

## ENHANCING THE PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN OUR SCHOOLS NEEDS A RUDIMENTARY EDUCATION FROM GOVERNORS

Raymond Mkatoko Maluleke

Tshwane University of Technology, 159 Nana Sita, Pretoria 0001

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56293/IJASR.2024.5706>

IJASR 2024

VOLUME 7

ISSUE 1 JANUARY – FEBRUARY

ISSN: 2581-7876

**Abstract:** This study intends to expose the importance of vigorous trainings within the South African school education spectrum in relation to school governing bodies in particularly but not limited to only school governors. The role played by school governing bodies in our schools are vital to the development or demise of such institution therefore important to have governors who could able to read and write either in their mother tongue or medium of instruction. Since the dawn of democracy in 1994 there has been legislation established to include school governing bodies in the affair of our schools abolishing the apartheid education act that separated citizens based on their tribes, religions and ethnic groups. The inception of the legislation in 1996 started with transformation in abolishing the school committee which was used as the core institution of governance during apartheid regime. However, governing body despite affording the parents and guardians the absolute authority to run their affairs where their children learn. Schools in urban areas do not suffer from this challenge of having high illiteracy amongst its governors like in rural and township schools where the principal are main governors.

This study recommends the election of governors with rudimentary education as they will be expected to develop policies, make appointments and make recommendations as well as set targets in their respective schools where they are elected to govern. During the quarterly and annual meetings they will be expected to make presentations verbal and non-verbal for the progress or shortcomings experienced by the school and therefore they should be in possession of the skills to be applied in communicating with all stakeholders involved in the undertaking of such institution as the bar to hold whoever is assigned with whatever task is not compromised and report is prioritized for shareholders and stakeholders as well as the school community with huge interests of the development of such institution in their localities. Development of policies by governors for implementation by the accounting officers needs some level of skills and knowledge to perform such functions hence is very important to go through continuous trainings before resumption of duties where it will be emphasized the importance of consulting and reporting back to the major shareholders and stakeholders who participated in the elections of those governors in order to access the assigned duties if are carried out accordingly to achieve the common goal of all parties involved. Governors without the necessary skills do compromise the importance of governance as they delegate their functions to the principals and avoid quarterly and annual meetings at all cost to avoid accountability and difficult questions. They are likely to skip meetings as they feel that their presence could not serve a meaningful purpose in the meeting when issues are deliberated for the benefit of their children and community at large.

**Keywords:** School governing bodies; parents; school community; educators; rudimentary education; grade 12; SASA; Section 20; Section 21; NDP-2030 Vision; trainings and systems

### 1.1 Introduction

The whole aim of the study is to enhance performance of School Governing Bodies in Vhembe District public schools in order to enable them to adhere to the basic principles of good leadership and good governance in which ultimately could improve the results particularly in Maths education and Science. Education is vital to the development of South Africa. The value of education should be good enough in order for learners to acquire valuable skill and knowledge in the international economy. The norm of education is the corner stone of economic development and transformation (Bayat, Louw & Rena, 2014: 53). In South Africa, there is legislation that allows

parents and communities to work with the South African Department of Basic Education (SADBE, 2020: 1-16). Ensuring the quality of education is a key mandate of the SADBE and provincial offices of the SADBE. Enabling pupils in primary schools to master basic numeracy, reading and writing skills is essential for laying the foundation for a successful teaching and learning system at the secondary school level.

In recent years, the Limpopo Province Provincial Department of Education has established school governing bodies with a view to improve the quality of school level education in public schools. Studies conducted by Duma, Kapueja & Khanyile (2011:51) have found that it is essential for members of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) to be given the necessary training in areas related to leadership, accountability, the recruitment of employees, report writing, presentation of research reports and conducting quality audit exercises in public schools. Studies by Hall and De Lannoy (2019: 14) have highlighted the need for accountability and transparency among school governing board members and inspectors.

Enhancing the quality of education in public schools is vital for producing suitably trained and competent school level graduates. This, in turn, will have a positive effect on the national economy (Harry, Chinyamurindi & Mjoli, 2018: 1-10). Studies by Anderson-Butcher and Aston (2014: 37-45) have pointed out that school level education is a societal issue that needs participation from all stakeholders. All relevant stakeholders must be able to play their role in ensuring quality school level education in order for learners to be able to contribute positively to the economic growth of South Africa (Maluleke, 2014: 11; Maponya, 2010; Rangongo, Mohlakwana & Beckmann, 2016: 24-29).

Departments of Education and SGBs should work in close collaboration in order for SGBs to be effective. Departments of Education must make sure that School Governing Body members are equipped enough to achieve their responsibilities effectively. Departments must provide SGBs with training opportunities, followed by assessment tests. SGBs should consist of duly trained and competent members as a means of ensuring competence at the level of SGBs. Members of SGBs should be assessed on a regular basis by way of giving them trainings and tests. Circuit managers are allowed by Sections 19(1)(b) & 19(2)(b) of the Act to assess the suitability and competence of members of SGBs in all South African public schools. Study by Mestry (2018: 385-400) has pointed out that the assessment of SGBs is vital for ensuring the quality of school level education in poorly resourced South African public schools. One of the aims of the study is to assess and evaluate the suitability of members of SGBs in public schools in Vhembe District.

Learners need to acquire skills to peruse and write perfectly so that they can learn different concepts adequately and with ease. This task can only be ensured if SGBs are held accountable to all relevant stakeholders. If this can be done the results could improve immensely in our schools because all the stakeholders will be competent in carrying out their duties without expecting the principal to lead in monitoring them about what to do as mandated by the South African Constitution. The South African Government must empower SGBs to make decisions in terms of the Act. Capacity building is particularly important for all SGBs in the developing countries, especially in South African public schools (Mahlangu, 2008:43). The researcher believes that capacity building is possible to happen when the governors have got rudimentary education as individuals. Where the parents lack such skills and knowledge the principals do take advantage of the system for their own personal gains using the same legal structure in place.

The management of public schools requires discipline, commitment and respect for good leadership and governance (Worku, 2019: 109-120). The key to ensuring enough commitment and discipline in public schools is to foster accountability, transparency and respect for the basic principles of accountability, transparency, fairness and objectivity. All relevant stakeholders must be allowed to have a say on the quality of education provided to pupils enrolled in public schools. Study by Maluleke (2014:40) states that partnerships with parents should be established at the school level in order to provide them with the skills and knowledge needed to participate effectively in their children's education.

The democratically elected SGBs could be effective if the parents elect knowledgeable people to be in the helm of these structures. The people with the right skills should come forward in convincing other constituencies that they can do the right job on behalf of the major stakeholders and shareholders of the education system where the school is located as one of their assets/instruments to use to produce useful products which will transform its societies to be a good place to live in as the main role that could be played by the education in any society/country, as people

do live better lives if they are educated as they can able to venture in formal markets with the skills they have of which that will make them contribute to their societies in one way or another once they start having an income also to be leaders of different community structures for the benefit of all who live in such areas.

## 1.2 Objectives of the study

- To identify key predictors for enhancing performance of School Governing Bodies in order to ensure adherence to good leadership and corporate governance principles among SGBs in public schools and few independent schools around in Vhembe District;
- To assess and evaluate the quality of partnership amongst all affected parties; and
- To determine whether the applicable system has appropriate institutional policies for ensuring sound governance and administration in education;

## 2. Literature review

The South African Education System needs urgent action. The dawn of democracy in South Africa has seen the passing of legislation specifying the participation of various stakeholders in our schools. The passage of legislation outlining the role of different stakeholders in school governance has been a feature of South Africa's democratic transition (Mosoge & Van der Westhuizen, 1997:67). This inception gave schools mandate to govern and run their own affairs for the benefit of their learners. Schools are now governed by elected school governing bodies (SGBs) who develop policies, adopt constitutions, monitor implementations of agreed decisions, support the professional performance and administrative duties in making sure that schools perform their duties effectively and efficiently to attain quality results (Maluleke, Cassim & Karodia, 2016:3)

Partnership in education between social structures with an interest in education is important for the effective provision of education and although it was not fully acknowledged in the past by the State, it is extended in the current democratic era (Dekker & Van Schalkwyk, 1995:483). The single most important investment any country can make to its people is education. It has intrinsic and instrumental value in creating societies that are better able to respond to the challenges of the 21st century (NDP-2030, 2012:296). The SGB may solicit the voluntarily service of parents who have expertise in particular 'problem' subjects of the school e.g., Physical Science, Natural Science, Mathematics or Accounting. In a situation where none of their members or parents can teach any of the 'problem' subjects the governing body can create an "SGB teaching post", engage the services of an experienced and qualified educator to teach the learners till such time that the department of education offers the school a grant to appoint the teacher permanently (Quan-Baffour, 2006:41). As a researcher I am of the view that to see this happening in our schools National Planning Commission should oversee its product which is National Development Plan (NDP) if infrastructures and resources are channeled to all schools and if all stakeholders are embraced in making our education inclusive to all community structures in order to realise good governance and administration as envisaged by this plan.

According to SASA 84 of 1996, Section 16(2) posits that a governing body has a trusting relationship with the school and Section 16(3) states that the professional management of a public school must be undertaken by the principal under the authority of the Head of Department, subject to this Act and any applicable provincial law. The School Act distinguishes between governance and professional management, assigning the former to the SGB and the latter to the senior management team (SMT) of the school (Naidu et al, 2008:154). The researcher believes that the mandate of the governors and administrators should be to complement each other in terms of sharing responsibility in the education of a child rather than competing for roles in the education system. According to SASA 84 of 1996, Section 19 (1) (a & b) provides a platform for the extensive training towards governors that is supposed to run continuously for the benefit of the governors to grasp the contents of SASA in relation to the functions of the governing bodies and clearly distinguish the professional role to be played by the principal of the school and the governing part assigned to the governors of which the two complement each other, it would be of utmost importance in taking our SGBs to another level by issuing them with competency certificate once they have completed such training so that they could perform their duties and take full accountability for the benefit of the school.

School governance is regarded as an act of determining policy and rules by which a school is to be organised and controlled, which includes ensuring that such rules and policies are carried out effectively (Maile, 2002:1). This implies that the SGB, promoting the best interests of the school and, in particular, of learners, is responsible for developing a strategy for ensuring that quality education is provided for the learners (Fox, 2003) cited by Xaba (2004: 314). Study by Xaba (2004:314) cites that the SGB does this through monitoring and evaluating the implementation thereof. In other words, the SGB formulates a strategy for the achievement of the school's vision and mission whilst the principal and staff are responsible for the implementation thereof. The researcher posits that the roles of the two are clearly defined but could encounter challenge if the governors do not have the necessary skills to formulate those strategies for implementation by the principals and staff.

Section 19 of SASA 84 of 1996 states the Head of Department must establish a programme to provide introductory training for newly elected governing bodies to enable them to perform their functions; and provide continuing training to govern bodies to promote the effective performance of their functions, as well as to enable them to assume additional duties. The Head of Department must ensure that principals and other officers of the educational department render all necessary assistance to governing bodies in the performance of their functions in terms of this Act. The researcher posits that based on the obligatory duty raised above upon the Head of Department, it is inevitable that schools collaborate with other school communities in that order to achieve the intended outcomes of quality education in our education system that will contribute positively to the growth of our economy.

Section 19 of SASA 84 of 1996 requires the HOD to provide introductory training for newly elected governing bodies in order for them to carry out their duties effectively of which extensive training to them is so important as they are expected to govern finances as one of their primary responsibilities for ensuring that their school funds are well spent (Nash, 2015:16). The competence of the governance is mostly majored by how it manages its finances, as well as how it uses them. My deduction to this is that the parents has a constitutional obligation to our education system, but parents who are less educated are likely to shift their responsibilities to the teachers and head masters, but those who are well informed are in a good position to execute their obligations without that much hassle.

According to Beckmann & Visser (1999:158 & 160) argued that further training is essential to ensure the efficient and effective participation of various stakeholders in the fields of governance and management of schools, to enhance the quality of education provided to learners in the whole country in totality. The researcher believes that education authorities need to train SGB members vigorously in order to eliminate potentially severe problems that could defeat the whole purpose of public school SGBs as democratic mechanism to localise governance. The purpose of training these governors is to assist the inexperienced governors to perform their required functions with confidence (Mahlangu, 2008:50). Study by Van Wyk (2004:54) recommends that the training offered to the SGBs should be offered in their mother tongue and not the language that suit their providers.

Newly elected governing bodies and departmental officials who are involved with school governance at school level should be trained in the content and conditions of the SASA, and about what their respective duties and responsibilities entail. The training of school governing body members and departmental officials should be of a high standard and should be presented professionally. The training should be designed to accommodate different groups in SGBs and trainers should be informed beforehand of these differences, abilities, and skills of the group to be trained, to ensure full participation and development for all. During such training session's mutual agreement should be reached concerning interpretation of the education law in question and the application of these conditions and regulations in practice (Clase, Kok & Van der Merwe, 2007:260). The researcher is of the view that governors with rudimentary education will actively participate than illiterate governors.

Financial school management preparation should be practice-based, and it should include the following topics:

- The legislative structure that governs the handling of financial schools.
- The legal framework that regulates the operation of financial schools.
- It is important to receive training in the administration of school fees.
- Budgeting is part of financial planning.
- Financial management.
- Financial command.

- Information Technology in schools.

According to Heystek (2004:7), for parents to be able to perform the expected policy and financial functions, they must have the ability to read and understand the policies in order to implement them and the legislation. Therefore, education is a fundamental aspect in the development of the “wide range of skills and capacity that one needs in order to deal with the complex issues and tasks that SGBs are expected to fulfil” (Van Wyk: 2004:54). These governors should also be given ongoing training to help them perform their duties more effectively or to allow them to take on new responsibilities (Mestry, 2006:32). The shift to decentralised school governance and management requires SGB members to develop a wide range of skills and capacity to deal with the complex issues and tasks they are expected to fulfill. Teachers often mentioned the necessity of providing appropriate training for school governors, particularly the parent representatives. They also suggested also suggested that the SGB members should receive copies of the SASA in their own language and undergo training on the content thereof by people fluent in the local vernacular. One teacher maintained: “*The workshops for the training of SGBs should be improved. Follow-ups should be made to evaluate theory performance. No follow-ups, no improvement.*” My deduction on the experience raised by teachers above is very accurate without vigorous training in their mother tongue nothing will be achieved by government on governance.

Research conducted by Van Wyk (2007:137) states that the Department of Education must educate parents to at least the fourth or sixth grade level. Educators also believed that parents who had received training should be given a certificate. Some even suggested that parents serving on the SGB be compensated in order to motivate them to complete their tasks within the SGB structure. Study by Nash (2015:111) emphasizes that paying school governing bodies for their role as governors is subject to strict legal restrictions. On a personal level, these sentiments shared above for the compensation on the undertaken work of governance and the minimum level of literacy for eligibility to serve in the school governing bodies structures could produce quality results as the governance would be held accountable by the school community who elected them with mandate to remove them. This could stimulate integrity, pride, enthusiasm and more responsibilities from the elected governors to carry out the mandate on behalf of the school community.

Study by Maluleke, Cassim & Karodia (2016:7) argues that compensation could encourage active participation by those with good skills in school administration, in contrast to the majority of township and rural school SGBs, which are mostly remotely controlled by the influence and direction of principals. The researcher believes that compensation could be viewed as appreciation for outstanding work done because the members have been offering their services for free for nearly 20 years and have never complained despite being one of the few governance structures that do not enjoy such benefits as counter-partners doing the same job for government entities who are compensated for their service. The current situation in the schools may be regarded as mistreatment by the department and other stakeholders who do not appreciate the outstanding job being done by SGB members in terms of financial benefits, which leads to the manipulation of corruption as they see the funds being deposited and end up conniving with principals to forge ghost work by ghost quotations that end up being paid a lot.

Study by Mbatsane (2006:128) contends that while the school's governors are either illiterate or have little knowledge when it comes to financial matters, the principal may use the delegation of financial tasks to pursue his/her own goals at the expense of the school. In a financial context, accountability is summarized very succinctly by Lello (1979:6), when he states that if money is allocated it should be accounted for. For the headmaster this means he or she must manage funds responsibly and will be held accountable to parents, the governing body, and the department. Study by Heystek (2002:7) argues that in order for parents to perform the expected policy and financial functions, they must be able to read and comprehend the policies in order to implement them, as well as the legislation. The researcher believes that version by Heystek strengthens the notion that governors who have rudimentary education should be elected in order to hold the headmasters accountable for the delegated function by the Head of the Department and the governors.

Governing bodies are responsible for ensuring that school funds are spent wisely (Nash, 2015:16). “The SGB is not well trained that is why they do not know what is expected of them with regard to finances, they only sign cheques, they do not work according to the budget” (Van Wyk, 2004:52). My deduction to this is that if the school has illiterate governors elected to govern, it is likely to use the school finances for their personal benefits than for the intended purpose as they will not be held accountable.

Study by Van Wyk (2004:55) maintains that the competence of members of the SGB directly relates to the amount of training received. Thus, this necessitates intensive training if the skills and competencies of SGB members are to be enhanced. A parent who had been trained expressed his opinion: “*Without training we can fumble a lot but with training we can see where we are going.*” Educators also felt that parents who had received some form of training should be issued with a certificate (Van Wyk, 2007:137). The researcher posits that once the department has addressed the issue of effective training for the members, the SGBs could be in a good position to set up different committees themselves as allowed by law with a clear understanding that the school needs several systems in place if it is to run effectively and efficiently for the benefit of all stakeholders who give education a first priority in their localities. This could be interpreted by the actions the Head of Department dedicates to the governors in terms of SASA 84 of 1996, Section 19, which squarely stated that the Head of Department has to provide training to the governors and ensure that the principals render all necessary assistance to governing bodies in the performance of their functions in terms of this Act. That could mean that the principals do not stand against the governors but assists them to perform their duties as assigned by this Act.

In terms of SASA 84 of 1996, Section 62(1), the Member of the Executive (MEC) may, subject to such conditions as he or she may determine, delegate any power conferred upon him or her by or under this Act to the Head of Department or an officer, except the power to publish a notice and the power to decide an appeal lodged with him or her in terms of this Act. In terms of SASA 84 of 1996, Section 18(1) states that subject to this Act and any applicable provincial law, the governing body of a public school must function in terms of a Constitution which complies with the minimum requirements determined by the Member of the Executive Council by notice in the Provincial Gazette. The researcher is of the view that based on these acts alluded above, it came to his attention that the roles that are played by the governing body, as well as the Head of Department are duties assigned by the MEC in that specific province. To prevent the rift between governors and principals, the MEC should have undertaken this function of training as the governors themselves, rather than delegating it to the HOD who often delegates this function to the principals. The principals then has to take these functions to the governors who latter make policies to govern the same principals who trained them how to interpret and develop policies. Hence, a rift sometimes occurs between the two as to who should do what, despite the explicit mention of the law on what should be done by whom.

SASA 84 of 1996, Section 62(3) states that a delegation under subsection (1) or (2) does not prevent the Member of the Executive Council or Head of Department from exercising such power or perform such duties. The researcher posits that MEC should always play an effective oversight role in order to intervene urgently if things are not done properly in that province where he or she is the MEC to prevent the escalation of matters to the national office.

The functions of SGBs are divided into two compulsory functions that must be performed by all SGBs and optional functions these SGBs may perform if they have the requisite skills (Potgieter, Visser, Van Der Bank, Mothata & Squelch, 1997:35). The roles of all governing bodies in public schools are outlined in Section 20 of SASA 84 of 1996, where the school governing bodies are subject to this by carrying out the following functions:

- Promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school;
- Adopt a constitution;
- Develop the mission statement of the school;
- Adopt a code of conduct for learners at the school;
- Support the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions;
- Determine times of the school day consistent with any applicable conditions of employment of staff at the school;
- Determine the admission policy of such school as the governing body;
- Determine the language policy of the school subject to the Republic of South Africa's Constitution;
- Administrate and manage the school's buildings, including land and grounds occupied by the school, including, if necessary, school hostels;
- Encourage parents, students, educators, and other members of the school community to volunteer at the

school;

- Recommend the appointment of educators at the institution to the Head of Department, pursuant to the Employment of Educators Act of 1998 (Act No.76 of 1998) and the Labour Relations Act of 1995 (Act No.66 of 1995);
- Recommend the appointment of non-educator staff at the school to the Head of Department, pursuant to the Public Service Act of 1994 (Proclamation No.103 of 1994) and the Labour Relations Act of 1995. (Act No. 66 of 1995);
- A public school can establish posts for educators and non-educators to employ them in addition to the establishment determined by the Member of the Executive Council in terms of section 3(1) of the Educators' Employment Act, 1994, and the Public Service Act, 1994 (Proclamation No.103 of 1994), subject to this Act, the Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act No.66 of 1995), and any other applicable law;
- A public school can only hire an educator in a position established under the Act if that educator is registered with the South African Council of Education;
- The governing body of a public school must include ample information of any positions envisaged in terms of subsections (4) and (5), including the projected costs relating to the jobs of workers in such posts and the manner in which such costs are proposed to be met, when presenting the annual budget contemplated in section 38;
- Enable appropriate use of the school's facilities for instructive programs not performed by the school at the request of the Head of Department under equal conditions decided by the Head of Department;
- Discharge any other duties placed on them by or under this Act, as well as any other functions decided by the Minister or the MEC to be compatible with this Act.

The governing body may allow fair use of the school's facilities for community, social, and school fund-raising purposes, subject to the governing body's reasonable and equitable conditions, which may include levying a fee or tariff that benefits the school.

The researcher posits that with aforementioned functions demonstrate that for any public school to be effective and efficient, a well-informed SGB with rudimentary and/or sound literacy must be at the helm of governance in order for the school to achieve the anticipated government priorities, which are to create a conducive environment for teaching and learning that will produce quality education for the development of children.

For the school to run properly, it should have various school committees which are created to assist the management to carry out its professional duties without difficulties. Further concern is expressed by Bush and Heystek (2003:136), that research done in Gauteng reveals that most SGBs have not been proactive in formulating the necessary policies and committees to govern schools. Many policies and committees are not in place, including the SGB constitutions because they lack the confidence or skills to do so themselves. Instead, the parents rely on the principal to do the work for them because of their low literacy level. Beckmann & Visser (1999:159) argued that the success of all the programmes and committees should be assessed and be refined regularly. The researcher is of the view that to have committees which are established to support the management to carry out professional duties, governors should be educated or having rudimentary education to sit in some of these committees like finance committee whereby the treasurer is the chairperson of this committee and has to sit each and every month to have a look at the school state of affairs financially.

### 3. Research Methodology

The design of study is descriptive and cross-sectional. Quantitative methods of data analyses will be used in the study mainly. According to Bryman (2015), a descriptive study design is suitable for an exploratory study of this kind. According to Maluleke (2014:48) and Terry (1977:179), a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analyses are appropriate for this kind of study.

A qualitative research method and a quantitative methods would prevail in this study though quantitative would be applied mainly in the study than qualitative method, people like School Governing Body members, school clerks, educators, principals, circuit officials and circuit managers, could be used to give information through tested means like interviews and Delphi technique method in a form of questionnaires as these people mentioned above have got

good accounts for incidents which take place in their operation of control and all the above schools to be used do have different scenarios in terms of how the SGB has played their roles in improving the performance of their respective schools.

Quantitative research methodology being regarded as realism or positivism in uncovering the existing truth in explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods in particular statistics (Aliaga & Gunderson:2000). The results produced by different schools to be used in gathering data will explore this method in comparing the performance of those four schools in similar period since 2014 up to now in studying and analysing the pattern of how they performed in a decade. Data was then captured in Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) then data analysis commenced (Bayat, Louw & Rena,2014:186).

Quantitative research design that was measurable, assessable and assessment based in terms of the results the schools have achieved within a certain period could be used as the tool to prove the performance of the school in this regard of which that will demonstrate if the SGB has managed to take out the school from poor performing to better performing state through its involvements and its strategies which have been inculcated by the school to produce the expected results.

#### 4. Findings of the study

##### 4.1 Adequate training to the governors

Study by Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge & Ncgobo (2008:105) believes that through the sponsorship and creation of school governing bodies, schools already play an important role in this matter. Parents should be empowered through capacity building programmes that extend beyond basic literacy (Mncube & Mafora, 2013:19). The participants in the present research proposed certain ways in which parents could be encouraged to participate more fully on SGBs, including the payments of those parents who are SGB members, and the establishment of regulatory mechanisms to discipline lazy or uncooperative members. In addition, the participants are of the opinion that the following would contribute to the effective functioning of the SGBs: the co-option of parents with relevant skills; the valorization, recognition and appreciation of those parents who are school governors; the election of parents with relevant skills, even if such parents do not have children in attendance at the school (Mncube & Mafora, 2013:22).

Thus, Mncube & Mafora (2013:20) cited Tsotetsi et al.(2008) who insisted that training be provided for the SGB in order for them to function effectively. The competence of members of the SGB directly relates to the amount of training received (Van Wyk, 2004:55 cited by Maluleke, Cassim & Karodia, 2016:28). Study by Vilakazi (2019:18) posits that SGBs are run by unqualified parents. Study by Maluleke (2014:35) cited Van Wyk (1998:33) who stated that illiterate parents are unable to keep up with new educational problems and instead delegate their responsibilities to school principals, resulting in them being passive participants. Researcher is of the view that to empower governors who are in a high state of illiteracy, the department should train them using their mother tongue in order to stimulate participation and understanding on policy prescripts by the governors as this will trigger their active involvement and their acceptance of the challenges ahead of them.

Some senior educators and principals believe that training should be prioritised by the department of education to be provided extensively until it is seen that the governors could able to execute their constitutional obligations so that sound governance should be a prime of our public schools in order to get intended quality results which could be triggered by effective and efficient governance in place in our schools but with the undertaking which is in place at the moment the department of education is only doing damp squib duty at the expense of governors who are expected to stabilise and revitalise all public schools in order to attain quality results (Maluleke, Cassim & Karodia, 2016:29).

Do you believe that governors are adequately supported and empowered by the Department of Education to perform their obligation in terms of giving them the adequate training so that they may know their duties and what to do at any given situation in relation to governance which is their legal mandate?



School Governing Bodies (SGBs) members must be trained on the basic principles of good governance on a regular basis:

School Governing Bodies					Educator					Circuit Office Official				
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1	1	5	12	7	0	2	1	38	17	3	1	6	9	1
4%	4%	19%	44%	26%	0%	3%	2%	66%	29%	15%	5%	30%	45%	5%
100%					100%					100%				

70% of governors believe that they should be trained on the basic principles of god governance on a regular basis.

95% of educators believe that this aspect of training SGB members is very important to the survival of the school as well on how professional the school could be run. Once SGB members are well informed about what is expected of them such space should be afforded to them in terms of SASA 84 of 1996, S19(1 & 2).

Only 50% of the circuit officials do support this idea and another 50% does not support the call but they are the ones charged with such responsibilities in terms of section 19(2).

On assessment of management and leadership when SGB members are elected into governance, almost 89% of the governors support that they should be having a certain level of management and leadership in order to qualify to be elected despite being a parent or guardian.

The SGB members should be trained vigorously on their whole mandate of governance including to recommend and appoint personnel at the school in terms of SASA 84 of 1996, S20(1)(i & j) & S20(4 & 5) in order to understand the policies and set realistic targets as well as to peruse and understand circulars inviting them to attend workshops rather than waiting for the school managers to inform them verbally other than giving them the circular to read for themselves.

Study by Van der Berg, Taylor, Gustafsson, Spaul & Armstrong (2011:3) advises that relationships of accountability and support among partners and stakeholders should be fostered within the school system as well as in school communities. They envisaged an instructional structure, i.e. at national, provincial and school level, designed to avoid the breakdown of teaching and learning due to a lack of capacity. In such a supportive structure there is better alignment of the interests as well as incentives of partners and stakeholders, towards the common goal of educational improvement. Study by Clarke (2007:175) posits that once the parents have been elected, and prior to the first formal meeting of a newly constituted board, it is important that the principal brief them fully about their duties and responsibilities and provide them with the information that they may need to properly fulfill their governance duties.

School community refers to people who, by virtue of sharing the same geographical locality, have over the years developed and adopted shared interests, needs, desires, norms, precepts, values and culture(s) that bind them together as a unit (Naidu et al,2008:129). The prospect of an exodus of ordinary members of the public could pave the way, it has been felt, for political activities to dominate new bodies as they reconstitute, or failing that, that schools could find governing bodies dominated by the retired and semi-retired. Of course, schools have good retired people and are glad of the time they give, but it is not healthy for an institution serving the needs of the young ones to have only such volunteers (West, 1993:101).

One governor described how her waking up to this point had initially raised laughter from other governor colleagues at the end of governor training day (West, 1993:106):

Interesting views expressed by governors from both teacher-wing and parent-wing but pointing fingers at the department of education, majority believe that this aspect is not been attended adequately by the department as it is likely to be done once after the elections of the governors into the office though the SGB are basically the owners of the schools and therefore should be well equipped to govern the schools in order to prevent crisis as well as to professionalize the sector at the level of operations. Governors agree that workshops or trainings are provided by

the department but very not extensively though few governors are of the view that these workshops do help them immensely to grasp and understand how to perform their constitutional obligations.

Study by Clarke (2007:175) argues that those parents who are involved in the school choose to be involved because they believe that it is in the best interest of the children to do so and/or because they are people with a sense of duty and a spirit of service. This is why they are often the best governors. Once you have identified a sufficient number of suitable candidates, it is worth making an effort to obtain a brief CV or profile (10-15) lines, prior to the date of the election meeting, from each candidate, which lists their particular skills, qualifications and interests. Publish these in a single document and distribute copies to each parent who registers to vote, so that the parents are able to make an informed decision about the candidates that they vote for. Time can also be provided prior to the election meeting for candidates to speak briefly about their decision to stand and the contribution that they think they can make were they to be elected.

The researcher shared the same views which do support the argument raised by Clarke above, the current system of electing SGB members at the moment does not provide the platforms illustrated on Clarke's argument when it comes to how best to identify the best governors of the school. These participants believe that there should be a minimum requirement which consider some competencies from the parents who could represent the parents' community at the school of which at the moment is not the case as the method of raising a hand to elect SGB members is a norm if not the standard undertaking by election officers, which in their views do not ensure that the best governors are elected to serve in the school governing bodies in order to professionalize the sector. They are of the views that an academic requirement on top of the current prerequisite could be helpful in electing the governors to serve at this legal structure in order to minimize the manipulation by the educators. The active involvement of governors is not likely to go away, for all schools are now much more directly accountable to their communities for the decisions they take (West, 1993:105).

The researcher is of the view that if the department does heed the call made by Governor B4 in this study to translate all the prescripts used in governance into African languages to maximize full participation from governors elected from parent-wing to serve in the structure, the entire structure would be accountable of its decisions to the school communities than being passive participants which gives the educators such leeway to manipulate them in the structure, if it is difficult to heed such understandable call to cover everyone, the minimum academic requirements should be in place when governors are elected especial from parent-wing so that they may able to understand all the concepts used when carrying out their constitutional obligations in order to own up their decisions in general meeting of the parents community and school community as well as to the department of education.

Mostly, school governing bodies members are assessed on how best they manage the school finances when elected to serve as governors of public schools with fiduciary mandate entrusted upon them (Maluleke, Cassim & Karodia, 2016:18). Perhaps the most relevant duties of a school governing body are its financial responsibilities (Clarke, 2007:280). The governing body of a public school must prepare a budget each year according to guidelines determined by the provincial minister for education, which shows the estimated income and expenditure of the school for the following year. It is clear from the above that the governing body, a public school's financial control is ultimately in the hands, not the principal (Clarke, 2007:281). The researcher believes that those training or running the workshops should be very versatile in conducting workshops which do help members with different backgrounds without making them feel inferior during the presentation as that could derail the mission of such workshop and to the detrimental of the end user, a learner at the school.

The Independent Schools seem to be neglected by the department of education when it comes to providing them with training and workshops though even the public schools governors are not content with how the department is handling this aspect, as they believe that it was supposed to be done in a continuous basis to all SGB members as some believe that three positions are prioritized by the department of education at the expense of others rather than considering all of them to have management and leadership qualities.

Political activism, similarly, is not necessarily a bad thing but no head would relish more than his or her fair share. The governing body needs a mix of people of all ages and active walks of life. This is to reflect the profile of communities (West, 1993:102). A researcher is of the similar opinion that as long as education is a societal issue all

of us from different walks of life in our community should partake for the smooth running of our schools irrespective of age, social status, political affiliation and envisaged benefits one should be expected to relish whilst serving in the governance alongside its challenges but for the improvement of the education which has to benefit the child from the same school-community where we all hail from through corporate citizenship and by virtue of birth. With the support from political activism and governing bodies associations, the department should be rigorously taken into task to play its part without any compromise, a number of studies conducted believed that training of governors is very critical in the success of the schools but the department seems not to be doing enough to fund this aspect adequately in order to accomplish this very important mandate to ensure that the education is governed by competent governors to yield positive results which are intended by the government.

Not shying away from the reality that the South African education system needs urgent action, the NDP suggests that it is important to build national capabilities such as “human capacity, school management, district support, infrastructure and results-oriented mutual accountability between schools and communities”. The focus is on the role that all stakeholders have to play in achieving good educational outcomes that are responsive to community needs and economic development: driving efforts to improve learning outcomes in schools, and districts, and addressing weaknesses in teaching, management, administration support and accountability (Van Deventer, 2016:385). The researcher is of the view that all citizens should parade a meaningful part in the empowerment of the governors to perform their constitutional duties with the necessary support from the district which represents the department of education to build human capacity from both perspectives on a side of parent-wing and teacher-wing as equal partners for the benefit of the school as a whole, which will eventual improve the state of affairs in the school community through quality education which could be received through effective partnership and cooperation.

The views presented by the respondents do not differ in its interpretation but only in terms of outlining them for consumption by the intended users whom in this case is the researcher, mentor and ultimately the department as well as general public. Majority of them believe that the department is giving the SGBs the required support in order for them to carry out their constitutional obligations despite few participants who do not believe that the department does provide enough support to SGBs though at independent school to empower them is the duty of the school whom in this case will be the accounting officer, this view is supported by Clarke (2007:175) which states that once the parents have been elected, and prior to the first formal meeting of a newly constituted board, it is important that the principal brief them fully about their duties and responsibilities and the information they may need to properly fulfil their governance duties. In terms of SASA 84 of 1996, section 19(2) states that the Head of Department is responsible for ensuring that principals and other officers of the education department provide all necessary assistance to governing bodies in carrying out their functions under this Act. With this act in place, it is very clear that the principals are part and parcel of the department and therefore any failure that is reported to the department squarely falls upon their heads as the accounting officers delegated to perform professional duties in terms of SAS 84 of 1996, section 16(3) and assigned to assist the governance in terms of SASA 84, section 19(2), on the other hand this could mean that the success of the school lies in their hands.

#### 4.2 Retaining the system in place

In your opinion, do you think the system which is in place of governance done by parents and administration done by school managers do benefit the learners and school community at large or there is a need to change this practice to allow only administration to make policies and implement them at their own pace without governance at a play?

Parents must be allowed to sit on the SGBs of public and private institutions in Vhembe District:

School Governing Bodies					Educator					Circuit Office Official				
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
0	0	1	17	9	1	1	5	22	29	1	1	6	10	2
0	0	4%	63%	33%	2%	2%	8%	38%	50%	5%	5%	30%	50%	10%
100%					100%					100%				

Legal guardians must be allowed to sit on the SGBs of public and independent institutions in Vhembe District:

School Governing Bodies					Educator					Circuit Office Official				
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
0	0	2	15	10	2	2	6	23	25	0	1	6	10	3
0	0	7%	56%	37%	3%	3%	10%	40%	43%	0	5%	30%	50%	15%
100%					100%					100%				

Almost 58% of school governing bodies agree that parents and legal guardians should be allowed to sit on legal governance structures of public and independent schools in Vhembe District whereas only 35% strongly agree that parents and legal guardians are inseparable when it comes to parenting of the children but 6% of the governors do not believe in that idea, they are of the view that the school can run without involvement of the parents and legal guardians.

39% of participants from the teaching profession are of the view that parents and legal guardians should be allowed to sit on school governing bodies of public and independent schools in Vhembe District. 47% of educators strongly agree that primary educators and legal custodians should be allowed to sit on the SGBs where decisions of governance of that school are made, whereas 5% do not believe in this concept of bringing the parents and legal guardians in on issues which affect the future of their children.

In terms of the respondents, 50% of the circuit officials agree that the school could not function properly without the voice of the other partners who are parents and legal guardians. 13% strongly agree that parents and legal guardians should be allowed which is the lowest compared to 35% and 47% respectively from school governing bodies and educators. 30% of circuit officials are not so sure if there is a need to bring parents and legal guardians on school governance. 8% of the circuit officials do not support this idea of working with parents and legal guardians on issues which affect their children; they believe that the educators and circuit officials could do better in providing governance and administration without their involvement.

Majority of respondents believe that the current system in place works well as it allows the educators and primary educators to work collectively to benefit one youngster who is a learner in this case, they sustained their views as to why the system should be retained as such in order to allow checks and balances done by the parents, they believe that it is very vital to keep the current system in place to see to it that running of the schools are intact as that could create some pitfalls if the administrators should be left alone to deal with policies and governance at the same time implementing them at their own pace could be disastrous in the system. They believe that administrators should be monitored and be held accountable for their actions on the given assignments by their clients whom in this case are parents. The fact is that parents and teachers do have a lot to share with each other over individual children and most schools in the sample had excellent information systems (West, 1993:71). Study by Naidu et al (2008:191) argues that monitoring helps schools, departments or individuals assess how well they are doing. It allows schools to assess if they are achieving targets and teaching standards and shows where improvement is needed.

Few governors have got unique views which differ sharply with the views expressed by majority on this question of allowing parents and/or legal guardian to have a say on issues which affect their offspring. The elections which are held after each and every three years are made to nominate parents or guardians with right skills to utilise at the structure to profit school as well as the country at large hence parents are nominated and voted into power by majority of parents or guardians. Respondents all agree about the importance of having parents on the board but with limited scope of responsibility and powers, their participation should be minimal also in order to allow the professionals to lead in the education of a child.

The researcher strongly believes that there is only one change which should be affected in the elections of school governing bodies in order to perfect the system which is to put grade 12 as one of the prerequisites to the current requirements set by the experts and the department in order to hold their employees accountable. The researcher is of the view that people who are illiterate should not be entrusted with a huge responsibility of this nature and is of the view that in order to make things work at the school people who are able to read and develop the code of conduct, finance policy, safety policy and the constitution of the school, if that is not addressed schools with educated SGBs will benefit and the ones with uneducated SGBs are likely to suffer in terms of the benefits which

are derived from this system, he believes that the government came with good system but failed to set educational requirement on it to make it optimal. Research conducted by West (1993:88) posits that yet selection of governors to date has not yet been rigorous in its expectations of knowledge or training. Anyone can be put forward or come forward as a governor and, indeed, with the greater onus which is now placed on governors' shoulders, there is understandable concern about the suitability and calibre of the people who might stand and the capacity of any governing body to work cohesively and with due confidence about their remit and powers.

### 5. Recommendations

- The department should make it a policy to campaign at parents' meetings and community gatherings by parents' community who intend to stand for elections in their schools so that those who are to elect them understand what they stand for in the education of the society and their children, by so doing their profiles will be assessed by all parents who will vote them into governance of their schools. It is always encouraged that members who are available for nominations are better equipped to handle finances and develop policies of the school and as such have some level of rudimentary education to understand the concepts which they will be exposed to for the period of three years.
- There are three seats of bureau holders which are considered as central points in the functioning of the school governing bodies and should be occupied by the parents with academic education above grade 12 and this could be realised if the open campaign and lobbying are made the policy or additional requirements are made on the three positions to confirm that the school is governed professional to the right direction by governors who are competent enough to make well informed decisions on educational matters for the benefit of the learners.
- These positions have got a term of office which may not exceed one year in a cycle of three years in terms of SASA 84 of 1996, S31(3&4) and therefore the office-bearer of a governing body may be re-elected or co-opted, as the case may be, after the expiry of the term of office or the members be rotated on those positions amongst themselves to avoid regression of some sorts in governance of the school, it is a painful fact that interpretation and developing the policies of the school needs someone to be in possession of certain level of rudimentary education to grasp the functions to be performed by the democratically elected governing body of the school and as such capacity and skills of the members are vital importance for considerations when nominations and elections are conducted.
- The department of education and governing bodies associations should make sure that the level of training to the governors in public schools and independent schools is improved by ensuring that effective training is continuous as stipulated in SASA 84 of 1996, Section 19 (1)(a & b) in order to capacitate them in executing their roles so that they could able to perform their functions effectively and consider issuing them with certificate of competency after completing the program of training designed in that particular period by which in principle will be to professionalize the structure. The department of education and governing bodies associations should consider writing all the training materials in all official languages of the country for easy usage by those who are less educated.

### 6. References

1. ALIAGA, M. & GUNDERSON, B. 2000. *Interactive Statistics*. 1<sup>st</sup> edition. Prentice Hall.
2. BAYAT, A., LOUW, W. & RENA, R. 2014. *The role of SGB in underperforming schools of Western Cape: A field based study*. New Delhi: Kamla-Raj.
3. BECKMANN, J.L. & VISSER, P.J. 1999. *Some legal aspects of capacity building for public school governors*. *De jure*, 32(1)(152-160)
4. BRYMAN, A. 2015. *Business research methods*. Oxford University Press
5. CLARKE, A. 2007. *The Handbook of School Management, Kate Mccallum*, Cape Town, South Africa.
6. DUMA, M. A., KAPUELA, I. S. & KHANYILE, P. D. 2011. Educators' Experience on the Role of Parents in the School Governing Bodies of Rural Schools. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 1(3): 19-24.
7. HEYSTEK, J. 2004. *Working relationship between principals and their governance teams*. Draft paper. University of

Pretoria.

8. HEYSTEK, J. 2006. *SGB in South Africa-Relationship between principles and parent governors-A question of Trust?* South African Journal, Vol.24(4) 308-312.
9. MALULEKE, R. M., CASSIM, N. & KARODIA, A. M. 2016. *Challenges of school governing bodies towards school performance*: Regent Business School, Durban: Republic of South Africa.
10. MESTRY, R. 2006. The functions of SGB in managing school finances: *South Africa Journal of Education*, Vol.12(1)27-38.
11. MNCUBE, V. & MAFORA, P. 2013. *School Governing Bodies in Strengthening Democracy and Social Justice: Parents as Partners?* *Anthropologist*, 15(1): 14-19.
12. NAIDU, A., JOUBERT, R., MESTRY, R., MOSOGE, J. & NGCOBO, T. 2008. *Educational Management & Leadership: A South African Perspective*. Second impression (2010). Oxford University Press Southern Africa.
13. VAN WYK, N. 2004 : School Governing Bodies: the experience of South African Educators. *South African Journal of Education*. Vol 24. No.1 P. 49-54 .
14. VILAKAZI, L .2019. *Kasi Schools a model in neglect (Article published in the Sowetan Newspaper of 8 November 2019)*. Johannesburg: The Sowetan Newspaper.
15. WEST, S .1993. *Educational values for School Leadership*, Kogan Page Limited, British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data.
16. WORKU, Z. 2019. Factors that affect the quality of teaching and learning in public schools. *Journal of Economic and Business Studies*, 2(1): 109-120.