

**An investigation into practices in selecting Parent-
representatives to School Governing Bodies in two
selected Secondary Schools serving Multiracial
Communities in the Fort Beaufort District**

by

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degree of



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SUPERVISOR: Dr Namhla Sotuku

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DECLARATION

I,M.TOMBE G. ADAM-UBANG....., declare that this dissertation which I hereby submit for the degree of Master of Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Fort Hare, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary education institution.



I also declare that as far as I am aware, all references used in this dissertation have been cited and acknowledged.

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The logo of the University of Fort Hare is a shield-shaped emblem. At the top, a sun with rays is positioned above an open book. The book's pages contain the Latin motto 'IN LUMINE TUO VIDE BIMUS LUMEN'. Below the book, the text 'University of Fort Hare' is written in a serif font, with the tagline 'Together in Excellence' underneath it in a smaller, italicized font.

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ABSTRACT

The idea of involving parents in school governance is a worldwide phenomenon based on the decentralisation of school governance philosophy (Sayed, 2002). This philosophy is part of a wider political drive to decentralize power and promote local community participation (Brown and Duku, 2008).

This qualitative study was conducted in two multiracial schools in the Fort Beaufort district. It investigated the practices involved in selecting parent representatives to the school governing body (SGB) and representation mechanisms to gain access to and to represent the concerns and interests of other parents in this structure.

Evidence gathered through observation and interviews revealed that the schools that participated in this study seem to share similar practices for selecting parent representatives to the SGB. This was evident in the factors they considered in their decisions to select parent representatives. Moreover the study also revealed that parent representatives to the SGB do plan and have mechanisms in place that they use in gaining access to the interests and concerns of the parents they represent. However, there is evidence that the concept 'representation' seems to be little understood by parents. Among other issues, this was evident in parents' non- attendance of meetings, reluctant participation in meetings and issues of exclusion that confront parents in the wider community regarding the representation of their interests in the SGB.

This study recommends that, for parent representatives to play their role effectively and to represent the interests and concerns of other parents in the SGB, they require the support and participation of the larger parent community. Schools also require that departmental officials play a meaningful role in supporting schools in their parent involvement initiatives.

Key Words: School Governing Body; Parent representatives; Representation practices; Multi-racial schools

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1.1 The composition and the issue of participation and Representation in the SGB	3
1.1.2 School governance in the Nkonkobe Municipality (Eastern Cape Province)	6
1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM	12
1.2.2 Sub-research questions	13
1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	13
1.4 RATIONALE OF STUDY	14
1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY	15
1.6 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS	15
1.9 DELIMITATIONS	16
1.10 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS	16
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	18
2.1 INTRODUCTION	18
2.2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SCHOOL GOVERNANCE	18

2.2.1	Decentralization and devolution of power in the education system in South Africa	18
2.2.2	The nature of school governance in South Africa	23
2.2.3	The concept of Governance and Governance in Schools	24
2.2.4	Legislation supporting school governance	28
2.2.5	Functions of school governing body	31
2.2.6	Composition of school governing bodies in schools	35
2.2.7	Democratic participation in school governing bodies	38
2.2.8	Representation of stakeholders	40
2.2.9	Managing conflict in School Governing Bodies	51
2.3	PARENTS IN SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY	54
2.3.1	Experiences of parents in School Governing Body	55
2.3.2	Attitudes of parents in SGB	56
2.3.3	Decision making in schools	59
2.4	GUIDE FOR ESTABLISHING A SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY	63
2.4.1	Provisions in the guide	64
2.4.2	Issues in the research	65
2.5	SUMMARY	66
 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLGY		 67
3.1	INTRODUCTION	67
3.2	RESEARCH PARADIGM: INTERPRETIVE	67
3.3	POSITIVIST PARADIGM	68
3.4	RESEARCH APPROACH: QUALITATIVE	69
3.5	RESEARCH DESIGN: A CASE STUDY	71

3.6	DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS	72
3.6.1	Documents	72
3.6.2	Interviews	73
3.6.3	Observation schedule	74
3.7	GAINING ACCESS TO PARTICIPANTS	76
3.8	RESEARCH SITE AND PARTICIPANTS	76
3.9	ETHICS AND CONFIDENTIALITY	77
3.10	DATA ANALYSIS	79
3.11	DATA COLLECTION PHASES	81
3.11.1	Phase 1: Piloting	81
3.11.2	Phase 2: Interviews	82
3.11.3	Phase: 3 Observations	83
3.11.4	Phase 4: Document analysis	85
3.11.5	Phase 5: Data Analysis	85
3.12	LIMITATIONS OF THE CASE STUDY	86
3.12	SUMMARY	87
 CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS		 88
4.1	INTRODUCTION	89
4.2	BIOGRAPHICAL DATA APPLICATION	90
4.2.1	Non-parent representatives	90
4.2.2	Biographical Data of Elected Parent-representatives	91
4.3	PRESENTING AND ANALYSING DATA IN RESPONSE TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION ONE	93



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4.4	PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA GATHERED IN RESPONSE TO RESEARCH QUESTION TWO	97
4.5	PRESENTING AND ANALYSING DATA IN RESPONSE TO RESEARCH QUESTION THREE	102
4.6	PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA GATHERED IN RESPONSE TO RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR	110
4.7	SUMMARY	114
 CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS		 115
5.1	INTRODUCTION	115
5.2	DISCUSSION OF THE MAIN FINDINGS	116
5.3	RECOMMENDATIONS SPECIFIC TO THIS STUDY	119
5.3.1	Pre-requisites to the SGB	119
5.3.2	Parental participation is the key to effective parent Representation in the SGB structure	119
5.3.3	Empowerment workshops	120
5.4	LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	120
5.5	SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	121
6.	REFERENCES	123
7.	LIST OF APPENDICES	132

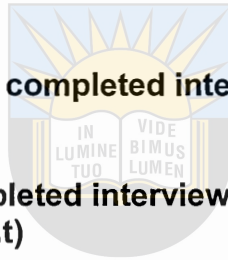
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1	Guide prescribed by the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Education	7
Table 1.2	Summary descriptions of selected school types	9
Table 2.1	Number of members to be elected for each Component of the SGB	37
Table 4.1	Biographical Data of Non-parent representatives	91
Table 4.2	Biographical data of elected parent representatives	93
Table 4.3	Factors considered by both elected and non-elected Members to select parent representative to the SGB	94
Table 4.4	Dislikes as a Parent-Representative	108

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LIST OF APPENDICES

7.1	Appendix A: Interview Schedule for Non-member parent	131
7.2	Appendix B: Interview Schedule for Elected Parent Member	133
7.3	Appendix C: Observation Schedule	134
7.4	Appendix D: Letter to the District Manager	136
7.5	Appendix E: Letter for the participant (SGB)	137
7.6	Appendix F: Consent Form for all participants	138
7.7.	Appendix G: Sample of Pilot completed interview Schedule (non-SGB parent)	139
7.8	Appendix H: Sample of Pilot completed interview schedule (SGB parent)	142
7.9	Appendix I: Sample of completed interview schedule (non-elected parent)	144
7.10	Appendix J: Sample of completed interview schedule (elected parent)	147



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ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
DoE	Department of Education
EPR	Elected Parent Representative
GESGB	Guide for Establishing School Governing Bodies
HOD	Head of Department
ID	Identity Documents
SGB	School Governing Body
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
NEPA	National Education Policy Act
NGFSGBE	National Guidelines for School Governing Body Elections
NMP	Non Member Parent
PTSA	Teacher Student Association
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SASA	South African Schools Act
SMT	School Management Team



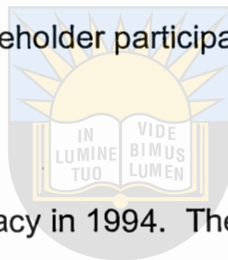
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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

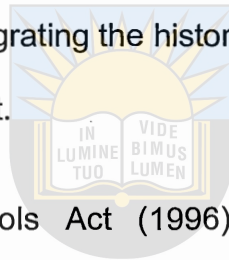
“The idea of involving parents in school governance is a worldwide phenomenon based on the decentralisation of school governance philosophy” (Sayed, 2002). This philosophy advocates that the school community ought to own schools and should take responsibility for the education of their children (Bush & Heystek, 2003 and Van Wyk, 2004). It further states that stakeholder participation benefits the school and the community it serves.



South Africa became a true democracy in 1994. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa formed the basis for policy development as part of the transformation process; the Department of Education (DoE) published a White Paper on Organisation, Governance and Funding of Schools (Department of Education, 1996) to foster democratic institutional management at school level (Tshaka, 2008:10). All stakeholder groups were to be given active and responsible roles to encourage tolerance, rational discussion and collective decision-making (Mncube, 2008; Republic of South Africa, 1996). The South African Schools Act, (SASA) 84, 1996, which came into effect at the beginning of 1997, emanated from this White Paper. In terms of this Act, all public state schools in South Africa must have democratically elected School Governing Bodies (SGBs) comprising parents, learners, educators, non-teaching staff and the school principal.

According to the South African Schools Act (1996), the election and the establishment of SGBs would provide an opportunity to transform schools into

harmonious environments through giving them certain power and responsibilities. Guidelines' regarding the establishment of SGBs (Department of Education, 1996) highlights the fact that the SGB should uphold the rights of all the learners, parents and educators by working as partners with the state and this sharing of power would promote a healthier relationship between state and the communities. Naidoo (2005) agrees with these guidelines by saying, devolving power to those SGBs who participate in democratic governance of schools, it also gives a school and its SGB a mandate to have a significant say in decision making. He further states that the Government faces challenges of integrating the historically decentralized system and redressing the imbalances of the past.



According to South African Schools Act (1996), SGB elections provide an opportunity for all members to exercise their democratic rights and to become actively involved in transforming education in schools. South African Schools Act elaborates that, if the stakeholders who are involved in education formulation are not active, the vision of quality education cannot be fulfilled. The purpose of the SGB is to promote the best interest of the school and strive to ensure its development through provision of quality education for all learners (SASA, 1996). The Guide for Establishing school governing bodies (1997:3) points out that, according to the Constitution, the provision for the establishment of a uniform system for organizing, governing and funding of all public schools in South Africa is set out in the South African Schools Act.

Squelch (2000:137) believes that, after the general election of 1994, the phasing in of the new education and training system served to introduce democratic participation and principles of democracy unit, non-discrimination, equity and equality

in South African schools. This new system favours a situation where all stakeholders with an interest in education such as a parent of a learner enrolled at a school or a representative of a sponsoring body or a person duly authorized by the Head of Department as prescribed in SASA, 1996 to performs/exercises his/her duty/power imposed by the Act. All these stakeholders have come together even at the level of the individual school and share in the decision making process. Naidoo (2005) also agrees that school governance was established by SASA and made many contributions to the new education system; hence a single democratic, non-racial and equitable education system was established.

According to the findings of different schools in Naidoo`s research, educators think that they are representing educators` needs; learners see themselves as representing learners; and parents representing parents, which is not in the interest of the school (Naidoo, 2005). Naidoo further points out that “representation in schools is affected by the historical context, ideological constraints as well as the balance of power that exists within the schools in the communities”. Chaka (2008:128) sees SGBs as legally structured representing all stakeholder groups, that is, parents, educators, non-educator staff and learners. But in reality some groups are usually under-represented or even excluded. For example, African parents do not make themselves available for election because, maybe, they live far away from school or they rely on public transport which may not be available in the evenings or weekends. That makes them to be under-represented in school governing bodies (Chaka, 2008:29).

1.1.1 The composition and the issue of participation and representation in the SGB structure.

SASA as cited in Chaka (2008), states that the SGB must be made up of parents, educators, non-educators, learners and the principal. The Guide for establishing school governing bodies (1997:11) elaborates that the Principal is automatically a member of the SGB. A parent or guardian of an officially enrolled learner at the school and who is not employed at the school may be a parent member of a school governing body. The educator must be employed at the school. Learners must be officially enrolled at the school in a level not lower than the eighth grade. "SASA makes it clear that a parent who is employed at the school may not be elected to the SGB as a parent member, but can serve as a representative of staff".

According to SASA (1996), parent members must comprise one more than the combined total of other members of a governing body who have voting rights. SASA further states that parents are the ones who must serve according to the interest of the school. Even White paper Two on the organisation, governance and funding of schools and the Bill of Rights both state that parents must form the majority, but do not specify the size of the majority. Parent majority seems to be based on the understanding that parents have a larger interest in the education of their children than any other stakeholder.

The number of parent members, educator members, non-educator members and learner members depends upon the size of the school enrolment. For instance, if a secondary school has less than 630 pupils, they need to elect 2 learner members, 7 parent members, 2 educator members and 1 non-teaching member. And if Secondary school has over 629 pupils they need to elect 9 parent members, 3 educator members, 3 learner members and 1 non-teaching member (Guide for Establishing School Governing Bodies, 1997:16).

Marashane (1999:78) believes that the concept of decentralization of powers originates from the belief that the State alone cannot control schools, but should share its powers with other stakeholders, particularly with those close to the school on a partnership basis. Hence before 1994 decentralized structures were established, and they were known as school boards, but what was of interest was that, these structures were comprised of parent representatives, teachers and students were excluded (Tshaka, 2008:8), this structure worked for the white minority while oppressing the black majority as *Peter Kallaway puts it in The History of Education under Apartheid, 1948-1994:*

Apartheid was characterised by the promotion of Afrikaner culture, language and economic interests, the emergence of a powerful structure of state power designed to defend the privileges of the minority, restriction of political, social and economic rights of the majority, strong curbs on the liberty of citizens, an increasing erosion of human rights, a high degree of coercion and control in the public sphere, racial inequality, and an attempt to enforce ideological control through the promotion of Afrikaner nationalist ideology (Kallaway, 2002:1-2).

Although there were blacks who were educated at the time, they had no say, but had to be the subordinates of the white minority, “eventually, parents of black children (and progressive parents of white children) were unwilling to accept this situation any longer. They wanted structure in which all interest groups could participate” (Chaka, 2008:9).

Hence the State believed that the sharing of power with other stakeholders in the education system could be a threat to its apartheid policies. This is also stressed by the SASA (1996) which makes provision for the formation of SGBs in all schools

comprising of parents, non-teaching staff, educators and learners from grade 8 upwards.

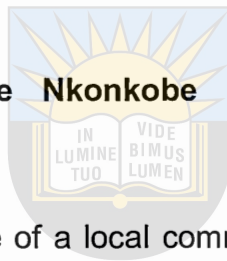
Gamage (1994:45-46) also agrees that the state alone cannot control schools and communities, and introduce SGBs to provide an alternative form of accountability to bureaucratic surveillance. Gamage believed that these collaborative participatory efforts by the stakeholders could develop true mutual responsibility and lead to better teaching and learning in the education system. However, Spillane, Reiser and Reimer (2002) point out that, individuals interpret and make sense of and define education policies in practice. Gamage (1994) highlights that, in order to make sense of these education policies, it is important for one to have a better understanding of deeper historical, structural and ideological contradictions in new school governance policies. He further mentions that conflicts and dilemmas are central to the experience of school governance.

Pampallis (2002) found that, even though the SASA allows that the SGB may apply to provincial education departments for additional functions in areas like curriculum, policy development and improvement of infrastructure, most parents on SGBs in the former white schools, usually, include individuals with skilled professional and managerial identities have been granted these powers. Maharaj (2005) mentioned that in order for parents to participate equally in school governance, they should possess the qualities and quantities of resources to affect their duties satisfactorily.

School Governing Bodies are a reality in the Grade R-12 school system in South Africa. The South African Schools Act (1996) mandates this practice as it specifies that every public school should have its own SGB. The SGB was established in response to a national agenda to reform the education system in the country

following political transition from apartheid to democratic government in 1994, and the subsequent adoption of a new constitutional dispensation and the phasing in of new education legislations. The SGB was part of a wider structural change in the governance and management of the school system, based fundamentally on the principles of democracy, unity, non-discrimination, equity and equality (Squelch, 2000:137). It was as part of a wider political drive to decentralize power and promote local community participation (Brown & Duku, 2008). The SGB is thus a mechanism for school-community participation in education decision-making.

1.1.2 School governance in the Nkonkobe Municipality (Eastern Cape Province)



Fort Beaufort District is one example of a local community where the effects of the decentralization of power in the education system, and the formation of SGBs are evident. It is mostly rural with only 4 sub-urban service centers in the Nkonkobe local municipality. These are Alice, Fort Beaufort, Adelaide and Bedford. It has 255 public schools in total. Of these, 190 are primary, 56 secondary, and 9 combined primary and secondary (DoE, 2006). SGB is the governance structure in all these public schools and delegates the daily management of the school to the school principal and the School Management Team often referred to as the SMT.

The SGB is supposed to play an active role in the different schools as long as they are public schools. The roles to be performed by these SGBs are clearly defined in the South African School Act (SASA, 1996). *"SASA mandates that the SGB in a public school must, inter alia, develop the mission statement of the school; adopt a code of conduct for the learners of the school after consultation with the learners, parents and educators of the schools; and determine the admission and language*

policies of the school, within the framework laid down in the Act and the ambit of the Constitution of the RSA. Other decision-making powers of the SGB include the suspension of learners from school as a correctional measure, recommendation regarding teacher (and other staff) appointment to the Head of Department of the Province, and managing the finances of the school”, (South African Schools Act, 1996, Section 20).

Section 20 of SASA also sets out these functions to be performed by the SGBs, “the SGB supports the principal, educators and other staff members of the school in the performance of their functions through supplementing the resources supplied by the state, administering the funds collected through school fees, donations and other fund raising activities. It has to prepare an annual budget for the school” (SASA, 1996, section 20(3)). The point here is that although this list does not include the full range of responsibilities of governing bodies, it serves to illustrate the pivotal role that the SGB should play, and the indispensable ‘bridge’ it represents between the school and the communities served by the school.

In Fort Beaufort, parents in the SGB form a central link between the school and the local community. Parents are, however, not the only group in the composition of the SGB. Consistent with the SASA (1996, section 23), the membership of the SGB in public schools in Fort Beaufort comprises of the elected members, the school principal (who is an *ex officio* member) and co-opted members. The elected members comprise individuals from the following categories: parents of learners at the school, educators at the school, members of staff who are not educators, and learners in the eighth grade or higher (National Guidelines for School Governing Body Elections, 2009:9). For these individuals to qualify for membership, they must

all have some form of affiliation with the school. Parent members have to be parents of learners enrolled at the school, educator and non-educator members should be currently employed at the school and the learner members should be enrolled at the school during the year of the SGB election.

Members of the community may be co-opted to the governing body from time to time (Karlsson *et al*, 2001:156). All these are indications of the school and local community link via the SGB structure and the understanding and compliance with SASA by the Fort Beaufort schools.

The size of the SGB depends upon the size of the school enrolment. The National Department of Education leaves it to the provincial departments to decide the size of the SGBs; hence the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Education prescribed the following guide:

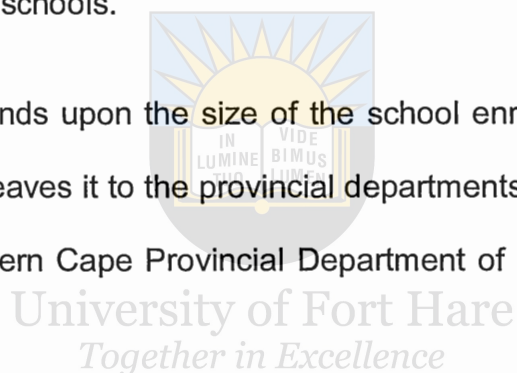


Table 1.1 Guide prescribed by the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Education

School	Principal	Educators	Parents	Non-educators staff	Learners	Total
Primary School -160 Learners	1	1	4	1	0	7
Primary School 160 to 719 Learners	1	2	5	1	0	9
Primary School 720 or more Learners	1	3	6	1	0	11
Secondary School 630 Learners	1	2	7	1	2	13
Secondary School 630 or more Learners	1	3	9	1	3	17
Comprehensive or Combined School 500 Learners	1	2	7	1	2	13

Comprehensive or Combined School 500 or More Learners	1	3	9	1	3	17
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Source: (School Manual, 1999: C-9, 104)

While the parent group makes up the majority of SGB members, parents cannot just assign themselves to the SGB structure. They have to be elected procedurally and the elections have to be free and fair (Guide for Establishing School Governing Bodies, 1997:16). The National Guide Lines issued by the National Department of Education outline the procedures to follow in the election of the parents to serve on the SGB of a school. Whilst the Provincial Department is at liberty to formulate its own guidelines, it has in essence no room for deviations and simply adopts the National Guidelines. However, the selection of parents to serve on the SGB and subsequent representation of the wider parent community remain a problematic issue. In Fort Beaufort, the majority of parents, particularly in the Black communities do not bother to get involved and some of those who get involved want at the end of their tenure as elected members, to be affirmed for a further period without going through the electoral process.

Part of the problem lies in the communities themselves. Naidoo (2005) points out that representation on the SGB, schools is affected by the historical context, ideological constraints as well as the balance of power that exists in schools in the communities. What this amounts to in reality is that, on the SGB in some schools, representation tends to run along ethnic group lines (Fine, 1997). Naidoo (2005) asserts that there is wide socio-economic and racial variation among communities in South Africa. Communities in Fort Beaufort are examples where such disparities exist. The ethnic composition of communities in Fort Beaufort shows that black,

coloured, and white community groups reside in the district (Moll, 1990:190). Fort Beaufort is evidently multi-ethnic and much of this ethnic mix is reflected in the population of some of the schools. The Provincial Education Department in the district gave the following breakdown in Table 1.1 of the schools within the Fort Beaufort district. The breakdown reflects the multi-ethnic nature. Local communities in Fort Beaufort district are quite heterogeneous.

Table 1.2 Summary descriptions of selected school types

School type	Local Community / Village	Location	Ex-Dept
Primary	Coloured Township	Fort Beaufort	HOR
Primary & High School	Black Township	Fort Beaufort	DET / Ciskei
Primary & High School	Ex-White Suburb	Bedford & Fort Beaufort	CED
Primary, Junior Secondary, & High School	Black rural	Adelaide, Fort Beaufort, Middledrift, Alice, Debenek	DET/Ciskei

Source: Moll, I. (1990:186)

In the Fort Beaufort district, the local population is divided as follows: 94.7% black Africans, 4.0% whites, and 2.3% coloured (Moll, 1990). Three secondary schools in the community serve students from each of these racial groups and one serves Coloureds and Blacks.

When parents are elected to SGB, they are, theoretically, supposed to represent the interests of parents in the SGB context (Naidoo, 2005). Naidoo argues that the concept 'representation' itself remains contested and little understood among parents and educators (Naidoo, 2005). Indeed, while the SASA requires every public school to establish school governance which will represent the school community

and protect the values and principles of democracy, including human dignity, achievement of equality, advancement of human rights, non-racialism and non-sexism etc. In practice, as Naidoo (2005) notes, representation often ranges from parents representing exclusively their own children's interests to more broadly providing parental perspectives on policy. Implicit here is that the wider interest of the parent-body, that is elected parents should represent in the SGB, gets downplayed. There is a supposition here, from personal observations, that the SGB in some secondary schools in Fort Beaufort is affected by these kinds of issues.

Fine (1997) adds that the question of what parents are being asked to represent in the name of parental participation in schools has to be confronted as some parents act in their own self-interest or in the interest of their ethnicity, gender, and race (Chaka, 2008:28). Chaka (2008:28) notes further that in reality some parent groups are usually under-represented or even excluded from the SGB. Although there are studies (e.g. Chaka, 2008) that have investigated reasons for under-representation of some category of parents in SGBs, policy-practice tension in relation to SGB (Naidoo, 2005:74), parents experiences (Mncube, 2009:95) and participation in SGB (Adams & Waghid 2005:30), none has focused on the process variable of parent selection to serve in the SGB structure. It is this aspect that the research problem of this study is located with an emphasis on two schools in the Fort Beaufort District.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The South African Schools Act has mandated the establishment of School Governing Bodies in all public schools in South Africa. From a personal observation, most parents in black rural areas, who are elected to SGBs in schools in Fort Beaufort are not the biological parents of the learners, but are the grandparents and

therefore qualify as guardians (GESGB, 1997). Grandparents are more active than parents, yet the legislation requires parents. In Black communities, there are no legal guardians. Relatives simply become guardians of learners by virtue of the support they give to the children. This is not to suggest that the latter is problematic in itself but what is of interest is the seemingly lack of clarity in the process followed in the selection of these individuals (or the biological parents of learners) to become members of SGBs.

As an educator in the Fort Beaufort district over the last five years, I have also observed that parent membership in SGBs does not seem to reflect the sub-groups in the wider community population. In addition, in some secondary schools, some parents remain on the SGB Committee for a long time. Other researchers have made similar observations and have questioned the politics of inclusion/exclusion of the SGB Committee (Mncube, 2009:96).

Furthermore, it is often the practice for parent-representatives to speak on behalf of all parents in SGB meetings or other formal sessions, but it is unclear how these parent-representatives are in a position to do this. While the representation that they make may be genuine, there seems to be a dearth of literature on mechanisms for gaining access to the concerns and issues held by the very parents they represent. This is particularly the case in the multiracial school context of two schools in Fort Beaufort, that have been serving learners from communities of different racial backgrounds. In one particular instance, there is an SGB with mainly black Africans yet the schools have coloured and white children attending the school. The question that comes to mind in such a situation is whether these parents represent the interests of all parent-groups with children in the school. Research on how parent-

representatives get selected to SGBs or eventually represent the interest of the community is scanty. Informed decisions about improving SGB processes cannot be made in the absence of research evidence. Against this background a need arises to research what practices are involved in parent-representatives selection, and representation of their parent-communities in SGB structures in the Fort Beaufort district.

1.2.1 Main research question:

What practices are involved in the selection of parent-representatives to the SGB?

1.2.2 Sub-research questions

1. What factors do parents consider in their decision to select parent-representatives to a SGB?
2. What procedures are followed in the election of parent-representatives to an SGB?
3. What characterizes elected parents' representation practices in SGB?
4. What issues do parents of different racial backgrounds in the wider community confront regarding the *representation* of their interest in SGB structures?

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to investigate and understand the practices involved in parent-representative selection to the SGB in secondary schools in Fort Beaufort, and their mechanisms in gaining access and representation of the concerns and interests of other parents in this structure. An auxiliary purpose inherent in the study is to, based on the aforementioned outcomes, explore implications for policy and practice in school governance.

1.4 RATIONALE OF STUDY

Personal experience of monitoring the electoral process of SGB members in schools in the Fort Beaufort area has drawn my attention to such issues as the selection of illiterate parents onto the SGB. When these parents are selected, they have a way of just leaving much of their roles and responsibilities to educators. This is why I often wonder whether the parents in the community take such issues as the literacy level of the representative into account before voting them into office.

The objective to investigate practices in parent election to SGB is significant, since this will give SGBs an opportunity to reflect on their practices after election and bring maximum community participation in nominating parent representatives. This is not an area that has been well researched in the local context. It is therefore important to look at the provision made by the Government to facilitate the maximum participation before the parent election process and the acceptance of those provisions by the community. It is important to look at what the Government has done or is doing with regard to the stated objectives of the study. It is important again to look at the beneficiaries of these collective participation/practices in school governance, since the education system serves as a bridge to the unknown world.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The study can contribute to the ongoing debate around praxis. Often what is stated in policy and what happens in practice can be a distance apart. There are several policy provisions and documents regulating practices of an SGB but sometimes these are divorced from reality. This study can lead to a better understanding of one

such case, that is, the selection and representation practices among parents in the SGB.

1.6 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Parent-representative: In this study parent representative means a parent who is the biological parent of a learner or a person who is legally entitled to the custody of a learner, and selected on to the SGB board, a parent who undertakes to fulfil the obligations of a parent or guardian, or the person legally entitled to custody of a learner. This parent must be registered and enrolled in the school in question (NGFSGBE, 2009:9).

Selection practices: According to the National Guidelines for School Governing Body Elections (2009:13), selection practices refer to the procedures followed when electing the parent component of the School Governing Body. In this study, the above definition is adopted, but extended to include what parents do in terms of representation after being elected.

School Governing Body (SGB): According to the School Manual (1999:C-3, 98), school governing body means representatives of major stakeholder groups in the school and is responsible for establishing policies and guidelines that will be the basis of the school's character and operational programme. In this study a School Governing Body is the structure which is responsible for developing and advancing policies which provide the right environment for implementing a diversity strategy within the school in question.

Representation: According to the Webster Dictionary as cited in Naidoo (2005:33), representation means making present of something that is absent. In this study

representation refers, not only to different parent members' ability to influence the political process, but also the way in which they stand in for, and take the place of other parents and the interest of those parents.

Investigation: According to the Concise Oxford dictionary of current English, investigation means to enquire; trying to discover information which is of public interest, but may be kept hidden. In this study, it refers to examining practices that are involved in the parent representative selection process with the purpose of improving those practices.



1.9 DELIMITATIONS

This study focuses on practices in parent election to the School Governing Body of the Fort Beaufort secondary school community. The schools that will be investigated offer secondary level education and serve multiracial communities. Thus, parents in SGBs in primary schools are not part of the scope of the study. Likewise, although Fort Beaufort is one of six districts within the Nkonkobe local municipality, secondary schools in other districts are outside the purview of this study. This is necessary for feasibility purposes and to give the study greater focus. The emphasis is on parents and not the other groups making up the SGB because the problem is located with the parent group.

1.10 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: Gives the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, purpose of the study, delimitation of the study and definitions of terms.

Chapter 2: Covers related literature and the conceptual framework that underpins the study.

Chapter 3: Outlines the methodology used in the study; the research paradigm, research design, population, sample and sampling, data collection methods, trustworthiness, data analysis and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4: Data presentation and analysis.

Chapter 5: Discussion of findings, conclusions and recommendations.



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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the key concepts in relation to school governance and the selection of parent-representatives to the SGB in secondary schools are discussed. The literature focuses on the impact parent selection has on the SGB as required by the SASA. According to Naidoo (2005:78), “selection of stakeholders is a key structural component of the new governance system, a means to ensure the active involvement of different stakeholder groups”. This study examines demographic characteristics, participation and representation and the composition of SGBs in question.

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2.2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

2.2.1 Decentralization and devolution of power in the education system in South Africa.

The South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) gives effect to principle of the democratisation of schooling by decentralizing meaningful power over the school to the school level stakeholders including the governors serving on School Governing Bodies in an attempt to redress the imbalances of the past (Beckmann and Prinsloo 1988). The Government granted powers from central government to local government to allow more independence to the school level stakeholders.

Naidoo (2005:13) states that in the past few decades school systems around the world promote decentralization which focusses on a local decision-making and community participation to ensure the efficient management of schools while

contributing to citizen empowerment and democratization. He further illustrates it as follows.

The election of April 1994, which marked the formal end of Apartheid rule and shift from authoritarian to democratic rule, ushered in a new South African Constitution with an equivocal commitment to representative and participatory democracy, accountability, transparency and public involvement (RSA, 1996c). The aim of participation is not just to participate but to have a right to elect representative and to have influence in decisions. However, the South African Schools Act intended to create a new school governance landscape based on participation, partnerships between state, parents, learners, school staff and communities and devolution of power towards the individual school and community (Naidoo, 2005).

The school governance was introduced in South Africa and yet the Government took for granted that the principles of democracy would be followed as written in governance policy. The policy did not cater for the reality of variability across school systems, as well as actual schools with distinctive characteristics and problems, diversity of communities and institutional histories in the implementation of the governance policy (Naidoo, 2005). Within communities, the school governing representatives tend to interpret democratic participation or democratic decision making in various ways by different stakeholders, depending on historical background.

Naidoo (2005:14) mentions that “the way governance operates at the school site is explained by the variation in the schools communities across the schools in the history of the governance and ex-department control, racial make-up, geographical location, level of resources, education and socio-economic level of parents”. Furthermore, governance in practice depends greatly on the theory of action or on the principal as the most dominant actor in school. Mosoge and Westhuizen, (1998) admits that in South Africa there is devolution of authorities and responsibility from central office to the school, the so- called school-based management of schools.

Steyn (2003:1) argues that “although the vision for a transformed education system in South Africa has been set out in policy frameworks and new legislation, the system is still influenced by the ethos, systems and procedures inherited from the apartheid past”. He mentions that the Report of the National Task Team on Education Management Development in South Africa identifies four apartheid legacies in education (DoE, 1996),

Firstly, **the education legacy**: During apartheid, 19 education departments catered for the different ethnic and racial groups (Harber, 2000). He mentions that the schools were structured in a racial hierarchy, white schools were the key beneficiaries, and black schools were the most disadvantaged. Hence, the research shows that the school governance in most white schools did not experience much difficulty in implementing a culture of teaching and learning, because they were fully involved in the planning and learning of their children’s education. In most black schools, they lacked resources; even if few resources, facilities and equipment were delivered to schools, teachers and parents did not have much experience of how to use them (resources), so they were sometimes rendered useless. In most cases

they were dependent on the principal as the driving force of the system. Sometimes the principal used his or her own discretion on how things should happen. Hence, the research shows that in most former Model-C schools, most white parents are actively involved in school activities, than black parents, they (white parents) were involved even during apartheid system, they had been performing the function of admissions policy at schools cases especially in a multiracial school, certain group dominates the participation of stakeholders, whilst other group is passive.

Secondly, **the education management legacy:** Steyn (2003) mentions that according to the Report, the lack of legitimacy of the education system led to a crisis in schools. In the majority of schools poor management and a collapse of teaching and learning accompanied this. This in most schools led to the non-implementation of the new curriculum. The involved stakeholders found it difficult to implement the new curriculum; this might have been caused by poor education management from the Department of Education or from the schools itself or it might have been caused by lack of participation in school activities by teachers, members of parents or by school management team (SMT). Moorthy as cited in Steyn (2003) posits the important role in implementing and conducting staff development; many principals of previously disadvantaged schools are not adequately trained in school management, and a lack of school management often results in a lack of time to manage programmes effectively.

Thirdly, **the public administration legacy:** This Public administration was characterised by a hierarchical structure infused with authoritarian management styles. Steyn (2003) mentions that the new departments of education inherited these structures and management styles. Although the education system in South Africa is

transformed, the system is still influenced by the procedures inherited from the apartheid era.

Fourthly, **the gender legacy:** Steyn (2003:1) mentions that the broader discriminatory tendencies in society as a whole are influenced by past practices. Women in general were under represented in senior management positions due to the perception that women were not fit to hold top positions. Even in our days, in most schools one seldom sees the chairperson of a governing body or principal of the school being a female or holding a top position. In black communities it is believed that women according to their culture cannot stand in front and address the community; they are supposed to be the sub-ordinates of the males or admit all what is being said to them by men or males.

According to Horowitz as cited in Naidoo (2005:34), "evolution of power to local levels, may be a strategy that involves the dispersion of power – the proliferation of points of power so as to deflect heat away from a single central focal point. This allows central authorities to devolve responsibility for resolving difficult issues to local actors while taking credit for promoting grassroots participation and democracy".

Argyris and Schon as cited in Naidoo (2005:18) suggest that the SASA and related policies ensure stakeholder (parents, learners and school personnel) participation in school governance and promote democracy and citizenship. It is also assumed that these policies will promote equity and quality in education, hence the decentralization of power amongst stakeholders. Governance policies will be affected by the make-up of communities that the SGBs are expected to represent, meaning that the decision-making roles and power will or may differ from the roles created and assigned by the participants in the new governance processes.

Naidoo (2005:31) points out that governance reforms and the establishment of the elected SGB would promote the interests of the school and ensure efficiency and equity; it would increase community participation in school level decision-making and advance the cause of democracy and would also ensure greater funding for schools and thus advance quality education. Hanafin and Lynch as cited in Naidoo, (2005) believe that middle class parents are the most involved, most visible and who are proximal to the school.

2.2.2 The nature of school governance in South Africa

The South Africa Schools Act (SASA) views management and governance as separate concepts (SASA, 1996). According to this document (SASA, 1996), governance is the sphere of influence of the SGB but Naidoo (2005:32) sees the functions performed by school governors and the management of the school in terms of overall policy versus day-to-day operations as complex. SGBs may perform a number of management functions when it comes to policy making but research shows that the latter depends on the particular context, and how an individual perceives school governance. Johnson as cited in Mncube (2009:84) shares the same sentiment when he mentions that the needs of each school are best determined at local level as each community and therefore each school has distinctive needs.

Chaka (2008:22) outlines the functions of principals and also discusses issues affecting the functionality of the SGBs. SASA (1996, Section 16) states that the principal is a representative of Head of Department at the school where he/she is employed. This mandates the principal to provide guidance, assistance and support

to the SGB in the interests of the Department of Education. The role of the principal and subsequently the SGB may not be contrary to the instructions of the Head of Department, education legislation, education policy and or employment policy (ibid).

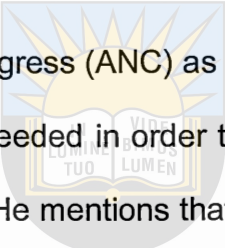
The SGBs are also required to adhere to action taken by the Head of Department in terms of section 16 of the Employment of Educators Act of 1998 in addressing the incapacity of an educator. It is for this reason that Naidoo (2005:32) perceives the SGBs as performing other functions that are managerially more inclined than governance. On the other hand, the principal also continues to perform functions supposed to be the responsibility of the SGBs. This may be so, especially in Fort Beaufort, because the principal is a member of the SGB and enjoys respect within as a father figure with authority. The SGB more often than not supports his authority especially in the rural schools where parents are more submissive, farm schools where parents are ignorant and township schools where effective discipline has to be exercised.

Mncube (2009:85) in contrast to Naidoo (2005) says that the day-to-day duties of the school are the responsibility of the principal and the governance of the school is the responsibility of the SGBs. This is more applicable in urban schools especially the former model C schools.

2.2.3 The concept of Governance and Governance in Schools

SGB election and representation operate within the context of the democratic system of Government in the RSA (Naidoo, 2005:27). This implies that the Department of Education has a constitutional mandate to redress the injustices of the past and extend this democracy to school level. This means the Department has to share its power with the school communities on a partnership basis. This partnership can only

be realized through democratically elected SGBs that are guided by the democratic principles in their functions. These elected members should represent the community to protect their values and the principles of democracy which include human dignity, achievement of equality, advancement of human rights and non-sexism in a multicultural society. SASA (1996) replaced the apartheid models where parents were appointed to school committees rather than elected. In this process, it is the democratic right of the parents to elect the parent members who will represent their interests.

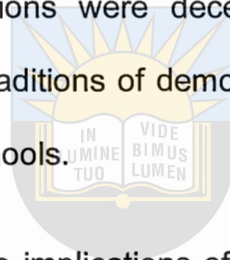


According to the African National Congress (ANC) as cited in Clase *et al* (2007:243), school governance structures were needed in order to fully develop the potential of the human resources of the country. He mentions that education in whatever form is a fundamental component of democracy and as such the government has decided to share its power with other stakeholders such as parents, teachers and learners, so as to have the smooth running of the process. This gives the parents the opportunity to live, practise democracy in the performance of their duties at the school, and thus gain experience for the benefit of the greater South Africa.

Lemmer as cited in Clase *et al* (2007:244) states that the decentralisation of power to govern schools is aimed at decreasing centralised bureaucratic management of schools. Although the new dispensation for education was introduced, there is a need to improve the approach and the implementation thereof so as to suite the diverse cultures of the country. They point out that the former national minister , Kader Asmal, warned that `change would not be without its own problems and that groups in education affected by these changes should negotiate change responsibly even if change threatens and influences the most sensitive traditions in schools`.

Chaka (2008:15) confirms the successes of the government when he cites the major developments in the new education system as follows:

- A single, democratic, non-racial and equitable public education system was established;
- Two categories of school – public schools and independent (private) schools- replaced the various categories that existed during apartheid;
- A uniform system of school governance was introduced in all public schools;
- Important powers and functions were decentralised to the level of the community, drawing on the traditions of democracy, anti-apartheid struggles, and of the former Model C schools.



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However, Naidoo (2005:41) sees the implications of the new reform of governance as stakeholders who cannot recognise the difference between school governance and management. Among other things, some of these implications might be caused by the uncertainty of their functions, the diverse cultural backgrounds of various groups to be represented and ineffective training of school governors. Therefore, this has led to complaints about overload in functions. Hansen as cited in Naidoo (2005:42) cautions that “even though there is decentralisation, there is little reason to believe that decentralisation improves the situation. As a result, this led to the intervened variables such as teacher training and parent support”. This results in under-participation from most stakeholders especially in the disadvantaged communities.

Wolhsetter and Mohrmanm as cited in Naidoo (2005:43) point out that school-based decision-making for improving schools and building community show promise of following conditions are present: empowerment, knowledge that enables community

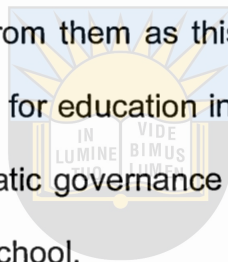
members to understand and contribute to the organisation information about the performance of the organisation and rewards for high performance.

Naidoo (2005:28) points that the reason for the establishment of governing bodies is to extend democracy. However, in reality their activities may be focus on supporting efficient functioning of the school organisation with little regard for democratic participation. On the contrary, Chaka (2008:28) shows that there are some groups who are under-represented or even excluded in the SGB structures, which are legally structured to represent all stakeholder groups.

Although the SASA (1996) has mandated the establishment of governing bodies, it is also the duty of the Government to see to it that the interests of all the groups in those institutions are represented, especially in multiracial community schools so as to prevent under-representation of certain groups. Van Wyk (2004:49) stresses that when educators and communities collaborate in making important decisions about educational alternatives, a true mutual responsibility develops. Therefore, the introduction of SGBs in schools means the achievement of co-operative participatory and collective decision-making.

Moon, Butcher and Bird as cited in Heystek (2004:309) sees power play and domination as part of any teamwork and interpersonal interaction. This power play may be conscious or unconscious, whereby a principal trying to dominate the SGB or the chairperson of the SGB, trying to dominate the principal on behalf of the parents, and this may result in mistrust of both parties.

Principals used to be the people who made final decisions, according to the statutory school level structures, introduced before 1994 democratic elections, which were known as Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) in black schools. Tsoetsi, Van Wyk, and Lemmer, (2008:386) clarify that those PTAs and governing bodies in Model C schools formed a basis for the post-apartheid school governance structures, such as school committees, school boards or management councils consisting of parents but who had only limited decision-making powers (Chaka, 2008:9). Most black principals during school governance apartheid had the final in authority and as a result this cannot be quickly taken from them as this is new to most stakeholders. SASA (1996) gave guiding principles for education in South Africa. These principles such as redress, equity and democratic governance aim at equalling the sharing of power amongst all governors of the school.



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Van Wyk (2004:49) elaborates that, when democratic structures are introduced in all schools, the schools must ensure that educators, parents, learners and non-teaching staff, actively participate in the governance and management of schools with the intention of providing a better teaching and learning environment.

2.2.4 Legislation supporting school governance

After the 1994 democratic election, policies were introduced with on focus of redress, equity, quality and democratic participation. There were also major policy reforms affecting the structure and process of education and training that were introduced (Naidoo, 2005:23). This legislation included the White paper on Education and Training (DoE, 1995), the South African Qualifications Act (DoE, 1995) and a new Outcomes-based curriculum, called Curriculum 2005 Framework in 1997 (DoE, 1997). According to the National Guidelines for SGB Elections (NGSGBE, 2009:3),

there are also Legislations and Principles underlying free and fair elections of SGB.

They are as follows:

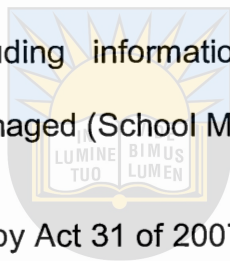
- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996;
- National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act 27 of 1996);
- South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996)

Chaka (2008:10) points out that the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa formed the basis for policy development in 1994. There was an Interim Constitution that was replaced by the final constitution in 1996. The objective was to provide a framework for transformation and democratization. This policy (White Paper) guarantees access to basic education for all. In order for basic education to be achieved, the policy makers believed that school governors should be introduced in all public schools and the principles underlying free and fair elections of SGBs should be followed and practised.

SASA stipulates that the SGB must be involved in the formulation of school policy but when formulating school policy, SGBs are bound by the Bill of Rights, which is contained in the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996). This document emphasises the importance of democracy and its contents, it has a significant impact on education policies and how these are implemented. There are some important aspects that Principals and SGBs should take note of in the SA Constitution:

- The State (and the school as an organ of state) is obliged to protect and promote human rights, section 7.
- The right of equality, section 9, implies that there should be no unfair discrimination in, for example, admission policies.

- Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity
- Everyone has a right to freedom, security and bodily and psychological integrity.
- Children must be protected from neglect, abuse and exploitation.
- The child`s best interests come first.
- Access to education is a basic right.
- Receiving instruction in the official language(s) of one`s choice is a basic right.
- The language and cultural traditions of others must be respected.
- Everyone has the right to information that they may need for the protection or exercising of their rights including information, which implies that such information, must be carefully managed (School Management Manual, 1999:8-9).



SASA Act 84 of 1996 (as amended by Act 31 of 2007) aimed at providing uniformity in of schools, to amend certain laws relating to school; and to provide for matters connected therewith. Naidoo (2005:24) elaborates that to promote access, quality and democratic governance in schooling system. SASA also provides mechanism a for stakeholders to participate in decision-making. It grants power and guidelines to school governance to improve education the system and to effect the different historical situations by introducing SGBs in schools. This governance will promote the democratic process by:

...redressing past in justices in educational provision, provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners and in so doing lay a strong foundation for the development of all our people`s talents and capabilities, advance the democratic transformation of society, combat racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and to intolerance, contribute to the eradication of poverty and the economic well-being of

society, protect and advance diverse cultures and languages, uphold the rights of all learners, parents and educators, and promote their acceptance for the organisation, governance and funding of schools in partnership with the State (DoE, 1996:2).

The National Education Policy Act (NEPA) of 1996 provides mechanisms to shift control into National and Provincial departments, aimed at transforming apartheid education. This Act outlines responsibilities of the Minister of Education, formalize relations between national and provincial authorities (Naidoo, 2005:24-25). NEPA allow the national minister of education to promulgate policy pertaining to some educational issues such as:

- Facilities, finance and development plans for education
- The management and governance of schools
- Admission policy of schools
- Compulsory school education
- Control and discipline at schools, and
- The Norms and Standards for school funding (School Management Manual, 1999:10).

2.2.5 Functions of school governing body

The SASA (1996) saw the need to give certain powers and responsibilities to school governing bodies. The establishment of an SGB provides the opportunity to transform schools into harmonious environments. The GESGB adds that the governors should uphold the rights of all the learners, parents and educators, by working as a team with the State. According to the NGSGBE (2009:2), SGBs should

aim to improve the quality of education, ensure good governance, advance the democratic transformation of our society, and ensure that the school serves the interests of the community and the expectations of parents. SASA (1996:20) sets out the following functions to be performed by all SGBs:

- To promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education at the school.
- To adopt a constitution.
- To develop the mission statement of the school.
- To adopt a code of conduct for learners at the school.
- To support the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions.
- To administer and control the school property, and buildings and grounds occupied by the school including school hostels if applicable.
- To encourage parents, learners, educators and other staff at the school to render voluntary services to the school.
- To recommend to the school, subject to the Employment of Educators Act (1998) and the Labour Relations Act (1995).
- To recommend to the Head of Department the appointment of non-educator staff the school, subject to the Public Service Act (1994) and the Labour Relations Act (1995).
- To allow the reasonable use, under fair conditions determined by the Head of Department, of the facilities of the school for educational programmes not conducted by the school itself, at the request of the Head of Department.
- To discharge all other functions imposed upon the governing body by or under the Act.

- To discharge other functions consistent with the Act as determined by the Minister by a notice in the Provincial Gazette.

There are further functions of SGBs that are set out in section 21 of the Act (SASA, 1996). However, SGBs must apply to the provincial Head of Department for permission to undertake these functions. Section 21 functions include the following:

- To maintain and improve the school's property, and buildings and grounds occupied by the school, including school hostels, if applicable.
- To determine the extra mural curriculum of the school and the choice of subject options in terms of provincial curriculum policy.
- To purchase textbooks, educational materials and equipment for the school.
- To pay services to the school.
- To perform other functions consistent with the Act and any applicable provincial law.
- To provide an adult basic education and training class or centre subject to any applicable law.

Improving the literacy level of parental governors serve on the SGB is of great importance, since their inclusion in the education process is a meaningful one and since they are the beneficiaries of the policies of the Government. It is important that the Government should make policies that ensure that all community group members are included, and their needs addressed. Some of these policies should aim at improving the literacy level of members and could be the establishment of learning centres closer to the communities.

According to the Act 84 of 1996, the Department of Education should set up programs to provide introductory training for newly elected governing bodies. The purpose is to assist SGBs to perform their functions effectively. Gould (1998:32) claims that the availability of social and material conditions necessary for the achievement of purposes or plans could lead to self-development and freedom. Berlin as cited in Gould (1988:39), on the other hand, claims that poverty or lack of education may render liberty useless. This liberty is the one that should encourage parents, irrespective of ethnicity, gender or race to participate freely in the democratic processes that take place in our country. Heystek and Panquette (1999:191) argue that in South Africa neither parents nor educators have had much experience of participatory decision making because in the past, principals in certain schools were generally regarded to be the only people with knowledge and authority to make decisions.



It is unfortunate to mention that in the functions of SGBs, among others, preparing of an annual budget, planning school finances for the following year, keeping of financial records and developing policies might be too complex for the SGBs to perform due to a lack of necessary skills and knowledge, more specifically in the disadvantaged communities.

Chaka (2008:27) points out that the challenge facing SGBs is the complexity of functions, which include: development of policies, recommending the appointment of teachers; and drawing up of school budgets. Functions need a certain level of expertise on the part of SGB members. But this is not the case in most former Model C schools. Most of the parents serving in those SGBs are educated and include

many professionals, such as accountants, lawyers and architects who can assist the SGB to perform their functions effectively.

The literature shows that most of the members of SGBs have no relevant skills, particularly in financial management. As a result, principals are under pressure to manage their school`s finances instead of the SGBs. However, in most cases many principals together with SGBs lack financial knowledge, skills and expertise to manage finances. In many cases, it is reported as mismanagement of funds through misappropriation and improper control of financial records. Mestry (2006:28) reveals that many principals feel threatened that SGBs have been given the responsibility of managing the schools funds. Previously, principals were in charge of school finances and now they feel disempowered by the new legislation.

Functions that are performed by SGBs are important. SGBs contribute to whole school development and there is a need for continued support and consistent follow up from the departmental side because there is no remuneration for SGB contribution. They need to be supported and encouraged to perform their level best even if it means developing their knowledge or skills. Van Wyk and Bush *et al* as cited in Mestry (2006:32) voice out that training given to SGBs by the school districts (departments) is usually ineffective because many department officials selected to train the SGBs are not experts in financial school management. This result into challenges SGBs are facing in performing their functions, more especially in managing finances, particularly in disadvantaged communities.

2.2.6 Composition of school governing bodies in schools

The South African Schools Act , (1996) states that School Governing Bodies must comprise of parents, learners (in schools with grade eight classes or higher), educators, non-teaching staff and a principal by virtue of his or her status.

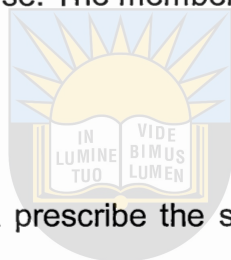
The National Guidelines for School Governing Body Elections (NGFSGBE) (2009:9) points out that a parent means the biological parent or guardian of a learner or the person legally entitled to custody of a learner. A parent also means the person who undertakes to fulfil the obligations of a parent or guardian, or the person legally entitled to custody of a learner. A parent who is employed at a particular school may not represent parents on the SGB.

An educator, who has voting rights in that particular school, is an educator who teaches at the school. The Manual for School Management (1999) stipulates that even temporary educators and educators who are parents of learners at the school may serve on the SGB. The principal is automatically a member of the SGB with full voting rights.

Learners who serve on the SGB must be in grade eight upwards. GESGB (1997) , states that learners with special educational needs in grade eight or higher may also be elected, if the case is reasonably practicable. The Manual for School Management (1999) also points out that a learner must be elected by other members of the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) to serve on the SGB. These representatives must have knowledge of financial matters and must serve for a period of one year.

Non-teaching staff include a member of staff who is not an educator. This staff member must be appointed under the Public service Act 103 of 1994 or employed by the SGB for services other than professional educational services. He or she must be permanent or temporary not a substitute who is standing in for other employers who are on leave (Manual for School Management, 1999).

There are two types of co-opted members, co-opted members with voting rights and those members without voting rights. Co-opted members without voting rights are those members with particular expertise. The member with voting rights serves in the SGB for a maximum of 90 days.



Although the SASA (1996) does not prescribe the size of the SGB it indicates in section 23 that parent members must be one more than the combined total of other members of a governing body who have voting rights. GESGB (1997:16) and Manual for School Management, (1999: C-9) stipulate that a number of members on the SGB may vary, depending upon the size of the school enrolment. The table below provides a guideline of the number of the members to be elected for each component of the SGB.

Table 2.1 Number of members to be elected for each component of the SGB

School	Principal	Educators	Parents	Non-educators staff	Learners	Total
Primary School -160 Learners	1	1	4	1	0	7
Primary School 160 to 719 Learners	1	2	5	1	0	9
Primary School 720 or more Learners	1	3	6	1	0	11

Secondary School 630 Learners	1	2	7	1	2	13
Secondary School 630 or more Learners	1	3	9	1	3	17
Comprehensive or Combined School 500 Learners	1	2	7	1	2	13
Comprehensive or Combined School 500 or More Learners	1	3	9	1	3	17

Source: (School Manual, 1999: C-9, 104)



2.2.7 Democratic participation in school governing bodies

According to Beane as cited in Naidoo (2005:37), 'democratic participation is a process or way of life in which participants define and seek social desires through full participation in governance and in making decisions that affect them'.

With regard to democratic participation and co-operation, all stakeholders irrespective of ethnicity, race or gender, should be actively involved and their voices heard during the decision making process. Adams and Waghid (2005:25) state that in order for the elected members to function effectively, training is needed so as to have a fair understanding of what the principles of democracy entail. Tsoetsi *et al* (2008:387) elaborates that: democratic school management can be successful if school governors could have the required competences. For the parent governors to govern the schools their skills, knowledge and experience of governance, including financial skills is crucial.

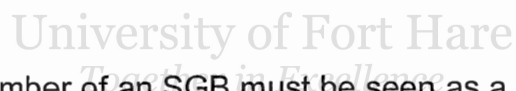
The literature shows that there is a need for a relationship built on trust and more focus on team building, which could do more for effective governance. It is important for the various groups of the same community to accept change and let new ideas with regard to school governance of different groups sink in their minds for the sake of democracy.

According to the Daily Dispatch dated (14 January, 2010), certain groups did not accept change and the democratic participation of all stakeholders irrespective of ethnicity, race or gender. In this article pupils and parents disrupt an assembly on the first day of schooling, protesting before the department official as she was introducing a newly appointed Principal (Black African man) in the Green point High school in East London. They demanded that the former acting principal (Coloured man), be appointed as the school principal. This shows that the protest was based on racial discrimination, although they denied this in the article. It is said that the post was advertised and candidates who met requirements were short-listed. So this shows that the correct procedure according to the Schools Act was followed and there were no objections during the interviews and to the SGB's recommendations for appointing this principal (SGB chairperson, Dan Bolman). The Chairperson claimed that the principal was appointed as he was the most competent candidate in the interview, and parents assumed that the former acting principal would have automatically been appointed as principal.

This shows that, although the parent/teacher members are granted power to recommend appointments of staff, they misuse or interpreting the procedure the way they deem appropriate. This is not the first nor will it be the last incident, more especially in the multiracial schools where parents think that by appointing a person

of another racial group, they are betraying their school or community. I hope the department will in the near future consider amending SGB functions and eliminate some of the SGB powers, more especially when it comes to finance management and the appointment of staff; some of the parent members are illiterate, so they do not consider the legal procedure that much as stipulated in SASA, but they do what is best for themselves.

Creese and Earley (1998:8) suggest that the SGB would be effective in their school governance if they focussed on features for effectiveness, such as working as a team, good relationships with various groups and the principal, effective time management and delegation, effective and fruitful meetings amongst all the groups, knowledge of the school and the training and development of school governors.



The contribution of any member of an SGB must be seen as a means of building the school; it should be welcomed and discussed not criticized. If good working relationships based on trust are promoted in the school, this would be accompanied with good results. Interests of all groups will be represented. Dieltiens (In Education 2000 Plus: Governance management: 6) argues that the effectiveness and efficient roles of school governance depend on active participation of stakeholders in reaching consensus on the nature and ethos of schooling. Dieltiens as cited in Education 2000 Plus believes that "Broad based participation in schools in South Africa was seen by the liberation movement as essential mechanism in transferring schools, in undermining structural hierarchies and providing a platform for previously unheard voices in making decisions on schooling matters". Young (2000:6), states that the reason governing bodies fall short of accomplishing their duties is in the

failure of the legislation and its implementers in creating the right framework and conditions for participation to flourish.

2.2.8 Representation of stakeholders

According to Naidoo (2005:33) "representation is likely to range from parents representing exclusively their own children`s interests to more broadly providing parental and community perspectives on policy". He further mentions that governance policies may be used to control conflict between interest groups, often favouring those groups that support the objectives of the State.

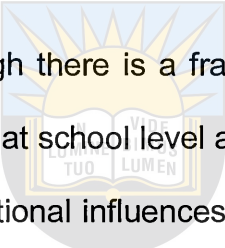
For the representative to represent its constituency, a process of free and fair elections should apply so that the elected representative is answerable to those who elected him/her (Adams & Waghid, 2005:27). The latter is not always the case in most schools, especially where there is a multiracial community. The research shows that certain groups dominate the participation whilst other groups are passive participants. Their literacy level of education or non-attendance of meetings may cause this non-participation and that leads in certainty on how to get involved in school activities. Limitations to participation in the work of governing bodies relates to the particular type of election system and the impact of social prejudices and attitudes. Representative democracy can limit the influence of people who are prohibited from a direct voice in decision-making processes (Govender, 2001: Sayed and Carrim, 1997). However, Dieltiens & Enslin (2002) disagree that representative (or deliberative) democracy is inferior to participatory democracy and argue that both have strengths and weaknesses and can be combined in such a way as to build on their strengths and address their weaknesses.

Naidoo (2005:15) points out that there is a strong structural emphasis whereby elections equal representation and in turn equals participation and decision by consensus. This process is taken as a democratic practice. Unfortunately, this is not always the case in most schools, especially in a multiracial school. The representative members may follow the rules and procedures laid out in the Act and regulations that promotes the interests of the school. However, this all depends on the dominance of members of the SGB, whom they are representing and their interests as opposed to the interests of the school.

According to Naidoo (2005) legislation or regulation maybe the solution to problems of representation and greater participation but that does not ensure greater representation of the diverse needs and interests of heterogeneous communities, nor does it guarantee that oppressive power relations will change. That means that attention is needed to power relations among stakeholders, there must be a change in theories of leadership among principals, so that there is a real commitment to cooperative governance and management in practice (Naidoo, 2005). There is also a need for recognition of participation, representation of various groups and democratic decision-making interpreted according to different actors in the context of their practice. He further argues that whatever the governance policies` intent, it will be affected by the make-up of communities that the SGBs are expected to represent, the way in which representation is going to take place in that particular context, differences in social capital and gender relations.

According to Carrim (2001:98), representation by stakeholder groups tends to assume that they are homogeneous and ignores racial, gender and other divisions within the groups. This has the effect of silencing significant voices and therefore

running the risk of encountering problems in realising policies at the level of implementation. Fleisch (2002:66) however, uses a very similar argument to argue for the superiority of stakeholder democracy involving direct participation by individuals: "The stakeholder approach is democratic as it provides space for a variety of voices, rather than having a single majoritarian interest making all the decisions stakeholder democracy assumes that there is no self-evident common interest in the collective, but that competing social groups are what constitute the constantly shifting common ground."



Naidoo (2005) points out that although there is a framework that provides a rubric within which actors continually design at school level and within the school governing body itself, there are historical, institutional influences, individuals in the SGB and in school community that are influenced by their own beliefs about governance. "This means that the latter affect how individuals interpret the demands made by policies on them in the interplay between policies that attempt to direct local action and the direction that is constructed by local actors" (Spillane *et al* as cited in Naidoo, 2005). As a result in most multiracial schools, decision-making is being done by certain groups at the expense of other groups, maybe claiming that the school belongs to them and since it is an ex-model C school or maybe they have been governing or participating in school activities for a long time (long before democracy), when these schools were ruled by the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) as the research shows. The aim is that people should participate in the elections of representatives and have a right to influence decisions. Therefore, SASA provides mechanisms for stakeholders to participate in decision-making and provides specifications of who should participate and provide guidelines on areas over which particular stakeholders may exert influence (Naidoo, 2005).

The research indicates that even though the parents may be willing to participate, the school is not user-friendly to parents; but instead parents feel excluded intentionally or unintentionally by not being educated on how they should be involved (Mncube, 2005:96). This shows that clear procedures should be made and followed before the election of parent-representatives to an SGB, to be aware of election dynamics, i.e. what is expected to SGB representatives.

Adams and Waghid (2005:27) point out that at least two issues, which lead to diametrically opposed political positions, the power of representatives and what representation involves, dominate the debate on political representative. Bobbio as cited in Adams & Waghid (2005:27) clarifies the point on how an elected representative in the SGB represents its constituency; a parent member could represent its constituency, either in the role of a delegate or, a delegate means purely and simply a spokesperson, a messenger of those he represents.

On the other hand, an elected representative can represent its constituency if she or he is an expert. This confers that he or she has the power to act with certain independence in the name of and on behalf of those represented (Adams & Waghid, 2005:27). This means that the elected representative as fiduciary can use his own discretion to interpret the interests of his electorate. Bobbio as cited in Adams & Waghid (2005:27) refers to this as representation without mandate. The literature shows that in most schools, operation without a binding mandate leads to conflict in terms of group interest, some group interests end up being excluded intentionally or unintentionally.

According to McLennan (2000:84), social prejudices and the defence of sectional interests can lead to the exclusion or under-representation of members of particular racial or ethnic groups of women. In addition, election systems determine which stakeholders or groups are represented and which are excluded, thus potentially excluding important groupings (Sayed and Carrim, 1997).

SASA has mandated the establishment of SGBs in all public schools and how these SGBs should function. The representatives are from different backgrounds, so each representative grouping would want to enhance its own interest at the expense of another group's interests, which would result in conflict between two parties. Johnson and Scollay as cited in Adams & Waghid (2005:27) voice out that leadership power is the ability of one party to change or control the behaviour, attitudes, opinions, objectives, needs and values of another party. Chaka (2008:28) mentions that in reality some groups are under-represented or even excluded, especially the African parents group in an SGB, catering for White, Indian and coloured learners. Their SGBs do not represent all the necessary interest.

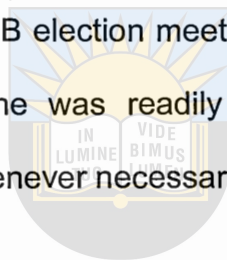
Some authors note the relative under-representation of females on SGBs in general and the poor representation of black parents in former white schools and African parents in former Indian and Coloured schools. There is a tendency for literate parents to be elected over illiterate ones and for non-educator representatives to be administrative staff rather than manual workers. While it is not clear why this is so, social prejudices undoubtedly form at least part of the explanation. The under-representation of blacks, particularly African parents, may also be the result of the relatively long distances that many of these parents have to travel to the school in order to participate in elections and SGB meetings, which normally take place at

night (McPherson and Dlamini, 1998:14, 36; CEPD, 2001: xi, ; McPherson and Naiker, 2002:9-10; Carrim, 2001:106; Vally and Dalamba, 1999).

Chaka (2008:29) points out those voters are more likely to believe that literate candidates are stronger representatives than those who are less literate. This may be because literate parent members are seen to have more capacity in certain areas relating to SGB functions, and they show more confidence in dealing with teachers. On the other hand, literature shows that conflict mostly used to be between skilled, professional parent members and the principal of the school. Principals claim that the SGB is taking over his or her management duties, whereas there is a difference between management and governance. Johnson and Scollay as cited in Adams & Waghid (2005:27) voice out that the principals by virtue of their positions are not the only source of influence, but all governing body members should at least have the potential to influence decision-making processes. That means that each representative on an SGB brings own basis for influencing decisions. All the interests of different groups have to be represented.

A number of authors have noticed an apparent dominance of governing bodies by school principals and teachers, particularly in schools in disadvantaged communities (Govender, 2001; McPherson and Naiker, 2002; Karlsson, 2002; Tladi and Mulaudzi, 2003). This is usually caused by a lack of capacity (skills and knowledge) of relatively uneducated parent bodies. Most authors tend to see this as a constraint on democracy which needs to be overcome by increased and better to see the `strengthening of authority of the principal`- particularly in schools in disadvantaged communities.

According to the research done in Noord Sekondere skool which is a dual medium (Afrikaans/English), the Principal is the one who often organizes meetings to tackle problems, claiming that the parents are unable to play vital a role because they are unskilled, untrained and the chairperson cannot chair the meeting because he is under qualified (Naidoo, 2005). On the other hand, an educator representative on the SGB claims that she represents the best interests of teachers and she is not afraid to oppose the principal as long as the SGBs are uncertain of their rights. However, the chairperson of Zulu High school in Kwazulu-Natal, which is a rural school, says that he was elected by parents at the SGB election meeting to be the chairperson of the SGB. He was selected because he was readily available for governing body meetings or to meet the principal whenever necessary.



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The research conducted in 6 schools of Johannesburg, Kwazulu-Natal and Gauteng, found that representation and participation of SGB members may be influenced by a wide variation of factors (cultures, skills and knowledge, and available resources), as well as key differences like socio-economic levels, racial make-up and rural/urban context (Naidoo,2005). The research shows that in most schools, the Principal and School Management Team (SMT) provide direction. Parents believe that professionals know what is best for the school and the parents can only be involved if they have certain technical skills. Whereas Kogan as cited in Naidoo (2005) points out that the SGB`s roles is also affected by individual attitudes and capabilities in interpreting their governance roles. Naidoo (2005) argues that the SGB`s support role is largely through the payment of fees, participation in fund-raising and affirming decisions taken. That means that, according to the research, most parent members of the SGB, including chairpersons of the school are uncertain of their roles.

Principals decide for them (Naidoo, 2005). The district officials in the research show that *“many SGB members don’t know a thing about governance; the principal and the electoral officer simply convinced them to join”* (Naidoo, 2005:73).

The active participation of parents, teachers and learners in school decision-making depends on their unique experiences, specific issues they have to deal with, the variation of SGB members and the nature of the relationships between parents, principal and educators (Naidoo, 2005). Thus, there should be a healthy relationship amongst stakeholders in schools. The research in South West High school, principal indicates that members of their SGB worked together; they need one another to advance the best interests of the school, but the common interest is not always achievable. However ; the parents of the school claim that, different stakeholders sometimes do not “ see eye to eye” because the SGB has to involve parents, educators and learners on matters of school governance and put forward the interests of each group. This shows that the relationship must be based on a partnership built on mutual respect, effective communication and codified procedures and rules (Naidoo, 2005).

The SGB chairperson of the Beach High School came up with a completely different view; He stressed the link between the availability of resources and the nature of governance and says:

We don’t experience problems in working out what the SGB should be responsible for because money is our last worry. We have what we want most of the time. It doesn’t lead to petty problems between the SGB and staff. The school premises are pleasant and well run and if you have infrastructure, your problems must and will get less.

Resources certainly impact on governance. If you are well resourced, SGB function more efficiently (SGB chairperson of the Beach High School, as cited in Naidoo, 2005).

Beach High school is an ex-Model-C, English medium school. The student population is mixed, 60 percent White and 40 percent Black, Indian or Coloured. In this school, the chairperson is Indian, one parent member is Black and all student and educator representatives are White. The chairperson is an attorney by profession and he was selected because he was at the school for two years as the vice-chairperson. The school runs smoothly; the Principal pointed out that *“most of functions are actually carried out at school, and it is just a matter of rubber – stamping them at the governing body meeting”*. He further mentions that the primary role of the SGB is not in policy setting or decision-making but information sharing. The SGBs support role is largely through the payment of fees, participation in fund raising and affirming decisions taken by school personnel (Naidoo, 2005:77). This shows that this particular school qualification of members' matters and the decision cannot be taken by SGBs as they (principal and staff) have been running the school prior to democracy and White representatives have dominated it.

In three (Black) schools, SGBs play a different role. Research shows that in Eastern and South West High, members represent specific stakeholder interests; elected teachers and students represent their constituency and do not see governors as the school's interest first; and in Zulu High SGB members are supportive because they see to it that things run well and buildings are fixed and students are disciplined (Naidoo, 2005). This shows that most parents SGB members play a consultative role

under the principal and leadership, unlike Beach High school where parent members who have more power assert their influence.

The researcher (Naidoo, 2005) observed that in all schools that participated in his study, most principals were males, except one acting female principal in one school. Even the chairpersons of the SGBs were males; most educator and learner representatives were males, and three out of six researched schools had three female learner representatives. Principals play the most dominant role in the SGB and broadly in the governance because of their position in schools, and most of them believe that they have to decide what needs to be done and rubber-stamped by SGBs. This means that although it would appear as if there is consensus amongst stakeholders, the most influential member is the principal, then other school governing members have to with what the principal has decided, and since most of the SGB members believe that professional/ literate person knows more, most parent members play a consultative role under the principal and leadership.

“Representation is being minimized in more communities that are diverse. Stakeholder representatives on the SGB may represent particular sub-groups or develop a sense of responsibility in which the school becomes more important than those they are to represent” (Naidoo, 2005 and Chaka, 2008). The research also in (Naidoo and Chaka) shows that most black parents find it difficult to attend meetings; there is not that willingness or someone who fits for a particular job. Representation across the school is clearly affected by the historical context, ideological constraints, as well as the balance of power that exists within these schools and in their communities. (Naidoo, 2005:87).

At first glance, one may have a picture of an SGB functioning democratically. However in practice/ reality, research shows that the principal plays a dominant role, and since the stakeholders are not equal participants, that leads to limitation of parent participation. Most parent members have very little to say at meetings as the principal directs the meeting. The chairperson is just given a platform to chair the meeting, but teachers and principals are the ones who dominate the discussion; parents just pose questions for clarity on issues they are less familiar with (Naidoo, 2005:88). Naidoo (2005:81) elaborates that while 'parents are increasingly more involved, the extent of their participation in decision-making varies depending on the kinds of decisions and the school'. He further mentions that the parents are more involved in discussions around finances, helping with learner discipline and in building maintenance.



There are issues that parents consider when selecting representatives for school governing bodies. The research according to Naidoo (2005:79) shows that in some schools they need qualified people to operate efficiently. For instance, in Beach High School, the principal of another school from a black community was convinced by parent members to stand for elections because they believed that he will understand the workings of the SGB. The SGB chairperson is an attorney, and has been the chairperson of Beach High School for more than four years; he was also the chairperson of another school. This shows that the parents and the school do not want to see themselves selecting somebody who is going to learn governance work when he or she is part of the team/committee. What the parents do is to select one person over and over again.

For example, the chairperson in this school (Beach High School) was elected because she was a local member in the community who knows the background of the community and the needs of pupils and parents and was also a head of department in a neighbouring school. This means that the parents are more concerned about the needs of pupils and parents, and as a result they need to be represented. In one rural school parent members elected some members at school and the SGB co-opted people from the community, including a local businessman for help and support. This does not comply with the SASA's requirement of a majority plus one for parent representatives (Naidoo, 2005:55).

2.2.9 Managing conflict in School Governing Bodies

According to South African Schools Act (1996:9), every SGB must operate within a binding constitution, thus limiting their sphere of influence and power. School governing body members are legally recognised as juristic persons and they qualify to be sued (South African Schools Act, 1996:8). So, the elected representatives are responsible and answerable to their electorate. That way the misuse of power and irresponsible representation is discouraged. Chaka (2008:30) points out that representation are crucial and a necessary condition for democracy; it is not sufficient in itself. He further argues that democracy is also about having a voice and influencing the decisions taken in those democratic structures. In an attempt to ensure meaningful democracy, it is important that all interest groups are represented and participate in SGB.

However, Lewis and Motala (2003) argue that "in order to improve the system in a democratic and sustainable way, it is necessary to understand and respect the diversity of perspectives of those trying to engage in democratic practice, in the

school governance system". So, the SGB workshops` conducted in schools have to be improved; material used for training must accommodate diverse cultural groups, so as to fully participate in the school activities and understand what is expected of them.

Mutual understanding can be gained by having healthy debates and discussions, so as to reach consensus amongst different stakeholders. Fletcha as cited in Adams and Waghid (2005:28) stresses that 'the dialogic approach fosters different people`s living together according to rules agreed upon by all through free dialogue'. This means less conflict, if parent members or SGBs share the practice harmoniously, i.e. each elected representative is be given a chance to voice his interests irrespective of his race, ethnicity or gender; all group`s interests will be represented. Fletcha as cited in Adams and Waghid (2005:28) points out that in order to reconcile differences or manage conflict, one is left with the option of either using power claims (including force), or validity claims as a basis for action. Sayed (2002) and Lewis and Motala (2003) identify conflict in South Africa since the functions of governing bodies have included those associated with school fees, the appointment of teachers, racial politics and representation on governing bodies. From my experience as a school principal, in most cases whenever there is an annual general meeting involving a financial report, conflict will occur and in most schools it results in the expulsion of the principal. In most instances misappropriation and improper control of financial records are the reasons for expulsion. During the appointment of educators, in some schools, candidates lodge disputes, claiming that the right procedure for appointment has not been followed as stipulated in the Act. As a result, at the end when it comes to governing body representation, certain groups will be dominant at the expense of other groups.

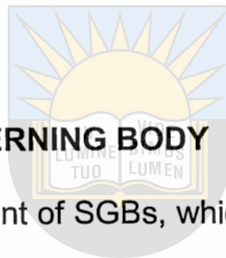
“The dialogical approach works so that people from different ethnic backgrounds can live together in the same educational system, using rules that result from dialogue among them” (Fletcha in Adams & Waghid, 2005:28). From my own point of view, this dialogical approach is far from reality, as literature shows that the majority group has to be trained in order to fully participate in educational activities and make decisions, so as to be represented; also African parents have to avail themselves during elections, so that all the parents are represented when it comes to SGB structures. There is a need for newly elected SGB members to be trained. The workshops for training should be improved and cater for different racial groups. Constant follow up from the department should be made to evaluate their performances (Van Wyk, 2004:53). Those SGBs who are in exit will preach what they were practising to the members of the community, especially if they were genuinely trained. So everything will not be new to those newly elected representatives. It will depend on the support that they get from the department and the school they serve.

Van Wyk as cited in Clase et al (2007:249) recommends a system of co-operative school management and describes it as an interactive approach to education, where all the stakeholders are represented and take co-responsibility for the efficient and effective management of the school activities. In that way, trust is established and other interested parties can be made aware of and be motivated for the critical role that governing bodies have to play and will have to play largely in future.

The Daily Dispatch (21 January, 2010:1), states that the parents of Green Point High school in East London (Eastern Cape) planned a meeting to elect a new SGB, as the parents were not satisfied with the way the current SGB appointed the new principal

who happened to be a black African man, instead of appointing a certain Coloured man who happened to be the acting principal in this school. How will the department handle this challenge, as parents have no right to remove the existing SGB; only the MEC of the province has the power to dissolve an SGB that is not functional?

To conclude, very little work has been done on how different groups attempt to promote their own interests and what factors parents consider in their decision to select parent-representatives to SGB. Detailed work is needed in order that it can be more fully understood.



2.3 PARENTS IN SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

SASA has mandated the establishment of SGBs, which include parents. Parents are required to form the majority on an SGB. They are placed in a powerful position with authority to influence more important issues, such as school budget, language policy, discipline and appointment of educators (Van Wyk, 2004:49). These parents should represent their electorate by reporting regularly and often to them in order to promote positive parent involvement and support. The objective of these parents together with other stakeholders is to promote the best interest of the school, despite the fact that they are faced with challenges.

2.3.1 Experiences of parents in School Governing Body

The research that was done in the Free State by Tsoetsi *et al* (2008:389) shows that in the past, members who were re-elected onto the SGB were given training long after their election. Sometimes training was never conducted. This re-election and non-effective training of parents resulted in wrong dissemination of information,

which ended up in most cases by parents interpreting governance using their own discretion.

Naidoo (2005:81) points out that parent participation in the SGB is adequate from a structural or procedural perspective in most schools. For instance, meetings are held on schedule and parents attend regularly. However, there have been occasions, where parent members have been dismissed because they could not adhere to the commitments. This shows that, there is collaboration between school and home, or co-operation between staff and parents. That means that parents work closely with the principal and management. Parents are more involved in discussions around finances, helping with learner discipline and building maintenance (Naidoo, 2005:81). In most cases it is the parents who have been in the governing for a longer period. The danger of this could be in forgetting the interests of the electorate and using one's own discretion in decision-making. Naidoo (2005:83) states that parents, who contribute, are the parents who are knowledgeable and more educated and know what is expected from the school. This participation is related to social status, income, race and geographical proximity. Lewis and Naidoo (2006:419-420) points out that "the unskilled and illiterate parents were further disadvantaged, while professional parents from well-off ex-Model C schools grappled with SGB functions more easily. This led to unevenness in the capacity of SGBs to perform their functions. Low and unbalanced participation levels in the day-to-day and on-going decision making of school governing bodies raise doubts about the efficacy of such policies as levers to effect a democratic culture in schools".

The literature shows that there are parents who lack participation in SGB. Non-participation is mostly caused by factors discussed earlier in the study. The

participation of these parents depends on the discussion at hand. Singh, Mbokodi and Msila (2004:304) state that at times the school environment does not seem open to parents. Parents' ideas or views are not welcomed. They are called by the school when they want to report something, rather than calling them for ideas of improving quality in the schools. The research done by Mncube (2009:96) shows that, the lack of active participation of the majority of parents is caused by the fear of academic victimisation of their children. They also fear challenging the status quo and they end up accepting things even though they disagree with decisions taken.

The research by Tladi and Mulaudzi (2003:129-130) shows other reasons for the restricted participation of parents in SGBs. Parents often feel intimidated by principals and teachers and *'are not free to state or debate certain issues in the presence of educators'*. In addition, the fact that SGB members are not remunerated tends to result in 'lack of commitment' by some parents. Employed members of SGBs are not able to participate fully in school activities as they usually commute between home and their place of work during the week, leaving home early in the morning and returning late in the afternoon or in the evening. Weekends are then used to attend various social and religious gatherings. Self-employed trade people such as plumbers or bricklayers are apparently reluctant to be on governing bodies as membership precludes them from submitting quotations for work at the school - presumably a potentially important source of work for trades' people in small communities. Tladi and Mulaudzi (2003) state that employed and self-employed parents are often elected as chairpersons of SGBs *'which requires them to be mostly available at the school'*. This suggests not only a reason for them to be elected to governing bodies, but also to hold leading positions in the governing body structures.

2.3.2 Attitudes of parents in SGB

Tsotetsi *et al* (2008:391) believe that a parent governor may be uncomfortable about acknowledging a lack of knowledge about SASA. People want to be trained alone, so as to express themselves as much as possible, and to ask for clarity, where there is a need. Some groups still maintain the culture of not discussing important issues with the children; the children are expected to listen to the rules without questioning them.

The research by Mncube (2009:96) shows that the majority of governors who cannot express themselves fluently in English, feel that the use of only English in governing body meetings has a negative effect on participation of some members. So those parents who are fluent in English are able to express themselves, while the non-English speaking parents become passive. This means a win-lose situation, where those parents who are high level English speakers become active participants. In that way the interests of one group are discussed, while the other group becomes passive and interests are not equally represented. The result of non-participation is not to attend meetings by most parents. The research in Tsotetsi *et al* (2008:391) points out that school governors are concerned about the fact that all written material provided by the province is available in English. Parents complain that the manuals should be in their own languages, so as to understand what it entails. Alluding to this Tsotetsi *et al* (2008) the practice of providing training in English has had the effect of marginalising many African language speakers (Department of Education, 2004:61). In the report of the Review committee on school governance (DoE, 2004:62) mentioned that parents are complaining about the extensive use of English, which inhibits the participation of many Black parents in school governance. Chaka

(2008:28) elaborates that the dominance of English in the training sessions and the training materials is a problem for many school governors who may not be comfortable in speaking or receiving information in English.

The latter is not addressed by the DoE or the Review committee, because the 2009 manuals are written in English only, and the election process is conducted in English. So that means there is a one group that has to suffer at the expense of others. Naidoo (2005:83) elaborates that when that the agenda for meetings is drawn up; it reflects how limiting parent participation is in practice most of the time. He further argues that according to the regulations, chairpersons are responsible for drawing up the agenda for SGB meetings. But in some schools the agenda is drawn by the principal in consultation with the chairperson.

The literature shows that a number of SGBs lack key information. So the electorates believe that some information they are supposed to get is being withheld from them and are not fully aware that the representatives do not have enough information. In some cases, the parents complain that the principal is the one who deliberately hides the information. Clase *et al* (2007:249) mention that the field of tension is seen as a situation where there is tension and overstrain which may lead to an imbalanced situation. This situation could include a clash of interests, mutual threats, distrust and a breakdown of a good relationship. If two parties move in opposite directions, which mean no mutual understanding, then tense situations will occur.

The research by Mestry (2006:33) shows that in some schools, parents are not involved when it comes to school matters; the principal deliberately keeps them uninformed, because he fears that he will lose their power. According to South African Schools Act (1996), all stakeholders must be involved in the formation of

policies, whether it is a school or financial policy. But some parents are not involved in the drafting of a financial policy. The principal receives a copy of the policy from another school and put their signatures to the documents. Parents are not even aware of what the policy entails. This shows that the principal is the one who takes the decisions.

2.3.3 Decision making in schools

South African Schools Act, (1996) gives certain powers and responsibilities to school governing bodies to share in decision making in public schools. These governing bodies include parents, learners (in grade eight upwards), Educators and the principal as an ex- officio member. Section 23(a) of the Schools Act mentions that parent members must comprise one more than the combined total of other members of the governing body, who have voting rights. Prinsloo (2006:357) mention that the majority of parents in the school governing body implies that parents have a strong and decisive voice in matters such as the financial affairs of the school, language policy and recommendations to the Head of Department regarding the appointment of educators. However, the research in Mestry (2006:34) indicates that most of the participants are excluded from financial decisions. The principal and the chairperson of the school take all the decisions regarding finances.

Mncube (2009:91) points out that parent participation varies in different types of schools. Most parents in disadvantaged areas are often not afforded the opportunity to play a full role in the governance of a school. In most cases decisions are taken by the senior management team instead of the governing body. The research shows that the parent governors are mostly needed when there are difficult decisions to take, decisions like expelling a learner through misconduct, mismanagement of

funds by the Principal identified by the learners of the school in question. The parent members have to be involved and site with the principal.

Karlsson (2002:332-333) mentions the greater number of certain groups in the make-up of SGBs (males in all types of schools, Whites in former white schools, administrative staff rather than cleaners or gardeners as non-educator representatives) and the apparent dominance of principals, and to some extent teachers in SGB decision-making in most poor schools. She concludes that although there is decentralization of power to governors in all schools, there is no significant change in power relations at schools. Lewis and Motala (2003) argue that in South Africa "the post 1994 governance debate has focussed on form, that is the formal articulation of rules, roles and responsibilities, and that writings assessing the success on school governance have focussed on the formal form and the ability of SGBs to meet legislative prescriptions (i.e. their policy fidelity), rather than on their actual functioning and how authority and voice are distributed and used in practice". They argue that more attention needs to be given to process and values that is the nature of parents participation, the ways in which women or other groups are being excluded from SGBs, "interpersonal interactions in SGB meetings, and the substantive nature of SGB discussions". Sayed (2002:45) argues that a commitment to democracy needs a more sustained and proactive policy of supporting SGBs to exercise their powers and functions.

All the institutions including the schools need policies to implement their functions effectively. A finance policy must be developed and adopted by all relevant stakeholders and be implemented. Chaka (2008:12) also mentions that governing

bodies should make an admissions policy, but in consultation with provincial education departments and must be in line with national norms.

Through lack of consistent follow up and support from department officials, the latter in most schools is not effective. In some schools the governing body with the principal use their own discretion to govern the school. The research done by Chaka shows that even the officials that have been sent by the department to give support and guidance in schools, have no experience in financial management (Chaka, 2008). Therefore the department must appoint relevant officials with appropriate skills to do the job effectively. The governing bodies must be encouraged, supported and be evaluated or assessed in their functions, so as to avoid decisions taken by a few individuals instead of all relevant stakeholders.

According to Heystek (2004:311), it is the responsibility of the local district manager to make decisions about the ability of a specific school governing body to perform their expected functions effectively. Department officials should train and develop the governing body and equip them to perform their expected functions. These officials must have the knowledge and skills to assess the situation at each school and to make a meaningful decision together with the principal and parents. It will be suitable if the department would appoint district officials who know the community well, and that are responsible for a few schools, so as to perform his or her duty effectively. The tendency of the department in most cases is to appoint a person who has an urban background to work with an unfamiliar situation. That leads to a stagnant development of schools.

Van Wyk (2004:52) points out that most of the school governing body members are illiterate and therefore fail to perform the duties delegated to them. Van Wyk shows

that governing bodies are often easily manipulated into making decisions, but does not mention which members in the SGB, as the governing body comprises of parents, learners (in grade eight up wards), teaching and non-teaching staff. When Van Wyk mentions the literacy level of the governing body, he does not specify whether in terms of qualification or professional. But in some schools, some of the members of the governing body are professionals and they have relevant skills as mentioned earlier in the study. Brown and Duku (2008:436) indicate that many parents in black African schools often defer decisions to educators because of the teacher`s position/identity, rather than being upfront and vocal. Their study shows that there is a break in communication between elected members and the electorate, and this leads to decisions being taken without a mandate. A decision taken without a mandate is a decision taken by representatives without consulting the constituency.



Naidoo (2005:87) argues that an ideal picture of school governing body functioning in an open and democratic manner would reflect working collectively in attempt to reach decisions by consensus. However, in practice the process is managed by the principal. In some schools, participatory decision making is not equal. There are those members who take decisions for other members of the governing body who have to follow what has been decided upon.

In most of the schools, governing body meetings are like information sharing forums rather than gatherings where key decisions are made (Naidoo, 2005:88). The research in Naidoo shows that a school governing body just exists to fix things up at school, but is not involved in the decision making. In some schools decisions are taken in informal discussions between the Principal and the governing chairperson or

by Principal alone. In most cases the Principal or the chairperson outlines an agenda item and educators dominate the discussion; parents participate by posing questions to get clarity on issues they are less familiar with (Naidoo, 2005:88). According to the research, the latter mostly happens in township or rural schools, where there are parent members with a low level of education, and they depend on the educator or Principal's decision.

Naidoo (2005:89) points out that decision making empowers certain sectors of the parent population in some schools, that is those parents who are used to participating in school activities, so governing bodies function well. Whereas other schools, where there is lack of participation and dominance of school management do not function well.



University of Fort Hare

2.4 GUIDE FOR ESTABLISHING A SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

The GESGB (1997:3) points out that, according to the Constitution, for the establishment of a uniform system for organizing, governing and funding of all public schools in South Africa, criteria are set out in the South African School Act of 1996.

The SASA stresses that an SGB must comprise of parents who must be one more than the combined total of other members of SGB including learners, educators, non-teaching staff and a Principal by virtue of his or her official capacity, and co-opted members. NGSGB (2009:10) states that there are two types of co-opted members, co-opted members with voting rights and those without voting rights. Those members without voting rights are those recruited by the SGB because of their expertise in areas that may benefit the governing body and the school, whereas co-opted members with voting rights are nominated and appointed to serve on the

SGB for a maximum of 90 days, if a vacancy is created due to the departure of an elected member. This member is elected by way of by-election.

2.4.1 Provisions in the guide

A governing body is expected to elect office bearers among its members, including a chairperson, a Treasurer and a Secretary. These appointments must be made at the registration meeting, which should be less than 30 days after the election of the parent members of the SGB. National Guide for School Governing Body (2009:10) states that the chairperson of a school must be a parent member of a school who is not employed by the school.



The term of service in the governing body may not exceed three years, and the term of office for learners is one year only, but who may stand for re-election based on performance. When a child completes a school, the parent is no longer permitted to stand for election to the SGB. According to Guide for Establishing School Governing Body (2009:9) a person will not be eligible to be a member of a governing body if he or she is mentally ill, unrehabilitated insolvent or has been convicted of an offence and/or sentenced to imprisonment without a fine for a period exceeding six months.

2.4.2 Issues in the guide (Guide for Establishing School Governing Body, 2009)

The GESGB (2009) mentioned the eligibility of members of governing body, but did not mention how to deal with parents who are not eligible to be members of school governing body. Hence my first concern is how does the department or the school differentiate between a person and parent who has been convicted of an offence and

sentenced to imprisonment for a period exceeding six months. As mentioned earlier in the study, some governing members serve on the SGB for longer than the stipulated time. The term of service has been specified in the guide. Secondly, how does the department make sure that the right procedure has been followed in excluding those parents who are no longer eligible to stand for election to the governing body? Do they rely on the Principal or governing body for this? For example, Chaka (2008:17) points out that a parent is no longer eligible to stand for election to the governing body, if his or her child completes or leaves the school.

Some researchers (Adams and Waghid, 2005:27; Xaba, 2004:313) mention that elected representatives have a constituency, therefore, they represent it. However (Bush and Gamage, 2001) points out that in many instances results in ineffective and dysfunctional governance and tension among governors. This shows that, the elected representative does not always represent the interests of those who elected them. Hence (Adams & Waghid, 2005:27) suggest that if the representative misrepresents the people, mechanisms exist to remove him or her.

Naidoo (2005:34) suggests that devolution of power to local level is not a means to eliminate conflict; rather, it may be a strategy that involves the dispersion of power. This is an attempt to do away with a single central focal point (Horowitz, 1995). This allows sharing of responsibility for resolving difficult issues among various stakeholders, while promoting participation and democracy. Tsotetsi (2008:37) states that the SASA represents a form of democratic school management and it can only be successful if school governors possess the required competences. But the ability of parent governors to govern schools depends on their skills. Hence in some schools, parent members want to affirm (to be re-elected) for a further period without

going through the electoral process. Principals in most schools also do not bother about the re-election of members; they want the easy way out, claiming that, it will be a long process, so they rather work with the same members over a long period of time, particularly skilled or knowledgeable members.

2.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter, an overview of parents' involvement in school governance was presented. This chapter also looked at how apartheid affected school governance and the status of school governance in recent times. This chapter also showed how democracy, the Constitution, and Government legislation underpinned and supported this notion of parental involvement. It further presented a picture of School Governing Bodies in rural schools and discussed them in relation to much current local research. Finally, I looked at the theories that underpin the whole idea of parent participation, democracy and decentralisation in the education system. In the next chapter I present the methodological approach this research employed.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter two introduced the literature that focused on the legislative imperatives supporting the establishment of SGBs. It further discussed the impact parent selection has on an SGB. This chapter justifies the methodology and research design for this study that sought to investigate and describe the practices involved in parent-representative selection to an SGB and the extent to which they represent the interests of other parents in this structure.



3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM: INTERPRETIVE

The study was anchored on an interpretive paradigm because knowledge here was viewed as consisting of a multiple, rather than a single reality (Creswell, 2nd ed. 2003) and the research was actively conducted in two multiracial schools. It was within the active interaction between parents and the researcher that knowledge was constructed. Given this view, the researcher's ontological assumptions were informed by constructivism. Interpretive research is qualitative in nature. As a researcher, my interest was in understanding how parent-representatives were selected to the SGB structure in the schools and how they made sense of, and practised, the notion of representation (Merriam, 1998). The Interpretive paradigm is characterised by seeing the social world from a highly subjective viewpoint. It places the emphasis of explanation on the subjective consciousness of the social participants instead of the objective researcher (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). According to Janse van Rensburg (2001), interpretivists reflect an interest in contextual

meaning making rather than generalized rules. This was the most appropriate paradigm for my study which attempted to provide a deeper understanding of a particular situation in its naturalistic setting. Reeves (1996) outlines that the interpretivist stresses the need to put analysis in context that is information is analysed according to the existing environment.

In line with the above assertion the interpretive paradigm seemed most relevant to this study because it is based on the belief that what we see requires investigation, so as to understand. It is the product of human consciousness; it is aimed at deepening our understanding of a particular situation (Adendorff and Lawrence, 2006:1). This paradigm involves people and stipulates that people are not objects; it regards them as having feelings and thoughts throughout the process. The researcher must ensure that participants' views, thoughts and experiences are respected. Cohen and Manion (1994: 38) maintain that "methods are a range of approaches used to gather data which is to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction".

3.3 POSITIVIST PARADIGM

The reason why this study was not based on positivist approach was because the positivist paradigm believes that human behaviour should be studied scientifically (Adendorff, and Lawrence (2006). However, this study dealt with human thoughts, so that each person's views were taken into consideration, analysed and evaluated as the end result. Hammersley (1995:2) views positivism as "a mode of social research whose essential feature is that it is founded on certain distinctive philosophical assumptions which the new paradigms reject".

Mahlangu (2006) states that a positivist believes that “reality exists independently of pure reason, it is ‘out there’, it can be discovered through use of ‘scientific method’”. Mose as cited in Stomberg (1986) agrees with this sentiment when he says “positivism has come to mean observable enquiry based on measurable variables and provide propositions”. The study dealt with the human mind, which means that it considered what people thought about an existing situation. The researcher had to get inside people’s heads and interpret what they said without using scientific methods. From the positivist view, fixed natural laws are applied. According to Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2001:61), the aim of positivist research are to offer explanations leading to control and predictability. Positivism is a very predominant way of knowing the social world. Blaxter, Hughes and Tight as cited in Guba and Lincoln (1994) refer to it as the ‘received view’. Walliman (2006:203) states that ‘Comte maintained that society could be analysed empirically just like other subjects of scientific inquiry, and social laws and theories could be established on the basis of psychology and biology. He based his approach on the belief that all genuine knowledge is based on information gained by experience through the senses, and can only be developed through further observation and experiment’.

3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH: QUALITATIVE

This study also included qualitative dimensions. This study use qualitative research. Qualitative research as broadly defined by Strauss & Corbin as cited in (Hoepfl, 1997:17) means “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statically procedures or other means of quantification”. Bryman as cited in Silverman (1997:64) agrees by stating that “the most viewing events, actions, norms, values, etc., from the perspective of the people who are being studied” as opposed

to producing results that emanate from figures. Oakley (1999:156) views qualitative paradigms as understanding behaviour from the actor's own frame of reference using naturalistic and uncontrolled observation. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:3) define qualitative research as "a field of enquiry in its own right that crosscuts disciplines, fields and subject matters". This definition fits well in this study which required a deeper understanding of a particular situation in its naturalistic setting.

This qualitative research focused on the understanding and interpretation of education policies by the members of the SGBs. For this purpose, observation schedules and interview schedules seemed to be the most suitable tools to use. Participants included elected SGB members and non-elected members, an SGB election co-ordinator and a Principal. Aronstam (2005:41) observes that qualitative researchers usually take the known subject as their starting point and focus on understanding through contextualised data collection and interpretation. He says they talk about a need to perceive things from a participant's point of view. Maja as cited in Ravele (1997:63) suggest that researchers who use qualitative approaches are "interested in the quality of a particular activity, situation and relationship."

Another important aspect in the interpretive approach is that, it deals with small scale research (Cohen and Manion, (2000:13). Gwarinda (2006) agrees with the above statement when he says "qualitative research sets boundaries to find focus". It examines both the intentions of the organisation and the actualities and what happens in the real life of that organisation". He further says "there is thorough examination and evaluation of data". This is the most appropriate paradigm for this study because it seeks to provide a deeper understanding of a particular situation in its naturalistic setting.

3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN: A CASE STUDY

The case study design fits best with the research approach adopted in this study. A case study is one in which the researcher explores a bounded system, known as a case (Yin, 2003), through in-depth data collection involving multiple sources (Hofstee, 2006:108). The case study is described as referring to research that investigates a few cases, often just one, in considerable depth (Bobbie & Mouton 2003:149; Gorman, Hammersley and Foster, 2000:3).

In this study, a case study allowed the researcher to apply multiple data sources to understand the particular phenomenon of interest (O` Leary, 2004). McCarthy (2006) supports the notion of carrying out an in depth qualitative study in order to hear more and understand. The case study design was selected because the researcher wanted to deliberately cover contextual conditions, since these were highly pertinent to the phenomenon of the study. The multiple case form of design was deemed suitable, because I researched only two schools instead of a number of schools, and this helped me gather adequate data within a real life context. After collecting data, a data analysis was done, evaluation of facts and coming up with the findings. Ngubane as cited on Bassey (1999) shares the same sentiment when he says "the strength of the case study is its ability to study a situation within its context. He further says it also presents research or evaluation of data in a more publicly accessible form than other kinds of research report in a narrative form". Ngubane (2005) believes that in one way or another case study subscribes to the situation through the eyes of his/her participants.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

3.6.1 Documents

To present rich and quality data, I asked how the SGB of Fort Beaufort schools have been involved in school governance by reading some school documents, among others, the SGB election guide and minute book of previous meetings. Merriam (2001:126) emphasised that "Documentary data are particularly good sources for qualitative case studies because they can ground an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated" (emphasis in the original).

The main documents that I asked from each school was the SGB election guide because I wanted to know if the school had one, and was familiar with the election procedure process that takes place in schools. Another document is the SGB election minute book; this book helps to see how often they (parents, staff and SGB) meet and see if there is any dominance exercised amongst the Principal, the staff and parents, and to see if they work cooperatively with each other. Do they have a mutual understanding amongst each other (i.e. to see if the Principal and/or the chairperson dominate the meeting)? The third document is the general minute book which records back on decisions taken)? How did they plan the process? Did they involve them from the start? This also helps for the Principal not to choose the people he likes or avoiding parents to be elected over and over again. It was anticipated that these documents would offer insights into the parent-representative selection procedural practices. The advantage of these documents was that they allowed for both prospective (before parent-representative selection) and retrospective (after parent-representative selection) evaluations to be made.

3.6.2 Interviews

In this study, the main methods of data collection were the interviews and observation supplemented by document analysis. According to Fontana and Frey (2005) an interview:

- Involves face to face verbal exchange between two or more people
- A product of collaborative exchanges between two or more people
- Leads to a mutually created story or data
- It is hardly a natural tool

For this study, the interviews were semi-structured in nature, and focused specially on the issues raised in each question.



According to Patton as cited in Merriam (2001:72), "We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe ... and the purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other people's perspective". A semi-structured interview is a mixture of predefined questions and conversational style. All the interviews were recorded with the permission of participants, but where permission was not granted, the interviewer took notes, although it was a difficult task, and not all the data could be collected as said, as a researcher would be left behind.

The tool that I have used to collect data was the interview schedule (Appendix A and B). I focussed on interviewing three elected and four non-elected members from each school, although I was supposed to interview four elected and four non-elected, but I could not reach the fourth one in Billion high school. I ended up interviewing three and four respectively. I tried to find out what challenges there were that

positively or negatively pose a threat to their practices in the school. Individual interviews were used to solicit different opinions from different members. Much time was spent on interviews because participants could not honour their interview appointments. Other participants re-scheduled for another time or date. Unlike observation, it was time consuming and tiring. I also had an opportunity to go to the schools during their time of elections.

3.6.3 Observation schedule

Observation as a data collection method relies on the researcher's ability to use his/her senses to gather data (Cohen et. Al, 2000). There are two types of observations relevant for this study. The first was the traditional observation where a researcher sits in a corner of a room observing proceedings of a meeting. This type of observation works well especially where participants cannot show or give their true reflection.

Another type is the participant observation, whereby the researcher becomes part of a group or community that is being studied (Cohen et. al, 2000). The researcher opted for this type of observation. In this type of observation, the researcher could collect genuine data. In this study, the researcher believed that it was necessary to observe the election process in both schools. Observing the process would allow the researcher to document what actually happened in practice. This observation focussed on the participation of parents in the election process. It also focused on the procedures followed before and after the election of SGBs, whether the procedure stipulated in the Election Guide was followed or not, whether the notices were prepared on time, the nomination process followed, and also how to handle disputes, if there were any.

Another effective tool that I used was the observation schedule with descriptors, aiming at providing first-hand information as to how the election process was done in these schools (Appendix C)

3.7 GAINING ACCESS TO PARTICIPANTS

I first went to the District office with the letter asking permission to do research in these schools (Appendix D). I was granted permission to go on with the process and as a result the district manager helped me with the Principal's contact numbers. I phoned the schools for appointments.

Lofhand and Lofhand as cited in Hoepfl (1997:25) suggest that the "participants are the ones to grant someone access to their lives, their minds, and their emotion, therefore permission has to be sought". In my study, permission was sought from two sources: the elected and non-elected parents (Appendix E and F).

At first school I went to, the Principal was warm and welcoming. I was prepared to answer any question that needed further clarification. He promised to organise some SGBs and parents only after school hours, and I had no problem with that. I could not use the school because all what the principal does was promising, until he told me that they have got crises, the chairperson of SGB passed on. I decided to look for another school because I was running out of time.

I went to the second school to the school principal and made an appointment with him. The principal gave contact numbers of SGBs and their work places; I had to find parents on my own through the help of SGB members whom I worked with.

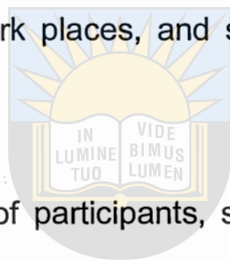
When I contacted one principal in the former model C school, he told me that he was away for June holidays and would be back in July. I asked him to organise SGB members of his school and some parents who were familiar with the election process. He had no problem with that. Although panicking, I went to that area and phoned the chairperson of the SGB of that particular school. Fortunately, he was a willing participant because he gave me phone numbers of other SGB members. In the case of parents, I had to go around looking for parents who have children in that school. That was how I got participants.

3.8 RESEARCH SITE AND PARTICIPANTS

I conducted my research in the urban area of Fort Beaufort District. The reason was that it was where I worked where I work. I felt that it would be easy to get participants, and to honour any appointments at any time. I conducted my research in the two former model C schools, namely Delter and Billion high schools (pseudonym). Billion high school was not the school I intended to do research in, but through difficult situations I opted to choose the school. I made an appointment with the school principal, but he took almost two months promising that he would organise the parents to be interviewed. After two months, I decided to look for another school. This was not easy for me, because I had to phone the principal from time to time. He sometimes did not answer the phone. When I phoned the office, his secretary would tell me that he was not available. There are times when I had to drive to the school; he would promise that a week would not end without me meeting the parents.

The two schools I worked with were chosen because they were multiracial schools i.e. school consists of black, coloured and white learners, and my study was

investigating practices in selecting parent-representatives to SGB. I also worked with the parents who were familiar with the election process or had been in the SGB structure before. The parents of this school were middle class parents, so they were expressing themselves in English which made the work much easier for me not needing to translate from one language to another. I had known the principal of Billion high school. We first met when the department funded us both to study Financial Management. I knew things would be better at this school and run smoothly. However, things were not as I thought; as a result, I had to interview some of the participants in their work places, and some at their homes or in the evenings.



I decided to decrease the number of participants, seeing that I was experiencing difficulty in finding the participants. I opted to interview four elected and four non-elected members, i.e. two elected and non-elected from each. These participants were parents who had children in the school. One parent from Billion high school did not turn up. He excused himself, saying he was out of town, and when he came back, he was around for three days, then away again. Therefore, we did not have a chance to meet.

According to Patton as cited in Cantrel (1993), interpretive research uses small samples to allow the researcher to focus in depth on issues important to the study. I used small numbers of participants and I selected only two multiracial schools.

3.9 ETHICS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

According to Zimbardo as cited in Cohen and Manion (1994:362), "Ethics embody individual and communal codes of conduct based upon adherence to a set of

principles which may be explicit or implicit, abstract and impersonal or concrete and personal". To ensure that member`s contributions and deliberations during this study would be safe guarded, and that this will be informal.

The appointments were made which indicated the purpose of the study and of my visit to the school (Appendix E). The letter which supported this visit was issued by the institution that I was enrolled in, and given to the authorities of the school. A signed consent form was also issued to the participants (Appendix F), ensuring them of confidentiality and anonymity of members during the entire process (Cook, 2002). This meant that participants` personal information would not be divulged and the researcher would not share the information that was shared with her in ways that would reveal their identity.

I was careful in the way I conducted the study. My appointments were supported by written ethical considerations when I visited schools. I asked for permission before carrying out my study on the parents. All the information gathered and recorded in the study was treated confidentially. I have given pseudonyms to the parents and the schools to protect anonymity and confidentiality. I assured participants that all participation in this study was voluntary, with the option of leaving the process at any time (Cook, 2002). This meant that the personal information that they shared would not be revealed. One participant boldly said that he did not mind even if his identity/information was revealed; he would even go to the institution if invited. He wanted to share what was happening in their schools. He did not just sign the consent form but wrote down his whole name.

Appointments were made with the District SGB co-ordinator with whom I shared the purpose of the study. Permission was granted to go to the relevant school principals.

I made appointments with the school principals. In each interview meeting, I had a signed consent form which I gave it participants as an assurance not to reveal their confidentiality and anonymity. Furthermore, I stated that the process was voluntarily and they could leave anytime.

Ngubane as cited on Janse van Rensburg (2001) defines research ethics as referring to the moral dimension of research about what is right and wrong while engaged in research. All participants read and signed the consent form, and they freely participated. In order to ensure that all participants were happy and free, the use of consent forms was highly recommended. A researcher depends on the information given by the participants. Although Miles Hierberman as cited in Kolagano (2000:65) said that one "cannot focus only on the quality of the knowledge we are producing, as if its truth were all that count. The researcher must also consider the right and wrongness of their actions as qualitative researchers in relation to the people whose lives the researchers are studying, to our colleagues, and to those who sponsor our work".

One of the things I did to collect data was to go to the people I did not know, avoiding people I knew would tell me what I wanted to hear, but not what they knew from experience. After I interviewed two participants, I gained more experience; as a result, I had more confidence, and I was boldly sharing with the participants. My interviewees were free; they even stressed important things in their mother tongue Judging their facial and body expressions. I assured the parents that the information shared would be for analysis and reporting on the research. I also told them that I was willing to share the results of the study with them.

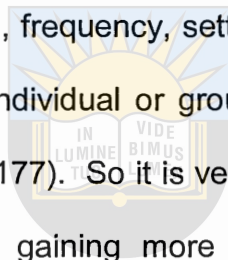
3.10 DATA ANALYSIS

“The suitable approach to analyse qualitative data is through content analysis” (Gray, 2004: 328). One has to interact with the collected data; the data have to be classified and be teased out so as to be familiar with it. In data analysis it is important to look for patterns in different categories, relationships and similarities, and be able to group the data and make conclusions at the end.

Constant-comparative analysis was employed to analyse the interview transcripts, observation data and documents (Brown, 2002). This analysis focuses upon identifying recurrent themes across transcripts. Recurrent themes are similar and consistent ideas, thoughts, images and accounts shared. These themes were coded and used as flag poles to reflect the essence in participants` accounts.

I made use of the tape recorder when conducting interviews, as well as taking notes as I was listening to the participant. The tape recorder helped in recording all the information given by the participant, even if the researcher would leave behind in jotting down the notes but could still get the information from the tape recorder. I noted down things I needed clarity on and to be followed up with more questions. I allowed participants to use any language they were comfortable with. Fortunately, for me, all the participants used English, but there were things which were expressed in isiXhosa by those participants who had isiXhosa as their mother tongue. That made things easier for me when I had to transcribe from the tape recorder. The only thing that was left for me was to make sense of the things and give meanings to impressions (Stake, 1995:71). Patton (1990:371-372) comments that “the challenge is to make sense of massive amounts of data, reduce the volume of information,

As the qualitative researcher, I was the only instrument for data collection and analysis, therefore, all information obtained was through the researcher's insight. Cohen *et al* as cited in Lincoln and Guba (1985:146) emphasize that "the planning of the conduct of the interview is important, including the background preparation, the opening of the interviews, its pacing and timing, keeping the conversation going and eliciting knowledge, and rounding off and ending the interview". They make mention that careful consideration should be given to the several stages of the interview. For example, at the planning stage of the interview attention will need to be given to the number (per person), duration, timing, frequency, setting/location, number of people in a single interview situation (e.g. individual or group interviews) and respondent styles (Le Comte and Preissle, 1993:177). So it is very important to pilot a study, so as to prepare for the main study, gaining more confidence, rephrasing some questions and eliminating some questions.



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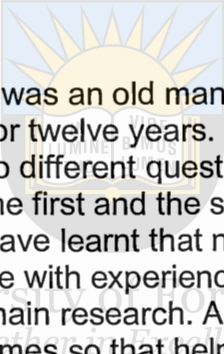
3.11.2 Phase 2: Interviews

I managed to interview three elected parents and all of them were males. I could not interview more parents because I was running out of time as the election process was about to start. The election process should have happened in 2009 June/July, so it was given a short period of time to proceed. I interviewed the first participant in his work place.

A tape recorder was used in this research, since it is a valuable way of collecting data, especially when interviewing a participant because it picks up almost everything that is being said by the interviewee. When I was in the middle of an interview, one of his colleagues entered the room talking loudly, unaware of the

interview process. So this taught me to organise a quiet place in the near future, especially when one is using a tape recorder.

When I interviewed the second parent, I used the same questions as the first participant. But the parent told me to give him the questions first, so that he could write the answers down before responding. We took almost four hours. I think that when I need to research in the future, I have to give questions to the participant beforehand, then organise another day for the meeting, because this was tiring and lot of time was spent.



The third participant that I interviewed was an old man who had a grandchild at the school. He had been in the structure for twelve years. When I interviewed him, he could almost give me same answers to different questions (He answered the question he answered when I asked the first and the second question). So I could not get much information from him. I have learnt that next time I should choose to work with middle aged or young people with experience. I decided to review and rephrase the questions again for the main research. As I was interviewing them, there were follow-up questions sometimes so that helped to modify questions or questioning.

It is worth noting that most participants allowed me to use the tape recorder, except one parent member who told me to give him interview questions, so that he could answer them. After answering the questions, there were follow up questions, and I had to write them down again, send them back to him.

3.11.3 Phase: 3 Observations

The researcher also acquired data through observation in order to obtain insights about setting, the social climate, the parent's interaction with each other and parent interaction with electoral officers and the District officials (monitors). I observed two schools using an observation schedule. Before the election process started, the District official introduced us.

During an observation on the 21st May 2010 in School A (Billion), I observed that the process had started, of which 15% quorum in the voter`s roll was not met. The number was short of one parent to meet the quorum. Then two parents came in later as the process was proceeding. During the process, parents were nominated but, the first three parents refused to be nominated. An ex-chairperson of the school had to intervene, explaining that the parent with a problem or who did not want to be nominated should have reported earlier to the electoral officer. The process monitor explained that the elections should be voluntary not forced.

Other relevant documents were not completed on time. The training of electoral officers before elections helped the officer and the department to work co-operatively. An electoral officer was not quite clear about his job and he had to be supported by the District monitor.

During observations in school B, Delter high school, the process could not start because parents who attended the meeting were not on the voter`s roll whereas they have voting rights, i.e. they were the legal parents of the school. Parents wanted to nominate parents who were not present at the meeting. A District official explained that a parent should have written a letter if he or she was willing to be elected in his/her absentia. Observations were time consuming, unlike interviews where participants would excuse themselves and re-schedule their appointments.

As the process was proceeding, one parent, seeing that her name was not on the voter`s roll, asked the official to register her name as she wanted to be part of the process. The parent asked the researcher not to record what was happening at the time, so they wanted the researcher to observe and record a perfect process. A

candidate from the task team was asked to handle the matter. The parent eventually was enrolled and she participated in a process.

3.11.4 Phase 4: Document analysis

The documents that the researcher got from both schools were the SGB election guide. The guide provided the school with direction on the election process and procedures. The Principal showed me the SGB election book but he could not open it. He just reported that they had followed the procedure. They had called the meetings during the relevant time. He assured me that all the old SGB members were aware of the election process in time. The Principal would not allow me to have a look at the book. He assured me that he would not lie to me. He told me that, there was no need for the general minute book as the SGB election minute book was the one which was important.

At the second school, the Principal was on his way out, so he would not show me other documents. We planned to have another meeting but it was unsuccessful and I could not come back for other documents as I was supposed to conduct research for the main study.

3.11.5 Phase 5: Data Analysis

Data analysis is an on-going process throughout the process of data collection. This process led to minor modifications of the interview questions and shaped what was asked in subsequent interviews. Few questions were rephrased or modified after first interviews. The taped interview was transcribed after the interviews were completed,

and fortunately two participants were fluent in English and one expressed himself in isiXhosa. I had to translate the data from isiXhosa into English.

The researcher had an interview schedule for each parent and the field notes were taken during interviews. An interview schedule with personal information and a date, plus written notes were put together labelled parent one or two. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985:345), units should have two characteristics; "First, it should be heuristic, that is, aims at some understanding or some action that the inquirer needs to have or take. Second, it must be the smallest piece of information about something that can stand by itself, that is, must be interpretable in the absence of any additional information other than a broad understanding of the context in which the inquiry is carried out".

Schools were classified as school A or B during observations. Each observation schedule was named school A or B and was put together with its field notes taken during observations. Notes had the same date as the observation schedule.

3.12 LIMITATIONS OF THE CASE STUDY

A minor challenge was that some of the participants forced themselves to use English and as such could not boldly talk/express their views. They took too much time to think before answering and that resulted in longer meetings than expected. The process was time consuming and tiring.

Another challenge was to phone the participant and find his phone switched off or not available. When visiting the house, he would not be there. I had to be patient and as a result I interviewed half of the participants in their work places and half of them

in their homes and, in some instances, at awkward times, for example, six in the afternoon or eight in the evening. Choosing schools that were far from each other was challenging as I had to go and make appointments. Sometimes, I would be given another date for the meeting and I had to come back again.

3.12 SUMMARY

This chapter justified the research methodology and design of this study that aimed at investigating practices involved in the parent selection to the SGB and the extent that they represented the interest of other parents in the structure. This study was located in the interpretive paradigm and therefore adopted a qualitative research stand. The plan was that data gathering for this study would be through semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis. However, it was impossible to analyse documents as the researcher was not given access to them. In the following chapter the data are presented and analysed.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter three presented and justified the methodology used to collect data for this study. This chapter presents and analyses data collected for this study whose aim is to explore and describe the practices involved in the selection of parent representatives to an SGB and the extent of the representation of their interests within the structure in a multicultural school context. This study was guided by the following research questions:



Main research question:

What practices are involved in the selection of parent-representatives to an SGB?

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Sub-research questions:

1. What factors do parents consider in their decision to select parent-representatives to an SGB?
2. What procedures are followed in the election of parent-representatives to an SGB?
3. What characterizes elected parent '*representation*' practices in an SGB?
4. What issues do parents of different racial backgrounds in the wider community confront regarding the *representation* of their interest in SGB structures?

The researcher conducted observations in two schools as well as interviews with three elected and five non-elected SGB members. The researcher also analysed documents such as the SGB election minute book and general SGB meeting minute

book. As discussed in Chapter three, a tape recorder and field notes were used. Time was spent listening to the tape recorder repeatedly and transcribing and categorising data into themes. This was done in conjunction with the field notes. As part of research ethics, the researcher assured the participating schools and research participants of confidentiality and anonymity. As a result the schools and participants were given pseudonyms to ensure this. Schools are referred to as school A or B, participants as Non-Member Parent (NMP) and Elected–Member Parent (EPR) and they are numbered (1, 2, 3...).



The following section of this chapter is structured as follows:

4.2 Biographical Data of participants

4.3 Presentation and analysis of data gathered in response to research question one: What factors do parents consider in their decision to select parent-representatives to an SGB?

4.4 Presentation and analysis of data gathered in response to research question two: What characterizes elected parent '*representation*' practices in an SGB?

4.4 Presentation and analysis of data gathered in response to research question three: What issues do parents of different racial backgrounds in the wider community confront regarding the *representation* of their interests in SGB structures?

4.5 Presentation and analysis of data gathered in response to research question four: What procedures are followed in the election of parent-representatives to an SGB?

4.2 BIOGRAPHICAL DATA APPLICATION

4.2.1 Non-parent representatives

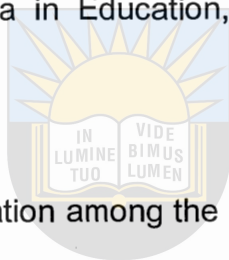
This category consists of parents that were familiar and had at some stage participated in the selection of an SGB but were never members of the SGB structure. In the last three years, about 80% of non-member parents have participated in the election process of an SGB. 20% of them did not participate in the last three years. Although the 80% of these parents participated in the elections, most of them did not want to be elected because of a lack of interest and work related commitments. They, however, reported that they were concerned about what was happening in their children's schools.

Table 4.1 Biographical Data of Non-parent representatives

Age group	30 – 35	36 – 45	46 – 52
Female		0	1
Male		3	1
Qualifications			
Masters		1	1
Badmin Hons		1	
First Degree		1	
Diploma		1	
Home Language			
Xhosa		2	1
English		0	0
Afrikaans		1	1
Relations to Learner			
Parent		3	2
Guardian		0	0
Grand parent		0	0

Non-elected members that were interviewed were of the age group between 36 and 51. There were three male participants in the age group between 36 and 45. In the age group between 46 to 51, one female and one male participated.

From the data presented above, one can also say that the participants appeared to belong to the middle class. Three of the participants were educators and two were working at the Department of Education offices as School Education Specialists. Two participants had Masters Degrees, one had a Bachelor of Administration Honours, one had a Higher Diploma in Education, and one had a Bachelor of Education degree.



This table also reflects language variation among the participants. This variation was informed by the fact that the researcher was working with multiracial schools. For example, three participants had isiXhosa as their home language and two of the participants' home language was Afrikaans. This diversity was crucial for this study as it helped ensure the representation of voices from different racial groups. The table also shows that all the non-elected participants in the research were the biological parents of the learners.

4.2.2 Biographical Data of Elected Parent-representatives

This category consists of parents that were currently members of the SGB structure in the multiracial schools in which the research was conducted. All the participants were serving a second term in the SGB.

Table 4.2 Biographical data of elected parent representatives

Age Group	30 – 35	36 – 45	46 – 50
Male		1	1
Female		0	1
Qualifications			
Masters		0	1
BEd Hons		0	1
First Degree		0	
Matric		1	
Home Language			
Xhosa		0	2
English		0	
Afrikaans		1	
Relations to Learners			
Parent		3	0
Guardian		0	0
Grand Parent		0	0

Table 4.2 shows the age group of elected parent-representatives who took part in the research ranging from 35 to 50. One parent-representative is in the age group range 36 to 45, and two are between 46 and 50. Two of these elected parent-representatives were males and one was female. From the data presented above, one can identify that the participants seem to belong to the middle class: The participants' qualifications range from Matric to Masters of Education Degree. The participants are from different language background and thereby represent different racial groups.

Lastly the table depicts that most of the parent representatives are parents of the learners at the school. This is contrary to what literature revealed about most black rural schools, where more grandparents participate in the election of SGB (Mncube, 2006).

4.3 PRESENTING AND ANALYSING DATA IN RESPONSE TO RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

- **What factors do parents consider in their decision to select parent representatives to the SGB?**

Data responding to the above research question were collected through interviews of both the non-elected and elected parent representatives. The following table presents factors considered by both the elected and non-elected members in their decision to select parent representatives to the SGB.

Table 4.3 Factors considered by both elected and non-elected members to select parent representative to the SGB

Factors	Frequency (N8)
1.Level of education	//
2. Social status: rich.	/////
3. Social status Standing in the community (Progressive, Respected, Committed Dedication and Competent Attendance in meetings etc	////
3. Gender	//
4. Race	//

Factors	Frequency (N8)
5. Parent of a child currently at the school	///
6. Proximity	/
7. Fluency in language	/
8. Age	/

According to the data in table 4.3, the following issues emerged from the conducted interviews from elected and non-elected members in the multiracial schools.

Issue 1: Possession of wealth in the community is the most common considered factor for one to be elected as parent-representative in the SGB structure.

“White schools would love to get people who are active, people who are of great benefit, people, people who’ve got money, people who are employed, so as to make sure that this school will even get money from outside. Therefore, when it comes to these white schools, they don’t just support, to take parent who don’t have money, to take parents who are from poverty, but they would like to get parents who are working. Those schools are fortunate to get new members of SGB, people who are business persons, people who’ve got money” (NMP-3 and EPR 1 and 3).

The quotation above raises many issues: Money gives ones leverage and a right to be elected. This illustrates exclusion of parents who might come from disadvantaged backgrounds from participating in the SGB. Maharaj (2005) cites that for parents to participate equally in school governance, they must possess the qualities and quantities of resources to effect their duties satisfactorily. In the two

multiracial schools studied, the focus is on quantity of a single resource. Moreover, Chaka (2008:128) claims that for the SGBs to be legally structured they need to represent all stakeholder groups. But in reality some groups are usually under-represented or even excluded as is the case in these schools.

Issue 2: One's social status and competence is regarded as the second favoured factor for parent election to the SGB.

In this instance, social status was considered a determinant for one to be selected in the SGB. This includes being respected, progressive, committed, dedicated, and participation in the meetings.



“Social status is also a factor highly considered during elections process. The only challenge here is that, people of high standing within the community normally do not avail themselves during this period. People with skills and abilities tend to be absent and as such whoever becomes available gets elected. For instance during 2009 elections, the process could not take place the first day, as the 15% quorum was not met. It had to be rescheduled for another day and the parents who were present in that meeting were the ones who were elected, as few as they were. Yes, social status within the community is a desirable factor when practical” (NMP-1).

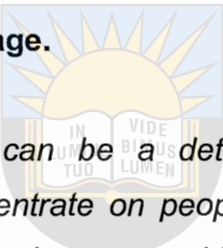
“...and then another point is that, we've got to make sure that, this person will honour, will come at all times when called, you see” (EPR1).

“if I was to vote, I would have looked for somebody who is competent, in terms of management, you

know, so to me competence in terms of management would have been very important, plus specific skills” (EPR 2).

“A person who attends parents meetings, is where we derive that sense of commitment from that particular person, just attending meetings and maybe participating in discussions in the parents meeting” (NMP4).

Issue 3: The least considered factors that influence a parent’s selection to the SGB - Proximity to the school and age.



“...I don’t think that can be a determining factor, because, if you concentrate on people living around the school, for an example, you would leave out some expertise, from people who stay far away the school and that would cause problems in the running of the school. You might not get everything from those who stay nearer the school” (NMP-4).

Another parent agrees that”... the proximity of a parent is not a problem because, if one is elected to be a member of SGB, then one will tell that, will sort of see, yes, if that person is not so many kilometres from the school, but it’s not important, but one has got to accept if one is requested to join the SGB member, irrespective of his colour, irrespective of where this person stays” (NMP-3).

This is contrary to practices in some schools where African parents consider people who live closer to the school (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer 2002). They also makes mention that African parents do not make themselves available for election, maybe because they live far away from the school or when they have to rely on public

transport which may not be available in the evenings or weekends. Therefore, those that are at a reasonable proximity to the school get elected.

4.4 PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA GATHERED IN RESPONSE TO RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

- **What characterizes elected parent ‘representation’ practices in the SGB?**

A total of three elected parent representatives were interviewed to respond to this question. This group constituted parents who were members of the SGB and all of them were serving a second term in the structure. From the interviews, the following issues emerged as elected parents to the SGB structure discussed their mechanisms of how they ensure that they represent the interests and concerns of other parents.

Issue 1: Plan as SGB

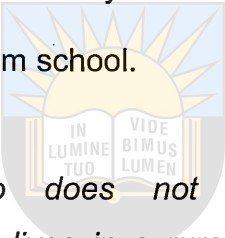
The parents plan as an SGB. When they plan they decide on policies and, start by having a Mission and Vision of the school. They also plan for the year, that is, the activities that they are going to be carried out for the year. After planning, they report what they have planned to sub-committees and then disseminate to educators, parents and learners (EPR-2). This is the way to involve other stakeholders, in order to hear their views or comments, and come to a mutual understanding.

“We discuss it, and the decision that came to SGBs, I had to take it back and speak to “parent” and we come to some sort of an agreement that the school could be happy and the parent as well, and obviously the child...” (EPR-1).

Issue 2: Implementing Planning

Elected parent-representatives implement planning, as they implement they also report back to parents quarterly. This shows time they meet with other stakeholders, unless there were urgent matters to be dealt with. They did not report in stages. When implementing, parents prioritised the problem at hand, and they made sure they that follow up on policies, as they did not want to deviate from the policy (EPR-3).

One parent-representative mentioned that they make an effort to reach out to all parents, even to those who stay far from school.



“... a parent who does not live in our area/community, who lives in a rural area, who is little bit difficult to reach, but we try by all means to reach them as well” (EPR-1).

Issue 3: Continuous feedback to parents

An elected parent gives feedback to other stakeholders; they try to address all the interests/ needs of parents, irrespective of race. This was emphasised by another parent: *“...because I’m a government official, what I did, I took the policy... I gave every parent an opportunity to decide”* (EPR-3). Another parent member reported that they investigated individual problems, search whether it was a management or governance issue, and if it did not concern governance, they refer it to the principal (management) to solve it (EPR-2). One parent stated that if the school was dealing with broader issue like curriculum, it concerns them but an individual problem was dealt with by school principal and the SMT then handles the issue (EPR-3). This shows that the parents differentiate governance and management duties. After giving feedback to parents, they evaluate the process or implementation.

Issue 4: Evaluation at the end of the year

The parents reported back quarterly until the end of each year. Then they evaluated the implementation, so as to plan for the following year. The fact that they prioritised the parents' problems at hand, meant that they evaluated how far they had gone with the present year's issues or plan and what their strengths and weaknesses were. Finally, they looked at how best to tackle similar issues in future. Although they did experience silence from the majority of parents, there were those that dominated in the meeting. The common trend in the meetings was that some parents voiced complaints/needs/suggestions. Parent EPR-3 complained that: *"You will find an educator who is very influential, trying to super impose his idea in the school..."*.

It appeared that there was a process of consultation between the SGB and other stakeholders. The elected parents planned first and then reported to non-elected parents in an attempt to get their views and reach a mutual understanding. They implemented what they had planned, gave continuous feedback to parents, and listened to individual problems. At the end of the year, they evaluated what had been implemented, i.e. their strengths and weaknesses for the future. One parent reported that they go as far as sacrificing their time trying to solve parents' needs/problems (EPR- 1).

Issue 5: Experience of Representation

All parents experienced challenges in representing other parents, but their challenges differed from school to school. For instance, EPR-1 and EPR-3 had the same challenge of shortages of teachers but EPR-1's challenge was the crisis of shortage of teachers. Learners were not taught for several months and as a result the learners threatened to march to the Department of Education. One parent

highlighted that: "...learners were actually scared and concerned that they might fail because of the teacher shortage "(EPR-1).

"In 2008, I was phoned by the Principal of the school because we had a shortage of teachers at the school, still not that we don't have it anymore but it is better. We had a growth shortage of teachers, He said,' listen Mr Shaun (pseudonym), the Matrics had a meeting here and they are now threatening to march to the Department of Education, because they were affected by this shortage of teachers` (EPR-1).

An elected parent from school A had the challenge of an educator who could not teach a particular learning area offered by the school. The parent reported that learners complaining about the language used when teaching the subject. Consequently, the learners chased out the educator. The educator was not fluent in English and the learners could not hear him properly. Therefore, the SGB had to see to it that the space was filled and learners had to be taught.

Another parent reported about poor attendance of parents at meetings. Even though some of the `black` parents attended the meeting, they were passive. Other races dominated them, but nevertheless, they expected that their interests be represented. Another parent participant reported that one parent came complaining about corporal punishment and that his child had been punished by a teacher. This parent did not know where to report the matter to, whether to the management or to the governance. They had to inform the principal about the matter, since this was a management matter; they had to solve the matter together with the Principal. Corporal punishment is an offence, and this must be dealt with as prescribed in the

Constitution, but the parent did not clearly indicate how the matter was resolved, and who was involved in the disciplinary hearing. According to SASA, the SMT and the Governing body have to work co-operatively in solving disciplinary problems. South African Schools Act (sub-section (10) of Act 24 of 2005) stipulates that “Any person who contravenes subsection (10) is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a sentence which could be imposed for assault”. This parent was not specific on whether they followed what was stipulated on SASA.

The same parent participant highlighted the mismanagement of funds as one of their challenges. He argued that there were allegations of mismanagement of funds by the Principal of the school. People outside judged him by his luxurious lifestyle. The SGB had to intervene because the funds were under the SGB’s control. The Principal was not the signatory there and they managed to solve the problem by reporting to the parents that the Principal was not guilty (EPR-2).

Parents also reported that there were times when a parent made a suggestion/interest which needed to be attended to. The SGB had to report the matter to the sub-committee, then it flowed down to all other stakeholders, i.e. educators, parents and learners, then they had to decide on a plan of action.

Issue 6: Process of solving the issue

The parents’ experiences differed from school A and School B and they had different ways of solving an issue. When school B had a problem of a shortage of educators, learners were unruly but parent members managed to play their role as SGBs. They would not let the learners march to the Department of Education. Parent EPR-1 had to quickly go to the school, gather the learners in an assembly and listen to their concerns. This showed that the SGB played their role well and they followed the right

procedure. They could not let the children out of the school during tuition time and they had to take this matter into their own hands. They wrote letters to other parents, asking for an urgent meeting. Eventually the SGB managed to convince the Department of Education of the seriousness of the matter. Finally the problem was gradually solved.

Most of the parent-representatives showed that the right procedure in solving the problem had been followed, although in some cases the SGB had to deviate a bit from the policy. An example of this is when the learners chased out an educator and the SGB had to see to it that the learners were taught and the vacant post was filled as soon as possible. So this parent-representative had to look for an educator herself. This was not the right appointment procedure. The parent admitted that: *"...we tried it un-officially in 2003 and 2004..., we said let's throw this woman un-officially for Arts and Culture purpose" (EPR-3).*

4.5 PRESENTING AND ANALYSING DATA IN RESPONSE TO RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

- **What issues do parents of different racial background in the wider community confront regarding the representation of their interest in SGB structures?**

Data in response to this question were collected through interviewing both the elected and non-elected parent representatives.

The following issues emerged:

1. The non-participation of the majority of black parents leading led to their interests not being represented in the SGB structure
2. Issues of exclusion: Black parents claimed that they were not listened to

3. School Management Teams (SMT) seemed to have had their own preferred candidates and people whose voices counted
4. Cultural Differences
5. Resistance to current legislation on school governance

Issue 1: Non participation of a majority of black parents

This issue was voiced by white and coloured parent representatives. They reported that black parents were invisible in the SGB structure. They claimed that the majority of black parents did not attend parents' meetings and were also reluctant to participate in meetings as well as in the SGB structure. This resulted in black parents' interests not equally represented in the SGB structure. They raised the following issues in support of their claims:

“So the attendance use to be poor, especially in those parents who have got the majority children(black in this instance) in the school, so the minority parents do attend and get the advantage of being elected over and over again”(EPR1).

“We have never had truly democratic elections, mainly because of parents' lack of interest and non-commitment in the process” (NMP-2):

Other parents claimed that black parents did not want to avail themselves when it came to SGB elections. Some never attended meetings. One parent raised a concern about the invisibility of black parents in the meetings.

“Most black parents do not want to avail themselves during elections. They do not want to commit

themselves; they leave this to other races as if they know better than black parents” (NMP-1).

“ the majority of learners are Black, but eeh, you will find the SGBs of those schools are still White. There are so many questions when it comes to that, why? Yet so many parents are Black, so many kids are Black. There are reasons for that. Number one, Black parents are still clinging to that bad habit, sometimes that are called, I DON`T GO TO MEETINGS” (EPR-3).

The lack of participation of black parents was an area of great concern. The Review of School Governance in South African Public Schools published in 2003 points out that while African children make up 28% of enrolment in the former House of Assembly schools, African parents only made up 7% of SGB members in those schools (Chaka, 2008:29).

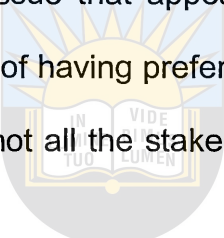
Issue 2: Issues of exclusion: Black parents claimed that they were not listened to

“...he was never responded to, he was never given a positive answer, because he said, this is not what we suppose to get, this is wrong, but his question was ignored deliberately, ok! So we are not heard, we are not given chance of trying to find-out, you see! Those SGBs are VERY CLEVER, they are very cunning; they are very clever (repeats) to come forward, there`s a big wall between us and the SGB of those particular school. It`s got to crack and join those SGBs (laughed out loud)” (NMP-3).

In response to the above scenario, Singh et.al (2004:304), state that at times the school environment seemed not to be open to parents. Parents` ideas or views are not welcomed. Chaka (2008:30) cautions that democracy is about having a voice and influencing the decisions taken in democratic structures.

Issue 3: School Management Teams seem to have preferred candidates and People whose voice count

Most candidates agreed that the SMT had their preferred candidates and people whose voice counted. This was an issue that appeared to concern and affect all racial groups. The SMTs are accused of having preferred people to participate in the SGB and moreover during meetings not all the stake holders` voices are taken into account.



“...these schools before elections... the principal and the SMT and teachers at large, would aim to get people who are going to be of great benefit for the school, for the life of the school, the progress of the school. In other words, you could see them at a distance that they do what is known as inroads. They look at their parents, they make inroads. That means, they want to get parents who are going to be of great benefit, who are going to participate, who are going to help this particular school. Not just parents for the sake of being a parent here” (NMP-3).

“...the main reason is that we don’t want to be elected...those schools take advantage of using the same persons.”(EPR-3).

Supporting the issue raised here is Duku (2006) whose study on an SGB revealed that the structure is most of the time in the “principal’s pocket,” and participation in it is equated with tokenism.

Things were discussed at other levels and what took place in most meetings was a briefing on what had been done or what had been discussed by a few individuals who were the Principal’s favourites (NMP-1). The same participants highlighted that there was a need for a general meeting organised where things needed to be clarified. Even though the meeting was held, one would not get satisfactory answers or feedback. Parent would be seen as troublemaker, and as a result some parents were afraid to ask questions because their children would suffer in the classroom (NMP-3). This parent shared an instance where he was in a meeting and he wanted to find out about school fees that they were being paid monthly, and he was never given a satisfactory answer.

“...a parent wanted to know what happened to our school fees. Is this the money that we are paying every month? He was never answered; he was never given any satisfactory answers at all. If you want to find-out, you are taken as if you are the trouble maker, as a result some parents are afraid of asking questions, because their children will suffer in the classroom and they decided to keep quiet” (NMP-3).

Parents claimed that they did not get financial statements; SGBs were not formerly introduced to them, but the school functioned with current SGBs. However, these committees were not functional and as a result things were discussed at SGB level instead of SGBs working hand in hand with these committees (NMP-4).

Table 4.4 Dislikes as a Parent-Representative

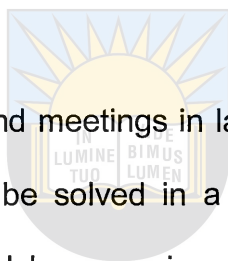
Dislikes	Frequency
Participating in the SGB without remuneration	//
Poor attendance of meetings by parents	//
Non-involvement of parents in school issues	//
Jealousy	/

By assessing these responses from the above table (table 4.4), it was clear that these parents had something in common. Most of the parent's representatives reported that poor attendance at meetings by parents was rated as the factor most disliked, i.e. parents did not want to attend meetings; claiming that they did not get meeting notices inviting them to the meetings. One parent member showed that they do whatever it takes to make the parents aware of the meetings; they announced in churches about the meetings; they wrote letters which were sent through learners and even announced it on radios. It is clear that in most schools, parents did not want to involve or commit themselves and as such that caused non-involvement of parents in school issues such as school activities, raising of funds and signing of their children`s books. Other parents reported that they sent letters to churches, as some of the parents were church members. They had made announcements on radio as well (EPR- 2). Now the question is what is the problem? Why those parents did not want to go to meetings?

These parents also stated that they worked as SGB members but were not paid whereas they performed all the duties of the school going out of their way, wasting

their time. Parent participant wished that: *"...SGB members... do get paid. How I wish this be legislated, so that all SGBs are paid"* (EPR-2).

Table 4.4 also shows that there are those parents who give themselves wholeheartedly when it comes to school matters. They want to assist in the development of the school and as a result they end up being on the committee more than once. Few parents regard themselves as spectators, they become jealous of the parents who like development and parents who have a passion for what they are doing (EPR-3).



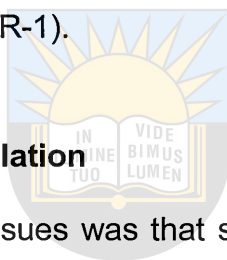
This means that if parents could attend meetings in large numbers, things would be much easier. Urgent matters would be solved in a short period of time. A lot of saving would be done by the school because in some instances meetings were postponed and then parents had to be notified in writing and in the media sometimes. Meetings had to be called again and this revealed that a lot of material or money wasted.

Most parents would be on board, they would be involved in school issues; quick decisions were done because many heads think well than one head. Many parents would help each other in coming to constructive decisions. Moreover, if all or most parents would be involved, all parents would have a mutual understanding or agreement; they would see things in different way and, would not judge other dedicated parents, but instead would appreciate their work.

Issue 4: Clash of Cultures

This study was conducted in multiracial schools. Since different racial groups represented the school, a clash of cultures seemed to be an issue. School B

consisted of many black learners, and few other races. This school had a problem of black learners, when they had to go to the bush during holidays because they came back not wearing school uniform. Parent-representatives had to understand and tolerate the situation whereas they were supposed adhere to the school policy. That showed that even the parent-representatives deviate a bit from the policy; if they were to stick to the policy, they would have played their representation role well and in harmony. One parent put it like this: *“Before you tackle any problem, you have to go back a step and standstill, and think out of the box, does not think as a coloured. One has to adapt to the situation”* (EPR-1).



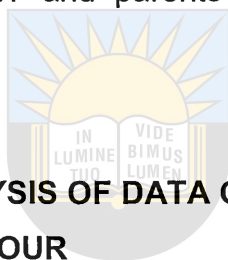
Issue 5: Resistance to current legislation

Parents voiced out that one of the issues was that some schools cling to the “old” ways of doing things regardless of what SASA prescribes. Elected parents complained of having an old structure in their school. The school did not have a Representative Council of Learners (RCL), instead it was using the roles of the Prefect system. This school also misunderstood the roles and responsibilities of SGB and school management and as a result an SGB post vacant at the school, was filled without SGB involvement. The Principal, with some Heads of Department, appointed an educator without consulting the SGB. This meant that the (white) Principal of the school used his power to do things and they did not follow what was written in the SASA. Although the SGB intervened in the matter, showing that they knew the appointment procedures, the situation stayed the same (EPR-2).

School B reported that they used the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA). Questions were based on SGBs (see Appendix B), elected parent-representative questions. Why is it called PTSA instead of SGB? On the other hand, they were

calling themselves PTSA whereas they are SGBs, or the principal work with the people of his choice (EPR-1)? The school seemed to function as the school with SGB, the parent participants were aware of the fact that the research was about parent-representative members.

From the above, one can identify that non participation was an issue that led to lot of problems in school governance. If parents could effectively play their role, they could help each other in taking constructive decisions. Moreover, an effective and meaningful partnership between SMT and parents was crucial for SGBs to be effective.



4.6 PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA GATHERED IN RESPONSE TO RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR

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- **What procedures are followed in the election of parent-representatives to SGB?**

A. School A


- **Pre –Election Nomination**

Data in response to the above research question were collected using an observation schedule (see Appendix C). In school A, before the election process, the electoral officer managed to prepare notices for the nomination process at a relevant time. The notices stated date, time and place of the combined nomination and election meeting. A prescribed template/form was used. The elections could not start on time because parents arrived one by one and as a result the 15% quorum was not met in time. Those parents who arrived earlier became anxious some left to relieve themselves; even the team from the District was panicking because they were at the school for about 45 minutes. This led to the Electoral officer starting the

process without the 15% quorum in the voter's roll. The number was short of one parent to meet the quorum in the voter's roll.

What does the 1997, 2004 and 2009 Guide say about the quorum? The Guide stated that if the quorum is not met at the meeting, the meeting must be rescheduled for another day. In school A, the guide was not followed because they started with the process before the quorum was met. It also stated that schools must apply to the Head of the Department for permission to deviate from the single nomination and Election Day process stipulated in these guidelines.

- **During the process**



Two parents came in later as the process was proceeding. The election procedure as stipulated in the NGSGBE was exercised; a nominated person nominates another nominated person. During nominations, there were parents who refused or excused themselves from nomination, more especially the black parents. An ex-chairperson intervened, explaining that the parent with problem or one who does not want to be nominated should have reported that to the Electoral officer earlier. Then the member from the Department explained that the elections should be voluntarily not forced.

Nomination forms were not completed and the person who was supposed to be a monitor completed the forms for them. When I asked the reason for this, he said he wanted to speed up the process. During the process, the Electoral officer explained how the parents should do nominations in the ballot paper. There were two ties; the Electoral officer had to break the tie by flipping a coin. When I looked at the

monitor's notes, template 17, he declared that the quorum had met before election, although an expected member had been filled as the process proceeded.

- **Issue**

The nomination forms were not completed on time. According to the guide (Guide for Establishing School Governing Body, 1997), the nomination form should be duly completed by the proposer, seconder and nominee, and has to be submitted to the Electoral Officer not more than seven days and not less than 24 hours prior to the commencement of the nomination and election meeting.

- **Post Elections**

After the process, an Electoral officer had to sign documents or Templates and hand them over to the school representative. The Electoral officer was not sure which forms or Template to sign, although trained for the process. The District office official had to explain further what was required or had to take place. He explained when to select office bearers, within 14 days, and how to go about co-opting a member.

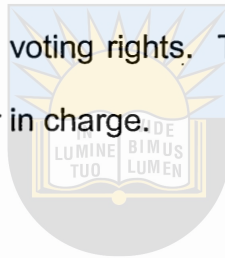
All the documents and ballot papers used at the election were put in a sealed envelope. The election of office bearer's meeting was held as the first meeting after elections. The elected persons were notified by the principal/electoral officer after the election process. However, according to the NGSGBE, the District manager was supposed to notify in writing the positions of the elected persons. Most of the days stipulated in the Guide for election process were not met. The reason was late election process which took a year later than the expected time. The schools were exercising non-co-operation between them and the District office and that resulted in speeding up other things or shuffling others. The election was done in a shorter period than the usual process, the reason be the District challenges that were taking

place at the time, which resulted in late SGB elections than other Districts. The schools took some days to notify parents and nomination forms had to take few days to reach parents and few days to hand them back to the school.

B. School B

- **Pre-Election Nomination**

All the documents to be used were prepared and notices were sent to parents through learners. Before the election, parents arrived in numbers. In this school the process could not start because other parents who were present were not written on the voter's roll even though they had voting rights. The District official told them to sort out the problem with the educator in charge.



- **During the Process**

During the process, one parent raised a question about what was going to happen if a parent did not attend the meeting and yet parents needed him or her on the committee. The District Official explained that the parent could have something or his or her apology written down in his absentia, she or he could not be nominated.

The parents who were allowed to register during the process did not have Identity Documents (ID) with them whereas the form has an ID space in it. An official gave them a mandate to register without having IDs. This meant that in some schools these election processes were not genuine and schools did not always follow the procedure. Even the people who represent the DoE sometimes encouraged unprocedural tendencies as they were involved during the election processes. Therefore, this needs to be rectified from Head of Department. This shows that the elections may not be free and fair as stated in the Guide.

- **Post-Election**

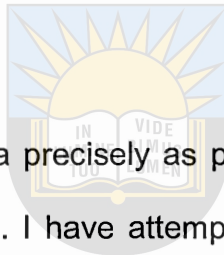
After elections, the first meeting was the election of office bearers. Elected parents select themselves; the Principal of the school sent names to the District office.

The following issues emerged during observations in both schools:

1. The process started although 15% quorum was not met
2. The nomination forms were not completed prior as per Guide
3. Other parents registered on the Election Day

4.7 SUMMARY

In this chapter I have presented data precisely as provided by respondents during interviews and from what I observed. I have attempted to explore and provide the views, feelings, and experiences of participants on practices involved in parent selection to the SGB and the extent that they represent the interest of other parents in this structure. As claimed in Chapter three, triangulation of information articulated from interviews, observations, and documents had spoken to each other in this chapter. The following chapter concludes the study. Here I present the findings, draw conclusions and make recommendations for further research.



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CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to investigate the practices involved in the selection of parent representatives to the SGB structure and the extent to which they represent the interests of other parents in this structure. The study was guided by the following research questions:



Main research question:

What Practices are involved in the selection of parent-representatives to the SGB?

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Sub-research questions:

1. What factors do parents consider in their decision to select parent-representatives to an SGB?
2. What procedures are followed in the election of parent-representatives to an SGB?
3. What characterizes elected parents' '*representation*' practices in an SGB?
4. What issues do parents of different racial backgrounds in the wider community confront regarding the *representation* of their interests in SGB structures?

Data gathering for this study was through semi-structured interviews and observations. The planned document analysis was abandoned and this is discussed

in the limitations of the study in section 5.5. This chapter discusses the main findings, draws conclusions and make recommendations for further research.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

5.2.1 Selection practices

Selection practices seem to reveal that the term “representation” is little understood.

Factors parents consider in their decision to select parent representatives to the SGB

The possession of wealth was found to be the key factor that was considered for parent representative selection to the SGB. Is this an indication that parents had little or lack understanding of the concept ‘representation’?

Evidence from this study that was collected from interviews suggests that the possession of wealth is a pre-requisite for parent representative selection to the SGB. This study revealed that the competition amongst the middle class seems to be about financial resources. Competences that include one’s experience of school governance, financial skills were not identified as key requirements for parent governors to govern the schools effectively

This is contrary to what other studies revealed. For example Duku’s (2006) findings were that one’s level of education and literacy level was the determinant for selection to the SGB. Chaka (2008:29) also agreed with Duku(2006) when she explains that voters are more likely to believe that literate candidates are stronger representatives than those who are less literate. This may be because literate parents are seen to have more confidence in dealing with teachers (Chaka, 2008:29). McPherson and

Dlamini (1988:14) agree, when they say, there is a tendency for literate parents to be elected over illiterate ones and for non-educator representatives to be administrative staff rather than manual workers. Furthermore, Tsotetsi *et al* (2008:387) elaborate that democratic school management can be successful if school governors have the required competences.

Parents of different racial background in the wider community seem to be confronted with various issues regarding the *representation* of their interest in SGB structures?

The issue of exclusion: Black parents claimed that they were not listened to and that they regarded themselves as voiceless. As a result, their interests were not represented in the SGB. Chaka (2008:30) points out that democracy is about having a voice and influencing the decisions taken in those democratic structures. If then the SGB is a legal and democratic structures it should be inclusive.

Non participation of black parents: The non-participation of black parents seemed an area of great concern. These parents were found to be reluctant in attending meetings, passive in meetings and also did not want to participate in the SGB structure. This issue was not new to this study. The Review of School Governance in South African Public Schools, published in 2003, pointed out that while African children made up 28% of enrolment in former House of Assembly schools, African parents only made up 7% of SGB members in those schools (Chaka, 2008). Singh, Mbokodi and Msila (2004) also raised this concern in their study of black parental involvement in education.

Resistance to School Governance Policies and Power relations: Principals were reported to use their power in overturning decisions by the SGB and sometimes

would take decisions that were contrary to what the SASA prescribed. Even the very structure of a SGB did not exist in one school as the school still had what used to be the Parent Teacher Student Representative (PTSA). This was done regardless of the SASA legislation.

5.2.2 Elected parents “representation practices” of other parents in the SGB structure

Representation practices were found to be characterised and guided by a process of consultation

All participants agreed to have been engaged and believe in a planning process that was inclusive of all stake holders. Effective communication that included continuous feedback to the larger parent community was identified as a key aspect. The representation practices were thus reported to follow a four stage process: Planning; Implementation, Continuous feedback to parents and Evaluation at the end of the year.

5.2.3 Procedures followed in the election of parent-representatives to SGB?

Schools observed appeared to understand the procedures to be followed when electing parent representatives to the SGB, as outlined in DoE (NGSGB, 2009) guide for establishing and electing school Governing Bodies.

The election process seemed to be guided by the following processes: Pre-Nomination Processes; Election Processes;

Post-Election Processes

However, the proceedings on the Election Day contradicted the NGFSSGBE Guidelines (2009). The following issues emerged:

- The process started although 15% of the quorum was not met.
- The nomination forms were not completed prior to election process
- Some parents registered on the election day

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS SPECIFIC TO THIS STUDY

5.3.1 Pre-requisites to the SGB

Tsotetsi et al. (2008:387) cite that democratic school management can be successful if school governors could have the required competences. The term competence is a crucial factor. Its implications are that, for the parent governors to govern the schools effectively, a range of skills which include knowledge and experience of school governance and financial skills are required. One therefore cannot be elected because of only one resource, wealth.

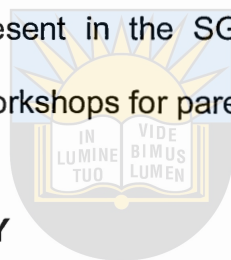
5.3.2 Parental participation is the key to effective parent representation in the SGB structure

Parent representatives' mandate is to represent the interests and concerns of the larger parent community. However, without the larger parent community availing themselves and participating in meetings, this is impossible. Moreover, evidence suggests the concept `representation` itself remains little understood among parents. Schools and SGBs should find ways to encourage parental involvement. A reflective process might help schools to identify weaknesses and strengths and be able to work on those weaknesses and identify instances where parental involvement and

participation is to lacking and use lessons learnt as a foundation for effective and more inclusive parental involvement.

5.3.3 Empowerment workshops

The concept 'representation' itself still remains little understood among parents. Naidoo (2005) notes that representation ranges from parents representing exclusively their own children's interests to more broadly providing parental perspectives on policy. Implicit here is that, the wider interests of the parent body whom elected parents should represent in the SGB are downplayed. There is therefore a need for empowerment workshops for parent representatives to the SGB.



5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher aimed at working with ten participants, five from Elected Parent Representative and five from Non-Member Parents. The researcher encountered a challenge of participants who were reluctant to participate in the study. That resulted in working with eight participants. The researcher decided to omit document analysis as it was difficult to get the documents at school whilst doing pilot a study. Although the study aimed at understanding people's perceptions in a naturalistic setting, which is the notion of the case study as outlined by Smith (1994:6) who makes the following comment:

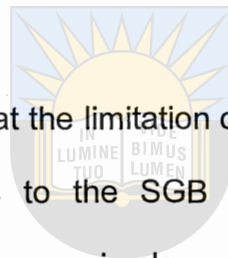
*Case studies make a "drama of the commonplace"...
In making it vivid, even creating suspense, the
researcher appeals to more than one way of knowing,
to more than one epistemology.*

In this study, the researcher had to rely on individual interviews and observations. There was no school document analysis which further made the study incur more limitations. The researcher achieved what was intended, i.e. to explore and understand the practices involved in parent-representatives` selection to the SGB.

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This case study investigated the practices in selecting parent-representatives to the SGB in multiracial schools in the Fort Beaufort District. Further research could be conducted on the following:

- It has been acknowledged that the limitation of this study was that it focused on 8 parent representatives to the SGB from two multiracial schools. Replicating this study with a larger simple would substantiate the findings of this study.
- Extending this research design to incorporate primary schools and comparing the findings to this study would add a different perspective. Would similar factors emerge or a whole new set?
- The majority of participants identified the possession of wealth as the key factor influencing decisions of who gets elected to be parent representatives in the SGB. A longitudinal study of schools whose selection practices are influenced by wealth as a factor should be undertaken to find out the limitations and possibilities.



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- Non-participation and reluctance of the majority of parents was an issue raised in this study. What could be the contributing factors to the non-participation of majority of black middle parents, in schools of their choices?
- The concept of representation seems to be little understood by parents. How do parents conceptualise the concept of being represented in the SGB?

5.6 CONCLUSION

Parents in the SGB form a central link between the school and the local community. Theoretically parents elected to the SGB are supposed to represent the interests of parents in the SGB context. However, for parent representatives to play their role and represent the interests and concerns of the other parents in the SGB, they require support and participation of the larger parent community. The concept 'representation' seems to be little understood by parents.

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7. LIST OF APPENDICES

7.1 Appendix A: Interview Schedule for Non-member parent

Section A: Personal Information

1. Your Age:.....
2. Gender:.....
3. Employment:.....
4. Highest level of education:.....
5. Your home language/Ethnic/Cultural/religion.....
6. Relations to the learner(s) attending the school:.....

Section: B: Describing factors considered in parent decision to vote for representatives in the SGB.

Q1 How frequent do you participate in the voting for representatives in the SGB over the years? When was the last time? Why do you participate?

Q2. Before deciding who to vote for to represent you as a parent, if you were involved, are there things that you would take into consideration? What are those things??


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Q3. Would Geographic proximity influence your voting preferences? Why?

Q4. Tell me about the performance of your elected parent representatives in the SGB.

Q5. What are the challenges you encountered with your elected parent-representative in the SGB?

NB: There are also follow-up questions!

7.2 Appendix B: Interview Schedule for Elected Parent Member

Section A: Personal information

1. Your Age:.....
2. Gender:.....
3. Highest level of education:.....
4. Employment:.....
5. Your home language/Ethnic/cultural/Religion:.....
6. Relations to the learner(s) attending the school:.....
7. Years serving as SGB member/Number of terms:.....

Section B: Describing practices that characterized your parent-representation in SGB.

- Q1. Describe your duties as member of SGB.
- Q2. (a) Describe how you go about performing this mediator role. Give some examples of what you do, when and why?
- Q2 (b) How do you get to know the interests/needs/views/demands/suggestions of the larger group? Describe in detail how this happen.
- Q3. (a). Mention one incident/experience of representation that you really **like** and describe what happened there to make it that way?
- Q3. (b). Mention one incident /experience of representation that you **dislike** and describe what happened there to make it that way?
- Q4. Your community consists of parents of racial groups other than your own. How has this impacted on your role as parent-representative? What have you have to do differently to reach out to them? Describe in details and give examples.

NB: There are also follow-up question/s which are not included in the questions

7.3 Appendix C: Observation Schedule

Tick whether the described behavior is demonstrated or not demonstrated.

ELECTION PROCESS

No.	Behaviors	Present	Not-present
1	Electoral officer prepares notices of the nomination process		
2	Electoral officer prepares notices of the combined nomination and election meeting		
3	The notice prepared by the Electoral officer states the date, time and place of the combined nomination and election meeting		
4	Notice of nomination meeting for parents is distributed 30 days before date of nomination & election meeting		
5	Hard copy of the notice was sent to parents of every learner 21 days before (or handed to all learners at the school 14 days before) date of nomination & election meeting		
6	Nomination was done on prescribed template/form		
7	Nominated person has been nominated by another nominated person		
8	Has nomination form completed by proposer, seconder and nominee and been submitted to electoral officer		
9	After nominations has expired, the following has been considered: -rejecting nomination of any nominee who has not been nominated in accordance with the process set out in guidelines -completed the said nomination form as required in these guidelines -announcing the names of nominees whose nominations have been accepted		
10	Is the quorum of 15% in the voter's roll met at the meeting, before the nomination and election process take place		
11	Electoral officer explain the proceedings to be followed		
12	Every ballot paper has stamp on it, to prevent the ballot paper from being tampered		
13	The voting process has been explained, the minimum and the maximum number of nominees to be voted for		
14	Are there any disputes		
	PROCEDURE AFTER SELECTION OF SGB		
15	All documents, ballot papers used at election are put in a sealed envelope		

16	Elected members are notified in writing of his/her election		
17	Notify parents of the election results within 14 days of the meeting		
18	School principal convene the first meeting within 14 days after notification of the results of the elections		
19	Election of office bearers in the first meeting		
20	District Manager been notified in writing of the date of the meeting and of the name, address and positions elected or nominated		



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7.4 Appendix D: Letter to the District Manager

15 March 2010
The District Manager
Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Education
Fort Beaufort District

Dear Ms.....

Re: Permission to conduct research in schools

Kindly be informed that Ms Ntombi Mbane, Student number 9866329 is currently registered for a Master`s Degree (Med) with the University of Fort Hare.

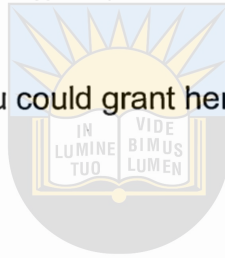
As a Researcher, she is required to conduct a research study in two Fort Beaufort high schools in your District.

The University would appreciate if you could grant her permission to do the research.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours faithfully

.....
Thesis Supervisor



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7.5 Appendix E: Letter for the participant (SGB)

PRACTICES IN SELECTING PARENT-REPRESENTATIVES TO SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY STUDY, 2009

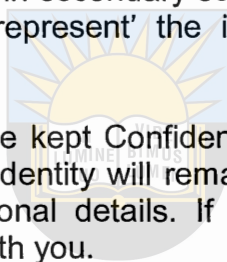
COVER LETTER

Dear participant,

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this study.

The purpose of the study to understand the practices involved in parent-representatives' selection to the SGB in secondary schools in Fort Beaufort, and the extent that these elected parents 'represent' the interest of other parents with learners at the school.

The information that you share will be kept Confidentiality, thus, whatever you say will not be shared with others. Your identity will remain anonymity: there will be no mentioning of names or other personal details. If you wish, when the study is completed, I can share the findings with you.



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Thanking you in advance.

Yours Faithfully

.....
Student

7.6 Appendix F: Consent Form for all participants

CONSENT FORM

ANONIMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY: The information that you share will be kept confidentiality, thus, whatever you say will not be shared with others. Your identity will remain anonymity: there will be no mentioning of names or other personal details. If you wish, when the study is completed, I can share the findings with you.

PLEASE TICK AS APPROPRIATE

	YES	NO
1. I have understood the purpose of the study.		
2. I am convinced that the information will be confidential.		
3. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at anytime.		
4. I may refuse to take part if I wish.		
5. I may ask questions for clarity reasons during/before/after the study.		
6. I agree to take part in the study.		
7. I understand that it will not be possible to identify any individual respondent in the study report, including myself.		

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NAME AND SURNAME:

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

7.7. Appendix G: Sample of Pilot completed interview schedule (non-SGB parent)

Practices in Selecting Parent-representatives to School Governing Body INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (non-SGB parent)

1. Gender – Male
2. Age – 41
3. Highest level of education – Hons in Badmin
4. Occupation - Educator

Q1. What factors do parents consider in their decision to select parent-representatives to SGB?

- One must have a child in that particular school
- Must have interest in the education set-up i.e. must have contribution in school, attend meetings and constructive support.
- Must be in a position to know a little about the policies (government policies), SASA.
- Must have interest in an education of a child.
- We do consider age of a person, even if one is a guardian s/he must be an adult.

Q2. What procedures are followed in the election of parent-representatives to SGB?

- There has to be a voters roll done by the electoral officer, who is not a principal of that particular school, it could be a neighboring principal.
- In that voters roll, there will be the name of a parent, child and a grade.
- After the process, the electoral officer has to issue out forms to parents, either in a meeting situation or give out nomination forms to the learners, so that learners could give them to their parents.
- In those nomination forms a parent will have to nominate a parent who appears in the voter's roll, then there after a date for the elections will be set up.
- During the Election Day certain minutes will be given to some parents to continue with the nomination process, if they did not have a chance to do so, and then there after the election process will continue, normally one man one vote.
- Parents are told to be free and to go to the people of their choice and get their signatures that they are willing to stand in the election.
- Also go to another person who will second the motion and then, that process will continue until the counting takes over, then the results will be made available to the parents.

Q3. What characterizes elected parents 'representation' practices in SGB?

-Members from the parents representing the parents

-Parents always have more members than any other components, since they constitute a bigger number as far as SGB is concerned.

- They represent parents because they have been elected by the parents. Whenever there are meetings, issues will be discussed and at the end of the day, they will have to take whatever decision and report to the parents in a parents meeting.

-Whatever the members are doing, they are doing what the whole body had agreed upon.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTION- how will one know if all different racial groups are represented?

-They are represented because it is important that they convene meetings with parents, what they are coming up with ,is something that is been discussed in parents meetings, even if at some point they will still be expected to convene a parents meeting and report whatever they may have agreed upon or whatever they have decided to do.

-At times some SGB representatives are the ones who are making decisions and they fail reporting back.

-Interests (black-parents) are represented not to the extent parents or I would wished, parents are informed through news letters

Q4. What issues do parents of different racial background in the wider community confront regarding the representation of their interest in SGB structures?

-Issue of language is a problem

-Most learners are from black communities but still using English and Afrikaans. English is taken as the first language, Afrikaans as the second language. Question is ,why Afrikaans is made 1st additional when there are so many black learners who should be taking isiXhosa as the first additional instead of Afrikaans?

-Also black parents choose Afrikaans in the place of isiXhosa.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTION-- - Do you feel your interests are respected?

-In these former model-c schools, black parents are regarded as visitors

-Schools have been there for white community, since democratic country, most black parents decided to send their children to those former model-c schools.

-Even black parents have their minds as visitors as well

- In most cases black parents do not come out and confront issues, they are scared not only what whites people will say, but also what other black people will say

- Might be described as trouble makers once start questioning things. It's a question of 'All is well' even if it's not like that.

- In most cases one may have a point to address but for the sake of harmony and how a visitor should do things, you tend to turn a blind eye to even an important things.

Q. What do you do about that as parents (ignoring things)?

-We just sit back and do nothing about it, (quiet about things), even though it appears in most cases we are encouraged to talk about these things but one could see that black parents are visitors. 'There is still a long way to go.

Q. How often do SGBs give report back?

-Report backs are given, but these days you tell what people want to hear and know, one is so selective in telling people, parents are told what they need to hear, and it is the way in which parents are decided to do

- Parents agree to what is has been decided upon and they are expected to endorse and say the SGBs must carry on; they are doing a great job.

Q. How do parents make decisions on schooling matters?

-Platform is during meetings but one could see that some issues have been already agreed upon, but platform will always be created during meetings

- One could see that it is more of briefing, parent are briefed about what is happening or what is going to happen.

7.8 Appendix H: Sample of Pilot completed interview schedule (SGB parent)

Practices in Selecting Parent-representatives to School Governing Body

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (SGB parent)

SGB MEMBER

1. Gender – Male
2. Age – 44
3. Highest level of education – Bed Hons
4. Occupation – Senior education Specialist (Subject advisor)

Q1. What factors do parents consider in their decision to select parents-representatives to SGB?

- Consider parent of a child who is currently in the school.
- Parent who is responsible for fees and welfare of a child not necessarily biological parent, it might be a grand parent of a child, guardian of a child.
- Must be a person who has interest in the education of a child.
- Must show interest by all times, attending meetings.
- Must always open for new ideas and development, even in the community.

Q-How do you recognize these parents in your community?

- Parents lobbying or caucusing to say they know the person, maybe is a community leader, has got ideas (so the school will develop).
- Parents influence each other (they know certain parent) according to their abilities.
- Parents do consider gender issue – Not only males who are elected as SGB members
- Parents do consider different racial grouping as well.

Q2. What procedures are followed in the election of parent-representatives to SGB?

- Term is three years – procedure is stipulated in SASA
- District office declares dates for elections and appoint electoral officers, i.e. principal of another school. Also unions are represented.
- Electoral officer issue out nomination forms where parents should nominate a parent and there must be two witnesses to the parent who's nominating, then nomination forms must be signed by a nominee or a person who accepts to be nominated and those nomination forms must be submitted up to the last hour, to the electoral officer.
- Electoral officer will type a list of nominees

-Day of elections, parents in general meeting will vote for these people, if there are five posts for parents and the nominated parents are five, there will be no need for elections, those parents will automatically be part of SGB members, if they are more than the required number, election and voting will take place.

Q3. What characterizes elected parents' representation' practices in SGB?

-School is a racial issue, got blacks, whites, coloureds and foreign learners but no foreign parents at the SGB yet. They are given a chance to voice out their concerns in order to be represented as well. -For now they are not willing to be elected or to serve in SGB. Do consider gender and racial groupings when electing members.

-Co-op parents who are community builders/expertise so as to develop the school with the help of parents, e.g. the school has bank manager to help with school finances.

-Getting the voices of the constituencies – at least once a term general meetings are held

-Parents are invited for reports, e.g. financial reports, development reports, where parents are to be given report back on their learners' performance, report on maintenance of the school. In those meetings parents do contribute or share views.

-School policy says parents are free to write to the SGB whether a consent or complaint or if a parent initiates something, come up with new ideas.

Foreign parents are not coming upfront at the moment with their views), other racial groups which are vocal at the moment (Whites, blacks and colored are represented in the SGB and in committees which are at school

Q. How do you get their voices?

-Minority attend meetings

-Getting their voices through news letters on term basis- for those who do not attend meetings.

Q4. What issues do parents of different racial background in the wider community confront regarding the representation of their interest in the SGB structures?

-Black parents demanded that isiXhosa must be introduced

-Some Afrikaans speakers thought this is going to supersede their Afrikaans

-At the end parents agreed that school is an English medium school with Afrikaans as a subject and isiXhosa as a subject (we had a hot debate).

-Different racial interests are represented, learners are given a chance to practice their cultural activities on cultural days

-SGB gives report back once a term through newsletters and on general meetings, special meetings are held for urgent matters

7.9 Appendix I: Sample of completed interview schedule (non-elected parent)

PRACTICES IN SELECTING PARENT-REPRESENTATIVES TO SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY, STUDY 2010

1 INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (non-elected parent)

1. Gender – Male
2. Age – 41
3. Highest level of education – Hons in Badmin
4. Occupation - Educator

Q1. What factors do parents consider in their decision to select parent-representatives to SGB?

- One must have a child in that particular school
- Must have interest in the education set-up i.e. must have contribution in school, attend meetings and constructive support.
- Must be in a position to know a little about the policies (government policies), SASA.
- Must have interest in an education of a child.
- We do consider age of a person, even if one is a guardian s/he must be an adult.

Q2. What procedures are followed in the election of parent-representatives to SGB?

- There has to be a voters roll done by the electoral officer, who is not a principal of that particular school, it could be a neighboring principal.
- In that voters roll, there will be the name of a parent, child and a grade.
- After the process, the electoral officer has to issue out forms to parents, either in a meeting situation or give out nomination forms to the learners, so that learners could give them to their parents.
- In those nomination forms a parent will have to nominate a parent who appears in the voter's roll, then there after a date for the elections will be set up.
- During the Election Day certain minutes will be given to some parents to continue with the nomination process, if they did not have a chance to do so, and then there after the election process will continue, normally one man one vote.
- Parents are told to be free and to go to the people of their choice and get their signatures that they are willing to stand in the election.
- Also go to another person who will second the motion and then , that process will continue until the counting takes over, then the results will be made available to the parents.

Q3. What characterizes elected parents 'representation' practices in SGB?

- Members from the parents representing the parents
- Parents always have more members than any other components, since they constitute a bigger number as far as SGB is concerned.
- They represent parents because they have been elected by the parents. Whenever there are meetings, issues will be discussed and at the end of the day, they will have to take whatever decision and report to the parents in a parents meeting.

-Whatever the members are doing, they are doing what the whole body had agreed upon.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTION- how will one know if all different racial groups are represented?

-They are represented because it is important that they convene meetings with parents, what they are coming up with, is something that is been discussed in parents meetings, even if at some point they will still be expected to convene a parents meeting and report whatever they have agreed upon or whatever they have decided to do.

-At times some SGB representatives are the ones who are making decisions and they fail reporting back.

-Interests (black-parents) are represented not to the extent parents or I would wished, parents are informed through news letters

Q4. What issues do parents of different racial background in the wider community confront regarding the representation of their interest in SGB structures?

-Issue of language is a problem

-Most learners are from black communities but still using English and Afrikaans. English is taken as the first language, Afrikaans as the second language. Question is, why Afrikaans is made 1st additional when there are so many black learners who should be taking isiXhosa as the first additional instead of Afrikaans?

-Also black parents choose Afrikaans in the place of isiXhosa.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTION-- - Do you feel your interests are respected?

-In these former model-c schools, black parents are regarded as visitors

-Schools have been there for white community, since democratic country, most black parents decided to send their children to those former model-c schools.

-Even black parents have their minds as visitors as well

- In most cases black parents do not come out and confront issues, they are scared not only what whites people will say, but also what other black people will say

- Might be described as trouble makers once start questioning things. It's a question of 'All is well' even if it's not like that.

- In most cases one may have a point to address but for the sake of harmony and how a visitor should do things, you tend to turn a blind eye to even an important things.

Q. What do you do about that as parents (ignoring things)?

-We just sit back and do nothing about it, (quiet about things), even though it appears in most cases we are encouraged to talk about these things but one could see that black parents are visitors. 'There is still a long way to go.'

Q. How often do SGBs give report back?

-Report backs are given, but these days you tell what people want to hear and know, one is so selective in telling people, parents are told what they need to hear, and it is the way in which parents are decided to do

- Parents agree to what is has been decided upon and they are expected to endorse and say the SGBs must carry on; they are doing a great job.

Q. How do parents make decisions on schooling matters?

- Platform is during meetings but one could see that some issues have been already agreed upon, but platform will always be created during meetings
- One could see that it is more of briefing, parent are briefed about what is happening or what is going to happen.



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7.10 Appendix J: Sample of completed interview schedule (elected parent)

ELECTED PARENT

1. **Your age/ Gender** 45 Male
2. **Employment:** Motor Industry
3. **Highest level of education:** Matric
4. **Your home language/Ethnic/Cultural/Religion:** English/ Afrikaans
5. **Relations to the learner(s) attending the school:** Parent
6. **Years serving as SGB member/Number of terms:** 6yrs/ 2 terms

7. Describe your duties as member of SGB.

- Basically the overall responsibility of SGB is school governance. School governance, although is not a duty, it is a responsibility of the SGB to work hand in hand with the School Management Team (SMT), because SMT is there to manage the school, the SGB is there to govern, so there has to be a working relation between the two, to see the success of the school. When it comes to governance, there are things need to be shared, responsibilities like financial management, Administration, Discipline also the upkeep or maintenance of the school that is government property. We are actually stewards when it regards the school structure itself.

8. REPRESENTATION requires that you act as `mediator` between the parent-body and the school-body.

(a) Describe how you go about performing this `mediator role`. Give some examples of what you do, when and why?

- School governing body consists of different components, e.g. parent, student and teacher component. So teacher component represent teachers, parent component represent parents and student component represent learners. SGB parents go to the school with the mandate from the parents and then report back to the parents regarding the activities and everything else that happens at school. We are the link; we represent one thousand plus parents who have children at the school.

Mediator role – The manner in which we go about obviously we have our own SGB meetings and in-between, there are visits for the school and there are discussions that take place at the school in-between those meetings. So there is a constant communication between the school and the SGB. Then when we have PTA meetings, which are when we report back to the parents, as what happens at the school. And also you get fresh mandates from the parents at the PTA meetings as to what the parents expect or things that they would like or need to be initiated at the school. The meetings are basically more the type of forum where you actually interact with the parents, where you act as this link between parents and the school. Sometimes there are issues that need to be brought under the parent's attention urgently. So there, obviously there will be letters that go out or handed out to the children, so the chairperson of the SGB and the Principal will co-sign, so that the parent could see that it is not something that comes from the Principal but it's a collective initiative.

Mediator (where, why and when) – Meetings are actually held at the school, we use a dining hall. Our meetings start at seven O'clock in the evenings. We try to have PTSA meetings every quarter, although I think the minimum is two meetings per year. We try to have it every quarter, so that is where this mediation takes place.

We also have smaller groups because obviously now you call PTSA meetings for the parents of One thousand plus learners, now you do not `always` get good turnout and in that respect you have to be innovative, so you start calling smaller groups like, in grades or per grades, start from grade eight(8) t till grade twelve(12), and concentrate on those groups and call those parents so that you have a bigger group of people , then they are “shy”(show with two fingers in both hands). And they do not want to talk. You know if it is a smaller group they are able to share their views.

(b) How you get to know the interests/needs/demands/suggestions of a larger parent body that you represent? Describe in detail how this happens and give examples.

-Fortunately or unfortunately, we do have parents that come forward and talk to one of the SGB member and say” I think this is not how we should do certain things,” but most of the time we (SGB) encourage them to, if they have got a view/suggestion or a complaint, they (parents) should do it in writing, so that we can have something in writing that we can take it forward. **Example:** Last year I had a parent who had a daughter in matric, now we do encourage our pupils, obviously we cannot tell the pupils not to come to school because of school fees that is out of the question. But we encourage our pupils that before the matric farewell, they must have paid up all their school fees, so basically what happens is, we have meetings and we discussed this, as I said this earlier on that we are trying to target certain groups to speak to them aside and not in front of the larger group. This specific parent came to see me in my house, because she could not afford to pay the school fees, her child was in arrears, and there was a problem between her and her husband, they were having a divorce and there was just a normal family problem, she came and she explained it to me, so parent do come forward and raise their views or problems. I took this to the broader SGB, and we discussed it, not to say we wanted to make an exceptions, but also to discuss each case on its merits, that we don`t just generalize sometimes. So that is an example of a parent coming forward raising an issue to SGB member. WE discussed it, and the decision that we came to, I had to take back and speak to the `parent` and we came to some sort of an agreement that the school could be happy and the parent as well and obviously the child, because any child wants to go to the farewell, there is no child who would not love not to go to the matric dance. But unfortunately side of it, is just a parent who does not live In our area/community, who lives in a rural area, who are little bit difficult to reach them, but we try by all means to reach them as well.

© What do you then do with these interests/needs views/suggestions/demands once you have collected them? How do you tackle them? Do you package and convey these interests/needs etc of different parents to members of the SGB?

-Always we try to tackle all the problems that come our way. In between meetings as mentioned earlier on, there are discussions taking place, so we , if there are needs/interests that need to be dealt with, we even sacrifice and have meetings that last up to 12 midnight if need be.

(d) Mention one incident/experience of representation that you really like, and describe what happened there to make it that way?

In 2008, I was phoned by the principal of the school because we had a shortage of teachers at the school, still not that we don`t have it anymore but it is better. We had

a growth shortage of teachers. He said" listen Mr. Shaw, the Matrics had a meeting here and they are now threatening to march to the Department of Education in Fort Beaufort, because they were affected by this shortage of teachers'. I had to immediately jump into my car went into the school, because learners were leaving the school without permission. Secondly parent entrusted that their children are at school. Parents had an impression that their children are at school. Now the children were marching and if something happens to them, the school will be in trouble. Thirdly, it was very hot that day, children were exposed to heat and other dangers on the road. I went to school and when I got there, we gathered them in an Assembly court again, because they were all scattered, demanding for the gates to be unlocked so we had a quick assembly and I asked them, "people what is a situation? And they say there were adamant that they want to march to the Department of Education, because they are "fed-up", they were actually scared and concerned that they might fail because of the teacher shortage, so unfortunately I was able to calm the situation, and convince them otherwise that, marching won't solve the problem. We were able to highlight the dangers and risks that we would have been exposed to if they would march to the Department. What we agreed on was that, I asked them (learners), rather go home and tell you parents that we will have an urgent meeting tonight, with your parents, because we do not want to leave your parents behind, we might solve this and we will have a stronger voice, if your parents are involved. So we gave them letters (there was a letter drafted), and I co-sign with the Principal, and the learners got the letters and at the school they went home. In the evening 95% of Matric parents attended the meeting, as the shortage of most teachers were in matric.

Meeting started in a high emotions but it ended up in a constructive manner, it ended in a cordial manner, because there was a lot of trust amongst us, because at first the parents were accusing the principal of not enough, to guarantee the shortage to be sorted out, but we actually had a highlight with parents and we convinced them that, "listen the Principal is not working alone, He is working with the SGB, so if the Principal gets blamed we should be blamed as well as parents, because under 50% attendance and all those things we spoke about them in those meetings. And eventually we had a five point plan, that came out of the meeting, so the next day, as we decided in that meeting that not only the SGB will go out and see the District Manager but also, we selected some parents to accompany us and see how we do things, that they have a better understanding of the types of challenges that we have when we go there. They came with us, they saw for themselves, but fortunately that problem has gradually been solved.

Dislike – The incident that I dislike most about representing the parents, is the lack of interest, lack of interest is when parents do not pay the school fees, they do not come to meetings, they do not sign the children`s books. It is not nice to represent parents when it comes to that. You always try to push issues and try to solve problems but you feel you are not having the support of the parents, because when you call PTSA meeting you get less than 50% attendance, we got about 1200, although most children have more than one parent, so we could say we demand one thousand six hundred of 1800 but you never get that and it is the issue I dislike in representing parents.

-Have you ever ask them why they do not co-operate?

-Parents always looking for excuses, whether it is valid or not, it needs to be tested but how? I do not know, because they always claim that they do not get letters inviting them to the meetings. But at some stage we even sent letters to churches because our parents are members of churches, so the notices could be read out in church services inviting parents. At one stage, we even asked the radio Ciskei to announce the meeting. We also asked radio Mhlobo wenene, Algoa but they could not turn up, but when their learners wanted to march to the Office, the majority attended the meeting. Their main argument or excuses is that they do not know about the meetings. Although every single child gets a letter, even if there are two children in one house, each child gets a letter.

9. Your community consists of parents of racial groups other than your own. How has this impacted on your role as parent-representative? What have you or they had to do differently to reach out to them (you)? Describe in details and give examples.

-Impacted very broadly because we have to have understanding, have to have tolerance regarding other racial groups, and their cultures and the ways of doing things because now we have to understand when the boys (Black boys) had to go to the bush during holidays, when he comes back in July, he acts bit differently, maybe although the school has uniform, the boys might take chances trying to wear his traditional attire, since he comes from the bush. Its how we handle those situations, because we come from a backgrounds were we only had `coloured children~ we knew how to handle coloured children and their behaviors. At one stage we even had White kids at school, but you have to have tolerance and understanding. Before you tackle any problem, you have to go back a step and standstill, and think out if the box, do not think as a coloured, if I may call it that, but think as a South African with 11 Nationalities and 11 Cultures. So that has impacted us – Multiracial schools. We have to adapt to the situation.

What does the school policy say and why don`t you stick to the Policy?

-Hey man, all I can say, is that one has to adapt to the situation.