

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE MANAGEMENT OF
PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE NORTHERN PROVINCE**

by

CHARLES MANOKO MOKOKA

RESEARCH ESSAY

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(i)

DECLARATION

"I hereby declare that the research essay submitted for the Masters degree to the Rand Afrikaans University, apart from the help recognised, is my own work and has not been formerly submitted to another University for a degree".


CM MOKOKA

JANUARY 1997



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(ii)

OPSOMMING

Daar is drie opvallende gebiede wat probleme skep in die algemene bestuur en administrasie in die Noordelike Provinsie, naamlik: ouer betrokkenheid in finansiële bestuur, beleidmaking en hulpbronbestuur.

Die mees belangrike metode van navorsing wat in hierdie navorsing gebruik is is die fokusgroep tegniek, waarby 'n groep skoolouers ondervra en onderhoude mee gevoer is. Drie ope vraag tipe vrae is aan hulle voorgelê ter bespreking en analise (ontleding).



Die ander metode was dié van 'n literêre studie. Relevante inligting, feite, teorieë en bevindinge oor die onderwerp is versamel om hierdeur die menings van ander navorsers oor die probleem te bekom.

Die mees belangrike bevinding wat verkry is is dat die lae opvoedingspeil van ouers stremmend inwerk op ouer betrokkenheid. Finansiële bestuur is van groot belang vir ouers. 'n Ander bevinding is dat ouers relatief tevrede is met hulle huidige betrokkenheid in vergeleke met die toedrag van sake twee jaar tevore.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- * Mrs S. Schalekamp, a lecturer in the Philosophy department (formerly in Education and Nursing) for her inspiration, motivation, input and guidance.
- * The Educational Management Lecturers, Professor K.P. Dzvimbo and Dr B.R. Grobler for their efforts and encouragement, they have been a source of inspiration throughout my studies.
- * Mr C.S. Mokoele, the Science Head of department at Karabi High School for his assistance in the graphics and organising the parents interviewed as a focus group.

(iv)

DEDICATION

To my wife Matjie, with gratitude for providing me with the opportunity to fulfil my dreams.



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CHAPTER 1

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE NORTHERN PROVINCE

1.1 BACKGROUND

According to the literature survey, (Sallis, 1995; S.A. Schools Bill, 1996; The Argus, 1996:7p) there are many areas where the parents can be involved in the management of schools. Some of these areas include decision on curriculum and extra curricular activities, administration as well as to support or oppose the school, i.e. create pressure or support groups. For the purpose of this research, much emphasis will be laid on the three main areas that have been repeatedly been referred to by different authors (Sallis, 1995; S.A. Schools Bill, 1996, Argus, 1996:7p). These are financial management, policy-making and resource management. The problem that prevails in most public schools in the Northern Province is that parents have been relegated to the background instead of playing a role in making management of schools efficient by participating. Key areas such as financial management and policy-making are areas which brought school administrations to a halt as most problems reflect on lack of transparency in managing of the school finances (Herald, Die, 1996:7p "pupils hold teachers hostage"). The reason that motivated the researcher to choose this topic is that the researcher had been worried by the declining interest in the parents to get involved in the management of the specific school which the researcher is

heading. The researcher taught at two schools before as a teacher and the parental involvement had been deplorable.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There are three main areas where parents can play a crucial role in the management of schools. These areas are the role of parents in financial management, policy-making (specifically the code of conduct for teachers and pupils) and resource management. There are important issues that the researcher can focus on in each of the above-named areas. Parents can be involved in the financial planning of the school. They can also be part of the Budget Committee as well as play a decisive role in decision-making with regard to finances. Parents can further be involved in matters pertaining to school fees and can also play a managerial role in the control or audit of the funds at a particular school.


As far as the issue of policy-making in a school is concerned, parents can be involved in determining the Code of Conduct in respect of teachers and pupils, they can play a major role in designing school rules, from the researcher's experience parents want to be involved in the protection of buildings and material resources in a school.

The last of the three identified areas, where parents can be involved in the management of schools is the human resource management, including both human and material resources. Human resource management is an issue that involves the

appointment and dismissal of staff members, the question of disciplinary action with regard to personnel or teachers involved in misconduct and lastly the representation of parents in the management structures.

The old school committees (formed according to the Lebowa Government Gazette, 1978) have been rejected as a symbol of the old order. Most parents were illiterate and could not contribute much to the schools' administrations. The non-participation of parents led to the collapse of many educational institutions.

In formulating a scientific statement of the problem in the abovementioned threefold topic one may ask the following questions:

- 
- (i) What is the opinion of parents concerning their involvement in school educational management?
- (a) Do they want to be involved?
 - (b) How do they want to be involved?
- (ii) What does the proposed South African Schools Bill (1996) has to say about parental involvement? What general observation do we find on parental involvement in school management in other literature?

1.3 THE AIM OF RESEARCH

The first aim is to determine the opinion of parents regarding their involvement in school management. Do the parents want to be involved or not and how do they wish to be involved in the following areas: financial management, policy-making and resource management?

The second aim of this research is to compare the data obtained with the views expressed in the literature, specifically the proposed Schools Bill (1996). The comparison will be limited to the three areas mentioned in the previous paragraph.

1.4 METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

1.4.1 Focus group

One selected public school in the Northern Province will be visited and parents grouped to form a focus group. Three open-ended questions will be put to them for discussion. The data will be analysed.

Miles & Huberman (1994:25-26) write about the "what the case of the researcher is" and "where his case leaves off" as a problem. A case is defined as a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context. The case is a unit of one's analysis. Studies may be of one case or of several.

On the level of the school where the research was conducted a group of parents formed a focus group or the "heart" of the research. This group focused on the problem of the involvement of parents in the three areas, financial management, policy-making and resource management. This formed a case because it occurred in a bounded context (i.e. the school).

The research carried out by the researcher in this research essay is an example of a case in a small group. The parents in this school form the focus or the "heart" of this research.

1.4.2 Literature study

This research method will be mainly employed for comparative purposes. The relevant information, facts, theories and findings on the topic will be collected and gathered to find out what other researchers have to say about the problem. Reflection on information collected and literature will be evaluated concerning the stated problem. The emphasis will however be on the new proposed S.A. Schools Bill (1996) and the Northern Province School Education Act (1995).

1.5 DEMARCATION OF STUDY

The research will be conducted only in one selected public school in the Northern Province. Although there are many areas of management, only finance, policy-making and resource management will be researched. These three areas have been

selected because they are the most crucial areas in school management and parental involvement (see 1.1). The Argus (1996) "fury over classroom abuse claim" and the proposed S.A. Schools Bill (1996).

1.6 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

CHAPTER 1

In chapter one the researcher gave the background of the problem and the motivation for the study. The reader ought to understand and visualise the problem so as to benefit from the recommendations that follows later in the essay.

The researcher also presented the statement of the problem to the readers. This problem occurs in the public schools in the Northern Province. By asking the right type of questions, the problem would be better understood and conceptualised by the reader.

The aim of research was also stated. This would serve to direct the research process and ensure continuity and relevant flow of information.

The methods employed in the investigation were highlighted. These methods were chosen as the most applicable for the research problem and aim of the research.

The study field was demarcated to comply with the requirements set by the university for a research essay. This demarcation guided the researcher to mention only relevant data.



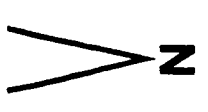
CHAPTER 2

FOCUS GROUP DATA ANALYSIS

2.1 BACKGROUND

The researcher visited Karabi High School, one of the oldest high schools in the Kone-Kwena Area Office on the 21.08.1996 for research purposes. The researcher is the present principal of the said school. The school is situated approximately 54 kilometres north west of the city of Pietersburg in a rural village called Ga-Phago. The village is under the jurisdiction of Moletji Tribal Authority under the Chieftainship of Kgoshi K.S. Moloto. See on the next two pages a map and the physical layout of the school.

The school has been named after the present Chief's grandfather, Karabi, hence it was originally a school belonging to the chief's kraal. The school was handed over to the two communities Phago and Fairlorie during the 1986 upheavals when the Chief's authorities were questioned and the school became a community school. Since then the parents became involved in designing the school policy together with the school management though the policy was not formalised and codified. Because of the aforesaid parental involvement the school became a force to be reckoned with. It became the best managed school of that time in the area but unfortunately due to



W

(TO BOCHUM)

GILEAD-SESHEGO ROUTE



W.F. KNOBEL HOSPITAL

LOVSDALE (GAMMASOTHO) VILLAGE

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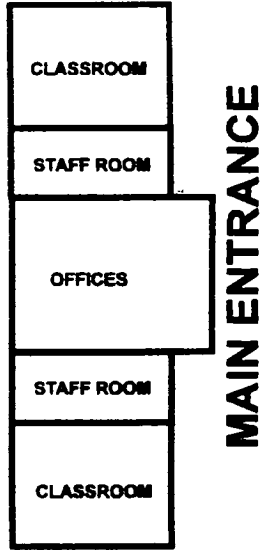
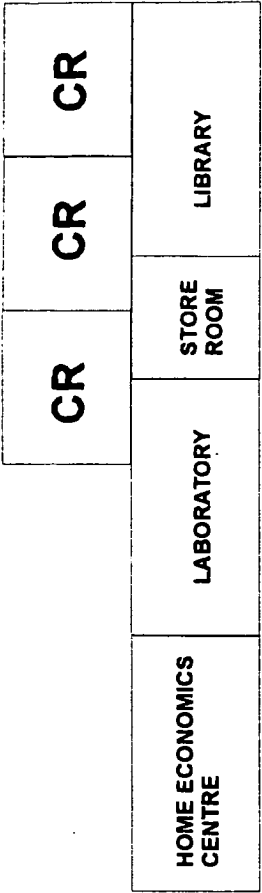
SESHEGO VILLAGE

KARABI SEN. SEC. SCHOOL (AT GA-PHAGO VILLAGE)

PIETERSBURG CITY

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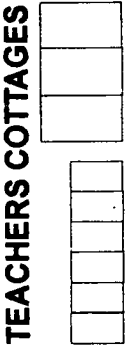
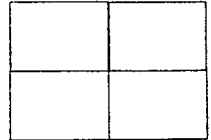


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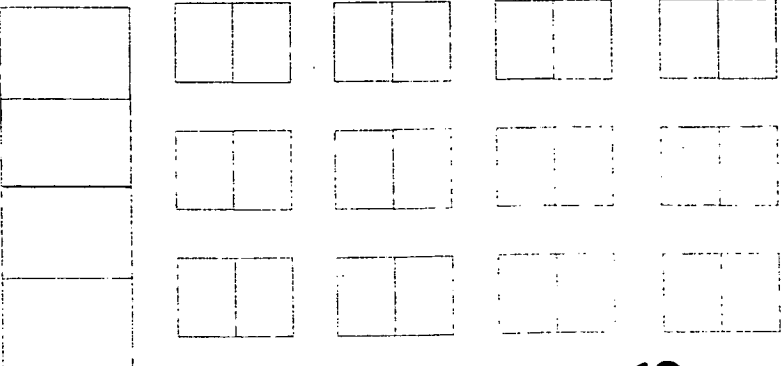


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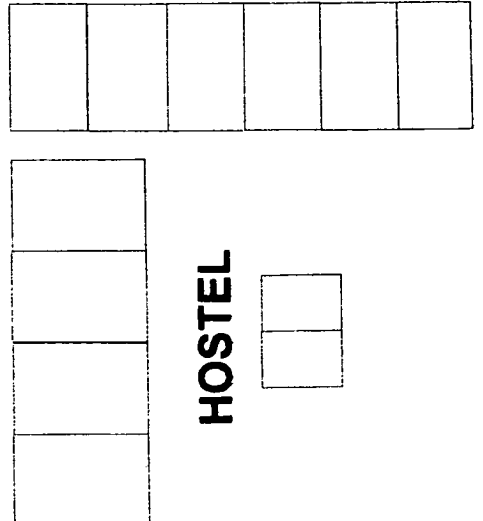


TEACHERS COTTAGES

HOSTEL



HOSTEL



S

CR = Class Room

the political changes, the then school committee's legitimacy started to be questioned. The parents had been intimidated not to be involved in the school management. Since a sound foundation had been laid and the school had been fortunate to retain some of the oldest and most cooperative staff members, the school did not deviate much from its positive course characterized by parental involvement.

2.2 REASONS FOR THE CHOICE OF THE SCHOOL FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES

As mentioned in the above paragraph, the researcher is the principal of the selected school. This is most probably the reason for the researcher in choosing this school which makes this research, action research.

The second reason is that the researcher took it upon himself to rejuvenate and revitalise the declining interest of parental involvement since 1993 after being promoted to the said school. The parents were encouraged and motivated to become involved in the school again. At the first parents meeting to welcome the new principal, the researcher took advantage in his policy speech to invite parents to become involved in the running of the school.

The following areas of their involvement had been dwelt on; in inter alia:

- Parental involvement in financial management
- The involvement in the policy-making, specifically of the Code of Conduct for teachers and pupils
- Their involvement in management of resources

2.3 PARTICIPANTS IN THE FOCUS GROUP

The following persons formed the focus group which responded and took part in the focus group discussion of the researcher:

Mr M.W. Ramahlodi (48 years), formerly the chairman of the outgone school committee and now a Vice-President of the Ga-Phago branch of SANCO (South African National Civic Organisation). Mrs Mashishi C.S. (35 years), the assistant secretary of Ga-Phago branch of SANCO. Mrs Mogotlane F.T. (35), a member of Civic at Ga-Phago. Ms Kekana J.M. (40) also a member of the Civic at Ga-Phago. Mr Kganyago S.M. (69), a retired primary and secondary school principal, presently the Secretary of Fairlorie Branch of SANCO. Mr Morudu E.M. (47), a member of the Fairlorie branch of SANCO, as well as Mr Meso A.M. (64) as a member of Fairlorie Civic Association.

Mr Masehela O.S. (56), the longest serving Chairman who is in his third term of office, a very influential leader who had been elected in the Council of School Chairmen to liaise with the Department to restructure the new governance system. Mr Masipa M.P. (69), an additional member in the present School Committee and Mrs Ramaoka L.R. (47) also the longest serving member of the School Committee who assisted the Secretary.

2.4 QUESTIONS IN THE FOCUS GROUP

The questions for the interview in the focus group had covered the three areas of school management. These areas are the involvement of parents in the financial management of the school, the parental involvement in the formulation of the Code of Conduct for teachers and pupils and the involvement of parents in the resource management.

The following questions formed the basis of the focus group interview with the members of the School Committee and representatives of two Civic Associations designated to form the school governance under the new Schools Bill (1996) and Northern Province School Education Act (1995).



2.4.1 HOW DO YOU WISH TO BE INVOLVED IN THE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL?

- 2.4.1.1 Why do you think you can be of assistance to the school when you are involved in the financial management of the school?
- 2.4.1.2 Which stakeholders do you think should form the Finance Committee in a school?
- 2.4.1.3 Why do you think the previous way of running the finances was unsatisfactory?

2.4.1.4 How do you wish to be involved in the control/audit of the school finances?

2.4.2 HOW CAN THE PARENTS PARTICIPATE MEANINGFULLY IN THE FORMULATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE TEACHERS AND THE PUPILS?

2.4.2.1 What are the contributory factors that discourage the parents to be actively involved in the design of programmes of the teacher and the pupil's code of ethics?

2.4.2.2 Do you think most parents are doing their best in assisting the school management to formulate its school policy and why?

2.4.2.3 Do you need more say in the hiring and firing of teachers and why?

2.4.2.4 Do you think parents are fairly represented in the management of schools and why?

2.4.3 WOULD YOU AS PARENTS LIKE TO TAKE TURNS IN THE MONITORING OF THE SCHOOL RESOURCES AGAINST VANDALISM?

2.4.3.1 What are the best ways of taking care of the school material resources?

2.5 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION PATTERNS ESTABLISHED IN THE RESPONDENT'S RESPONSES

Pattern 1

The focus group revealed that the parents are relatively satisfied with their present involvement compared to the situation two years ago.

"Yes, since the Civic associations have involved themselves in the Schools, unlike in the past".

Pattern 2



The focus group also revealed that the low educational qualifications of parents hamper parental involvement.

"Parents do not know anything education-wise".

Pattern 3

Further analysis reveals that financial management is a great concern for the parents. Parental involvement especially in financial management must improve and the parents must be involved from the budget throughout the financial year at quarterly meetings until the year ends.

"Parents should be involved. When schools reopen parents should receive financial statement. The same thing should apply when schools close i.e. quarterly or half yearly financial report. Quarterly financial statement is valid and acceptable".

Pattern 4

The protection of school property against vandalism must be improved through parental involvement. One parent disagreed and said that it is the responsibility of the teachers.

"The security officer is overburdened with a lot of work. On seeing somebody carrying school property for private use, drastic steps should be taken on that person. Unused school property can be sold for the school's benefit".

"Teachers too should be responsible for managing school property, be it in class, or wherever. If a teacher sees a broken window pane, he/she should inform the principal. Everybody should be involved in informing the principal of any mishaps on school property".

Pattern 5

The group felt that the security officer hired by the school has to be supplemented by the involvement of parents in the protection of the school property.

"The security officer at school is overburdened with a lot of work. Everybody should be involved in taking care of the school property".

Pattern 6

The parents appeared to be willing to be involved only in the hiring of teachers.

"The present hiring of teachers system is good".

Pattern 7

The parents do not wish to be involved in the dismissal of any teacher who is uncooperative.



"We, however, do not want the powers to expel the teachers".

Considering 6 and 7 above, the researcher might draw the conclusion that the parents limit their involvement to issues that are less sensitive and positive like hiring. The researcher might also conclude that parents want to be involved in the hiring to get their own children's relatives and friends into the school and in turn do not want to get their own children's relatives and friends out of the school.

Pattern 8

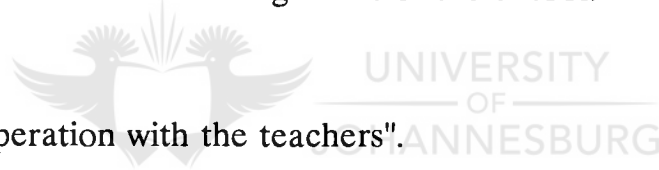
The parents seem to realize that there should be limits to their powers. They recognise the part played by the area offices and provincial department.

"The teacher can only be warned three times by the School Committee/Board, thereafter the Area Office can be informed in writing".

Pattern 9

The parents are more concerned about the cooperation between themselves and school management than in the management of the school.

"We only need cooperation with the teachers".



Pattern 10

The parents are aware of the importance of their active involvement in school management as part of effective school management.

"Parental involvement is highly appreciated".

2.6 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER 3

In chapter 3 the researcher will do a literature survey to find out what different authors say about the topic. The literature survey would be done according to the three main areas of concern to the researcher i.e. the involvement of the parents in the financial management of a school, the formulation of code of conduct of teachers and pupils, as well as the resource management. This approach would allow the reader to have a global picture of the sequence and flow of areas and issues related to the problem.



CHAPTER 3

3. LITERATURE SURVEY

3.1 Introduction

Parental involvement in the management of schools is a world-wide issue. Wesseler (1982:45) states that "participation of parents in school management is not socially and morally desirable but functionally necessary and oriented to increasing efficiency within the existing research".

The literature surveyed advocate vehemently parental involvement in the school management (Sallis, 1995:9-13p; S.A. Schools Bill, 1996; Argus, 1996; Northern Province Education Schools Act, 1995). The authors emphasize the serious business of preparing parents as the third partners in the smooth running of schools (first being the teachers and second being the pupils).

There are three crucial areas where parents need to be engaged in the school management, these areas include as mentioned in the first chapter, financial management, policy-making and resource management. These are the three key areas that reveal the weakness of not having parents represented in the education of their children.

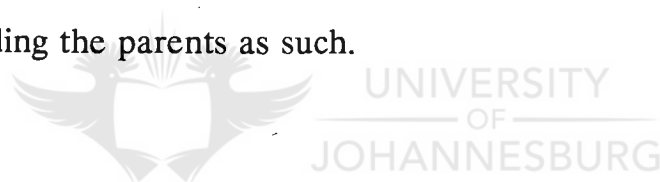
3.2 THE INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS IN FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Van der Westhuizen (1991:372) defines "school business management as the execution by a person in a position of authority of those management actions connected with the financial aspects of schools and having the sole purpose of achieving effective education". For the purpose of this research essay this definition will be used.

3.2.1 Parental involvement in the financial planning of a school

The parental involvement in the financial planning of a school is one important issue which needs immediate attention of school principals as middle managers and the Provincial Department of Education. The financial policy of the school should not deviate from the provincial policy, hence at school the parents should be involved in scrutinising the provincial financial policy so that they can be abreast with new planning systems in finance pertaining to schools. According to the White Paper on Education (1995:57) state funding to schools should be equitable. This implies that subsidy to schools would be equal in respect of the type of schools and this fact should be known by the parents of a particular school. This aspect should be known by the parents so that they should, together with the Finance Committee, be able to plan and determine the average amount of school fees to be paid by each pupil.

Parents should be informed of new innovations such as the School Finance Task Team which has been appointed to work on schools funding. The Task Team has considered the concept of a nationally determined "ability to pay threshold", to protect the parents who are without the means to pay school fees from the obligation to pay such fees (S.A. Schools Bill, 1996:23). Such new innovations should be discussed with the parents of the particular schools so that they should also feel to be part of the planning. The S.A. Schools Bill (1996) further emphasises that no child can be denied his/her rights to basic education on the grounds of the parent's inability to pay school fees (S.A. Schools Education Bill, 1996). If the parents cannot be involved in the discussions that concern such important issues, the problems in schools would escalate and that would imply failure to plan on the part of school management including the parents as such.



3.2.2 The involvement of the parents in the drafting of budget

In proclaiming the governing bodies in schools, the MEC (Member of the Executive Council) of Gauteng Provincial Department, Mary Metcalfe outlined in a local newspaper one of the responsibilities of the governing bodies as the preparation of the school budget (The Saturday Star, 1996:8). "Parents, as part of the governing body would have a share in the budgeting of funds allocated to the school. This would help in alleviating the problem of mistrust and would ensure much envisaged transparency". Although Mary Metcalfe is the MEC of the Gauteng Education Department, her statements are also relevant in the Northern Province Department of Education. The S.A. Schools Bill (1996:10) further reiterates that the parents are

the majority party in the school governing body hence they have the responsibility to determine and oversee the budget. The parents as part of the governing body may only determine that school fees shall be payable under Section 24 if, the governing body has presented an income and expenditure budget for the forthcoming year, and such budget has been considered and approved by a majority of parents and voting at a general meeting of parents of learners at school (S.A. Schools Bill, 1996, p.24).

One important issue in financial school management is the parental involvement in decisionmaking on how money allocated to schools from the department should be spent. In a sequence of advertisements in newspapers, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, the MEC of Education in the Northern Province, made a call to all the professional people to take part in school governance (budget). He outlined the duties of school governance as decision-making on how money allocated for buildings and other things should be spent (Noord Transvaler, 1996:23).

3.2.3 Involvement of parents in school fees

Many sources affirm the necessity of parents to play an active role in matters pertaining to school fees (S.A. Schools Bill, 1996 & Northern. Province School Education Act, 1995).

The reasons underlying the affirmation of parental involvement in such sources is because most disruptions at schools are revolving around school fees allegations (Herald, 1996:7p). This had caused a serious blow to the smooth running of schools

because of lack of transparency. Matters concerning school fees include the determining of the amounts to be paid, matters pertaining to fund raising campaigns, and procuring funds necessary to implement certain programs. The parents would have the responsibility to establish and administer school fees and they also have a duty to raise voluntary contributions (S.A. Schools Bill, 1996:10).

3.2.4 Involvement of parents in control/auditing of finances

Chubb and Moc (in Sallis 1995:10) states that public authority must be put to use in developing an educational system that provides parents with significant control over finances and curriculum. The parents as part of the governing body shall prepare an annual income and expenditure budget in accordance with guidelines determined by the MEC, for consideration and approval by a majority of parents present at a meeting (S.A. Schools Bill, 1996:26). The Bill further states that the governing body shall on request by any parent of a learner at a public school, provide him/her with a copy of the latest audited financial statements of the school (S.A. Schools Bill, 1996:27). Such presentations of audited statements would enable parents to be actively involved in overseeing and administering the collection of any school fees payable (S.A. Schools Bill, 1996:9-10).

3.3 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN POLICY-MAKING AT SCHOOLS

"A policy should be regarded as general statements or guidelines for decision making to guide those who are involved in the implementation or execution of planning. Policy provide guidelines and allows the executor to make decisions within a certain framework. In this way divergent decisions may be made in the context of same fixed decisions" (Van der Westhuizen, 1991:150). For the purpose of this research essay this definition will be used, specifically with regard to the drafting of policy for pupils and teacher conduct.

3.3.1 Parental involvement in the formulation of Code of Conduct for teachers and pupils



Parents are naturally responsible for moulding their children's characters from birth. The parents instil the basic human values to the children, moreover parents still have the obligation to provide motivation and moral support to pupils (Pillay, 1992:2). If parents are naturally responsible for the education of their children it speaks for itself that they must have the desire to see to it that the school educates their children as they see fit.

Parents should lay down a firm code of conduct for pupils at school to instil trust (Porter, 1992:2). S.A. Schools Bill (1996:5) mentions that parents shall cause the child to attend school from the first seven years until he/she reaches the age of fifteen.

The incident reported by Herald, (1996:7p) where the parents went on rampage to try and call to order a teacher who allegedly abused a child physically, is another signal from the parents that they are committed to be involved in the code of conduct for teachers.

Northern Province MEC for education, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, outlined the powers of the governing bodies as inter alia, the formulation of disciplinary code of conduct for teachers and pupils (Noord Transvaler, 1996:23). This idea is also supported by Sallis (1995:10).

The Northern Province School Education Act (1995:12) further emphasises that parents should be involved in assisting the principal and the appropriate officer of the department responsible for the welfare of the learner if the learner is repeatedly absent from school (Northern Province School Act 1995:12).

3.3.2 The involvement of parents in the formulation of school rules

"Rules should be regarded as specific instructions or fixed decisions which cannot be disregarded. They make no provision for using one's own judgement or interpretation" (Van der Westhuizen, 1991:150).

The issue of school rules is one crucial issue in the management area of policy-making. According to the Report of the Committee to review the organisation, governance and funding of schools (1995) and S.A. Schools Bill (1996) the issue of

collaborative management of schools is emphasised. The principal should engage the teachers, pupils and the parents in designing school rules. It should not be a unilateral process but a joint effort between the stakeholders.

It is up to all the stakeholders in the school to draft rules and regulations. This joint effort in education, has increased both the legitimacy, quantity and quality of parental involvement in policy-making processes at the local level (Goldring, 1993:94). Dekker (1990:32) recommends the involvement of parents in class-committees to enable the enforcement of school rules and regulations. The parents should be given access to a wide range of information about the school, for example rules on admission, policies and achievements of the school and progress of their own children (Sallis, 1995:9). The parents are often surprised to find that the laws do not give them a clear right to form a parents association, to be consulted about the changes in school policies and rules (Sallis, 1996:10). According to the S.A. Schools Bill (1996:10) parents also have the right to determine the admission policy concurrent to that of the MEC of Education.

3.4 THE INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES

There are two types of resources that can be dealt with for the purpose of this research essay.

Material resources in a school involve all the physical resources such as building structures and the contents thereof. These include desks, chairs, and writing boards.

The software of the computers is also included under the material resources.

Human resources deal with the people who are within a particular school including the teachers, the pupils, the labourers and all interested stakeholders in a school.

3.4.1 Material resources

The notion of giving schools back to the communities was coined by the Gauteng MEC of Education and Mary Metcalfe asserts that it would reduce vandalism (The Saturday Star, 1996:12). This notion can also be applicable to the Northern Province because the parents have to be motivated to develop a sense of ownership regarding schools. Goldring (1993) also supports the idea that parents play a role in the use of the schools' resources (Goldring, 1993:94). Porter (1992:9) states it very clearly that the parents should be involved in the physical development of the school (Porter, 1992:9). Parents are charged with the responsibility to purchase textbooks, education materials and equipments, maintain the grounds and buildings of the school (S.A. Schools Bill, 1996:10).

The Northern Province School Education Act (1995:23) further emphasises that the parents of a learner at a public school shall be liable for any damages to or loss of school or departmental property in respect of which the learner concerned is liable to the department or school concerned.

3.4.2 Human resources

Parents in a school should be involved in the management of human resource such as the teachers, pupils and labourers as well as the interested stakeholders. As it shall be demonstrated under 3.5 below, the parents have to play a role in the selection of suitable teachers as well as the recommendation to dismiss an uncooperative member of staff.

3.5 THE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

The management of human resources is regarded by Van der Westhuizen as personnel management (Van der Westhuizen, 1991:239). Personnel management is defined as the provision, maintenance and development of personnel with the aim of achieving the goals of the undertaking concerned (Van der Westhuizen, 1991:239).

The definition holds true for the parental involvement because the parents have to play a role in the management of human resources.

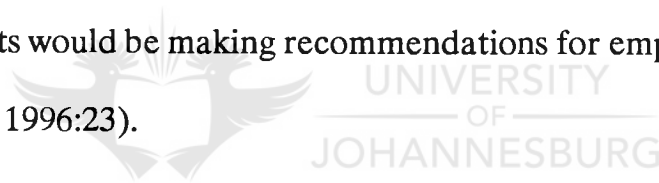
3.5.1 Parental involvement in the appointment of teachers

According to The Saturday Star (1996:8) the MEC of Gauteng education department outlined the responsibilities of parents in the governing bodies as inter alia, the firing

and hiring of teachers. She further says that the parents would also decide on the admission qualifications of the teachers (The Saturday Star, 1996:8).

Report of the Committee to review the organisation, governance and funding of schools (1995:56) outlines the typical decision on which the governing body would be made as inter alia the recommendation to the provincial appointment of teachers (Report of the Committee to review the organisation, governance and funding of schools, 1995:56).

In his provincial call for the participation of all the professional people in the governing bodies, the MEC of the Northern Province emphasised that one of the powers of the parents would be making recommendations for employment of teachers (Noord Transvaler, 1996:23).



3.5.2 Parental involvement in the dismissal of teachers

Most parents feel that it should be their responsibility to recommend the appointment or dismissal of staff members. This has been demonstrated in the story in (The Argus, 1996:7) where parents were furious about an allegation that a teacher has abused a child and they called for the immediate dismissal of the teacher concerned.

However, parental intervention is not a one-sided affair, parents may also intervene to protect the teachers against the violent behaviour of the pupils. In the article

carried by (Herald, 1996:7) "pupils hold teachers hostage", pupils held the teachers hostage because of allegations of lack of transparency in the spending of funds.

It is also internationally recognised that the parents have a responsibility to hire and fire teachers (Relly, 1995:191).

3.5.3 The involvement of parents in the disciplinary action against the staff members

As it has been mentioned earlier on that the parents are envisaged to have the right to hire and fire teachers, the firing itself can be interpreted as one type of disciplinary action that can be imposed upon a staff member who is involved in misconduct. Another example of a disciplinary action against a staff member appears in the article from the Argus (1996:7) where parents are calling for the suspension of a teacher who allegedly abused a child physically. One of the powers of governing bodies in the Northern Province as envisaged by the MEC Dr Aaron Motsoaledi is to formulate disciplinary code of conduct of teachers. They would also ensure the smooth running of the school to see to it that there is no disruption and ill-discipline (Noord Transvaler, 1996:23).

According to Sallis (1995:13) parents must always be informed on matters pertaining to the discipline of members of staff through the governing body. At the parents' meetings they only have to be briefed of a disciplinary action about a teacher and no details have to be divulged.

3.6 THE REPRESENTATION OF PARENTS IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

The parental representation in school management is one crucial issue in the staff management area that needs urgent attention. This concern has also been raised by the Gauteng MEC in one of the local newspapers (The Saturday Star, 1996:8) that there is a need to develop the management skills of parents so as to ensure the smooth running of schools.

Pillay (1992:2) asserts that the parents must continue to monitor the education progress of their children as a way of complementing and supporting the efforts of the teachers to develop the potential of children, this they can do by playing a role by being represented in various management levels.



The intervention of parents when pupils held teachers hostage in the article from Herald, (1996:7). Herald, (1996:7) shows that there is a great need for the parents to be represented on the management level for the smooth running of schools.

Relly (1995:19) mentions that one characteristic of a successful school is its governance and control that are shared by teachers and parents. The shared responsibility would be vested in a newly composed local type of school governing body.

The White Paper on Education and Training (1995:59) also confirms that many school management already reflect an accountable management, with high levels of community participation. The White Paper refers to the public schools because only two types of schools are existing, viz. the public and private schools.



CHAPTER 4

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Parental involvement - general remarks

Parental involvement in the management of schools is a step in the right direction to improve the efficiency of school governance. The period prior to 1994 was characterised by a fragmented education systems based on race. Hence some departments had successful parental involvement while in others it was poor or even absent. This research essay studies schools in the Northern Province where most of the pupils were in schools under the control of the former homeland authorities. School committees had many restrictions placed upon the nominations of potential members, viz. to qualify as a potential member in the old school committees the parents may not have been in the public service. Retired teachers, police, doctors, nurses and soldiers did not qualify as members of the school committee. These are however the potential members best qualified to make a positive contribution in the management of schools because of their level of literacy.

The people who were associated with the liberation movements such as the ANC, (African National Congress), PAC (Pan African Congress) and AZAPO (Azanian People's Organization) were also not allowed in the school committees as they were suspected to incite people against the government of the day. The exclusion of these people increased the illegitimacy and unacceptability of the school committees and

increased pressure from many parents to withdraw from the activities of school committees. Parental involvement collapsed at most schools and principals were left to run the schools on their own. This created fertile soil for instability in schools.

The socio-political events after 1994 changed the education setup dramatically as far as parental involvement is concerned. The Ministry of Education spelled out its underlying philosophy of the government policy on school organisation, governance and funding in its first White paper, education in a democratic South Africa: First steps to develop a new system, which was approved by the Cabinet in 1995 February after extensive public consultation.

The Minister of Education appointed a Review Committee, chaired by Professor Peter Hunter, to recommend in detail how a unified, non-racial national school system could be brought about. The review committee gave a report back to the Minister on 31 August 1995. The Minister went further to appoint a legal panel to advise him on the legal and legislative implications of the report.

After weighing the public response to the draft, the Ministry of Education revised it for submission to the Cabinet. The new policy document, The Organisation Governance and Funding Schools: Education White Paper 2, was approved by the Cabinet in February 1996 and published in the Government Gazette (General Notice 130 of 1996). A drafting group comprising the Minister's legal panel and officials of the Department of Education then prepared the South African Schools Bill, 1996 which puts the new government policy into legislative form.

The Draft Bill (1996), as well as the Northern Province School Act (1995) concur that each public school governing body shall comprise of elected members of the constituencies making up the school community, parents of learners at school, educators at school, staff at school who are not educators, the school principal, learners at that school, elected by the Student Representative Council and members of the Community co-opted by the governing body. All the documents mentioned above provide for the fact that the parents shall comprise the majority of the members of the governing body.

The researcher recommends that the system of class fathers/mothers be practiced. This implies that a certain group of parents are chosen monthly, quarterly or whatever period they may decide to serve as class fathers or mothers for the particular classes from Std 6 to 10. They come on a weekly basis and check problems with the material resources in that class. If a window pane has been broken, the class leader or class teacher would provide information and the parents of the culprit be called and make arrangements with the school to repair the window pane. The class mother and the class father may draw the class policy in conjunction with the class teacher e.g. that furniture in that class should not be taken out of class unless under instruction by a particular teacher. This system would increase the parental involvement and would keep the parents closer to the school.

The researcher cannot hesitate to point out that at a school where research had been done, several gains had been made; to mention a few, the school is no longer having a problem of vandalism, as parents are positively involved, viz. with the cooperation

of parents the pupils are involved in repairing broken window pains. Pupils felt recognised and involved and hence the campaign had been successful because a sense of ownership was instilled in the parents and pupils. Again, the parents have been involved in the management of school finances, they determine with the school management the amount of school fees. They also assist the school management on the design of the Code of Conduct of the teachers and pupils.

Despite the positive involvement of parents as mentioned there are negative aspects that count against our efforts to involve parents, these to a large extent defeat the gains that are already made so far. Such negative aspects include inter alia, that most parents are still too illiterate to cope fully with the demands of the school. Some parents also do not attend general meetings out of ignorance. With the introduction of the new school governance system as envisaged by the new Schools Bill (1996) at national level and the Provincial School Education Act (1995) for the Northern Province, the school under review shows positive prospects as it has been chosen as a pilot school by the Area office to pilot the new governance system at schools.

4.2 Recommendations regarding parental involvement in the financial management of the school

As proposed in the S.A. Schools Bill (1996), and the Northern Province School Act (1995), the governing body has been granted the following powers and responsibilities: determine and oversee the school budget, establish and administer a school fund, determine, charge and oversee the collection of any school fees

payable by parents of learners at the school, raise voluntary contributions, purchase textbooks, educational materials and equipment, maintain the grounds and buildings of the school (S.A. Schools Bill, 1996:10-11).

The researcher recommends an active involvement of the parents in overseeing the finance of a school since this area created many problems in the school management previously. The old school committee did not have expertise to assist in the financial accounting of the school.

The researcher recommends that the parents be called to the general meetings as regularly as possible to give them the interim financial statements at specified intervals.



4.3 Recommendations regarding the parental involvement in the school policy-making (Code of Conduct for teachers and pupils)

4.3.1 Policy with regard to the Code of Conduct

The researcher recommends that with regard to the code of conduct of teachers and pupils it is worthwhile that both parties be represented in the formulation of that policy. At the school where the focus group data has been conducted the technical committee which comprises the parents, teachers and pupils has been appointed in 1994. The Committee met at three consecutive occasions to draft the code of conduct for both the teachers and pupils. The fourth meeting in January 1995 was

a general meeting where the code of conduct was discussed and ratified. It was amazing at that general meeting that positive contributions were made and that it can be regarded as a success. The drafted code made the school easily manageable because all the stakeholders appreciated the efforts of the Technical Committee.

4.3.2 The rules committee

Another approach that can be recommended is the establishment of a rules committee. This committee would also comprise of parents, teachers and pupils but parents should be in majority. Such a committee should decide on the school rules relevant and appropriate to a particular school considering factors such as whether it is a rural or urban school, day or boarding school, the religious character of the school as well as the level of literacy of the parents of the school. After drafting the rules they are jointly discussed with all the concerned parties and if accepted they are written down adopted and applied.

4.4 Recommendations regarding resource management of a school

The researcher recommends that the school employ two to three security officials to alternate in guarding the school against vandalism. The researcher also recommends that parents divide themselves into smaller groups to take turns in monitoring the school premises at regular intervals.

At the school where the researcher conducted the focus group interview, the researcher as the principal was successful in developing a campaign to create a spirit of ownership amongst pupils and parents. They feel the school belongs to them and have a great need to prevent it against vandalism.

The following specific example illustrate the campaign approach:

Window pane campaign

The parents and teachers were consulted to introduce the campaign and find out how they feel about it. The researcher took the initiative to encourage pupils to volunteer to repair the broken window panes. Pupils who were willing came and the researcher explained some logistics and procedures. Issues of remuneration were also discussed with the volunteers. Both parents, teachers and pupils felt that it would be less costly if it can be done by the local pupils. The hidden agenda was not to do the repairs at a less costly venture but to conscientise the pupils and parents to develop the spirit of ownership about the school.

The campaign worked wonders to the school. Being paid two rand per window pane the pupils repaired about 300 window panes within two weeks and started to police those who may break them. They felt they have exerted their efforts to repair the broken window panes and no one should be allowed to spoil their good work. The campaign has been successful and the school does not experience the vandalism anymore.

4.5 Recommendations regarding human resource

4.5.1 Appointment of teachers

The researcher recommends that the parents on the governing body specifically be involved in the interview and recommendation of the potential teachers of the school. This joint effort by the principal, teachers and parents will increase transparency and will ensure trust of the parties concerned in the appointment of teachers. Selection committees should be formed at schools. Such committees must be comprised of the teachers and parents. If there is an opening at school the principal should inform the selection committee and the post shall be advertised openly using the media. Applications will be received and sorted by the selection committee and potential candidates be called for selection.

4.5.2 Dismissal of teachers

The governing body as the arm of the principal would be updated on the performance of individual teachers and together with the principal would take preventive and corrective measures against the teacher. When it comes to serious offences of teachers such as persistent state of being under the influence of alcoholic beverages, the parents would recommend through the principal and that governing body to the Provincial department to terminate the services of such a teacher.

4.5.3 Disciplinary action against teachers

The researcher recommends that the governing body takes a disciplinary action against offending teachers. Their involvement should be limited to the legislation as formulated by the S.A. Schools Bill (1996) and the MEC in the Province.

4.6 Final Conclusion

The researcher would strongly recommend a cordial relationship between the school and the parents of the learners. Some tactics could be used to attract the parents to freely associate with the teachers in the school. The school may initiate fun-days where the teachers, pupils and the parents play different sporting codes together. This has been used once by the researcher after having realized that there was a tension between the teachers and pupils and the strike seemed inevitable. The teachers played against the pupils different games such as soccer, netball, athletics and it was fun that broke the tension. The parents came in big numbers to watch the games.

4.7 SUMMARY

There are three remarkable areas that create problems in the management of schools in the Northern Province, these are the following: parental involvement in financial management, policy-making and resource management.

The most important method used in this research essay was the focus group, where a group of parents in a school are interviewed. Three open-ended questions were put to them for discussion and data was analysed.

The other method was the literature study. The relevant information, facts, theories and findings on the topic were collected and gathered to find out what other researchers have said about the problem.

The most important results obtained are that low educational qualifications of parents hamper parental involvement. Financial management is of great concern to parents. Another important result is that parents are relatively satisfied with their present involvement compared to the situation two years ago.



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