

**THE ROLE OF LEARNERS IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN
FARM SCHOOLS**

by

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that

THE ROLE OF LEARNERS IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN FARM SCHOOLS

is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference.

This mini-dissertation has not been previously submitted for a degree at another university.



NGOBESE BH _____

DATE _____

DEDICATION

This mini-dissertation is dedicated to

- My loving wife, Zipporah Xolile Ngobese;
- My mother, Khanyisiwe Ngobese and my late father, Khanyisani Augustine Ngobese;
- My late mother-in-law, Miriam Buthelezi and my father-in-law, Elfes Buthelezi;
- Our son, Thabani Ngobese and two foster daughters, Slindile Manyathi and Angel Buthelezi;
- My brother Sifiso Celumusa Justice Ngobese and his wife, Sphiwe Ngobese and their kids;
- All my sisters and their families;
- My sister-in-law ,Victoria Nene, and her whole family;
- My aunt, Thandiwe Elizabeth Ngobese, and her family;
- All my in-laws kwa Buthelezi kwa Ngwetshana;
- All my neighbours at Coronation;
- All the members of the St. Michael's Church at Coronation;
- It is also dedicated to all those who seek to understand more about the involvement of learners in school governance in farm schools.

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ABSTRACT

As a teacher himself, the researcher has observed that although the Government Policy states clearly that there should be Representative Councils of Learners (RCLs) in schools offering Grade 8 and higher, in some schools that is not the case. Other schools involve learners only in the maintenance of discipline. Is that the purpose of the policy? What did the policy makers really intend with this policy? This study attempted to set out and find the answer to these questions. Firstly, the background to this research has been discussed; illustrating the situation of the farm schools in deep rural areas and the plight of the teachers who have to make policy work in these remote places was discussed. Secondly, the research problem was stated and the aims and objectives of the study were listed in order to structure the study from the beginning.

From the literature overview it became clear that the Representative Council of Learners is the official body representing learners in the governance of the school. The principal has to see to it that it is involved in decision making, i.e. those members of the RCL who form part of the SGB, should always be invited to the SGB meetings. The TLO has a duty of capacitating the RCL even though he/she is the subject teacher with as much the load as all other teachers at similar post level. The principal must see to it that the TLO does his/her duty in this regard.

The Department of Education must first ensure that schools establish RCLs as they should. It must also not only train TLOs but also ensure that the principals are empowered regarding the establishment and the functioning of the RCL. In this way, and in this way alone could disciplinary problems be addressed and the culture of teaching and learning be rekindled in our schools.

By means of the qualitative strategy of ethnographical design, and the interview as method of data collections, information was gathered from farm schools in the Vryheid Region of KwaZulu Natal. Respondents were school principals, members of RCLs and teachers that have been involved in the implementation of these governing bodies for learners.

The conclusion of the researcher is that the RCLs do not function properly at many of the schools due to ignorance about the content of the Policy and a general perception that learners in governing positions might hold a threat to the school's authorities.

The researcher recommends that the SMTs, including the principals of High Schools (secondary and combined schools) be called into workshops where the role and functions, the value and duties of the RCL must be unpacked. There the consequences can be negotiated and the true value of these institutions can be estimated. The recommendations of the researcher will hopefully be a valuable contribution to the improvement in the implementation of a policy that could mean a lot in the development of the learners' leadership skills and their becoming of empowered citizens in our much appreciated democracy.



ACRONYMS USED IN THIS STUDY

SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
TLO	Teacher Liaison Officer
SRC	Students' Representative Council
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
SASA	South African Schools' Act
KZN DEC	Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Education and Culture



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ADDENDUM: Letter of permission

