

**FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE  
SUCCESS OF LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC SCHOOLS  
IN SOUTH AFRICA: A CASE STUDY IN  
TWO EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE SCHOOLS**

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late parents who taught me to appreciate the value of education and my family and friends who supported and encouraged me throughout my studies.

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation, which is submitted to the University for the degree of Master of Education has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at any other University, that it represents my own work in conception and execution and that all sources which I have quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of a complete reference.

  
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..... 31/3/96

DATE

## ABSTRACT

This study gives a background of Black Education in South Africa and seeks to indicate activities at these schools that impact on results obtained in the examinations. The study was conducted at two successful and effective schools in the Eastern Cape under the former Department of Education and Training.

Effective schools literature based mainly on US research, has been reviewed and its applicability in South African schools, tested against the two schools through a case study method. The two schools were physically visited and data concerning activities and mechanisms used to attain success at the two schools, gathered through observation, questionnaires and interviews.

The findings of the study were related to roles played by the principals, teachers, students, and parents. Each of these role-players had a significant role to contribute towards success. Both principals at the schools visited involved and broadly consulted other role players in decision-making thus creating a favourable atmosphere for teaching and learning at the schools.

This research has therefore set a new focus of study with particular emphasis on roles played by principals, teachers, student and parents towards the schools' success and how these roles can be combined into a solidified whole.

## CHAPTER 1

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Black Education in South Africa has for many years been in a crisis in that it was inferior when compared to that of other racial groups. According to Dube (1985), the introduction of Native Education in the 1940's, was aimed at handicapping African children with the introduction of an inferior syllabus coupled with inadequate learning conditions and poorly educated teachers. These factors were intended to reinforce the belief in South Africa, of white superiority while simultaneously making African children believe that their lowly position in society was due to inferior mental ability.

Native Education was reported as early as 1943 to be in appalling conditions. Buildings in most cases consisted of tin shanties or wattle daub into which two or three times the number of pupils which the room should hold, were crammed. Salaries paid to teachers were appalling and teachers were overloaded. One teacher would be found occasionally to be teaching eighty to one hundred in two or three different standards, all in the same room. Ventilation and light in these classrooms would be very poor. Schools would have no assembly halls, cloak rooms, wash basins or facilities which modern school hygiene demands. Thus Native Education was intended to be a road to nowhere insofar as higher and effective education is concerned (Dube, 1985).

With the introduction of Bantu Education in 1953 by Dr Hendrick Verwoerd, Missionary Education was accused of teaching African children false expectations and directing them to greener pastures they would never be allowed to graze. According to Verwoerd, African Education should train African in accordance with their opportunities, mindful of the sphere in which they live. Furthermore, Native Education must have its root entirely in the Native areas and in the Native communities. Bantu Education was thus aimed at lowering their expectations (Dube: 1985). In South Africa, until 27 April 1994, Black Education was administered by the Department of Education and Training and the education it provided was statutorily inferior to white education. It's been that way since 1953 when the Bantu Education Act was passed. The law's purpose was to save money and to prevent blacks from getting an education that would enable them to compete with whites. In the government's apartheid plan, a black in South Africa was destined to be a labourer (Kauffmann, 1991).

Hartshorne in King and van den Berg's (1992) study, had this to say about the context of black education, "... the background and context is an inferior, discriminatory, politically driven education reflecting a political and economic system, the purpose of which is to maintain the domination and privilege of the white sector of society. Just as clear is that poor facilities, large classes,

underqualified teachers, unsuitable curricula, disturbed conditions in the school and community, a poor socio-economic environment and unsatisfactory examining methods, all are part of that context" (P. 5)

The inferiority of Bantu Education created unexpected opposition where primary and secondary black school children rebelled. Schooling has been interrupted periodically and teacher morale affected by political expressions since 1976 (Griesel and Richter, 1986). The June 16, student riots in Soweto which started as a class boycott, led to the shooting of many students by the police. (Dube, 1985).

The immediate cause of the Soweto students uprisings was the government's decision to impose Afrikaans, the language of the oppressor, as it was referred to: as a medium of instruction for certain subjects in black schools (Wyatt, 1993). Between April and September 1984, more than 900 000 students were involved in school boycotts over the issue of Bantu Education (Dube, 1985). Among the student demands were a repeal of the Bantu Education Act, a single National Department for all races, equal per capita expenditures for all children, equal salaries for teachers, equal school facilities, free and compulsory education for black children, and open universities and training centres (Wyatt, 1993).

Although the Bantu Education Act (1953), was later amended and supplanted by subsequent laws, separation of races was still very much in effect. Schools were still overcrowded, and facilities still poor. Some schools even today, lack basics such as laboratories, libraries, storage facilities for school equipment, sportsfields and electricity. Nearly all black schools in South Africa are confronted with the same problems which have over the past years affected the end of the year matric results dropping the national average in 1992 from 43 % to 38 % in 1993 (Ritchie, 1994) and 36,4 % in 1990 (EP HERALD, 8 January 1991) a crisis, as it was termed.

Other courses of low pass rates in black schools are related to the growth in pupil numbers at the secondary level, lack of student preparedness of students sitting for the examinations, students electing to do their subjects on the higher grade in the more difficult subjects such as mathematics and science. Students also lack a culture of serious study on a daily basis and constitute a problem on several grounds relating to their educationally deprived backgrounds which have meant that they generally lag behind in their physical, emotional, cognitive and conative development. The presence of over-age students also has a deleterious effect on students (Chisholm, 1991).

Education in South Africa therefore, is one of the many areas of social life in which black South Africans have suffered unfair discrimination. For instance, although there were almost five times as many black pupils as white, the education budget for whites was nearly twice that for blacks (Hartshorne, 1985). But despite that, some black schools were able to overcome these hardships and obtained good matric results of up to 92 % (Ritchie, 1994) and 100 % passes. One of such schools is Bhekuzulu High School in KwaZulu Natal studied by Jacobs (1991) which also caters for socially disadvantaged pupils, one of several impoverished schools. In 1990 the school obtained a 100 % pass rate and achieved a record of 97 % of its candidates for university entrance. Such schools that perform well despite being economically disadvantaged, can be said to be effective and successful because they have few or, none of the sophisticated teaching and learning equipment.

## 1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

The purpose of the study was to examine two black schools in South Africa that have had good matric results in the past five years despite the problems these schools under the former DET were faced with. These schools, one a township school and the other a rural school, are Ndzondelelo and Ngwenyathi Senior Secondary Schools which are both located in the Eastern Cape Province, in Port Elizabeth and in East

London. Both schools have had an average pass rate of more than 80 % in matric exams over a period of five years from 1990 - 1994 as indicated in the table below:

*SUMMARY OF RESULTS - NDZONDELELO AND NGWENYATHI*

*SECONDARY SCHOOL 1990 - 1994*

SCHOOL	LOCATION	1994 %	1993 %	1992 %	1991 %	1991 %	AVERAGE %
Ndzo- ndeletelelo	Port Elizabeth	82	69,4	84,9	93	87,3	83,3
Ngwe- nyathi	East London	96,3	89,7	84,5	95,2	74,3	88

Both schools are among the top 10 (See Appendix 1a and 1b) in the Eastern Cape Province in terms of matric results over this period. This study is therefore an attempt to find the mechanisms these schools have used over these years to attain success when many other schools in the same plight did not perform well. A search for characteristics related to achievement was made at both schools. As these are rural (Ngwenyathi) and a township (Ndzondelelelo) school,

comparisons of the two schools in terms of their operation, and resources was also made. This study will then provide practitioners with understanding of various techniques and mechanisms employed at economically deprived schools, how these schools overcome the barriers imposed on them by the system, and how pupils, teachers, parents and the principals interact in order to attain success as well as how a negative situation can be changed to the better.

### 1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT :

Many black schools in South Africa operate in low socio-economic environments under difficult conditions where in most cases there are no basic facilities for the schools to function well. But some schools, despite these hardships are successful and effective and are able to obtain good matric results when some which are also directly affected by the same conditions under which these schools operate, fail to obtain good results. This study was an attempt to measure the extent to which the effective schools literature which is mostly based on U.S schools, was applicable to South African black schools that are successful. The application of the U.S. literature in the South African schools, was tested with the awareness that populations where the effective schools techniques are to be applied, differ from those where these techniques were proven to be effective. This may lead to a limited set of learning

objectives when striving to achieve a high level of instructional effectiveness (Weller, 1985). The main research question this study attempted to answer was thus:

- \* What factors contribute to the success of low socio-economic schools?

#### 1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

According to effective schools literature consulted, important to consider is the fact that, success attained by any school or learning institution, is as a result of the roles played by the principal, teachers, students and parents. Questions leading to answers that indicate these roles also need to be examined. Answers derived from the following questions therefore need to be considered:

- \* What role(s) do principals play for the school to attain its success?
- \* What role(s) do teachers play to attain this success?
- \* How do students contribute to their own success?
- \* In what way(s) do parents support the school to attain success?

By attempting to find answers to these questions, some light could be thrown on how all these roles contribute to the success of low socio-economic schools in South Africa.

### 1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

As the schools being studied operate in low socio-economic environments and are classified in terms of their background as disadvantaged schools, that lack most of the basic resources that other schools not in this category have, it would be interesting to see what the outcomes of this study would be. The majority of parents at these schools are unemployed, and those who are employed, are at the lower end of the income scale. According to the Sowetan (20 July 1995), they are the first to be retrenched or lose their jobs if things do not go right where they work. There is therefore minimal financial support from the parents who tend to withdraw from participating in school activities as a result of their plight.

The majority of parents have minimal or no education at all and depend entirely on the school to give them direction thereby increasing the burden on the teachers who are also faced with carrying out their job as professionals. Most of the schools are overcrowded and understaffed, and many teachers are underqualified but are expected to produce good results while their schools lack facilities such as electricity, running water, laboratories, libraries and storage facilities for school equipment. These and other hardships have therefore been identified as some of the

causes that have led to poor results in the matric examinations.

This study is therefore intended to investigate the extent to which schools operating in these environments are able to make maximum use of the least available resources, both human and physical, to their advantage and to the success of their students

Important also to be shown by this study is what activities these schools are engaged in, which make them successful and how other schools can be changed to be centres that make a difference when children are from different home backgrounds. If, according to Coleman (1996) there is a relationship between home environment and academic achievement i.e. "schools bring little influence to bear on a child's achievement that is independent of his background and general social context", this study should show what it is that these schools and all their role players should do in order to enable all children irrespective of home background, to attain success. This study should also demonstrate how schools are transformed into learning centres that demonstrate academic achievement.

This study should therefore show what role the principal teachers, students and parents play to attain success and how they inter-act with each other. The role(s) the

principals of the schools play, to facilitate progress are also of great importance. Findings of this study are intended to provide answers to questions related to various roles played by principals, teachers students and parents of these schools as well as to provide other researchers with understanding and information of what goes on in low socio-economic schools, that makes them succeed against all odds.

The study is also meant to open new avenues for avenues for further research in South Africa about how effective schools in low socio-economic environments operate. Focus should also be directed to other levels other than matric, as these may be the foundation on which success is built. These findings can be shared with all interested parties that can benefit from them. Such information should also illustrate the characteristics at the schools concerning roles and conduct of principals and other role players that enable them to attain success.

#### 1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

Black schools, in this study only refers to those schools that were administered by the DET before 27 April 1994. Only two of those schools i.e. one rural and the other a

township school, were examined. Both schools are located in the Eastern Cape Province. The "success" of the school that were examined was narrowly defined by focusing on the Std 10 end of the year examination results only. Findings of this study were be generalized to all Black South African schools formerly under the DET, schools that drew their student population from economically deprived environments and poor home backgrounds. Another limitation of a study of this nature is, according to Merriam, (1988), that the investigator is left to rely on his or her own instincts and abilities through out most of this research effort. The researcher is therefore the primary instrument of data collection and analysis.

#### 1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS:

Success: refers to effective schools achieving good results in the Std 10 examination results.

Effective schools: this refers to positive outcomes of all school activities and this may include such outcomes in academic achievement.

Low socio-economic schools: these are schools that operate in poor communities, in this case DET schools that draw their student population from deprived environments.

DET: Department of Education and Training under which most black schools operated before the establishment of the New

Department of Education and Culture that includes all former education departments such as the House of Representatives (HOR), House of Delegates (HOD), and The House of Assembly (HOA) which catered for Coloureds, Indians and Whites, respectively.

Black schools, refers to schools that operated under the former DET and allocated mainly in black townships and rural areas.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW:**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION:**

In this chapter effective schools literature based mainly on U.S. and South African research is discussed. This is tested on South African Schools. There is more focus on the correlates of effective schools but first a brief picture is provided of the situation in black schools and the communities from which these schools draw their student population, how these relate to the study or can impact on student achievement. This section begins with the emergence of effective schools studies followed by roles played by the principal, teachers, students, parental involvement, learning in groups (co-operative learning), the significance of evaluation as well as the importance of school climate conducive to learning in all effective schools. In conclusion Ken B. Hartshorne's (1992) perspectives on South African effective schools is provided.

### **2.2 BACKGROUND:**

Apart from the obvious defects in the education system of blacks, black South Africans occupy the lowest socio-economic stratum of the society, which is an area that needs

to be considered when examining black education and particularly the academic achievement of students which may be affected by home environment processes as will be seen in the discussions that follow. Thus, black schools are mainly looked at on the basis of U.S. literature and the minimal South African literature consulted. This is so because South Africa according to Jansen, (1994), in part because of its isolation from participation in international research initiatives and model, did not participate in the Coleman type research that will be discussed later. However, South Africa recently gave birth to a range of studies on school effectiveness and educational efficiency which are by no means coherent in either ideology or method. Some reports are at pains to celebrate ethnic nationalism as the answer for "mediocre low-achieving black" schools (Jacobs, 1991).

In Jansen's (1994) work, mention is made of other studies as assessments of self-reports by principals of school-effectiveness by Carrim and Shalem, (1993) and in the same work a third set of studies reviews the relationship between academic achievement and educational efficiency by Chetty (1992). Despite these desperate strands in the South African literature, there exists for the first time an attempt to examine seriously what happens inside classrooms as the basis for policy and planning (Jansen, 1994).

The majority of black school children in South Africa do not only have deprived schools, a vast number of these children are malnourished and live in government-built match-box houses and shacks. Most of the people who live in these areas are the working poor. The men are mostly labourers in factories and the women housemaids. Their mean income would be around R340 per month. At school there is no government-sponsored food supplement and a nurse usually visits the school only once a year (Kauffmann, 1991). Most of these school children are from low socio-economic home environments. However, the Government of National unity has recently introduced a feeding scheme for primary school children in these schools in 1994.

The Coleman (1966) study, conducted in the U.S. asserted that, socio-economic factors bear a strong relation to academic achievement. This research further indicated that home environment may be the primary force that affects student achievement over time because parents are the most consistent figures in the child's life. Moore (1987), also noted that high socio-economic children in the U.S. tend to be more successful than their low socio-economic peers. In Slaughter's (1987) study, Hess reported that the higher a person's social status is ranked, the more likely that he or she is to have a higher level of performance on achievement tests. In the same study, White reported that

many family characteristics have been found to be associated with individual student achievement, characteristics believed by many researchers to be linked to socio-economic status and life style. White, in the same study also indicated that socio-economic status may be an indirect measure of home environment and that student differences may be more influenced by child rearing practices such as, reading to the children, taking them to the libraries and encouraging them in school rather than by the occupation, income or education of the parents.

According to Bullard and Taylor (1993), U.S. education decided on the basis of research on home environment, that disadvantaged minority children, just didn't have what it takes to succeed in school. This belief was reinforced in 1966 when James Coleman and colleagues released their survey of Equal Education Opportunity. The results of the survey stated that the reason black student performance in the U.S. was below that of white students, was because of family background and there wasn't a whole lot, schools could do about it. Coleman, (1966) concluded that "Schools bring little influence to bear on a child's achievement that is independent of his background and general social context, .... this very lack of independent effect means that the inequalities imposed to the children by their home, neighbourhood, and peer environment are carried along to be inequalities with which they confront life at the end of the school" (p.15).

Bullard and Taylor (1993), further reported that Jencks and other researchers relieved the school of any responsibility in the failure of disadvantaged children. Their study concluded that schools could make no impact on the economic and social inequalities brought into the classroom. The implication of these findings was that schools do not make a difference.

Coleman's methodological approach was later seriously challenged as it failed to mention schools that did teach children successfully. These schools were identified by researchers like George Weber, Wilbur Brookover, Larry Lezzotte, and Ron Edmonds who conducted detailed analyses of the differences between successful and unsuccessful schools for low income children in the 1970's. They published their findings, citing specific characteristics that, made these schools so successful (Bullard and Taylor, 1993).

Given this background and its impact on student achievement, many black children in South African schools are doomed to fail because not only are they from low socio-economic environments, but their schools are also deprived and impoverished.

### 2.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS:

Ron Edmonds (1979), reported in an article published in the Educational Leadership Journal, an article which brought together some of the most powerful and all inclusive data on successful schools serving lower socio-economic schools. In the article Edmonds refuted Coleman and Jenck's approach, citing schools where family background put no limit on the aspirations and ability of disadvantaged children. The article clearly showed the differences between high-achieving and improving schools and the declining and low-achieving schools and identified the following characteristics in high-achieving schools:

- The principal was a strong leader visible and supportive,
- Teachers believed all their children could learn,
- Teachers had specific goals,
- Teachers were not satisfied with the status quo,
- Teachers had high expectations for their students,
- There was student monitoring,
- Students were happier and worked harder,
- There was trust between students, faculty and staff,

The article set forth what the researcher believed were correlates of an effective school which became guiding

principles of effective schools over the years. These correlates were:

- Clear and focused school mission,
- Safe and orderly environment,
- High expectations,
- Opportunity to learn and time on task,
- Instructional leadership,
- Frequent monitoring of student progress,

At a later stage, positive home - school relations, was added as a correlate. Edmonds (1979) also indicated that what effective schools share is a climate in which it is incumbent on all personnel to be instructionally effective for all pupils.

The results of the studies conducted by researchers like Weber, Brookover, Lezotte and Edmonds thus, set forth a new focus of study, that of "effective and successful schools" (Bullard and Taylor, 1993).

The effective schools concept is the idea that, schools can be transformed into learning centres which demonstrate academic achievement. Central to the idea of effective schooling, is a developmental process in which key educational ingredients are combined into a solidified whole (Weller, 1985). Today several characteristics - mainly those concerning the roles and conduct of teachers and

principals have emerged as the best, although not perfect, answers to the question of what makes an effective school

(Wells, 1987). Fairman and Clark (1985) have also identified a common set of characteristics that tend to be present in high-achieving schools. Differences in effectiveness among schools, defined in terms of student performance on tests of basic skills can be accounted for by various factors or criteria. These criteria according to Gibbs (1989), merely serve as an umbrella under which one can collect data and evidence to support the effective schools theory. The five most agreed upon correlates of effective schools are as follows:

- Principals' characteristics and behaviour,
- Teachers' characteristics and behaviour,
- School classroom climate,
- Instructional emphasis and,
- Pupil evaluation,

Meanwhile, a newer less -developed segment of the effectiveness of schools research addressing parent - involvement and its effect on students' learning experiences has also emerged (Wells, 1987). Characteristics to be discussed in this study are those related to the roles of principals, teachers, students, and parents as well as the school climate and evaluation.

### 2.3.1 PRINCIPAL'S ROLE:

Fairman and Clark (1985) have noted that for a school to be effective, strong leadership especially by the principal is essential. The effective principal must have the capability of involving the faculty and student body to help create and maintain a positive and supporting learning environment. The principal must also be able to help his or her subordinates accept responsibility for their own behaviour thus enhancing the potential for positive learning environments and must also be able to unite the faculty to accept common goals building a more cohesive organisation. Leadership in this instance is knowing how and having the ability to involve individuals and groups of faculty members appropriately in the planned change process.

The effective principal, according to Weller (1985), should emphasize and promote classroom instruction and inservice programmes. Liphan (1982, p.ix) in Weller's (1985) study asserted, "If a school is vibrant, innovative, child-centred place, if it has a reputation for excellence in teaching, if students are performing to the best of their ability, one can always point to the principal's leadership as the key success. Moody and Amos (1979) in Weller's (1985) study, indicated that in effective schools, principals not only devote more time and effort in instructional improvement, but that strong leadership,

with an emphasis on accomplishing educational goals, is positively related to student academic achievement. Furthermore, effective principals not only pay visits to classrooms and make observations, they also become active colleagues in the teaching phenomenon.

Effective principals according to Wells (1987), recruit outstanding teachers who want to assist in helping achieve the goals of the school, demand more from them and hold them accountable for the progress of their students. Also important is that effective principals will not allow students to be labelled unteachable. This study further stated that another technique the principal can apply, is school - based planning, i.e. a joint decision-making process. By emphasizing collaboration in making changes within the school so that everyone understands reasons behind decisions, and encouraging feedback from teachers as well as other staff members, the principal will generate a feeling of joint - ownership of the school. The principal's effectiveness can be viewed as a prerequisite for providing a positive learning environment for all students within a school.

### 2.3.2 TEACHER'S ROLE:

Another characteristic of effective schools as seen by Fairman and Clark (1985), was teacher characteristics including teacher expectations of their students reaching high levels of achievement regardless of background. This characteristic distinguished effective schools from ineffective schools. The time for establishing high expectations should start with the principals who must have high expectations for themselves, for faculty members and for students.

Wells (1987), on the other hand, saw good and extensive teacher - student interaction and classroom dynamics as crucial to effective learning. In this research, Wells (1987) clearly indicated three essential characteristics of effective teachers. Firstly, effective teachers must believe that each student has the capability to succeed academically and that they as teachers are the ones who will help make the difference in students' levels of achievement.

During the process teachers can move assuredly through the required curriculum at a brisk pace, covering necessary material and always demanding that students work up to their capacity. To be more effective, teachers must offer praises and encouragement, emphasizing students' capabilities instead of their negative performance.

Students must be encouraged to talk and their ideas must be used in class.

Secondly, effective teachers should have effective and thorough techniques for transferring knowledge. They must spend most of their class time on task i.e., direct teaching where students are actively engaged in learning. Thus, teachers who fill the school day with learning activities that students are able to master, will successfully cover more material. Beginning class on time and keeping the discussion, lecture and classwork moving continuously are some of the methods for raising the percentage of time - on task. The third characteristic of effective teaching, concerns mastery learning, which uses tests as a form of continuous feedback to teachers, enabling them to determine the areas where students need corrective procedures, more instruction and subsequent tests. Thus, material will be taught until it is mastered, and students will not be passed through the system until they have proven their comprehension of the required curriculum. The effective teacher remains the master in the architecture of classroom management. Physical objects which may distract students learning should be eradicated or modified. Rules of conduct should be kept to a minimum and clearly posted.

Classroom procedures and expectations also need to be clearly explained by the teachers. Through a behaviour

monitoring system which is consistent in nature and includes positive feedback which rewards appropriate conduct, the teacher exhibits effective classroom management strategies that promote effective learning. Effective classroom instruction can also be attained through planning where teachers can assure student involvement, ensure content coverage and promote student success through a comprehensive programme which is logical in sequence, keeps students on task and tests the objectives that were taught (Weller, 1985).

### 2.3.3 STUDENT INVOLVEMENT AND CO-OPERATIVE LEARNING:

Students also play an important role in the effectiveness of a school through their involvement and participation in all school activities. In South Africa, for example, students in Secondary Schools as stakeholders, should be represented in the school governing council, as they have a significant role to play (EP HERALD, NOVEMBER 16, 1995). In this way, students can be engaged and involved, using their diverse talents and potential in a variety of learning techniques such as, among others, co-operative learning which according to McGee Banks, (1993), involves instructional techniques in which students work in small groups and receive rewards or recognition based on their individual as well as their group performance. It changes

power relationships in the classroom and shifts the responsibility for learning from the teacher to the students. There is considerable evidence that co-operative learning can increase the academic achievement of some students, improve race relation and increase mutual concern among students.

#### 2.3.4 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT:

Another correlate of effective schools that has been suggested, by many researchers such as Gibbs (1989), is parental involvement and support. According to Weller (1985), the body of effective schools research that examines parent involvement in helping children, is the newest and least well defined. However, researchers agree that, especially in low income situation, the responsibility of developing a strong school-home bond, rests upon the school and teachers. The most recent effective schools findings, emphasize the necessity of parental encouragement and support throughout the child's school years. Bloom (1984), emphasized the importance of the home environment of the child in the child's schooling. He cited some of the home environment processes that have high relationships with school achievement which included the following:

- Work habits of the family, the degree of routine in the family, the emphasis on regularity in the use of space and

time and the priority given to school work over other activities.

- The availability and quality of the help and encouragement parents give the child in his or her school work
- Stimulation, the opportunity provided by the home to explore ideas, events and the larger environments.
- Opportunities in the home for developing correct and effective use of the language.
- The parents' aspirations for the child's school achievement and their interest in and knowledge of the child's school experiences.
- This research also suggests that the best way to improve home support for learning begins with a dialogue between the school and the home. Many educators advocate visits by the teachers and daily open visitations for parents. Also essential, is communication through frequent calls, progress reports and newsletters to inform parents of students' obligations. Bringing parents into the schools as volunteers, or providing school based programmes for parent education, are highly recommended methods of helping parents help their children (Weller, 1987).

#### 2.3.5 SCHOOL CLIMATE :

A school climate conducive to learning, i.e. a safe and orderly school free of discipline and vandalism problems, is also an important feature of an effective school.

Principals cannot provide instrumental leadership unless they also possess organizational leadership skills. Those who are effective leaders, have established the foundation for effective schools, and thus, the potential for creating a school climate conducive to learning (Fairman and Clark, 1985).

Promoting of orderly and safe environment is also salient to effective schooling. By establishing co-operation between the teachers and the principal with respect to uniform enforcement of school rules and the enactment of disciplinary procedures, students are held accountable for their conduct and made aware of the consequences of their transgressions. Discipline which is fairly administered and is consistent in scope, reinforces the concept of order. Moreover, evidence through starting and ending lessons on time, regularly assigning and returning homework, and positive role modelling by both teachers and principals, contribute to the development of an orderly environment.

Safety, the right to work, and learn, in an atmosphere free from physical and health hazards, is also essential to effective schooling. Other factors which contribute to a safe working and learning environment are adequate instructional space, freedom from overcrowded classrooms, flexible scheduling and enforcement of state safety codes. But the ultimate responsibility for the climate rests with the principal (Weller, 1985).

Wells (1987), agreed that the principal can make a school more effective by developing and maintaining an orderly atmosphere, and ensuring that creating order does not replace academic achievement as most important. Making use of a joint decision-making approach also enhance a positive school environment. Such an orderly and safe climate will be conducive to teaching and learning and schools that adopt this approach are bound to be effective.

#### 2.3.6 EVALUATION :

Also important for the administrator to do, is to assist teachers and the total organization, in establishing an appropriate system to monitor and assess the degree to which objectives are being achieved within the school (Fairman and Clark, 1985). Evaluation, i.e. monitoring student progress towards the achievement of instructional objectives, should be conducted on an ongoing basis. Both teachers and principals should take an active part in reviewing student academic progress. The principal has to take a proactive stance in evaluation by personally assessing student learning through an evaluation of teachers learning plans, tests, and student test scores. Frequent visits to classrooms with occasional periods of actual teaching across the grade levels will offer the principal opportunities to become more aware of academic achievement of students. Teachers should give homework, unit tests and

ask probing questions as each lesson progresses. This will give feedback through which the teacher can modify and reteach concepts and skills.

The evaluation of the overall instructional program of school is of great importance and is based primarily on tests scores that generally predict achievement in succeeding years. These test scores are good indicators of effective schools. The principal can show support for academic excellence by accolades for teachers whose students have excelled in achievement in both school and community wide forums. He can also provide release time for teachers to visit exemplary programmes and encourage them to actively participate in professional associations (Weller, 1985).

When examining the concept of effective and successful schools in South African black schools, it is imperative to view these against the background of the majority of children coming from low socio-economic environments and attending schools that are equally ill equipped. Schools lack resources but education does take place, and effectively at some schools. This study looked into such "effective and successful" schools and the mechanisms the schools used to reach the level of success they attained.

#### 2.4 CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, according to Hartshorne (1992), when we look at the effectiveness of a school we look at the positive outcomes of all school activities. As indicated in our discussions, this refers and includes all participants in realising these outcomes. The school is led by a principal who has a vision. This vision is to be shared with other role players at the school such as teachers, parents, students, as well as the community. The vision should be in line with a clear school mission which should state clearly what the school aspires to achieve.

An atmosphere of mutual trust should exist between the principal, teachers, and the students and this will only be possible if the principal creates a climate to facilitate learning. For example, teachers and pupils should feel secured at school. The school must promote activities that will motivate the students to participate freely in such activities. Teachers should be task oriented and make maximum use of teaching time, by keeping and engaging pupils on task at all times both as individuals and as groups. This is to be coupled with constant monitoring of the students progress. Parents should also be given an opportunity to play their significant roles which should never be underestimated. All these activities will together lead the school to attain the positive outcomes envisaged.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION:

A case study was conducted at the two identified schools, namely, Ndzondelelo and Ngwenyathi to examine the extent to which the correlates of effective schools literature are applicable at these schools. The case study method, according to Jaeger (1988) refers to a way of organizing social data so as to preserve the unitary character of the social, objects being studied. Merriam, (1988) also sees a case study as a method that concentrates on many if not all the variables present in a single unit, it is usually inductive in nature and it is impossible to identify all the important variables ahead of time. Results are presented qualitatively using words rather than numbers. It is partly for this reason that the two schools were visited and a case study conducted. The other reason is for identifying any possible similarities or differences that exist in the running of the rural and township schools that both have attained good results. Through the case study method, one must therefore physically go to the people, setting, site or institution in order to observe behaviour in its natural setting (Merriam, 1988).

Walker (1980), in Jacobs' (1991), study, pointed out that, case studies illustrate to teachers, researchers, and

educational authorities elsewhere how a particular group of teachers resolved a particular group of problems and such case studies have a quality of untenability i.e., somebody is doing something, it is not hypothetical.

Thus, using the case study approach, it was figured out what complex things go on within the two schools studied, using a variety of techniques such as direct observation, questionnaires and interviews, to gather information.

### 3.2 DESCRIPTION OF SITES:

Before dealing with the modus operandi in this study, a short description of the sites visited follows.

#### 3.2.1 SITE NO. 1 - (NDZONDELELO)

The first school visited was Ndzonelelelo Secondary School in the Port Elizabeth Magisterial district. The school is situated in a residential area called Zwide Township that consist mainly of four-roomed matchbox houses of low in-come groups of people who earn their living by working in factories and retail stores in the city and around the area. A large number of these residents are not employed and depend mainly on pensions and temporary jobs for their living. The school also draws its student population from surrounding townships and squatter areas around Zwide. Most of the school children walk to school and few of them further away make use of buses and taxis

to school. The school is about 15 - 20 kms from the city centre and work places. The residents use mainly taxis and buses to transport them to these places.

### 3.2.2 SITE NO. 2: (NGWENYATHI)

The other school visited is Ngwenyathi Secondary School located in the Magisterial District of East London in a residential area called New Lands, a rural area also known as Nxarhuni. The school also draws its student population from as far as Mdantsane, a township that is between 10 - 15 kms away. These students commute to school by bus and taxis. Some children are from nearby locations or villages such as Eluxolweni and Khwetyana. Many students from the nearby locations walk daily to school, some walk for more than an hour because no transport is available to take them to school. Many students in this area live in rondavels and mud houses that are not sophisticated. Because there are no work places, parents are always away seeking some jobs because in the poverty stricken areas they live, there no job facilities. The city centre is about 20 kms from this area and this is where some of the working group have their jobs.

### 3.3 PROCEDURES FOR DATA COLLECTION:

As stated at the beginning, three techniques were used to collect data at these two schools. Firstly, activities were

observed at the schools, secondly questionnaires were issued to target groups or subjects and thirdly, interviews were conducted with these subjects.

### 3.3.1 OBSERVATION:

Observation at both schools was done over a period of two days (1st two days) during the site visits. The schools were physically visited with the intention of observing the school environments and the general activities and particularly what goes on in the matric classes, in terms of teaching, interaction between teachers and students, as well as the principal. Documentary sources at the schools were also examined. These included school records especially of previous years' Std 10 results, the school curriculum, enrolment and staff, a brief history of the school and how the principal communicates with teachers, students and parents. There are numerous reasons why this technique of data gathering is used. The researcher might have noticed things that have become routine to the participants themselves, things that may lead to understanding the context. By using this technique, the observer gets to see things first hand and to use his or her own knowledge and expertise to interpreting what is observed, rather than relying upon once removed accounts from interviewees (Merriam, 1988).

### 3.3.2 QUESTIONNAIRES:

Questionnaires were issued on the third day of the visit to the target groups for them to complete. These were open ended questions. Each group was given its own set of questions, questions that directly requested the respondents to indicate their role in the school's success. There were four target groups in each school, namely the principal, teachers, students and the parents and each group had a set of ten questions to respond to, questions that would depict their roles in the schools operation. These were completed and returned on the same day and the day thereafter. A case study can also include data gathered by a survey instrument. For example, an investigation of an innovative school program may involve sending a questionnaire to parents asking their opinions about the program. Their responses can form part of the data base for the case study (Merriam, 1988). This method is used whenever a researcher has access to all or most of the members of a particular group in one place. The instrument is administered to all members of the group at the same time and usually in the same place. The chief advantage of this approach is the high rate of response, often close to 100 %. (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1993).

### 3.3.3 INTERVIEWS:

After collecting data through observation and questionnaires, these were studied and some interview questions were formulated. These were based on the responses obtained and what was observed. Subjects interviewed consisted of the same people given questionnaires to complete. The interview questions were open ended and required the respondents to elaborate on some points made. The main purpose of interviews according to Merriam, (1988), is to obtain a special kind of information, the researcher wants to find out, what is "in and on someone else's' mind". Interviewing then allows the researcher to enter into the other persons' perspective.

### 3.4 PLAN FOR ANALYZING DATA:

#### 3.4.1 OBSERVATION:

What was observed at the schools was categorised according to the items, which served to give a picture of how the school operates, its size, what resources the school has and what interactions are like at the school between all role players. These items included enrolment and staff, curriculum, facilities, communication, documentary evidence of Standard 10 results for the previous years, general atmosphere at the school and resources. Data was gathered at the schools through these items.

### 3.4.2 QUESTIONNAIRES :

On the third day of the visit at the schools, questionnaires we issued to be completed also as a means to gather data. These consisted of a set of ten questions for each of the groups targeted namely, the principal of the school, all Standard 10 teachers, ten students from each Standard 10 class and at least to one member of the schools Governing Council or PTSA (Parent Teacher-Students Association). This was done to outline each group's role in the school's success. These questionnaires were distributed as follows:

#### NDZONDELELO SECONDARY SCHOOL

TARGET GROUP	# OF QUESTIONNAIRES
Principal	1
Std 10 Teacher	13
Students	50
Parents	1

**NGWENYATHI SECONDARY SCHOOL**

TARGET GROUP	# OF QUESTIONNAIRES
Principal	1
Std 10 Teacher	8
Students	30
Parents	1

**# OF RETURNED QUESTIONNAIRES**

TARGET GROUP	NDZONDELELO	NGWENYATHI	TOTAL
Principal	1	1	2
Teachers	10	7	17
Students	50	30	80
Parents	1	1	2
TOTAL	62	39	101

**3.4.3. INTERVIEWS :**

After collecting data through observation and questionnaires, interview questions were formulated based on responses obtained. Subjects interviewed were the principals of both schools, all standard 10 teachers, one student from each standard 10 class and one parent from the School Governing Council. The subjects were selected to represent the various role players involved in the learning and teaching processes at the school.

Thus, instrument used to gather data were observation, questionnaires and interviews. The interviews were based on data gathered by observing and distributing questionnaires to the subjects involved. Data will be presented and analyzed in the chapter that follows.

## **CHAPTER FOUR – DATA ANALYSIS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, data from observation, questionnaires and interviews was analyzed under each of the headings mentioned. Information obtained from the two schools was presented separately under each heading. The sequence followed in presenting the data was as follows: the principals' responses, teachers' responses, students' responses, and parents' responses. This presentation was then be followed by findings that show similarities and differences between the two schools studied.

### **4.2 DATA GATHERED THROUGH OBSERVATION:**

Data in this section was presented under the following headings, enrolment and staff, curriculum, physical facilities, communication, documentary evidence, general atmosphere and resources.

#### **4.2.1 ENROLMENT AND STAFF:**

When this study was conducted at Ndzonelelelo and Ngwenyathi enrolment and staff was as follows:

**ENROLMENT – NDZONDELELO SEC. SCHL. '95:**

STD	# OF CLASS GROUPS	TOTAL # OF PUPILS
6	6	229
7	6	241
8	5	186
9	7	247
10	5	157
	29	1060

**STAFF:**

Teaching personnel at Ndzondelelo consisted of 37 teachers. This figure included the principal and the deputy principal positions. Non-teaching staff consisted of the administrative clerk, a nightwatchman, a labourer and a caretaker. These can diagrammatically be represented as follows:

# TEACHING POST	# OF APPROVED POSTS	NON-TEACHING POSTS	# OF STAFF
Principal	1	Admin. Clerk	1
Deputy Principal	1	Nightwatchman	1
Head of Dept.	7	Labourer	1
Teachers	28	Caretaker	1
TOTAL	37	TOTAL	4

(Extract from Annual Returns - 1995)

### NGWENYATHI SECONDARY SCHOOL - 1995:

Enrolment and staff at Ngwenyathi Secondary School was as follows:

#### ENROLMENT:

STANDARD	# OF CLASS GROUPS	# OF STUDENTS
6	10	447
7	5	225
8	6	241
9	6	260
10	3	88
TOTAL	30	1261

**STAFF:**

Teaching personnel at Ngwenyathi with its 1261 students, consisted of 28 staff members including the principal and the deputy principal: Non-teaching staff consisted only of the school administrative clerk and a labourer who also acted as a caretaker and nightwatchman. A diagrammatic presentation of this data would be as follows:

# TEACHING POSTS	# OF APPROVED POSTS	NON-TEACHING STAFF POSTS	# OF POSTS
Principal	1	Admin. Clerk	1
Deputy Principal	1	Nightwatchman	-
Head of Dept.	2	Labourer	1
Teacher	24	Caretaker	-
TOTAL	28	TOTAL	2

(Extract from Annual Returns - 1995)

#### 4.2.2 **CURRICULUM:**

The school's curriculum was also examined, but focus was more on subjects taken by matric students. In both schools subjects offered in Standard 10, were a continuation of subjects started in Standard 9. The two schools were not following similar streams of subjects in these classes:

Ndzondelelo Secondary School followed five different streams whilst Ngwenyathi had only two.

At Ndzondelelo Secondary School, subjects offered were the following, Xhosa, Afrikaans, English, and Biology which were compulsory for all students.

Students were also required to take two more subjects from the following, Physical Science, Mathematics, History, Geography, Biblical Studies, Accountancy, Business Economics and Economics.

Ngwenyathi Secondary School on the other hand offered Xhosa, Afrikaans, English and Biology (also compulsory for all student). Other subjects offered from which students were required to take two were the following: Mathematics, History and Geography.

#### 4.2.3 PHYSICAL FACILITIES:

The physical facilities of the schools were also a subject of observation. The building structure at Ndzondelelo Secondary School consisted of 7 classroom blocks with 30 classrooms connected by open-air walkways, two administration blocks, a new and an old structure housing offices, a staff room and toilet facilities, two laboratories, a fairly equipped library, a home economics room and a

dwelling for the school caretaker. There was also a separate block of toilets for students. Sports facilities consisted of a rugby field, a netball field and an underutilized tennis court.

Building facilities at Ngwenyathi consisted of five blocks of buildings with 34 classrooms. An administration block with offices and a staff room as well as toilet facilities, a library, two science laboratories and two multi-purpose classrooms. Toilet facilities for students were ten to twenty meters from the other building structures.

#### 4.2.4 COMMUNICATION:

At Ndzondelelo Secondary School, departmental meeting play an important role in communication. All teachers are afforded an opportunity through these meetings to voice out their views concerning school matters. The roles of Heads of Departments and channels through which they work, are clearly stipulated. Each Department through its head, holds monthly meetings where minutes and records are set up for future reference, some suggestions from these meetings filter through to staff meetings usually chaired by the principal or deputy principal. In return the principal holds meetings with heads of departments and the deputy principal. Each department has its own departmental policy that governs it. (Memos, circulars etc are

also used). Clear guidelines of controlling students academic work and problems are stipulated in the school policy.

Communication at Ngwenyathi Secondary School is rather different. No written instructions are given but staff meetings are held to give instructions. Decisions are jointly taken in these meetings. Circulars are circulated to all staff-members and sometimes pinned on the notice boards for everyone's attention. Standard 10 teachers collaborated and jointly support children by meeting and discussing ways to help and guide the students. Assemblies are used as place to empower students through, among other things, stressing moral values and by relating to occurrences they are aware of.

#### 4.2.5 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE:

A detailed account of Standard 10 results for the past two years (1993 and 1994) was requested and reviewed to find out in which areas or subjects students excelled and to what degree they excelled. Both schools presented a summary of these results as indicated in the following:

SUMMARY OF RESULTSNDZONDELELO SEC. SCHOOL - 1993 - 1994

SUBJECT	# PASSED	# FAILED	TOTAL	% PASSED
Eng'93	169	1	170	99,4
94	150	-	150	100
Afr'93	150	20	170	88,2
94	141	9	150	94
Xho'93	170	-	170	100
94	150	-	150	100
Bio'93	110	60	170	64,7
94	131	17	148	88,5
Maths'93	41	13	54	75,9
94	49	15	64	76,5
Hist' 93	44	15	59	74,5
94	42	9	51	82,4
Geo' 93	132	21	153	86,3
94	109	11	120	90,8
Phyisc'93	17	-	120	100
94	21	7	28	75
Bibs' 93	59	5	64	92,2
94	24	11	35	68,6

SUMMARY OF RESULTSNGWENYATHI SEC. SCHOOL 1993-1994

SUBJECT	# PASSED	# FAILED	TOTAL	% PASSED
Eng' 93	97	3	100	97
94	80	1	81	99
Afr' 93	94	6	100	94
94	80	1	81	99
Xho' 93	97	3	100	97
94	80	1	81	99
Bio' 93	73	27	100	73
94	76	5	81	94
Maths' 93	14	15	29	48,2
94	16	14	30	53,3
His' 93	66	5	71	97
94	46	5	51	90,2
Geo' 93	93	7	100	93
94	77	4	81	95

#### 4.2.6 GENERAL ATMOSPHERE:

The general atmosphere reigning at the two schools was also reviewed, in particular what it was like in the Standard 10 classes and how teachers in these classrooms influenced and interacted with the students. These classrooms were therefore visited and teachers and students were observed during the teaching and learning process. Various forms of interactions and strategies that were employed were of great interest and the tone set by these methods laid the foundation of progress in learning and teaching.

#### 4.2.7 RESOURCES:

A tour around the schools was conducted to see resources available. Each classroom visited had at least a chalkboard and a pin board at the back of the classroom. Other resources available included TV sets and Video machines, radio and tape recorders, science kits, library books, manual and electronic typewriters and garden utensils.

#### 4.3 DATA GATHERED THROUGH QUESTIONNAIRES

(See Appendix 2 for Questionnaire)

Questionnaires were distributed as indicated earlier to principals, teachers, students and parents. Each of these groups' responses was as follows:

#### 4.3.1 PRINCIPALS' RESPONSES:

From the questionnaires that were returned and received, the principals responded as follows:

##### NGWENYATHI:

Responding to questions 1 and 2 the principal responded that success that was attained by the school was as a result of a healthy atmosphere of teaching and learning that was created at the school and teachers were highly motivated. Students are also willing to learn and very co-operative. Teachers were involved in the development of the school and this involvement helped to motivate both students and teachers. Parents were also increasingly involved, especially the PTSA.

##### NDZONDELELO:

To these questions (1 and 2), the principal saw teamwork, discipline and dedication as factors that create magic for good results. To ensure that a climate of teaching and learning existed at the school this was attributed to the development of positive interpersonal and effective day-by-day operational procedures at the school.

**NGWENYATHI:**

To question 3 and 4, the response was that, the heads of departments help to achieve this (monitoring teaching and learning progress) by checking on the exercise books of students. Class visits by senior teachers and head of departments were also frequently conducted.

Effective teaching is reflected by work done by students. Teachers are also encouraged to visit each other in class so as to learn from one another.

**NDZONDELELO:**

In response to question 3 and 4, the principal asserted that, use of student test scores for evaluating teachers and the use of teacher portfolios which included plans, materials, assignments, feedback to students etc. helped to monitor progress of teaching and learning. Regular discussions with individual teachers and their heads of departments also helped to ensure, that effective teaching takes place in the classroom.

**NGWENYATHI:**

Responding to question 5 and 6, the principal suggested that the length of the school day should be 7 hours provided that

there are hours involving group activity which creates interest among the pupils. Concerning obeying school rules, the principal made it an ongoing exercise to educate students about freedom and authority and emphasized that there was no institution without rules.

#### NDZONDELELO:

To question 5 and 6, the principal suggested that students should at least be engaged for two thirds of the school day in learning activities so that they are able to sustain the interest and retention capacity. Concerning school rules, the principal set high behavioral standards which were communicated and consistently enforced, to influence the students.

#### NGWENYATHI:

With regard to teacher support and subject choice for students (Question 7 and 8), the principal helped in getting teaching aids and other resources e.g. hiring of video tapes and inviting subject advisors to visit the school. On subject choice, the principals did not believe in imposing in such an issue because in most cases it depends on the interest of the students, however, guidance was necessary.

**NDZONDELELO:**

On teachers support and students subject choice (question 7 and 8), the principal responded that he organised resources that would enable teachers to improve their effectiveness in teaching and does not believe in taking decisions alone but involves others and influences them towards making responsible decisions.

**NGWENYATHI:**

Concerning question 9 and 10, the principal responded that all parties mentioned i.e. principal, teachers, students and parents, contributed to a certain extent to success although the parent's contribution was lately minimal. About the forthcoming results (1995), the principal was pessimistic because of problems experienced at the beginning of the year, such as the shortage of teachers.

**NDZONDELELO:**

Responding to questions 9 and 10, the principal indicated that to attain success, they worked as a team i.e. (teachers, students, parents and principal) and each member made a valuable contribution towards the success of the school. The principal confirmed that their students would perform well at the end of the year because they had worked

hard and with the assistance they got from all parties, he was positive about the results.

#### 4.3.2 TEACHERS' RESPONSES:

(See Appendix 3 for Questionnaire)

##### NDZONDELELO:

Responses from the Standard 10 teachers concerning the principal's role in the school's success were as follows: Success emanated from the fact that, the principal always motivated teachers as well as students and encouraged that the high pass rate be maintained. The principal supported teachers by supplying all the necessary materials and always consulted the staff in matters affecting them. The principal also had a high level of discipline and enforced teachers attendance and effective tuition. The teachers also saw themselves as active players in success. They also had to motivate students, give advice whenever it was necessary. They also give tests and assignments, arranged extra classes and should always be well prepared when going to class. They also made maximum use of available resources.

On the questions of how often tasks should be given to students, this varied from teacher to teacher. Some felt

that, this should be done for 80 % of the time and some felt that it could be done after every lesson, twice a week, three times a week etc. Kinds of tasks to be given could vary from role play, paragraph questions, reading newspapers and assignments. Some of these tasks could be done in groups or by individuals.

On the question of free communication in class with students, all respondents answered "Yes". This was done by inviting questions from students and giving room for their own ideal. It was also meant to develop their communication skills. This encouraged a high sense of responsibility as some students became innovative and became problem solvers in class.

Concerning group work or individual attention on student, all the respondents felt that group work was more convenient especially given the numbers and resources available. Some though, felt that individual attention was necessary to give special attention to those with certain weaknesses. Probing questions could also be used to generate conversations. Evaluation mechanisms employed varied from classwork, homework, tests, and quiz competitions to oral evaluation. Resources that teachers made use of, were chalkboards, radio, television and video cassettes, text-books, maps, charts and overhead projectors.

The teachers saw the following to be contributing to success: dedication of teachers, constant testing and revision, afternoon, week-end and school holiday, teaching sessions. Discipline at the school was instilled as early as in standard six and maintained through to Standard 10. Co-operation existed between teachers, students and the principal.

Students were also motivated and informed about the previous year's results and performance and requested to strive for more. All the teachers except for two were optimistic about the end of the year's results. Those who were pessimistic attributed their doubts to the June results which were not satisfactory.

#### NGWENYATHI:

Teachers at Ngwenyathi responded as follows to the questionnaire issued to them: On the question of the role the principal played in the schools success, the principal was a source of inspiration who always created an atmosphere for learning and teaching.

He motivated the staff and cared for them and systematically supervised his subordinates. He set a good example by regularly honouring his teaching periods and worked very hard in managing school property.

As far as their role is concerned in the school's success, the teachers felt that success was attained as a result of collective hard working on their part, engaging the students with tasks such as assignments, classwork and preparing thoroughly when going to class. They also achieved this success by covering and completing the syllabus earlier and allowing enough time for revision.

Teachers believed that they also had a motivational role to play that enhances achievement and create a healthy atmosphere of learning to the pupils.

Responding to the questions of how often tasks are given to the students, some teachers felt this could be done during or at the end of every lesson whilst others felt that this could be done weekly, monthly or quarterly. Other assignments could be given to groups of students to work together where they can learn to help each other. Tasks given to the students included class-work, home work, assignments and discussions, where students are encouraged to actively participate. In some assignments they had to discover information on their own and those who had worked very hard were praised.

All the respondents agreed that they allow students to freely communicate in class. Teacher do this by allowing students to ask questions and express their

feelings on any topics discussed. This communication helps create a conducive atmosphere for meaningful teaching and learning. When a new concept is introduced, groups can be asked to explain to each other, and lack of clarity dealt with by the teachers. Sometimes students are even challenged to talk about "out of school" activities in class. The respondents all saw group work to be very important because it enhances collective initiatives where students are free to share ideas when dealing with given activities. Group work becomes the solution when dealing with big numbers. Individual attention was also seen to be necessary when problem areas for certain students, have been identified. To evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching, the respondents make use of class tests written monthly or weekly and give feedback, written work and group discussions. Questions are asked during and at the end of each lesson. Teachers also make maximum use of available resources such as text books and science equipment. In-service course material supplied by subject advisors, charts, newspaper, cuttings, maps, television and everything else at the teachers disposal, are used to produce the good results.

The teachers attributed the schools' success to co-operation between themselves as well as their pupils for their sacrifice and perseverance. Also mentioned in this regard, was the formation of subject committees whereby

problems encountered by different teachers are subject to discussion in subject meetings. The success was also as a result of a healthy culture of teaching and learning that was prevailing at the school, which had its foundation on discipline. Hardwork by all teachers as well as the students was always a contributory factor.

Concerning the forthcoming Standard 10 results (1995), most of the teachers still felt that students would perform well although they indicated that even under the constraints of working under pressure from the position of being understaffed, positive attitudes from the students and the notion of maintaining the esteem of the school, was encouraging. Those who had doubts, attributed their doubts to problems experienced earlier in the year where some subjects were not taught due to a shortage of teachers.

#### 4.3.3 STUDENTS' RESPONSES:

(See Appendix 4 for questionnaire)

##### NGWENYATHI:

Responding to the question regarding the principal's contribution to the school's success, students at the school, saw the principal as a very encouraging and hardworking person who always sees to it that teachers

attend to their classes at all times. On top of that, the principal also encourages that afternoon and Saturday classes be held for all matric students and that tasks are given to the students everyday. The principal also encourages group discussions in class in the absence of a teacher, he emphasizes good attendance and always stresses the importance of moral values and good behaviour. The principal treats students with respects and expects the same from them. He communicates with students and listens to their problems. He supplies teaching and learning materials and invites subject advisors to address students about examination requirements and study methods. Students also saw the principal as having a unique approach of motivating them and their teachers. In encouraging them to work hard, the principal would always remind them that, there is light at the end of a tunnel.

On the question on reasons for the school's success, a variety of factors lead to the success. According to the students, hard work on their part and guidance from their teachers, cooperation with parents and the desire to maintain the previous years' standards, led to the school's success. Sacrifice by teachers and students, extra classes held in the afternoons, Saturdays and school holidays also lead to the school's success. Timeous completion of the syllabus and revision of previous years' question papers, student participation and involvement

during tuition, builds confidence to students and enable to them perform well.

In response to questions (3 and 4) concerning subject choice and whether the students were comfortable with the subjects they were doing, they felt that it was their responsibility to decide which subject they were to do after being guided by the teachers. Because of self knowledge and career directions to be pursued, by individuals, student interest and preference, is to be considered. Most of the students were comfortable with the subjects they were doing as they were in line with careers of interest. But some had concerns about Afrikaans and general subjects which would limit their career opportunities after matric. A stream of Mathematics, coupled with commercial subjects and physical science was suggested by the students.

On the questions regarding tasks given to students as well as individual and group work, most of the students felt that tasks ranged from easy to difficult, depending on the subject, availability of references and resources and the nature of the task. When teachers provide the necessary references for information sought and give guidance, tasks become manageable and easy to complete. But when this is not the case, it is difficult for students to complete tasks. However, some students preferred difficult and challenging tasks that require them to use their own

at the end of each section or chapter, students were kept on track and got acquainted with tests.

Question 9 and 10 concerning school rules, students felt that these were flexible and fair. The cordial relationship that existed between teachers and students, enabled all parties to understand and to negotiate for some concessions which make school life enjoyable. The rules were directed to all parties concerned i.e., both teachers and students were governed by the school rules. Those who felt that the rules were rigid attributed their feelings to the fact that the principal was firm in enforcing the rules to maintain discipline and the good image of the school. With regard to performance at the end of the year, all students were optimistic and confident as they have been working very hard during the year. They also felt that they had the best teachers who had prepared them for the exams and would even do better than the previous years' students: their performance during the year was on indications thereof.

#### **NDZONDELELO:**

The students responded that, the principal's contribution towards the school's success, was as a result of strict rules that, he set out which students were expected to obey. He saw to it that all classes were attended to by teachers and by supervising the teachers to perform their duties and

being very strict on attendance and punctuality. He encouraged students to put more effort on their work and not to depend entirely on teachers. Previous years' results were made known to all students to motivate them to even do better. Students were also encouraged to have after school, Saturday and holiday classes and group discussions to ensure that progress was being made and students work towards achieving their goals. The principal also related well with students and teachers and allowed links between them. The principal took it upon himself to check for problems students might be encountering in certain subjects and provided the necessary resources and equipment.

The students felt that the school attained success because students obey the rules and teachers are firm and strict with discipline. Students were also dedicated and had a positive attitude towards their work. Students and teachers spent extra hours at school, in the afternoons, weekends and during school holidays. Teachers were always willing and committed to support and prepare students for examinations. Students freely communicated with their teachers and the teachers loved and cared for them and influenced them positively. Previous year's question papers were revised which also acquainted students with examinations and the standard of performance expected in the examinations.

On the question of subject choice and whether they were comfortable with the subjects they were doing, the students felt that they should be allowed to have the final word in this regard, as subjects are linked to career choice, general interests, performance and ability. All the school needed to do, was to guide students in this regard. The students were also happy with the subjects they were doing as they were related to their future careers and occupations. Some were not happy with Mathematics and Afrikaans which they felt were difficult and "irrelevant", respectively.

Concerning tasks, individual and group work, students felt that tasks given ranged from easy to difficult and the nature of the task and subject were the determining factors. Easy tasks according to the students, were those given after they have been taught. With manageable tasks students were given an opportunity to look for more information on their own and with difficult tasks, students are required to look for information even before lessons were given. However, some students welcomed difficult tasks as they felt that they prepare them for tertiary institutions. Working in groups also gave them the opportunity to develop knowledge and research skills.

Group work was also welcomed over individual work. Group work, according to the students, enabled them to interact with their peers, share ideas, enhanced communicative and

interpersonal skills whilst learning subject material. In groups students have an opportunity to ask questions without being intimidated by a big classroom and the teacher.

When asked how often and when they preferred to be evaluated students responded that this should take place on a daily, weekly, monthly basis. Daily, evaluation should be in the form of class and homework, weekly evaluation should be , through short tests and monthly evaluation, in the form of longer tests. All these forms of evaluation helped in checking for understanding and the effectiveness of learning and teaching. Students were prepared for the examinations as revision questions came from these tests. Problem areas were identified and review of work and corrections were made in time through feedback given and students progress was well monitored. The students preferred to be evaluated, daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly for various reasons. Those who preferred daily tests, feared longer tests, weekly tests were preferred after the end of each section or chapter, monthly tests would give enough give to prepare and a reasonable amount of work would be completed. Quarterly tests would help in revising the amount of work done over that period and students would be better prepared for examinations.

Concerning school rules, some students felt that the rules were rigid while others said they were flexible. Those who felt that rules were rigid mentioned, over-strictness, not allowing certain hair styles, enforced corporal punishment which was not "acceptable" and students not consulted when it comes to school rules. Those who believed that rules were flexible attributed this to the fact that students are allowed to have an input in the running of the school. Students were able to cope with the rules which enabled them to work hard and have respect for their teachers. When there is an emergency or a problem rules did not apply, the situation was dealt with as it came. The rules were also in line with what their parents believe in. There is a strong bond of communication and understanding of the rules between students and teachers and if there were no rules, there would be chaos and corruption at school. On the question on whether they would pass at the end of the year all students were optimistic referring to their performance during the year and the amount of time spent working hard. The June test was mentioned as an indicator that showed problem areas for the students for them to work hard and to correct mistakes and weaknesses identified. Teachers gave a lot of support and encouraged students to maintain the image of the school.

#### 4.3.4 PARENTS' RESPONSES:

(See Appendix 5 for questionnaire)

##### NGWENYATHI:

The parent consulted at Ngwenyathi preferred to respond verbally to the questionnaire. Responding to the question on how the principal contributes to the success of the school and how he relates to parents, the parent saw the principal as a patient and carrying person who is very

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influential both to parents and teachers. Teachers and parents respected the principal as he consulted broadly before embarking on any innovation. Parents saw a dedicated committed, inviting and exemplary leader in the principal. These qualities contributed positively to the general success of the school.

Concerning parental involvement and support in school activities, parents had a vital role to play at the school. Parents had been involved in fund raising projects, when the school celebrated its success in matric results and other related cultural activities where they were required to wear traditional attire. Parental support at home for students was also seen as important. Students

were allowed time to do their homework, and other home duties suspended when students prepare for examination. About parental financial support, the confusion over free and compulsory education has impacted negatively on the school, but attempts were made by the PTSA (Parent, Teachers, Students Association) to redress the situation.

Concerning reports on student progress, parents preferred regular reports, after every test written. This would enable them to assist and monitor the students' progress and to help and support the children where necessary. Parents and teachers met on regular basis through the PTSA and were kept informed about all developments at the school. At the beginning of the year, parents were part of a delegation to the education office to resolve a problem at the school. This interaction strengthens the bonds between parents, students and the teachers. Concerning what contributed most to the school's success, roles played by the principal, teachers, student and parents cannot be separated, all contributed significantly. Through their PTSA, students also had a say in school matters. About the end of the year, examinations, the parent was doubtful if results would be good because much time at the beginning of the year was spent on requesting more grants for teachers from the department of education to alleviate the burden of overcrowding experienced at the school. This delay on tuition, may impact negatively on the results.

**NDZONDELELO:**

On the question of how the principal helps in the school's success and how he relates to the parents, the response from the parent, consulted was that, the principal was approachable and in constant contact with parent by giving written and verbal reports that facilitate all forms of interaction. Concerning the extent to which parents were involved in school activities, the parent who was a school governing council member, felt that he was in that capacity, a participant in development related areas. Concerning support by parents to the principal and teachers, feedback on their performance was given and they were also awarded for note-worthy events achieved.

Support given to students at home was through monitoring their progress continually and sharing concerns with relevant teachers at the school. According to the parent, there was no direct help given for children in their school work. This could be done through frequent visits to the school and enquiring about student progress from teachers. Parents also preferred progress reports every month to be able to detect any possible deficiencies at an early stage. Interaction with teachers was quite often. They met in PTSA and general meetings, school functions and other events such as sport. Such meetings reinforce direction towards success. Success at the school was attained as result of

roles, played by the principal, teachers, students and the parents but a strong school governing body was essential to co-ordinate individual efforts. Concerning performance by the matric candidates at the end of the year, the parent was positive, citing this feeling to the fact that standards had been set for the students and motivational talks given by teachers and parents.

#### **4.4 DATA GATHERED THROUGH INTERVIEWS:**

Subjects interviewed at Ndzondelelo and Ngwenyathi consisted of both the principals of the schools, all matric class teachers, one student from each matric class, and one member of each of the school's Governing Councils or PTSA (Parent Teacher Student Associations). Questions asked during the interviews were open ended. Both principal's responses will be tabled followed by the teachers', the students' and the parents' responses. Data collected through interviews was as follows:

##### **4.4.1 PRINCIPALS' INTERVIEWS:**

###### **NDZONDELELO:**

When asked how he manages to communicate and influence the teachers, students and parents as a leader, the principal responded that he believed in positive social channels that

create an atmosphere of trust between all concerned parties. The principal also believed that teachers, students and parents should see the leader to be honest and open. He believed in participatory decision-making which he did by consulting and involving these parties for them to own all decisions made. It was also important, according to the principal, to be accessible to all. Regarding communication, mechanisms the principal does not believe in impersonal forms of communication. Rather than using memo's, the principal communicated directly with the staff so that messages are not misconstrued. Heads of Departments also played an important role in this regard. The principal held regular staff meetings at least twice a month and weekly meetings with heads of departments.

Interaction with parents was through the School Governing Council where the chairman was the main spokesperson. The principal was slotted in when necessary on certain matters. The procedure was that, the principal first met with the Governing Council after which recommendations made, were presented to parents and if accepted became decisions that would guide the processes at the school. Students were also represented in the process. Concerning results, the principal was optimistic about the forthcoming examinations because of hard work that had been done and that all the necessary assistance was provided to both students and teachers.

**NGWENYATHI :**

When asked about strategies he used to attain good results and how teachers, students and parents were influenced to work jointly towards achieving success, the principal attributed this success to the previous principal who laid the foundations by strengthening and developing him and other staff members. With the previous principal, a lot of experience was shared as a result, there was no difficulty for him in taking over as the new principal. Teachers were also very supportive and co-operative. Another reason for success was the encouragement and motivation he provided to matric teachers. At the beginning of the year, when results were announced, and analyzed, those teachers with good results were awarded and congratulated for their good work as a result all teachers are always striving towards getting these awards. The principal also supported the teachers in various ways. Teachers are motivated in staff meetings for good work done and their importance acknowledged. It is always emphasized to the teachers that good results can only be obtained through teamwork, not through individual efforts. Inexperienced teachers are encouraged to consult veterans within the school in their subjects. Teachers may also seek such assistance from neighbouring schools if it is not available within their school. Co-teaching in this regard was also suggested and implemented. Support for students was also massive. Other

students is also massive. Other than in-school learning activities, students are also supported and guided in excursions for out-of-school learning activities. Thus, an atmosphere of learning is created for students at the school. Parents serving in the School Governing Council were very co-operative, and also contributed tremendously to the school's success. The principal was firm and strict with discipline and very consistent. Parental role, other than in the PTSA, was very minimal and the principal would be happy to see more parents involved.

#### 4.4.2 TEACHERS' INTERVIEWS:

##### NDZONDELELO:

Standard 10 teachers interviewed responded very positively to questions posed to them. Concerning interaction and communication with students, class representatives and the SRC (Student Representative Council) played an important role and worked in close collaboration with class teachers. All concerns were referred to the deputy principal to attend to.

This form of interaction leads to a healthy ethos being created at school where students respect teachers. Good results were also achieved as a result of this inter-action because students were dedicated, co-operative and very

disciplined. Teachers were also concerned about the abolition of corporal punishment and anticipated problems in this regard in future. Teachers also believed in continuous evaluation and always gave feedback to the students about their performance. Creativity on the part of the students was recommended by the teachers. The principal's support in encouraging and motivating new teachers and providing the necessary teaching materials was highly commended by the teachers concerned. The teachers felt that they were part of the school in terms of decision taken, as any innovation was discussed broadly, first in departmental meetings and then in staff meetings. If any change pursued was rejected, it would be reviewed by the principal until sufficient consensus was reached.

Responding to why the school had such outstanding results, this was attributed to teachers being task-oriented. At all times, teachers supported and guided the students, they were firm with discipline, on time in class, spending afternoons, and weekends with them and worked very hard and very closely with students. This resulted in mutual trust and co-operation between teachers and students. Parental support and co-operation was also seen to be of significant importance by the teachers.

### NGWENYATHI :

Inter-action with students at Ngwenyathi Secondary School other than in classrooms, was also through students representatives. Teachers believed in being fair and firm to students. They always tried to be approachable, transparent and not rigid as before. To maintain discipline and order at the school, teachers abstained from using abusive language in the presence of students under all circumstances. This resulted in students being obedient to them and carrying out their instructions to the letter thereby facilitating teaching and learning. In helping create a climate conducive to learning and a healthy ethos at the school, teachers worked together in attending to any problems that crops up at the school to make sure that no disruption to teaching and discipline took place.

Another reason for success according to the teachers, emanated from the school's policy of selecting candidates. Each school has its own tradition regarding the filling up of vacancies and all expectations are raised with new candidates who will then decide whether they will cope with what is expected of them. Other than that, teachers support and assist each other at all costs and work as members of a family. Even teachers in junior classes are expected to help in Std 10 classes in section they master. Concerning

evaluation, the teachers believe in formative evaluation i.e. continuous evaluation, testing small sections to avoid any late discoveries that students did not understand. This helped to monitor teaching and the learning process. Students were also free to talk and share their feelings with teachers, this was because teachers took it upon themselves to attend to their problems. When students did not perform as expected, teachers investigated what the problems were and encouraged pupils to be open to them about such problems. The result of this interaction, was that trust was built between students and teachers which eliminated many disciplinary problems. Teachers also praised students for all their efforts and participation in learning activities and the completion of tasks given.

Teachers also expressed the acknowledgement of their input in the running of the school. This was attributed to the principal who created trust and security and an atmosphere for things to happen. As a result teachers saw the school as an inviting place to be at. Teachers' views were channelled through departmental and staff meetings where they communicated without fear to be intimidated for what they believed in. Such interactions make the school a healthy place to work at.

#### 4.4.3 STUDENTS' INTERVIEWS:

##### NDZONDELELO:

Responding to the question of why they were attending school at Ndzondelelo, all students interviewed responded that they were attracted by discipline and good results achieved by the school. Students at the school were cared for and tuition went on all the time. The community also spoke well about the school, its results, the teachers and the schools' performance in sport. The school was also consistent in enforcing rules and time was respected at the school. These characteristics lead to the schools' success, to attain the to attain the best results.

Concerning the high pass rate, students saw their teachers and principal to be very supportive and positive towards them. Teachers sacrificed and committed themselves to see them progress in their work, the principal provided all the necessary assistance and their willingness as students to obey school rules, facilitated the process of learning and teaching. Working in groups where they revise jointly even after school hours, also contributed to the attainment of good results. The principal and teachers also encouraged and supported the formation of such groups. Students were afforded an opportunity to ask questions and channel their views through to the teachers in class during tuition.

This enhanced participation and involvement and made students more confident in themselves. The extra classes held in the afternoons, weekends and school holidays enabled students to cover vast amounts of work long before the examinations and students become acquainted with their school work. Timeous corrective feedback after tests or projects, was also given by the teachers.

#### NGWENYATHI :

Responding to the question of why they were enrolled at the school, the students cited that they were impressed by discipline at the school and tuition that went on all the time in the classrooms. The students reported that, school rules were obeyed and teachers respected. One student saw the regulations that govern the school as an instrument that creates an atmosphere of learning. Other reasons mentioned for good results the school attained, were dedication on the part of teachers and the neatness of students.

On the question of what made the school succeed, the students saw the principal as the one who initiates all processes as he motivated, developed and encouraged students to improve performance at all times. He was instrumental in the formation of small groups for after-school classes and sometimes involved himself and interacted with them in

the process, personally. Teachers who were also dedicated and supportive, spent most of their time with the students. They were punctual for classes, covered reasonable amounts of work in class and kept students engaged with assignments, class and homework. Tests were written regularly and corrective feedback given to students as soon as possible. An atmosphere of trust existed between students and teachers and between the principal and students. Students tried to emulate their teachers whom they regarded as their role models.

#### 4.4.4 PARENTS' INTERVIEWS:

##### NDZONDELELO:

When asked to elaborate on roles parents should play that have a direct impact on the students performance at school, the parent interviewed responded that such roles should start long before the child goes to school. Parents should be role models who uphold the nations values and sense of pride so that students can have confidence in them. Education should not be used as a tool to despise uneducated parents who will as a result thereof, not be able to influence or support children positively in educational matters. Parents should also directly interact with their children, sit with them around the table and educate them about issues such as for example, sex education, at home.

Parents should also be encouraged to continually visit the school and enquire about their children's progress. Schools should be inviting and accessible places where parents can interact freely with teachers. To achieve this interaction, parents should be invited to the school around an issue which they are likely to support e.g. raising funds for sports equipment or a prize giving ceremony. Parents do not support vague agendas, an issue must be identified and parents will support.

There are also a number of innovative ways, through which parents can motivate children to progress and perform well at school. Role models from the parents are to present talks to students and developmental programmes around educational issues organised. These should be initiated and encouraged by parents. Empowering exercises must be shared among parents themselves to build sound families and societies. Parental expertise in certain areas of development should also be invited and working committees established, that will be expanded to accommodate people from various categories of careers who will be required to present motivational talks to students and other parents about their success.

**NGWENYATHI :**

The parent interviewed, a member of the school Governing Council from the school, found it very easy to talk about the school and the roles played by parents. Many people in the area were not educated but were very keen to see their children educated. Parents did all they can to motivate their children. They gave them enough time to study, showed interest in their schooling and provided them with incentives after passing examinations, such as gifts and clothing. Some although to a limited extent, came to school to the enquire about their children's progress.

Although in the background, parents supported and motivated their children in various ways to attain success. Through the school Governing Council, parents were able to make their voice heard at the school and interacted, collaborated and supported the teachers as much as they could. The success the school attained was as a result of these interactions and support as well the personality and vision the school principal had. However, parents should be encouraged to be more involved and supportive so as to be able to continue to improve the students' success at the school.

#### 4.5 FINDINGS:

Data gathered from the two schools, namely, Ndzonelelo and Ngwenyathi clearly shows the importance of all stakeholders in the daily operation of the school. The roles played by the principal, teachers, students and the parents, are of significant importance and contribute tremendously towards the schools' success. In both schools, the principal is the initiator and steers the school towards a particular direction by first creating a positive learning environment. He communicates and consults broadly with all other parties, guides and supports teachers tremendously by, supplying the necessary learning materials and resources, working through departmental heads and deputies to co-ordinate all processes at school, interacting and consulting with parents through the school governing bodies and monitoring tuition and evaluation at school by ensuring that students are always attended to in the classes. For instructional improvement with their strong leadership both principals emphasise on accomplishing educational goals related to academic achievement through promoting classroom instruction and in-service programmes teachers attend. In both schools as stated earlier, the principal's effectiveness should be viewed as a prerequisite for providing a positive learning environment for all students within a school.

Teachers on the other hand in both schools, work hand in work as a team and are highly motivated. They carry out their task of teaching and nurturing their students with the utmost diligence. They hold after school, weekend and holiday classes willingly and keep students on task by continuously testing them on objectives taught. These tests give feedback that enable the teachers to determine areas where students need corrective feedback and more instruction in subsequent tests and assignments.

With the massive support students get from both the teachers and principal, they also work in smaller groups and jointly work on projects given by them. In these groups, students find it very easy to communicate with their peers and share ideas on all given tasks. They also learn other communicative and inter-action skills and develop a sense of responsibility changing power relations from teacher to students. In the absence of a teacher in class, students within these groups, take the initiative and facilitate learning, either in the smaller groups or with the whole class. The operation of these groups go beyond the school premises and also function at the students' homes in the evenings. Students have found this exercise to be increasing their academic achievements, mutual concern and improving relations among themselves.

In both schools, parental role and support other than that of governing council members, is very minimal and the school principals and teachers would be happy to get more support from the parents. One parent has suggested that the school should be inviting to parents, they must feel free to visit the school at all times and the school should have empowering programmes for the parents so that they can feel that they are co-owners and legitimate partners who will contribute towards all school development programmes. Their involvement in school activities should be highly encouraged. As Weller (1989) puts it, "... especially in low income situation, the responsibility of developing a strong school-home bond, rests upon the school and teachers" and parental encouragement and support, throughout the child's school years, becomes very necessary. This view by Weller, was confirmed by the parent interviewed at Ndzonelelo, who emphasized that effective parental support does not begin when the child goes to school but before this period and the parent must be the child's immediate role model.

Other data showed differences in staff provisioning and differences in curriculum between rural and urban schools within the ex-Department of Education and training (DET) schools. For example, the enrolment at Ngwenyathi (rural) was at 1261 with 24 teachers, 2 departmental heads, deputy principal and principal, whereas at Ndzonelelo, (urban)

enrolment was 1060, with 28 teachers, 7 departmental heads, 1 deputy principal and principal. Curriculum at Ngwenyathi was very limited when compared with that of Ndzondelelo. The reason being a lack of resources and suitably qualified teachers to serve in the area. Despite all that, Ngwenyathi was able to make maximum use of available human and physical resources to obtain better results than many schools in the province.

The principals in both schools play an important role in facilitating learning and teaching and influencing all parties to play their roles. Their involvement in these processes also enhances co-operation with the principal, teachers, students and parents.

## CHAPTER FIVE – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

### 5.1 CONCLUSIONS:

Schools in low-socio-economic environments operate under difficult conditions. This has been the case since the days of separate native education and the introduction of Bantu Education in the 1940's and 1950's respectively, which were aimed at handicapping African children from these areas with inferior education. This chapter will give an overview of what some schools in these areas, are able to do to overcome all hardships they are faced with as a result thereof, but offer quality education and obtain good results despite the problems they experience. The performance of these schools has been tested against literature reviewed on effective schools and the characteristics such schools have (Edmonds, 1979; Weller, 1987; Gibbs, 1989). Conclusions have been drawn from the findings in the study and recommendations made for future research.

Whilst literature on effective schools has primarily been drawn from U.S. sources, this evidence is also applicable to South African Schools. Given the background that most black schools in South Africa are from low-socio-economic environments and are deprived and impoverished, it is easy to believe that children from these schools are likely to

fail, if home background influences academic achievement. On the contrary effective schools literature challenges this notion, since schools that have been involved in this study have proved to be successful in terms of effective teaching, therefore schools can make a difference.

Literature reviewed cites a few characteristics, that enable schools to be effective and successful. These characteristics are related to the role of the principal, who should possess strong leadership qualities with an emphasis on accomplishing educational goals (Weller, 1985), the role of the teacher which includes teacher expectations of their students reaching high levels of achievements regardless of home background (Fairman and Clark, 1985), the role of the students who through co-operative learning can increase their own academic achievement (Mc Gee-Banks, 1993) and the role of the parents who according to Weller (1987), should be brought into the school as volunteers or be provided school based programmes for parent education. These characteristics, if applied as suggested, can lead to a school's success irrespective of students' school or home background.

Other characteristics related to the above are a creation of favourable school climate for teaching and learning for example, an atmosphere free from physical and health hazards, adequate instructional space and freedom from

overcrowded classrooms (Weller, 1985), as well as evaluation.

Concerning the principals' role, literature suggested that the principal must be capable of involving the teachers and the students in decision-making to help create and maintain a positive teaching and learning environment. If the principal emphasizes collaboration in making changes within the school, so that everyone understands reasons behind decisions, and encourages feedback from teachers, students and parents, the principal will generate a feeling of joint ownership at the school. Research has unearthed ample evidence that underlie effective schools, ironically enough during this study, those schools that were diagnosed as effective did manifest these characteristics namely, involvement of teachers, students, and the School Governing Councils in decision-making. On the other hand, while the principals may not have based their leadership on principles of effective schools, the success of their schools confirmed research findings.

The principal's management style therefore, plays an important role in the success of any school, as the principal directs, controls and initiates processes and holds an important role of influencing others. To achieve a high level of success, school principals should establish and have high expectations for both the teachers and the

students.

Furthermore research also maintains that teachers also influence students to reach high levels of achievement regardless of their home background (Coleman, 1966). This characteristic distinguishes effective schools from ineffective schools. Given the fact that the two schools studied operate in areas identified as impoverished, and draw their student population from the same areas. The central argument in this study confirms the notion that high levels can be achieved regardless of student home-background.

There is also evidence that effective learning comes as a result of good and extensive teacher-student inter-action and classroom dynamics. Teachers must therefore always praise, encourage and emphasize students' capabilities instead of their negative performance. Students must also be encouraged to talk and their ideas must be used in class i.e. students should be used as a resource. Effective teachers should spend most of their class time, on task i.e. direct teaching, where students are engaged in learning. Findings from the study have also confirmed that inter-action between teachers and students at both schools involved do play an important role in the schools' success. This is reinforced by questionnaire responses where students confirmed that they were allowed to freely inter-

act with teachers, ask questions and air their views without any fears, because teachers were open and caring.

As regard students' contribution to their own success, very little is mentioned in literature except for co-operative learning, where students learn and work in groups and participate in learning activities initiated by teachers. Working in small groups and receiving rewards based on individual and group performance, enhances student performance and academic achievements. This is further confirmed by students' responses i.e. working in groups build confidence in them and they learn to inter-act and acquire more skills such as critical thinking, independence, leadership skills, consensus, exchanging ideas, sharing and acceptance of criticism. This exercise also enables them to communicate with teachers and their peers. It also changes power relationships in class and shifts responsibility for learning from teachers to students as indicated in the findings.

Another factor that came to the fore was that parental support and involvement is strongly suggested as a feature that can help a school towards effectiveness. Parents especially those in low income situations can contribute positively, to the schools' success by encouraging their children throughout their school years through task

completion, perseverance, time on task and school attendance. Parents according to Coleman (1966) are the most consistent figures in the child's life. Parental support and inter-action with schools can be in various forms. Other than parents supporting the school financially, teachers should visit student homes and schools should have daily open visitations for parents. Communication through frequent calls, progress reports and newsletters to inform parents of students' obligations are other forms of interaction. As suggested by one parent interviewed, parents should be brought into the schools as volunteers or school based programmes should be provided for parent education as a form of empowering them to help their children. Those parents who have achieved some academic success can be brought into school to serve as role models to pupils. The need for this interaction with parents, has been indicated by both principals and parents interviewed. These interdependent roles, namely, the principals', teachers', students' and parents' can jointly contribute tremendously towards prosperity and success of any school.

## 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS :

In the light of the above, this study suggests the following:

- \* an investigation needs to be made of the extent to which principals in existing schools interact positively within their schools and how this interaction impacts on the school's performance, be it for academic achievement or the creation of a favourable climate for learning and teaching e.g. high expectations, positive teacher attitudes, order and discipline and a clean orderly and secure environment.
- \* the possibility of establishing and empowering School Governing Councils to co-ordinate extra-curricular programmes with parents involved extensively, is essential. Such an endeavour could inform educators of ways in which parents can be involved more effectively both in in-school and out-of-school programmes.
- \* this study can also be the basis to further investigate underlying factors, inside and outside the schools, that influence unsatisfactory school results i.e. factors contributing to results attained by poor performing schools.

- \* this study also recommends that an analysis be made of the interpersonal relationships at such schools (poor performing) between principals, teachers, students and parents and compare these with those dynamics that exist in successful schools.

Such investigations will show how schools operate and why they operate the way they do. This study has shown how two schools in different settings operate and some common factors in the running of these schools which can be guide lines for all schools striving towards success. This research focuses on effective schools with particular emphasis on the roles played by the various parties involved in the process and how their roles are combined into a solidified whole.

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TOP SCHOOLS IN THE REGION FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS

School	94	93	92	91	90	LOCATION
NGWEBA	92,9	86,6	98,2	85,4	79,4	GRAAF REINETTE
NGWENYATHI	96,3	89,7	84,5	95,2	74,3	EAST LONDON
NEWELL	86,2	70,3	80,4	66,3	66,5	PORT ELIZABETH
MASIPHATHISANE	94,6	70,3	85,8	59,7	37,8	PORT ELIZABETH
NDZONDELELO	82	69,4	84,9	93	87,3	PORT ELIZABETH
KWEZI LOMSO	78,3	67,6	89,6	59,4	72,8	PORT ELIZABETH
NOMBULELO	86,3	82,2	80,9	67,3	60,7	GRAHAMSTOWN
THUBALETHU	80,2	80,2	68	79,1	85,4	FORT BEAUFORT

(Extract from summary of matric results - E.Cape Region - 1995)

TOP 10 SCHOOLS E. CAPE REGION - NOV' / DEC' 94

AREA OFFICE	SCHOOLS	# WROTE	# PASS	% PASS	% EXEMPTIONS
1. EAST LONDON	NGWENYATHI	81	78	96,3	51,9
2. PORT ELIZABETH	MASIPHATHISANE	278	263	94,6	41,4
3. CRADOCK	NQWEBA	99	92	92,9	51,5
4. GRAHAMSTOWN	NOMBULELO	197	170	86,3	14,7
5. PORT ELIZABETH	NEWELL	203	175	86,2	48,3
6. PORT ELIZABETH	LUNGISA	173	142	82,1	32,4
7. PORT ELIZABETH	NDZONDELELO	150	123	82	26,7
8. EAST LONDON	THUBALETHU	172	135	78,5	18,6
9. EAST LONDON	MZOXOLO	172	135	78,5	18,6
10. PORT ELIZABETH	KWEZILOMSO	212	166	78,3	22,6

(Extract from summary of matric results - 1995)

Appendix 2

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE PRINCIPAL

1. What would you attribute the success attained by your school to? Explain briefly.

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2. How do you ensure that a climate of teaching and learning exists at your school? Explain briefly.

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3. How do you monitor the progress of teaching and learning in the classrooms? Explain briefly.

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4. How do you ensure that teaching and learning take place effectively in the classrooms? Explain briefly.

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5. For how long should students be engaged in learning activities on a school day? Motivate your answer.

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6. How do you as a school leader influence your students to obey school rules? Explain briefly.

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7. What support or assistance do you give to the teachers to ensure that they perform better/effectively in their teaching? Explain briefly.

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8. Should you as the principal decide which subjects your matric students must choose or should you involve others? Motivate your answer.

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9. Who contribute most to your school success - Is it the teachers, students, parents or yourself? Explain briefly.

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10. Will your matric students perform well at the end of this year or not? Motivate your answer.

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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

1. What role(s) does your principal play for the attainment of success by your school?

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2. What role(s) do you as a teacher play for this success?

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3. How often do you give students tasks to perform on their own? Explain briefly.

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4. What kinds of tasks do you give to your students and how do you motivate them to learn?

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5. Do you allow students to freely communicate/consult with you in class? Answer Yes or **No** and explain.

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6. Do you give individual attention to students or do you prefer to work with them in groups? Motivate your answer.

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7. What method(s) do you apply to evaluate the effectiveness of your teaching? Motivate your answer.

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8. What contributes most to your school attaining good results? Explain briefly.

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9. What resources do you make use of in class to facilitate your teaching?

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10. Do you think this year's candidates will perform well in the exams at the end of the year? State why?

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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

1. In what way(s) does the principal contribute to the school success - pass rate?

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2. What do you see to be reason(s) for your school's success?

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3. Should you as a student determine which subject you must to do or not? Give a reason(s) for your answer

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4. Are you comfortable with the subjects you are doing this year? Motivate.

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5. Do you regard tasks given by your teachers to be easy,manageable or difficult? Why?

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6. When given tasks or preparing for exams or any other forms of evaluation do you prefer to work as an individual or in groups? Motivate your answer.

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7. How often are you evaluated or tested at school, (e.g. daily, weekly, monthly etc.) and how does this help?

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8. How often do you prefer to be evaluated or tested? Motivate your answer.

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9. Do you consider your school rules to be flexible or rigid? Motivate your answer.

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10. Do you think you will also perform well in the examinations at the end of the year? Motivate.

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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

- 1. How does the principal help in the success of the school and how does he/she relate to you as parents?

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- 2. To what extent are you as a parent involved in school activities /running of the school?

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- 3. What support do you give to the Principal and teachers of the school to ensure that the school is successful? Motivate your answer.

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- 4. What support do you give to your children at home to make sure that they perform well?

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- 5. Do you help your children with their school work - if so in what way(s)? Explain briefly.

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- 6. How often as a parent do you prefer to get your child's progress report from school? State why.

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- 7. How often are you inter-acting and meeting with the teachers of your school? Explain briefly.

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- 8. Of what benefit are such inter-actions and meetings to the school's success? Explain briefly.

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- 9. What do you think contributes most to the success of the school? Is it the principal's role, teacher's role, student's co-operation or parental support? Explain briefly.

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- 10. Do you think this year's matric candidates will also perform well in their examinations at the end of the year? Motivate your answer.

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.....

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# University of Durban-Westville

FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
 Department of Foundations of Education  
 Direct line: (031) 820-2604  
 Fax No.: (031) 820-2866

The Area Manager  
 Eastern Cape Department of Education  
 Private Bag X64  
 Uitenhage  
 6230

16 May 1995

Dear Sir/Madam

I am Dr Siphon Hlophe, the Co-ordinator of an MEd Programme in Educational Management at the University of Durban -Westville. One of my students is Vukile Tshazibana and is from your area (Eastern Cape).

Vukile wants to do a qualitative study (a case study) looking at the factors that contribute to the success of low socio-economic schools in South Africa. I am his supervisor and see this study of significance in that its the first of its kind. We rarely have research based on case studies. He requests permission to conduct this case study in your schools.

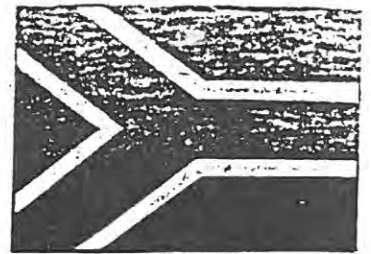
Your co-operation in this regard will be very much appreciated.

Thank You Sir

Sincerely

Dr. Siphon Hlophe  
 (M.Ed Co-ordinator)

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE  
 PROVINCE OF THE EASTERN CAPE  
 DEPARTEMENT VAN ONDERWYS EN KULTUUR  
 OOS-KAAP PROVINSIE  
**ISEBE LEMFUNDO NENKCUBEKO**  
 IPHONDO LEMPUMA-KOLONI



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Act Regional Chief Director  
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 6056  
 1995-05-23

Dr Sipho Hlophe  
 M.Ed. Co-ordinator  
 University of Durban-Westville  
 Private Bag X54001  
 DURBAN 4000

Dear Dr Hlophe

Thank you for your letter dated 16 May 1995.

Permission is hereby granted for student Vukile Tshazibane to conduct his case studies in our schools. Before visiting a school, Mr Tshazibane is requested to make the necessary arrangements with the principal, prior to his visit.

As the Department of Education and Culture (East Cape Province) could be interested and gain something from the outcome of the research and findings, it is suggested that the Department be informed accordingly.

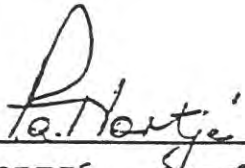
Yours faithfully

P A NORTJÉ  
 ACTING REGIONAL CHIEF DIRECTOR

Permanent Secretary  
Department of Education and Culture  
Private Bag X0032  
BISHO  
5608

ATTENTION : MR H FRANZEN  
DEPUTY PERMANENT SECRETARY :  
STANDARD EDUCATION

Copy for your information, as well as a copy of the letter received from Dr Siphon Hlophe from the University of Durban-Westville.



P A NORTJÉ 23/5/95  
ACTING REGIONAL CHIEF DIRECTOR

Area Manager  
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→ Private Bag X62  
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ATTENTION : MR F M NGXATU

Copy for your information, as well as a copy of the letter received from Dr Siphon Hlophe from the University of Durban-Westville



P A NORTJÉ 23/5/95  
ACTING REGIONAL CHIEF DIRECTOR

