

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**An investigation into the implementation of the  
staff selection policy for school-based  
management posts by School Governing Bodies in  
three schools in the Umlazi District**

**2006**

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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STAFF  
SELECTION POLICY FOR SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT POSTS  
BY SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN THREE SCHOOLS IN THE  
UMLAZI DISTRICT

RESEARCH REPORT

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Busisiwe Patricia Gcabashe, declare that this dissertation is my own work, submitted in partial fulfillment of the degree of Masters of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The research was conducted under the supervision of Dr Thandi Ngcobo. I further declare that this dissertation has never been submitted at any other university or institution for any purpose.



**BUSISIWE PATRICIA GCABASHE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study is an investigation into the implementation of the staff selection policy in three schools in Umlazi district, south of Durban. The concerns expressed by educators and parents during public hearings held on School Governance prompted the inquiry into the implementation of the selection policy. The study was a response to the three main areas related to how the School Governing Bodies implement this policy, namely, the challenges facing SGBs when implementing the staff selection policy; how the SGBs cope with these challenges; as well as the systems that the Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal has in place to assist SGBs in their execution of this important mandate.

Data was collected through the use of questionnaires and interviews in order to arrive at answers to the above challenges. Questionnaire responses were solicited from the officials of the Department and the principals of schools as trainers who impart the implications of this policy to SGBs. Interviews were conducted with educators as well as parent members of the SGBs who served in the selection committees.

The findings in this study indicated that SGBs were capable of interpreting and implementing the selection policy. One of the findings was that the training has to be co-ordinated so that all the relevant components of the Department that deal with staff selection would utilize an integrated approach. Also the content of the training was found not to empower lay governors with the knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of the various managerial levels from the principal to the heads of department. Most importantly, it became evident that some members of staff selection committees were not familiar with the roles and responsibilities that they have to fulfill in the performance of their mandated duties.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	<b>PAGES</b>
<b>Declaration</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Table of contents</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Chapter One: Introduction</b>	
1.1 Background to the study	1
1.2 The purpose of the study	3
1.3 Objectives and key questions of the study	4
1.4 Theoretical framework of the study	4
1.5 Research methods	6
1.6 The structure of the dissertation	6
<b>Chapter Two: Literature review</b>	
2.1 Introduction	7
2.2 Principles underpinning the implementation of the staff selection policy	7
2.2.1 Participatory decision making	8
2.2.2 Devolution of authority to SGBs	9
2.3 Policy implementation	10
2.4 The staff selection policy in the South African Context	11
2.5 Challenges emanating from implementing the staff selection policy	12

2.6	Perspectives from other countries on the role of SGBs in the implementation of the staff selection policy	13
2.7	The debate regarding the inclusion of parent members of the SGB	13
2.5	Conclusion	16

### **Chapter Three: Methodology**

3.1	Introduction	18
3.2	The research approach	18
3.3	Theoretical framework	18
3.4	Population of the study	19
3.5	Sampling	20
3.6	Triangulation	21
3.6.1	Questionnaires	21
3.6.2	Interviews	23
3.7	Ethical considerations	24
3.8	Data collection process	25
3.9	Data analysis	25
3.10	Limitations of the study	26

### **Chapter Four: Research Findings**

4.1	Introduction	27
4.2	Biographic information on respondents	27
4.2.1	Table 1 – Questionnaire respondents	27
4.2.2	Table 2 – Interview respondents	29
4.3	Responses addressing key questions of this study	30
4.3.1	Responses from questionnaires	30
4.3.1.1	Responses relating to the consultative processes of the Department of Education	30

4.3.1.2 Responses relating to training offered by the Department of Education	31
4.3.1.3 Responses relating to challenges facing SGBs in the implementation of the selection policy	31
4.3.1.4 Departmental strategies to assist SGBs	32
4.4 Responses from Interviews	33
4.4.1 Lack of involvement of lay governors in policy formulation	33
4.4.2 The conduct of educator-members during the staff selection process	33
4.4.3 Inclusion of lay governors	34
4.4.4 Dealing with other stakeholders during the staff selection process	34
4.5 Coping strategies of SGBs during policy Implementation	35
4.6 System put in place by Department to assist SGBs	36
4.5 Conclusion	38

## **Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendation**

5.1 Introduction	39
5.2 Conclusions on the study	40
5.3 Recommendations on the implementation of the selection policy	41
5.3.1 Consultation with SGBs on the selection policy	41
5.3.2 Training on the selection policy	41
5.4 Recommendations for further study	43

References	44
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## **Appendices**



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to this study**

Since the advent of democracy in 1994, the Department of Education has been faced with a challenge of transforming a fragmented, inequitable and culturally oppressive system of education into one that would promote democratic principles of redress, equity and social empowerment. One of the highlights of this transformation process was the promulgation of the South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996 (SASA) whose aim was to facilitate, *inter alia*, “the devolution of authority and increase community involvement in decision making at school level through the establishment of School Governing Bodies” (SGBs) (Murphy 2002: 96). The staff selection policy is one area where the SGB is expected to play a leading role by recommending to the Head of Department the educators and non-educators to be employed at the public school. In this study the researcher investigates the role and effectiveness of the SGB in the implementation of the staff selection policy.

Murphy (2002) views school governance as one of the phenomena that recognize the interdependence between a school and its surrounding community which depends on the morality of a democratic partnership with parents. The SASA was designed to create and manage a new national schooling system by giving equal opportunities to all stakeholders to participate in a democratic educational environment. One of the distinct features of the Act is the devolution of much of the decision-making to the school level with education districts providing the necessary support. The most important provision of SASA is the broadening of governance in schools to include the participation of parents of learners in decision-making on critical matters such as the selection of staff.

Based on the above-mentioned provision of SASA, the Minister of Education published in the Government Notice 222 (February 1999) the broad guidelines for the staff selection process for educators. These were endorsed through the adoption of Resolution 5 of the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) (1998) and the Employment of

Educators' Act No 76 of 1998, which both enabled provinces to develop their own specific guidelines for procedures and practices relating to staff selection. The KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Education Department, through the Human Resources Management Directorate, then published provincial Guidelines on School-based Promotions: Volume 1 (1999). This document provided details on how the selection policy in the province would be implemented in line with the broader national stipulations.

According to section 20(i) of SASA one of the functions of the SGB is to recommend to the Head of the Department an educator who is suitable for appointment to a vacancy. In order to carry out this function, the SGB has to form a Selection Committee from among its members to implement the Departmental selection policy with regard to the filling of vacancies for school-based management and other posts. The Human Resources Management Directorate issues a procedure manual for the processing of school-based management posts to all School Governing Bodies which, among other things, spells out how the Selection Committee must be formed and who its members are. The following components are critical in the composition of the selection committee:

- One departmental representative (who may be the principal of the school) as an observer and a resource person)
- The Principal of the school if s/he is not the departmental representative, except in cases where s/he is acting and is an applicant
- Three members of the SGB and or co-opted members (excluding educators who are applicants)
- One Teacher Union representative per union party to Education Labour Relations Council as observers (Butler, 1999).

At the beginning of 2003 the then Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, formed a Ministerial Review Committee to look into whether School Governance policies were being effectively implemented (Sunday Tribune: 06/04/2003). Four public hearings were held in the province of KwaZulu-Natal where the issue of the involvement of Governing Bodies in the selection of incumbents for school-based management posts was raised with serious concerns by some educators with regard to the lack of capacity of most

parent members of the SGB. On the other hand lay governors insisted that it was proper for them to continue becoming involved in staff selection, especially for management posts, as the law dictated. Their major concern, however, was that they were not getting enough support from the Department in terms of capacity building of members of selection committees. Also, there were concerns in the ELRC report regarding the number of outstanding cases of disputes on school-based promotion posts. The council also pointed out that in most of the cases the aggrieved were challenging the unprocedural manner in which SGBs had conducted the selection processes. (Senior Management Meeting report: May 2003)

Most educators present in these hearings were strongly opposed to the involvement of lay governors and felt that this function should be left in the hands of the officials of the Department. Prompting this response was the number of unresolved disputes resulting from the perceived breach of staff selection processes by SGBs and which impacted negatively on the management of schools. The reasons which educators put forward for these perceived malpractices were:

- The lack of capacity among most parent members of SGBs to conduct interviews for such senior and critical posts; and
- the lack of understanding of the Department's policy regarding selection procedures

The view by the educators to exclude lay governors, according to MacBeath (1998), infringes on the right of optimal participation of the broader community in an inclusive model of school-based decision-making. It is against the backdrop of the above perceptions by the various role-players and their relevance to the education transformation agenda that I decided to closely look into the effectiveness of the implementation of the selection policy by SGBs in our schools.

## **1.2 The purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which the implementation of the staff selection policy by SGBs is yielding the desired results, namely the adherence to

correct staff selection procedures and the selection of suitably qualified managers. Furthermore, if not yielding these outcomes, the purpose was to determine factors that are possibly impeding on the effective implementation of the selection policy for school-based management posts by the School Governing Bodies. The purpose was to determine the role played by the officials of the Provincial Education Department in assisting Governing Bodies to understand the selection policy. Furthermore, since none of the above-mentioned public hearings were held in Umlazi District, it was deemed necessary to investigate the degree to which the findings of the hearings applied to this district.

### **1.3 Key questions in this study based on Umlazi District**

As already indicated, the objective of the study was to determine whether School Governing Bodies in Umlazi District have the capacity to execute their duties in terms of recommending to the Head of the Department suitable candidates for appointment to management posts in schools, as mandated by SASA. In addition, the objective was to elucidate any impediments that may be causing the SGBs to struggle in fulfilling this legal requirement. The following investigative questions were derived from the main research question and guided the researcher whilst interacting with the research problem:

- What challenges are School Governing Bodies faced with in implementing the staff selection policy for school-based management posts?
- How do SGBs cope with these challenges?
- What systems has the KZN Education Department put in place to assist SGBs in the implementation of this policy?

The process of gaining answers to these questions was through the analysis of primary data which was collected using various methods as will be discussed later in this chapter.

### **1.4 Theoretical framework of the study**

Symbolic interactionism, the naturalistic theory underpinning this investigation, looks at the nature and result of the interaction of human beings with one another as well as their interaction with the various phenomena they come to contact with. It recognizes the possibility that some individuals may try and influence the others' definition of the

phenomena so that they attach a particular meaning to them. This theoretical framework lends itself to this kind of research in that it acknowledges the complexity of human behaviour in interpreting and implementing policy. School Governing Bodies are, in many educational quarters, seen merely as implementers of the policies as prescribed by the Education Department. This view does not acknowledge the possibility that SGBs may attach their own meaning to the selection process, based on the way in which these policies impact on their environment. The view unfortunately does not take into account human subjectivity in policy implementation through symbolic interactionism. In line with this, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2001) explain that human beings act towards issues, including policy implementation, on the basis of the meaning they have attached to them, using symbols like language or words. Symbolic interactionism as a theoretical framework, according to Denzin (1992) rests on the following three assumptions that:

- Human beings act towards phenomena on the basis of the meaning they have for them
- The meaning of such things is based on their social interaction with fellow human beings
- These meanings are modified through a continuous process of interpretation.

As School Governing Bodies implement the staff selection policy as developed by the Department of Education, they have to continuously interpret its contents to ensure that they comply with all its legislative provisions.. Section 19 of SASA states that it is the responsibility of the provincial education department to provide funding and personnel to empower members of SGBs in carrying out their roles and responsibilities. Because symbolic interactionism directs itself to the nature and result of the interaction of human beings and symbols it recognizes the fact that other individuals may try to influence others' definition of the situations. It was important therefore also to examine the role played by the Department of Education in cascading the policy and monitoring the implementation thereof by SGBs (Cohen et al, 2001). Therefore, an attempt was made to focus on how SGBs interpreted and attached meaning to the selection policy through interacting with other role-players namely the officials, teacher unions, the broader school community and other members of the SGBs.

## **1.5 Research methods**

This study was primarily qualitative in nature. This was as a result of the exposition by Page and Meyer (2000) that the qualitative method of research puts emphasis on people's perceptions around the object of study. This study therefore intended to closely look at the perceptions of people regarding the implementation of the selection policy by SGBs. Questionnaires and interviews were selected by the researcher as tools for primary data collection. Questionnaires were posted to principals of the three schools as well as officials of the department responsible for the implementation of the selection policy for school-based management posts by SGBs. A series of interviews were held with educator and parent members of the SGBs. These tools are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

## **1.6 The structure of the dissertation**

The next chapter, Chapter Two reviews literature related to the devolution of staff selection decisions from state education departments to school governing bodies comprising of parents as representatives of communities surrounding the schools.

Chapter Three elaborates on the research methodology used to collect primary data that provided responses to the key research questions. Details on sampling, data gathering instruments, data collection and data analysis are also key elements in this chapter.

Chapter Four is devoted to findings of this study. The last chapter, Chapter Five, presents conclusions drawn from findings and concludes by presenting recommendations for selection policy implementation by SGBs and further research on related issues.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

Legislation in South Africa requires that every public school must elect a governing body and section 16 of SASA states that the governance of every public school rests with its governing body. According to section 26 of SASA, members of an SGB must be elected from educators, non-educators, parents and learners in schools offering grade 8 or higher. The aim of this study was to investigate the implementation of the selection policy for school-based management posts by School Governing Bodies in schools in Umlazi District. The study focused on the challenges which SGBs face during the implementation of the policy. It also looked at the support received by SGBs from the department of education when implementing this policy. The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the devolution of decision-making authority to the school level in an attempt to empower communities to become involved in the running of the schools

This chapter begins by clarifying concepts related to the implementation of the staff selection policy by SGBs. Then it discusses international and local perspectives regarding the critical role of policy implementation in guiding the actions of the SGB during staff selection. It then interrogates the argument regarding the involvement of lay governors in this very important process.

#### **2.2 Principles underpinning the implementation of the staff selection policy**

According to section 20 of the South African Schools Act (SASA) Act 84 of 1996, one of the functions of the SGB is to recommend to the Head of Department the most suitable candidate to be appointed in vacant posts. The function of staff selection by the SGB is underpinned by the following principles:

### **2.2.1 Participatory decision making**

In the new South African political era democracy is viewed as much more than a governmental phenomenon but a way of life that is extensively varied, communicative and participatory. In this era of democracy, communities no longer view public education as just another responsibility of the state, but as a service which people are entitled to receive, entitled to use and entitled to expect value from (Lemmer: 1994). In support of this notion Grace (1997) argues that participation and involvement in decision-making by all stakeholders are ways in which individuals can become actively engaged in sharing a sense of responsibility for the school. Such a strong partnership should include empowerment of SGB members, enablement by legislation and enhancement of skills as key components. It is therefore important that the SGB is *au faire* with all the national and provincial mandates that govern their operation, in this case, the staff selection policy of the Department. This is very crucial because the school, as a juristic person, must act in accordance with the legal mandate as outlined in the relevant legislation.

Keith and Girling (1991) argue that schools which are collaboratively managed through institution based policies that are continually adapted are highly likely to become centers of staff and community commitment. This deliberate participation ensures added value in terms of feedback on the effects of policy, skills development, social interaction and added knowledge, all of which are necessary for successful policy implementation. Policies that support active parental involvement in decision-making have been found to bring society closer together, help parents gain confidence and develop a sense of efficacy. The author's argument is that schools where this is practiced become havens where domination, manipulation and excessive control by either the SGB or the principal are minimal.

Participatory decision making recognizes the interdependence that exists between schools and local communities, which depends on the democratic partnership which manifests itself in a number of facets. Murphy (2002) has identified the following facets as crucial to stakeholder democracy:



- The valuing of coming together in communicative spaces where dialogue occurs
- The revering of open inquiry and critique in pursuit of the common goal
- The respect of individuals and the skills they bring into the democracy
- The acknowledge of the interdependence in a responsible manner

According to Corson (1995) and Riley and Louis (2000) policies which have not been modified by argument and discussion carry a far greater likelihood of having fundamental faults, thus necessitating a series of further amendments. Imposed changes that are perceived to be supportive to teaching and learning may therefore end up alienating and de-motivating both educators and learners. In support of the above argument Foster, Smith and Thurlow (1997) state that sometimes it takes years for some effective policies to be formulated whilst others are constructed in a hurried fashion by adapting policies that were developed for unrelated contexts. It is therefore believed that positive impact will be greater where policies have been constructed from the ground up and where significant local participation has been solicited during the policy design and implementation.

### **2.2.2 Devolution of authority**

In the South African context, devolution of authority to SGBs is based on the democratic principle of decentralization of power and the distribution of authority to lower levels of the community. Tleane (2002) argues that a governing body is a creature of the law, which has been created to give expression to the notion of partnership between the state, parents, educators and learners. Therefore, governing body members possess rights which are translated into authority and power as well as duties which are then translated into obligations and responsibilities. As decision-makers, it is important for legislators to clearly define the role and extent of involvement of SGBs in staff selection. Also, the governing bodies need to be given time and space to operate within the legislative framework relevant to them.

In support of the South African concept of devolution of authority in education, (Corson, 1995) states that

*“The devolution of power through self-governance to individual schools for ‘hands on’ involvement in the running of the school by lay governors must surely include the identification of mechanisms and procedures through which schools will become efficient, effective and responsive to the needs of the learners, staff and parents. ”*

In relation to the earlier argument, policies adopted across the education system are based on certain principles, in this case it is the democratic principles of transparent decision-making. Good policies are believed to be those that devolve policy-decision making power to schools. This is in line with the objective of creating self-reliant schools.

Though some level of authority is decentralized to SGBs, the South African education system still retains some level of authority through policies that are centrally formulated. Caldwell and Spinks (1993) highlight the trend to centralize authority by some Education Departments in terms of the setting of goals, establishing priorities and frameworks as well as policy formulation. The Departments insist that this is done in order not to compromise accountability on their part.

### **2.3 Policy implementation**

The international trend regarding policy implementation in education is that it takes place in three hierarchically related levels namely the conceptualization, interpretation and re-contextualisation of policy text. These levels are the central level where policy is promulgated as legislation, the local level where policy is interpreted and recontextualised as well as the school level where policy is further interpreted, recontextualised and implemented by the role players taking into consideration the context of their environment (Riley et al, 2000). In the South African context the above translates to the promulgation of education policies as framed by the National Education Policy Act, 27 of 1996 and the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996. Provincial

departments engage in the interpretation and contextualisation of the national policies as well as their own policies through provincial gazettes. School Governing Bodies are then expected to contextualise related policies and then formulate their own school policies for implementation.

As a body that implements the policies of the state, governing bodies are expected to assist the provincial department in taking decisions based on their knowledge and assessment of their local circumstances. This is because SGBs understand the circumstances better than the national and provincial departments. When appointing staff, the governing body is therefore expected to look for candidates who will better respond to the vision and objectives of the school. This study therefore tried to determine whether SGBs in the sample schools were adequately prepared to fulfill this legislated obligation.

#### **2.4 The staff selection policy in the South African context**

In line with section 20 of the SASA (1996), governing bodies of public schools play a pivotal role in the selection process by recommending to the Head of Department staff suitable for appointment. SGBs have to establish Staff Selection Committees as prescribed in the Departmental procedure manual. These committees, which must be chaired by an SGB member, must include members of SGBs, members of Teacher Organizations who act as observers and a Departmental representative who acts as a resource person. SGBs can co-opt individuals who possess relevant expertise into the committee. It is the responsibility of the Department to train Staff Selection Committees on proper procedures to be followed in staff selection. The selection process consists of various phases which are performed by various stakeholders namely, recruitment, sifting, short-listing, interviewing and appointment. Selection Committees of SGBs are involved during the short-listing and interviewing phases of the staff selection process and thereafter submit to the Head of Department names of those candidates they recommend for appointment. Should there be any grievances and/or disputes lodged, members of the Staff Selection Committees may be called upon to present evidence to Grievance or Dispute Resolution Committees.

## **2.5 Challenges emanating from implementing the staff selection policy**

The existence of tension between school governors and professional managers of many schools was a major cause for concern that emerged during the public hearings. It was cited that this conflict results from the perceived lack of knowledge regarding the different, yet complimentary roles to be played by school managers, professional staff, and lay governors. Governors accuse managers of sidelining them on critical issues under the notion that the matter is strictly professional and also keeping information away from them whilst governors are accused of exceeding their mandate when making decisions during the implementation of the selection policy. This tension could become evident even in how the educator governors and lay governors relate to one another as members of selection committees. According to Cohen et al (2001) the main area of conflict between the lay governors and the professional governors is the selection of staff, especially that of the principal.

SASA states that the most critical function of the governing body is to promote the best interest of the school and to strive to ensure its development. This is the legal reason for all the different components of the governing body to work together to successfully provide quality education to all its learners through the effective implementation of the policies of the department. In support of this view, Tleane (2002) emphasizes that governing bodies provide stakeholders with a platform where remarkable differences could be resolved for the common purpose of developing a schooling environment that is conducive to effective teaching and learning. In the spirit of SASA, parents are considered as a very critical component of the SGB which must always have more members than the rest. The national democratic revolution in South Africa emphatically calls for transforming schools into centres of community life, therefore leaving parents out of participating in decision-making relating to staffing will be against the spirit of SASA.

## **2.6 Perspectives from other countries on the role of SGBs in the implementation of the staff selection policy**

Staff selection has become a topical issue internationally (See Anderson, Briggs and Burton, (2000); Razik and Swanon, 1995) which therefore means that it is also important for one to look at the implementation of the staff selection policies in other countries. This allows for the drawing of comparison regarding how the South African system of governance is influenced by international trend. According to Anderson, Briggs and Burton (2000), the governance of schools in the United States of America (USA) differs from that of the Republic of South Africa in that education in the USA is the responsibility of the various states with very limited influence by the federal government. There is therefore an absence of uniform standards in the USA system of school governance. School-site decision making by governing councils on personnel issues, is viewed by many as undermining teachers' rights and collective bargaining in the USA. There is a varying pattern of school staffing because governing councils in the USA can fire or hire as they see fit (Razik and Swanson: 1995). It was discovered that only the state of Chicago in the USA, follows a system of governance that is similar to the Republic of South Africa (RSA). The system of governance in the UK is somewhat similar to that of the RSA in that there are local school councils that are representative of the various community structures. Policy initiatives in both countries are aimed at increasing parental participation in decision-making, including the selection of staff through SGBs (Arnott and Raab: 2000). In South Africa, the responsibility of staff selection has been handed down to the SGBs through the power of legislation, which takes into account that these structures require a lot of capacity building, as stated in Section 19 of SASA. It is the recommendation by the SGB that influences the appointment made by the Head of Department.

## **2.7 The debate regarding the inclusion of parent members of the School Governing Body**

Traditionally, education has been regarded as the exclusive domain of teachers with parental participation being very limited. This resulted in the division between home and school becoming a very clearly marked one. With the promulgation of SASA schools

have become more open to parents and their active participation in the educational matters of their children. This participation is understood in different terms in different schools, ranging from inviting them in the annual general meeting or only in fundraising drives, to decision-making in critical areas such as staff selection (Lemmer ,1994).

The view by those who are against the involvement of lay governors in the selection process is that this process is a matter for professionals that needs to be handled by professionals. Their argument is that most of the lay governors are not capable of participating effectively in this sophisticated process. The claim is that some lay governors tend to favour or prefer local candidates even if they are not suitably qualified over more suitable outsiders. Lack of comprehension of the legislative framework that underpins the selection policy and the implementation thereof was also cited as one of the challenges regarding the inclusion of lay governors (Fleisch, 2002).

As noted in the first chapter under the discussion on the background to the study on the first page, this was a strong viewpoint by the educators against the inclusion of parents in selection committees dealing with school-based management posts. This view came up frequently during the four public hearings that were held by the ministerial review committee in the province. Reasons put forward, mostly by educators and other departmental officials were the lack of management experience by most of the lay governors in their work environment, the lay governors' lack of knowledge of the educational environment, the problem around the language of the interview and lack of knowledge and understanding of the departmental regulations governing the selection process. Murphy (2002) has observed that most educators complain of micro-management by the lay leadership which sometimes becomes "collective management committees" instead of remaining policymaking bodies that look into the governance of the school. Nixon, Allan and Mannion (2001) discuss the complexity that exists between the need for governors to be a body representing the interest of the local community in the school's affairs and the fact that there is growing a demand for expertise in various areas of governance, especially the selection of staff. The trend in some countries is to

move towards appointing specialist governors which creates a great possibility of territorial conflict between “quasi-professionals” and the real professionals.

Anderson et al (2001) emphasize that although

*“Professionals may feel that selection of professionals is a matter of expertise, so it is, but it is also a matter of more general judgment in which lay governors have shown to be capable of performing a useful function and where governors require the assistance and education, this duty rests with the principal and the education Department to educate them to their full potential”*

*(Anderson et al, 2001)*

In support of the inclusion of lay governors in the selection committee Middlewood and Lumby (1997) describe the involvement of lay governors in the governing of schools as well as in the selection of staff as ensuring democratic accountability and a social legitimation of the local community. SASA broadens governance in schools to include parents in decision-making on critical matters such as selection of school managers regardless of parental literacy levels.

The above implies that parental involvement in the selection committee has advantages for the SGB and that these advantages, include the provisioning of a unique experience and environment for the development of critical reflection and judgment by lay governors. It also entails active inquiry, communication and moral sensitivity which are crucial elements in the selection process (Snauwaert, 1993). It is apparent that because lay governors serve for a period of three years with by-elections taking place during the term of office, thus bringing in new members, SGBs require ongoing assistance by the education department to build their capacity around issues pertaining to selection procedures.

The effective performance of lay governors who are members of selection committees relies heavily on the attitude of the principal who forms the link between the department and the lay governors at the level of the school. MacBeath (1998) purports that:

*“The SGB is sometimes looked at as a friendly outsider and a sympathetic critic and the quality of the relationship between the principal and the governors is critical in the effectiveness of the SGB.”*

According to Dean (2001) lay governors are said to perform exceptionally well if they receive the correct information, are communicated with as equals and are allowed to occupy roles beyond those of symbolic representations at morning assemblies, to which professionals sometimes relegate them into. The SGB thus becomes a means to build capacity of the school community to be able to fulfill the vision and mission of the school and to ensure that what takes place within the classroom is in sync with the needs of not just the immediate but also the broader community.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

The main areas of focus in this study were the challenges faced by SGBs in implementing the selection policy in relation to school-based management posts. It emerges from the literature reviewed that the fundamental principles of democracy that underpin our new system of governance are critical in ensuring that there is full participation of the entire school community in ensuring high quality education. The devolution of authority to SGBs to participate maximally in decision-making regarding the selection of staff is one area that is seen as ensuring that schools communities work collaboratively. The ability to participate fully and effectively by all stakeholders depends on the extent to which opportunities for the development and sustenance of the necessary skills have been made available to SGBs. It is acknowledged that for the selection policy to be properly implemented it has to take the various schools' contextual factors into consideration. SGBs are best positioned to know what these factors are.



The critical question that was investigated through this study was whether these structures receive adequate support by the department in their execution of their legal mandate. Findings on this issue are presented in chapter 4.

## CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

Kaplan, in Cohen et al (2001:93), “suggests that the aim of methodology is to help us to understand, in the broadest possible terms, not the products of scientific inquiry but the process itself”. In line with this view, the intention of this chapter is to elaborate on the research approach used to conduct the investigation, how sampling was done to ensure a sample that is representative of the subject of inquiry, the various instruments that were used to collect data, some ethical considerations of the study, the data collection and analysis process and probable limitations to the study.

### 3.2 The research approach

The researcher used a qualitative form of enquiry to understand how the policy regarding the selection of staff into promotion positions was being implemented. The rationale for adopting a qualitative approach rested in Cooper’s argument (2001) that:

*“Qualitative research assumes that there are multiple realities –that the world is not an objective thing out there but a function of personal interaction and perception. It is a highly subjective phenomenon in need of interpreting rather than measuring...It is assumed that meaning is embedded in people’s experiences and mediated through the investigator’s own perceptions.”*

This approach assisted in drawing conclusions based on the perceptions of the research participants regarding the effectiveness of the implementation of the staff selection process for school-based management by SGBs.

### 3.3 Theoretical framework

The naturalistic theory of symbolic interactivism, as outlined in the first chapter under the discussion on the theoretical framework (page 4), indicates that the SGBs are key role-players in the interpretation and implementation of policy regarding staff selection

(Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). It also accommodates the policy formulation principle of recontextualisation as alluded to in the second chapter on page 10, under the discussion on policy implementation. In view of the above, it was understood that one could not expect a uniform response in the implementation of the selection policy from one school to another. There was a possibility that some SGBs would be more concerned with preserving their culture and tradition and that in their implementation of the selection policy they would be looking for a local candidate, no matter what. This meant that one could not look at the phenomenon of the implementation of the staff selection policy in a mechanistic and reductionist view (Cohen et al, 2001). What this means is that one cannot reduce SGBs to only implementers of the Department but that are able to attach their own meaning and interpretation to such a policy.

### **3.4 Population of the study\ ,**

The school population comprises of schools in the new Umlazi District consisting mostly of schools in townships south of Durban. Most disputes around the implementation of the staff selection policy by SGBs come from the Black and Indian township schools (ELRC, 2000). The new Umlazi district manages a large number of township schools from these two population groups and was therefore viewed as the most appropriate site for conducting this particular research. The district was chosen because its schools had not been included during the public hearings on school governance.

Also constituting the population in this study were School Governing Body members who have been involved in the staff selection for appointments to school-based management posts. These included parent members, educator members, principals of schools as ex-officio members of the SGB as well as representatives of the education department charged with the training of the SGBs.

The principals from the three schools that were chosen are part of a team of master trainers who assist the department in training SGBs on all aspects of School Governance including the staff selection policy. The close association between the researcher and these principals enabled the former to gain access to members of governing bodies of

various schools. The researcher led the team from the Department that trained master trainers in all districts, including Umlazi on a quarterly basis. It was in these training sessions where strong relations were formed with the principals of the three schools.

### **3.5 Sampling**

The above discussion means that purposive judgment sampling, a non-probability sampling method was used to generate a sample from the population. This therefore means that the sample may not be representative of the population and that it will not be possible to generalize the findings from the sample to the wider population (Page et al, 2000). Judgment sampling of the group that would participate in the research was based on four aspects of the process, namely, the sample size in relation to the time available to conduct the research, the parameters of the sample, as well as access to the sample. Only three schools were selected for participation in the study due to the fact that there was limited time during which to complete the study. The study was also intended to focus on the district where disputes on staff selection were prevalent.

Two schools in Black townships and one school in a predominantly Indian township were sampled to participate in the research. The researcher ensured that the sample consisted of respondents, who, in her judgment would provide the necessary information on the subject that was being studied. The officials were selected because they conducted training to master trainers on the implementation of the policy on staff selection. Principals were selected because they provided training to other principals in the district as well as to SGBs of their schools and they were also playing a significant role during staff selection in their schools as indicated in chapter one. Educators and parents who were in the SGB had also participated during staff selection in their schools. A total of three parent members of the SGBs were interviewed. It was initially intended that three SGB educator members would be interviewed but only two educators were interviewed. This was due to the fact that the interviews could only be conducted at the end of the fourth term and the third educator was with marking of Grade 12 examination scripts. The three principals and ten officials of the department of education were provided with questionnaires for completion.

### **3.6 Triangulation**

Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect primary data from the respondents. This triangulation was based on Crotty (1998) and De Vos's (2000) view that triangulation is founded upon the notion that every form of data is potentially biased and that the use of a combination of methods can either eliminate or highlight these biases. In justifying the utilization of a variety of methods in data collection, Cooper (1998) points out that

*“The lack of apparent rigour in data collection in most research is frequently a basis for accusations of bias and for concern over the lack of generalisability of findings”*

In order to limit the problem presented in the above quote, the researcher then decided to use a combination of both questionnaires and interviews for data collection.

#### **3.6.1 Questionnaires**

The decision to use questionnaires for data collection for this research was based on a variety of reasons. The first of these was to elicit information on the implementation of the staff selection policy from the officials of the education department who are involved in training and monitoring. Also, questionnaires offered an opportunity to the researcher for collecting information from a relatively large group of people. Due to the fact that questionnaires are impersonal, the respondents were then provided with the opportunity to remain anonymous. To prevent questionnaires from encroaching on the respondents' time they were designed in such a way that the time taken to complete them was not unreasonable (Cohen et al, 2001). After piloting the questionnaire, the researcher came to a conclusion that it could take the respondents about 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire, considering the fact that these officials have very busy schedules. This was one of the reasons for not interviewing principals of schools. The questionnaires were faxed to all principals and posted to officials of the department. The sample questionnaire is included in the list of appendices as Appendix 01.

A structured questionnaire, with set closed and open-ended questions was administered. The former was used in order to accommodate the size of the sample and enable the researcher to generate frequencies of responses for statistical information (Cooper et al, 2001). Open-ended questions allowed respondents to state their feelings regarding possible improvements in the capacity building programmes in line with the qualitative nature of this study.

The questionnaire was divided into sections A to D based under the following sub-headings:

- Section A called for general information about the respondent and his/her involvement with the department of education in relation to school governance and the level of interest in the field under research,
- Section B was structured in such a way that it consisted of rating scales from 1 to 5 to allow for the varying degrees of responses. The figure 1 on the scale indicated that the respondent strongly agrees with the statement and the figure 5 meant that the respondent strongly disagrees with the statement. The midpoints in the scale were included to accommodate non- extremist responses to questions.
- Section C included dichotomous questions where respondents were expected to indicate their choice by either yes or no.
- Section D was for open-ended questions where respondents were allowed space to provide detailed information on issues raised in that section as well as provide additional information on their opinions on the implementation of the staff selection policy by SGBs.

Completed questionnaires were returned by all three principals of the sample schools. The School Governance co-ordinator from Umlazi district returned the completed questionnaire and nine out of the eleven questionnaires that were sent to head office personnel were returned completed. Therefore out of 15 questionnaires that were sent out a total of 13 questionnaires were returned completed, constituting an 86% return. What is significant is that responses from all three role players were received and would lead to a balanced judgement regarding the implementation of the selection process in this district.

### **3.6.2 Interviews**

A series of interviews were conducted with parent as well as educator members of the SGBs in the three sample schools. A copy of the interview schedule has been attached as Appendix 02 in the list of appendices.

The rationale behind conducting interviews was because the research itself is based on symbolic interactionism theory which emphasizes consideration for individual interpretation of the staff selection policy during implementation, as discussed in Chapter 1 page 4 under the theoretical framework. Interviews afforded lay governors an opportunity to speak for themselves regarding their implementation of this policy in their individual schools. The researcher used semi-structured interviews which allowed for further probing where this was necessary (Denzin et al, 2000). All interviewees were asked the same basic questions in the same order.

Interviews were conducted in the language of the interviewees to remove the language barrier and to accommodate the varying literacy levels of lay governors. For educators, interviews were conducted to encourage freedom of expression whereby the educators would be free to articulate their opinions around the implementation of the selection policy. Principals were not interviewed due to the fact that the researcher wanted to ensure consistency by using the same instrument namely, the questionnaire as a means of gathering information related to capacity building of SGBs by principals as well as Departmental officials. Due to the hectic nature of the principals' schedules the researcher decided not to interview them.

The interview schedule included questions that were related to the experience of the interviewees as members of the SGB as well as members of selection committees. Questions 1-3 were intended to acquire information regarding the experience of the interviewee around the selection process. The crux of the interview was based on the open-ended questions asked in section 4 of the interview schedule which included questions based on:

- The consultation process between SGBs and the education department during the policy formulation stage,
- Strategies of the department regarding capacity building of SGBs,
- The role of the teacher unions as an important stakeholder in the process,
- The involvement of lay governors and educators who are not managers in the filling of management posts
- Challenges that SGBs experience in the implementation of the staff selection policy.

Question 5 dealt with possible amendments the respondents felt that they needed to be made to the selection policy in order to improve on its implementation

Out of a total of six interviews that were scheduled, only five were conducted. These included all three parent members of the SGBs from all sample schools and only two of the three educators who had served as members of the Selection Committee. The third educator was not available due to the marking of Grade 12 examination scripts and the closure of the schools for the summer vacation made it impossible to reschedule the interview. This means that 83% of the intended interviews were conducted.

Principals of the three schools were not interviewed but were requested to complete questionnaires which included critical questions on the training of staff selection committees. The questionnaires also provided them with an opportunity to express their own views on the implementation of the staff selection policy in their schools.

### **3.7 Ethical considerations:**

Besides this being a gesture of courtesy, but also considering the sensitive nature of the subject under study, letters were sent to schools to request the permission of the SGBs to participate in the research. The purpose was to protect principals from being accused later on of jeopardizing or compromising the position of the SGBs at the schools. When dealing with interviewees, their vulnerability was addressed by following the principle of *primum non nocere* which guarantees the participants' confidentiality and anonymity



throughout the interview (Cooper et al; 2001). Questionnaires were structured in such a way that it was not important for the respondent to identify him/herself by name or that of the school or office. Furthermore, participants were given the assurance that their names and those of their schools would not be divulged during the research process.

### **3.8 Data collection process**

The close interaction between the researcher and the principals of all the three sample schools during school governance training, as explained earlier in this chapter on page 19 where the population of the study is discussed, assisted in gaining access to these schools. In each of the three sample schools the principals were approached first to establish whether they would be willing to facilitate the participation of the other SGB members in the research. Once that willingness had been established letters formally requesting the SGB members to participate in the research were then faxed to school. Copies of the questionnaire were faxed to the principals as well. Convenient dates, times and venues for interviews were then negotiated with the schools and these were honoured. Visits to conduct interviews were used to collect the questionnaires from principals of schools.

Departmental officials from the school governance unit were approached informally, requesting them to participate in the research. This was done out of courtesy and also to ensure that they become aware that these would be posted to them. Questionnaires were then posted to the district and Head Office. Members of this unit are responsible for the training of SGBs on how to form the selection committees and how these committees must implement the policy on staff selection and the researcher is the lead convenor of this unit. Questionnaires from this group were collected during a scheduled monthly meeting to avoid incurring any expenses during the process.

### **3.9 Data analysis**

Responses from questionnaires were assembled into statistical and thematically meaningful units. Data collected from interviews was transcribed and various themes that emerged from the data were grouped into different categories. This is in line with the general guidelines for the data analysis framework as suggested by Schurink (1996), that

the thematic approach is critical when analyzing data. All data collected was organized and categorized into themes and analysed for consensus, similarities and unpredictable responses.

### **3.10 Limitations of the study**

The study did not include all Governing Body members from all schools nor all departmental officials but was only limited to schools in Umlazi district and ten officials of the department. Furthermore, only three schools were studied for the purpose of this research. This means that the results cannot be generalised to all schools in the province. Despite this limitation the study was found to be useful in that even though the findings are not generalizable, the fact that the study was qualitative means that it developed a better understanding of the issue.

The researcher is known to almost all of the respondents due to her involvement in School Governance in the Department. This could result in some of the respondents avoiding to say things which, according to them, would be viewed as negative criticism to her section. Respondents were, however, put at ease by the researcher around this issue. The language issue during interviews also posed some limitations and therefore parent members of the SGB were interviewed in their mother tongue to enable them to express themselves freely, which then became cumbersome in terms of having to translate their responses into English later on.

The research findings that were derived from the study are presented in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Introduction

As already indicated, this study investigated the implementation of the selection policy for school-based management posts by School Governing Bodies in three sample schools in Umlazi District. It particularly looked at the challenges facing the various components of the School Governing Bodies when implementing the selection policy and how they cope with these challenges. It further investigated the nature of assistance rendered by the department of education to School Governing Bodies during the implementation of the selection policy at school level. As indicated in the previous chapter, primary data was collected from the members of the School Governing Bodies by means of interviews and from principals of schools and departmental officials through the administration of questionnaires. Findings emanating from this data are discussed hereunder.

#### 4.2 Biographic information on respondents

Both the questionnaire began by collecting biographical information of the respondents to highlight critical factors relevant to this study and to the nature and quality of their responses and involvement with the subject of research.

##### 4.2.1 Table 1. Questionnaire respondents

Section A of the questionnaire which was completed by officials of the Department and principals of the three schools yielded the following information about the respondents' activities and experience in relation to the implementation of the staff selection policy:

Position in the Department	Years of experience in School Governance	School or Office based	Nature of involvement in School Governance
Principal A	08	School-based	Master Trainer
Principal B	06	School-based	Master Trainer
Principal C	09	School-based	Master trainer
District official	06	Office-based	SGB Training and dispute resolution

Provincial official A	08	Office-based	Policy interpretation and SGB Training
Provincial official B	06	Office-based	Policy interpretation and SGB Training
Provincial official C	07	Office-based	Policy interpretation and SGB Training
Provincial official D	05	Office-based	Policy interpretation and SGB Training
Provincial official E	08	Office-based	Policy interpretation and SGB Training
Provincial official F	07	Office-based	Policy interpretation and SGB Training
Provincial official G	08	Office-based	Policy interpretation and SGB Training
Provincial official H	06	Office-based	Policy interpretation and SGB Training
Provincial official I	06	Office-based	Policy interpretation and SGB Training

The table indicates that the principals of schools have 5-9 years of experience in the governance of their schools. This means that they have accumulated adequate experience in dealing with the staff selection policy of the Department. These three respondents were thus positioned where the actual implementation of the policy takes place and their feedback therefore can be considered as first hand accounts of the implementation of this policy. When it comes to the nature of their involvement in school involvement, the table indicates that these principals, besides the fact that they train SGBs in their own schools, they also assist by training other principals on the various policies of the Department. They therefore train Selection Committees in the District on the staff selection policy and have a primary account of the type and effectiveness of the training offered by the Department.

The table also indicates that the district official also has adequate experience in terms of school governance as well as an added advantage of handling disputes resulting from the implementation processes. This indicates that her responses would give more light into the actual causes of the disputes, whether they emanate from interpretation, the role played either by the type or frequency of training offered by the Department.

Besides the benefit of their vast experience, officials from Head Office have an added advantage in that they are involved in the training and interpretation of policies and can recommend possible amendments. Their responses regarding the implementation of the staff selection policy based on their interpretive and training experience were therefore very important for this study.

#### 4.2.2 Table 2. Interview Respondents

The interviews conducted with educators and parent members of the SGB yielded the following information regarding their experience in the SGB and involvement in the staff selection process:

Component of the SGB	Years of Experience in the SGB	Years of experience as member of the Interview Committee
Parent A	06	04
Parent B	08	05
Parent C	06	03
Educator A	06	05
Educator B	03	02

The three parents have evidently accumulated more than five years of experience as members of SGBs and were therefore regarded as suitable respondents in this study. Also, the table indicates that these respondents have also been involved in the implementation of the staff selection policy for two or more years. During their term of office, they have received training from the Department and can therefore be regarded as

reliable respondents. Furthermore, the fact that they are based at the school level where the actual policy implementation takes place was regarded as very critical in this study.

### **4.3 Responses addressing key questions of this study**

The three key questions that this study sought to answer regarding the implementation of the staff selection policy related to challenges facing SGBs in the implementation of the staff selection policy, how the SGBs coped with these challenges and the systems that the Department put in place to assist SGBs in the implementation level. The following findings accrued from the analysis in response to the above key questions:

#### **4.3.1 Responses from the questionnaire**

##### **4.3.1.1 Responses relating to the consultative and implementation processes of the Department of Education**

The question regarding the Department's consultative process in policy implementation and the level of consultation of the SGBs in the selection process was regarded as important. The responses suggested that there is consensus between officials of the department and principals of schools that there is insufficient consultation between the Department and the parent component of the SGB on matters relating to the development and implementation of the staff selection policy. The feeling from all three Principals (100%) and ten officials of the department (71%) was that SGBs do not have inputs into the formulation of the selection policy. All these respondents were of the opinion that the SGB only become involved at the implementation stage in accordance with the provincial procedure manual (Human Resources Management Circular, 1999).

Responses from 80% of the respondents indicated the need for the Department to consult with representatives of SGBs regarding the staff selection policy as was done with the labour organizations. Respondents felt that consultation was going to lead to ownership of the implementation process by all stakeholders. All respondents felt that the interaction of SGBs with application forms during the short listing stage was appropriate in that the SGBs only dealt with those

applications which had met with all the requirements of the advertised post. They were only concerned with the suitability part of the process.

#### **4.3.1.2 Responses relating to training offered by the Department of Education**

This section is on the question that dealt with the perceived adequacy and effectiveness of the training of SGBs by the Department on the staff selection policy. Responses by 66% of the principals were that the Department provides adequate training to role-players with 42 % of the officials also agreeing that the training on the implementation of the staff selection policy provided by the Department to the SGBs each time there was a new procedure manual was, in their view, adequate. However, responses by 57% of the officials also indicated that this training needed to be well co-ordinated by the various components of the Department involved with the implementation of this policy. The officials indicated that training was fragmented due to the fact that it was conducted by different sections of the Department which then made it difficult to monitor policy implementation, while 66% of the principals indicated that the training of SGBs was adequate and efficient.

#### **4.3.1.3 Responses relating to challenges facing SGBs in the implementation of the selection policy**

Respondents referred to the following challenges:

- Responses from 70% of the principals were that the Department only provided training when there were advertised posts whilst there were lots of issues relating to the implementation of the staff selection policy. Examples cited were the transformational issues related to equity.
- The lack of inclusion of the core functions for various management posts for heads of departments, deputy principals and principals during training of Selection Committees posed a challenge. This inadequacy of knowledge of these core functions, especially by lay governors, compromises the efficacy of the decision regarding the suitability of the candidates.

- The Department only provided training to the principals and chairpersons of SGBs who in turn capacitate the rest of the Selection Committees. This cascade model led to different interpretations of certain sections of the policy which could lead to unnecessary disputes.

#### **4.3.1.4 Departmental strategies to assist SGBs**

The following improvement strategies were suggested to counter the challenges that emanated from this study:

- Responses by 60% of the principals indicated that there is a need to increase the frequency of the training sessions with emphasis on the training of Selection Committees.
- Responses by 80% of principals suggested the need for the inclusion of core functions of the various management levels, as laid out by the department (PAM document of 1999) in the training of SGBs. This will ensure that Interview Committees know exactly what is expected of the suitable candidate when formulating questions for interviews. It was felt that the knowledge of the core functions would avoid the insistence of educators to the committee to recommend a colleague from within the school even if he or she is not suitable. The feeling was that lay governors would also understand that they cannot insist on a local educator or a relative of one of the SGB members if they do not meet the criteria.
- The training of the SGBs by departmental officials was suggested instead of the matter being left in the hands of the chairperson and the principal who had attended a Departmental seminar to cascade the information. Responses by 100% of the officials indicated that this would help avoid having conflicting interpretations and distortion of information. Respondent E wrote in the questionnaire that “this would reduce the number of disputes that are plaguing the department as a result of breach of the selection procedures”.



#### **4.4 Responses from interviews**

The responses that emerged from data collected during interviews were not very different from those that emerged from responses to questionnaires. The purpose of the interviews was to triangulate responses from questionnaires and further develop a deeper understanding of issues raised in this study.

##### **4.4.1 Lack of involvement of lay governors in policy formulation**

It emerged from the interviews in the same way that it had in the questionnaires that lay governors were not involved at the policy formulation process. Instead, responses from 100% of the governors indicated that they viewed themselves only as implementers of a “top-down” policy. They cited that only the labour organizations, as stakeholders in the selection process, are able to make its inputs on behalf of educators during the policy formulation stage. Governors indicated that they also needed to make inputs during the policy formulation stage. The respondents felt that lay governors would be able to completely own the entire staff selection process, instead of only viewing it as obligatory, if they were involved from the very beginning of its formulation. A similar view is expounded by Riley et al (2000). Seventy percent (70%) of SGB members indicated that they would therefore like to be consulted by the Department to give opinion in the formulation process of the staff selection policy.

##### **4.4.2 The conduct of educator-members during the staff selection process**

Another finding that emerged from the interviews was that all lay governors raised an issue regarding the conduct of educator members of selection committees in cases where one of the applicants is from within the school. The finding regarding this matter was that parent members in the selection committee preferred to exclude educators from these committees where applicants were colleagues from the same school. The reason stated by parent C for this is that:

*“bafika bethwele ozakwabo abafundisa nabo befuna kuqashwe bona”* (they have specific colleagues whom they want to be appointed in the positions).

Parent B cited that some educators who are part of the selection committee discuss the performance of the candidates for the principal's post with their colleagues. This respondent felt that this jeopardizes the new principal's integrity even before being appointed to the position. Anderson et al (2001) confirmed the concern raised by parent B by indicating that educator governors in the UK sometimes use sub-committees to challenge management or to perpetuate a particular line of thinking should they want to impose certain demands on the school management. This would then involve attempting to influence the selection committee to recommend a particular individual for the principal's position who will then assist them in achieving their agenda.

#### **4.4.3 Inclusion of lay governors**

The challenge expressed by educators during public hearings referred to in Chapter One under the discussion on the background to the study on page 3, was that educators were insisting that parent members of the SGB should not become involved in the appointment of senior staff at school. The reason put forward for this is in line with Hoyle et al's (1996) assertion that there are "non-job related factors that sometimes dominate the selection decision as well as the problem of meager knowledge of the duties of school management by lay governors". This however, did not appear to be a problem to the various interviewees in this study. All indicated that there was a need to include lay governors during staff selection. The educator members viewed community members as critical stakeholders in the transformation process of each school. Parent A for example, indicated that:

*"Involving some parents in Interview Committees has assisted in that the rest of the parents accept the outcome of the selection process because of the participation of parents who represent their aspirations."*

#### **4.4.4 Dealing with other stakeholders during the staff selection process**

Interview responses also indicated that SGBs are facing the challenge of dealing with Teacher Unions who have more knowledge of the selection procedure than they do.

Governors cited that this tends to compromise the position of most parent members of SGB who serve in the Selection Committee. The majority of the respondents (68.5%) indicated that there is a lack of understanding by SGBs of the role to be played by the Teacher Unions in the staff selection process. Words commonly used by respondents to describe their interaction with the social partners were “interfere”, “intimidate”, “dominate”, “dictate”, “exceed observer status” or “overstep the mark”. Parent C insisted that

*“more understanding has to be created to all stakeholders through proper training, so that no stakeholder oversteps their line or stance”.*

All three respondents indicated that the role played by the Teacher Unions was an important one and that the Department must enhance this partnership through well coordinated training ventures.

#### **4.5 Coping strategies of School Governing Bodies during policy implementation**

The second key question in this study dealt with the strategies used by SGBs to cope with the above-mentioned challenges. Despite concerns regarding the insufficient training on the selection process, responses from 80% of lay governors were that they were competent and were coping with the task of implementing the staff selection policy, except in a few areas which they felt, had to be looked into. All educators who were interviewed concurred with the lay governors in that none of the three schools had received any grievances or disputes as a result of their implementation of staff selection procedures. To them, this was an indication that the SGBs were competent in performing the task at hand but could not say that it is the case with SGBs of all public schools.

It emerged that this was because most of the interviewees had vast experience in the implementation of the staff selection policy. Besides this, all interviewees indicated that networking with other SGBs in the district had assisted them in learning from one another and sharing the knowledge about the policy. Also the co-option clause as mandated by SASA (1996) has benefited all three schools upon implementing the policy. This clause

enables SGBs to co-opt community members who have expertise in staff selection into the selection committee. SGBs from the three schools co-opted retired principals or human resource managers to form part of their selection committees. The co-option clause has been utilized effectively by the staff selection committees of all three schools to enable them select the most suitable candidates into relevant positions.

Some schools cluster themselves together and organize institution based training which is conducted by the various principals which allows for all members of the Selection Committees to receive adequate training. Other SGBs, who have the financial means, would join voluntary associations of SGBs where their members receive training which is organized through private service providers.

#### **4.6 Systems put in place by the Department to assist SGBs**

The third question dealt with the systems which the department had put in place to build the capacity of SGBs in the implementation of the selection policy. The finding on this matter was that almost half of the Departmental officials (42.8%) are of the opinion that the Department could still do more to ensure that the training provided to SGBs is adequate to equip them to implement the selection policy effectively. They also felt that it was critical for training to be responsive to the specific needs of the SGBs. This is in line with Bisschoff's (in Anderson et al, 2000) claim that "the key to the successful execution of the school governor's duties is to learn about the school's strengths, weaknesses and opportunities". This enables governors to cope effectively with the implementation of policies in their environment.

The finding on training of SGBs was that there was room for a lot of improvement in the training of SGBs on the selection policy. Concerns put forward by interviewees included the following:

- Insufficient time allocated to training on selection procedures
- The concentration of training on the principals and chairpersons of SGBs to the exclusion of other SGB members

- Lack of a system to ensure that the chairperson communicates knowledge received during training to the entire SGB.
- Fragmented training whereby the Teacher Union observers receive training from their organizations and SGB members receive training from the Department whilst both are role-players in the same selection committee.
- The training of Teacher Union representatives and SGBs together to narrow the gap between the two very important stakeholders and to minimize the tension that is perceived as resulting from a lack of co-ordinated training.
- The department should play a bigger role than is currently happening in the training process. Currently, the training is left in the hands of the SGBs who do not, most of the time, have the professional expertise to conduct the selection process for such professional positions.

The finding was that members in the selection committee therefore do not operate in unison as interviewee A explained that in order to avoid conflicting interpretation of procedures

*“It would have been nice if we would meet together with the Teacher Unions to discuss pertinent points to the process so each one knows exactly what their position in the committee is before the actual process begins and train together and have common knowledge and can reach common grounds during the selection process”.*

As is indicated by all respondents to questionnaires, those who were interviewed also indicated that it was imperative for the education department to improve on the strategies for training School Governing Bodies on the staff selection policy and procedures. Departmental officials indicated a need for improvement on the co-ordination of training on the selection policy implementation among the sections of the Department that deal with the SGBs. Presently, the HRM section formulates policy on selection of staff whilst the School Governance Development section is responsible for the training of SGBs on the policy whilst the Labour sections handle all the grievances. The officials felt that the three sections should synergise their training plans for SGBs.

#### **4.7 Conclusion:**

The above exposition indicates positive aspects regarding the ability of the sample SGBs to implement the staff selection policy in their schools as perceived by the respondents. It also reflects on the respondents' opinions regarding areas of improvement for the Department in giving support to SGBs when they are implementing this policy through proper training strategies. The various challenges which SGBs are facing during implementation are also indicative of the need for the Department to employ an interventionist approach to training.

The next chapter discusses the conclusions of these findings on the implementation of the staff selection policy by the SGBs. It also expands on the recommendations for enhancing the skills of the selection committees as sub-committees of the SGBs to execute their task to the best of their ability and in line with the legislative framework. The chapter also offers recommendations for further research in areas related to this study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

The Education Department, in its endeavor to devolve decision-making power to the school level, has issued a policy that incorporates SGBs in the selection processes for school-based management posts. The question is whether this policy is being effectively implemented by the SGBs and whether the department gives the necessary support to these structures to enable them to execute their legal mandate to the benefit of the learners, the educators, the department of education and the communities themselves. One of the strategic goals, as reflected in the Provincial Master Strategic Plan (2003-2006:8), is

*“to transform schools into self-reliant and effective learning institutions that are also vibrant centers of community life... through creating governance structures that are conducive to effective teaching and learning ... and to develop programmes that will encourage community participation”*

To enable this strategic goal to be achieved, section 19 of SASA mandates the provincial education department to ensure that SGBs are empowered to carry out their roles and responsibilities by setting aside funds to train them and ascertain that departmental officials are appointed to perform this task.

It was therefore deemed important to undertake this study to determine how the structures of governance have been empowered to ensure maximal community participation at school level. The study on the implementation of the selection policy by SGBs, which is pivotal in the achieving effective teaching and learning in these institutions, was a means of examining the participation of communities in critical decision-making.

This chapter presents conclusions emerging from findings in this study. It also discusses the recommendations that were drawn from the findings regarding the implementation of the staff selection policy by Governing Bodies of three public schools in Umlazi District and also offers recommendations for further research on related issues.

## **5.2 Conclusions on the study**

It is important to highlight that one of the major findings that emerged from this study is that the training programmes that the department offers SGBs in relation to the staff selection policy and processes was found to leave much to be desired by both the officials of the department and the members of the SGBs themselves. The areas of training that were indicated as needing the most attention are:

- the duration and frequency of the training sessions,
- co-ordinated training of SGBs by the department itself and
- the content which is exhaustive of the knowledge that is necessary for implementing the selection policy by SGBs at school level. The finding was that the SGBs are not exposed to the roles and responsibilities of the various managerial levels from Principal to Deputy Principal to Head of Department as laid down in the Personnel Administration Measures (1998). They also lack exposure to the various legislative prescripts that are relating to the employment of staff. What this means is that they will be limited in their understanding of the professional and managerial expertise and expectations for candidates to these positions. Another finding in this study was that the Employment Equity Act and the implementation of the department's equity plan are other important policy issues that the selection committees need to be capacitated on.

Another finding was around the issue of the roles of the members of selection committees. It emerged that stakeholders have not been made to fully understand the roles of one another and the rationale behind the inclusion of the stakeholders as part of the committee especially among parent members of the SGBs and the educators. Representatives of Educator Unions were also viewed in a somewhat skeptical manner especially by lay governors who felt intimidated by the level of understanding of the



selection policy by this component. Riley, et al (2000) emphasises that if selection committees are to become effective, it is important that the relationship between the educator unions and the department be characterized by a shared understanding and commitment to common goals, open communication as well as collaborative problem solving. Combined training of all the different members of the selection committee would then help ensure that they can share the information they have acquired and be open and transparent in their dealings with one another.

### **5.3 Recommendations on the implementation of the selection policy**

#### **5.3.1 Consultation with SGBs on the selection policy**

Findings in the study reveal that there is need for the department to review its consultative processes during the formulation stage of the selection policy to enable lay governors to make inputs into the policy. Through the KZN School Education Act, No 3 (1996) the department has created district and regional forums which are formed by elected chairpersons of SGBs who are lay governors. These are the structures that can be engaged in consultation with the department regarding the staff selection policy. It is recommended that SGBs, through the district and regional forums, be afforded an opportunity to make inputs into the development of the staff selection policy. The SGBs will therefore not be seen merely as implementers but as active stakeholders whose opinions carry considerable weight. As implementers of the policy they would be in a position to give feedback into policy development with the view of improving on the quality of management and governance in schools.

#### **5.3.2 Training on the selection policy**

The study also revealed that there has to be some improvements effected in the training processes to ensure that training becomes responsive to the contextual needs of selection committees

- It is recommended that the training programme of the department be needs-based for it to be relevant to the staff selection committees. Training of newly elected and by-elected members of the SGB should include training on staff selection as

well so that SGBs become familiar with the processes even before they engage in the implementation thereof. The study revealed that currently, only those SGBs whose schools have advertised management posts receive intensive training on this subject from the department. This is done in the limited time space whilst some SGBs need more time to be able to master not only the jargon but also the legal processes related to staff selection.

- The model of training used by the Department does not ensure that the information received from training reaches the staff selection committee as it was initially intended. The reasons for this have been cited as the fact that the invitation is usually extended only to the chairperson and the principal of the school. Also, the departmental officials who are not available for site-based training at school level leave it to the principal to further train the remaining members of his or her SGB.

This model of cascade training was viewed by respondents as resulting in different interpretations of the procedures between SGBs of different schools or SGBs and other stakeholders.

- It is therefore recommended that initial training be given to all SGB members collectively, to enable them to have common knowledge on staff selection. Further training should then be conducted to selection committee members in clusters, by officials of the department as a response to their obligation to SASA.
- It is also recommended that the department develops a tool for monitoring and evaluating the training programmes and determine their effectiveness in relation to the implementation of the policy by SGBs. It is hoped that this will result in follow-up training that addresses the problems encountered by those selection committees who seem to be struggling in their implementation of the staff selection policy.

Finally, it is recommended that if the above training is to be effective, a co-ordination forum has to be put in place. The forum needs to include officials of the Department from the various components at Head Office and Districts who are dealing with issues of training which are related to the staff selection policy. These components have been identified as including the Human Resource Management section which is responsible for the formulation and cascading of the policy. Then there is a Labour Relations section which has to deal with the disputes that arise from deviation from policy. This section can provide information to other sections on the schools that need further training and the areas of training. The School Governance unit responsible for overall capacity building of the School Governing Bodies is another critical role-player for inclusion into this forum. It is perhaps the unit to be responsible for co-ordination of training of SGBs within the Department.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for further research**

Based on the findings of this study there are a number of issues that could be the focus for future research. The various training methods used by the provincial education department of education to equip SGBs on the selection policy need to be looked into. The implications of the selection policy in the filling of management posts in relation to the new curriculum changes could be further investigated, since curriculum management is also the responsibility of the school management team. The involvement of all stakeholders as part of consultation during the policy formulation stage is another issue that could be investigated to enhance participation and contextualization of the policy formulation process. For generalizability, a follow-up survey to determine whether the findings in this study apply to the rest of the province of KwaZulu-Natal could be undertaken.

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UNIVERSITY OF NATAL- DURBAN  
EDGEWOOD CAMPUS

DEGREE:           MASTERS IN EDUCATION

TOPIC:            THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SELECTION  
POLICY BY SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES WITH  
REGARD TO SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT  
POSTS IN THREE SCHOOLS IN UMLAZI  
DISTRICT

STUDENT:         BP GCABASHE

YEAR:            2003

*Dear Colleague,*

Kindly complete the following questionnaire and return to the above-mentioned student on or before **14/11/2003**.

Your co-operation in this regard is highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance.

Mrs BP Gcabashe



## QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire shall be completed by Principals of schools, District Promotions co-ordinators and Provincial Labour Relations officials.

### SECTION A - GENERAL INFORMATION

1. What is your position in the department of education?.....
2. For how many years have you been involved in School Governance?.....
3. Are you school-based or office-based? .....
4. If not school-based how did you become involved in School Governance? (tick one)

4.1 Applied for the position	
4.2 Due to Departmental restructuring process	
4.3 Other (specify)	

5. What is the nature of your involvement with School Governing Bodies in the staff selection process?

5.1 Training of School Governing Bodies	
5.2 Grievance/Dispute resolution process	

6. Does the Department of education, in your opinion, ensure that School Governing Bodies understand their functions in terms of section 20 & 21 when executing their responsibilities?  
Yes/No.....

### SECTION B - STAFF SELECTION POLICY

Indicate your opinion by marking the appropriate number on the scale provided for each question.

To what extent do you **agree/disagree** with the following statements

1-strongly agree, 2-agree, 3-neither agree or disagree, 4-disagree, 5-strongly disagree:

1. The Provincial Department of education should consult the School Governing Body structures like the Regional Education Councils when drawing up the Staff Selection Policy for school-based management posts.

1	2	3	4	5
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2. The Provincial Department of education should only consult the School Governing Body structures when drawing up the management plan for advertised school-based management posts

1	2	3	4	5
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3. The Provincial Department of education should undertake the entire selection process for school management posts without any involvement of School Governing Bodies.

1	2	3	4	5
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4. The Provincial Department of education and the School Governing Body should undertake the selection process jointly from the sifting of applications to the placement of successful candidates

1	2	3	4	5
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5. The Provincial Department of education should continue with the current nature of involvement of School Governing Bodies in the staff selection process.

1	2	3	4	5
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## SECTION C - TRAINING

Answer the following questions Yes or No. Please give reasons for your answer if you answered "No".

1. The Department of education provides adequate training to its officials who train School Governing Bodies on the staff selection policy for school-based management posts. Yes/No.....

If no why?

.....  
.....  
.....

2. The Department of education provides co-ordinated training to School Governing Bodies throughout the province on the policy for staff selection. Yes/No?.....

If not why?

.....  
.....  
.....

3. The officials of the Department of education provide adequate training to all School Governing Bodies on the staff selection policy to be able to implement it. Yes/No?.....

If not why?

.....  
.....  
.....

4. The training that the officials of the Department of education provide to School Governing Bodies on the staff selection policy for school-based management posts is effective and appropriate. Yes/No?.....

If not why?

.....  
.....  
.....

5. The role of Teacher Unions in the selection of staff has been clearly understood by all stakeholders that are involved in the selection process. Yes/No?.....

If not why?

.....  
.....  
.....

**SECTION D**

Please respond in the spaces provided:

- 1. What in your opinion are the challenges that School Governing Bodies face in implementing the selection policy for school-based management posts?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

- 2. What strategies will/has the Department put in place to assist the School Governing Bodies to overcome the challenges mentioned in 1. above?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

3. Which areas of the staff selection policy regarding school-based management posts does the Department of education need to amend for the School Governing Bodies to be able to implement it successfully?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for answering this questionnaire.

SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATOR  
MEMBERS AND LAY GOVERNORS OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNING  
BODY

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SELECTION POLICY FOR  
MANAGEMENT POSTS BY SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES:

1. WHAT COMPONENT OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY DO YOU REPRESENT?
2. HAVE YOU SERVED AS A MEMBER OF THE GOVERNING BODY BEFORE THE CURRENT TERM OF OFFICE?
3. HAVE YOU SERVED AS A MEMBER OF THE INTERVIEW COMMITTEE FOR SELECTION OF MANAGEMENT POSTS
4. IN TERMS OF SECTION 21 (1) OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS ACT NO 84/1996 THE SGB MUST RECOMMEND TO THE HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT EDUCATORS TO BE APPOINTED AT THE SCHOOL:
  - 4.1 HOW DOES THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CONSULT WITH THE STRUCTURES REPRESENTING THE SGBs IN THE FORMULATION OF THE SELECTION POLICY?
  - 4.2 WHAT IS YOUR OPINION ON THE STRATEGIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN COMMUNICATING/WORKSHOPPING THIS POLICY AND ALL RELEVANT LEGISLATION TO ENSURE THAT THE SGBs WHO ARE IMPLEMENTORS THEREOF HAVE ITS FULL UNDERSTANDING?
  - 4.3 ARE INTERVIEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS FAMILIAR WITH ALL THE RELEVANT LEGISLATIVE PRESCRIPTS GOVERNING THIS POLICY AND HOW?
  - 4.4 HOW DO YOU SEE THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER UNIONS AS MEMBERS OF THE SELECTION PROCESS AND HOW CAN THIS ROLE BE AUGMENTED TO MIXIMIZE IT?
  - 4.5 IIN YOUR OPINION, SHOULD LAY GOVERNORS AND POST LEVEL ONE EDUCATORS BECOME INVOLVED IN THE SELECTION FOR MANAGEMENT POSTS AND WHY?
  - 4.6 WHAT CHALLENGES DOES THE INTERVIEW COMMITTEE OF YOUR SCHOOL FACE IN IMPLEMENTING

THE SELECTION POLICY FOR MANAGEMENT POSTS  
ARISING

- 4.6.1 FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S  
SELECTION POLICY ITSELF
- 4.6.2 FROM THE MEMBERS OF THE SELECTION  
THEMSELVES
- 4.6.3 FROM THE OTHER SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY  
MEMBERS

5. IN YOUR OPINION, WHICH AREAS OF THE SELECTION  
POLICY SHOULD BE AMENDED AND WHY?