

**FROM POLICY TO PRAXIS: A STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
REPRESENTATIVE COUNCILS OF LEARNERS IN THE WESTERN CAPE,
FROM 1997 TO 2003**

BY

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KEY WORDS

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School Governance

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Democracy

ABSTRACT

FROM POLICY TO PRAXIS: A STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REPRESENTATIVE COUNCILS OF LEARNERS IN THE WESTERN CAPE, FROM 1997 TO 2003

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This thesis traces the evolution of learner participation in school governance in South Africa, identifies international trends in school governance, particularly learner participation, and then analyses the progress made in South Africa in moving from policy to praxis in this regard. I have discussed the contextual forces that have influenced the production of the policy text on learner participation in the South African Schools Act. This is followed by an analysis of how the policy text has been interpreted and implemented at provincial level in the Western Cape, taking provincial legislation, regulations, circulars, and the capacity building programme that was implemented into consideration.

I also look at how the whole process was experienced at institutional (school) level, and how the policy was interpreted and implemented. I also evaluate the phenomenon of learner participation in school governance in terms of promoting the principles of transformation, placing particular emphasis on the promotion of democratic practices in South Africa.

In conclusion I contend that the present policy of learner participation in school governance does reflect the resolve of the National Government to promote the principle of participation by all stakeholders in matters affecting them. However, the study has

shown that the implementation of the policy at provincial and institutional level has not been as effective as it might have been and has hampered the development of praxis in learner participation. This has hindered learners from making meaningful contributions towards the attainment of the goals as set out in the constitution. Furthermore, present rumblings of curtailing the powers of the school governing bodies because of limited progress in attaining the above goals seem to be a retrogressive step. I strongly contend that given the support, training and encouragement as set out in Article 19(2) of SASA, learner participation in school governance can make a positive contribution towards attaining the goals of transformation in our country, particularly of advancing democratic practices in our society.

May 2005

DECLARATION

I declare that: FROM POLICY TO PRAXIS: A STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REPRESENTATIVE COUNCILS OF LEARNERS IN THE WESTERN CAPE, FROM 1997 TO 2003 is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

IVAN ALFRED CARR

SIGNED:

MAY 2005

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
COLTS	Culture of learning, teaching and service
COSAS	Congress of South African Students
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
EMDC	Education Management and Development Centre
ERS	Educational Renewal Strategy
FOSATU	Federation of South African Trade Unions
LEA	Local Education Authority
LECC	Local Education Crisis Committee
NECC	National Education Crisis Committee
NEPI	National Education Policy Initiative
NGEO	Non -Governmental Educational Organization
NZSTA	New Zealand School Trustees Association
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PTSA	Parent-Teacher-Student Association
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
SASA	South African Schools Act
SACT	Schools Act Coordinating Team
TLO	Teacher Liaison Officer
UDF	United Democratic Front
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the thesis, providing the rationale for the study, its aims, specific focus, the framework and context, research design and methodology, research questions, and an outline of the structure of the thesis.

1.2 THE RATIONALE

I have been involved in formal education since 1965, and have witnessed the transformation of education from the painful “birth pangs” of the 1970s, through the turbulent years of the 1980s, to the difficult years of the 1990s. In May 1997 I was seconded to the Schools Act Coordinating Team (SACT), a dedicated team tasked with the implementation of the South African Schools Act in the Western Cape. The first task was ensuring that all necessary provincial regulations were put in place to implement the policy, followed by providing capacity building programmes to enable governors to function optimally. My particular focus was on learner participation in school governance, via the Representative Council of Learners (henceforth referred to as RCL) - hence my passion for this topic.

My responsibility included initiating and coordinating programmes for the Representative Council of Learners. It was my privilege to see learners develop into fine young people with exceptional leadership skills. However, I also found learners being held back by negative and restrictive attitudes at some institutions. This contradiction in implementing RCL policy prompted me to find out more about the subject. Subsequent reading then directed my attention towards determining why there is such a gap between the “policy-in-intent” at national level, and “policy-in-action” at provincial and school level. In pursuing this line of interest, it became imperative to unpack the complexities around the concepts of policy and praxis.

Some policy analysts see policy as a “value-laden” concept, approaching it from the perspective of goals, values, and practices. Maluleke (2000:41) refers to the views of Kaplan (1987), who sees policy as “a projected program of goals, values, and practices”, and to the opposing view of other policy analysts such as Eulau and Prewitt (1987) who see policy as “a standing decision characterized by behaviour consistency and repetitiveness on the part of both those who make it and those who abide by it”.

Seen in the light of the first definition, the national policy on the RCL should be understood in terms of the values and principles espoused in the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996), namely: redress, transformation, equity, and equality. This means at the end of the implementation process, the above values and principles should have acted as beacons showing the way to the correct application of the policy. Seen in this light, the South African Schools Act becomes an enabling co-driver towards achieving the ideal of transformation in our country, and the RCL becomes a vehicle to promote an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality, and freedom as entrenched in the supreme law of the republic of South Africa. This view is substantiated by Kelsen’s Pure Theory of Law (1967), in which he claims that the Grundnorm is the starting point of the chain of legal norms. He states that: “It is at the apex of the hierarchy of the legal norms and is the original source of authorization for decisions and actions taken throughout the system, down to the lowest level” (Maluleke, 2000:47).

In terms of the second definition of policy, the experience of the last ten years in South Africa indicates that the interpretation and implementation of educational policy has not always reflected consistency and repetitiveness; thus giving rise to much dissatisfaction. This situation should, however, be seen in the terms of the background to policy formulation. The South African Schools Act clearly sets out the vision for education, and one could assume that there are no conflicting interests in the implementation of these policies, since consensus was reached. Motala (1998) comments on this by stating that the uninvolved often make assumptions that: “(Because of) the ostensible agreement in the policy arena and the niceties of consensual statements about the goals to be achieved, there is no likelihood of conflicting interests in regard to the implementation of policies” (Chisholm, Motala and Vally, 2000:20).

Certainly it would be naïve to see the SASA as foolproof legislation. One needs to understand that it reflects the positions taken up by the two main political groups prior to 1994, the African National Congress and the National Party (Ota, 1998). One therefore cannot make the assumption that there are no conflicting interests in policies, even if consensus was reached with regard to goals to be achieved. Often conflicting interests remain despite the policy content and surface at the stage where policies are to be implemented. However, the euphoria of overcoming apartheid might have clouded public scrutiny. Chisholm, Motala and Vally (2001:20) reflect on this matter as follows: “The eagerness to overcome the legacy of apartheid, coupled with overwhelming public enthusiasm and excitement about an emerging democratic system, has shielded the policy-making process from public scrutiny”. Now that the euphoria has waned, and a hard look is taken at the implications of some of the policies, much of the current educational discourse has moved into the arena of policy implementation. For the purposes of this study, my understanding of the term policy will lean towards the value-laden concept, and the focus will be on the impact of the RCL policy in terms of the key goals of educational reform and transformation.

The term “praxis” is defined in Webster’s comprehensive dictionary as an “exercise or discipline for a specific purpose, practical application of rules as distinguished from theory”. This suggests that it is more than just practice or implementation, but that a stage has been reached whereby the policy implementation has developed to a level where everyone concerned with it knows exactly how to respond to the particular issues involved. The viewpoint of McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996:8) is that praxis is “informed, committed action that gives rise to knowledge rather than just successful action ... it leads to knowledge from and about educational practice”.

One is aware that the education policies were put in place to be enacted and to achieve transformation. There are, however, a number of factors to bear in mind. Firstly, there are a number of levels at which mediation needs to take place amongst the policy actors, so as to allow all parties to arrive at a clear understanding of the process. There is definitely a need to analyze how schools are expected to manage change created by national policy. Often the headmaster is seen as the “linchpin in translating government policy” (Mahoney, MacBeath and Moos,

1998:61). From personal experience I can concur that principals often respond by merely appearing to implement government policy. Mahoney *et al.* explain further: “Although the policy content at the macro-level may shape the parameters of how schools operate, it is at the micro-level of the school itself that policy is translated into practice” (1998:123).

One point of view is to consider all the problems, obstacles and impediments to policy implementation only at the institutional level. Another perspective would be to consider what is happening at provincial level. One finds that the volume of policy formulation at national level is such that a gulf has emerged between the “policy-in-intent” at national level, and the “policy-in-action” at provincial level. The result of these different perspectives is that one finds contradictions in policy frameworks at the different levels of administration at which mediation needs to take place amongst policy actors. This sentiment is expressed by Kruss (1997:87) in her comment: “The interpretation and implementation of potentially contradictory policy frameworks in nine provinces with specific and very different regional histories, is bound to influence educational restructuring”.

Research reveals that there are tensions between the government’s expectation of change and the expectations of stakeholders at school level (Mahoney *et al.*, 1998). The reference to the RCL as an “onding” by a principal serves to give notice of the tremendous amount of work needed to change perceptions, and to establish democratic learner structures. This resistance to change is commented on by Mahoney *et al.* (1998:61) who explain that teachers, parents, governors and pupils expected headmasters to prepare their staff and schools for future developments, but did not want head teachers to be pro-active change agents. These stakeholders expected headmasters to act as gatekeepers protecting schools from external demands, resisting political changes and adjudicating on how best to manage what is necessary (Dempster and Logan, as quoted by Campbell, 1999:650). A possible way to approach policy change seems to be through a facilitative or interactive process between the policy and the values and culture of the school.

Erikson and Schultz (1992) are particularly critical of the educational discourse at this time, claiming that the absence of student experience from current educational discourse seems to be a consequence of the systematic silencing of the student voice. They feel that fundamentally the student experience goes unheard and unseen for what appears to be ideological reasons. This

sentiment goes against the current trend in the international community that not only recognises the right of the child to access to education, but also requires the right of the learner to participate in decision-making (Sarason and Van Beueren, 1992:214). In response to the existing situation in education, the erstwhile Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, highlighted as one of his strategic objectives, that all secondary schools have RCLs that will enable the active participation of learners in school affairs (DoE, 1999:15).

A second factor lies with policy implementation, and here a need has been established to critically evaluate the fit between the intention of the policy and the level of praxis that has been attained, i.e. the practical application of the rules, regulations pertaining to the policy.

1.3 THE AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

This research falls within the educational management field, and the specific area is that of school governance.

The Field of Study

The Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Chapter 2, Act No. 108 of 1996) enshrines the rights of all people, and amongst others, the democratic values of human dignity, equality, and freedom. Furthermore, the Constitution establishes basic values and principles of public administration, and encourages the public to “participate in policy-making” (Section 195.1.e).

The above references reflect the importance attached to the transformation of civil society in South Africa. The key role that education should play in the transformation process is stressed in the preamble to the South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996), which specifies, amongst others, that education should strive to:

- improve the quality of learning, teaching and service;
- advance the democratic transformation of society;
- uphold the rights of learners, parents, and educators;

- promote the acceptance of responsibility for the organization, governance and funding of schools in partnership with the State.

Educational management strives to create, support and monitor those conditions that will encourage all the stakeholders to work interdependently to achieve the goals set out above. This research lies within this field of study, and the area of educational management on which the study will focus is on school governance.

The Specific Focus of the Research

In terms of the SA Schools Act (1996), a governing body must be established in every public school (Section 16.1), part of which are learners in the eighth grade or higher. The functioning of the governing body, and particularly the role of the learners, is the area of concern of this research. The South African Schools Act makes provision for a representative council of learners in each ordinary public school that offers instruction in the eighth grade or higher (Section 11.1). Furthermore, it specifies that the RCL should elect the learner members who serve on the governing body of that school (Section 23.4). It is the responsibility of the Province, by notice in the Provincial Gazette, to determine the guidelines for the establishment, election, and functions of the RCL (Section 11.2). An analysis will be done on how the Western Cape has responded to this responsibility. Provincial regulations (or measures) were all published in 1997. Western Cape promulgated new regulations on 31 January 2003 in which the MEC has changed the previous guidelines for functions and election procedures into regulations.

It is my intention to focus on how the stakeholders at schools have interpreted the policy text, how they have internalized the policy in terms of the context of the school, and what operating procedures, regulations and rules have been put in place to implement the policy. I will concentrate on the process of policy mediation at school-level, investigating the response of the schools to the challenge of implementing learner participation in school governance and try to identify those factors responsible for the slow pace of establishing a RCL praxis at schools. Furthermore, the study will assess the level of progress that RCLs have made toward contributing to the “moral purpose in education” (Fullan, 1999:1). This will include an evaluation of the contribution made by the RCL toward:

- making a positive difference in the lives of all the learners (Fullan, 1999:1);

- contributing to making the school a learning community (Fullan, 1999:4);
- promoting the practice of democracy and the acceptance of co-responsibility (Rambiyana, 1996:193).

This research should provide a body of knowledge which, when viewed generically, could give an indication of the process of mediation with regard to new policy initiatives. From a more specific point of view, it is envisaged that this research could provide guidance to those schools that have not been able to shake off the shackles of the past, and have not fully committed themselves to the new system. In order to address the identified areas of concern, the research will be guided by the following sub-aims:

- (i) deepening my personal perspective on learner participation in school governance by doing a detailed literature survey of learner (student) participation in South Africa and in other countries;
- (ii) analyzing the policy of learner participation as manifested in SASA;
- (iii) analyzing how the policy was mediated at institutional level.

1.4 THE CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

The context within which this research is located lies chiefly in the following areas:

- democratizing school governance;
- the need for capacity building;
- social transformation and globalization;
- school as a learning community.

Furthermore, the study should be seen in terms of the context of changes that have taken place since 1994. According to President Mbeki (DoE, 1999: 6) the underlying elements identified in the First White Paper, namely, access, success, quality, equity and redress still remain. Indeed they have been the topic of much discourse and debate. However, many educationists and education policy analysts now acknowledge that the understanding of policy processes just after 1994 may have been rather superficial and naïve. What is becoming clear is that transformation will be a long and slow process. However, what is also becoming clear is that one cannot expect to achieve success unless one provides the necessary resources. This is emphasised by Jarvis

(2000), saying that for policy to be successfully implemented, it needs to be understood, and then supported by “the essential capacity of human and financial resources to implement it”.

Democratizing School Governance

Since the 1970s the restructuring of schools and school systems has been a worldwide phenomenon, and featured high on the agenda of the resistance movement in South Africa, particularly the role of school-site councils. Sithole (1995:93-114) traces the history of student participation in school governance, and motivates the inclusion of learner participation. This work probably played a major role in informing the drafters of SASA to provide for the participation of secondary school learners in school governance. However, the promulgation of SASA did not automatically change the negative perceptions with regard to this issue, and cognisance should be taken of the views documented, when mediating the implementation of new policies. This aspect will receive greater attention in chapter 3.

The Need of Capacity Building

A particularly problematic area in implementing the new system is the different perceptions people have of the purpose of the governing body, and the modus operandi thereof. The context of this research should also take cognisance of what has been done with regard to this issue, and the influence capacity building has on the mediation of policy. This matter will receive further attention in chapter 4.

Social Transformation and Globalisation

The democratisation of the South African political arena has, unfortunately, coincided with the increasing integration of the world’s economies. This has led to deregulation, privatisation and the drastic curtailment of basic social services. The legacy of the past has left South Africa with a backlog in social services that cannot be addressed by relying on policies based on market perspectives. The implementation of rationalization and restructuring has impacted negatively on the transformation process, and one has to be aware of this when evaluating responses from schools on policy implementation. Educational transformation is widely recognized as a critical building block in transforming society. The Government responded to the challenge by putting the basic policies and structures in place, allowing for multiple sites of governance, with

decentralization of authority to schools and communities. However, accompanying these strategies should be a fundamental shift in understanding the new concept of governance in education. Here I am referring to the process by which authority is mediated in the system, from the national ministry to each individual school.

The transformation process was given a harsh wake-up call in 1999 by then Minister of Education, Kader Asmal. He recognized the excellent work done in putting policies in place, but identified a serious shortcoming in the gap between policy and practice. In the Implementation of Tirisano document the erstwhile Minister, Kader Asmal (DoE, 1999) claimed:

(There) is a serious crisis of leadership, governance and administration in many parts of the system. This has many facets. The most serious, in terms of scale, is the incapacity of several provincial departments of education to set the agenda for their systems, perform their tasks in a business-like way, and give adequate professional support to their institutions of learning.

Bearing the above in mind, the need for the role of the RCL in promoting transformation to be critically examined becomes apparent, and further justifies this study.

School as a Learning Community

Schools today are modelled on learning communities (Bryk and Driscoll, as quoted by Smith, Thurlow and Foster, 1997:25), and are social organizations that consist of cooperative relations among adults who share common purposes, and where daily life for adults and learners is organized in ways that promote commitment among its members. This concept of schools as communities seems to stem from a realization that learners need to be provided with the social capital that, in the past, schools assumed was being provided to the learners by their immediate and extended families. Selznick (1992:369) expands on the role of the school, stating that its function “is to regulate, discipline, and especially to channel self-regarding conduct, thereby binding it so far as possible, to comprehensive interests and ideals”.

The concept of social capital refers to the development of norms, obligations, and trust through interaction and the building of relationships with other people, as well as inculcating a sense of stability, security, and positive self-concept. Without these personal and social prerequisites for coping with the challenges of the school's curriculum learners often flounder. According to Gamoran (1996:2): "When such relations are flourishing, social capital can serve as a resource supporting the cognitive and social development of young people".

1.5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Five theoretical positions serve to frame this study. They are: democratization of education; political contestation; decentralization; policy and policy process; change and change process.

Democratization of Education

The following quotation serves to introduce this topic: "Democratic behaviour is not genetically conditioned, inborn or inherited faculty – it is learned. The practice of democracy must therefore be taught to its practitioners" (Oyugi, Odhiambo, Chege and Gitonga, 1988:21).

The question whether schools should see the promotion of democratic practices as part of its brief should be discussed at each institution so that all stakeholders take ownership of this process. SASA, in its preamble, spells this out quite clearly. Entwistle, as quoted by Rambiyana, Kok, and Myburgh, (1996:192) says that the skills of democratic behaviour have to be patiently taught and painstakingly learned. How these skills are to be taught differ from country to country, and how it has been attempted in the Western Cape, South Africa will be the focus of chapter 4.

Democracy: The concept democracy stems from the Greek words "demos" (the people) and "kratein" (to rule). It has been defined as a system in which the people govern themselves (Cohen 1971:3), or where "control is vested in elective officers as representatives who may be upheld or removed by the people" (Webster, 1992:346). In a basic sense democracy is usually perceived as government of the people, stemming from the people, and exercised by the people, for the people. Having all the concerned people involved in the decision making process is

usually not a viable option, hence the involvement of the people takes place through representative democracy where people of their choice debate issues and make decisions on their behalf. Representation therefore implies that someone is taking the place of, or is present instead of someone else.

Education has been defined in various ways over the years, the most notable probably being that of John Dewey. However, the essence of democracy, as perceived currently, is based on the following key elements, according to Nguru (1995:60): citizen involvement in political decision making, equality among citizen, human rights, a system of representation, and an electoral system. Nguru refers to the views of two African writers, expressed in a paper delivered at the annual congress of the Education Association of South Africa (11-13 January 1995) on this issue. Fafumwa defines education as: “The aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to the society in which he lives”. Furthermore, he says that: “It is a process for transmitting culture in terms of continuity and growth and for transmitting knowledge either to ensure social control or to guarantee rational direction of the society or both” (Nguru, 1995:61).

Kajubi on the other hand, emphasizes that: “Education must become a means through which society transforms and advances itself to higher ideals rather than remaining a process of merely acquiring information and paper qualification” (Nguru, 1995:61).

Bearing in mind the above definitions, if Africa wishes to move decisively towards democratic governments and societies, its education system should be used to fashion democratic values, attitudes, beliefs and habits. It is the root source of establishing democratic behaviour, conduct and practices in society. It could be said that the degree of democracy in any given society would be directly proportional to the degree of acculturation of the people in democratic values, attitudes and beliefs. As Oyugi,, Odhiambo, Chege and Gitonga (1998:21) claim: “For democracy to exist, survive and prosper, it requires that the people be bathed in and drenched with the democratic ethos!”

The foundation for democracy therefore lies in an education system that promotes the ideals of democracy. The development of the RCL system in schools in South Africa is a vehicle that could greatly benefit the country and serve as a model to other countries. This would also assist in the ideals of NEPAD - that of promoting good governance in all African countries. Nguru (1995:61-62) goes on to identify the following critical factors to be included in democratic citizen education:

- Integration: It should not be taught as a separate subject, but reflected in practice.
- Adequate preparation of educators at colleges, universities or during in-service training.
- Appropriate instructional strategies: These include a more hands-on approach, group projects, cooperative learning, open discussions, and learner involvement in community activities and services.
- Flexible classroom climate: Modelling the principles of democracy in the classroom.
- Utilizing adequate instructional resources: Aggressively embarking on efforts to make resources available to the learners, such as media resources, and skilled persons in the community.
- Assessment of learners: Making use of continuous assessment and project work.

Participation: Participation usually means being involved in some activity or process. Democratic participation usually relates to processes aimed at the development of policies, and is a flow of influence from grassroots upwards. Accompanying participation is the principle of co-responsibility. This means that “if people want to take part in, for example, decision making, they should not only know the avenues available to them, but should also accept that whatever the outcome, they carry the responsibility of it, together with other participants, and that they are accountable for it” (Rambiyana, 1996:191). This means that the avenues for participation should be clearly specified, be available, and people should be encouraged to participate, but never be forced to do so.

Bearing the above in mind, the pursuit of democracy could therefore be considered as a principle for learners to participate in school governance.

Political Contestation

The education policy espoused by SASA was conceptualized as a contested political process that included the “formulation, issuing and implementation of government texts such as laws, white papers, regulations, reports, notices, circulars and ministerial statements” (Karlsson, 2001:3). These government policy texts are then implemented at provincial level, district level, and at institutional level. The stakeholders involved in the implementation process do so in terms of their own understanding and interpretation of these texts and framed by their own social context. During this process of moving the policy from central government to institutional level, a filtering may take place that could lead to a mismatch between the intention of the policy and the implementation of the policy. It is therefore incumbent on the representatives of the learners to remain vigilant and committed to constructive engagement on issues involving them. Fitz and Halpin (1991:135) caution on the issue of interpretation: “...interpreting policy via a reading of correspondence between ideological preferences and concrete proposals is a hazardous procedure, and one which may overlook the complexities, contingencies and competing interests which we believe are so much a part of the policy-making process”.

Decentralization

The third theoretical frame is related to the previous two, and there are three aspects to bear in mind. Firstly, decentralization is rooted in the democratic faith. This refers to the basic belief that schools are community institutions, and as such should have “the participation of the people, and that the greater this participation, the better the decisions about schools will be” (Baron, 1981:31). Furthermore, in the matter of values, preferences and the allocation of decisions on policy and governance, the people become a “countervailing force to authority” (Baron, 1981:31). This means that the people have greater opportunity and leverage to influence decisions in accordance with their directly expressed interests.

Secondly, the intention of decentralization is that of achieving educational reform, and changes in governance are typically among the key proposals. In particular, many countries have taken steps to move more authority to individual schools and to strengthen the role of parents in governing bodies. The belief is that greater parental involvement will lead to greater self-esteem of the learners, and this will in turn lead to enhanced performance of the learners.

Thirdly, the intention of decentralization is to hold someone accountable. The belief is that greater community involvement will cause the institution to respond to the needs of the community. It will also encourage greater acceptance of ownership of the school, and in turn this will lead to greater financial support. Furthermore, the increased financial support will make the institution more accountable to the community, such as giving financial reports and annual reports, as it makes progress towards achieving the objectives of the institution. According to Levin (1998:131) an emphasis on standards, accountability and testing has been a feature of reforms in many countries, with these countries holding up their rankings as evidence of the quality of their work. However, he cautions that large-scale change in education is not accompanied by substantially increased financial commitment to schools by governments, and cautions: “The attempt to move the gears of education without the grease of financing is producing some very loud noises from the machinery, whether it will be successful is still an open question” (Levin, 1998:132).

In order to understand school governance in a developing country such as South Africa, one has to explore the “theoretical underpinnings of the move towards decentralization” (Herman, 2002:1). Colonial rule left a legacy of strong bureaucratic centralism in the developing countries. After independence, many of these countries continued in this vein of placing strong emphasis on central planning. This is typical when independently constituted local and regional government is weak to begin with (Lauglo, 1995:6), as indeed was the case when the new South Africa came into being in 1994. Whilst coming out of an era characterized by a calling for participatory democracy and people’s education, the education policy of South Africa also had to address aspects such as redress and equality of educational opportunity. The way to proceed was guided by the various White Papers, and the National Policy Framework was drawn up. It provided the overall policy direction, implementing decentralization by delegating extensive powers to provinces to manage and govern primary and secondary education. Furthermore, powers were allocated at local level with the establishment of Article 20 and Article 21 schools in terms of the S.A. Schools Act. This has left a need for policy mediation between the policy actors at both provincial and local level, and resultant differences in provincial legislation, and at

the implementation stage at institutional level. This research will focus particularly at the policy mediation stage at institutional level.

The policy of decentralization in school governance appears to be a common international trend since the 1980's, although the rationale differs from country to country. It is, in fact, the "central plank of major international efforts aimed at restructuring educational systems" (Makaleng, 1999:46). McGinn and Pereira (1992:168) raise an interesting point when they suggest that governance policies may be used to regulate conflict between interest groups and to favour those groups that support the objectives of the state. Governing bodies fit these requirements well. They "incorporate" representatives of the main interest groups concerned with education in a locality and provide a forum for the local resolution of disagreements. This function is likely to be particularly valuable in post-apartheid South Africa where schools have previously been "theatres of the struggle". It transfers to school level many of the issues about priorities and resources that are so difficult to resolve in a society where the costs of transformation are likely to outpace the government's ability to fund change (Bush *et al.*, 2001:2).

In England and Wales, the transfer of powers to governing bodies can also be seen as a wish to empower parents and business interests and to weaken teachers and the local education authorities. This emphasis on "consumer" rather than on "producer" interests is based on the market-led assumption that parents know what is best for their children and that teachers are more concerned with their own interests than those of the pupils and students (Bush and Gamage, 2001:40). Similar views are espoused by MacPherson, an Australian academic who worked for six months in the New Zealand Services Commission at the time of the reform in the management structure of New Zealand schools. He writes of the motivation of politicians and their advisers as follows:

From the outset, real devolution was considered as a means of altering the balance of power between the providers and the clients to raise satisfaction levels. Behind what appeared to be a new touching faith in more direct democracy was a steely resolve in the House and in Cabinet to create a new system with a sophisticated set of checks and balances that would embed

responsiveness as a norm of professional and administrative practice (as quoted by Bush and Gamage, 2001:41).

In their cross-national review of policy and research on decentralization within public education systems, Walberg, Paik, Kumukai, and Freeman (2000) identified 22 definitions of decentralization, such as: principals collegially share power with teachers; restructuring government to satisfy citizen needs and interests; and school-based decision making. Decentralization is therefore far from being a unidimensional and uncontested concept. Behind the overall similarity in the trends toward devolution, there remain substantial differences in the areas of decision-making transferred from the centre to the school. Examples are: organization of the curriculum; financial management; personnel management; and resource allocation. Furthermore, an increase in decentralization in one aspect of management is often accompanied by an increase in control by the center in other areas.

To facilitate the understanding and the analysis of the nature of decentralization, Ainley and McKenzie (2000) refers to the framework developed by the OECD (1995; 1998) that distinguishes between the different dimensions of decentralization:

- decision fields: organization of instruction, planning and structures, personnel management, and resource management;
- decision levels: national, state, intermediate and local;
- decision modes: full autonomy, after consultation, independently, but within a framework set by a higher authority.

The OECD framework gives a useful mapping of the broad dimensions of the concept of school governance and the importance of clarifying exactly what is meant by the term decentralization.

Bearing the above in mind, decentralization could therefore be considered as a principle for including learners on the school governing body so that they can articulate their expectations, concerns and burning issues in a forum that has the legal authority to act in their interests. They do not want this to be done for them by parents or educators, but want to contribute directly toward decisions that directly affect them (Chinsamy, 1995:55–56).

Policy and Policy Process

In order to move away from the strong bureaucratic control on education under the apartheid regime a number of processes had to take place. The first was a process to change policy. Policy is defined as the “authoritative allocation of values” (Prunty, as quoted by Makaleng, 1999:31) and fundamentally it is about “the exercise of political power and the language that is used to legitimate that process” (Codd, as quoted by Makaleng, 1999:31). The following are a number of approaches to policy change.

The first approach to analysing policy is an examination of the level of convergence or divergence between the policy text and its implementation. Of particular interest would be a comparison of trends in terms of past learner structures in the schools and how schools have responded to the new policy. Insights could also be gained into limitations in policies, or the need for mediation and/or adaptation to practices.

The second approach to policy and policy process is known as the bureaucratic or top-down model in which the government presupposes that it has the ability to drive the change process in a particular direction. Policy and policy implementation is seen as “the transmission of a blueprint to the operating units” (Dyer, 1999:47). According to this view, any deviance from the intended manner of implementation is explained in terms of unclear directives or regulations, or weak organizational controls. This model fails to acknowledge the role that should be played by various actors in the policy process.

The third approach is known as the bottom-up model and was described by Sabatier in 1986 (CEPD, 2001:7). This approach to policy attaches most importance to the actors at the implementation level. The danger of this model is that the “street level” actors are not always fully aware of the social, legal, and economic factors which impinge on the policy text. Furthermore, it also ignores the context created by legislative arrangements.

The fourth approach is known as the bargaining and conflict model and seeks to follow the problem-solving route. It focuses on interdependence between the state and the various interest groups, and accepts that policy implementation is a process of mediation between competing

interests. Policy analysts such as McLaughlin (1991) and Fuhram (1991) suggest that policy is not only a matter of formal decisions taken by national level bureaucrats, politicians, or experts, but also a constant process of mediation between the different players at the different levels of the policy process.

In most cases the last approach to the concepts of policy and policy process may be the most logical route to follow within the present context of transformation in the country, but there may be circumstances where the other models may be more appropriate. An analysis of the context would be essential to determine the best option. McLaughlin (as quoted by Kgobe, 2000:8) substantiates this view when he claims that individuals interpret policy and act on it at each point of the policy process.

Caldwell and Spinks (1988:63) recommend that the policy process should be “all-over-at-once” rather than top-down or bottom-up, with appropriate involvement of people at all levels: communication should be multi-directional, flowing up, down across lines of authority.

Change and Change Processes

The fifth conceptual approach draws from a range of literature including the work of Fullan (1993, 1999), Senge (1990), Beare (1993), Ball (1990), Ramsay and Clark (1990). The essence of the research findings seems to be that:

- it is not that easy to accomplish fundamental change; and
- formal structural changes do not automatically lead to re-culturing.

Introducing change into an organization as large and complex as an educational department that relies on a matrix system will obviously not be easy. Besides the cultural differences that would be present, there will also be differences at a detailed, institutional level, and differences in the level of competencies of the practitioners. Fullen (1993) comments on this matter by claiming that initiatives for change are reacted upon in the context of some familiar, reliable construction of reality. This means that policy initiatives meant for school-level change thus have to deal with the broad principles, but it must also deal with the perceptions, understandings and ideologies regarding the said issue. Thus he concludes that an innovation cannot be assimilated unless its meaning is shared (Fullen, 1993).

With regard to the process of change, there are three basic stages in terms of the framework suggested by Lewin (1951). He sees it as unfreezing, changing and refreezing. In other words, the beginning and the end points represent stability. Why this framework may not be found useful, is the fact that at many institutions learner participation in school governance has already become part of the culture. This means that it is already unfrozen. In other institutions, however, there is strong tendency for it to remain unfrozen.

There are therefore three aspects to bear in mind concerning the content of change:

- there is a task aspect to managing the change that could take up a reactive or proactive posture;
- there is a professional practice aspect that involves variation in the level of competencies and skills;
- there is a body of knowledge which has to be imparted and understood, consisting of legislation, models, methods, and techniques.

An alternative framework is to see the change process as problem solving. At a conceptual level this would mean identifying the change problem in terms of moving from one state to that of another. In simpler terms then, it means finding answers to the questions: what, why and how.

In looking at change management strategies, the framework presented by Bennis, Benne and Chin (1969) provide some guidelines. However, there is generally no single change strategy that works. One is best served by using some mix of strategies, dependent upon factors such as degree of resistance, target population, the stakes involved, the time frame, the expertise available, and dependency. In view of these approaches, policy initiatives directed at school level change should take cognisance of the prevailing perceptions, understandings, ideologies and culture at the institutions. The intended change cannot be assimilated unless the meaning is shared and understood. The implication is that all the policy actors in the change process need to engage constructively with one another, interact and reach consensus on the basic assumptions, concepts, and beliefs underlying the policy initiative.

The research done by Ramsay and Clark at the St. Mary's College, Hobart in Tasmania also provides some useful insights to education change. Of particular interest is the statement by Ramsay and Clark (1990:4) that "any explanation for the differential success of schools that ignores the internal working of the institution must almost certainly be inadequate".

They provide the following theoretical structure when considering change at school:

- belief that change is possible;
- belief that the school is the essential unit of change;
- belief that schools can and do make a difference;
- belief in accurate data collection;
- belief that facilitation promotes the process from policy to praxis;
- belief in collaborative action research;
- belief in emphasizing fundamental values (Ramsay and Clark, 1990:205-209).

Bearing the above in mind, change and the change processes become an important principle to understand the importance of learner participation in school governance in South Africa.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What does literature identify as playing a role in the development and implementation of policy with regard to learner participation in school governance?
- How has the Western Cape Provincial Government responded to Article 11 of SASA, and how has Western Cape Education Department interpreted the response? What structures, operating procedures, regulations, rules and programmes have been put in place in order to implement the policy?
- How have the stakeholders at school level interpreted and internalised the policy text in Article 11 of SASA in terms of the context of the school?
- What impact has the implementation of the policy had in terms of the key transformation goal of enhancing democratic practices in our country?

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

When tracking the progress of policy towards praxis in school governance, it is necessary to be aware of the levels of implementation and mediation at national, provincial and institutional level. The research will, however, focus on the institutional level. It will be of both a qualitative and quantitative nature, and it will be approached from a phenomenological perspective. The phenomenon being researched is the interpretation and subsequent implementation of SASA, focusing on section 11, and its accompanying provincial regulations. This is in line with the thoughts of social science writers who see the discipline as: “concerned with the interpretative understanding of social action and (that) the most significant feature about social action is its subjective meaning” (Carr & Kemmis, 1986: 87).

The research design will take the form of: documentary analysis of policy (literature survey); comparative study of practices of learner participation in school; governance in selected countries (literature survey); empirical research through questionnaires; data analysis, recording of findings and drawing out of learnings.

1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This section gives an overview of the structure of the thesis, indicating how the main aspects of the research have been collated.

The introductory chapter introduces the topic, gives the rationale, context and framework of the study, briefly outlines the research methodology, and introduces the research questions. This is followed by an outline of the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2 provides a literature survey of school governance in selected countries of the world, seeking similarities and differences to learner participation in South Africa. The key words used in the literature survey are: student participation; student council; student government; student power; student empowerment; student decision-making; student voice; student management; student role; student leadership; shared decision-making.

Chapter 3 gives an analysis of the South African policy of learner participation and seeks answers to the first research question, concentrating on the South African perspective. It focuses on analysing how education policy was influenced by social, economic, political and cultural forces, leading to the promulgation of SASA, and in particular, Section 11. It also identifies those aspects that have led to tension in school communities.

Chapter 4 gives a historical account of the capacity building programmes implemented in the Western Cape, from 1997 to 2003, indicating how the Western Cape Provincial Government responded to Article 11 of SASA, and how Western Cape Education Department interpreted the response? It therefore answers the second research question: What structures, operating procedures, regulations, rules and programmes have been put in place in order to implement the policy?

Chapter 5 deals with the research design and methodology. It explains the research methodology used to seek answers to research questions 3 and 4 as given in 1.6. The focus of the methodology followed is based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Chapter 6 presents and discusses the findings obtained in the study to research questions 3 and 4 and are given in terms of the analytical framework discussed in chapter 5.

Chapter 7 looks at the findings obtained and relates these to the research questions. The research findings are interpreted in terms of the methodological framework described in chapter 5. I share some of the learnings that I gained during the process and offer some recommendations that to my view should facilitate the further development of the RCL.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE SURVEY ON THE LATEST TRENDS IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a literature survey of school governance in a selected number of countries in Europe, North America, Australasia, and Africa. The countries are England and Wales, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, France, United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Tanzania, Kenya and Namibia.

Specific attention has been given to analyzing the latest trends in school governance, focusing on learner participation in school governance. The survey also sought to identify examples in which schools promote democracy education through political and civic engagement. It was anticipated that the literature survey would identify promising approaches that could be usefully implemented by representative councils of learners in South Africa when carrying out their mandate.

2.2 THE SHIFT TOWARDS DECENTRALIZING SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

The 1980s was a particularly turbulent era for schools, not only in South Africa, but worldwide. An international trend began emerging towards decentralization and greater autonomy for public schools (Beare, 1993). There seemed to be a frenzy to restructure schools and school systems (Caldwell, 1998), and this led to the promulgation of legislation creating a substantial shift towards the decentralization of educational administration and school governance in many countries. In Europe there were major changes made in the legislative framework for the provision of public education, including England (1988, 1992 and 1993), France (1983 and 1989), Italy (1997), Spain (1990 and 1995) and Sweden (1985, 1988 and 1991). Site-based management has also been documented in the USA (Herman and Herman, 1993), Canada (Brown, 1990), New Zealand (Wylie, 1995) and Australia (Caldwell, 1998; Ainley and McKenzie, 2000).

When reviewing the background to the reform movement in these countries, one needs to bear in mind that it might have been triggered off by political and social situations peculiar to these countries, but that these movements also served as examples elsewhere as globalization expanded. We find that in most countries decentralization takes place through the devolution of power to school governing bodies comprising of the representatives of relevant stakeholders, while the operational management is devolved to the principal (Bush and Gamage, 2001:39). This is in line with the views expressed by Caldwell and Spinks (1988:5), who define the self-managing school as one for which “there has been significant and consistent decentralization to the school level of authority to make decisions related to the allocation of resources”.

Whilst there is considerable diversity in the forms of decentralization adopted by these countries, the assumptions underpinning the rationale are all very similar. They can be summarized as follows:

- Locating decision-making as close as possible to the point of implementation will lead to better decisions being reached (Robinson, Timperley, Parr, and McNaughton, 1994:72);
- Greater autonomy will enhance the quality, effectiveness and responsiveness of public education;
- Parental involvement in school governance, according to Chan and Chui (1997:103), can be justified from diverse points of view, including efficiency and effectiveness, public accountability (Gamage, 1993), as a matter of right (Beare, 1993), as conducive to students’ learning, according to one parent association in Victoria, an enhancement of school policy formulation, according to an official of Victorian Council of School Organizations (VICCSO), and as a means to more democratic governance (Deem, 1994).

Similarly the inclusion of learners in school governance is a practical way to promote democratic values and develop a democratic political culture. In the words of Harber (1997:9): “If students are going to learn both the skills of participation and to value tolerance, mutual respect and equality then they must experience them in practice rather than just learn about them in an abstract way”. This view is supported by Diamond (1993:7) when he points out that the development of a democratic culture “...cannot be taken for granted as a natural by-product of

democratic practice or institutional design”. It should be underpinned by a school and classroom ethos that accommodates the values of tolerance, mutual respect and freedom of expression.

Devolution of Authority

Literature draws a distinction between administrative and political forms of devolution. Administrative devolution is organizational in nature and involves delegating authority to lower levels of the hierarchy to make certain decisions, usually to promote efficiency. Political devolution, on the other hand, implies some form of semi-autonomous local control, often through boards of elected officials. Looking at these two models from a practical point of view, two distinct differences emerge:

- Administrative devolution can be reversed at any stage or time, but political devolution requires a formal agreement or legislative change;
- With administrative devolution, employees are accountable to those higher in the organization, but with political devolution their main accountability is to those who elected them (Education Review Office, New Zealand: School Governance and Student Achievement, June 1999).

The School Governing Body Used as a Mechanism for Decentralization

The composition of school governing bodies is similar in most countries, and probably evolved from the United Kingdom that had a long tradition of having parents and community leaders involved in the management of individual schools (Baron, 1981:81). Parental participation in school councils and school boards was therefore common practice in the former British colonies. When the Labour Government set up the Taylor Committee in 1975, it set up a ripple effect in many other countries. The terms of reference were:

To review the arrangements for the management and government of maintained primary and secondary schools in England and Wales, including the composition and functions of bodies of managers and governors, and their relationships with local education authorities, with head teachers and staffs of schools, with parents of pupils and with the local community at large; and to make recommendations (Baron, 1981:89).

The recommendation of having an enlarged role for parents and for more public involvement in the schools was generally greeted with satisfaction. The proposal to give governors a major role in the decision-making in respect of the curriculum and teaching, however, was strongly criticized by teacher unions (Baron, 1981:95). Similar antipathy to governing bodies was echoed in New South Wales in the 1970s and 1980s where the Teachers' Federation vehemently opposed the establishment of school councils with community participation (Gamage, 1992). The composition of governing bodies usually includes parents, educators, community representatives, and the principal. However, a number of countries have been more progressive and have included representatives of non-teaching staff, as well as learners. This will be looked at in the literature survey in the selected countries.

As signatories to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, most countries have recognized the principle that children should have the right to express their views on all matters that affect them. In line with this, most of the major countries have made statutory provision for secondary school learners to participate in decision-making, and some have developed structures that represent the views of learners on a local level, regional level, and at national level. A notable exception in Europe though, is England, which seems to be lagging behind in this area.

2.3 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN ENGLAND AND WALES

England has a long history of stakeholder participation in school governance, and many of the Commonwealth countries have systems that have evolved from the English system. In tracing how school governance reached the present level of participation by the stakeholders, it is noticeable how the government of the day has influenced its development. From a legal perspective the relationship between parents and schools in England and Wales is encapsulated in the Education Act of 1988 that holds parents responsible for ensuring that their children receive full-time education. The Act says: "It shall be the duty of the parents of every child of compulsory school age to cause him to receive full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise" (Education Act, 1988:Section 76). The members of the school governing bodies were elected as representatives of certain interest

groups connected with the school, and Lowe (1996:03) identifies additional rights and powers of the governing bodies with regard to finances, admission of pupils, and appointment of principals. Furthermore, Wragg and Partington (1995:08) state that the 1988 Act gave the parents the power to sever ties with the Local Education Authority (LEA), and obtain funding directly from the Department of Education.

The Education Acts of 1992 and 1993, according to Welton and Rashid (1990:125), further reduced the control of education by the LEAs, particularly with regard to the finances. According to Earley and Creese (as quoted by Bush and Gamage, 2001:43), parent representation was increased in 1999, and with their increased powers could "...act as a bridge between the school and the community and, if operating successfully, can be a two-way conduit between them". Furthermore, the transfer of power to governing bodies can be seen as an attempt to empower parents and business interests and to weaken teachers and the local education authorities (LEAs). This emphasis on consumer rather than producer interests is based on the assumption that parents know best what is good for their children, and that teachers are more concerned with their own interests. This policy was also politically expedient at the time since the Labour Party had control of most of the LEAs.

The motives for the radical change in the governance of education are summarized as follows by Welton (1990:125-126):

- increasing control of education spending;
- removing education from allegedly damaging political interference by local authorities of a different political persuasion from the government;
- regaining control over an education system that was regarded as being run by the teaching profession in a way that was contrary to the interests of the learners, parents, and the economy;
- making educational institutions accountable to their users by exposing them to the rigours of the market place;
- raising national standards, partly through the establishment of a national curriculum together with a system of testing and monitoring;

- making education more efficient, by enabling strategic and operational decisions to be taken as close as possible to where they must be implemented;
- replacing democratically-based systems for controlling public services with privatised services or quasi autonomous non-governmental organizations.

The outcome of the implementation of the education legislation from 1988 onwards has led to increased powers and responsibilities for school governors. This can be summarized as follows:

- overseeing the implementation of the national curriculum;
- developing and overseeing the implementation of the school's development plan;
- controlling the school's financial management;
- regulating the conduct of learners through a code of conduct, suspension and expulsion;
- developing and overseeing the implementation of a policy on sex education;
- publishing information about the school for the parents and wider school community.

From the analysis of legislation over the years, one can therefore see how the role of the parents (or the consumer) has gradually become more significant. The school governors now enjoy substantial powers, and the professional attitudes are still adapting to the new reality (Bush, 1992:22).

The Role of School Councils in England and Wales

Research done by the NSPCC in 1998 in partnership with the School Councils UK and the Advisory Centre for Education involving almost 400 schools demonstrated that:

- schools want to set up and maintain school councils;
- school councillors were positive about their ability to improve relationships between learners;
- school councillors felt positive about contributing towards school life and school environment;
- the majority of educators saw school councils as an essential in giving a voice to the learners;
- schools were clear that the success of school councils depended on establishing a high level of trust between educators and learners;

- schools felt that councils at primary schools could also be used effectively to involve learners in decision-making (<http://www.schoolcouncils.org/> 2005/03/23).

The research by NSPCC also suggests what school councils can do:

- the development and implementation of school rules and policies particularly in relation to anti-bullying, anti-racism and anti-discrimination;
- the reduction of vandalism and the improvement of the school environment;
- the development of peer support schemes;
- raising funds and making decisions on how to spend them;
- running school newspapers/websites/radio/TV;
- involvement in staff appointments (<http://www.schoolcouncils.org/> 2005/03/23).

Research done by Davies (1998) concludes that for school councils to work effectively, the following are necessary:

- inclusive structures and lines of communication through class councils, year councils or circle time, so that an individual voice can be heard;
- frequent meetings and immediate feedback;
- meetings held in lesson time;
- a wide-ranging agenda that includes both learners' immediate concerns and school policy issues;
- support from all educators, particularly the head (<http://www.schoolcouncils.org/> 2005/03/23).

At a conference titled 'Citizenship in secondary schools' held in London on 13 July 2004, Jessica Gold outlined a range of benefits that can be associated with school councils:

- higher than expected attainment compared with similar schools;
- reduced pupil exclusions;
- improved behaviour, attitudes, academic work, relationships with staff, relationships between pupils, attendance;
- learners feel that they are being listened to, even if their request is turned down;

- a school council is a source of information, and can communicate with the wider learner body (<http://www.schoolcouncils.org/> 2005/03/23).

One of the topics at the above conference was the proposal by Wales to introduce statutory school councils. The proposal included the following requirements:

- the school council must meet at least once every half term;
- all learners to have a voice in choosing council members;
- all year groups in the school, to be separately represented and special needs units to have their own representatives;
- feedback from each meeting to be provided to learners and the governing body;
- the governing body to consider that feedback (<http://www.schoolcouncils.org/> 2005/03/23).

Similarities and differences in school governance compared to South Africa

There are some areas in which school governance in England and Wales clearly differs radically to that in South Africa. They are:

- overseeing the implementation of the national curriculum. This is clearly a professional management issue in South Africa, and does not fall under school governance;
- no provision has been made for learner representation in school governance to date, although the matter is receiving attention;
- the education acts in England and Wales tend to be very specific with regard to the roles and responsibilities of school governors. This is not so in South Africa, and there are many areas where there is much overlapping, making collaboration essential for successful operation of the schools.

It appears as if in England and South Africa there is a need for the members of the SGB to balance the interests of the lay and professional members in such a way that the SGB meets the needs of the school.

2.4 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN SWEDEN

During the late 1960s and early 1970s Sweden, as well as the other Scandinavian countries, experienced a groundswell of political interest in decentralizing education. This led to the establishment of representative councils or committees for shared decision-making or consultation at each school (Baron, 1981:253). The Swedish approach to education is bureaucratic and reflects the concept of the school as an extension of society. Administration of education takes place through the municipality as an agent of the state. Swedish school statutes provide for “collaborative committees” in the upper secondary schools (age 16–19), consisting of headmaster, two teacher representatives, two pupil representatives, and two directly appointed representatives of the municipal education committees who act as chairperson and deputy chairperson. Administrators are also strongly represented and the duties assigned to these “collaborate committees” are loosely defined and relate to non-controversial issues. There is no statutory provision for these committees in the basic school. Baron (1981:256) claims that although participation of pupils in governance is viewed as important in democratizing education, “most secondary school pupils were very ill-informed about, and had little interest in these channels for pupil participation”.

The SIA Commission proposed in 1974 that the “collaborative committees” should be converted into governing bodies with greater and more clearly defined authority. These bodies would include pupil representatives. The Minister of Education responded in 1976, after further investigation, that pupil representation should be confined to the upper stage of the basic school and above (age 13+). However, pupil representatives could be co-opted as non-voting members in those stages of schooling where they do not have representation as a right. It was further proposed that the municipal education committee decides on the composition of the school committee. The official function of this committee is to serve as a consultative body promoting harmonious relations within the school, and good conduct amongst learners.

Baron (1981:256) quotes Lauglo (1976) as follows: “It might seem as if the authority proposed by the Minister for the school committee was so carefully specified and narrowly circumscribed that the proposal would be easily accepted”. However, this was not the case. In December 1979, the proposal was shelved. The major reason for this being shelved was that parent and pupil participation in decision-making conflicts with two political principles that were especially important in Sweden. These principles are:

- there should be a clear chain of administrative responsibility extending downwards from politically responsible bodies. Parent and pupil representatives, though elected to office, are not elected by the public at large, nor are they “officials” appointed by and responsible to a higher administrative authority;
- the other principle derives from the special recognition that in Sweden is given to corporate bodies, whether these be economic interest associations, such as trade unions, or other broadly-based voluntary associations.

The resultant proposal was that representatives of pupils and parents are, whenever practicable, to be nominated by the local chapters of the Swedish Association of Pupils and the Home and School Association. Furthermore, since the mid-sixties increasing militancy among teacher unions has led to pressure for “industrial democracy” as opposed to “participatory democracy” which could include parents and pupils. Participatory democracy has therefore been checked in Sweden by the advance of industrial democracy.

2.5 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN DENMARK

By way of contrast to Sweden, the desire for clarity in the chain of administrative authority has not kept Denmark from allowing politically “irresponsible” parents from exercising considerable influence in the schools, nor from de-emphasizing the authority of the head teacher (Baron, 1981:272). The Danish Education Act of 1993 places parents at the centre of the educational process and implies that the school leaders should build a partnership with the school community. This is emphasized by the following extract: “The task of the basic school is, in cooperation with parents, to offer possibilities for the pupils to acquire knowledge, skills,

working methods and forms of expression which contribute to the all-round development of the individual pupils” (Folkeskole Act of 1993: Article 1.1).

The Act reflects a tradition of democratic participation and what stands out is that “school leaders recognize instinctively a rightful place for parents in the education process and the school’s responsibility as a key contributor to the maintenance and development of democracy” (Moos and Dempster, 1998:100). The schools also accept responsibility for developing their students’ capacity for “democratic deliberation, critical judgement and rational understanding” (Moos and Dempster, 1998:103). Furthermore, Article 3 of the Danish Folkeskole Act (1993), states: “ The school must prepare the students for participation, sharing of responsibilities, rights and duties in a society with freedom and democracy. The education in the school as well as in daily life of the school therefore must build on intellectual liberty, equality and democracy”. Because of this requirement, it is widely accepted in Denmark that students should be participants in decisions about their education and that teachers and principals should provide role models for them by acting in a democratic manner. Moos and Dempster (1998:103) quote the Danish Minister for Education, Ole Vig Jensen, who confirms this view in a speech in August 1997:

A democratic challenge to education is the way to go if we want to develop our democracy. If an education must prepare (its pupils) for democracy, it must be democratically organized... we don't postulate a connection between democracy and education. We insist on it.

The Danish approach to education seems to be anti-bureaucratic, stressing voluntarism rather than central control, and lateral communication rather than vertical communication. There is great emphasis on education as a joint concern of parents and teachers, and the administration of education takes place through municipal committees.

2.6 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN NORWAY

The situation in Norway differs from the other Scandinavian countries in that direct parent involvement in school governance has existed since 1889. It was then decided that each school should have a supervisory committee on which there should be a majority of directly elected parent representatives. This system, however, was not very effective. In 1969, Parliament promulgated the Basic School Act that provided for a whole network of councils for each school: a parents' council, a pupils' council, a teachers' council, and a non-teacher staff council. In addition a "collaborative" committee was created. This collaborative committee, later called the Governing Body, had a composition of the principal, one representative from the municipal education committee, two representatives from the parents' council, two representatives from the executive committee of the pupils' council; and one representative from the non-teaching staff. The regulations gave the "collaborative committee" a wider and less specific brief than that of Sweden.

The system of school governance in the Scandinavian countries has evolved over a long period of time, and there are lessons that could be learned by South Africa. The first matter is the inclusion of learners on the governing body, and that the system has worked for many years. The second matter is the matter of collaboration that is stressed in the operation of these councils. Thirdly, the democratic way of life is promoted in all aspects of education so that it is not applied in isolation when dealing with school governance.

2.7 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN FRANCE

In the late 1960s, the pupils in France joined other pressure groups and stakeholders in protesting against poor educational planning, calling for more parent involvement. This was followed by a call for the involvement of senior pupils in the running of schools (Fraser, 1971:88). It was in the early 1980s that school governance was addressed through the establishment of four bodies – the School Council, the Parents' Council, the Teachers' Council, and the Class Council.

The School Council was presided over by the principal, and consisted of five members from the administrative staff, five elected teacher representatives, five elected parent representatives, two elected pupil representatives, and five local representatives. The functions of the committee included the school finances and school rules (reglement interieur). The latter included such things as safety, lessons, relationships, roles and responsibilities of student representatives, discipline, health, cultural activities and insurance (Lewis, 1985:56).

The Class Council was the second type of committee that involved pupils. It was established to look after the interests of the pupils, and consisted of the principal and all those who taught the class, 2 parent representatives, and 2 pupil representatives. The Ministry conceived the class council as the forum for exchanging information, dialogue, coordination and a stimulus to further action. Their powers included involvement in general school matters as well as discipline (Lewis, 1985:58-59).

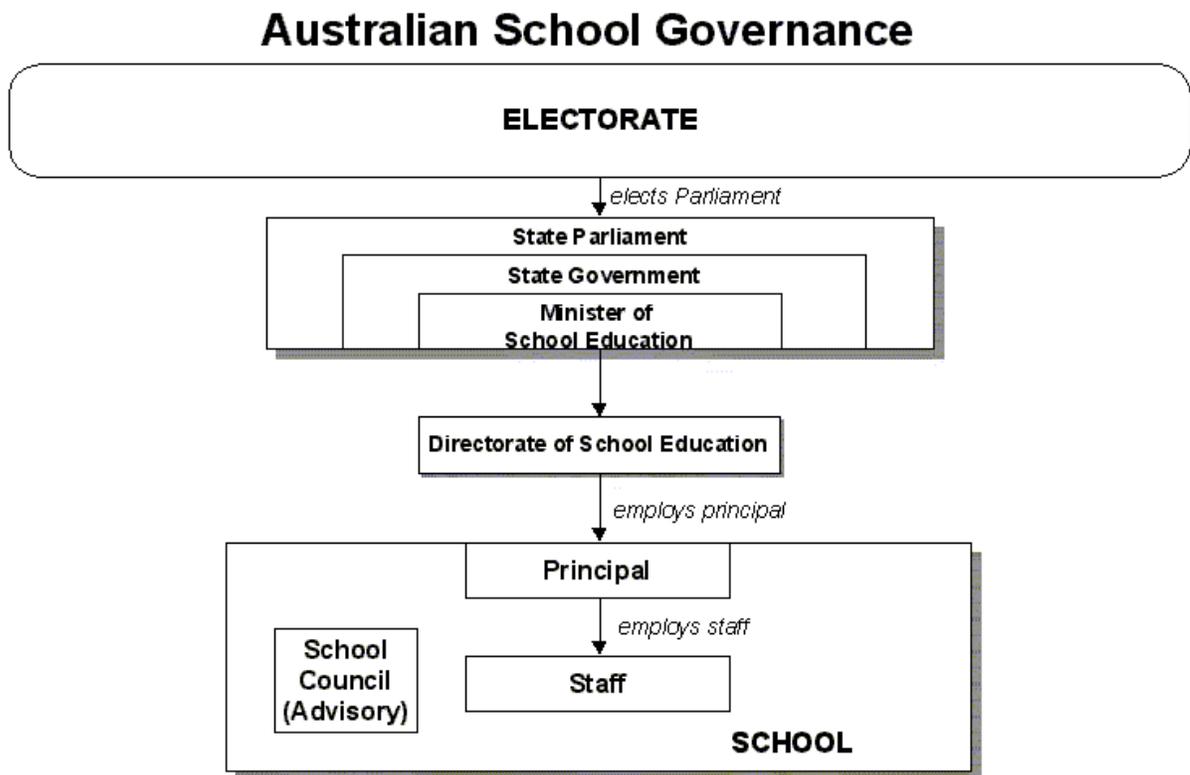
The brief look at school governance in France has again supported the findings in Scandinavia. It should serve as an inspiration to make the system work by giving the necessary support and not leave learner representation as a token of democratic practice in South Africa.

2.8 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN AUSTRALIA

Sturman (1989) traces a number of factors that led to changes in school management and governance in Australia. He asserts that the 1960s were associated with structural pressures for change and decentralization since the government systems were growing so rapidly and were becoming difficult to manage from the center. Furthermore, there were changes in attitudes and values that supported greater involvement in decision-making by both the teacher component and the student component. These pressures continued in the 1970s, but were overlain by a stronger interest in redressing educational disadvantage and the benefits of local responses in addressing individual learning needs, as well as pressures to update existing curricula and to develop new curriculum areas. Sturman (1989) then characterizes the 1980s as a time for accountability, with the establishment of strong curriculum frameworks that moved the responsibility for curriculum development back from individual schools and teachers to the central authorities. These

tendencies have continued into the 1990s, but with some interesting adaptations in some states. In Victoria the responsibilities for personnel matters included the appointment of school principals. School accountability is also extended to the parent community as well as to the central government. The system has also made provision for training so that schools are equipped to exercise their responsibilities. Thus in the period from the 1960s to the 1990s the Australian State Governments changed from having virtually full autonomy over the major fields of decision making about education while the National Government and the schools themselves had virtually none, to a system in which the State Government, the schools and the National Government all collaborate in all four fields of decision making. The extent of decentralization to schools varies according to the particular elements within the broad field of decision-making (Ainley & McKenzie, 2000:139-151).

The Australian School Governance Model



^{*} This diagram shows governance arrangements in Victoria, but similar models exist in other States

(Education Review Office, New Zealand, 1999: School Governance and Student Achievement)

Student Leadership in Secondary Schools

A survey conducted into student leadership at schools in New South Wales (Buscall, Guerin, Macallister, and Robson, 1994:30) revealed that although most schools had systems and programmes in place, it was relatively uncommon to find policies or philosophies underpinning the structures or institutions. The general belief was that student leadership was an important aspect of the overall function of the school. It also tended to concentrate on those students in the senior grades at school. Furthermore, it was found that student leadership existed at various levels. A summary of the findings (Buscall, *et al.*, 1994:30-34) follows.

The first level is linked to the day-to-day running of the school, and student leaders are given the opportunity and authority to exercise leadership skills in selected areas of management such as supervision, discipline, organizing of activities, etc. The second level sees student leadership as a means of community building within the school. This includes aspects such as fostering school spirit, promoting cooperation, and supporting the principal and the School Management Team. The third level concerns the culture of the school and it is concerned with maintaining the standards and traditions of the school. This tends to imply that student leadership is seen as an extension of the management of the school and a means to preserve the status quo at the school.

There is a great variety amongst the leadership structures in schools, but the main types of systems are: the Student Executive, the Prefect System and the Student Representative Council.

Student Executive: This structure was most commonly formed by a captain and vice-captain elected from grade 12 in some way by staff and students. In co-educational schools it was more common to have a boy and a girl captain of the school, and no vice-captain. Many schools accommodated the fact that the Grade 12 students finish in October by having their term of office run from term 4 of the first year to the end of Term 3 of the next year. The Executive formed part of the Prefect System or the Student Representative Council where these existed at schools.

The Prefect System: The selection process for the position of prefects varies from school to school, but the common approach is as follows:

- All Grade 11 students are invited to apply in writing, motivating their selection by giving details of the contributions made to the school. Some schools have formal application forms, while other schools ask for testimonials from members of staff. Other schools have developed an election process involving staff and the students.
- Most schools then had a selection panel comprising people such as the vice-principal, master in charge of prefects, the Grade 11 and Grade 12 coordinator, selected members of the staff, etc. who would interview the applicants and make recommendations to the principal.
- The prefects would then be presented to the school at a formal assembly and presented with some form of official badge of office.

Very few schools have detailed and specific role descriptions for prefects, but those that do exist often focus on negative aspects such as being a “police officer”. Some schools have tried to move away from this tendency and have attempted to give greater weight to the pastoral responsibilities of the student leaders than to supervisory-type responsibilities. This has, however, led to some conflict of interest in accommodating both roles.

Student Representative Councils: These generally have characteristics given in the list below.

- Membership: most schools have representatives chosen from Grade 7 to Grade 12, although some allow membership from Grade 8 to Grade 12, while one school had representatives from Grade 11 and Grade 12 only. Some schools weight the membership so that the more senior grades have greater representation than the junior grades. The number of members varies between 18 and 20 students, and the captain and vice-captain are usually ex-officio members. Schools usually appoint one member of staff to take responsibility for the supervision of the SRC.
- Functions: the SRC was always seen as advisory in nature, with the main objectives being:
 - (i) to provide a forum where students could express their opinions;
 - (ii) to hold regular meetings;

- (iii) to further enrich the school community through ideas and works;
- (iv) to foster and encourage school spirit;
- (v) to give tangible support to the staff and principal;
- (vi) to publish a student newspaper;
- (vii) to assist in the arrangement of student events such as sports days, dances, yearbooks;
- (viii) to engage in charitable works.

Whereas the Prefect System tended to maintain the status quo, the Student Representative Council tended to be more challenging and questioning and addressed day-to-day issues that affected the students. Although most schools operated an SRC system, their roles were rarely defined in the vast majority of schools.

The Australian system has retained a strong centralization feature with regard to accountability by establishing clear central objectives. This is backed by very good capacity building programmes to ensure that schools are able to deliver in terms of these objectives.

2.9 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN NEW ZEALAND

During the 1970s the concept of shared decision-making in school government at a local level received increasing support, especially in efforts to find mutually acceptable solutions to controversial issues. A study by Barrington and Marshall (1975) describes the attempts by a school to resolve a challenge to the tradition of compulsory school uniforms by involving all the main participants, parents, pupils, teachers and the Board in the decision-making process. Barrington and Marshall (1975) also describe how the decision by one urban school board to allow a student representative to attend meetings was opposed by the Chairperson. The other members of the board supported this innovation, viewing it as “a start, at least, towards democracy in schools”.

The new policy, known as Tomorrow’s Schools, was introduced in October 1989 under the New Zealand Education Act (1989) and marked a radical shift when all layers of administration between the central state agencies and the local school were abolished, and many of their

functions devolved to a parent-elected Board of Trustees. The model applies to all 2700 state schools in New Zealand and does not take into account factors such as the size or remoteness of the school. It also does not take into consideration the extent to which the school's community is able to provide the kind of skills that are required for effective governance.

The rationale for this degree of decentralization was:

- to remove the delays, frustration and inflexibility engendered by the highly centralized and complex system, and in this way enhance the quality of decision-making;
- to empower the parents and the communities;
- to strengthen links between a school and its community.

When the new act was implemented in 1989, only current parents could become trustees, and boards were limited to only five parent representatives. However, recent legislation now provides for more flexibility, and the parent representatives may range from three to seven elected members, and furthermore they need not themselves be current parents. The question that arises here is whether the parental concerns for the provision of quality education have now been outweighed by an emphasis on competence in governance skills. Just as in the case of South Africa, the chairperson must come from the parent members.

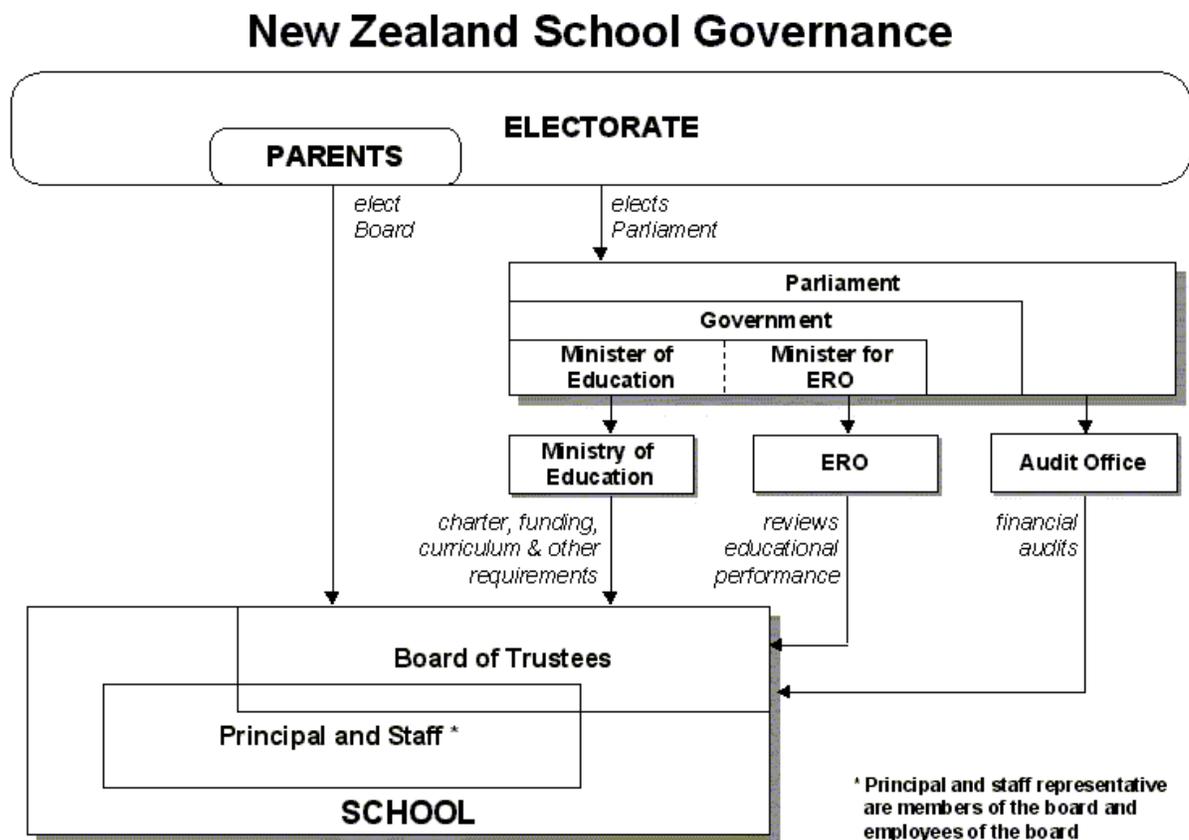
Under the Education Act 1989, cooption of additional members may be made to school boards, either to ensure that the boards are more representative of a school's community, or to increase the skills represented on the board. In practice the latter reason has been the primary reason for cooption. This has occurred particularly in schools in low-income areas where parent representatives have considered that they are not competent enough to provide the necessary technical and managerial skills. However, it is a legal requirement that the board must always have more elected members than co-opted members at any one time (Maximum of 4 in Australia and 6 in South Africa).

A very important feature of this system is the capacity building aspect that is built into the system. To date government agencies have focused on developing boards of trustees in their governance function by providing funding for training and support through the New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA) and policies such as the Ministry of Education's School

Support Project. This approach is guided by the assumption that all school communities have the capacity to elect boards that can run the school effectively, and that the government's role should be to focus on the building of the capabilities of the trustees. While this approach has worked well with most schools, it is being questioned with regard to those school boards that are still struggling to understand their governance role and meet the requirements placed on them.

A recent amendment to the Education Act 1989 provides for the Secretary of Education to require that the board obtain specialist support through the appointment, for a specified period of time, of persons or an organization to provide the board with appropriate assistance.

The New Zealand School Governance Model



(Education Review Office, New Zealand, 1999: School Governance and student Achievement)

Composition of the school governing body

The mechanism for realizing these objectives set in the New Schools policy was the establishment of the board of trustees. While parents had been involved in school administration via school committees at primary school, and Boards of Trustees at secondary schools, the powers allocated to the new structures were considerably broader than those of the earlier bodies. Furthermore, the composition of the Board would comprise a majority of parent-elected representatives, the school principal, one staff member and one student representative. With the establishment of boards of trustees, however, the devolution of power did not go all the way, but retained a strong element of accountability to central government. The Government exercised limitations to the power of these boards by establishing central objectives through the National Education Guidelines and the New Zealand Curriculum. School boards do also not have control over key areas such as school property and employment contracts.

A student representative on a Board is defined by the Act as “a person who, on the day on which the roll for the election closes, is a student enrolled full-time in a class (in form III or above) at a school or institution administered by the Board, elected by students enrolled full-time in a class (in form III or above) at a school or institution administered by the Board” (New Zealand Education Act, 1989: Section 97).

Before 1 September in every year, the Board of a state school or of a special institution, that is required to have a student representative, must fix a day in September in that year for the holding of an election for a student representative. The student representatives serving on the Board attend all meetings and are equal members in dealing with all aspects of school governance. Some schools elect two student representatives, but they share one vote since the Act only makes provision for one representative on the governing body. In some schools an advisory board consisting of senior students assists the student representative by meeting once a month to keep the top management aware of any issues pertaining to the students.

The New Zealand system has retained a strong centralization feature with regard to accountability by establishing clear central objectives. This is backed by very good capacity building programmes to ensure that schools are able to deliver in terms of these objectives. An interesting difference in New Zealand when compared to other countries with learner

representation on school governing bodies is the fact that learners only have one vote. What is heartening is the fact that it is stressed that learners are seen as equal members on the governing body.

2.10 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

In the United States, education is the responsibility of each state and it is the state legislature that makes the laws pertaining to education. A state board of education sets policy and promulgates regulations that are then administered by a chief state school officer at the head of a state education department. Each state is divided into school districts, each with its own board of education and a chief administrative officer, the superintendent of schools whom it appoints. School boards are usually non-party political elected bodies with the power to levy real property taxes for school purposes, hire professional staff and generally make rules and regulations for the operation of the schools. A principal heads each school building in a district, and s/he is responsible to the superintendent. There are no managing and governing bodies for schools. (Baron, 1981:25).

Civic Education

While there are no governing bodies as found in South Africa, the programmes introduced to bolster civic awareness may be usefully applied in making the RCLs in schools in South Africa function more effectively.

In late 2002, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) and Carnegie Corporation of New York, in consultation with the Corporation for National and Community Service, convened a series of meetings, and involving scholars and practitioners, to determine the components of effective and feasible civic education programmes. This initiative led to the introduction of the school-based civic education programme. The programme is based on the assumption that individuals do not automatically become free and responsible citizens but must be educated for citizenship (www.civicmissionofschools.org/2003/12/08).

The goals of civic education are to help young people acquire and learn to use the skills, knowledge and attitudes that will prepare them to be competent and responsible citizens throughout their lives. The objectives of this programme are to have citizens who:

- are informed and thoughtful; have a grasp and an appreciation of history and the fundamental processes of American democracy; have an understanding and awareness of public and community issues; and have the ability to obtain information, think critically, and enter into dialogue with others who have different perspectives;
- participate in their communities through membership in or contributions to organizations working to address an array of cultural, social, political, and religious interests and beliefs;
- act politically by having the skills, knowledge and commitment needed to accomplish public purposes, such as group problem-solving, public speaking, petitioning and protesting, and voting;
- have moral and civic virtues such as concern for the rights and welfare of others, social responsibility, tolerance and respect, and belief in the capacity to make a difference (www.civicmissionofschoools.org/2003/12/08).

The above goals have been identified as forming an integral part of the curriculum of the schools, and motivation thereof is summarized as follows:

- it is crucial for the future health of our democracy that all young people, including those who are usually marginalized, be knowledgeable, engaged in their communities and in politics, and committed to the public good;
- encouraging the development of civic skills and attitudes among young people has been an important goal of education and was the primary impetus for originally establishing public schools;
- schools are the only institutions with the capacity and mandate to reach virtually every young person in the country. Of all institutions, schools are the most systematically and directly responsible for imparting citizen norms;
- schools are best equipped to address the cognitive aspects of good citizenship – civic and political knowledge and related skills such as critical thinking and deliberation;

- schools are communities in which young people learn to interact, argue, and work together with others, an important foundation for future citizenship;
- many non-school institutions that used to provide venues for young people to participate in civic and political affairs (such as political parties, unions, non-profit associations, and activist religious denominations) have lost the capacity or will to engage young people. Schools, as major community institutions, can help reverse this trend and have an impact on other institutions (political, economic, religious, and family), by providing quality education that improves young people's civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes to vote and volunteer;
- forty state constitutions mention the importance of civic literacy among citizens, and thirteen of them state that a central purpose of their educational system is to promote good citizenship, democracy and free government (www.civicmissionofschools.org/2003/12/08).

When comparing the above with the idea of People's Education (see section 3.3) as advocated by the liberation movements in South Africa, one notices many similarities.

Research submitted by participants at the conference at the Centre for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) and Carnegie Corporation of New York in 2002, shows that schools can help to develop competent and responsible citizens when they:

- provide instruction in government, history, law and democracy. Formal instruction in these topics will increase civic knowledge, but furthermore, it may also contribute to young people's tendency to engage in civic and political activities over the long term. However, schools should not teach rote facts about procedures. This will not benefit the learners, and may in fact alienate them from politics;
- incorporate discussion of current local, national, and international issues and events into the classroom, particularly those that young people view as important to their lives. When learners have opportunities to discuss current issues in the classroom setting, they tend to have greater interest in politics, improved critical thinking and communications skills, more civic knowledge, and more interest in discussing public affairs out of school.

- Conversations, however, should be carefully moderated so that learners feel welcome to speak from a variety of perspectives. Teachers also would need support in broaching controversial issues in classrooms since they may risk sanctions or criticism;
- design and implement programmes that provide students with the opportunity to apply what they learn through performing community services that are linked to the formal curriculum and classroom instruction;
 - offer extracurricular activities that provide opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools or communities. Long-term studies of Americans show that those who participate in extracurricular activities in high school remain more civically engaged than their contemporaries even decades later. Thus high school participation in civic issues should be encouraged and valued;
 - encourage students' participation in simulations of democratic processes and procedures. Recent evidence indicates that simulations of voting, legislative deliberation, and diplomacy in schools can lead to heightened political knowledge and interest, although there is not much empirical support for this. Many experts feel that there can be no substitute for actual civic and political participation. According to Avery (2002), students who do participate in classroom simulations of an imaginary society run by majority rule became more tolerant;
 - encourage student participation in school governance. Students have good ideas about how to improve their schools and communities as places for civic life and learning, and their input needs to be considered as a way of modelling democratic practice and improving school management. There is a tradition of research that suggests that giving students a voice in the management of their own classrooms and schools also helps to build their civic skills and attitudes. The Civic Mission of Schools Report (2003:26-27) refers to The International Association for Evaluation of Education (IEA) study that found that 14-year-olds who believe they can make a difference in the way their own school is run – and those who believe their student council has an impact on school policies – are more knowledgeable about politics and interested in current events than other youth. This finding holds true for adolescents who attend schools where most students are not college-bound. Thus, giving students a voice in school governance can be a promising way to encourage all young people to engage civically. According to the

research findings by Flanagan and Faison in the Civic Mission of Schools Report (2003:28), when all students are seen to be treated equally in school, and adults make sure that all views are respected, students show more commitment to serving the public good, more willingness to work for equality in society, more tolerance, and more ability to think about social issues critically. Opportunities to discuss school policies, to be heard respectfully, and to work with others to address school problems may also enhance civic skills, such as public speaking and leadership.

It is important to note, however, that not all the endorsers of the report on the Civic Mission of Schools supported this recommendation. They all favoured student voice and participation in schools, and recognized that ultimate educational authority rested with teachers, school boards, and administrators. But some experts and practitioners, while believing that students, faculty, and parents should exercise more voice and responsibility in education, disagreed in principle with the democratisation in schools argument. Others believed that, given the systemic evidence of the effectiveness of democratising schools, it may be undesirable – and will certainly be difficult – to implement such reforms in today's schools.

Despite the above ongoing debate, all the endorsers of the report agreed that building a more civil and democratic climate in schools did not imply a laissez-faire attitude or the need to relax discipline and adult leadership. In fact, teachers and administrators may have to intervene to encourage peaceful deliberation and to prevent violence, bullying, social ostracism, and other behaviours that may undermine democratic norms.

There are also some educational reformers who advocate smaller schools that are structured as communities and oriented toward explicit purposes or values. Examples include large schools being divided into several academies that share the same building; holding deliberative meetings to discuss issues and policies; reserving blocks of time for intensive, collaborative projects; placing student members on administrative committees and school boards; and enacting school constitutions. While this type of reform is often aimed at improving academic performance and reducing behavioural problems, it

obviously also has civic potential as well. This is because many more students will have opportunities to participate in school governance and extracurricular activities in small schools or academies rather than large, unitary schools (www.civicmissionofschools.org/2003/12/08).

Examples of student participation in school affairs

The Board of Education for the Delaware City School District believes that students should be invited to participate in the school activities at levels appropriate to their ages and competencies.

They motivate this as follows:

- students should have a part in the determination of activities which so deeply affect their lives;
- as an institution fundamental to the operation of a democratic society, the schools should strive to exemplify the democratic ideal of citizen participation in decision making;
- as part of their educational development, students should assume some of the responsibility of planning and executing the activities of schools;
- students are a valuable resource whose contributions can materially aid and benefit the schools.

The Board's policy directs that students be invited to participate in administrative decision making in areas appropriate to their age and competence, but there is no legal obligation for schools to do this (www.neola.com/delaware-oh/policies/po5810.htm 2003/12/08).

Sam Chaltain, Coordinator of the First Amendment Schools Initiative, sees public schools as potential "laboratories for democracy" and is supported by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development and the First Amendment Centre. The initiative recognizes those schools that provide their students as well as their entire school communities with opportunities to practise democracy and uphold inalienable rights (www.firstamendmentschools.org. 2003/12/08).

At Cesar Chavez Public Policy High School in Washington, DC, students research policy issues and produce projects to address these issues. The classroom plays an important role in providing

students with information to place issues in context, but students are also encouraged to learn directly from members of the community (www.cesarchavezhs.org/ 2003/12/08).

Hudson High School in Hudson, Massachusetts is another school that builds its curriculum on the value of democracy. Students are divided into thematic “clusters” of between a hundred and one hundred and fifty students where they will explore a shared interest in depth. This allows for a good deal of student input, and encourages greater interaction between students and teachers. Cluster members will discuss and debate school issues, and brainstorm solutions. Each cluster will have a delegate to the Community Council where students will make recommendations for their school (www.hudson.k12.ma.us/ 2003/12/08).

The movement in American schools to promote civic education has led to a large number of innovative strategies and could be usefully applied at schools in South Africa. Davies (2002; 256), however, does pose the question whether the political apathy prevalent in the youth of America may not be the driving force behind the new citizenship curriculum. As democracy becomes consolidated in a country, the population, particularly the youth, lose the sense of urgency to participate in the political process. The present move to include democracy education in the curriculum in the Western Cape is therefore a proactive move that can only support the role to be played by governing bodies and RCLs in the schools.

2.11 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN CANADA

Student government in secondary schools in Canada plays an important part in how the affairs of students are conducted at secondary schools in Canada, according to Thompson (1969). The procedure followed is that each class names or elects a student to a student council that is responsible for supervising student social and extra-mural activities and for giving such assistance to the principal and staff as is necessary from time to time. In most instances the decisions of the council are subject to a veto by the principal, but this is used only on rare occasions. The student councils give students a sense of responsibility for the conduct of their own affairs as well as an appreciation of the democratic process (Thompson, 1969).

Experience has shown that the quality of student attracted to serve on the council is high and that generally these students are able to provide excellent leadership in the school as well as maintain an excellent scholastic record. The functions of the student council are as follows:

- communication channel – often publishing a newsletter;
- fundraising for school projects;
- assists in maintaining discipline through establishing codes of conduct;
- serves as a liaison between the school and the community.

Some of the other characteristics of the council are:

- student councils in Canada have in many instances appointed an ‘ombudsman’ to ensure fair treatment of students by staff and other students. This has proved successful and is being adopted widely;
- these councils have also on occasion undertaken assessment of school programmes and made recommendations for improvement;
- they have also visited municipal and provincial governments with a view to seeing how democracy works but have not always been inspired by the level or manner of debate engaged in by the politicians;
- the Canadian secondary school student is in general no longer the passive individual s/he once was. Students of both sexes are not prepared to accept the social shibboleths of the day. One counsellor, on reporting on student attitudes, said:

Many of the complex problems confronting today’s urban society stem from the conflicting polarization of attitudes adopted on one side by youth seeking revolutionary changes and their elders of the establishment striving to maintain the status quo. They (the students) are protesting the hypocrisy of parents who profess to support racial equality, but who react violently when their children date those of another religion or colour, the hypocrisy of teachers who pretend to support democracy while operating rigidly authoritative classrooms, the hypocrisy of principals who set up toy governments from whom they accept suggestions on minor projects while continuing to run the school to suit the staff (Thompson, 1969).

On student attitudes, the following view is expressed: Canadian students are critical of the traditional and ultra-conservative approaches of teachers and principals in the conduct of school affairs. They believe that there is a serious credibility gap between what the school professes and what society confesses. They feel that their initiative and imagination is being drained away by rigid regulations and requirements.

Interestingly, when the RCL was instituted in the Free State in 1996 the Free State Education Department sent a group of educators to tour schools in Quebec and Ontario where they met members of the student councils that functioned in a manner similar to the RCLs. MacDonald (2001:56) remarks: “The South Africans took back to their institutions a very positive impression of the Canadian students’ articulation of, and commitment to, their roles and responsibilities”.

2.12 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN TANZANIA

Tanzania was one of the first countries in Africa that made provision for pupil participation and representation in committees involved in decision-making. Harber (1999: 68) refers to Nyerere who argued that only by practising direct democracy, and learning by mistakes, can pupils become accountable in their responsibilities. This objective became policy through a directive from the Chief Education Officer in May 1968 regarding secondary schools. It is quoted by Harber (1999:68-69) and reads:

So as to involve the whole school there should be a committee comprising of staff and pupils, chaired by the headmaster, with the agriculture teacher acting as secretary... The pupils should be represented in the committee either in classes or houses. All planning and preparation of projects should be done in the committee and each project... should have a pupil as a secretary keeping records.

School Councils

The key organ for implementing democracy in secondary schools is the school council, and its composition is spelt out in the National Policy on School Councils (Ministry of Education, 1979). It can be summarized as follows:

- the chairperson is elected by the whole student body;
- the secretary is elected by the whole student council;
- members of the council consist of one representative from each class and two from each dormitory in a boarding school; in a day school, one representative for every fifty pupils. Teachers vote for one representative for every fifteen teachers.
- The headmaster appoints two pupils, one non-teaching staff and one teacher to the council.
- Additional people may be co-opted without voting rights, for example the deputy headmaster, the school bursar, the head cook, chairperson and secretary of the Youth league of the school.

The council should have the following committees: executive, discipline, economic, culture & sport, education & politics, health, and food committees.

The functions of the council are listed as follows:

- to aid the government in clarifying their policy and its implementation;
- to advise the headmaster on learner matters, plans, and their implementation;
- to promote leadership for developing the school;
- to arouse the interest of learners in decision-making;
- to build and intensify cooperation and good relations amongst the teachers, learners and non-teaching workers of the school;
- to look after the discipline of the learners;
- to discuss and give suggestions on school regulations;
- to make sure that school regulations are honoured and followed;
- to arrange the duties and powers of the learner leaders;
- to keep an eye on the income and expenditure of learner activities.

Harber (1997:70) comments on the extent to which the above councils really exist and operate in schools, saying that headmasters do not really use the councils to promote democratic participation. He quotes Mbilinnyi (1991:59) claiming that the majority of schools are still authoritarian and reinforce passive subordination amongst the learners. Furthermore he refers to Kasinga (1986), suggesting that the present position in school councils, seen from the perspective of the learners, can best be described as consultative participation rather than direct participation. Learners are able to discuss and influence school policy, but the headmaster retains the final veto (Harber, 1997:70).

2.13 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN NAMIBIA

Prior to independence gained in 1990, the nature of school management and governance in South West Africa was characterized by the same rigid and inflexible dependence on top-down authority that characterized the South African education philosophy. With independence the idea of learner-centred education was mooted. This promoted the values and skills of democracy across the curriculum. It included developing attitudes such as:

- positive attitudes and critical tolerance toward other social, cultural and political values and beliefs, including appreciation of and confidence in oneself;
- commitment to human values such as justice, equality, truth, freedom, diversity and human rights;
- appreciation of the constitution and democratic behaviour;
- critical awareness of society in order to become a truly democratic citizen;
- competence in making responsible judgements in terms of justice, equality and other democratic values (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1994).

School Councils

The nature of school management and school governance is such that it should promote the attitudes described in 2.6.2.1. The role of learners in school management is described in the *User's Guide to the Education Code of Conduct* (1993) that was agreed to by both student and teacher organizations. At grades 11 and 12 learners are directly represented through democratically elected school boards along with parents and teachers. The functions of these

school boards include matters such as: discipline, finances, budgets, school fees, staff appointments, and use of school facilities.

At this level the learners are therefore fully involved in the democratic governance of schools. Below grade 11, however, their role “is better described as consultative rather than democratic” (Harber, 1997:137). Harber goes further by stating that Namibia has the potential to expand learner involvement in school governance from grade 12 to grade 8.

2.14 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN KENYA

Kenya gained independence in 1963, and the responsibility for financing primary schools was shared by the government, religious organizations, communities, and parents (Gravenir, 1993:90). The great need for secondary schools, however, resulted in a large number of community schools or “Harambee” (self-help) schools being established, funded almost entirely from school fees (Raju, 1973: 61). This placed a severe burden on parents and the Education Commission recommended that the state include these schools in its Development Plan. (Maraj, 2000:98). The chairperson of the Education Committee in the Nakuru Municipal Council, Ngalai Valai, is quoted by Mureithi (1999:1): “The students would better appreciate the country’s resources if they were taught the importance of good governance at an early stage” (Maraj, 2000: 98). Valai further recommends that school governors undertake induction courses to prepare them for their tasks (Maraj, 2000:98).

Implications for School Governance in South Africa

The review of school governance in Kenya has revealed the success that can be achieved by poor communities to motivate and mobilize communities to play an important role in their children’s education. This has put pressure on the state to address the matter of shortage of schools, particularly in rural areas. This strategy has been used in South Africa with similar results.

The review of school governance in Tanzania has been an eye-opener. The fact that learners have been involved in school governance since the 1960s is remarkable when compared with the

“bureaucratic-authoritarian nature of school organization in most of Africa and elsewhere” (Harber, 1997:71).

The review of school governance in Namibia has again brought to the fore the fact that the survival of democracy cannot be taken for granted. The introduction of the philosophy of learner-centred education has effectively been able to promote democratic values and behaviour. What has been particularly encouraging has been the “clear sense of purpose and direction” (Harber, 1999:138) with which Namibia has tackled the challenge of building a democratic political culture.

There is evidence, in terms of the Unesco Report on the State of Education in Africa (1997), that African Countries are now widening their understanding of education to include a basic understanding of the political system and the key aspects of democratic practices, as well as the development of democratic values, skills and behaviour. One of these aspects is the involvement of learners in school decision-making structures. The practice of the democratic election of prefects by secret ballot after candidates present their case to the school is an example (Unesco, 1997:19-20).

2.15 EVALUATING THE GOVERNANCE MODELS

The school governance models now being used in the above countries are all based on partnership, and according to MacPherson, commenting on the New Zealand model, has as purpose more than just administrative efficiency. In addition it creates a change in the balance of power between the providers and the consumers of education. He claims that the move was more than a declaration in the belief in more direct democracy. Rather, it was a steely resolve in the House and in the Cabinet to create a new set of checks and balances that would embed responsiveness as a norm of professional and administrative practice (MacPherson, as quoted by Robinson, Timperley, Parr and McNaughton, 1994:73).

Gamage (1999:8) cites an Australian principal on the partnership model:

“I believe the stronger you make your school council and your parent and teacher involvement in the school the stronger will be the school community. It will be harmonious, open and cooperative. It will solve problems rather than create problems... I believe that school council means a better informed, more cooperative school community”.

McGinn and Pereira (1992:169) support this view when they suggest that governance policies may be used to regulate conflict between interest groups and to favour those groups that support the objectives of the state. They elaborate on this when they claim “governance policies are used by the state as a political mechanism to ‘manage’ conflicts about education between groups in society”.

Bush and Gamage (2001:44) refer to the alternative view of Pascal who claims that the shift in power in governing bodies may lead to the “interplay of organizational interests”. Governments use decentralization to bolster their own position as well as to improve the quality of education. From the literature survey it becomes apparent that most countries recognize the link between democratising the state and the need to democratise education and the educational institutions. However, Davies (2002:253) contests this, stating that in South Africa there is a formal recognition of the link between a democratising state and the need for educational democracy. Legislation has been put in place to support their policies and the governance of schools. She acknowledges that South Africa has to overcome a number of challenges such as historical structures, ideologies and inequalities, but that the commitment of the state is clear. This means that the issues to be dealt with focus on the practical implementation of the policies leading to the democratisation of the schools and the wider community. The democratically elected structures such as the school governing bodies and the representative council of learners should therefore be promoted in order to support the democratisation of our schools.

On the above matter Bush (1992) refers to the South African situation and the potential conflict between teacher interests and community interests. He suggests that one needs to balance the

potential for conflict with the needs of the learners. He goes on to claim that using the school governing body as a forum to resolve disagreements in a post-apartheid South Africa is likely to be particularly valuable since it transfers many of the thorny issues about priorities and resources to the very level that had been the theatres of the struggle. What has become apparent in the South African situation is that the governing body does have the potential to become a mediating forum at which the interests of the various constituencies could be expressed, debated and consensus reached. There will always be the potential for conflict, but an effective school governing body at least provides the best opportunity to manage the differing goals of interest. In the words of Bush (1992:30): “The participation of parents, teachers and community representatives (and learners), together with its legal responsibility for the school, makes the governing body the legitimate forum for reconciling external pressures and internal considerations”.

Davies (2002:253) refers to David Held (1995) who lends further support to democracy education. He argues that the new economic order is rapidly diminishing the efficacy of the single nation-state as the unit for democracy. He argues further that the democratization process should go beyond international borders, since issues such as security, economics, human rights or the environment are not bound by these borders, and that peaceful problem-solving should be rooted in democratic processes. He proposes a “cosmopolitan democracy” emerging from a democratization process beyond national borders. This idea could have positive spin-offs for Southern Africa if it could be implemented. The formation of NEPAD may be the stimulus needed to do this.

Schools in Africa have traditionally tended to be authoritarian in nature with regard to its values and practices. They have not encouraged participation, debate, responsibility and critical enquiry, but have instead used “chalk and talk, rote memorization and corporal punishment to reinforce teacher-centred discipline” (Harber, 2002:267). In support of this view Harber (2002:267) cites examples in Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Rwanda:

- “Human rights have not been taught in schools in Botswana” (Bourne, Gundara, Dev, Ratsoma, Rukanda, Smith, and Birthistle, 1998).

- “The racist nature of the white minority regime in the then Rhodesia, followed by the violent and conspiratorial nature of the liberation struggle and the resulting prominence of the Marxism-Leninism in post-colonial Zimbabwe have helped to produce tendencies towards intolerance, distrust and violence in the political culture” (Sithole, 1988).
- Concerning the 1994 genocide in Rwanda where between 800000 and one million people were murdered, Retamal and Aedo-Richmond (1998:16) questions the role played by schools in the indoctrination of hatred and the resulting genocide itself, and raises questions about the kind of education that they received.

Harber (2002:267-276) moots the idea that education can play a significant role in helping to develop more democratic political systems over time through cultivating and developing the values and behaviours of a democratic political culture. He stresses that it cannot provide a “quick fix” solution, but it can help to embed democratic politics in a more supportive and sustaining culture over time. In supporting the democratisation of education he examines the relationship between poverty and authoritarianism in Africa and cites six ways in which the latter exacerbates levels of poverty. They are:

- lack of transparency creates an environment that enables corruption to take place easily;
- violence caused by civil unrest and leading to a decline in investment;
- expenditure on war and maintenance of the military;
- repressive atmosphere that negates creativity;
- the lack of response to the needs and interests of the poor;
- rural poverty left unchallenged, and sometimes used to subsidize towns.

The above matters could all be addressed, according to Harber (2002:267), by creating democratic structures that will encourage and promote political education in schools, and the development of democratic values, skills and behaviours in young people. Democracy education should therefore strive to raise awareness of the link between “democratic schooling, social democracy, and poverty reduction” (Davies, 2002:254). South Africa is committed to include education in its discourse and policies to democratise the society, and the school governing bodies and representative council of learners are vehicles that could be used far more effectively than it is at present.

2.16 CONCLUSION

School governance was examined in a number of countries to establish the role of stakeholders, particularly that of learners. I found that many countries have programmes that incorporate leadership training for learners and make provision for some measure of consultation with regard to decision-making. Other countries have learners participating in school governance in terms of legislation. Examples were also found where democracy education or civic education is incorporated into the curriculum, and interesting projects are initiated to promote democratic practices. These could be useful in promoting the work of the RCL in the schools in South Africa. The next chapter will look at the role played by the learners in the process of democratisation of South Africa, and the subsequent inclusion of learners in school governance.

CHAPTER 3

AN ANALYSIS OF THE S.A. POLICY OF LEARNER PARTICIPATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The first research question is concerned with what literature reveals as factors that played a role in the development and implementation of policy with regard to learner participation in school governance. This chapter looks at the history of the participation of students in school governance in South Africa and traces and reviews the formation of the student representative councils in South Africa, as well as the formation, problems, strengths and relevance of the Parent-Teacher-Student-Associations. The establishment of these two bodies are seen as the key elements leading to the inclusion of learners in school governance in South Africa.

This is followed by tracing the historical background and theoretical framework that informed the current legislation on learner participation in school governance, referring particularly to:

- the Education Renewal Strategy (DoE, 1992), that largely reflected National Party policy on education;
- the proposals of the Democratic Movement through the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) on Administration and Governance (1992), commissioned by the National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC);
- the African National Congress (ANC) Educational Policy Guidelines (1992).

The divergent viewpoints of the negotiating parties eventually led to compromises in the development of a framework for school management and school governance. This was also the case with regard to the development of policy on learner participation in school governance.

The role of the learners in school governance differed from area to area, and also between urban and rural areas. Furthermore, the level of participation in school governance also depended on the relationship between principals and the learners. According to O'Connell (1991), it is important to note that the issue of democratic school governance, and especially the role of students in school governance, has always been the epicentre of the struggle for educational

transformation throughout the country. It is therefore important to understand where the SRC had its origins, and the role it played in the creation of the new South Africa.

3.2 THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (SRC)

The establishment of SRCs should be seen against the backdrop of the social problems, economic hardships and political activities prevalent in the 1970s, and the tragic responses to protest actions in 1976. It was a culmination of a number of factors that led to the establishment of the Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC), the most important of which was probably the stubborn action of the education authorities to force Afrikaans as a medium of instruction (Brooks and Brickhill (1980:95-96). Other educational factors were general poor quality of education, shortage of classrooms, lack of proper facilities, large classes, unqualified or under-qualified teachers.

However, to see the above as the root cause of the conflict is being simplistic. Children wanted education equal to that given to the white population, and their parents were unable to fulfil these demands. Added to this was the lack of respect for, and status of the black person in a white-dominated society. According to researcher Ellen Hellman, the old principle of respect for seniority had been completely eroded in Soweto. Many children in Soweto could still quote extracts from Verwoerd's Senate speech of 1954 in which he said that there was no place for the Bantu within the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. He also claimed that "the black man should not be misled by being shown the green pastures of the European where he could not graze" (Lindberg, 1978:130-131). Thus by the 1970s there was a general state of loss of parental control, and children took their fate into their own hands.

A brief summary of some of the events that took place in 1976 will be given to place the formation of SRCs into perspective.

- On 20 January 1976 there was a standoff between the Meadowlands Tswana School Board and Department of Bantu Education on the use of Afrikaans as medium of instruction.

- In February 1976 two members of the Meadowlands Tswana School Board were dismissed, apparently because of the board's refusal to use Afrikaans as medium of instruction. The remaining seven members of the board resigned in protest.
- During April, there were clashes between students and school principals on the language issue.
- On 17 May students at Orlando West Junior Secondary School, having unsuccessfully tried to see their circuit inspector, stayed away from school in protest against the enforced use of Afrikaans as medium of instruction, having presented a 5-point memorandum to their principal. On 20 May, four more schools joined the boycott.
- Parents and school board members tried to persuade students to return to classes while the matter received attention, but more and more schools came out on strike.
- 27 May, the first overt act of violence took place when a student stabbed a teacher of Afrikaans at Pimville Primary and students then stoned the police who came to make an arrest in connection with the stabbing.
- On 30 May there was an article in the *Sunday Express* in which the circuit inspector, Mr de Beer said that the solution would be to expel any child who stayed away from school for longer than 10 days, to close the schools and to transfer the teachers.
- During the following two weeks pupils refused to write examinations, buildings were stoned, and some pupils were arrested.
- On 16 June pupils initiated a march in protest to the use of Afrikaans. They marched through Soweto and about 10 000 marchers converged on Orlando West High School. Up to this stage the march had proceeded peacefully, except for one incident where police tried to remove placards. Now the police confronted the pupils, and asked them to disperse. According to reports, police fired tear-gas canisters into the crowd, and the pupils retaliated by throwing stones at the police. Police then opened fire, first warning shots into the air and then shot at the crowd. Thirteen-year-old Hector Peterson was the first to be shot dead.
- As the sun went down that night Soweto was ablaze with the fires of buildings that had been set alight. Anti-white feelings ran high in Soweto, and hostility towards the police was at fever pitch. Many Africans died as well as two whites that were beaten to death by

enraged mobs. Meanwhile riots had spread to Mamelodi and Atteridgeville in Pretoria, and to the Pietersburg area and the East Rand.

- On 17 June the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, M.C. Botha, ordered the immediate closure of all schools, but after meeting with black urban leaders, agreed to continuous consultation in future to discuss educational grievances.
- Schools were re-opened on 22 July, but remained deserted, and marches were organized to protest against pupil detentions.
- The Soweto Students Representative Council called for a three-day strike by the workers. It was estimated that about 75% of the workers in Johannesburg stayed away.
- During 1977 the strife at street level continued, and the situation was compounded by the death in detention of Steve Biko, the leader of the Black Consciousness Movement.
- A period of unease followed throughout the country over the next few years with mass actions and stay away action led by SRCs, particularly during 1980, 1981, and 1985. It was during the 1980s that the slogan “Liberation before Education” first appeared.
- During March 1984, the demands from pupils took on political overtones, and the singing of freedom songs became the order of the day (Lindberg, 1978:130-137).

The formation of the Soweto Students Representative Council was thus the forerunner to the SRC in the secondary schools falling under the Department of Education and Training (DET), Department of Education: House of Representatives, and Department of Education: House of Delegates. These bodies demanded a say in matters that affected the learners, and operated in line with democratic principles. A further development was the cooperation between the SRCs of schools in the same neighbourhood to support each other in rallies and mass action. The constitution of the SRCs differed from each other, but their roles and functions were basically the same – working in the best interests of the learners. Sithole (1995:94) describes the SRC as “organs of student government and power”. Furthermore he states that through the SRC students not only challenged the education departments and withstood the repressive apparatuses and strategies of the former apartheid state, but they also questioned the prerogatives of principals and parents to take decisions without consulting them and challenged their traditional views on schooling. Students were also able to amass power, which made them a formidable force in society and in the educational arena.

The history of the SRC clearly positions it to challenge authorities on issues and there are examples documented of how some SRCs at schools made a positive contribution to the school environment. Sithole (1995:95) comments on the relationship between role players at school as follows: “Evidence in most schools with democratically elected SRCs, which were established with the full approval and support of parents, the principals and teachers, reveals that the relationship between the principals, parents, teachers and students is qualitatively improved”. This translated into high levels of improvement in the school’s effectiveness, because of a general improvement in the behaviour of the learners. In these schools all major policy decisions dealing with the organization and management of the schools were not taken without consultation.

Sithole (1995:95-96) also refers to documentation that contradicts the above-mentioned scenario, and that indicates that these SRCs in fact contributed to the chaos that was so prevalent in the schools during the 1980s. Some of the reasons given are:

- SRCs were established without the blessing of the principals, parents and teachers, and operated in a hostile and confrontational school environment. Any issue that the students needed to address was therefore done by employing force or some other disruptive strategy since there were no channels in place to deal with their grievances in a structured and amicable manner.
- SRCs that operated in this hostile environment, did not develop good relationships with the different stakeholders, and thus also cut themselves off from the very source of guidance on how to operate their organization effectively.
- the general trend with elections was that the students who were elected to serve on the SRCs were those who were brave enough to face the onslaught of parents, principals and teachers, and not necessarily those who exhibited their leadership skills.

Consequently these schools experienced unprecedented levels of disruption and conflict, and this impinged negatively on all aspects of school life.

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (1994:6) advocated that in the field of education and training, “structures of institutional governance which reflect the interest of all

stakeholders and the broader community served by the institution” should be established. The above principle of inclusiveness was endorsed further by the ANC Education Department when they mooted that the governance structure of all schools should include parents, teachers and students (at secondary schools) as elected representatives of constituent groupings (RDP, 1994: 6).

3.3 THE OPPOSING IDEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS OF THE MAIN PROTAGONISTS

According to Ball’s (1990) definition of policy and ideology, the policy actors should engage in a process of bargaining and negotiations so as to reach a common understanding of what the policy means. Since the policy actors in this case came from different ideological perspectives, with different value systems and principles, the policy that evolved reflects these competing and contested values. In South Africa the main protagonists were the ruling National Party, and the Mass Democratic Movement, that consisted of a large number of organizations.

Factors that Shaped the Formation of the Mass Democratic Movement

The framework of the National Party was deeply rooted in its apartheid ideology, based on ‘baasskap’, inequality, and preferential treatment to the minority white population. The period just after the student uprisings saw the apartheid regime implementing their policy of “self-determination”, and consolidating their Bantustan programme. The establishment of the Tricameral Parliament in 1983 saw the extension of their policy. In the educational arena, different education departments were created in each of the Bantustans, as well as each of the tricameral sectors. However, these official structures failed to earn credibility or legitimacy with the majority of disenfranchised people, who continued to see apartheid education as unequal, inferior, and designed to perpetuate a system of subservience and exploitation. The student uprising in 1976 was a response by the disillusioned students but it was restricted to schools and there was not much support from the broader community. Furthermore, there was not much support from organizations within education. However, the student uprisings did produce the spark that initiated a new political climate of opposition to apartheid and the formation of a number of organizations. The formation of the Federation of South African Trade Unions

(FOSATU) in 1979, followed by the formation of the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) broadened the struggle against apartheid. However, it was the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in August 1983 that was most significant because it unified a large number of local civic organizations, as well as regional and national anti-apartheid formations into a single, legal front to oppose the apartheid regime. Furthermore, what the formation of the UDF did was to provide a home for all sectors of the population. Nzimande (1998: xii) says that: “it united youth and broader community struggles, thus bringing into the post-1976 political developments in South Africa, the missing adult and parent component”. These developments therefore collectively started to shape the formation of the Mass Democratic Movement.

Factors that Influenced the Stance Taken by the Mass Democratic Movement

The framework of the Democratic Movement had its roots in the Freedom Charter, adopted in 1955 at a “Congress of the People”. It enshrined the principles and values of non-racialism, democracy, equality and redress. In fact, the education clause “the doors of learning and culture should be open to all” became a “ benchmark for transforming the education system” (Johnson, 1995:131). The formation of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) in 1986, later known as the National Education Coordinating Committee, was probably the most significant milestone in the struggle against apartheid education. What it did was to bring together a large number of actors within the educational sphere, and representing all stakeholders, thus providing a new vehicle to drive the struggle against apartheid education. It incorporated the political power of students into a much broader, deeper and more mature alliance of forces in the education sector than had hitherto been possible. This achievement by the NECC is probably one of its most noteworthy achievements (Levin, Moll, and Narsing, 1991:232). The reasons for bringing the students’ struggle into the centre of the political struggle in South African education are:

- They were numerically by far the largest social group with a permanent location in the educational arena; hence their presence was essential if the educational struggle was to have a mass political character.
- In terms of their social composition, school students in the townships could be said to bear the brunt of the political repression of apartheid. The overwhelming majority of the student population was comprised of children from the African working class, and as

such their political experience was consistent with that of the most oppressed sector of the community (Levin *et al.*: 240).

The NECC thus concretised the understanding of the connection between the educational struggle and the broader political struggle and laid the basis for the concept of “People’s Education for people’s power”. People’s Education is summarized in the words of Sisulu (Nzimande, 1998:xiv): “When we fight for and achieve democratic SRCs and parents committees, we are starting to realize our demands that the People Shall Govern and that the Doors of Learning and Culture Shall be Opened”. The NECC conference held in March 1986 was convened to coordinate the activities of the education organizations concerned with the crisis in education. Soobrayan (1990:30) identifies three major elements that emerged from the conference:

- it formulated guidelines for a future system of People’s Education;
- while it recognized that People’s education could not be fully implemented until apartheid was abolished, the process to build People’s Education could start immediately;
- that in both the immediate and post-apartheid context the enskilling of black people was an essential part of implementing People’s Education, as well as achieving and sustaining national liberation.

Soobrayan (1990:32) expands on the first element, identifying the following guidelines:

- it is based on decades of resistance;
- it is based on the assumption that education and politics are inextricably linked in a manner that the transformation of education should occur within the context of social transformation;
- it is both an educational and political strategy;
- it must serve the interests of the majority of the people of South Africa by focusing on empowerment and the eradication of illiteracy;
- education includes formal, informal and non-formal education of people of all ages;
- it must aim at instilling democratic values, collectivism and a wider social consciousness;
- it must encourage creativity and critical thinking;

- it is a process that can only reach its full potential after apartheid is abolished but must always be reflexive and responsive to changing needs and conditions.

The key principle of People's Education is the principle of democracy. It stresses very clearly that education can never be neutral. Those in control will always use education to realize their particular vision. Thus under National Party control it will be used to further subservience and oppression; under the control of the people it would become an instrument for liberation. According to Soobrayan (1990:33): "For education to serve the interests of the majority, the majority must not only control it, but the people must also participate in its conception, formulation and implementation".

Bearing the above in mind, the response by the regime to curtail the NECC as an organized political force was to set about the destruction of the militant student base around which activities centred. The detention of students was a deliberate, calculated and repressive strategy by the regime to undermine the power of the educational and other organizations in the townships.

When negotiations started, the dilemma of the Mass Democratic Movement was that they had to sustain their credibility and retain the support of the masses, but they also had to meet the expectations and challenges set by a government-in-waiting, which were "well-researched and consistent with political and economic trends, particularly if South Africa were to become part of a global community" (Makaleng, 1999:71-72). The following factors therefore influenced their stance:

- since the early 1990s, the mass democratic movements advocated the formation of new governance structures as a mechanism to facilitate participatory democracy in the education and training sector thereby enabling the relevant stakeholders to contribute to decision-making. The establishment of SRCs and PTSA's therefore strongly influenced their position. They were seen as "useful instruments to develop new representative and participatory structures for the governance of education" (Zafar, 1999:1);
- the "virtual collapse of the (educational) system in various parts of the country" (Christie, 1994: 45);

- disastrous black matriculation results;
- the establishment of the Mandela Education Delegation (1993).

3.4 FORMATION OF PARENTS-TEACHERS-STUDENTS ASSOCIATION (PTSA)

The discourse on the development of a People's Education gained momentum and prominence when the NECC supported the establishment of PTSAs in schools as an alternative to the “puppet governance structures of the apartheid-era educational authorities” (Karlsson, 2002:328). The inclusion of students in Parent-Teachers-Associations to form the PTSAs was perceived very positively as a means to address the day-to-day crises in schools. The NECC therefore made their organization available to facilitate their formation by establishing Local Education Crisis Committees (LECCs).

From the mid-1980s, there was a growth of these alternative school-level governance structures that were seen from the beginning as part of a campaign to develop a new democratic system of education. Its chief thrust was to empower all the participants in the educational process, and to provide a framework in which all stakeholders could participate in addressing the educational crisis in South Africa. It was based on the recognition that the educational crisis could not be adequately addressed without the participation of all stakeholders. Schools that employed this system witnessed a phenomenal shift in terms of the negative perceptions that different parties held about each other (Sithole, 1995), and they played an important role in managing crises and conflicts during the decade prior to 1994.

Problems Experienced by the PTSAs

There were many factors that have had a harmful effect on the organization and smooth operation of the PTSAs. In 1993, the Natal Education Policy Unit identified 14 reasons that contributed to this situation. These problems are summarized below:

- lack of statutory and official recognition of PTSAs made it difficult for them to assert their authority;

- state education departments, including the Bantustan authorities, undermined the process of implementing PTSAs. In some rural areas, chiefs were vehemently opposed to PTSAs, and especially to the participation of students in school governance;
- school principals saw PTSAs as eroding their administrative control of schools; in particular, they resisted student participation;
- there was a lack of clarity about the rights, powers and functions of PTSAs and the respective roles that the different components should play;
- the lines of accountability for PTSAs were blurred, and there was uncertainty as to whether they were accountable to local communities, to local education coordinating committees (where these existed), or to the narrower school communities;
- student, teacher and community organizations often did not actively support the development of PTSAs even when they paid lip service to the PTSA concept. PTSA members often wore many organizational caps, and thus did not consistently give PTSAs sufficient attention although they did bring along valuable experience;
- lack of skills and expertise, especially in technical and professional matters, affected the efficient and effective running of the PTSA;
- PTSAs were under-resourced and operated without funding;
- meetings were poorly and inconsistently attended;
- parents who lacked relevant skills were often wrongly influenced and manipulated by school authorities;
- teachers were sometimes problematic: they did not want to attend meetings after hours; they tended to hold students in low esteem; in some cases they bought “cheap popularity” with the students at the expense of taking a principled stand on issues;
- uncompromising attitudes on the part of the students and misguided militancy were often interpreted as party political. Teachers and parents were also reluctant to involve students in “sensitive” matters, especially the discipline of teachers. On the other hand, students sometimes expressed concern about an “adult alliance” (i.e. parents and teachers) in the PTSAs;
- collective responsibility and democratic decision making was undermined as various sectors or components of the PTSAs tended to promote narrow sectoral interests (Sithole, 1994:3-4).

The Strengths of the PTSA

Notwithstanding the weaknesses identified above, the concept of the PTSAs proved to have a number of strengths, and served to be a model for the future governance model. Sithole (1994:6) identified a number of strengths. They are listed below:

- PTSAs were legitimate and acceptable community structures, and provided opportunities for different interest groups at schools to work together and influence school policy by taking informed and democratic decisions;
- PTSAs proved to be effective conflict resolution organs, and improved relationships amongst the various stakeholders;
- different interest groups were able to monitor, manage and take decisions about the usage of school resources and funds, and helped to defuse a common source of conflict;
- because PTSAs operated in a democratic and transparent manner, there was no fear of victimization; thus issues of a controversial nature involving constituent members could be raised openly without prejudice;
- PTSAs contributed to a more effective teaching and learning process in schools, as different sectors could contribute their unique experiences;
- parental participation in the PTSAs brought important community dimensions into the PTSAs and the school, and generally improved parental support of school projects and activities;
- teachers' academic and administrative expertise and hands-on classroom experience assisted parents to understand what was going on in the school. Through interaction with parents, teachers were able to understand students' backgrounds and the context of their work;
- students, as beneficiaries of the learning process, played a crucial role in the on-going evaluation of schools. Their representatives gained a sense of responsibility that was transmitted to their peers, with whom they related with ease. Students also brought fresh and innovative approaches to school governance; PTSAs were in fact the product of students' demands.

Whilst many of the above strengths may be true in some schools, it certainly was not so in others and cognisance should also be taken of those cases where the functioning of the PTSAs became a

hindrance to the effective functioning of the schools. The weaknesses dealt with in 3.4.1 often caused tension between the PTSA and those responsible for the professional management of the school.

Relevance of the PTSA

Despite the many problems experienced by PTSAs, there were a number of schools where this system worked really well and served to model cooperation amongst all the stakeholders that probably led to the acceptance of the present policy of school governance as per SASA. The democratic movement propagated the view that democracy was more than people voting for a government every few years, but rather that people should participate on a daily basis in decision-making processes that affect their lives, one of which was education. The PTSAs therefore gave concrete expression to the implementation of participatory democracy.

3.5 A REVIEW OF PROPOSALS FOR SCHOOL GOVERNANCE DURING THE 1990s.

Participation of learners in school governance, as required by SASA, is based on the concept of the learning community, where all members of the community participate in decision-making processes. In the South African context, the call by the learners for participation in the affairs affecting them became the focal point of the call for participation in government by the mass democratic movement. In the words of O'Connell: "If participation in government is a basic human right, to be voteless is to be less than human, and a transformed South Africa must be one in which democracy, and through it humanity, is restored to all" (O'Connell, 1991:133). This is a radical change from the strong bureaucratic controls that were in place during the years of apartheid. In order to make the new system a reality, a number of processes had to be initiated.

The Educational Renewal Strategy (ERS) document and the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) both advocated increased participation in school governance through the policy of educational decentralization. The level of participation, however, was the main focus of the discourse, and the outcomes of the negotiated settlement should therefore be seen as a give-and-take situation between the two main protagonists – the National Party, and the Mass Democratic Movement, the latter including the ANC and the NECC. There were a number of

factors that influenced the stance taken by these parties, and it is important to take these into consideration in order to have a better understanding of the process that evolved.

Education Renewal Strategy (ERS)

The dilemma that the National party found itself in the early 1990s was that it was legally in power and wanted to sustain credibility and support from its constituencies, but was being forced to accede to the pressure to reform the education system. Some of the factors creating this pressure were: the damaging effect sanctions had on the economy; SWAPO's victory in Namibia; the school and rent boycotts; the teacher strikes; the mass protest actions; the bad publicity internationally.

The strategy formulated was known as the Education Renewal Strategy, and it put forward a new education dispensation based on the following principles to achieve their objectives: equal opportunities; promotion of national unity; the recognition and accommodation of language, cultural, religious and other legitimate interests; the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, and gender; the provision of person power for national needs; the forming of whole human beings; and the sharing of responsibilities for the provision of education between the State and interested sectors, such as the parent community (ERS, 1991:17). Despite these aims, though, the document made no attempt to indicate how equality would be achieved in the face of previous inequalities and injustices. The only suggestion for greater management autonomy is found in section 18.3:

In order to establish the principle of greater responsibility among the community, especially for school education, it is of the utmost importance that the responsibility for the provision of education be brought closer to the local communities. Involvement of the community in school education can inter alia be obtained by the systematic establishment of management councils at schools, which, depending on the abilities and wishes of the school community concerned, could function according to different measures of management autonomy. In the meantime education authorities could embark on programmes to educate communities on the role and responsibilities of management councils at schools.

Consideration could also be given to representation, by giving observer status to elected learners on management councils of secondary schools when matters come up for discussion, in cases where communities believe that there is a need for this (ERS, 1992:79-80).

The motive for the National Party proposing that parents be involved in school governance is also questioned by Nzimade, Pampallis, Dlamini, Ntuli, and Berger (1993:75) when stating: “The ERS seems to regard the involvement of parents in governance of schooling more as a means to finance schools rather than as an objective in itself”. In fact, the ERS model is primarily structured around questions of finance, and the following extract bears this out:

In order to decentralize... management councils would have to be invested with a considerable degree of financial autonomy. In this regard the establishment of the so-called model C schools within the DEC brought particularly important principles and experiences to the fore. This initiative could be used as a basis for the establishment and effective functioning of management councils and the obtaining of community involvement at schools (ERS, 1992:81).

The above approach differs from the essence of democratic governance with equal participation of all stakeholders in the governance of schools.

The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), 1992.

The NEPI report sought to address some of the shortcomings of the system of governance prevailing under the apartheid regime, examples of which were: uncoordinated policy implementation, duplication under the fragmented system, top-down policy processes, limited political accountability and participation by interest groups (Zafar, 1999:3). The report approached the matter from two different perspectives.

The first perspective is referred to the “systems perspective”, and is a macro-perspective of system change, focusing on the “structures and processes required to render the whole system more democratic and accountable” (NEPI, 1992:38). The system proposed that decisions be

taken at a level as close as possible to those who are directly affected by them. A key feature of this systems change was the recommendation that governance structures be institutionalised through statutory provisions, backed by a legally enforceable charter of educational rights and responsibilities. The system also provided for voice to express public opinion to political authorities and enabled community organizations to lobby authorities on policy issues.

The strength of this proposal lay in the fact that it provides for a unitary system, and that it introduces elected policy adoption structures at school, district, regional and national level. However, they point out that the contentious aspect of the proposal lay in the assumption that “given the history and context of fierce contestation of policy formulation experienced in South Africa, the political authorities would be able to introduce a statutory structure in the policy process”. What this implied was that there could merely be token consultation with stakeholders and organizations, and that policy could simply take place at another level.

The second perspective began from a micro perspective of school governance, and took as a starting point the NECC’s commitment to expanding the role of PTSA’s in the governance of the system. This approach attempted to entrench representative democracy within the government structures in education. This perspective called for three levels of governance: national, regional and local, and a level for institutional governance. Furthermore, all these levels were delineated into geographical areas.

The strength of this proposal was again the unitary system of governance, and the clustering of interest groups into associations. Some weaknesses that they point out are, firstly, mixing special interest representation with general interest representation. Secondly, it introduces the dilemma of having both state and civil society being put together in one structure, where interests may sometimes become skewed. Thirdly, NEPI cites examples of civil organizations, yet only mention the powerful liberation bodies such as Congress of South African Students (COSAS), the South African Democratic Teachers’ Union (SADTU), and the National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC).

Both these perspectives supported the idea of learner participation in school governance, and played a significant role in promoting its inclusion in SASA.

The ANC Policy Framework for Education and Training, 1994.

In the framework for education and training, the ANC is very critical of the high degree of centralization and authoritarianism within the system prevailing at the time. It claims: “the non-consultative, opaque and top-down style of these bureaucracies has restricted wider participation in policy formulation and ensured political control by the top echelons of the bureaucracy” (ANC, 1994a: 20). The standpoint of the ANC on the system of governance in education and training is that there should be “a balance between the responsibilities of national and provincial government and popular participation in policy development and implementation through structures of governance and consultation” (Zafar, 1999:4). This means that there is room for negotiation between those who develop policy and those who implement it. As with all negotiations, therefore, there was a “give-and-take” situation, and this is reflected in the agreements. Badat (1993:141) concurs with this view and states: “Negotiations were less about the transfer of power to democratic forces, but more about a negotiated political settlement underwritten by a series of agreements, pacts and accords covering a variety of social spheres”.

3.6 PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE ROLE OF STUDENTS IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

As with most issues there were, and still are, different perceptions of the role that students should play in school governance, and these are accompanied by tensions and contradictions. The more politically aware students have always regarded their participation in school governance as critical for the democratisation of the education system. Without their presence in governance structures they have felt that whatever input they may give could be completely disregarded if they were not present. Furthermore, they felt that decisions reached would not be democratic since not all stakeholders would be present, and principals may tend to dominate parents thus inhibiting the democratisation of schooling.

The other educational and political interest groups in South Africa perceived and articulated divergent views on this matter, and these will be discussed below.

Viewpoint 1

According to this point of view, the idea of learners being involved in school governance is seen as “an absurdity of the first order”. The Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) was the chief proponent of this view, and under the former Kwazulu Department of Education & Culture, PTAs and SRCs were banned. On cultural and traditional grounds they felt that learners should passively receive instructions and behave themselves in accordance with the instructions of their parents, principals and teachers. This view rejected the idea that learners should be involved in politics or more specifically, be involved in protest actions against apartheid. It held the belief that decisions about education lay squarely in the domain of the parents, principals and teachers, while learners should concentrate on their studies. Student involvement in school governance would therefore undermine the traditional value system of the people of South Africa (Zafar, 1999:3).

Other interest groups also held this viewpoint. They felt that the education of the child is the primary purpose of schools, and their education should not be sacrificed to achieve the genuine ideals of the liberation movement.

Viewpoint 2

According to this point of view, the fact that learners became involved in school governance during the “struggle” years is accepted as being a necessary ploy in the liberation of the country. It sees the situation at the time as being abnormal and which required abnormal responses. Now that South Africa has attained political stability and a reasonable level of normality in civil society, learners should be encouraged to concentrate on their studies and co-curricular activities. There should be no overtly political overtones in seeking to develop a culture of learning, teaching and service.

This viewpoint therefore supports the idea that learners should not be involved in school governance. Proponents of the above point of view see a dire need to depoliticise education in South Africa in order to stabilize education, and promote a culture of learning, teaching and service (COLTS), especially in township schools. This point of view tends to suggest that

inculcating COLTS and promoting the process of the democratising schools are mutually exclusive.

Viewpoint 3

According to this point of view, learners do have a role to play in school governance. However, the level of involvement should be limited and prescribed. Their main premise is that there are certain aspects of school governance where the involvement of learners would be undesirable. Examples cited by Sithole (1995:98) are those involving the discipline of teachers for misdemeanours, and professional issues in which the judgement of teachers and principals, it is contended, is unquestionable.

Viewpoint 4

Proponents of this view contend that learners are an indispensable component of democratic school governance at the secondary school level, and that they have earned the right to participate by the contribution they made in the struggle for educational transformation, as well as their participation in the mass democratic movement that eventually led to the liberation of South Africa. Furthermore, it is felt that the schools are the very change agents that should be used to deepen democracy in our country. It is here where a culture of democracy should be inculcated in our learners, and from which it could permeate into the rest of the community.

This viewpoint emanates from the time of the formation of the NECC in 1986, and the call for the establishment of the PTSAs. It the view that was supported by most of the organizations affiliated to the mass democratic movement, such as the ANC, COSATU, NECC and COSAS. According to this viewpoint, then, governance structures of all school at secondary level must include elected representatives from parents, teachers and learners.

3.7 DEVELOPING POLICY ON STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

By 1995 the proponents of the first two viewpoints had lost ground to those of the latter two viewpoints. By now it was accepted that students would participate in school governance, but the

question was whether it should be unconditional participation, or limited participation. At the heart of this debate was the quest to find a common understanding of what exactly school governance entails, and what does school management entail? That people found the above aspects confusing is not surprising, as there is a lot of overlapping. In fact, one finds that people are still experiencing problems with the difference between management and governance despite having attended workshops on this issue.

The Role of Students in School Governance in the Hunter Report

In terms of the Hunter Report (1995) the participation of students in school governance seems to have been accepted. The following serves to confirm this:

- the composition of governing bodies, in secondary schools, should comprise parents, teachers and students. It is recognized that these stakeholders can play different roles with respect to different elements of school governance;
- the composition of the SGB should also be sensitive to racial and gender representation. If necessary, additional members should be nominated to ensure gender balance;
- schools should have SRCs, and may have representative structures in addition to the governing body, for example parents' associations. The governing body has specific responsibilities, but is not intended to replace such other bodies, which can make valuable contributions within a school community.

Contestation on School Governance and School Management

The Hunter Report emphasizes the way that these two concepts overlap so as to enable schools to provide effective and efficient education. It emphasizes the provision of clear policies and the generation, distribution and utilization of resources in an accountable, equitable and effective manner. Furthermore, it claims that discrete definitions of governance and management are difficult, if not impossible, so close is the relationship between them. While there are certain functions that are clearly governance and some that are patently management, there are others that could arguably be assigned to either, according to institutional context. Governance is widely agreed to be concerned with the formulation and adoption of policy and management for the day-to-day delivery of education. Generally, stakeholder groupings should be involved where policy matters are decided, while day-to-day decisions about administration and organization and

activities supporting teaching and learning in the school should be in the domain of the professional staff, although stakeholders should have the right to comment on and make suggestions with regard to such decisions (Hunter, 1995:52).

All the models discussed above make provision for community involvement in school governance. The degree of involvement, however, differs, as do the motives of the parties making the proposals. Dlamini (1993:5) supports this view, where he claims that the sharp differences between the government's and the democratic movement's interpretations of "community participation" reflect the different interests of their constituencies. He identifies the following advantages for the Government with the control of schools with the community:

- the community will have to deal with the education crises at schools (particularly black schools), which the government sees as being perpetuated by elements outside the school;
- the community now accepts shared responsibility for the financing of education.

On these two issues Dlamini, (1993:5) comments that the attitude is problematic because "the justification for community involvement is not based on a genuine belief in people's right to self-determination". On the second issue he feels that this system may be used to bar children from disadvantaged backgrounds from attending these schools, claiming: "It may be a way to preserve better quality education for the wealthier communities".

3.8 THE FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The challenge for the new dispensation was to deal with the reality of combining the systems approach that is strong on government structures based on representative democracy, and the school governance approach that is based on very strong participatory democracy. When comparing the South African Schools Act (Act 108 of 1996) and the National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996), we find significant continuity with the proposals made up to 1994 regarding the composition of school governing bodies and their roles, responsibilities and powers. The exception to this was the proposals made by the ERS.

In a research document for the Department of Education, Foster and Smith (2001) developed a definition for educational governance as given below:

Educational governance refers to the formal system that provides for the exercise of authority with respect to various policy domains by the government itself or by delegated authority by various policy actors representing organizational or individual stakeholders, including the provision for voice for the latter, as defined below:

- Authority is the right, conferred by law, to make decisions about a particular matter in the education system.
- Voice is the right, conferred by law, to participate in the decision-making process, without having the right to vote or participate in any final decision.
- Stakeholders are groups and individuals who: deliver educational services; are responsible for ensuring that these services are delivered; or benefit from or pay for these services.
- Policy Actors are a subset of stakeholders, named by law to exercise authority or voice at different levels of the system.
- Levels of Government are understood as different strata in the vertical distribution of authority and voice, but do not include internal administrative divisions.
- Policy Domains refer to the major matters over which authority or voice is exercised.
- Accountability refers to the process by which a body or person who has been granted authority for some aspect of the education system is obliged to render account to another person or body for some specified object by some pre-determined means.

(Foster and Smith, 2001:4 –5)

School management is viewed by Leithwood and Duke (1999:53) as a sub-system operating within the governance system, which deals with a variety of “responsibilities for policy implementation, maintaining organizational stability, and ensuring that routine organizational tasks are ‘done right’ ... through such functions as planning, organizing, supervising, coordinating, budgeting, and staffing.” School management is therefore responsible for the day-to-day administrative and instructional functions of the school by ensuring effective teaching and learning, and the efficient use of the school’s human and material resources. Sithole (1995:106) reinforces this view claiming that school administration “operationalises and implements school policy as formulated and adopted by the school governance structure”.

Despite the above distinction, governance and management are interrelated and interdependent concepts, and everyone involved should understand that all decisions taken should be in the best interest of the learners' education. Sithole (1995:107) attests that whatever school policies are formulated, adopted and implemented, the test for their relevance is whether, in the final analysis, they will:

- create a conducive learning environment;
- ensure the adequate supply and efficient utilization of learning resources; and
- lead to the improvement of qualitative educational outcomes so that the student will derive maximum benefit.

3.9 LEGISLATION PERTAINING TO LEARNER PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Prior to the implementation of legislation on the representative council of learners (RCL), at least two systems operated in South Africa namely the prefect system or "leerlingrade", and the Student Representative Councils (SRCs). There were schools where a dual system was used, having both prefects and a SRC. Some schools also had the system where the Parent-Teacher-Association was extended to include the students, thus forming the PTSA.

The new structure for learner participation in school governance differed from all previous systems in that it was the first system to have a statutory basis. In terms of SASA (1996):

- A representative council of learners at school must be established at every public school enrolling learners in grade eight and higher (11.1);
- A Member of the Executive Council may, by notice in the Provincial Gazette, determine guidelines for the establishment, election and functions of the representative councils of learners (11.2);
- The Member of the Executive Council may, by notice in the Provincial Gazette, exempt a public school for learners with special education needs from complying with subsection (1) if it is not practically possible for a representative council of learners to be established at the school (11.3).

In terms of the Education Amendment Act (Act No. 57 of 2001), article 11.1 of SASA has been amended, and the RCL is now the only recognized and legal representative body for learners at schools. The intention of this amendment is to make schools aware that by persisting with the old traditional prefect system they are breaking the law. Schools were again made aware of this with Circular 56 of 2004, dated 30/11/2004. Article 11.2 of SASA is amended and the Member of the Executive must now publish the functions and procedures for election of representative council of learners. Formerly only guidelines were published. Once again the amendment is reinforcing the role to be played by the RCL by strengthening the legal side to its implementation.

In terms of article 16.1, the representative council of learners shall elect from its ranks two learners who shall be members of the school governing body. The term of office of these members shall be ONE year. During the past few years, many educators have called for a longer term of office for the RCL members, so as to retain the expertise developed during the first year. This, however, is not possible in terms of the present electoral system.

The functions and procedures for election of representative councils of learners are given in the Provincial Gazette Extraordinary (5946), dated 31 January 2003.

1. The composition of the RCL: The composition of a representative council of learners consists of 3 representatives for each grade from grade 8 and higher. This means that at most secondary schools the RCL will have 15 members.
2. Nomination and election of members of the RCL:
 - The representatives for each grade referred to in sub-measure (1) are elected separately by the learners in the grade concerned.
 - The procedure for the nomination and election of learner members is the same as for the nomination and election of educators, except that the school principal acts as the electoral officer. In practice the principal usually delegates the election process to the Teacher Liaison Officer.
 - The electoral officer shall determine a date, time and place for the meeting.
 - Nomination forms, duly completed by the persons proposing and seconding the candidate, as well as the candidate herself or himself shall be lodged with the

electoral officer not more than 7 days, and not less than 24 hours, prior to the commencement of the election meeting; or

- A learner may be proposed as a member during the nomination and election meeting, provided the proposal is seconded and a nomination form duly completed is lodged with the electoral officer within the time allocated for this by the electoral officer.
- A learner may not nominate him- or herself.
- Thereafter the electoral officer shall announce the names of the candidates whose nominations have been accepted.
- If the number of nominations received and accepted is fewer than three, a new meeting shall be convened.
- If the number of nominations accepted equals three, the electoral officer shall declare these three candidates as duly elected members of the RCL.
- If more than three nominations are accepted, a poll shall be held.

POLL:

- The electoral officer shall prepare a notice of the election meeting for each grade and display this at least 10 days before such a meeting.
- A quorum shall be at least one more than half of the total number of learners in the grade concerned.
- The electoral officer shall distribute a ballot paper on which an official mark or stamp appears, to every learner present wishing to vote.
- Each learner shall be required to cast his or her vote by marking three names of the approved candidates.
- The electoral officer shall reject a ballot paper on which no official mark or stamp appears; or where more than three names have been marked; or if, in the opinion of the electoral officer, there is uncertainty about for whom a vote has been recorded.
- The three nominees for whom the greatest number of votes is recorded, shall be declared as duly elected by the electoral officer.
- Where the number of votes recorded for the first four or more candidates is equal, the polling procedure shall be repeated.

- Where the number of votes recorded for the third position gives a tie, the polling procedure will be repeated with regard to these learners.
- Should the above procedure still not give a result, the electoral officer shall ascertain the result with regard to the said learners by drawing lots.

Comment: It is essential that every school develops an ethos around the election of the RCL; strategies such as election campaigning, inauguration ceremonies, acceptance speeches, etc. all help to develop the ethos of learner participation at the school.

3. Election of office bearers of the RCL:

- The principal shall convene the first meeting of the RCL and shall preside at such meeting.

Comment: This responsibility is usually delegated to the Teacher Liaison Officers.

- At the first meeting the representatives shall elect from their ranks at least a chairperson, a vice-chairperson and a secretary.

Comment: The constitution of the RCL will determine the positions to be filled.

4. Functions of the RCL:

The representative council of learners must:

- Draft a constitution and submit it to the governing body for approval.
- Act as representatives of their fellow learners.
- Serve as a channel of communication among learners themselves, between learners and staff and between learners and principal.
- Assist in maintaining order in the school in accordance with approved school rules.
- Set a positive example of discipline, loyalty, respect, punctuality, academic thoroughness, morality, cooperation and active participation in school activities.
- Promote good relations among learners themselves, between learners and staff, the school and the community and the school and parents.
- Promote responsibility, learnership and leadership.
- Support the total educational programme of the school (academic, religious, cultural and sports).
- Maintain and refine traditions.

Comment: These functions indicate the high expectations there are for the RCL, and the challenge for the adult members of the school governing bodies is to accept the members of the RCL who serve on the SGB as equal partners and help them to grow and develop. This can only happen if they receive the full support of the principal, staff and members of the governing body.

Njozela (1998:74) cautions principals and school governing bodies not to underestimate the contributions of learners in school governance matters, especially when they are given opportunities to develop their skills and level of maturity. Ncgobo (1999:26) suggests that where learners fail to make meaningful contributions, the reason may be found in the attitude displayed towards them. This will be the case where adult members tend to dominate them, treating them as minor members.

5. Dissolution of the RCL:

- The principal of the school concerned may, after consultation with the governing body, dissolve a representative council of learners if such council of learners has failed to discharge its functions satisfactorily or has acted in a manner that is not in the best interests of the school concerned.
- A representative council of learners dissolved in terms of above must be recomposed in accordance with this measure.

6. Discharge of individual members of the RCL:

(a) The principal may, after consultation with the governing body, the staff and the representative council of learners, discharge a member of the RCL from his or her membership if he or she –

- commits an act that undermines the administration of the school, or encourages such acts to be committed by others;
- is disobedient or refuses to carry out instructions given to him or her by an educator or a person in charge;
- is loath or refuses to fulfil duties;
- conducts him or her in a scandalous, improper or unseemly manner or is guilty of gross discourtesy towards another person;

- is found guilty of an offence and is sentenced to imprisonment without the option of a fine;
- stays away from school without permission to do so, unless he or she can prove a valid reason for his or her absence;
- fails to attend meetings regularly;
- leaves the school permanently; or
- has been suspended.

(b) A vacancy that occurs as a result of the application of 6(a) above, must be filled by a member elected in accordance with measure 23.

Comment: Sections 5 and 6 must be implemented in terms of fairness, transparency, and due process. It is therefore essential that all RCLs have an approved code of conduct and grievance procedure.

3.10 SUSTAINABILITY OF THE RCL

Sustainability is defined in the Chambers Dictionary as the ability to “hold up, to bear, to support, to provide for, to maintain, to nourish”. The success of the RCL in its role as a democratic governance structure is dependent on the processes being people-centred, people-driven and democratic. Karlsson and Pampallis (1995:129) concur with this sentiment when they state: “It is these very principles which are the hallmark of good governance”. The existence of a fully functioning RCL will therefore give effect to the sustainability of development and could serve as a benchmark of efficient school governance at an institution. The ties between school governance and the concept of sustainable development are stressed in the White Paper on Education and Training (1995b: 22): “sustainability is not just a financial concept. True sustainability occurs when the people concerned claim ownership of educational and training services and are continuously involved in their planning, governance and implementation”.

Given the history of South Africa’s educational crisis described in this chapter, the establishment of legitimate and well-functioning learner structures could be a tremendous asset to school management to build a culture of learning, teaching and service at schools. However, for

effective functioning of the RCL, capacity building programmes are essential. There appears to be consensus in literature that there are three essential areas of focus in capacity building programmes:

- accessing and using information and resources;
- developing skills in relation to governance functions;
- enhancing positive attitudes (Karlsson and Pampallis, 1995:136).

It is essential that the learners receive capacity building to make RCLs function well, but this needs to be accompanied by programmes for educators and principals as well to make them aware of the context of the new school governance system.

3.11 CONCLUSION

The chapter traced the history of learner participation in school governance in South Africa, from the 1976 student uprising, the development of People's Education under the leadership of the NECC, the establishment of PTSAs, and the interplay between the National Party and the Mass Democratic Movement, ending with the promulgation of SASA and the implementation of the RCL as the only learner body. It is hoped that in the reader has gained an understanding that the contribution made by learners to the democratisation of our country has earned them the right to participate at school governance level. However, it should not only be seen as a “politically correct” decision. It should be seen as a genuine attempt to democratise the policy-making process at schools so as to create an environment at schools that will encourage and nurture learning, teaching and service. The RCL can also be a platform that could be used to develop the country's human resources in a sustainable manner, producing leaders for the future.

The next chapter will address the second research question, looking at how the Western Cape Provincial Government interpreted the policy text, and how Western Cape Education Department responded in terms of implementing the policy. A historical account of the capacity building process that was adopted in the Western Cape from 1997 to 2003 will be given.

CHAPTER 4

THE CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME FOR RCLs IN THE WESTERN CAPE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The second research question focuses on how Western Cape Education Department responded to Article 11 of SASA. This chapter will review what regulations, structures, procedures, rules and programmes were put in place in order to implement the policy. The contents of this chapter are based on first-hand documentary and empirical research, joined with direct experience and involvement in school governance as a member of the Schools Act Coordinating Team (SACT), and information will be shared from personal records and data from the records of SACT. Although the Schools Act was promulgated in 1996, Western Cape Education Department (WCED) only established the SACT in May 1997. This dedicated team of eight members was assigned the task of ensuring that the Province would be in the position to implement SASA by January 1998. The initial work involved collaborating with the Directorate: Administration & Logistical Services to workshop all draft regulations to ensure its relevance to school situations, before these regulations could be promulgated. Their work also led to the publishing of Circular 0013/2000, delegation of powers in terms of SASA (1996) and the Western Cape Provincial School Education Act (1997), and the measures and regulations promulgated in terms thereof: Circular 0147/1998.

Once all regulations were in place, SACT took charge of coordinating the capacity building programme for school governing bodies and RCLs as stipulated in Art. 19(1) of SASA:

“ Out of funds appropriated for this purpose by the provincial legislature, the Head of Department must establish programmes to –

- provide introductory training for newly elected governing bodies to enable them to perform their functions; and
- provide continuing training to governing bodies to promote the effective performance of their functions or to enable them to assume additional functions.”

My specific portfolio in SACT involved the implementation of Art 19(1) of SASA with regard to the Representative Council of Learners. Discussions took place with area and circuit managers during a slot in the workshop ‘Orientation towards the training of governing bodies’ held on 11 – 13 August 1997 at Cape Town Teachers Centre to formulate a way forward with the RCLs. The first challenge was the lack of funds. Although the Act stipulated that the provincial legislature should appropriate funds for the capacity building process, no funds were available in the 1997/98 financial year. SACT was encouraged to seek funds elsewhere. We succeeded in obtaining funding to initiate RCL training by collaborating with the Special Project: Culture of Learning, Teaching and Service (COLTS), led by Ms Beverley Barry. The work done with these funds will be described under RCL: Project 1. Further funding was obtained from the business sector after organizing a school governance funding initiative. This took place at Engen Court on 1 August 1997, and positive responses were received from three of the 26 businesses that attended.

The fundamental principles that were established to guide the work and serve as the cornerstone of the capacity-building process were as follows:

- to promote the awareness that capacity building is the cornerstone of transformation;
- to promote the awareness that governance is an integral part of the school;
- to strive for sustainable capacity building;
- to promote democratic practices at school level;
- to do the training as close as possible to where the need has been identified;
- to underpin training with a support system;
- to support all structures that are involved in the transformation process;
- to strive to achieve equity and equality;
- to be led by the strategic direction given by the National Department of Education.

4.2 RCL: PROJECT 1

A model for the capacity building programme and work plan for the period October 1997 to September 1998 was prepared and submitted for approval to the top management of WCED.

Needs Assessment

Five service providers were invited to participate in this process. The intention of the intervention was to establish the needs of learners to enable them to participate in the school governing bodies so that the learners could make a contribution towards the shared vision of the school community. The participating organizations were Thousand Schools Project (T.S.P.), Catholic Institute for Education (C.I.E.), College of Trainers, Novalis Institute, and Organizational Services. They worked as a consortium to produce a coordinated programme, taking responsibility for the entire process of conducting the needs analysis, compiling a questionnaire, and developing a brief for the tender. During a series of meetings with these service providers, a programme was developed to do the in depth needs assessment, and it unfolded in a two-pronged approach described below.

The needs assessment workshop: This workshop was held on the weekend of 17/18 October 1997 for representatives from learners, educators and circuit managers from all nine areas of the Western Cape. The purpose of the workshop was to identify what information, knowledge and skills would be needed by the RCL members to contribute effectively toward school governance. The workshop was facilitated by SACT and the service providers mentioned above. The participants were:

AREA	LEARNERS	EDUCATORS	C.M./PRINCIPAL	TOTAL
George	4	-	3	7
Worcester	3	1	1	5
Paarl	3	1	1	5
Wynberg	4	-	1	5
Athlone	5	3	1	9
Mitchell's Plain	2	-	-	2
Bellville	4	1	1	6
Kuils River	1	-	-	1
West Coast	4	1	1	6

All the participants were requested to evaluate different aspects and sessions of the workshop on a scale from 1 to 5. An average evaluation was calculated for each aspect and session and expressed as a percentage. They could also comment on the workshop.

A	GENERAL	PERCENTAGE
1	Accommodation	81,4%
2	Catering	71,6%
3	Organization	79,6%
4	Arrival/Reception	79,5%
5	Interchange of ideas	83,9%
6	Appropriateness of objectives of the workshop	82,8%
B	SESSIONS	
(i)	Expectations: SACT	87,8%
(ii)	Team building: T.S.P.	90,0%
(iii)	Overview of SASA: C.I.E.	85,0%
(iv)	Group discussion / Data collection T.S.P. College of Trainers C.I.E. Organizational Services	85,0%
(v)	Plenary	80,9%
(vi)	Discussion / Underlying issues / Burning issues	82,0%

The evaluation responses indicated that the workshop was an enjoyable experience and that the objectives were reached. A matter of concern was the number of participants who attended. All areas received notification in good time, yet some areas were not well represented. Some comments by the facilitators and participants were:

- great learning experience and a great sense of camaraderie;
- wonderful to see learners, educators, principals, circuit managers, NGEOs, and WCED officials working together so well;
- participants were given the time and space to say something meaningful;

- participants felt safe and comfortable to express their opinions;
- the interaction that took place on the Friday set the tone for the workshop on Saturday.

The questionnaire: The data collected at the needs assessment workshop was collated and classified in terms of the information, knowledge and skills required by the learners to make a success of the Representative Council of Learners in terms of SASA. Using the data obtained from the above workshop, a questionnaire was drawn up and sent to all the secondary and intermediate schools in the Western Cape. It required the learner leaders at the schools to give an indication of:

- the importance of the identified area for effective participation in school governance;
- the perceived level of competence in each of the specified areas.

There were 33 questions in the questionnaire, and each question focused on a specific area. The following list indicates the subject on which the question is focusing.

Importance and availability of information on

1. The concept of the RCL
2. The organization and structure of RCL
3. The relationships of the RCL with other bodies/groups
4. School Governing Bodies and School Policies
5. The Constitution of South Africa
6. The South African Schools Act

Importance and availability of knowledge about

7. The rights and responsibilities of the SGB
8. The rights and responsibilities of the two learner representatives serving on the SGB
9. The roles and limitations of the learner representatives
10. School policies
11. The S.A. Schools Act
12. Codes of Conduct
13. The Constitution of South Africa
14. Analysing needs

15. Strategic planning
16. Networking and partnerships
17. Meetings

Importance and level of competency in skills in

18. Communication
19. Handling information
20. Personal assessment
21. Interpersonal relationships and abilities
22. Counselling
23. Motivating others
24. Facilitating group processes
25. Managing diversity
26. Creative thinking and problem solving
27. Conflict resolution
28. Networking
29. Leadership
30. Management and organization
31. Time management
32. Financial management
33. Public relations

The results: Questionnaires were sent to all 443 schools in the province with grade 8 or higher learners. Completed questionnaires were received from 80 schools, and the information was analysed by Organizational Services. All the respondents indicated that they view all the areas identified during the weekend workshop as very important. The ratings varied greatly with regard to the level of skills learners thought they possessed.

Training gap in main areas: The respondents indicated skills as the most important area for learners participating in the School Governing Body. Access to information was rated as the second most important aspect, and knowledge followed in third place. Respondents indicated the

competencies they possess in the same sequence, stating that they are more competent in the skills area, and less competent in the information and knowledge area. All the schools reacted similarly in indicating the importance of areas, but differed in the competency levels indicated.

Importance in individual issues: All 33 items were rated as very important for learners participating in the RCL, with leadership skills (question 29), conflict resolution skills (question 27), creative problem-solving skills (question 26), personal assessment skills (question 20) and communication skills (question 18) topping the list. Knowledge of the S.A. Schools Act (question 11), knowledge of the Constitution of South Africa (question 13), analysing needs (question 14), and knowledge of school policy (question 10) were indicated as of less importance.

Level of competencies: On average the respondents indicated that they have a high level of understanding of the Representative Council of Learners (question 1) and that they have information on the organization and structure of the RCL (question 2). On average they indicated that they have less knowledge of the S.A. Schools Act (question 13), school policy (question 10), analysing needs (question 14), networking and partnerships (question 16) and financial management (question 32).

Competencies versus importance: On average learners indicated that a gap exists between the importance of the issues and the level of competencies they possess. Some of the larger gaps exist with networking and partnerships (question 16), codes of conduct and/or contracts of cooperation (question 12), and financial management (question 32).

Variation amongst schools: Although agreeing on the importance of issues, schools differ on the levels of competencies indicated. On average the high level of competencies indicated seem to be unrealistically high, particularly when groups of learners from the same school indicate that they have high levels of skilfulness in aspects such as interpersonal skills and abilities, counselling skills, motivational skills, facilitation and group skills, managing diversity, creative thinking and problem solving, conflict resolution skills, networking skills, leadership skills, management skills, time management, financial management, and public relations skills.

Specifications for training courses for learners serving on RCLs:

On completion of a training course, learners should have information, knowledge and skills to act in the best interests of the school. With regard to information the following areas were identified:

- how the RCL is constituted, and its roles and responsibilities;
- how the RCL fits in within the wider educational framework;
- how to draft a constitution for the RCL;
- how the constitution and the Schools Act impact on school life.

With regard to knowledge the following areas were identified:

- how the SGB is constituted, and the roles & responsibilities of the SGB;
- how the SGB fits within the wider educational framework;
- how school policy is formulated;
- the important laws which govern and regulate school life;
- how to determine the needs of the learners;
- how to set realistic goals and objectives in line with school's vision & mission;
- how to network and form meaningful and beneficial partnerships with groups and individuals who share the same interests;
- how to constitute and conduct a meeting, meeting procedures, and the different types of meetings.

With regard to skills, learners should acquire skills to:

- communicate with learners, parents, and educators;
- handle information responsibly, particularly confidential matters;
- demonstrate self confidence, insight and interpersonal relationships;
- facilitate group processes, promoting teamwork and team spirit;
- solve problems;
- demonstrate leadership;
- demonstrate self responsibility and accountability;

- prioritise matters and draw up a work plan;
- demonstrate basic budgeting and fundraising strategies;
- promote the good image of the school;
- promote the best interests of the school.

With regard to the facilitation of RCL workshops the following principles should hold:

- it should be practical, participatory and have an element of fun;
- exercises should be structured to allow self-exploration and discovery;
- facilitators should serve as role models;
- all learners should be encouraged to participate in the learning process;
- facilitators should give attention to both process and content.

Process of Allocating Tender to a Service Provider

The tender process of the Provincial Administration: Western Cape was followed, and the invitation to service providers to tender to do the capacity building of RCLs in the Western Cape was advertised on the weekend of 14/15 March 1998.

An information meeting was held on 20 March 1998 at Liberty Towers that was attended by 40 people from 29 different organizations, and all aspects of the tender document were clarified. On 31 March 1998 the Office of the Tender Board approved 19 tenders for consideration. The Sifting Committee instituted for the purpose of making recommendations for the allocation of the tender met on 3 April 1998, using the approved criteria and formula. The committee was constituted as follows: an official from WCED (Special Projects), three school principals, three circuit managers, and one community worker. The committee was also representative, having 4 male and 4 female members.

The formula used to evaluate the tenders was as follows:

- (i) Price: This entailed 50% of the total points allocated. The lowest tender therefore got the full 50%, while all others received a points allocation in terms of the formula:

$50\% \times [1 - (T_c - T_{min}) \div T_{min}]$ where T_c is tender concerned, and T_{min} is the lowest tender.

Example: $T_c = R\ 250\ 000$; $T_{min} = R\ 200\ 000$

Therefore the concerned service provider gets 12,5% out of the total of 50% for price.

- (ii) Proven track record: 20%
- (iii) Prepared to work in a consortium: 10%
- (iv) Ability to run urban and rural workshops concurrently: 10%
- (v) Catering for all three official languages: 5%
- (vi) Small, micro and macro enterprise involvement: 5%

The formula to evaluate items (ii) to (vi) was:

$\frac{Y_{concerned}}{Y_{highest}} \times \%$, where Y is the average mark given by the evaluators to the tenderer.

The weighting factor of proven track record was further clarified as follows:

Two or more years experience in running training workshops in school governance: 20%

Two or more years experience in running training workshops: 10%

Based on the above criteria, the tender was allocated to Edu-Assist, led by George van der Ross.

The Capacity Building Programme Facilitated by Edu-Assist

Because many of the role players perceived the project differently, meetings were held with Edu-Assist to promote inclusiveness while still pursuing transformation. Edu-Assist succeeded in doing this, and managed to keep the participants aware of how this process fits in with the goals of transformation, equity and access so as to improve the quality of education for all the young people of our country. The process included training the Teacher Liaison Officers who are to provide support to the RCL so as to develop and grow. The objectives for the programme were outlined in the document “Capacity Building for Learner Members of School Governing Bodies”, and were to ensure that:

- Representative Councils of Learners are able to function effectively in terms of SASA;
- learners serving on the SGB are able to contribute to its effective functioning.

The tender made provision for a two-and-a-half day pilot workshop, followed by twelve similar workshops, one in each of the seven urban Western Cape Educational Areas, while the two rural areas of George and Worcester had two and three workshops respectively. The total number of workshops was therefore thirteen. Meetings were scheduled by SACT to coordinate arrangements between Edu-Assist and WCED officials to clarify roles of all members of the partnership. An important aspect raised at these meetings was the lack of a permanent structure at WCED to monitor and facilitate the ongoing capacity building of learners. This matter was to be addressed by a Work Study task group. SACT took responsibility for making the logistical arrangements for the workshops with each of the Area offices.

The pilot workshop: The pilot workshop took place on the weekend of 17-19 July 1998 at the Western Cape College of Education in Kuils River. It provided an opportunity to refine the training curriculum and to shape it around the RCL needs. There were twenty-one schools that were represented at the workshop, all secondary schools. The participants were 37 learners, 12 educators, and 6 Circuit Managers. The pilot workshop highlighted the challenges of the training in terms of the differences in both past and present experiences of the participants. It also allowed changes to be made in the programme so as to make it more focused.

The RCL training workshops:

The content of the workshop focused on the following aspects:

- functions, roles, and responsibilities of the RCL;
- the constitution of the RCL;
- communication skills;
- transformation and the role of education;
- vision, mission, and planning;
- action-reflection-learning-planning cycle.

There were twelve workshops and the details of the logistical arrangements are given in the table on p. 100.

DATES	AREA	VENUE	PARTICIPANTS
31 July-2 August '98	Athlone	W.C. College of Ed.	43
21-23 August '98	Bellville	W.C. College of Ed.	92
9-11 October '98	Worcester	Caledon	59
11-13 September '98	Worcester	Swellendam	39
23-25 October '98	Worcester	Worcester	35
4-6 September '98	Wynberg	W.C. College of Ed.	88
25-27 July '98	West Coast	Piketberg	89
14-16 August '98	Kuils River	W.C. College of Ed.	57
9-11 October '98	George	Mossel Bay	49
2-4 October '98	George	Oudtshoorn	22
28-30 August '98	Paarl	Stellenbosch	65
7-9 August '98	Mitchell's Plain	W.C. College of Ed.	77

The processes used were aimed at building a community of learning. Trust-building activities promoted the values of sharing, cooperation, tolerance and open-mindedness. Practical exercises were used in vision building, fundraising, and planning. The process of delivering further training to RCLs was based on the cascade model, and Edu-Assist enhanced this concept by establishing a strategic team comprising of two educators and five learners from each of the areas, and rural sub-areas.

The role and function of the strategic team was to:

- coordinate activities between schools in the area with regard to training workshops
- spearhead a campaign for establishing and sustaining RCLs at each of the schools in the area that offer tuition for grades 8 and higher.

The meetings of the strategic teams became known as the RCL Forum in some areas, and excellent work was done in many areas. The success was definitely dependent on the support the learners received from educators and circuit managers. A lack of financial support for this

project by WCED due to budgetary constraints would raise some serious questions, given the significant role learners played in the transformation process of education and South African society as a whole.

Evaluation: The evaluation was done at the end of each day using an evaluation form with a five-scale rating system. Participants were requested to evaluate each session on the 5-point scale below:

Description	Poor or Weak	Below average	Average	Good	Excellent
Evaluation	1	2	3	4	5

The average percentage for the session was calculated as follows: multiply the number of responses that each of the above categories received with the value indicated; divide that total amount by the total number of responses; and then express this as a percentage.

Cognisance had to be taken of the age and academic qualifications of the participants, which varied between 12 and 24 years of age, and between grade 6 and 12. Furthermore, educators also evaluated the workshop. In general the overwhelming majority of the participants rated the workshop very highly, and indicated that they were an unqualified success.

The workshops in the metropolises were done mostly in English, while those in the rural areas were done in both English and Afrikaans. Xhosa translations were done where it was necessary or requested. Consecutive translations of sections, however, tended to impact on the flow of the presentations. It would have been more appropriate if a dual medium approach had been used so that the flow of the workshop was not disturbed.

An analysis of the evaluations per session provided some interesting insights, and a trend that emerged was that the participants tended to evaluate the presentation done by the facilitator more than evaluating the content, process, and value-added component. It would have been better had the evaluation form clearly distinguished between the above-mentioned aspects.

The programme:

- **Introductory Activities**

Most participants found these activities of great value as it allowed them to relax, become less apprehensive, and to be able to communicate with strangers in a meaningful and enjoyable way. It created a good learning environment.

Some comments: Good climate established; excellent games and icebreakers; positive spirit prevailed; learners put at ease to participate in discussions; interesting, exciting, made us focus from the start.

- **Shape of the school**

This activity allowed learners to talk about their own schools, and to represent their ideas symbolically. It provided them with an opportunity to think about the values that should be included in the mission of their schools. 319 out of the 413 respondents rated this session as good to excellent.

Some comments: it is wonderful what people can do for each other; changed the way learners perceived their schools; excellent – lots of participation; it was creative, interesting, enjoyable.

- **Educational Context (History)**

The responses to this session were varied. Because of time constraints the session was factual and some found it to be boring, irrelevant and ‘onvanpas’. The history deals with the development of the Student Representative Councils (SRCs), and how this eventually led to the inclusion of learners today in decision-making processes of school governing bodies. Although no one indicated that they found it to be hurtful or offensive in their evaluations, subsequent correspondence received complained about the excessive accent on politics, claiming that the session was negative and upsetting. The average evaluation was 74%.

- **Communication**

This session was evaluated very positively, averaging 88%. The learners particularly liked the practical illustrations of poor communication and good communication.

223 of the participants rated it as excellent, while 174 rated it as good.

Comments: presentation was very, very good; fruitful and valuable; stimulating and very practical; learnt new ways of communicating; everyone could relate to it.

- **Constitution**

This session stressed the importance of having a constitution that will guide the behaviour of learners in the RCL. The use of audio-visual material (Lord of the Flies) helped with this rather difficult aspect of the RCL. 371 of the 471 participants rated the session as good to excellent, averaging an evaluation of 82%.

Comments: very informative; need more guidelines; time too limited; could have been done in a more creative way.

- **Vision and Mission**

This session illustrated vision with a very practical exercise that learners enjoyed tremendously. Use was made of tables and chairs to reach the star. 401 out of the 481 participants rated it good to excellent averaging 85%.

Some comments: excellent; enlightening; now I understand the difference between vision and mission.

- **Planning**

Responses were very positive and appreciative, commenting on the various types of planning – visual, strategic and potsae. Once again a practical way of learning to plan was used, allowing learners to plan a function using the POTSAE method. 395 participants out of 429 rated it good to excellent, averaging 88%.

- **Transformation**

Out of the 469 participants, 341 found the session to be good to excellent. The educator component registered an overwhelming excellent evaluation. Since this was an extremely sensitive part of the workshop, it was presented in a sympathetic and understanding way. The technique involved discussion of internal, external, social and institutional transformation. Despite this attempt, some participants, especially educators from ex-model C schools found it to be negative, and even recorded it as indoctrinating. They claimed that it made no contribution towards equipping learners to be well-prepared members of school governing bodies. The majority, however, found it to be interesting and exciting.

Some comments: excellent topic of discussion; evoked good response; such subjects MUST be discussed; we learned to understand one another better; thoroughly dealt with, although some people felt that there was too much emphasis placed on the past; we learnt how to change things especially in our schools, and it was the most interesting lesson I ever heard;

it was excellent, educational and promoted nation building.

- **Roles and functions of the RCL**

This session became controversial at times as there seemed to be dissatisfaction with the representation of the RCL on the governing bodies of schools. Discussions were also dominated by questions in this regard since the matter was new to almost everyone. The younger learners, especially, found this too technical. The question of existing learner structures was also a contentious issue. The evaluations reflected this as 273 out of the 436 participants rated it average to good, 44 rated it as weak to below average, while only 79 rated it as excellent. The average evaluation was 70%.

Some comments: practical demonstration of a functioning school governing body may have been more functional; more time should have been allocated to this section; this information should have been sent to schools beforehand so that we could have been better prepared; we will try to implement this information; it was interesting and helpful.

- **Action and Reflection**

Learners experienced more difficulty with the concept than the educators.

The average evaluation was 78%.

Some comments: I learnt that one has to take one step back in order to take two steps forward; very good topic, all should apply it; may have been too much at once for the learners; I learnt a lot about reflection and enjoyed it; it was very tiring, difficult to understand.

- **Strategic teams**

While most participants accepted the idea of electing these teams, there were some who questioned the absence of other schools. Despite the difficulties raised, learners and educators availed themselves for election. These strategic teams were expecting to approach the absent schools to share information gained from the workshop. Of the 397 respondents, 217 rated the session as good to excellent, while 115 rated it as average.

Some comments: An excellent idea to ensure that schools are informed – very important; good and committed people were elected – a step forward to build capacity; I didn't understand; a good step forward in building leadership skills; good for carrying on whatever was learnt in the workshop.

- **Overall Evaluation**

An examination of the statistics revealed that 37% of the learners evaluated the workshop as excellent; 36,6% as good; 8,4% as average; 1,5% as poor to below average. 16,2% did not rate the workshop. Statistics of the educators reveals that 35,4% felt that the workshop was excellent; 45,6% felt that it was good; 9,1% felt that it was poor to below average, while 9,8% did not rate the workshop. Interestingly, 81% of the educators rated the workshop as good to excellent, compared to 73,6% of the learners.

Follow-up strategic team workshops

In terms of the contract Edu-Assist had to run a series of local workshops with the strategic teams elected at the regional workshops. The Athlone strategic team functioned well and met on four occasions in 1998. The Bellville strategic also fared well and met on three occasions in 1998. The Kuils River strategic team met on four occasions in 1998, as did the Mitchell's Plain group. The Wynberg strategic team also functioned well and divided themselves into three zones, running workshops at Groote Schuur High, Steenberg High, and Sun Valley Junior School.

The Paarl area was divided into three sections: Franschhoek, Paarl and Stellenbosch/Strand. The Paarl Forum operated well for some time, as did the Strand RCL Forum. The West Coast decided to run their RCL strategic teams per circuit under the leadership of Mr L. Davids., Circuit Manager. This system worked really well and they still operate well.

The Worcester area formed sub-areas as follows:

- the Worcester sub-area divided into groups in Worcester, Touws River-De Doorns, and the Witzenberg;
- the Swellendam sub-area divided into a Riversdale and Robertson group; and
- the Caledon sub-area divided into a Bredasdorp and Grabouw group.

The biggest problem with the strategic team idea was the distance between schools in the rural areas, the resistance to support the programme because of financial restraints, and forces that were resisting change in getting schools to co-operate with each other.

Critical analysis of Project 1

- **Logistics**

SACT took responsibility for the logistical arrangements of the workshops and used the official channels to inform schools about the details such as venues, participants' transport, accommodation, catering, times, etc. It appears as if there was a delay in the system as many participants complained of late notices or lack of information. This resulted in some participants, especially educators, starting out with a negative attitude. Whilst the role of the circuit managers to drive the process within their circuits had been accepted at WCED, the implementation was difficult due to constraints on their own resources.

The training venues were reasonable with the staff generally being friendly and helpful. One serious problem though was the lack of hot water for ablution purposes at one of the venues. Catering was generally adequate. The size of the groups caused a measure of concern as they were generally too large. The creativity of the service provider to deal with these situations is to be commended.

- **Workshop content and process**

The work done by Edu-Assist in initiating the capacity building process was generally regarded to be of a very high standard. The facilitation skills displayed by some of the presenters were excellent and they were able to engage the participants in meaningful activities. The discussion after activities to gain an understanding of concept under discussion or to identify the learnings was particularly useful. There is no doubt that this type of intensive workshops was very demanding and that it tested the commitment of the service provider. The standard of materials produced was also excellent and continue to be used as a valuable resource. This project was done on a very limited budget and an important lesson was the fact that one needs to insist on realistic budgeting so that follow-up support and consolidation is built into the project.

In driving the RCL capacity building process in the Western Cape it had to be ensured that the letter and spirit of the law in SASA, and the Provincial Gazette Extraordinary (5136), was carried out. It also had to be ensured that ALL schools are involved in the process. In discussions between SACT and the service provider a strategy was decided upon to keep the programme as

politically neutral as possible, but focusing clearly on the historic transition that was being experienced in South Africa and particularly on the role that learners are to play in school governance. It was therefore decided to highlight such strategically vital issues as nation building, anti-racism and anti-sexism as well as the need to share existing resources as essential elements in the transformation of education in South Africa and the restoration of the culture of learning, teaching and service. However, it would be done in such a manner that would not alienate the former House of Assembly schools.

With regard to the initial approach taken, Edu-Assist commented by way of constructive post-eventum critique in their report that:

While the tentativeness of WCED was (and is) understandable given the sensitivity of the issues involved (see the minimal participation of former HOA schools), we believe none the less that a bolder approach would be more motivating to learners and educators alike. Moreover, the need to see issues as problems that are either taboo or taken for granted has to be addressed if we are to give more than a veneer of transformation education and training in such workshops. A good example of this proposition is the history of the RCL as an institution. It is self-defeating to exclude, or even sanitize, the history of the SRC movement in schools before 1976 in the mistaken belief that by doing so, we are shielding our children from getting to grips with the harsh realities that have given birth to the new South Africa and thus to the need for these kinds of workshops (Van der Ross, 1998:28).

When assessing the progress made towards moving from policy to praxis in chapter 7 the initial strategy followed will again be taken into consideration. However, the fact of the matter is that some schools had an SRC tradition while other schools had a prefect tradition, and indeed some schools had both systems. These traditions had to be brought together within the new context, and so build and consolidate democratic practices at schools. Thus the best elements of the two traditions had to be considered in terms of the new philosophy to find out what was appropriate.

On the issue of adapting to changing circumstances, Van der Ross says:

In practice, we have seen that learners quickly realize the significance of their role in the RCL once they understand the connections between the struggle for democracy on the one hand and the consolidation and broadening of democracy on the other hand (1998:28).

From the above quotation it can be inferred that, in fact, the learners do not have much of a problem in changing to a new system, but it is the adult who has more of a problem. Experience in working with RCLs dictates that I agree with the statement, and appeal that the learners receive the necessary support to make a meaningful contribution to school governance.

Compared to the other provinces, the Western Cape has a large number of primary schools with grade 8 or grade 8 and 9 learners on their roll, also known as intermediate schools (111 out of the 443 schools). In terms of SASA these schools must also have a functioning RCL. Thus the learners in grade 8 and 9 must be capacitated to serve on the RCL and on the SGB. Bearing in mind the financial constraints in which the programme had to operate, it was not possible to arrange separate workshops for these learners. While I will agree with Edu-Assist that there was often a serious imbalance in the maturity and communicative competence of the learner participants, there were often some impressive exceptions among the intermediate school's representatives. The workshops, in fact, provided them with opportunities to display their leadership skills.

One of the criticisms about the programme was the predominant use of English during facilitation. Proposals that learners be clustered in terms of language preference had to be weighed up against bringing culturally diverse groups together to break down barriers created in the past. Facilitators had to be aware of possible misunderstandings and the use of a dual language approach was again found to be effective. However, not all facilitators were able to do this. The service provider comments on the language issue as follows:

The general phenomenon of participants giving the impression of having understood everything for fear of being 'exposed' as not knowing the language of teaching was as much in evidence here as elsewhere in our society with exactly the same consequences of imprecision and inefficiency. Yet, when the physical imperatives compelled us to use simultaneous interpreting, as in the admirable and extremely impressive case of the hearing-impaired learners at the Worcester workshop, there was no impediment (Van der Ross, 1998:29).

The need for more attention to be given to the language issue was again raised quite pertinently.

In discussions with Edu-Assist the need for follow-up procedures was strongly underlined. The training of the RCL members and their educators will remain no more than an empty formality for most of them unless a series of quarterly or half-yearly refresher or monitoring workshops is planned for the next few years. These could focus on specific topics determined from a needs assessment.

Another matter on which agreement was reached with the service provider was the need to build up the strategic teams that were established in most areas during these training workshops. These strategic teams consisted of the most committed, and in many cases, the most insightful learners and educators. It was felt that these strategic teams could become one of the main instruments for breaking down the barriers to misunderstanding and miscommunication within and between school populations. The idea of initiating a conference of representatives of all RCLs in the Western Cape in order to help establish continuity of good practice and to encourage the development of an *esprit de corps* also had its origins during this project.

4.3 RCL PROJECT 2: TRANSLATION OF SKILLS – “Making our schools work for us!”

A budget of R 133 000 was approved for this project during the 1999/2000 financial year. Of this amount R 131 696 was spent. The workshops were held during March and April 1999. Three service providers were appointed to present and facilitate one-day workshops with the goal of

empowering RCL members to perform their duties by planning and managing a specific project at their respective schools. The service providers were: Spades, National Access Consortium Western Cape, and Murray Consulting & Training. The workshops were conducted in Kuils River, Bellville, Claremont, Mitchell's Plain, Paarl, Athlone, George, Worcester, Riversdale, Napier, Clanwilliam, Malmesbury, and Oudtshoorn. These places served as central points for a large number of schools. A total number of 267 schools were represented at these workshops and a total of 636 learners were trained.

Content

The theme of the workshops was based on the five pillars of COLTS:

- to develop values, commitment and discipline amongst all stakeholders and role players in education;
- to create a crime-free environment;
- governance;
- essential resources;
- a South African Education charter.

RCLs were encouraged to start projects in line with one or more of these pillars, and in line with one of the strategies of their SGB.

Methodology

The facilitators used interactive and participatory methods that encouraged networking. Answers were sought to questions such as: what must be done; who must do it; when must it be done; who would do the monitoring? Ample time was allowed for learners to engage in a practical planning session, followed by a feedback session. A wide variety of projects were identified. Examples are: developing school pride; improving school attendance; raising funds for instructional equipment; refurbishing classrooms; involving parents in school-related activities.

Critical evaluation

The workshops were well run and the participants found them to be enjoyable, meaningful, and could go back to their schools with a plan of action. Before proceeding with the programme,

each session allowed for some interaction between schools and provided an opportunity to find out what was happening at schools with regard to the RCLs. Responses were:

- the biggest problem that learners mentioned was the lack of recognition given to the RCL; and
- some of the schools are still perpetuating practices of the former Student Representative Councils and Prefect Systems.

In the expectations, most of the participants expressed a desire to increase the level of competency of the RCL and its members. They indicated that they do not have enough skills to improve the school environment and are therefore not in a position to make a significant contribution to establish a culture of learning, teaching and service. What has again been highlighted was the fact that change occurs slowly and with difficulty. It is therefore imperative that principals, educators, area managers, circuit managers, and parents give learners the support they need to make the RCL a success.

4.4 RCL PROJECT 3: TRAINING OF TEACHER LIAISON OFFICERS

A number of Train-the-Trainer workshops were held during 1999 in which participants were trained in acquiring the skills necessary to facilitate workshops. The contract was awarded to the erstwhile Teachers In-service Project (TIP), and a pilot workshop took place in Parow on 29 January 1999. Workshops were then organized at Goudini in February, June and August 1999. A Teacher Liaison Officer from each of the circuits in the Province was invited to participate. The specific purpose of inviting these educators was to give them the opportunity to:

- gain skills in designing and presenting workshops on school governance;
- clarify the roles and responsibilities of the RCL and the SGB;
- discuss a work plan per area to render assistance to RCLs at schools;
- discuss guidelines for the duties of the Teacher Liaison Officers;
- raise other matters of concern and share positive experiences.

The workshops were very well received and many of these educators became the beacons for the RCL in their areas, coordinating cluster workshops for the RCLs and taking the lead in their training.

Contents

- Setting the scene
- Raising awareness about workshop design
- Practical in workshop design
- Presentations and critique
- Principles of workshop design and planning

4.5 RCL PROJECT 4: TEACHER LIAISON OFFICER WORKSHOPS 2000

The strategy embarked upon by SACT to develop strong RCL structures at schools was to build the capacity of the Teacher Liaison Officer (TLO) at each school so that they could give on-site training and support to the learners. These workshops took place on a Friday afternoon and the following Saturday. A budget of R 150 000 was granted for this project. Synergy Consultants did the facilitation and the project was co-ordinated by SACT.

Logistics

AREA	VENUE	No. of participants	DATE
West Coast	Piekenierskloof	52	17/18 March 2000
George	George	46	26/27 May 2000
Mitchell's Plain	Sea Point	44	4/5 June 2000
Worcester	Worcester	56	21/22 July 2000
Athlone	Sea Point	35	28/29 July 2000
Kuils River	Sea Point	33	4/5 August 2000
Bellville	Sea Point	44	11/12 August 2000
Paarl	Stellenbosch	25	18/19 August 2000
Wynberg	Sea Point	36	25/26 August 2000

Content

- Role and responsibility of the RCL and the TLO
- Facilitative Leadership and Decision Making
- Interpersonal Relationships and Gender Issues
- Expanding the RCL Framework

Comment

- Very positive, and a call for further workshops.
- Request that this workshop be given to the whole staff as well as the SGB so that they could gain a clearer understanding of the role and responsibilities of the RCL and the TLO.

Recommendations Arising from the Workshop

- Develop a website to facilitate support to RCLs and TLOs.
- Provide a bibliography with handouts.
- Provide a recommended reading list.
- Structure: That the term of office of the TLO be at least three years.
- Structure: That a second educator be included to assist the TLO.
- Structure: That consideration be given to amend the Schools Act to have the term of office of the RCL increased to two years.
- That WCED appoint a Skills Development Facilitator to a cluster of schools to do leadership training with the learners of the RCL.
- That a Skills Development coordinator be appointed at the Head Office of WCED to coordinate the work done with the RCLs.
- That the focus of the work of above should be on academic performance, coping skills, gender sensitivity, code of conduct of learners, and building good relationships between learners and the other role players.

Way Forward

- Clusters of schools were identified with a leader to encourage closer cooperation with other schools in their area.
- Circuit managers were requested to put the development of the RCLs on the agenda of the school principals, and to stress that the success of the RCL is not the sole responsibility of the TLO, but a joint venture from the whole school community.
- Certificates would be issued to all participants.
- A summary of the input from all the TLO workshops would be prepared and distributed.
- All recommendations would be forwarded to Top Management.

4.6 RCL PROJECT 5: RCL TRAINING WORKSHOPS: 2000/2001

In the 2000 / 2001 budget a amount of R 64 000 was allocated for the programme “Translation of skills”, and R 28 000 for the development of RCLs. SACT liaised with the circuit managers and TLOs to co-ordinate the RCL workshops. The service providers used were: Spades, William Murray Consulting, and Youth for Christ. A total of 4006 learners received training. The content focused on:

- role and responsibilities;
- planning and organization.

Comments about the process by one of the Service providers

Some comments were:

- the RCLs at most schools were up and running;
- information-sharing opportunities at the start of the workshop allowed schools to learn from each other;
- issues with which learners were still grappling were: cell phone policy in the code of conduct; wearing of jewellery; role of RCL members on the SGB; school safety (drug abuse; discipline; bullying);
- the visibility and acceptance of the RCL has had a tremendous upswing at all schools that attended the workshops;

- the impact of the Teacher Liaison Officers has been tremendous. Many of the TLOs have held their own workshops, both at school and in clusters, which have assisted in raising the profile of the RCLs at their schools and in their communities;
- the attendance of the area and circuit managers at workshops reflected the commitment of WCED to the RCL programme, and had a positive impact on the learners present.

Recommendations

The cluster system worked well in terms of schools learning from each other. The stage had been reached where different programmes should be made available based on the level of development of the RCL. Suggestions were:

- level 1: RCLs struggling with elections, roles and responsibilities, functions;
- level 2: RCLs grappling with constitutional and organizational development;
- level 3: RCLs that are up and running but need support with programme implementation.

Some recommendations received from educators with regard to the process, were:

- schools are bureaucratic, so use channels within WCED to get the notice of workshops across to ensure participation e.g. circulars;
- convene a meeting with principals and the circuit manager to motivate them on the importance of developing the RCL;
- prior to the workshop, send schools possible dates, with a choice of attending any one;
- have more face-to-face meetings with TLOs to identify concerns, burning issues, etc.;
- send attendance certificates to all learners who attended these workshops that can be handed out at school assemblies.

4.7 RCL PROJECT 6: RCL TRAINING IN ISLP AREAS

Background

The Integrated Service Land Project (ISLP) had RDP funds available for projects within the specified areas: Cross Roads, Langa, Nyanga, Guguletu, Philippi, Delft and Weltevreden Valley. These funds were controlled by the Provincial Administration Western Cape Housing Department. An amount of R 650 000 was negotiated for WCED to spend on the capacity

building of non-WCED personnel such as School Governing Bodies and the Representative Council of Learners.

SACT submitted business plans for the training of the RCLs in the ISLP areas. On 24 November 1999 ISLP approved, through its agency Caleb Consulting, an amount of R 100 000 for Part I to be used during the period January - December 2000. The contract was awarded to two service providers: Spades and William Murray Consulting and Training, who jointly worked out the programme before implementing it. Workshops took place from May to August 2000 and RCLs from twenty- one schools received training. They were divided into six clusters of three or four schools. A total of 345 learners attended these workshops. Good reports were received about their service and all learners who attended the workshops received certificates of attendance.

Objectives

- Have the RCL functioning in terms of the school's vision and mission.
- Have the RCL functioning according to an approved constitution.
- Have the RCL function by means of well-defined sub-committees.
- Have the interests and concerns of the learners placed on the agenda of SGB.
- Have an effective code of conduct for learners and members of the RCL.
- Promote cooperation between learners and staff.

Course Content

- Module 1: Situation analysis; roles and functions; RCL constitution
- Module 2: Code of conduct for the school and RCL; grievance procedures
- Module 3: Planning of RCL activities
- Module 4: Conflict management
- Module 5: Time management
- Module 6: Personal development

Comments on the process

Some comments were:

- Workshops were well attended. Attendance rate varied between 90 &100%.

- Contributions from TLOs added value to the process.
- Learners at most schools were not aware of their school's code of conduct.
- Concerns raised during workshops were that corporal punishment was still being practised at most of the participating schools; that there is a lack of transparency between management structures and the rest of the school community resulting in a breakdown in communication; and that the crime and violence prevalent in the communities are spilling over into the schools.

Learners, educators and school management voiced the following matters:

- Assistance is needed with elections, campaigning and monitoring to ensure that the best learners are elected.
- The staff needs to buy-in to the importance of the RCL. Many still view the RCL as the old SRC, and are not aware of its role, functions or responsibilities. The RCL therefore does not get their support. There are also cases where educators incite the RCL to further their own personal agenda.
- There needs to be ongoing capacity building for the RCL. New members are elected every year, and often the transfer of skills is not very effective. Electing different TLOs every year does not promote the process either. It should also be remembered that the RCL is still a reasonably new concept to the communities, and this needs time to filter down.
- The RCL should participate more in school assemblies and functions so as to make them more visible. This will also motivate the learners more.

The service providers added the following comments and recommendations:

- Given the fact that these areas were very neglected over the past years, the learners and educators viewed the workshops as very encouraging and informative. The process is seen as a long-term intervention to engage the learners in the process of making their schools function more effectively.
- The learners were highly motivated and reported back to the larger group of learners at their schools. This strategy worked well and allowed one school to learn how other schools solved problems. This type of intervention should be used at all RCL workshops.

- Training manuals should be developed based on best practices where RCLs were fully functioning.
- Far too much emphasis is being placed on academic achievement discounting the holistic development of the learner, which includes the way they feel and the way that they interact with each other. Coping skills are direly needed for the harsh environment in which they find themselves today. Providing workshops around the following areas may impact positively on the entire learner body: self-discipline; positive attitude; values and morals; campaigning.
- Greater educator support in RCL training and activities will contribute to greater effectiveness.

RCL Capacity Building: Part 2

In August 2001 ISLP approved R125 000 for further training, and the contract was awarded to Spades. The work done was a continuation of the previous year, with new members of the RCLs.

4.8 RCL PROJECT 7: TEACHER LIAISON OFFICER WORKSHOPS: 2001

This workshop provided an opportunity for TLOs to share experiences with others, and to evaluate how recommendations made at the previous workshop in 2000 had been implemented. SACT also negotiated a partnership with the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and they took responsibility for a section of the programme dealing with Democracy Education and Election Procedure. They also offered logistical support to schools during the RCL elections. These workshops were again organized on a Friday and Saturday and were well received by the TLOs, despite the heavy workload they were bearing. The facilitation was Synergy Consultants, assisted and co-ordinated by SACT.

Outcomes

- Clarifying the role of the TLO
- Vision, mission and core values of the RCL
- Deepen democracy by expanding participation in decision making

- A raised awareness of the importance of democracy and human rights as an integral element of education
- Development of a set of achievement criteria for the RCL
- An improved structure for strategic teams to encourage interaction between schools, and an action plan

Logistics

One workshop was organized for each EMDC during October to November 2001.

EMDC	VENUE	DATES
Breede River/Overberg	Worcester	12/13 October 2001
West Coast/Winelands	Piekenierskloof	19/20 October 2001
Metropole East	Sea Point	26/27 October 2001
Metropole Central	Sea Point	2/3 November 2001
Metropole South	Sea Point	9/10 November 2001
Metropole North	Sea Point	16/17 November 2001
South Cape/Karoo	George	23/24 November 2001

Comments / Recommendations

- The TLO workshop should be done in levels.
- Level 1: Those schools that still need to implement RCL policy.
- Level 2: Those schools that have the system in place but are experiencing problems.
- Level 3: Those schools that have all the systems and procedures in place, and are functioning well. These TLOs could also help with co-facilitating.
- Workshops should take place twice a year.
- Could we not have this workshop during the vacation?
- Consider using microphones.
- Strategies on elections were very useful.
- Clusters should meet more often.

4.9 RCL PROJECT 8: TRAINING WORKSHOPS: 2001/2002

The TLOs again took responsibility to organize these workshops under the leadership of the circuit manager tasked with the RCL. A total of 1483 learners received training during this financial year. Cluster workshops took place in most areas during the period February to March 2002. More service providers were used to cover all the areas. These included Youth for Christ, Extreme Life, Koinonia and Synergi Consultants. The topics covered were:

- role and responsibilities of the RCL and SGB;
- meeting procedures;
- planning and organizing.

Evaluation / Comments / Recommendations

Youth for Christ incorporated the Solo Outdoor Adventures programme with the topics mentioned above. This provided learners with opportunities to learn through practical activities such as abseiling, caving, obstacle courses and various planning and decision-making activities. The programme succeeded in clarifying the rights and responsibilities of the RCL, and how the RCL could contribute to the sound management of the school.

The workshops run by the other service providers were also very interactive and evaluations were positive. The teambuilding exercises by Extreme Life were particularly effective. Groups of five learners were asked to build a tower with special tins. The debriefing session highlighted the processes through which all groups have to go in order to successfully complete a project.

4.10 RCL PROJECT 9: SCHOOL BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT: 2001/2002

In terms of one of the principles of the Tirisano Project schools are to embark on beautifying their buildings and grounds. SACT encouraged schools to provide funds to their RCL to initiate a school beautification project. They could claim back an amount of R500 on completion of the project. This formed part of the RCL project implementation module. RCLs had to answer the following questions:

- What needs to be done?
- Why does it need to be done and how should it be done?
- When and where will it take place?
- Who will do it?

After answering the above questions, a budget is drawn up for the project, and it is then submitted to the SGB for approval, and permission to implement it. On completion the school submits a claim, not exceeding R 500, on a letterhead to WCED.

Results

Some excellent projects were completed at schools, and some examples are:

- beautifying the school grounds by planting trees and shrubs;
- beautifying the school foyer;
- operation H.I.P.: Hygiene Improvement Project;
- operation 'Lookout': painting of notice boards, parking areas, sport areas;
- operation 'White House': a resource room for the RCL;
- operation 'Clean-up': providing a large number of bins on the school grounds.

4.11 RCL PROJECT 10: RCL TRAINING 2002/2003

The members of SACT finished their contract with WCED in March 2002, and their work was taken over by the Human Resource Department who established a section called the Education Management and Development and Governance (EMDG). Mrs Lorenda Olivier took charge of the training of the RCLs. The training of the newly elected RCLs took place in February and March 2003. Workshops were held in Wynberg (Metropole South); Kuils River (Metropole East and Metropole North); Mowbray (Metropole Central); George and Oudtshoorn (S.Cape/Karoo); Citrusdal and Paarl (West Coast/Winelands); Worcester and Napier (Breede River/Overberg). The service providers used were Thuthukani Solutions and Extreme Life.

Content

- Role and function of RCL and SGB
- Teamwork

- Personal development
- Meeting procedure
- Communication
- Self-esteem and assertiveness

Evaluation / Comments / Recommendations

The participants evaluated the workshops in terms of content, presentation and value. In all these aspects the average evaluation was above 80%. The introductory session in which learners were asked to work in groups and illustrate graphically those factors that impact positively or negatively on their schools was particularly enlightening and evoked lots of responses. The “tin tower” exercise proved to be very popular once again.

4.12 RCL PROJECT 11: TEACHER LIAISON WORKSHOP 2003

A refresher course was held for each of the EMDCs during May and June 2003, covering:

- self-evaluation of the state of the RCL at their schools;
- clarity on the role and responsibility of the RCL;
- clarity on the legal perspective on the RCL;
- formulation of a constitution;
- grievance procedure;
- finding joy in your work.

These workshops took place on a Saturday and were well received by the educators despite the fact that they felt that workshops should take place during school hours.

Evaluation / comments / recommendations

The workshops were evaluated in terms of content, presentation and value. The responses to all of these were very positive, each section averaging well above 80%. Some of the comments were: interesting and informative; excellent; well presented; questions answered excellently; enriching; good interaction; relevant and clear; problem areas addressed; insightful; die insiggewendste werksessie wat ek nog bygewoon het; regte perspektief en wakker weer die passie vir onderrig aan.

4.13 RCL PROJECT 12: RCL CONFERENCE

The Directorate: Human Resource Development organized a three-day conference for representatives from 450 intermediate and secondary schools at the Cape Teaching Institute in Kuils River from 31 July to 2 August 2003. The conference provided an opportunity for youth leaders in schools to share best practices on effective leadership and community involvement, and policy formulation. It also allowed discussion on RCL structures and programmes, and deepened the understanding and practices of democracy.

Objectives

The objectives were:

- to document the status of RCLs in schools;
- to clarify the legal framework in which school governance takes place;
- to compile a set of strategies to overcome obstacles to the growth and development of the RCL;
- to establishment a RCL Commission in each EMDC to articulate the needs, aspirations, and challenges of learners;
- to document best practices and success stories.

Logistics

WCED took responsibility for the logistical arrangements. These included notices to schools, invitations, transport, accommodation, catering, chaperones, social activities, keynote speakers, prior conference activities, prizes, donations, security, music, sound system, audio-visual equipment, stationery, conference sweaters and caps, registration cards and holders, and certificates of attendance.

Facilitation of conference programme

The content and process of the facilitation of the conference was arranged during meetings with service providers over a period of three weeks prior to the conference. The theme “ deepening

democracy” served as a thread that linked most of the discussions as learners unpacked those issues that influenced the functioning of the RCL.

Establishments of EMDC RCL Commissions

Each EMDC was charged with the task of forming a RCL Commission by using the given draft terms of reference. Sections of the terms of reference were: name; legal status; ethos and mission statement; long term objectives; short term objectives; structure; meetings; communication; strategies to achieve objectives (action plan).

Feedback from the EMDC Commissions

Ethos: Each EMDC Commission designed a flag and formulated a motto. Examples of motto’s are:

- ‘Unity in diversity’ (Breede River/Overberg);
- ‘Break borders (barriers); Make things happen’. (S.Cape/Karoo);
- ‘A leader is a leader through others’. (Metropole South);
- ‘Umanyano lweenkokheli – United leaders’ (Metropole East).

S.Cape / Karoo symbolised their RCL commission by painting an eagle to represent the strength of the RCL, an egg and young eagle to represent the birth of a new generation of RCLs, and a fish in the mouth of the eagle to represent the knowledge gained at the conference being taken back to the schools to help the RCLs.

Mission: We will strive to serve the RCLs of all the schools in our region by acting constitutionally and articulating the voice of the learners. We commit ourselves to the growth and development of RCLs by initiating capacity building programmes and activities by working hand-in-hand with the EMDC officials, community structures, the private sector, and the RCLs at schools.

Long-term objectives (Operational goals):

- to deepen the culture of democracy and human rights;
- to promote the visibility of the RCL;

- to obtain 100% unity amongst all schools in the region;
- to develop learners and equip them with leadership skills by organizing quality programmes;
- to design and maintain effective communication systems;
- to strive for service excellence at all times;
- to form strong and sustainable partnerships with youth organizations, and institutionalised Provincial and National Governmental Commissions.

Short-term objectives were:

- Structural: roles and responsibility of each member serving on the commission; develop projects for next few months; develop a framework of operation with accountability systems; develop suitable communication systems;
- Human Resource Development: identify the needs, challenges and aspirations of the learners; assess the training needs - for RCLs and the Commission to respond to the needs, challenges and aspirations of the learners; organize training by liaising with the EMDC and the EMGD section; forming sub-committees as a need arises;
- Policies: developing policies regarding issues such as membership, partnerships, code of conduct, grievance procedure, election processes, term of office, meetings, constitution;
- Ethos: develop set of common values, symbols, ceremonial activities, induction of members.

Steering committee of each EMDC RCL Commission

The EMDC RCL COMMISSION was elected through a process that mirrored the election process of RCL members at school. It provided the facilitator with the opportunity to clarify various procedures consistent with democratic elections, in line with the theme of the conference. It was used as a practical demonstration of:

- campaigns and manifestos;
- suitability and criteria of the nominees;
- election (through count);
- verification and monitoring;
- acceptance speeches.

Action plans

EMDC CENTRAL RCL COMMISSION

The action plans developed were:

- to ensure recognition for all RCLs by educators, principals, SGBs, and the EMDC;
- to promote transparency of all policies. Learners have a right to know where they stand when they transgress;
- to upgrade security at schools where it is unsafe;
- to promote more sport codes where there is limited choice;
- to establish a communication network between schools, and share a common project;
- to meet regularly so that RCLs can share information and support each other.

EMDC SOUTH CAPE / KAROO RCL COMMISSION

- Oudtshoorn Region: this group decided to tackle the problem of school uniforms.
- Mossel Bay Region: this group identified four areas of concern and devised an action plan to address teenage pregnancy, satanism, smoking at school, and racism.
- Beaufort West Region: this group settled on dealing with discipline and overcrowding at their schools.
- Knysna Region: this group decided to address the matter of racism at their schools.
- Plettenberg Bay: this group decided to focus on give developing their leadership skills.
- George Region: this group decided to address the matter of school fees.
- Heidelberg Region: this group decided to target the eradication of vandalism at their schools.
- Ladismith region: this group decided to address the problem of drug abuse.

EMDC NORTH RCL COMMISSION

Problems identified by this group were:

- teenage pregnancy;
- lack of communication between staff and learners;
- substance abuse.

EMDC EAST RCL COMMISSION

This group set themselves the following challenges:

- discipline at schools;
- healthcare facilities and training;
- safety and security;
- better communication systems at schools;
- capacity building to deal with peers on a personal level.

EMDC SOUTH RCL COMMISSION

- Ensure that RCLs have a budget for training and activities;
- Ensure that all RCL policies and procedures are in place;
- Make schools safer;
- Teenage pregnancy.

EMDC BREEDE RIVER / OVERBERG

- This group decided to lobby for an International Conference to enable learners from all over the world to come to South Africa to discuss the different school systems.

EMDC WEST COAST / WINELANDS

- build partnerships between schools;
- manage diversity better;
- make RCLs more visible and learner-friendly;
- address problems of discipline, substance abuse, safety and security of schools.

Proposed strategy for Western Cape RCL Commission

The following strategies were identified to take the process further:

- that the present working committee takes the process further;
- that the structure of each EMDC Commission be 5-8 elected learners and 2 TLOs;

- that the above commission elects 2 learners and one TLO to serve on the Western Cape RCL Commission;
- that the submissions from the commissions be taken further and acted upon.

4.14 CONCLUSION

Learner involvement in school governance in the past took the form of the issue-orientated Student Representative Councils that usually operated in direct confrontation with the school authorities. The RCL system reflects an attempt by legislation to have a school system that makes provision for the involvement of learners in the decision-making processes. However, the SASA goes further and in section 19 (1) makes provision for capacity building programmes “out of funds appropriated for this purpose by the provincial legislature”. It also stipulates that the Head of Education MUST establish training programmes. Bearing the above in mind the question therefore needs to be asked: Has this been done in the Western Cape?

This chapter has given an account of the capacity building programmes organized for the RCLs, but it should be seen in the light of limited available funding. The Western Cape, as with all the other provinces, experienced the problem that they simply did not have sufficient funds in their education budgets to drive a capacity building programme. When SACT came into being in 1997, it was encouraged to seek funds from the private sector, and through close co-operation from the National Business Initiative (NBI) a comprehensive plan was drawn up to seek funding from companies. The following companies responded positively: Engen, Woolworths, and Clicks. However, their contributions were restricted to the SGB training *per se* and not for the training of the RCLs. The funding for project 1 of the RCL was obtained from the RDP component under the auspices of Ms Beverley Barry.

The National Department of Education came to the rescue with regard to funding through the creation of a special fund called the Policy Reserve Fund, later known as the Conditional Grant. In the financial year 1998/1999 SACT received a budget of R 850 000. However, the funds only became available in October of that year with the result that very little time was left to do capacity building. This has been an ongoing problem and needs to be addressed. In the next

financial years the funding to SACT for capacity building increased, but most of the funds were allocated to the EMDCs for SGB training. A budget for RCL training was reserved by SACT with which the Projects 2-9 was funded. After March 2002 the capacity building fell under the Directorate: Human Resource Development that took charge of Projects 10-12.

In line with the policy of sustainable development, the strategy followed with RCL training was to allocate funding for the training of the Teacher Liaison Officers so that there would be at least one educator at each school who had a clear understanding of the RCL policy, and where it fits into the transformation of Education in South Africa. This strategy worked well and these committed educators are still doing sterling work. However, there is one recommendation that was first made in 1998 and repeated thereafter, that was not implemented due to financial constraints. This is the matter of taking school principals through the same process as the Teacher Liaison Officers so as to reach a common understanding of the underlying philosophy and logic of the RCL, and how it should be used to promote the transformational goals of our country.

A second limitation to the capacity building programme is related to human resources. Throughout the capacity building process the Provincial RCL Coordinator had to rely on WCED functionaries who were already heavily overloaded with other administrative matters, to make arrangements for workshops in their circuits. Prioritizing matters therefore became necessary for them and in the process the RCL tended to be neglected.

The existence of, and the effective functioning of RCLs as envisaged in SASA places South Africa internationally amongst the leaders in giving recognition to the voice of learners in decision-making with regard to their education. This chapter chronicles the progress made by the RCL since its inception in 1997. Chapter 5 will describe the research design and methodology that I used in the research.

CHAPTER 5

THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the research design and the methodology that was used during this research. The following issues are dealt with: research approach, research participants, data collection process, data analysis approach, reliability and validity, limitations of the research, and ethical considerations. In discussing the research approach I take both quantitative and qualitative into consideration, and motivate why a dual approach is used. The chapter also clarifies my understanding of school governance and where learner representation fits into the framework. Furthermore, the chapter provides a framework to analyze the level of competence reached by the RCLs, giving the key indicators that will be used to measure progress made by the RCLs.

5.2 THE RESEARCH APPROACH

This study has adopted a dual approach, using a quantitative approach to establish the broad context in which the RCL operates at schools, establishing general trends. The qualitative research approach identifies trends in more detail, describing incidents and interventions and how the participants feel about them.

Quantitative Approach

Quantitative research concerns the measurement of variables that will lead to a clearer understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. Aspects that I considered to be suitable to indicate different trends in my research were: experience of teacher liaison officers, how often TLOs meet with their RCLs, composition of RCLs, types of sub-committees, when are elections held, when do meetings take place, attendance at RCL meetings, level of participation, support received by the RCL, visibility of the RCL, contact with other schools, contributions toward school governance, availability of a RCL and SGB constitution, availability of a code of conduct,

availability of a grievance procedure, availability of the school's vision and mission statements, what type of activity is popular among the RCLs.

The thesis will therefore use a quantitative approach with regard to the actual implementation of strategies prescribed to make the RCL function effectively. This information will assist in assessing the level of competence reached by the RCLs.

Qualitative approach

In order to motivate why a qualitative approach has been adopted in this study, I consider those aspects which researchers highlight as recurring characteristics of qualitative research and evaluate their suitability to the study. According to Miles and Huberman (1994:6-7) the recurring features can be summarized as given below:

- it is conducted through an intense or prolonged contact with the “field” or life situation that reflects the everyday operation of the said individual, group, society or organization;
- the role of the researcher is to gain a holistic overview of the context in which the said organization operates;
- the researcher then follows up with an attempt to understand how the people concerned manage their day-to-day situations in the operation of the organization;
- the interpretation of the data collected may vary, but would be more compelling if it were underpinned by theoretical reasons, or by a measure of internal consistency;
- the researcher is the main agent to determine which measuring instrument will be used in the study;
- most analyses are done in words that allow the researcher to contrast, compare and analyze, and in this way identify trends and patterns that may emerge from the study.

The qualitative approach therefore describes both the process and outcome of the research and is a direct source of data that can be analysed. The analysis may then provide a clearer understanding of the phenomenon being investigated.

There are different points of view on this approach. One point of view sees qualitative research as a phenomenon in which the research topic is viewed critically through participation and observation. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993:372) qualitative research is a

“naturalistic enquiry, the use of non-interfering data-collection strategies to discover the natural flow of events and processes and how participants interpret them”. In terms of this definition the researcher should observe and interpret what is happening in a natural setting.

A second point of view, advocated by Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:12), sees qualitative research as learning “...at first-hand, about the social world they are investigating by means of involvement and participation in that world through a focus upon what individual actors say and do”. This means that the researcher interacts with the research subject in order to come to an understanding of the issues in question. In this way the interface becomes closer and the issues under consideration become more focused. Van Maanen (1990) concurs with this point of view, and states further that the collection of qualitative research data is generated *in vivo*. This implies that data should be collected as the phenomenon is occurring, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Crossley and Vulliamy (1997) argue that qualitative research in education “...has a special potential in developing countries because, for various historical and cultural reasons, educational research in such countries has, to date, been dominated by positivist strategies” (1997:13). As a result, they suggest, a quantitative research strategy has commonly been used to investigate questions when either a qualitative one or a combination of the two would have been more appropriate. Furthermore, they state: “... the narrative style of qualitative research reports can also be more accessible to a wider range of potential readers; and in predominantly oral cultures the advantage of personal fieldwork, in depth interviews and observation are most significant” (1997:14).

Hence in qualitative research a description of an occurrence is done followed by an analysis and interpretation. The word description should not, however, be seen to reflect a superficial understanding of data. It should be understood to mean a thorough and deep understanding of the phenomenon, the context in which it takes place, the process involved in its operation, the effectiveness of the phenomenon, and the subsequent evolution and development (Denzin, 1978).

The focus of this study is on the RCL itself, but in order to get a holistic picture, the researcher had to investigate the interaction between the members of the RCL itself, and between the RCL

and the teacher liaison officers, the principals, the school governing bodies, as well as the learners. The data collected has to be analyzed, interpreted and then has to provide a holistic description of the status of the RCL.

Based on the above characteristics, the qualitative research approach was considered to be both practical and appropriate for this study as it allowed opportunities for observation, as well as posing both closed and open-ended questions.

5.3 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS TO UNDERSTAND ASPECTS OF LEARNER REPRESENTATION

The following are frameworks that will be used to clarify my understanding of school governance and the contribution made by the RCL towards promoting it. It will also provide a basis to analyze what progress the RCL has made in moving from policy to praxis.

Analytical Framework for Understanding School Governance

In order to come to a clear understanding of the RCL as an organization of which the chief area of concern is school governance, the research will view governance in terms of the framework used by Smith and his colleagues at the Office of Research on Educational Policy at McGill University in Canada. They have defined the elements as follows:

- “Educational Governance is the formal system that provides for the exercise of authority with respect to various policy domains by the government itself or by delegated authority by various policy actors representing organizational or individual stakeholders, including the provision for voice for the latter, as defined below” (Foster and Smith, 2001:3).
- Authority is the right, conferred by law, to make decisions about a particular matter in the education system.
- Voice is the right, conferred by law, to participate in the decision-making process, without having the right to vote or participate in any final decision.
- Stakeholders are groups and individuals who deliver educational services, are responsible for ensuring that these services are delivered, and who benefit from or pay for these services.

- Policy actors are a subset of stakeholders: bodies or individuals, or types of bodies or individuals, named by law to exercise authority or voice at different levels of the system.
- Levels of government are understood as different strata in the vertical distribution of authority and voice, but do not include internal administrative divisions with a government service or department where there is no distinct allocation of authority or voice.
- Policy domains refer to the major matters over which authority or voice is exercised, namely: general policy direction; educational curriculum, services and organization; human resources; financial and other resources.
- A parameter is an element of the regulatory framework, the laws and the regulations that stipulate various terms and conditions that must be taken into account in the governance of the education system, including the legally enforceable rights of individuals and groups and provision for accountability.
- Accountability refers to the process by which a body or person who has been granted authority for some aspect of the educational system is obliged to render account to another person or body for some specified object by some pre-determined means (Foster and Smith, 2001:3-5).

The following schematic framework represents school governance as adapted from the Canadian model. The major elements of the analytical framework are:

- Level of governance playing a role in the RCL. Here it has been found that all four levels – national, provincial, Educational Management and Development Centre (EMDC), and institutional (school) – are involved.
- The policy actors who should be considered, such as: National Education Management and Governance Development Director, Provincial Education Management and Governance Development Coordinator, district (EMDC) coordinator for RCLs, school principal, deputy principal, teacher liaison officer, RCL members, learners, school governing bodies.

FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

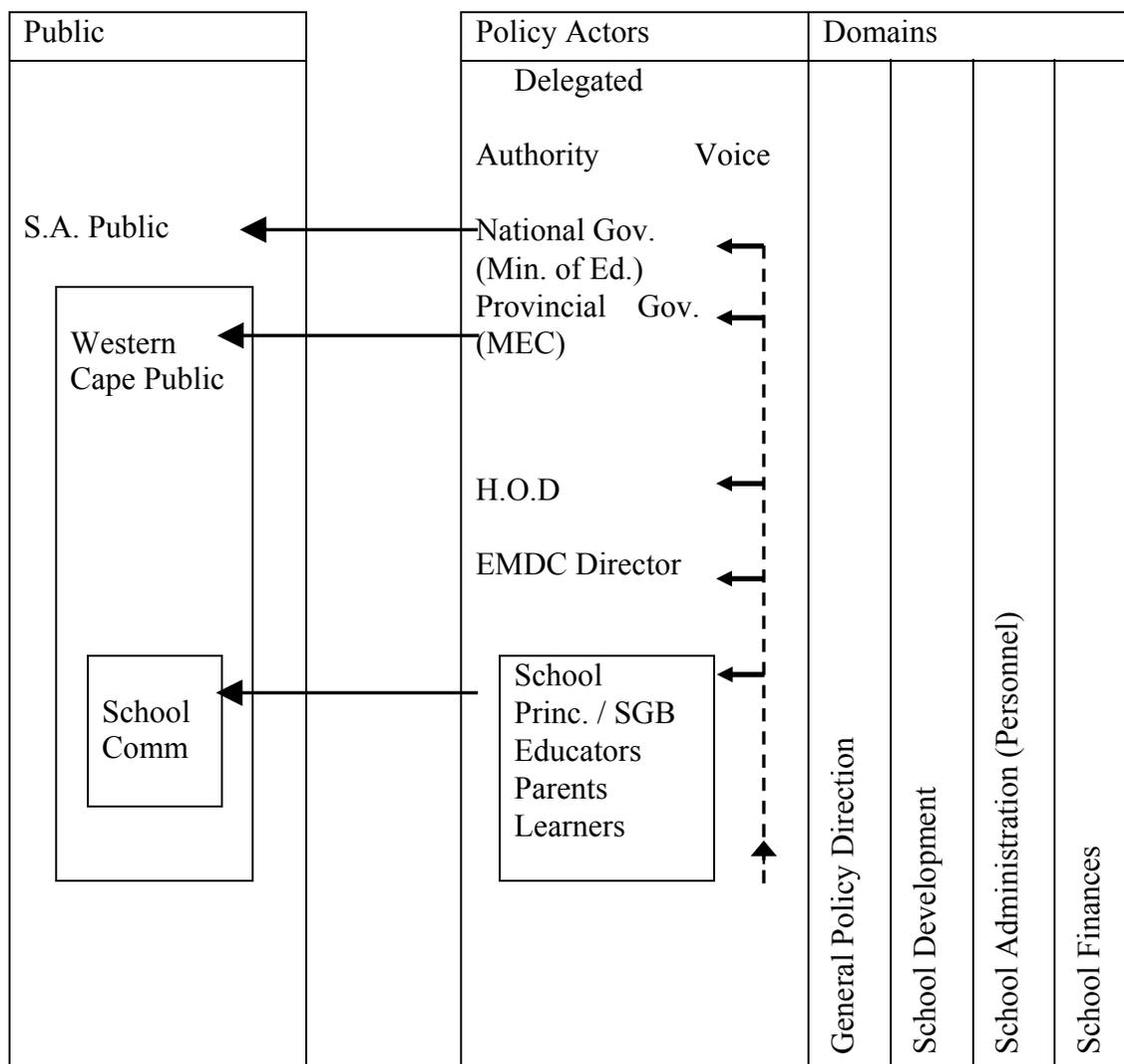
Constitution

Bill of Rights

Division of Powers

National

Provincial



NOTE: Adapted from “Educational Governance in Canada: a model for comparative analysis” by Smith, W.J., Paquette J.E. and Bordonaro T., (1995).

Framework to Analyze the Level of Competence Reached by RCLs

In analyzing the level of competence reached by RCLs the framework proposed by Bolman and Deal (1997) will be used. In their work they consolidate the major schools of thought on organizations into four perspectives or frames. They claim that successful managers reframe the organization until they understand the situation at hand (Bolman and Deal, 1997:16). The four frames, which I will also apply in investigating the RCLs, are:

- structural frame – linking the structure to the goals;
- symbolic frame – stressing the importance of ethos, teamwork, shared faith and culture;
- human resource frame – stressing the relationship between people and organizations;
- political frame – policies emerge from an ongoing process of bargaining and negotiation.

The key indicators that I will use are given in the table on page 138, and have been determined through preliminary research on the RCLs since its inception in 1997. The main source of the data was the reports of the teacher liaison officer workshops held in 2000 and 2001. In these workshops the teacher Liaison officers participated in a process of identifying those activities, policies or procedures that should be put in place so that the RCL could function effectively. The framework used in this process was that of Bolman and Deal (1997:6). More details of these workshops can be found in chapter 4, in sections 4.5 and 4.8.

This research will draw upon the conceptual tools, expanded on in sections 1.5 and 1.6, to monitor, analyze and evaluate the process with which the RCLs have progressed from policy to praxis. The deductions, conclusions and recommendations will, however, bear in mind the contextual settings expounded in section 1.4.

Once I have classified all the data in terms of these frames, I will determine how they relate to each other, and identify what the causes and effects are. If the root causes are clear as to what is retarding RCL praxis from developing, focused recommendations can be given.

Key Indicators (based on preliminary research)			
Structure	Human Resource Support (relationships)	Ethos	Political Negotiations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● RCL Constitution ● RCL Code of conduct ● SGB Constitution ● Code of conduct for learners ● Filing system for documents ● Format of RCL ● Sub-committees ● Structured meetings ● Representiveness ● Communication channels ● RCL Commissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher Liaison Officer ● Other RCLs ● Support from learners ● Support from educators ● Support from SMT ● Support from SGB ● Capacity Building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participation in school activities ● Visibility at school ● Visibility in the community ● Building up positive school spirit ● Establishing symbols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Grievance procedures ● Participative decision-making ● School governance:

5.4 DATA COLLECTION

The data collection took place in a series of three phases. Phase 1 dealt with the questionnaire to those schools that participated in the research. Phase 2 took place in May 2003 during teacher liaison workshops, and phase 3 took place during the RCL conference in June/July 2003.

Phase 1

During the first stage of the data gathering process, a questionnaire was given to those schools in the Western Cape who have RCLs and who attended the scheduled training session for their Teacher Liaison Officers during 2001. These sessions were arranged by the WCED and took place in each of the districts (areas) in the province. This provided the researcher with the opportunity to explain the research purpose, questions and procedure to the Teacher Liaison Officers and elicit their cooperation in taking charge of having the questionnaires completed by the other respondents at their respective schools.

According to Van Rensburg, Landman and Bodenstein (1994:504) a questionnaire is a set of questions dealing with some topic or set of related topics, given to a selected group of individuals for the purpose of gathering data on a problem under consideration. The questionnaire used in Phase 1 and 2 of this research (Appendix B) was developed after consultation with specialists and colleagues, and the primary purpose was to collect data that would provide a baseline of the level of competence reached by RCLs. The questionnaire consists of six sections, each focusing on different aspects of the RCL, and having five different sets of respondents. The respondents were:

- teacher liaison officers;
- chairpersons of the RCLs;
- school principals;
- chairpersons of school governing bodies;
- learners from the schools concerned.

The questions focused on providing data to answer:

- How have the stakeholders at school level interpreted and internalized the policy text in Article 11 of SASA, and the Provincial Gazettes Extraordinary 5136, dated 16 May 1997, and 5946, dated 31 January 2003, in terms of the context of the school?
- What operating procedures, regulations, rules and programmes have been put in place in order to implement the national policy on RCLs?
- What impact has the implementation of the RCL policy had on schools in terms of the key transformational goal of enhancing democratic practices in our country?

The teacher liaison officer of each school participating completed Section A of the questionnaire. It consisted of nine questions that dealt with the profile of the school and the context in which the RCL operated. The questions also touched on community involvement and the interaction with other community organizations. This aspect is in line with the vision of the Schools Act (1996) that wishes to promote partnerships between the school and the community. It also concurs with Miles and Huberman (1994:6-7) who claim that the researcher should "...gain a holistic overview of the context in which the said organization operates".

The teacher liaison officers also completed Section B of the questionnaire, and these questions focused on: the relationship between the TLO and other stakeholders with regard to the RCL, the support received by the TLO from other stakeholders, the support received by the RCL from the other stakeholders; training needs of TLOs and RCLs, the level of effectiveness of the RCL with regard to school morale and school governance, success stories or best practices.

Section C of the questionnaire targeted the chairperson of the RCL. These questions focused on the functioning of the RCL, support received from other stakeholders, level of effectiveness of the RCL with regard to school morale and school governance, success stories or best practices.

Section D of the questionnaire targeted the school principal. The questions focused on the level of effectiveness of the RCL as an organization to facilitate and promote cooperation between learners and management, democratic practices and decision-making, a disciplined and purposeful school environment, good communication, realization of the school's vision.

Section E of the questionnaire targeted the chairperson of the school governing body. These questions focused on the contribution made by the learners serving on the school governing body on issues such as attendance, participation in discussions, participation in decision-making, confidentiality, and communication.

Section F of the questionnaire targeted the learners at schools. Schools were requested to ask at least 5% of their learners in grade 8 to grade 12 to respond. The number of responses decided upon was 5% as this would give an average of 50 learners from a school of 1000 learners, a manageable number for the TLO. The questions focused on the visibility of the RCL at school, on how the RCL was dealing with learner issues, on whether the RCL had initiated any positive changes at school, and on communication.

Distribution of the questionnaires

All Teacher Liaison Officers were invited to attend the TLO workshops during October/November 2001. An opportunity was provided to explain and hand these questionnaires

to the TLOs. They were requested to return the questionnaires by post by 10 December 2001. Pre-paid envelopes were provided.

Types of questions used in the questionnaire

The questionnaire made use of both closed and open-ended questions. The closed questions have the following advantages:

- it is easier and quicker for respondents to answer;
- the answers from different respondents are easier to compare;
- the answers are easier to code and analyze statistically;
- the response choices give some direction for respondents;
- respondents are more likely to respond to sensitive topics;
- less articulate or literate respondents are not at a disadvantage;
- replication is easier.

The open-ended questions also had some advantages:

- they permit an unlimited number of possible responses;
- respondents can answer in detail and can qualify their responses;
- unanticipated findings can be discovered;
- they permit adequate answers to complex issues;
- they permit creativity, self-expression, and richness of detail;
- they reveal a respondent's logic, thinking process, and frame of reference (Neuman, 1997: 241).

Phase 2

The second stage of data collection took place during RCL and TLO workshops organized by WCED. The RCL workshops took place during February and March 2003, and the TLO workshops took place in May 2003. The questionnaire that these participants had to complete was exactly the same as Section B in Phase 1. The teacher liaison officers were also given the analysis of the 2001 questionnaire during a discussion section, and were asked to compare the responses to questions about the RCL by teacher liaison officers and chairpersons of the RCLs received during phase 1 of the data collection process.

Table A: The questions in this section dealt with the following matters:

- attendance at meetings by RCL members;
- level of participation in school activities by RCL members;
- visibility of the RCL at school;
- visibility of the RCL in the community;
- the support the RCL receives from learners;
- the support the RCL receives from educators;
- the relationship the RCL has with its TLO;
- the contact the RCL has with other schools;
- the contribution the RCL has made towards school governance;
- the contribution the RCL has made towards improving school morale.

Table B: The questions in this section dealt with how teacher liaison officers rated the support they received from:

- other staff members;
- the School Management Team;
- the Governing Body.

Table C: The questions in this section dealt with the rating received by the RCL from the learners of their school, and covered the following areas:

- how well the RCL members were known by the learners;
- how well the RCL was dealing with learner issues;
- how well the RCL fared in initiating positive changes at school.

In all three sections the teacher liaison officers were asked what conclusions could be drawn from the feedback given by the respondents. The data obtained from the teacher liaison officers was then collated and analysed in terms of the methodological framework discussed in section 5.3.2.

Phase 3

The third stage of data collection took place during interactive sessions with RCL members from schools throughout the province. These sessions took place on 1 July 2003 at the Cape Teaching Institute. Learners were grouped per region and a trained facilitator was used to create opportunities for the learners to respond to the following:

- to identify the needs, challenges, aspirations and opportunities of learners;
- to share practical hints, ideas and solutions to problems in the running of the RCL;
- to engage in a process to identify ways of building a RCL which is fluid, flexible and innovative, capable of promoting the transformation process in our country.

Details of the background, purpose, outcomes, logistics, and action plans can be found in the section 4.13 in chapter 4. The content and process of the facilitation of the conference were arranged during meetings with service providers, over a period of three weeks prior to the conference. The theme “deepening democracy” served as a thread that linked most of the discussions as learners unpacked those issues that influenced the functioning of the RCL.

The learners were divided into their EMDCs and reported to each of the seven allocated venues. These activities focused on establishing the level of competence reached by RCLs. As part of the programme I was allowed to get the learners to complete the prepared questionnaire that made provision for 18 questions on the status of the RCL. The data was then used to address the research questions.

The process also concentrated on aspects of school governance such as policy actors, policy domains, authority, and voice so as to have a clearer vision of the role of the RCL Commissions. The importance of building partnerships formed an important section of the discussions, and strategies evolved as to how the RCL could become a functional, proactive organization. The responses received were collated in terms of the domains for school governance: school policy, school administration, school development, and school finances.

5.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Data obtained in each stage of the study was analyzed immediately. This *modus operandi* is in line with the view of Marshall and Rossman (1989:114) when they contend that data collection and analysis must form a continuous process in the qualitative research design. Both convergent and divergent patterns of policy implementation were noted. Another key principle of interpretative analysis, according to Terre Blanche (1999:139), is to stay close to the data, to interpret it from a position of “empathetic understanding”. Geertz (1973) describes interpretative analysis as “...thorough description of the characteristics, processes, transactions and contexts that constitute the phenomenon being studied” (Terre Blanche, 1999:139).

Two levels of data analysis were undertaken. The first level involved the organization of the raw data into a database. The second level involved analyzing this data in terms of the methodological framework discussed in 5.3.2.

5.6 RELIABILITY

It is imperative that during the process of data collection and data analysis, the researcher is able to identify what is being revealed; and ensure that the findings of the study are acceptable and credible to both the researcher and those who read the research. A reliable instrument will give the same result each time the same thing is measured. According to Miles and Huberman (1994:278), “The underlying issue here is whether the process of the study is consistent, reasonably stable over time and across researchers and methods”. McMillan and Schumacher (1993), as well as Neuman (1997), support this view on reliability. Hammersley (1992) extends the concept of reliability to consistency by also considering the results from the perspective of the same person observing a group at different times.

Stability Reliability

This addresses the question: Does the indicator deliver the same results when applied over different time periods? In this study this aspect was addressed by testing the participants over a time-span of three years.

Representative Reliability

This addresses the question: Does the indicator deliver the same answer when applied to different groups? In this study the progress made by the RCL was investigated by testing all the different stakeholders at the school, thus addressing this aspect.

Equivalence Reliability

This addresses the question: Does the measure yield consistent results across different indicators? In this study this aspect was addressed by using multiple indicators. Different items in the questionnaire measured the same construct being tested.

Enhancing Reliability

When one acknowledges that reliability is crucial for data collection and analysis, the next question that arises is: How can reliability be enhanced? Two possible ways are:

- by explaining in detail how the data was collected and analyzed, another researcher following the same system, would stand a better chance of reaching the same conclusions;
- having the data collection and analysis corroborated by colleagues.

In this research a colleague corroborated the data analysis.

Neuman suggests that the following four principles be followed to increase the reliability of measures: clearly conceptualized constructs, using a precise level of measurement, using multiple indicators, and using pilot tests (Neuman, 1997:140). In this study an attempt has been made to apply these principles and in this manner increase the level of reliability.

5.7 VALIDITY

The aim of research is to produce findings or results that are deemed to be trustworthy or credible by other researchers or readers of the research. The validity is the extent to which findings can be regarded as credible or trustworthy. Hammersley (1990:57) expounds on the term validity by claiming that validity is truth interpreted as “the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers”. The relationship between validity and reliability is that a finding may be reliable but not necessarily valid, whereas validity implies reliability. Maxwell, Silverman, and other researchers identify a number of types of validity.

Descriptive Validity

Descriptive validity refers to the factual accuracy of the researcher’s account of what transpired during the research interaction. This implies that there should be evidence to substantiate the researcher’s account, and ensure that it has not been fabricated. Ways of addressing descriptive validity is the use of questionnaires and responses; audio and videotapes; interview reports; recorded written descriptions of events. In this study descriptive validity has been addressed through the written responses to questionnaires, and written recordings of feedback from group discussion.

Interpretative Validity

Interpretative validity refers to the meaning that the participants attach to the objects, events, and behaviours in the research environment. This type of validity is not physical, but it is spiritual, focusing on the thoughts, feelings, beliefs, perceptions and aspirations of the participants. It is a matter of interpreting and making deductions from that which the participants say and experience. Carr and Kemmis (1986:87) quote Weber on this issue, saying that social science is concerned with “...the interpretative understanding of social action and the most significant feature about social action is its subjective meaning”. In this study interpretative validity has been addressed by the use of video recordings during focused interviews, concentrating on recording articulated perceptions and feelings expressed by the interviewees. Furthermore, the researcher used active listening skills so as not to miss out on body language.

Measurement Validity

Measurement validity is the degree to which a measure does what it is intended to do. This means that the measure should provide a good degree of fit between the conceptual and operational definitions of the construct, and that the instrument should be usable for the particular purposes for which it was designed (Neuman, 1997:141). In this study measurement validity has been addressed by sharing the results obtained from phase 1 with the Teacher Liaison Officers during phase 2, to ascertain whether the above-mentioned fit has been achieved. Results obtained seem to verify this.

Triangulation

Triangulation refers to the application of a number of data-collection methods that serve to corroborate the findings of the research (Denzin: 1978 b). The reasoning behind this validation is that the result obtained from one technique would be reinforced by the results obtained using other methods. Silverman (2001:235) does express reservations about these methods as it changes the context of the research setting and character of the social interaction. During the course of this study, use was made of multiple methods.

Respondent validity

Respondent validity refers to the taking back of the research findings to the respondents for their own verification and perceptions about the findings. This seems possible when the number of respondents is reasonably small. I was able to obtain a measure of respondent validity during phase 2 of the data collection. The Teacher Liaison Officers were given a summary of responses to some of the questions asked of them during phase 1 (Analysis of 2001 evaluation).

5.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In pursuance of any qualitative study on human participants, it is important that consideration is given to respecting the rights of participants under international law. According to Nachmias and Nachmias (as quoted by Cohen and Manion, 1994: 366), the obligation to protect the anonymity of research participants and to keep the research data confidential is all-inclusive: "It should be fulfilled at all costs unless arrangements to the contrary are made with the participants in

advance”. In this study participants were always made aware of the purpose of the research and the possible outcomes being sought. Participation was voluntary.

5.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The following factors might have influenced the reliability and validity of the questionnaire during the data collection phase:

- although anonymity was required in the questionnaire, the possibility exists that the respondents may not have been totally frank in their responses since these may be considered as reflecting on their competence;
- some of the responses could be considered as sensitive and may have elicited false or misleading responses and subsequently influenced the reliability of the results;
- the formulation of questions was in English which is not the mother tongue of some of the respondents, and this may have led to misinterpretation of questions and elicited incorrect responses;
- the respondents in phase 2 and 3 were those educators and learners who attended workshops, and these are usually people who are committed to the process and to whom the success of the RCL is of a high priority. The results may therefore not be a true reflection of all the schools in the Western Cape.

5.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the research methodology and the data collection and data analysis strategies used in the study to obtain the findings. A comprehensive description of the questionnaires as research instrument was given. The questionnaire was used in phase 1 by all the identified groups; Teacher Liaison Officers, RCL members, school principals, chairpersons of governing bodies, and learners. In phase 2 only sections B and C of the questionnaire were used. The respondents were therefore only the Teacher Liaison Officers and the RCL members. During phase 3 a shortened version of section C of the questionnaire was used for the RCL members. In the data analysis stage the responses were collated in terms of the framework

discussed in section 5.3.2. The questions falling into each category have been indicated in the findings in chapter 6.

The chapter also addressed the issues of reliability, validity, and ethics, indicating how I responded to each of them in this research. It also described the limitations of the research. In the following chapter the data obtained will be analysed.

CHAPTER 6

THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the findings that were extrapolated from the analysis of the data collected during Phase 1, 2 and 3. In 6.2 a description will be given about the data collection process and the participants so as to gain an idea of the context in which the schools operate. The findings are presented in terms of the framework discussed in chapter 5. Each aspect identified as key indicators is discussed under each of the four frames: structure, symbolic frame, human resource frame, and the political negotiations frame. Each question pertaining to a particular indicator is given with the responses, followed by a summary of the findings.

6.2 CONTEXTUALIZING THE FINDINGS

Data collection

Phase 1 of the data collection took place during late 2001. All TLOs were invited to attend workshops during October and November 2001. At the end of each of the workshops time was allowed for the data collection questionnaire to be handed out and explained. The TLOs were requested to complete their section at school and to facilitate the completion of the other sections before mailing the completed questionnaires back to me. The return date was 10 December 2001. The data obtained from the questionnaire was collated and classified during 2002.

Phase 2 of the data collection from RCLs took place in February and March 2003 during the RCL training workshops. Time was allowed for each participating RCL to complete Section C of the data collection questionnaire. The RCL members of a school completed the questionnaire as a group. A total of 127 RCLs participated. Phase 2 of the data collection from the TLOs took place in May 2003 and a total of 130 Teacher Liaison Officers participated. They were attending interactive workshops held in each of the EMDCs. The data was collated and classified during 2003.

Phase 3 of the data collection from RCLs took place in July 2003 during the RCL conference at the Cape Teaching Institute. A total of 297 responses were received from RCLs represented by one or more learners. The questionnaire was adapted from Section C of the original questionnaire to probe some areas in more detail. The data was collated and classified in 2003.

Participating schools in Phase 1

Questions 1-9 of Section A of the questionnaire posed questions on the profile of the participating schools. Questions focused on aspects that could help the researcher develop an understanding of the conditions in which the RCL was operating. It also sketched the different landscapes in which RCLs were operating. The questions on community organizations served to make the reader aware that the school should not be seen in isolation, but that it forms an integral part of the community. The School Governing Body on which the RCL serves, in fact represents the whole school community, and the RCL should find ways to improve the cooperation between the learners and community structures to the mutual benefit of both.

Questions 1-4 in Section A of the questionnaire were as follows:

1. Under which EMDC does the school reside?
2. Which grades do you have at the school?
3. What is the learner enrolment at the school?
4. How long has the school been in existence?

The responses to Q. 1-4:

These responses were classified under each of the three rural areas, and the metropole area.

EMDC SOUTHERN CAPE: Five secondary schools (Grades 8-12), two combined schools (Grades 1-12), and five primary schools (Grades 8, and 8-9) responded. Some of these schools are in small rural communities, while others are fairly large schools in towns.

EMDC BREEDE RIVER-OVERBERG: Two secondary schools (Grade 8-12), two combined schools (Grade 1-12), and one primary school (Grade 8) responded. All the schools are fairly large schools in rural towns.

EMDC WEST COAST-WINELANDS: Three secondary schools (Grades 8-12), three combined schools (Grades 1-12), and six primary schools (Grades 8-9) responded. Nine of these schools are fairly large (600+), with three schools having fewer than 300 learners.

METROPOLES: Of the 23 schools that responded, one was from a combined school (Grades 1-12), and the rest were all large secondary schools (Grades 8-12).

The 52 schools that responded represent 11% of the schools with RCLs in the province.

Q. 5: Are there any community organizations that work closely with the school?

Responses indicate that there are quite a number of community organizations as well as state departments that are actively involved with the school activities. Examples mentioned are:

Club Coffee Bar, Youth League, Police Forum, Cancer Association Department of Correctional Services, S.A. Police Services, Department of Health and Social Services, AIDS Organization, Youth for Christ, FAMSA, Health Forum, Rotary Club, Lions Club, Spades, Career Research Institute, Cafda, New World Foundation, S.A. Navy, Neighbourhood Watch, SAILI, SHAWCO, Youth for Understanding in South Africa, Afrikaanse Taal en Kultuur Vereniging, Advice Office, Woman's League, and Concerned Mothers Organization. Not all these organizations are active in the schools, but many schools mentioned at least three organizations. Interestingly, the rural areas indicated far more involvement with community organizations than the schools in the metropole. In fact, nine of the urban secondary schools recorded no involvement with community organizations.

Q. 6: In which way do the above organizations support the school?

The responses to this question were as follows:

- through sponsorship;
- providing assistance with problem learners, such as pastoral help from churches, care from social workers;
- university assistance programmes in academic and sport areas;
- motivational talks from community leaders;
- student exchange programmes providing opportunities for learners.

Q. 7: In which way does the school support the above organizations?

The responses to this question were as follows:

- through fundraising efforts to support old age homes, cancer patients, etc;
- collecting clothes, non-perishable goods and distributing these among the organizations;
- advertising community activities in the school newspaper;
- providing senior learners to assist with extra classes for learners;
- making classrooms available for the use of church organizations, etc.

The responses received to questions 6 and 7 indicate the existence of a reciprocal relationship between many of the schools and the community organizations. The schools have indicated their involvement with the growth and development of the community, mentioning participation in the Junior Town Council, church organizations, school newspapers to keep the community informed; safety and security campaigns; crime awareness campaigns.

Q. 8: Share any other information to illustrate the school's role in the growth of the community.

The following responses were received:

- community leaders are allowed to speak to learners on pertinent community issues;
- sharing sport and other school facilities with other schools that do not have facilities;
- participating in projects such as the Masakhane Project, Tourism Project, and Abet;
- the school is not regarded as the centre of our community and is often totally disregarded when taking community decisions;
- there is good co-operation between the school and community structures with regard to safety and security;
- religious organizations contribute towards pre-primary schools, and children's homes.

The above responses indicate the large number of projects in which schools can get involved through the RCL. The involvement in civic education programmes could be particularly relevant for the RCL to enhance democratic practices in our country.

Q. 9: What are the difficulties facing the school?

The following responses were received:

- lack of parent involvement;
- non-payment of school fees;
- ill-disciplined learners;
- not enough time to deal with social problems;
- lack of, or poor facilities;
- vandalism, burglaries, gangsterism, alcohol and substance abuse;
- poverty, child abuse, unemployment, single parent households;
- extremely poor socio-economic conditions;
- we now have to abolish an excellent prefect system;
- increasing expenses to run the school are not being paid by the Department;
- lack of resource material;
- illiteracy amongst the parents;
- arrogant attitudes of principals and school management teams.

The above responses indicate the differing contexts within which the TLOs and RCLs have to operate, and cognisance will have to be taken of this fact. Furthermore, if the RCL is to play a meaningful role in the transformation process of South Africa the support needed to make a difference will be a determining factor in its success or not.

Profile of the participants

The Teacher Liaison Officers of 52 schools responded to the questionnaire. They accepted the responsibility to complete their own section of the questionnaire as well as ensuring that the other respondents did so. The Teacher Liaison Officers at each of the 52 schools thus facilitated the process of data collection during Phase 1. Responses were received from: school principals (50), the chairpersons of the school governing body (46), and the learners from the schools (600). The responses from principals and SGB chairpersons represent 10% of the total field. The responses from learners had to be curtailed because of practical reasons.

Responses received to questions 10-12 served to provide some context to the situation in which the TLO operated, and provided information on the experience of the Teacher Liaison Officers with the RCL, the training sessions they had attended, and whether recommendations made in previous TLO training interventions had been implemented.

Responses from TLO: Data from phase 1 & 2

Q. 10: How long have you served as a TLO?

Number of years of experience as TLO	0	1	2	3	4
Phase 1	10 19%	13 25%	11 21%	7 14%	11 21%
Phase 2	15 12%	39 30%	16 13%	24 19%	36 28%

The data indicates that a large percentage (54% in 2003) have experience of one year or less. This is an indication that there are many new TLOs in the system and that training is becoming crucial.

Responses from TLO: Data from phase 1 & 2

Q. 11: How often do you meet with your RCL?

Description of frequency of meetings between the TLO and RCL	Once a week	Once a fortnight	Once a month	Once a quarter
Phase 1: Response from TLO	14 28%	7 14%	25 50%	4 8%
Phase 2: Response from TLO	34 28%	31 26%	40 33%	16 13%

The number of times that the teacher liaison officers meet with their RCLs seems to be increasing, with 26% now meeting every fortnight compared to 14% during phase 1.

Responses from TLO: Data from phase 1 & 2

Q. 12: Did you attend the TLO training workshop?

Responses	Yes	No
Phase 1	22 44%	28 56%
Phase 2	47 38%	76 62%

A comparison of the tables of results indicates the following trend:

The new teacher liaison officers have increased by 12%, while the number of teacher liaison officers who have attended a teacher liaison workshop has decreased from 44% to 38%. These statistics indicate that there is a specific need for the training of teacher liaison officers. In fact, it is disturbing to find that so many TLOs have not received training.

The RCLs of 52 schools participated in Phase 1 of the data collection process and took place in November 2001. The Teacher Liaison Officers of each of these schools facilitated the process, and mailed the completed questionnaires to me. Phase 2 of the data collection process took place during RCL training workshops held in February and March 2003. These workshops provided a second opportunity to obtain responses from the RCL of each participating school. The RCL of each school present at the workshop was asked to complete Section C of the questionnaire used in Phase 1. I facilitated this process personally and a total of 127 responses were received from RCLs during this phase. Thus a total of 179 responses from RCLs were collected during the two data collection phases. This represents almost 40% of all the RCLs at schools.

During Phase 3 of the data collection process members of RCLs attending the RCL Conference in July 2003 completed a questionnaire that provided further data on the status of RCLs. Service providers facilitated the data collection process and I then collected the completed questionnaires. The number of responses per question varied between 253 and 399. Some of the questions in this questionnaire (Appendix C) were the same as in the first questionnaire, but it

included a few additional questions on the participation of the RCL in school governing body meetings. This represents an average of more than 60 % of the RCLs.

The RCL conference also provided an opportunity to establish a clearer picture of how the RCLs themselves see the organization in terms of:

- the most important function of the RCL;
- the most pleasant task of the RCL;
- the most difficult task that the RCL members have to perform.

The responses provide an interesting backdrop when analysing the responses given by the RCL to the questions in the questionnaire. It also afforded me the opportunity to compare the responses from urban and rural schools.

Responses from RCL: Data from phase 3

Q. 14: What do you regard as the most important function of the RCL?

Responses	Urban	Rural	Total
To represent the learners & articulate their views	37	27	64
To be role models for learners	18	16	34
To promote a culture of learning and teaching	19	9	25
Link between learners and educators	9	10	19
To keep learners informed; maintain communication channels	12	7	19
To seek solutions for learner problems	12	6	18
Stand up for the rights of learners	4	14	18
To build good relationships between the learners and the school community	6	10	16
Participate in decision-making in meetings	11	4	15
To maintain discipline	4	10	14
To make a positive difference	7	5	12
To implement school rules and policies	5	2	7
To include learner activities in the budget	0	4	4

When comparing the responses from learners, there is no major difference between the responses from urban and rural areas, except that the rural response was fairly high for standing up for the rights of learners, whereas the urban response was fairly high for seeking solutions for learner problems. Of interest is the higher response for promoting a culture of learning and teaching with the urban group than the rural group. The large number of responses for seeing the RCL as representing the learners and voicing their concerns on matters affecting them indicates that these aspects of democracy have been well understood by the respondents.

Responses from RCL: Data from phase 3

Q. 15: What do you regard as the most pleasant task of the RCL?

Responses	Urban	Rural	Total
To organise welfare & social activities, functions, projects	19	29	48
To support the learners; solve problems	26	15	41
To interact with learners & share opportunities	18	22	40
To make a difference in the lives of learners	24	15	39
To represent learners	13	14	27
Be the voice of the learners	14	7	21
To promote good relationships	12	7	19
To learn, attend workshops, camps	6	11	17
To implement the school rules	5	5	10
None (hard work & struggle)	1	2	3

Once again we find no major difference between the rural and urban responses. The fact that learners enjoy the planning and organising of functions and projects is encouraging. It is fine if the RCL structure has been democratically elected and functions in terms of an approved constitution, but if it is not active at school, its credibility can be questioned. It is by organizing activities that the RCL can involve other learners, build up school spirit, and in the process learn skills that will stand them in good stead for the rest of their lives.

Responses from RCL: Data from phase 3

Q. 16: What do you regard as the most difficult task that the RCL members have to perform?

Responses	Urban	Rural	Total
Implementing discipline	27	49	76
Setting example – expect perfection	9	18	27
Informing learners about serious issues e.g. AIDS, finances	20	4	24
Not receiving support from educators	13	8	21
Promoting co-operation; reaching consensus and completing projects	11	8	19
To stand up for the rights of learners, sometimes opposing teachers	11	7	18
Reprimanding learners in a nice way	8	8	16
Attending meetings, giving feedback	9	7	16
To keep everyone happy & satisfied	4	10	14
Organising big functions	5	5	10
To make a difference at school	3	4	7
To be available at all times to deal with learner problems	1	2	3
When you are expected to respond without being prepared	0	2	2

The responses of both groups indicate that implementing discipline is the most difficult aspect of the work of the RCL. However, the next one differs. The next highest response from the learners from the rural areas is “setting good examples to others”, whereas the urban response was “informing the learners about serious issues such as HIV Aids”. Besides the afore-mentioned responses, there was no significant difference between urban and rural responses. It should be noted that the task of implementing discipline is not a primary task of the RCL. It is a professional management task, and the RCL can be asked to assist them through sub-committees, for example.

6.3.INDICATORS OF THE PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RCL PRAXIS

The success of the RCL in advancing the democratic transformation of the school by establishing a RCL praxis is reflected by a number of factors, and will be classified in terms of the framework proposed by Bolman and Deal (1997:16), as discussed in Chapter 5. The four frames are: structure, human resource support, political negotiations, and ethos. The key indicators for each of these frames were identified during prior research with Teacher Liaison Officers and are listed in chapter 5. The questions used in each of the data collection phases have been linked to each of the indicators and appear in the table under each of the four frames.

STRUCTURAL FRAME

In the structural frame I have used those key indicators that all relate to the attainment of the objectives of the RCL. They are listed below:

- Functioning in terms of a constitution
- Functioning with a code of conduct for RCL members
- Having a copy and operating in terms of the SGB constitution
- Having a copy of the school's code of conduct for learners
- Having a filing system for the above documents for easy access
- Having in place a RCL policy clarifying election and cooption procedures
- Making use of sub-committees to share work
- Attendance and participation in meetings
- Representivity (representiveness)
- Communication channels
- Strategic teams (Commissions)

Some of these indicators could have been placed under the policy negotiation frame as there is a measure of overlap, but I have kept them under this frame.

Structure	Questions: Phase 1	Questions: Phase 2	Questions: Phase 3
• RCL Constitution	• Q. 35	• Q. 35	• Q.1
• RCL Code of conduct	• Q. 36	• Q. 36	• Q. 2
• SGB Constitution	• Q. 38	• Q. 38	• Q. 4
• Code of conduct for learners	• Q. 40	• Q. 40	• Q. 6
• Filing system for documents	• Q. 41	• Q. 41	• Q. 7
• Timing of RCL elections	• Q. 15	• Q. 15	•
• No. of elected, co-opted members	• Q. 13	• Q. 13	•
• Sub-committees	• Q. 14	• Q. 14	•
• Structured meetings	• Q. 11; 16; 32;	• Q. 11; 16; 32;	• Q. 8-11
• Meetings (cont.)	33; 34; 42; 66.	33; 34; 42	•
• Representivity	•	•	• Q. 17
• Communication channels	• Q. 55	• Q. 55	•
• Strategic teams (Commissions)			• 4.13

Functioning in terms of a constitution

Responses from RCL: Data obtained from Phases 1, 2 & 3

Q. 35: Does your RCL have a constitution?

CHOICES	YES	NO
Phase 1 & 2	64.8%	35.2%
Phase 3	78.7%	21.3%

This aspect is a concern since all RCLs should have a constitution in terms of which they should operate (*Provincial Gazette Extraordinary* 2003). There is also a sample of a constitution in the “*Guidelines for Representative Councils for Learners*” from the National Department of Education that all schools received in 1999.

Functioning with a code of conduct for the RCL members

Responses from RCL: Data collected from phase 1-3

Q. 36: Does your RCL have a code of conduct for its own members?

CHOICES	YES	NO
Phase 1 & 2	64.8%	35.2%
Phase 3	75.3%	24.7%

The above data indicates that there is an increase in the number of RCLs that have a code of conduct for its own members, increasing from 64.8% in 2001 to 75.3% in 2003.

Having a copy of, and operating in terms of the SGB constitution

Responses from RCL: Data from phase 1-3

Q. 35: Does your RCL have a copy of the SGB constitution?

CHOICES	YES	NO
Phase 1 & 2	64.8%	35.2%
Phase 3	64.3%	35.7%

The data obtained shows virtually no change from 2001 to 2003. It needs attention.

Having a copy of the school's vision and mission statements

Responses from RCL: Data collected during Phases 1, 2 & 3

Q. 39: Does your RCL have a copy of the school's vision and mission statements?

CHOICES	YES	NO
Phase 1 & 2	65,0%	35,0%
Phase 3	57,4%	42,6%

Surprisingly a lower percentage was recorded for this indicator in 2003. The matter needs further investigation.

Having a copy of the school's code of conduct for learners

Responses from RCL: Data from phases 1-3

Q. 40: Does your RCL have the code of conduct for the learners?

CHOICES	YES	NO
Phase 1 & 2	64.8 %	35.2%
Phase 3	75.3 %	24.7%

Most RCLs are involved in assisting the school management in maintaining discipline at school. This has to be done in terms of an approved code of conduct. It is therefore essential that each RCL have a copy of the school's code of conduct.

Filing system for easy access to documents

Responses from RCL: Data from phases 1-3

Q. 41: Does your RCL have the above documents filed for easy access?

CHOICES	YES	NO
Phase 1 & 2	56.4%	43.6%
Phase 3	54.3%	45.7%

For a RCL to function effectively it would need easy access to the documents mentioned in 6.3.1.1-4. Some schools have a section of a room allocated where RCL resources are kept. Other schools are fortunate to have a room allocated for a RCL office.

Format of the RCL (Timing of elections; elected and co-opted members)

It is essential that all schools develop a RCL policy in which all aspects of the RCL structure have been clarified with all the stakeholders. This should include all the details of the election procedure as well as details of co-option.

Timing of elections

Responses from TLO: Data from phase 1 & 2

Q. 15: When do your RCL elections take place?

MONTH	January	February	October	November
NUMBER	22	65	75	17
PERCENTAGE	12%	36%	42%	10%

The data on the timing of elections indicates that most schools are continuing according to past practice. There are no significant changes to having elections late in the year for the next year, or early in the year for that particular year. Schools having elections late in the year in preparation for the next are at 52%, while those doing it early in the year are at 48%.

Election and cooption procedures

Responses from TLO: Data from phases 1-2

Q. 13: How many members of your RCL are elected or co-opted in each grade?

Grade	Elected	Co-opted
8	3	2 – 6
9	3	2 – 6
10	3	2 – 6
11	3	2 – 6
12	3	2 – 9

The data indicates that

- The format of the RCL seems to have stabilised as per regulation of three representatives per grade. There were a few exceptions where some schools have between 2 and 10 representatives.
- Many schools are now making use of the co-option route to increase the number of learners on the RCL in order to cope with the demands on their assistance. The growing

number of sub-committees with which learners are involved indicates the need for co-option.

However, care should be taken that learners are not co-opted in such a manner that the format of the RCL becomes distorted.

Making use of sub-committees to share work

Responses by TLO: Data from phases 1-2

Q. 14: What sub-committees of the RCL function at your school?

The following is a list of all the sub-committees that have been identified by the teacher liaison officers during Phase 1 and Phase 2. Not all the schools have all of these committees, but the list indicates examples of committees that are operational at schools. The list also reflects the range of activities in which learners can become involved

Executive, Administration	Campus Duty, Grievances
Academic, Education, Curriculum	Media / Publications; Magazine
Sport	Liaison, Peace, Mediation
Uniform	Drama, Debating
Functions, Matric Farewell	Fundraising, Marketing
Social, Entertainment	Projects, Environmental Issues
Safety, Security	School Beautification
Health, Welfare	Child-Child Development
Arts and Culture	Peer Group Counsellors
Choir, Music	Class Representatives
Community & Voluntary Work	Library
Discipline, Prefect Council	Religion, VCSV

Attendance and participation in meetings

This is a vital aspect of school governance and the following questions and responses serve to illustrate it. Data was obtained from responses by the RCLs (Q. 32-34), and TLOs (Q. 11).

Responses from TLO: Data from Phase 1 and 2

Q. 11 How often do you meet with your RCL?

CHOICES	Once a week	Once a fortnight	Once a month	Once a quarter
	52	38	69	20
	29%	21%	39%	11%

Responses from the RCL: Data from phase 1 & 2

Q. 32: How regularly does the RCL meet?

CHOICES	Once a week	Once a fortnight	Once a month	Once a quarter
	117	24	26	12
	65%	13%	14%	8%

Responses from the RCL: Data from phase 1 and 2

Q. 33: How often does your RCL meet with your TLO?

CHOICES	Once a week	Once a fortnight	Once a month	Once a quarter
	64	37	46	14
	40%	23%	28%	9%

Responses from the RCL: Data from phase 1 and 2

Q. 34: When does your RCL usually meet?

CHOICES	During interval	Before school	After school	Over weekends
	86	9	90	0
	45%	5%	50%	0%

I found that:

- 78% of the RCLs meet at least every two weeks, and of these 83% meet weekly.
- 50% of the RCLs meet after school while 45% meet during intervals.

- There is a reasonable correlation between the responses of the RCL and TLO with regard to the regularity of their meetings. 50% of the RCLs recorded that they meet at least every two weeks, while the TLOs recorded 63% for this factor.

Meeting attendance of RCL members

Rating by TLO: Data obtained from Phase 1 and 2

Q. 16: How would you rate the attendance of RCL members at meetings?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	5	47	79	47
PERCENTAGE	3%	26%	45%	26%

Rating by RCL: Data obtained in response to Q. 42 by the RCLs during Phase 1 and 2

Q. 42: How would you rate the attendance of RCL members at meetings?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	8	32	89	50
PERCENTAGE	4%	18%	50%	28%

Rating by the School Governing Body: Data obtained during Phase 1

Q. 66: How would you rate the RCL with regard to attendance of SGB meetings?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	1	6	20	19
PERCENTAGE	1%	13%	44%	42%

From the above tables it appears as if meeting attendance is generally regarded as good to excellent. The RCLs (78%), TLOs (71%) and chairpersons of school governing bodies (86%) responded by evaluating it at good to excellent. This is encouraging since the RCL is a legal body and may only make decisions that are legal. It is therefore imperative that these decisions are made under normal meeting procedures, and that these decisions are recorded. The

attendance of meetings by RCL members is therefore an important indicator of the successful implementation of the RCL policy.

School Governing Body Meetings

Responses from RCL: Data from phase 3

QUESTION	YES	NO
Q. 8: Does your RCL receive notice of school governing body meetings in good time?	76.3%	23.7%
Q. 9: Does the above notice include an agenda of the meeting?	71.5%	28.5%
Q. 10: Does your RCL meet to prepare for the above meetings?	64.3%	35.7%
Q. 11: Does the RCL receive feedback on decisions taken at school governing body meetings?	67.0%	23.0%

The above responses indicate that these are areas that require attention since all school governing body meetings should take place in terms of normal meeting procedures. However, many positive responses were also received with regard to learner involvement in the school governing body meetings. The following list reflects success stories submitted by SGB chairpersons:

- learners assist with administration, such as assistant Secretary of SGB;
- learners assist with attendance registers;
- learners have excellent accounting skills to help with finances;
- learners provide excellent report-backs to the SGB on RCL activities;
- learners are shy at the start, but after encouragement they provide useful insights from the learners' perspective;
- learners have made positive contributions to decisions affecting the learners;
- learners assist in formulating priority lists for the physical needs of the school.

Representivity

No question was asked in the questionnaires with regard to representivity. However, the records of the elected RCL members, and the number of participants at RCL workshops since 1997 reflect a greater number of females. Also, leaders who came to the fore in strategic teams reflected all racial groups. This trend has continued when EMDC and Provincial RCL Commissions were formed.

Communication Channels

The following data was collected in respect of this indicator from responses to Q. 55

If there is one thing that would make the RCL function better or smoother, what would it be?

Some of these responses were:

- better communication with the principal;
- better communication between the RCL and the school management;
- better teamwork;
- finding ways to obtain more information, ideas and opinions from the learners.

The above responses indicate the importance attached by the RCL to sound communication channels being in place.

Strategic Teams or Commissions

The original idea of having RCL strategic teams of 5-7 persons was mooted by Edu-Assist in their original proposal. This was agreed to and implemented during Project 1. The purpose of the strategic team was to deepen the capacity building processes and enhance the skills of the RCLs in their area. The success of strategic teams varied from area to area and was definitely dependent on the support that was received from the circuit manager in the particular area. The strategic team concept has now developed into the recently established EMDC Commissions and the Provincial RCL Commission (See 4.13).

SYMBOLIC FRAME

The symbolic frame stresses the importance attached to ethos, teamwork, shared faith and culture. The indicators used in this thesis are:

- participation by the RCL members in school activities;
- level of visibility of the RCL at school;
- level of visibility of the RCL in the community;
- contributions by the RCL towards building up school morale;
- institution of symbols.

Ethos	Question: Phase 1	Question: Phase 2	Question: Phase 3
• Participation in school activities	• Q. 17; 43; 60	• 17; 43	•
• Visibility at school	• Q. 18; 44	• Q. 18; 44	•
• Visibility in the community	• Q. 19; 31; 45; 56	• Q. 19; 31; 45; 56	•
• Building up school morale	• Q. 25; 51; 53	• Q. 25; 51; 53	• Q. 18
• Establishing symbols	•	•	

Participation by the RCL members in school activities

The participation of RCL members in school activities is an important indicator of the success of the RCL as a representative body for the learners. It indicates whether the RCL is a legitimate body to other stakeholders at school and within the school community.

Data on the level of participation by the RCL members in school activities was obtained from responses by TLOs to Q. 17 during phase 1 and 2; from the RCLs in their responses to Q. 43 in phases 1 and 2; and from the school principals in their response to Q. 60 during phase 1.

Rating by TLO: Data from Phase 1 and 2

Q. 17: How would you rate the level of participation by RCL members in school activities?

RATING:	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	13	62	77	24
PERCENTAGE	7%	35%	44%	14%

Rating by RCL: Data from Phase 1 and 2

Q. 43: How would you rate the level of participation by RCL members in school activities?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	15	45	86	33
PERCENTAGE	8%	25%	48%	19%

From the data, the level of participation by the RCL in school activities is rated by 67% of the respondents of the TLO and RCL as between good and excellent. The opinion of school principals on this matter was also enlisted. They were asked to rate the RCL as an organization that promotes and facilitates the participation of learners in school activities.

Rating by Principals: Data from Phase 1

Q. 60: How would you rate the RCL as an organization to facilitate and promote participation of learners in school activities?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	2	13	28	7
PERCENTAGE	4%	26%	56%	14%

The response that 70% of the principals rated the contribution of the RCL from good to excellent supports the 67% obtained from the RCL and TLOs and indicates that the RCLs are generally effective in this area.

Level of visibility of the RCL at school

This indicator is related to the former one and reflects whether the RCL is a token body or whether it is functioning as expected by SASA.

Rating by TLO: Data from Phase 1 and 2

Q. 18: How would you rate the RCL with regard to its visibility at school?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	21	65	74	19
PERCENTAGE	12%	36%	41%	11%

Rating by RCL: Data from Phase 1 and 2

Q. 44: How would you rate the RCL with regard to its visibility at school?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	14	39	75	51
PERCENTAGE	8%	22%	42%	28%

The ratings given in this category indicate that this is an area that needs attention, and the fact that 12% of the TLOs indicate a poor rating, is significant. It seems to contradict the previous indicator about the level of participation in school activities and this area requires more research.

Level of visibility of the RCL in the community

The RCL is a relatively new concept and, as with all change, needs time to be accepted by the broader community. This does not take place automatically and specific interventions would be necessary to facilitate this process. It is therefore not surprising that the data below indicates that visibility in the community is a problem area.

Rating by TLO: Data from Phases 1 and 2

Q. 19: How would you rate the RCL with regard to its visibility in the community?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	62	85	25	6
PERCENTAGE	35%	48%	14%	3%

Rating by RCL: Data from Phase 1 and 2

Q. 45: How would you rate the RCL with regard to its visibility in the community?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	48	63	52	16
PERCENTAGE	27%	35%	29%	9%

Level of contributions by the RCL towards building school morale

Rating by the TLO: Data from Phase 1 and 2

Q. 25: How would you rate the RCL with regard to the contributions it has made towards building up school morale?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	20	82	62	10
PERCENTAGE	11%	47%	36%	6%

Rating by the RCL: Data from Phase 1 and 2

Q. 51: How would you rate the RCL with regard to the contributions it has made towards building up school morale?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	14	64	76	25
PERCENTAGE	8%	35%	43%	14%

Positive or success stories to support the building of school morale

Data to support the building of school morale was received from responses to Q. 31 by TLOs and Q. 53 and Q. 56 by RCLs. In prior work that I have done with the RCL the task of building up the school morale has frequently come up within the top three objectives of the RCL, and it is not surprising that many responses were received to Q. 53 (pleasant tasks) that fall into this category. The following are positive or success stories about the work of the RCLs to illustrate

the type of activities that they have been involved in to build up school spirit, school morale and a school culture. I have classified these under school development and school administration.

School Development

Learner Support Programmes are seen as an important area to be involved, and the data give examples of such projects where the RCLs are active. They are:

- bursary and other assistance for indigent learners;
- school feeding scheme and soup kitchens;
- school uniform project / clothes bank;
- peer counselling – prevented suicide;
- awareness programme – alerting learners to the dangers of drugs, and alcohol.

Activities to build up school morale display much creativity and examples are given below:

- talent shows – Grammy/Oscar Awards, Pop Idols competition;
- public speaking contest;
- fun run;
- flag per grade competition, hoisting of flags;
- school anniversary function organized;
- games to give learners an alternative to bad behaviour;
- radio station at school;
- sing-along at assemblies;
- tea party for educators and RCL members to improve relationships;
- Valentine’s Day programme.

School Environment Programmes are high up on the agenda of RCLs and examples of these activities are given below:

- school beautification project;
- placing of benches in the playground;
- placing of sign boards on the school campus;
- cleaning and painting of toilets, providing new towels for cloakrooms;

- redecorating the school's foyer and entrance area;
- renovating the school library;
- supplying all classrooms with brooms;
- environment-friendly campaign, planting of trees;
- anti-smoking campaign;
- school clean-up campaign, anti-litter campaign;
- World Environment Day poster competition;
- Masakhane Project: beautifying the school buildings.

Community outreach programmes helped to improve the visibility of the RCL and provided a service to the needy. Examples of these activities are given below:

- supporting local old age homes, giving donations, Easter eggs, and company;
- arranging a Charity Day, collecting money, clothes and donations for the poor;
- organizing a community project to donate blood;
- providing Easter eggs to the disabled children;
- visiting our local Special School to motivate the learners;
- rehabilitating a gangster who had assaulted one of the learners;
- organizing an anti-gangsterism and anti-drug abuse campaign;
- establishing a partnership with the SAPS to address drug abuse;
- arranging a concert to highlight the plight of people suffering with Aids;
- collecting funds for the Red Cross Hospital;
- participating in a local Fruit Festival;
- participating in the Save Water Project;
- organizing a human rights awareness campaign;
- arranging a Parent-Child Day to improve relationships.

School administration

RCLs improved the communication channels between learners and the school management in a number of ways. The following list gives some examples:

- regular meetings;

- class representatives in every class;
- slots in school assemblies;
- suggestion boxes for ideas from learners;
- establishment of a school newspaper;
- distributing a RCL questionnaire to identify the needs of the learners;
- the RCL participated in a process with our School governing body to appoint a school psychologist to help learners who had problems;
- the RCL started an incentive system where learners who excelled in academic work, sport or cultural activities received recognition and small gifts for their efforts;
- the RCL celebrated World Teachers' Day, handing out small gifts to educators.

HUMAN RESOURCE FRAME

This frame focuses on the relationship between the RCL and the people with whom it has to work in order to attain its objectives. It therefore looks at the relationship between the members of the RCL and the Teacher Liaison Officer, the principal and management team, the school governing body, and the learners at the school. It also concentrates on the level of support that the RCL and the TLO receive from the other stakeholders. The key indicators used for this frame in this thesis are:

- relationship between the RCL and TLO;
- relationship between the RCL and the RCLs of other schools;
- level of support received by the RCL from learners;
- level of support received by the RCL from educators;
- level of support received by the TLO from other staff members;
- level of support received by the TLO from the school management team;
- level of support received by the TLO from the school governing body;
- capacity building.

Human Resource Support (relationships)	Question: Phase 1	Question: Phase 2	Question: Phase 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Liaison Officer(s) • Other RCLs • Support RCL receives from learners • Support RCL receives from educators • Support TLO receives from educators • Support TLO receives from SMT • Support TLO receives from SGB • Capacity Building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q. 22; 48 • Q. 23; 49 • Q. 20; 46; • Q. 21; 47; • Q. 26 • Q. 27 • Q. 28 • Q. 29; 30 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q. 22; 48 • Q. 23; 49 • Q. 20; 46 • Q. 21; 47 • Q. 26 • Q.27 • Q. 28 • Q. 29; 30 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • • • • Q. 12; 13

Relationship between the RCL and the TLO

Rating by TLO: Data from Phase 1 and 2

Q. 22: How would you rate your relationship with the RCL?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	9	32	93	43
PERCENTAGE	5%	18%	53%	24%

Rating by RCL: Data from phase 1 and 2

Q. 48: How would you rate your relationship with the TLO?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	5	19	72	83
PERCENTAGE	3%	11%	41%	45%

A good relationship between the RCL and TLO is crucial if the RCL is to work effectively. The data indicates that at most schools this is the case. 96% of the RCLs rated this indicator between good and excellent compared to 77% of the TLOs. This indicates that to many RCL members the

TLO have heroic status. It also indicates that the TLO should not underestimate the value of the work that they do.

Relationship of the RCL with RCLs of other schools

Rating by TLO: Data from Phase 1 and 2

Q. 23: How would you rate the contact of your RCL with the RCLs of other schools?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	52	81	38	5
PERCENTAGE	29%	46%	22%	3%

Rating by RCL: Data from Phase 1 and 2

Q. 49: How would you rate the contact of your RCL with the RCLs of other schools?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	42	66	45	27
PERCENTAGE	23%	37%	25%	15%

The rating by the RCLs indicates that 60% feel it is poor or that there is room for improvement. The rating from the TLOs of 23% poor and 37% for room for improvement supports this view. The data indicates that schools are still operating very much on their own and that not much contact is taking place between the RCLs from different schools. The sharing of ideas and information is to be encouraged to the benefit of the learners. Engaging with other RCLs is a means of widening the horizons of learners and breaking down the artificial barriers created by apartheid.

Level of support that the RCL receives from learners

Rating by TLO: Data from Phase 1 and 2

Q. 20: How would you rate the level of support your RCL receives from the learners?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	33	74	65	5
PERCENTAGE	18%	42%	37%	3%

Rating by RCL: Data from Phase 1 and 2

Q. 46: How would you rate the level of support your RCL receives from the learners?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	21	63	60	35
PERCENTAGE	12%	35%	34%	19%

The low ratings for this indicator suggest that the work done by the RCL is not always appreciated by the learners or is not communicated well. 47% of the RCLs rated this indicator as poor to room for improvement in comparison to 60% of the TLOs. In discussions with Teacher Liaison Officers on the above data, the following comments were received:

- The trust level of learners for the RCL at some schools is still low due to the status and symbols given to prefects.
- At some schools RCLs have to operate without proper communication channels or accountability systems in place.

Both these responses indicate that at some schools the RCL is not given the necessary recognition and status as the only legal body to represent the learners.

Level of support received by RCL from educators

Rating by TLO: Data from Phase 1 and 2

Q. 21: How would you rate the level of support that the RCL receives from educators?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	39	57	65	9
PERCENTAGE	23%	34%	38%	5%

Rating by RCL: Data from Phase 1 and 2

Q. 47: How would you rate the level of support that the RCL receives from educators?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	16	29	73	61
PERCENTAGE	9%	16%	41%	34%

There is a big difference between the responses by the RCL and the TLO. 75% of the RCLs rated this indicator at generally good to excellent compared to only 43% of the TLOs. This aspect was tested again in Phase 3 and the response from the RCL members was as follows:

Rating by RCL: Data from Phase 3

Q. 13: Do you feel that you are receiving enough support to be able to carry out your duties?

CHOICES	YES	NO
	48.1%	51.9%

The response to this question indicates that the matter of support needs to be addressed if the RCL is going to develop to its full potential. It appears as if the task of being a TLO is regarded as an “add-on” and not enough time is allocated to do this task properly.

Level of support the TLO receives from other staff members

Rating by TLO: Data from Phase 1 and 2

Q. 26: How would you rate the level of support that you receive for the RCL from other educators?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	47	60	59	10
PERCENTAGE	26%	34%	34%	6%

This rating indicates that TLO feel that they are not receiving enough support from other educators. 60% indicated this factor as poor to room for improvement.

Level of support the TLO receives from the school management team

Rating by TLO: Data from Phase 1 and 2

Q. 27: How would you rate the level of support that you receive for the RCL from your SMT?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	28	53	70	26
PERCENTAGE	16%	30%	40%	14%

The parabolic spread of the results of this rating suggests that there are some schools where the support system is in place and working while this is not the case in other schools.

Level of support the TLO receives from the school governing body

Rating by TLO: Data from Phase 1 and 2

Q 28: How would you rate the level of support that you receive for the RCL from your SGB?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	42	64	51	19
PERCENTAGE	24%	36%	29%	11%

Once again the results seem to indicate that some schools are giving the TLO the necessary support, but 24% are stating that they receive poor support. In discussions with Teacher Liaison Officers on the above data, strong feelings were expressed as listed below:

- Many of the TLOs feel that the work with the RCL has become a burden because they are not receiving the support required to make a success of it.

- No provision is made in the timetable for the work with the RCL and they must find time within all other tasks allocated to them. The RCL is seen as an add-on to their other work.
- It appears as if the whole school community has not accepted the RCL model and it has not been formally discussed and become part of the school policy on leadership development and school governance.
- Teacher Liaison Officers have attended workshops, but on return no provision is made to even allow them to give feedback.
- If the RCL is to become a fully functioning body, school principals must take the initiative in acknowledging, promoting and supporting it.

Capacity Building

In order to function effectively, it is essential that the RCL receive training. Teacher Liaison Officers were asked to respond to what topics they covered and strategies they used to address this aspect.

Training topics for the RCL

Response by TLO: Data from Phase 1 and 2

Q. 29: What training have you provided to meet the needs of the RCL members?

Leadership (61)	Democracy education (5)
Role and function (43)	Grievance procedure (4)
Meeting procedure (25)	Social issues (4)
Conflict management (12)	Decision-making (4)
Planning and organization (12)	Assertiveness (4)
Teambuilding (7)	Peer counselling (3)
Communication (7)	Networking with other RCLs (2)
Code of conduct (7)	Cultural diversity (1)
Self-esteem (5)	Environment awareness (1)

The number of responses has been given in brackets. Although leadership training received the most responses, it often included other aspects that were identified separately. Nineteen TLOs did not respond to this question, twenty-five responded that they did not do training as the school

did not have a budget for this, and three indicated that no training took place because they did not have time. Some responses referred to workshops that had been arranged through the Department and run by service providers.

Training strategies used by the Teacher Liaison Officers

Response by TLO: Data from Phase 1 and 2

Q. 29: What training have you provided to meet the needs of the RCL members?

Workshops organized by staff	Full-day workshops
Workshops run by service providers	Weekend training camps
Workshops for own school only	Discussions with the RCL
Workshops with neighbouring schools	Guest speakers
Afternoon training sessions	Motivational speakers

Training needs of the Teacher Liaison Officers

Responses from TLO: Data received from Phase 1 and 2

Q. 30: What training do you feel TLOs require to meet the needs of the learners?

Teacher Liaison Officers advocated that the following strategies be used to give them the capacity to meet the needs of the learners serving on the RCL:

- regular TLO gatherings to discuss difficulties and successes with the RCL;
- conflict management and conflict resolution workshops;
- regular courses and workshops on a variety of topics;
- how to adapt the RCL system at schools with well-established societies who find it difficult to relinquish their ownership to the auspices of the RCL;
- train the trainers programme to enable the TLOs to train learners on their level, enabling them to have fun while learning about their responsibilities;
- training in establishing and implementing a grievance procedure.

Training needs of RCLs

Rating by RCL members: Data from phase 3

Q. 12: Do you feel that you have enough knowledge/skills to carry out your duties as RCL members?

CHOICES	YES	NO
Responses from the RCL	62.5%	37.5%

This rating by the RCLs is rather high, similar to the responses received in the first questionnaire sent out to schools in 1997. Learners often do not realise the full implications of the responsibilities attached to the RCL.

POLITICAL FRAME

This frame looks at the ongoing process of negotiating and bargaining leading to policies and decisions and the implementation thereof. In this thesis the indicators relate particularly to the four domains of school governance, as defined in chapter 5.

Political Negotiations	Question: Phase 1	Question: Phase 2	Question: Phase 3
• School Governance	• Q. 24; 50; 67; 68; 69; 70; 72; 73; 74; 75	• Q. 24; 50; 67; 68; 69; 70; 72; 73; 74; 75	
• School management	• Q. 57; 58; 59; 61; 62; 63	• Q. 57; 58; 59; 61; 62; 63	
• Grievance Procedure	• Q. 37	• Q. 37	• Q. 3

Contributions by the RCL towards school governance

This will be looked at from the perspective of the RCL and TLO, and then from the perspective of the school governing body and the learners respectively.

Rating by the TLO: Data from Phase 1 and 2

Q. 24: How would you rate the contributions made by the RCL toward school governance?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	29	86	54	5
PERCENTAGE	17%	49%	31%	3%

Rating by the RCL: Data from Phase 1 & 2

Q. 50: How would you rate the RCL in terms of its contribution towards school governance?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	8	68	78	25
PERCENTAGE	4%	38%	44%	14%

The fact that 66% of the TLO rated the contributions made by the RCL towards school governance as between poor and “room for improvement” indicates that the RCL has a long way to go. This is not unexpected as it is a new concept and will take time to be accepted. The fact that 49% of the TLO and 38% of the RCL respondents chose the “room for improvement” category confirms this. In discussions about this aspect with RCL members during the conference the following comments were received:

- The RCL is not seen as equal partners or stakeholders in important matters. Some learners are called in to deal with issues involving learners; thereafter they are dismissed. They feel inadequate and disempowered.
- Policies affecting learners are approved without the input from learners.
- At some schools the RCL does not feature at all on the school’s budget.
- Learners are not treated as full SGB members. Often they do not receive notices of meetings, or an agenda, or a copy of the minutes.

The above responses from the RCL members indicate the disparity found in different schools.

Rating by the SGB: Data from Phase 1

Q. 67: How would you rate the learner members of the SGB with regards to their participation in discussions in SGB meetings?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	2	17	17	10
PERCENTAGE	4%	37%	37%	22%

The following table rates the contribution of the RCL members serving on the school governing body with regard to their participation in decision-making in SGB meetings.

Rating by the SGB: Data from Phase 1

Q. 68: How would you rate the learner members of the SGB with regards to their participation in decision-making?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	2	20	17	7
PERCENTAGE	4%	44%	37%	15%

Rating by the SGB: Data from Phase 1

Q. 69: How would you rate the learner members of the SGB with regards to keeping sensitive matters of meetings confidential?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	2	3	22	19
PERCENTAGE	4%	6%	48%	42%

Rating by the SGB: Data from Phase 1

Q. 70: How would you rate the learner members of the SGB with regards to improving communication channels between learners and SGB?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	0	21	16	9
PERCENTAGE	0%	46%	35%	19%

The data received from the chairpersons of the school governing bodies paint a much rosier picture. When looking at the categories generally good to excellent to specific questions, the responses were as follows:

- Participation in meetings: 59%
- Participation in decision-making: 52%
- Keeping sensitive matters confidential: 90%
- Improving learner-school governing body communication channels: 54%

The members of the RCL serving on the SGB appear to be very capable of carrying out their tasks as expected by SASA. Usually these learners are at senior level and can cope with attending meetings during the evenings. Although nothing has come up in the data, a concern is whether the learners at primary school level where there is a RCL would be as capable.

Rating by learners: Data from Phase 1

Q. 72: Do you know the members on the RCL?

RATING	Poorly	Room for improvement	Fairly well	Very well
NUMBER	156	110	240	94
PERCENTAGE	26%	18%	40%	16%

Rating by learners: Data collected during Phase 1

Q. 73: How is the RCL dealing with learner issues?

RATING	Poorly	Room for improvement	Fairly well	Very well
NUMBER	123	177	198	102
PERCENTAGE	20%	30%	33%	17%

Rating by learners: Data collected during Phase 1

Q. 74: How has the RCL fared in initiating positive changes at school?

RATING	Poorly	Room for improvement	Fairly well	Very well
NUMBER	122	175	181	122
PERCENTAGE	20%	30%	30%	20%

Rating by learners: Data collected during Phase 1

Q. 75: Are you able to approach the RCL members with a grievance, suggestion or recommendation?

RATING	Yes, approachable	No, not approachable
NUMBER	390	210
PERCENTAGE	65%	35%

The data received from the learners again served to give notice of the great disparity that exists at schools. At some schools the RCL has been firmly entrenched and are doing sterling work. At other schools the RCL is seen as just another job that has to be done.

Contribution of the RCL towards school management

Rating by Principals: Data from Phase 1

Q. 57: How would you rate the RCL as an organization to facilitate and promote co-operation between learners and school management?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	1	9	29	11
PERCENTAGE	2%	18%	58%	22%

Rating by Principals: Data from Phase 1

Q. 58: How would you rate the RCL as an organization to facilitate and promote democratic practices and decision-making?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	1	17	18	14
PERCENTAGE	2%	34%	36%	28%

Rating by Principals: Data from Phase 1

Q. 59: How would you rate the RCL as an organization to facilitate and promote a spirit of mutual respect and good manners?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	0	8	29	13
PERCENTAGE	0%	16%	58%	26%

Rating by Principals: Data from Phase 1

Q. 61: How would you rate the RCL as an organization to facilitate and promote good communication between learners and school management?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	0	14	22	14
PERCENTAGE	0%	28%	44%	28%

Rating by Principals: Data from Phase 1

Q. 62: How would you rate the RCL as an organization to facilitate and promote the implementation of the school's code of conduct?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	2	18	23	7
PERCENTAGE	4%	36%	46%	14%

Rating by Principals: Data from Phase 1

Q. 63: How would you rate the RCL as an organization to facilitate and promote the realization of the school's vision?

RATING	Poor	Room for improvement	Generally good	Excellent
NUMBER	3	21	21	5
PERCENTAGE	6%	42%	42%	10%

Once again I find a rosy picture painted by the school principals. The percentage RCLs who fell in the categories generally good to excellent for facilitating and promoting the specific areas mentioned, were as follows:

- co-operation between learners and school management: 70%;
- democratic practices and decision-making: 64%;
- spirit of mutual respect and good manners: 84%;
- good communication between learners and school management: 72%;
- implementing the school's code of conduct: 60%;
- the realization of the school's vision: 52%.

These statistics confirm that all the learners need to make a contribution is the acceptance that they have the ability to do so, and to support and encourage them.

Formulation of a grievance procedure

Response by RCL: Data from Phase 1, 2 & 3

Q.37: Does your RCL have a grievance procedure in place for the learners?

This indicator was rated by the RCLs in all the data collection phases. The responses in Phase 1 and 2 showed that 49,3% of the schools had it in place. In 2003 during Phase 3, this had increased to 64,3%. This is a positive sign.

Positive or success stories to support RCL contribution to school governance

- Policy aspects: The following examples of contributions to policy formulation are: number and times of intervals; school uniform; coaching and sports uniform; prices of items sold in school cafeteria; implementing a sliding scale for school fees for parents who have more than 1 learner at school; establishment of a bursary fund for those indigent learners who wish to pursue tertiary studies; development of an RCL policy, including a vision and mission statement; development of a detention policy; assisted with the development of a school pregnancy policy; adapted the late coming policy so that the gate is locked between the first and second period; the RCL tackled the problem of smoking on the school grounds by: addressing the matter of educators smoking in front of learners, introducing a system of monitors during interval, and clearing ‘smoking dens’ and placing barbed wire above the boundary walls; addressing the problem of corporal punishment by placing it on the agenda of the school governing body; the Grade 8’s requested to use hair gel that was against school policy. A three-month trial period was allowed and subsequently it was approved by the SGB.
- School development: The following list gives examples of projects initiated by RCLs: school clean-up campaign; environmental awareness campaign; publishing a school magazine; school beautification campaign; graffiti removal campaign; quality education campaign; safety and security campaign; women’s rights campaign; HIV/Aids awareness campaign.
- School Finances: The following list gives examples of RCL involvement in finances: the RCL has negotiated an annual allocation in the budget to organize RCL activities; the RCL has negotiated a sliding scale of payment for those parents who have more than one child at school; the RCL has initiated the establishment of a bursary fund for

learners from the school for their tertiary studies; a number of RCLs have arranged fundraising functions such as Food Fair, Soccer Day, Stay-awake, Car Wash Day, Recycling paper project, Market Day.

6.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter gave an analysis of the findings on the implementation of the RCL policy. The findings were analyzed in terms of the key indicators discussed in chapter 5, and presented under the selected framework. The major findings were:

- The RCL as an organization is playing an important part in promoting the school's vision and mission in those schools where the concept has been accepted and supported.
- The responses to the questions concerning the key indicators indicate that good progress has been made towards establishing praxis for implementing the RCL policy at some schools.
- The many positive examples given by respondents illustrate how learner participation in school governance can be applied to improve schools.

It is also appropriate at this time to reflect on the process used to collect the data, as well as on the issues of reliability and validity. Firstly, with regard to the process, I made use of opportunities that presented themselves to interact with the key role-players involved in the implementation of the RCL policy. The strategy to link the research with a project proved to be useful in that it kept me focused, and it provided some logistical support. It also provided a "sounding board" to test ideas and hypotheses. Furthermore it provided opportunities to have large groups of stakeholders together at one venue, and focused on the subject matter of my research. By combining the data from responses from RCLs during phase 1, 2 and 3 I had access to data on RCLs over a number of years. In this sense, this can be regarded as a longitudinal study.

The questionnaires returned during phase 1 would have been more than the fifty-two schools, had the timing of these workshops not been delayed. This meant that some schools received it close to the final examinations. This obviously impacted negatively on the process. Nevertheless,

I feel that the strategy of using the TLO workshop to initiate the research proved to be well justified as it provided a group of educators committed to the process. Thus questionnaires that were received were done very thoroughly, and this is reflected in the amount of data collected.

Despite the limitation of the number of responding schools due to the practical constraints of the final examination, the schools that responded were fairly representative of schools found in the Western Cape. Of the three groups of schools with RCLs, the 32 secondary schools represent 11%, the 12 primary schools represent 11%, and the 8 combined schools represent 18%. Furthermore, the 29 rural area schools represent 13%, while the 23 schools in the metropolises represent 10% of all the schools in the Western Cape. There was also no significant difference between rural and urban schools, except the involvement in community structures mentioned in 6.2.

The research took place over a period of three years and I was able to evaluate the stability of the results across a large number of the indicators. Generally there was a good correlation of results. With regard to representative reliability, I was able to test the same indicator on all the different stakeholders at the school. For example, all the stakeholders responded to the question about the participation of the RCL in school activities. This served to reinforce the results obtained.

On the matter of equivalence reliability, I used a number of indicators to measure the same construct that I was testing. For example, on the issue of the school having all its policies in place, I tested this by asking whether the RCL had its policies (constitution, grievance procedure, code of conduct, etc.) in place, as well as having copies of the school's policies (constitution, code of conduct, vision and mission, etc.). I tried to enhance reliability by explaining in detail how the data was collected and analysed, and I also had the analysis corroborated by an assistant.

The next chapter reflects on the findings in this and the preceding chapters, identifies the major trends that were evident, and then provides some recommendations.

CHAPTER 7

INTERPRETATION, REFLECTION, RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the data collected was analyzed and the findings were recorded. In this chapter the findings will be interpreted, and upon reflection on the processes implemented over the period from 1997 to 2003, I will respond to the research questions:

- How have the stakeholders at school level interpreted and internalized the policy text in Article 11 of SASA, and the Provincial Gazettes Extraordinary 5136, dated 16 May 1997, and 5946, dated 31 January 2003?
- What impact has the implementation of the RCL policies made towards transformation in our country, particularly in respect of the key transformational goal of enhancing democratic practices?

Before interpreting the findings it needs to be said that the positive responses I received from everyone associated with the RCL in WCED is much appreciated. Furthermore, the generally positive responses received from the participants indicate that the RCL is on the road to becoming a structure that can really make a difference to the lives of the learners at school. It is trusted that the results of this research will be of value to persons involved in school governance and especially to those who are in a position to make a positive difference to the RCLs at schools. Should any of the recommendations be favourably considered for implementation, I am positive it will enhance the credibility of learner participation in school governance.

7.2 CONTEXTUALIZING THE FINDINGS

A limitation to the presentation of the findings of the research was that once all the data was classified under various headings, the context of the school submitting the data is not available and one has to go back to the source document to gain a better understanding. Thus there were some responses that differed significantly from one school community to the next. At one end of

the continuum RCLs received full support and were treated as full partners. At the other end of the continuum one finds that RCLs are ignored and seen as just another group of learners with limited knowledge. The following comments from principals serve to illustrate the divergent range of perspectives people have of the RCL and the role that they perceive it could or should play:

The RCL has grown in terms of their status and impact in the school during the last 3 years. Meetings are held regularly with the TLO present. Meetings are also held regularly with the Principal. The RCL is given time to address the learners during assemblies and class periods. Next year the RCL will also meet with Grade Heads in a formal setting.

Our learners are growing up in an atmosphere of general political apathy. There needs to be a process whereby the learners become exposed to civic issues. During the days of apartheid, politicization was very much at the forefront of learners' consciousness. Today's learners have forgotten the roots of the RCL, and are unaware of the power of the RCL to effect change.

Being a primary school with grade 8 learners, I feel that they are still very young. They have not reached the level of maturity to be involved in major decision-making. They would need far more exposure to seminars, camps and workshops to improve their communication and decision-making skills.

Contributions made at SGB-meetings have been done with much maturity, and they have won the respect of the adults on the SGB.

The above comments also serve to reinforce my perception that the level of contributions made by the RCLs is dependent on the level of support and encouragement that they receive from the adults with whom they work. During the discussion in chapter 1 of the context within which the research is located, four areas were identified, and the findings should be interpreted in terms thereof.

Democratization of School Governance

The essence of the RCL policy can be attributed to “decentralization of decision-making” (Heystek, 2001:211). It allows learners to articulate their feelings and concerns in a forum that has the power to act. Mpungose (1999:5) continues in this vein, contending that the learner complement of the SGB links all the learners in the school to the SGB and thereby makes it possible for learners to have a say in the governance of the school. Yet we find that the implementation of the RCL policy as part of the democratisation of school governance has been hampered by a reticence from top management to provide the stakeholders at school level with the underlying theories, arguments and logic that informed the policy. Nothing has been forthcoming from the National Education Department except the file “Guidelines for Representative Council of Learners”. For a new policy to be introduced without allowing those who are to implement it an opportunity to interact with it so as to own the policy is a recipe for failure. According to Ramsay & Clark (1990:205) it is through facilitation that a process moves from policy to praxis. At no stage were RCL workshops arranged specifically for school principals where they could interact with the underlying theory, argument and logic leading to the process of democratisation of school governance. It was expected of schools to implement the policy, without taking ownership of the new system. The result was that the appointed Teacher Liaison Officers were thrown into the deep end without the necessary support. Initially many of the principals continued to promote the prefect system in opposition to the RCL. This caused much tension to those Teacher Liaison Officers who were committed to implement the RCL policy and was also grossly unfair. The fact that schools have made progress has, in my view, much to do with the enthusiasm and dedication of the Teacher Liaison Officers.

Democratic processes form an integral part of school governance and are based on representative democracy. This in turn starts with free and fair elections taking place in a milieu conducive to the learners making informed decisions. Prior election awareness campaigns should therefore be seen as part of the process, and are to be encouraged by the TLO and school management. The one-year term for the RCL has been mentioned as being insufficient to gain enough experience to contribute effectively to school governance. There have been proposals to extend the period of office of the RCL. However, this is problematic since elections take place each year. I would

support proposals to co-opt learners who have gained skills but who have not been re-elected. The proposal that elections for the year take place in October of the previous year to allow a three month period for the new RCL to work with the old RCL. This could encourage a transfer of skills.

The one position on the SGB that is not dependent on democratic practices is that of the principal. It is therefore incumbent on the incumbent to portrait democratic practices in the functioning of the SGB. On the matter of training of school principals on the implementation of the RCL policy, it is the principal that needs to take the lead in co-ordinating the functioning of the “diverse personalities, interests, and background” (Squelch, 1994: 23) of the members of the SGB. It is also the duty of the principal to keep the SGB informed of the latest developments in education and the implications thereof (Mkondo, 1995: 11). The attitude of the other adults on the SGB is therefore very much dependent on the role taken by the principal. In fact, Squelch (1994:51) sees the principal as “the custodian of all accessible information from the education department”.

Capacity Building

Before responding to the capacity building programme in the Western Cape, let me refer to Cave and Wilconson (1991:201) responding to learner governors in England: “The learner governors’ youth, lack of knowledge and insufficient skills are seen as causes for their inability to make meaningful contributions to school governance”. It is precisely this attitude that negates the role that learners can play in school governance. The challenge is to help them develop and grow into knowledgeable adults. This can only materialize if the capacity building programme is taken up seriously, and an appropriate budget is allowed. Bisschoff and Pakhoa (1999:89) support this view, claiming that one of the aims of education is to educate learners to be well-balanced and skilled adults. So does Ngcobo (2003) when she states that participating in decision-making processes is the ideal training ground for making independent decisions regarding their income, residence, partners in marriage as well as to maintain successful relationships with whom they live and work. Lastly, on the matter of learner maturity, Chinsamy (1995:14-20) cites numerous authors who claim that the cognitive and moral development of learners in secondary schools is

well advanced, and that they are able to make sound decisions based on facts and on the morals and values of their communities.

The Government's legitimate concern with economic efficiency is understandable, but one needs to question the strategies being used when the allocation of financial, material and human resources is being hamstrung by so much red tape that the work that needs to be done simply does not take place. Providing training to school governing bodies and RCLs is one way to ensure that schools have access to the latest developments and policies relating to education and governance of schools. It should enable participants to gain a better understanding of the policies and allow more informed decisions to be taken, and promote more effective implementation of the policies. Lack of knowledge of governance matters and insufficient skills to make a meaningful contribution have also been put forward to negate learner participation in governance. This is a matter of concern and can only be addressed by doing the necessary capacity building when the new RCL has been elected. There are, however, many cases reported where the RCL has made valuable contributions to the governance of the school, and it should be seen as a challenge and an opportunity to nurture and mentor the youth. Insufficient allocation of funds is therefore an inhibiting factor. While the capacity training that has taken place has made progress, this needs to be done on a far wider scale. Only then will the RCL reach its potential of being the vehicle to promote democratic practices at schools.

Social transformation

When looking at the role of the RCL in promoting transformation, the research has revealed the tremendous potential that is available to schools. What is required is that learners be nurtured and guided to use the system to the benefit of the school and the broad school community. The RCL is a vehicle that can be used to put those matters on the school agenda that really affect the lives of the learners. It is also the place where the youth can learn the skills of negotiation, and where the practice of democracy can be instilled and inculcated so as to become a way of life and not something that people become aware of only when elections are due to take place.

One aspect that needs to be borne in mind when working with the learners at secondary school is the influence of peer pressure. Very often the school management is not aware of this. It is a time

when adolescents tend to challenge the authority of adults - whether parents or educators. Very often therefore one finds learners who serve on the RCL being challenged by their peers. They see the structure as supporting the school authorities. A strong support team would seem to be the answer to this situation.

The school as a learning community

We live in a society where the “normal” family unit is becoming a rarity. Many of the learners attending school today do not have the support structures to assist them to cope with the many challenges they have to face. The RCL structure at school is a forum that can improve communication between the learners and school management. Indigent families in need of assistance can be brought to the notice of the school management and school governing body. Examples of sub-committees of the RCL have been mentioned previously, and these provide a platform for the development of norms, values and trust through the interaction with others, and the building up of relationships and partnerships.

School governance is based on equal partnerships in which each party or person plays an important role in a partnership. On this point O’Connell spelt out very clearly to learners at the RCL Conference 2003 that to be considered as partners with the other stakeholders in school governance, the learners need to make positive contributions. He stated: “You cannot be a parasite in a partnership” (Brian O’Connell, RCL Conference 2003). The RCL should therefore keep in contact with other organizations, and with other RCLs. They should form partnerships with the local government, other education structures such as Safe Schools, police authorities, religious organizations, community-based organizations and non-governmental organizations to support or present extra-mural activities. An example would be to contact the Drug Education Agency to assist with substance abuse problems that have surfaced as a major problem at schools in the Cape Flats.

7.3 INTERPRETING THE FINDINGS IN TERMS OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In chapter 1 five theoretical positions were identified as framing the research. I will reflect on the findings in terms of each of these five positions: democratisation of education, political contestation, decentralisation, policy and policy process, change and change processes. Furthermore, I will substantiate my findings by referring to findings from other researchers in the field of school governance.

Democratisation of Education

The key elements of democratisation of education that were identified in 1.5.1 were: involvement in political decision-making, equality amongst the participants, human rights, a system of representation, and an electoral system. With regard to political decision-making the findings clearly indicate that the RCL has been actively involved in this process and examples were given where changes to school policy were initiated by the RCL (see section 6.3.4.).

With regard to equality amongst the members of the school governing body, the findings have revealed that many of the chairpersons have found that the learners provide valuable input. The only aspect that has come to the fore has been the non-involvement of learners concerning contracts with a third party (Bisschoff and Phakoa, 1999:89-93). However, when clearly explained that the exclusion is governed by a different law, and is subject to being under the age of twenty-one, I have found that it does not present problems.

With regard to the promotion of human rights, the many examples cited in the description of the activities of the RCL reflect a good understanding of this. Lastly, on the matter of the electoral system being used by the RCL, it is a legal system that reflects all the tenets as set out by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). The partnership formed between WCED and the IEC has elevated the RCL elections in the eyes of both the school community and the wider community. The examples noted in the United States where civic education is used to bolster the democratic process in that country can be applied here, but I feel those programmes do not

provide the basic skills in democratic practices that the correct implementation of the RCL system has to offer

Political contestation

The RCL was conceived in terms of a measure of political contestation, as dealt with in chapter 3. The obvious give-and-take during negotiations resulted in the new body being formed and implemented. The findings reflect that the resistance to change that was so evident during the initial stages of implementation has abated, and those schools that have fully accepted the RCL and are implementing it are doing very well. In fact, at many of the ex-model C schools the RCL is doing very well as these schools have an infrastructure and resources available to them. However, there are those schools where the RCL is a representative body for the learners only in name and the prefect system has continued to function as it has in the past.

There is, however, another level of political contestation. This is at the institutional level, where the school management, and particularly the principal, is placed in situations characterized by dilemmas and contradictory pressures. Campbell (1999:643) refers to Moller who describes the situation so vividly: “They are squeezed between the intentions of the state and policymakers, what parents require, what teachers expect, and what students need”. Thus I need to express my concern about the lack of RCL training for principals.

Decentralization

As part of the democratisation process in South African society, decision-making has been decentralised to the local level where all the role players can make a contribution. In the education sector this has been decentralized down to the school governing body that is representative of all the role players, including the learners. On this matter Maile (2002: 326-335) stresses the importance of accountability in discussing school governance.

In terms of decentralization, the RCL is a body that allows for input from the learners on all issues that affect them. In a country such as South Africa where there is strong competition for available resources, the RCL is in a position to make meaningful contributions, particularly when

priorities have to be set. Participation in the drawing up of the school's budget is therefore a practical way to make this contribution.

Policy and Policy Process

An analysis of the RCL policy with regard to the level of convergence between the policy text and its implementation has led to an amendment to the RCL policy at national level, and circular from WCED with regard to the same issue. Article 11 of SASA stated that a RCL must be established at every public school enrolling learners in the eighth grade or higher. The Education Amendment Act (No. 57 of 2001) expanded this article, stating that the RCL is now the only recognized and legal representative body for learners at schools. This was followed at provincial level with the promulgation of *Extraordinary Provincial Gazette 5956*, dated 31 January 2003, detailing the composition, functions, election procedures and dissolution of the RCL, as well as the discharge of individual members. My understanding of this amendment is that it wishes to address the issue of schools continuing the prefect or SRC traditions at their schools, while having a RCL as a token body. This understanding seems to be correct as a circular on this issue was sent out to all WCED schools on 27 October 2004, clarifying WCED interpretation of the amendment (Circular 0056/2004).

The circular pertinently states:

- the RCL is the ONLY legitimate body elected to represent the learners;
- the prefect body may operate at a school to assist with discipline only as a sub-committee of the RCL;
- the RCL functions in terms of elected office bearers. There is no position of head boy or head girl in terms of the new regulations.

The amendments must have been made after due process was followed to determine the trends of learner structures in the country in response to the RCL policy.

Change and change processes

The essence of research findings on change management is:

- it is not easy to accomplish fundamental change;
- formal structural changes do not automatically lead to re-culturing.

The findings reflect quite an optimistic picture that the RCL is gaining ground as an organization to look after the interests of the learners. However, there is still a long way to go before the RCL will really reach its potential and make a meaningful contribution to school governance.

When one looks to the business sector at how organizations respond to change, one finds that those who are adept at implementing change share three key attributes, each associated with the leadership at the organization:

- the imagination to innovate;
- the professionalism to perform;
- the openness to collaborate (Kanter, 1999:1).

These assets are reflected in the habits of people, in their personal skills, their behaviour and in their relationships. When they have been inculcated in an organization such as a school and are deeply engrained, change becomes natural and resistance very low. However, when the leaders at a school react defensively and ineffectively to change, it is seen as a threat and not an opportunity. To implement change successfully it is essential to win the hearts of the most influential people in the organization. At schools they are usually the principals.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a list of recommendations that I am making to promote the effectiveness of the RCLs. They have, however, in many cases been inspired by the ideas, suggestions, advice and contributions that have been put forward by the many stakeholders with whom I have had the privilege of working since 1997. These will be presented in terms of the framework discussed in chapter 4.

Structure

The following steps are recommendations with regard to structure:

- that an annual summit of RCLs of Western Cape schools be organized to help establish continuity of good practice and to encourage the development of an esprit-de-corps;

- that an ‘ombudsman’ be appointed to ensure the fair treatment of learners by staff and other learners. This could prevent volatile situations arising as has been the case in a number of schools, even leading to loss of life;
- that the strategic teams established during the training process be further developed through ongoing skills training and support;
- that the term of office of the TLO be at least three years, and that a second educator be included to assist the TLO with the eye of taking over after a while;
- that the matter of prefects be addressed assertively where they are being used to undermine the work of the RCL. Prefects can play a meaningful role as a sub-committee of the RCL to assist with discipline. Finding an alternative to the name ‘prefects’ could also be considered;
- that the RCL should meet with the TLO and principal on a regular basis, but at least once per term. Minutes should be kept of these meetings;
- that the EMDC commissions be given support to carry out their mandate, and that the Provincial RCL Commission be established, leading to a RCL conference to be held annually or at least every two years. It should concentrate on promoting democratic processes at schools and in this way contribute to sustaining democratic practices in our country. Furthermore, that the conference and its objectives be supported with the implementation of programmatic activities.

Human resource

Recommendation pertaining to WCED personnel

It is incumbent upon WCED to ensure that the RCL reaches its full potential through capacity building (Art. 19 of SASA). This can only take place if personnel are put in place to do so. I strongly recommend:

- that WCED have a permanent section in its Institutional Management & Governance Directorate to monitor and support school governance in the province. Furthermore, that a RCL Skills Development coordinator be appointed in this section to coordinate the work done with the RCLs;

- that WCED appoint a RCL Skills Development Facilitator to clusters of schools to do leadership training with the learners of the RCL on a regular basis or outsource this function to a service provider;
- that the focus of the work of the RCL Skills Development Facilitator should be on promoting academic performance, coping skills, gender sensitivity, code of conduct of learners, and building good relationships between learners and the other role players.

I also wish to appeal that other sectors in WCED as well as other government sectors recognize and use the RCL to involve the learners in their projects. Examples are: Safe schools, HIV/Aids components, the Health Department with projects such as the Health Promoting Schools, etc. Very often these sectors have budgets available for a project while RCLs at schools are crying out for funding to implement this type of project.

Recommendations pertaining to training are as follows:

- that budgeting for training be more realistic to allow for regular and consistent training;
- that the “train-the-trainers” programme for TLOs be resumed;
- that any programme intended to promote the transformation process takes cognisance of the role that the knowledge of history plays in the process;
- that matters such as age, academic standard and the learner-educator combination in workshops of this nature be taken into consideration;
- that serious thought should be given to the acquisition of technology for simultaneous translation and interpretation at workshops;
- that cluster workshops be arranged in terms of the level of development of the RCLs such as those struggling with elections, roles and responsibilities, and functions; those grappling with constitutional and organizational development; and those that are up and running but need support with programme implementation;
- that the full RCL receive training in aspects such as conflict management, drug awareness, peer counselling, teambuilding, education law, communication strategies, planning and the roles and responsibilities of the RCL and the SGB.

Political frame

Before giving my recommendations, I share some of the perceptions of school governance that came to the fore during Phase 3. Learners identified the following key issues as important to school governance:

- transparency with regard to school policies should become a top priority for school administration, and dates of implementation of policies should be made quite clear;
- RCL members have a responsibility to give input on school policies that affect learners;
- truth and justice are part of transparency. It is a fundamental ethos of the RCL and must be upheld at all times;
- RCLs must always be prepared and act objectively, basing decisions on facts and figures available and not become emotional.
- the RCL is accountable to the learners, parents, educators, principal, and school governing body; decisions should always be taken in the best interest of the school;
- learners should feel free to ask questions.
- the voice of the learners is a constitutional right and should be used in the best interest of the school, and at appropriate levels of public participation;
- misrepresentation by leaders cannot be tolerated in a constitutional democracy, thus the RCL leadership should uphold the values of the RCL;
- all learners can make a contribution, even the younger RCL members, and they should be nurtured as future leaders;
- school governance is all about collective decision-making that takes place in meetings; attendance of all meetings should be a high priority.

These issues reflect quite a mature understanding of school governance and the role that the learners see that they can play therein.

Recommendations concerning a RCL policy

One of the most important documents that a school has to formulate is a RCL policy that stipulates the school's strategic management plan for implementing the national policy in this regard. The following is a recommended policy that could provide a guideline for developing a school's policy.

Step 1: Policy objective

- It should be the intention of the RCL policy to affirm the school's commitment to implement school governance procedures in terms of: Article 11 of SASA (1996), Education Amendment Act (2001), and Provincial Gazette Extraordinary (5136), 16 May 1997.

Step 2: Policy principle

- It should be the intention of the RCL policy to affirm the school's commitment to the principle of learner participation in school governance through the Representative Council of Learners, stating the primary purposes and goals of that participation.

Step 3: Determine the policy decision

- Participation by learners in school governance should be encouraged and strengthened through class representation as this will lead to more informed decision-making.
- The processes central to learner participation, such as nominations, campaigning, elections, activities, and training should be openly communicated and clearly understood by ALL members of the school community.
- A budget should be provided for the RCL to perform its duties.
- A periodic review should take place to ensure that the RCL is functioning well.
- A slot should be given at every school governing body meeting for a RCL report.

Step 4: Implementation of the Policy

- A committee elected by the School Management Team, and headed by the Teacher Liaison Officer, should implement the policy.

Step 5: Non-compliance

- In cases where the policy is not implemented as approved, the committee should be called to account by the School Governing Body.

Step 6: Approval of policy

- This should be done by the School Governing Body.

Step 7: Date of implementation

- This should be determined by the School Governing Body.

Ethos

Recommendations pertaining to promoting learner participation in school governance:

- It is strongly recommended that principals, educators, area managers, circuit managers, and parents give learners the support they need to make the RCL a success.
- It is recommended that circuit managers regularly put the development of the RCLs on the agenda of meetings with school principals, and that they stress that the success of the RCL is not the sole responsibility of the TLO, but a joint venture of the whole school community.
- It is recommended that when the next series of TLO workshops is arranged, school principals or deputy principals are included since it is their responsibility to oversee that the RCL as a statutory body carries out its functions.

These recommendations are all focused on making the RCL a more effective organization and in most cases lean toward providing support. Some questions that arise and may require further research, however, are:

- Can a government sponsor and institutionalise independence without stifling that very independence?
- By providing the very minimum support to the RCL so that it cannot really become effective, is the State or the Education Department not undermining the system and thus
- Minimizing the contributions from learners?

My view on these issues at the moment is that WCED would like to see the RCL really function effectively, but that the imperatives within the education scenario are so intense that not sufficient time, energy or funding is allocated to the RCL.

7.5 CONCLUSION

The aim of the study was to evaluate what progress the RCLs have made towards establishing praxis. The results of the research indicate that much progress has been made towards it, but that there is still a long way to go. The practice of democracy is a day-to-day process, and one cannot assume that establishing democratic structures is sufficient. Policy initiatives meaning to effect change are reacted to in terms of the context of some familiar construct of reality. In the case of

the RCL it was understood from a perception of learner participation via a prefect system, or an SRC system, or both. It is therefore critical that all the role players engage with initiatives so as to develop a shared understanding of the concept of the RCL. Of these bodies, it was the Student Representative Councils who were more involved in school governance, taking up issues often in direct confrontation with the school authorities. The RCL system reflects an attempt by the school system to respond to the demand for involvement in decision-making, while also including the positive aspects of the prefect system.

The literature survey has indicated that learner participation in school governance is an international feature and countries have responded to it according to their unique circumstances. The response by South Africa with the introduction of RCLs as envisaged in the South African Schools Act positions South Africa internationally as one of the leading nations in giving recognition to the voice of learners in decision-making with regard to their education. Furthermore, independence is in effect mandated by law and ostensibly supported by school authorities. This vision should be cherished and nurtured in the interest of promoting a culture of learning and accountability at our schools, as well as deepening democracy in our country. To this end RCLs should be given all the support, resources, training and development that they need and deserve.

Lastly, I will respond to the question:

What impact has the implementation of the RCL policies made towards transformation in our country, particularly in respect of the key transformational goal of enhancing democratic practices?

To be able to answer this question one should have clarity on how transformation is defined. At a superficial level the word transformation means “to change form”. However, when one thinks about transforming an institution like a school it becomes far more complex than merely changing the people who are now in charge, or the learners who are now attending the school. What is needed would be institutional transformation. This means that the practices that have become embedded within that institution will also have to change. Let us look at the practice of having head boy and head girl at schools as an example. Obviously this is a practice that arose

with time and has become traditional at some schools, the positions having become associated with certain values. Thus when one is transforming the institution in terms of instilling democratic practices, one needs to evaluate whether these positions indeed comply with the values of democracy. This means that when one is challenging the positions, one is in fact challenging the value system that has placed it there in the first place.

It is only through open and transparent debate in a forum such as the RCL, SGB and RCL Commission that school communities can arrive at a set of values that everyone in the school community can affirm. This is certainly not easy, but it is a necessary step. It is only when everyone knows and understands clearly that by implementing and supporting the RCL policy one is promoting democratic practices at the school. Furthermore, in the process one is consolidating the values associated with democratic practices within the wider community in which the school operates. At that point RCL praxis would have been established.

The principle of inclusiveness in the institutional educational governance structures has been a hard-fought battle, and is now entrenched in SASA. Unless these elected representatives are well informed and empowered, it would nullify the call by the democratic movements over the years that people should participate on a daily basis in decision-making processes in all aspects of their lives, including education. The research has indicated that learners can do so much for the life and ethos of a school. Let the resources available to schools be used prudently to release this largely untapped source of youthful energy to the benefit of the school community as well as the wider community!

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APPENDIX A

NEEDS ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

PHASE A

APPENDIX C

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

PHASE B

APPENDIX D

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

PHASE C