

THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF A PREFECT SYSTEM IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS PREDOMINANTLY ATTENDED BY BLACK LEARNERS

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-

DEDICATION

To my parents, the late Boy John Donald Bowen and my dear mother Brunhilde Montsoane Bowen, who gave me the necessary courage to hold on to Jesus and who taught me that even when I find myself walking through the valley of the shadow of death, I should fear no one but put my trust in Him (Psalm. 23:4).

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SUMMARY

The purpose of this research was to investigate the structure and function of a prefect system in primary schools predominantly attended by black learners. It is the wish of learners to partake fully in school governance to bring about desirable changes within the education system. The riots that broke out in 1976, proved beyond doubt that learners no longer wished to be onlookers in the system, but to actively take part in stabilising it for their own future.

In the past, learners who served in the prefect council were randomly chosen and elected by the principal and the staff. This was done in isolation of the learners in the school. Favouritism and popularity were the main features for a learner to be elected. At any given moment during the course of the year, a member of the council who did not perform according to the principles as set out by staff members, was sacked and replaced by anybody who they felt would do a better job.

The democratic government that was voted for in 1996 brought about drastic changes within the education system. Unlike in the past, where learners were omitted as part of education stakeholders, the present government gives due consideration to learners' inputs and ideas.

Legislative Acts such as the South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996) were passed to accommodate the needs and aspirations of learners. In terms of section 10 (3) of Act No. 84 of 1996, public schools are allowed to institute a prefect system where necessary. The latter statement urged the compilation of this research to bring primary schools predominantly attended by black learners on par with their white counterparts who still make use of the prefect system.

The procedure for establishing an effective structure for SRC's in secondary schools is applicable in primary schools as well. The system for the election,

nomination and voting in secondary schools can be applied in primary schools as well. The functions of a prefect system that included, among others, monitoring of both educators and learners outside the school premises, have been replaced by functions that lead to the creation of an educative environment within the school.

Key words

Learner empowerment

Prefect system

Learner participation

Learner leadership

Leadership development

OPSOMMING

DIE STRUKTUUR EN FUNKSIES VAN 'N LEIERSTELSEL IN PRIMêRE SKOLE VIR OORWEGEND SWART LEERDERS

Die doel van hierdie navorsing was om die wese, die struktuur en funksionering van die prefekstelsel in laêrskole met hoofsaaklik swart leerlinge te ondersoek. Dit is die wens van leerlinge omte deel in die regering van die skool sodat hulle veranderinge in die sisteem van opvoeding kan bewerkstellig vir hulle eie toekoms.

Voorheen is, leerlinge wat in die prefekstelsel gedien het, lukraak deur die skoolhoof en personeel verkies. Dit is gedoen sonder die medewerking van leerling in die skool. Gunsbetoon en populariteit was die belangrikste verskynsel in die verkiesing van 'n leerling. 'n Prefek kan enige tyd geskors word deur personeel as hy nie die grondslag wat hulle vir die stelsel bepaal het volg nie, en kon vervang word deur 'n leerling wat die personeel voel die werk beter kan doen.

Die demokratiese regering wat in 1994 verkies was, het ingrypende veranderings aan onderwys gemaak. Anders as in die verlede, toe leerlinge nie deel van onderwysbestuur was nie, die huidige regering gee aandag aan die leerlinge se invoer en idees. Wetgewing soos die Suid- Afrikaanse Skoolwet is aanvaar om die noodsaaklikheid en aspirasies van die leerlinge te kan akkomodeer.

Die Suid Afrikaanse Skoolwet 10(3) maak dit moontlik vir enige openbare skool om 'n prefekstelsel in te stel waar dit nodig is. Alerdjie verklaring noodsaak hierdie navorsing aan ander laerskole met hoofsaaklik swart leerlinge, om hulle op gelyk vlak te bring met dié met hoofsaaklik wit leerlinge wat van die prefekstelsel gebruik maak.

Die metode wat gebruik word vir die verkiesing van leerlingrade vir hoër skole, kan ook gebruik word vir die prefekstelsel. Die stelsel wat gebruik word vir die verkiesing, nominasie en stemming in hoërskole, kan ook gebruik word. Die funksies van die prefekstelsel was voorheen die monitering van onderwysers en leerlinge buite die werks omgewing, maar is tans om leiding te gee in die skepping van 'n omgewing wat bevordelik is vir onderwys in die skool.

Trefwoorde

Leerderbemaagtiging

Leierstelsel

Leerderdeelname

Leerderleierskap

Leerderontwikkeling

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The part which learners must play in assisting management to perform their duties effectively, need to be properly structured, and in turn the learners themselves have to be educated to perform this task diligently and effectively. Kok (1997:1) points out that learners no longer wish to be onlookers in the educational process, but to be actively involved in it, especially in school management areas. Jacobson et al. (1973:34) explain that a learner council must be structured and arranged in such a manner that every learner feels his/her presence in the school. From the above, it is clear that the participation of learners in school management areas can go a long way towards the restoration of a culture of learning and teaching in schools.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

According to the ANC policy framework for education (1993:3), the education system under the apartheid government had a negative bearing on the country's economy due to its segregation policy. Learners, educators and parents were excluded from decision-making processes. This, according to Behr (1989:195-97), led to a well-organised march by the Soweto Learner Representative Council, rejecting the education policy. The formation of the Soweto Learner Representative Council led to increasing demands for the scrapping of the prefect system and its substitution with a Learner Representative Council (LRC) in schools. It was evident that racial changes needed to be effected in the education system in order to normalise it.

This was ultimately realised after the first democratic elections held in 1994, which unified the education system. The South African Schools Act (Act No.84 of 1996) accommodated demands for the establishment of Learner Representative Councils in the form of Representative Council for Learners (RCL). In terms of Section 11 of the said Act, RCLs' may only be established in every public school that has learners

in grade eight and higher. This, unfortunately, excludes the establishment of RCLs at primary schools. However, Section 10(3) of the Act allows public schools, including primary schools, to institute a prefect system where they deem it necessary.

From the unstructured interviews held with various managers of white schools, it was discovered that most white primary schools have prefect systems in place ahead of most black primary schools. This, of course, is very understandable because black schools were used as political battle-grounds during the "struggle" and therefore, the scrapping of the prefect system was more total and complete at black schools than at white schools. Apparently, when the new legislation was passed, black primary schools feared to revert to the discredited prefect system. This unequal situation has to be corrected to achieve equity between formerly white and black schools, as required by the new democratic dispensation.

Lack of a proper system for choosing learner prefects may lead to a volatile situation resulting in the decline of educational standards and chaos (De Waal, 1989:514). Anything that may result in the process being politicised should be discarded, as the school cannot be an educational institution and a political battle-ground at the same time (Van Schalkwyk, 1996:144).

The structure for a prefect body presents a problem area that needs to be addressed. Unlike the past prefect bodies, which were imposed upon learners, the present system has to be democratically chosen by learners at a school. Van der Merwe (1976:1) points out that lack of a proper system for choosing learner prefects at schools and the biasness of both learners and educators could have a negative influence in choosing a prefect body. It is therefore of the utmost importance that learners with the required potential should serve as prefects and be properly developed in a scientifically responsible way (Smith, 1982:88). This compels educational authorities at school level to address the matter of training, identification and utilisation of learners, to bring about an environment conducive to learning (Grobler, 1992:9).

Another problem area of concern that can impact negatively in choosing learner prefects is popularity. This may lead to students with the required potential being ignored at the expense of the average ones. This prompted Van der Merwe (1976:6) to state that an objective criteria be used for choosing learner prefects such as: good personality traits, exemplary behaviour to fellow- learners and the ability to motivate others towards the attainment of a particular goal. Thus, it is important that learner prefects be properly selected, as they form an important component of an effective school management (Gorton, 1983:422).

From the unstructured interviews held, the common structure or composition of a prefect body appeared to be as follows (Klerksdorp Primary, 2001:3; Unieskool, 2001:2; Meiringspark, 2001:1; Alabama, 2001:1):

- Head boy and head girl (to be chosen from senior classes, that is, grade 7).
- Assistant Head boy and head girl (from grade 6).
- 5 boy assistants (grade5-7) and 5 girl assistants (grade5-7)

Very little research has been conducted on the prefect system in primary schools. However, the literature on secondary schools, for example Van der Merwe (1976) and De Beer (1992) provides guidelines that may be tailor-made to accommodate the uniqueness of the primary schools. De Beer (1992:125) argues that in secondary schools the council should be democratically structured to include learners, educators and the school management team. The presence of educators and management is solely to advise the body on certain issues of concern and to serve as a disciplinary committee for transgressors. However, in the primary school it may be expected that the management team and educators will play a more prominent role in the election and functioning of the prefect body as a result of the tender age of the learners.

The functions of a learner prefect body also present a problem area for concern. The prefect body is put in place to add stability with regard to school management

by virtue of functions they are assigned to perform. Group decision-making by all parties (learners, educators and management) usually results in the situation of collective goals because everybody will feel co-responsible to make decisions work (Van Wyk, 1992:138 & Steyn, 1995:99). It is therefore clear that functions to be performed by the prefect body will be diligently carried out and observed, as all will be committed to them by virtue of having participated in its formulation.

Van der Merwe (1976:7) explains that the prefect body, if properly structured, should act as a link between the educators and learners at a school. The body could assist in creating a conducive educational environment in a school by performing functions like helping to supervise fellow- learners at a school by seeing to it that they behave accordingly, helping with the maintenance of discipline in the school, seeing to it that learners obey school rules at all times and to be forerunners and act responsibly in certain school sports activities like culture, soccer, music etcetra. Additional functions for a prefect body will be obtained from the empirical investigation.

Hence, that there is a need for ex DET schools to establish prefect bodies once again. This should be done to bring them on equal footing with ex-model c schools and to comply with the requirements expected of a public school, as stated in terms of section 10(3) of Act No. 84 of 1996.

The research problem centres on the following questions:

- What is the structure for a prefect system in primary schools?
- What are the functions of a prefect system in primary schools?
- What are the existing structures and functions for a prefect system in primary schools?

1.3 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

- Research aim 1: To determine the structure of a prefect system in primary schools.

- Research aim 2: To determine the functions of a prefect system in primary schools.
- Research aim 3: To determine empirically what are the existing structures and functions of a prefect system in primary schools

1.4 METHODS OF RESEARCH

1.4.1 Literature study

Various sources were used such as newspapers, educational journals and books. Key words used to determine the literature relevant to this research project were *learner empowerment, prefect system, learner participation, learner leadership and leadership development, sharing responsibility*.

1.4.2 Empirical research

- **Questionnaire**

A questionnaire that ascertain the structure and functions of a prefect system in primary schools will be formulated and completed by school managers (principals). The aim of the questionnaire was to determine the extent to which the prefect system succeeds in bringing stability to school governance through the creation of an effective structure. The questionnaire was preferred over an interview because it gave respondents enough time to think clearly before answering a question (Gorton, 1983:13).

Two types of questionnaires were identified, namely an open and a closed questionnaire (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:98). For this research, a closed questionnaire (structured) was chosen, because unstructured questionnaires (open) increase the time of completion. Furthermore, the respondent might not have a suitable answer for a particular question and may therefore complete it subjectively and not objectively. This would thwart the aim of the questionnaire (Smith, 1982:25).

However, with a structured questionnaire, information over a wide field can easily be gathered. Respondents will have enough time to respond to the questionnaire objectively as a result of the choices they are given. This will ultimately save time and facilitate the immediate procession of data collected (De Waal, 1989:66). Finally, the use of a questionnaire compels the researchers to a quantitative approach (Steyn, 1995:88).

- ***Population***

The research was conducted among principals of primary schools in the Southern District of the Klerksdorp region in the North-West Province (n = 60).

- ***Statistical Method***

The response will be analysed using the SAS procedure.

1.5 CHAPTER DIVISIONS

Chapter 1: Orientation

Chapter 2: Structure of a prefect system

Chapter 3: Functions of a prefect system

Chapter 4: Empirical research

Chapter 5: Summary, findings and recommendations

1.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter an orientation to the research was given. The structure and functions of a prefect system was motivated, among others by discussing the statement of problem, stipulating the research aims and indicating the methods used to achieve those aims. The population and statistical method were also indicated, as well as the division of chapters.

CHAPTER 2

STRUCTURE OF A PREFECT SYSTEM

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is divided into two sections: the official documents and the literature viewpoint. The two will be dealt with separately although there are common elements or ideology between them. With regard to literature, sources of a few years back have been used, because of scarcity regarding recent publications. The official documents consulted refer to the present *Leamer Representative Council* (L.R.C) instead of a *prefect system*. However, their guidance with regard to aspects such as elections and nominations of members for the council remain relevant.

Behr (1989:65) found that members of the prefect council were randomly chosen by educators with no inputs from the learners. This prompted this research, in order to correct this situation and to establish a prefect council that includes inputs from stakeholders such as learners, so that they also may feel that their role in bringing about stability in the education system is of importance.

2.2 EXPLANATION OF CONCEPTS

The literature sources do not give a clear explanation regarding the concepts *structure*, *learner prefect* and *the prefect system*. The three concepts need to be clearly explained so as to indicate their relevancy in the research. Together they form the basis of the research.

- **Structure**

The concept *structure* can be defined as the manner in which something has been put together (Reader's Digest Dictionary, 1994: 1206). In terms of the Mini Oxford School Dictionary (1998:633) it is something that has been constructed or organised. As Kok (1997:26) puts it, structure is something that has to be properly planned and arranged so that people are able to perform particular functions in the most constructive and effective way. He further states that in a properly structured

organisation, posts are formally grouped together so as to enable people to execute their duties effectively.

From the above, it can be concluded that structure may be regarded as something constructively built and put together in an organised manner so as to make it meaningful.

- **Learner Prefect**

The Mini Oxford School Dictionary (1998:488) defines the term *prefect* as a school pupil given authority to help keep order. This dictionary (1998:360) defines a learner as a person who is in the learning process. A learner prefect, according to Nel (1983:324), is someone who has to help develop a sense of responsibility amongst fellow-learners.

According to Du Toit (1991:4), a learner prefect forms part of a management structure wherein he/she is expected to give guidance and direction to their fellow learners regarding school rules. He further finds that a learner prefect always has to act in a manner that will make him or her earn respect among fellow- learners. Du Plessis (1994:6) indicates that in most cases, a learner prefect is to be elected to the council by learners as well as educators in the school.

From the above, it can be concluded that a learner prefect can be seen as a person who is in a learning process but at the same time being given authority to manage fellow- learners by virtue of the position he/she holds in a particular school.

- **Prefect System**

In terms of the Readers Digest Dictionary (1994:1220) this concept may be seen as a collective entity consisting of a group of interrelated or interacting elements. Furthermore, it is a set of parts, things or ideas that are organised to work together (Mini Oxford School Dictionary, 1998: 649).

A prefect system may be defined as a council in which the learners occupy positions of authority in order to develop potential leadership and a sense of responsibility amongst them (Kok, 1997:60).

The definition implies that a prefect system can also mean a council to which reference is made in subsequent pages. It therefore means that whenever the term *prefect council* is mentioned, it automatically implies the prefect system as well.

From the above, a prefect system may be regarded as a council in which learners stand collectively as a unit sharing the same ideas and working towards achieving common objectives.

2.3 PARTICIPATIVE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

The spirit of democracy, which has engulfed South Africa in recent years is beginning to take root in schools. This also has to include primary schools predominantly attended by black learners. New educational policies and legislative Acts such as the South African Schools Act (Act No.84 of 1996) indicates the importance of stakeholder participation (including learners) in the democratic governance of schools. In order for the school authorities to manage a school successfully it not only depend on their legal authority but also on the support and loyalty of learners as well. This compels school authorities to adopt participative democratic governance.

The explanation of the term *participative democratic governance* follows.

2.3.1 Explanation of participative democratic governance

In an attempt to define the concept *participative democratic governance*, the study was influenced largely by the discourse of the mass democratic education movement in South Africa especially the Peoples Education movement. According to Van der Walt (1999:138-9), Peoples Education supposes co-operation among all

segments of society, including pupils, irrespective of which ethnic groups they belong to. It further states that learners are expected to be involved and to take an active part in the social process.

According to Fraser (1998:45-6), democracy means that whatever happens or is decided should only be undertaken after consultation and with the involvement and participation of all concerned. He further notes that democracy is therefore either consultative, representative or participatory.

In accordance with EDUPOL (1998:64), *Governance* is understood to mean not simply the system of administration and control of education in a country, but also the whole process by which education policies are formulated, adopted, implemented and monitored. Governance is therefore an issue not simply at the broad national level, but also at every level of the system down to the individual school (Armstrong, 1998:18).

From the above, participative democratic governance can be defined as a system of school administration and control where learners as part of the stakeholders with an interest in education, are not only consulted and represented, but actively participate in the school decision-making process and structures where policies are formulated, adopted, implemented and monitored (Fraser, 1998:68).

2.3.2 Goals of participative democratic governance

One of the primary aims of democratic participation of learners in school governance is to make sure that the interaction between school participants be productive and promotes effectiveness in school governance (Schlechty, 1991: 63-66).

According to Shor (1992:21), an orientation regarding the year planning of school activities including those of the learners with reference to their needs, perception and interest be cultivated and drawn up. This is further emphasised by Johnson

(1991:5) when mention is made that in order to accomplish this activity plan, it is important to co-ordinate every party involved in the education system.

It would appear, according to Shaeffer (1991:8), that there is a growing awareness on the part of many people that learner participation in school governance can contribute towards the creation of interest from other stakeholders to participate fully in school activities to promote education.

Participation by learners in school governance can help achieve the following goals in schools (Shaeffer, 1991:8; North-West, 2000:1):

- to provide more educative resources in the school.
- to help the school become more relevant to local needs and conditions.
- to make the school more effective and efficient through community inputs.
- to help the community see value in the school.
- to help transform education by performing certain tasks allocated to them.
- to encourage educators, learners and parents to be responsible for the school and its effectiveness.
- to see to it that the needs of the school are met.
- to broaden participation and ownership of the education process.
- to help develop a culture of learning and teaching in all schools.
- to ensure that the school provides quality education.

The different levels on which participative democratic governance can exert in bringing about stability and effectiveness, both at school level and the community, are explained below.

2.3.3 Different levels of participative democratic governance

Participative democratic governance by learners in schools can be illustrated in two levels (Shaeffer, 1991:12). These two levels demonstrate the extent to which learners can assist in bringing about stability in the governance of schools. The two are discussed briefly (Shaeffer, 1991:12):

- **The individual level**

Participation can lead to changes in knowledge, attitude, skills, greater awareness, efficiency, self-reliance and better practice. This refers to the extent to which a learner as an individual can impact positively or negatively towards effectiveness within the school environment. It also implies that a learner prefect should have the necessary independent thinking and not to be influenced by others towards taking a particular course. A learner as an individual can therefore make a positive contribution towards creating a safe educative environment in the school.

- **The community level**

At this level, collaboration and participation can be an end to greater control over information and technologies, the generation of new ideas for resolving educational problems, more effective management and control of local resources and the development and strengthening of local organisations. This implies that a learner has to actively take part in community life to use his/her skills against others in promoting a spirit of mutual relations within the community he/she lives, for example being a member of community police forum to help combat crime and instability within the society.

In conclusion, it can be said that the two levels demonstrate the extent to which learners can help improve the images of both the school and the community they live in. With regard to the individual level, much depends on the individual learner to help create an educative atmosphere in a school. The knowledge that he/she brings with him/her to school is further enriched and broadened up by educators. Through the acquisition of that knowledge it will help him/her develop a positive attitude towards his/her seniors in the school. This will also help him/her to treat others with respect and to enable him/her to know who he/she is, so as to grow into a responsible person.

Regarding the community level, it is important that the learner respect the community in which he/she lives. The information he/she brings along from the formal education received has to be disseminated to the community so as to help

improve lives and environmental conditions. The community has to benefit from knowledge gained to better utilise local resources, maintain effective management of resources and to encourage working relations between community members.

Below are the advantages that participative democratic governance can bring about in a school are described.

2.3.4 Advantages of participative democratic governance

Participation of learners in some management areas such as ensuring that the implementation of the code of conduct for learners can be seen as a positive step in that their active involvement in matters affecting them directly will help towards attainment of better democratic governance in schools. Their participation in school management areas affords them the opportunity to shape their own destiny.

The analysis of partnership between the school and the community clearly implies that participation by interest groups such as learners in school governance must be encouraged, as they represent democracy in action. It also gives rise to recognition of equality. The argument is that irrespective of its short-comings, democratic participation by learners in governance of their schools gives them a say in the making of decisions affecting them directly, and consequently reduces power differentials in the school system (Mashamba, 1992:84).

However, despite these concerns, the world continues to witness efforts in both democratic and still more in undemocratic societies to amplify consultative, representative and participatory democracies. According to Blackmore (1993:67), the common-sense use of the concept "democracy " implies that the right and power to make decisions in public matters, of which education is one, "does not reside in a single individual or a class of individuals, but in each and every citizen".

According to the latter statement, the basic democratic institution then is a general forum in which all may sit and speak and each having equal voting powers.

However, because of the fact that not all can sit and speak, people have a basic democratic right to elect their representatives, who can sit and speak on their behalf. It may then safely be said that if properly planned and implemented, democratic participation has the potential to improve schools, thus contributing towards the restoration of the culture of learning and teaching.

Despite its shortcomings, democratic participation has the following advantages (Grace, 1995:128):

- It improves learner performance.
- It heightens educator professionalism.
- It develops a sense of ownership of the schools by communities.
- It democratises schools, education and society.
- It improves working relations.
- It improves discipline in the school.

The next aspect to be looked into concerns the disadvantages of participative democratic governance.

2.3.5 Disadvantages of participative democratic governance

According to Sarason (1990:53), the international community acknowledges that not only has the child the right to receive education, but also to be actively involved in it regarding decision-making in some management areas. Freeman (1996:37) argues that the child is to participate freely both in school and life events to display democracy and to assist him/her broaden his knowledge regarding the environment in which he/she lives.

There are, however, two major concerns regarding the active participation of learners in school governance. Contrary to expectations, participation by learners in the democratic governance of their schools may give them less authority, while real power remains anchored in the office of the principal (Mashamba, 1992:86).

Furthermore, it is possible that democratic participation by stakeholders in school governance may not be an easy way for the government of the day to abdicate its educational responsibilities. It may also be a way to spread the blame for poor performance by schools on participants instead of the hierarchy (Sayed, 1992:78).

In terms of the ANC policy framework for Education and Training (1993:20), a racially and ethnically based system of governance has been at the heart of the apartheid education. This also became evident in schools in as far as their governance was concerned. Learners did not form part of school governance and were at all times regarded as of less importance.

However, through the rise in power of the Soweto Learner Representative Council during the 1976 riots, the plight of the learners was recognised. Other stakeholders with an interest in education began to recognise the needs of learners as well as the need to involve them in educational matters including those from primary schools (Behr, 1989:68).

It is therefore clear that participation of learners in school management areas can have some disadvantages in as far as democratic governance in school is concerned. The mere argument that learners are at school to learn and not to dictate terms to authorities, is proof enough that most decisions will always favour those in authority.

2.3.6 Conclusion

It can be said that the general trend of this movement is to involve far more people than hitherto in the decision-making and opinion-forming processes in education. Furthermore, often those who are so involved are little more than observers and in other cases their roles are limited and relatively minor. Nonetheless, primary schools are becoming part of the governmental and administrative agencies responsible for educational policies and their implementation.

The reasons for learner participation in school governance are discussed next.

2.4 REASONS FOR LEARNER PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

There are several reasons for the movement towards learner participation in school governance.

2.4.1 Bridging the gap between democracy and bureaucracy

Beare (1990:10) argues that *bureaucracy* is a technical term meaning government by the departments by dividing the task into several components and allowing specialist units each to control the component allocated to it. He further states that in the case of bureaucracy, the government structure is hierarchical, with the person at the top of the pyramid finally responsible for seeing to it that the whole organisation carries out its duties effectively.

Beare (1990:9) further argues that since the term means “government by the people through a kind of town meeting or an assembly of all citizens who make up the city or state” decision-making in this way would be unwieldy and quite impractical unless a representative government is put in place. Democracy therefore implies round-the-table discussion and collective decision-making. The latter indicates that the school authorities occasionally consult with the learners before taking a particular decision. This in itself represents the democracy needed in our schools.

2.4.2 Improved school performance

Although there is no conclusive evidence to support the idea that involvement by learners in school governance improves learner and/or school performance, Fullan (1991:227) argues that there is some evidence which indicates that such type of involvement assists in raising educational standards in schools.

On the other hand, Weiss (1993:69-70) argues that because educators have detailed knowledge about learners and curriculum, decisions in which they

participate would be based on intimate understanding of context and thus would be wiser. Furthermore, it is argued that school-based management, founded on the belief that many decisions inescapably must be made at the school level where learners actively become involved, forms part of the critical ingredients for a successful education (Boyd, 1990:31). The significance of this argument lies in the fact that the school performance will improve through the active involvement of learners in school activities.

2.4.3 Educational change and school improvement

Writing about developing countries, Shaeffer (1991:8), argues that there is a need to establish partnership between educators and learners for purposes of facilitating educational change and school improvement.

The following two reasons are identified as to why this partnership is a desirable part for educational change and school improvement (Shaeffer, 1991:8).

- **The crisis of economics and management**

There is a crisis of economics and management in the world today, resulting in considerable difficulty in implementing centrally-organised innovations and reforms. There is often neither enough money available nor enough control exercised over the daily workings of the average school to guarantee that any reforms planned at the central level can help achieve their anticipated goals at the school and their development activities. Both these are for financial and material resources and for assistance in planning and implementing educational change (Shaeffer 1991:8).

In his response to the above reasons, Mkhwanazi (1993:2) argues that securing partnership between educators and learners can be done in two ways: Firstly, by involving the parents of learners in the education of their children both individually and collectively; and secondly, by including comprehensive organisations such as village education committees, district education authorities and school management committees.

The above two arguments have far-reaching implications for education in general. Firstly, they advocate a policy that recognises the rights of learners to actively participate in governance of their schools. This partnership has the potential to make for better schools, both in terms of the schools organisational climate and pedagogical benefits.

Secondly, the two authors' arguments have the potential to relieve the state of a heavy financial burden in so far as education provision and management is concerned. This is particularly true in developing countries, where fiscal constraints and imbalances are greater, and consequently it becomes a necessity to allow learners to take an active role in activities such as fundraising as a form of financial responsibility.

- **The problem of reforms and innovations**

The growing importance of partnership between educators and learners is also attributed to what Shaeffer (1991:8) describes as the persistent problem of the relevance, sustainability of reforms and innovations. There is an increase in the realisation of the need to decentralise and devolve authority to other partners in the system with no intimidation from outside being accommodated. Such a process is, undoubtedly, more and more evident around the world today wherein learners are involved in governance of schools, thereby bringing stability in their educative environment.

In this instance, learners, as part of the education stakeholders, need to be taken on board in as far as governance is concerned. However, Shaeffer (1991:9) states that the involvement of learners in governance depend largely on the location of the school. Furthermore, learners in both rural and urban areas are more likely to participate fully as compared to those in the townships. This he attributes to the environment with which the township learners are confronted. Furthermore, Mkhwanazi (1993:37) states that both schools in the rural and urban areas have the

capacity to secure sponsorship in order to purchase the required materials to facilitate change and improve the school.

2.4.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, it may be argued that participative school governance can help raise educational standards in schools. The creation of an environment conducive to education will also bring discipline back in schools. With the creation of such an environment, both the educators and learners will play their part in ensuring the success of teaching and learning in schools.

In order to ensure the success of a cohesive prefect structure, certain criteria have to be met. These are discussed below.

2.5 CRITERIA FOR THE STRUCTURE OF A PREFECT SYSTEM FROM OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

In terms of the Mini Oxford Dictionary (1998:154) the word *criterion* means a standard by which something is judged. The latter implies that the creation of a cohesive structure for a prefect system is to be judged in accordance with official documents to determine whether it is of the required standard. These documents are construed to put together a well-organised prefect structure. Official documents considered include the South African Schools Act (Act No.84 of 1996), North West Department of Education (2000), Transvaal Education Department (1990), KwaZulu–Natal Education Department (Act No. 3 of 1996) as well as policies from primary schools consulted.

As explained in par 2.1, attention is paid to what the various official documents have to say with regard the structure of a prefect council. After the democratic elections in 1994, various legislative Acts were passed which brought about drastic changes in the education system. This includes the prefect system rejected by black learners in the past (South African Schools Act, section 10(3)).

The South African Schools Act, section 10(3), allows public schools, including primary schools, to institute a prefect system. However, the system is only prevalent in ex-model c schools.

Most of these official documents refer to the present system of a Learner Representative Council (LRC), applicable to secondary schools. However, these documents are used for guidance purpose with regard to elections, nominations and voting procedures for representation in the council. This research also focuses on aspects that may assist in the creation of a prefect structure, for example meetings and the constitution. The latter two may feature both, as part of a structure and as functions that a prefect council has to perform.

The official documents will be discussed in three sections, namely the National Act, Provincial Documents and School Policies. The National Act is represented by the South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996), whereas the Transvaal Education Department (1990), KwaZulu-Natal Education Department (Act No.3 of 1996) and North West Education Department (2000) represent the Provincial Documents. The Unieskool policy, La Hoff Primary, Alabama Primary, Meiringspark Primary and Klerksdorp Primary represent the school policies consulted.

Attention will now be paid to what the National Act has to say about the structure of a prefect system.

2.5.1. South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996)

The passing of various legislative Acts after the democratic elections in 1994 brought about drastic changes in the country as well as education in general. The government, together with different educator unions, saw the need to include other stakeholders, including learners, in the governance of schools.

The South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996) is one of the most important official document passed to help re-shape the effective running of schools, moving from centralised decision making to a decentralised approach through the recognition of inputs from learners. Section 10(3) of the Act allows public schools, including primary schools, to institute a prefect system.

The South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996) is discussed with regard to the creation of a cohesive structure for a prefect system.

Although the Act does not specifically refer to the prefect council as such, but to the Learner Representative Council (LRC) as well as School Governing Body (SGB), these may also be used for the composition of the prefect council. Based on this, the composition of a prefect council may be as follows:

Composition of a learner council

In terms of section 23(1) of Act No. 84 of 1996, a learner representative council of an ordinary public school must comprise the following members:

- the guidance educator
- co-opted members
- senior learners in the school

The senior learners in the school are the elected learners from senior classes. It accommodates the guidance educator who is there to see to it that things are done accordingly. *Co-opted members* as specified in the Act, refers to those learners who possess certain expertise that can help the council reach its objectives. These learners were initially not elected but are now taken on board by virtue of their potential.

Election of members

In terms of section 10(2) of Act No. 84 of 1996, a Member of the Executive Council may determine guidelines for the election of a representative council of learners, which may include the following:

- The principal shall appoint a guidance educator to act as an election officer, for all electoral procedures relating to the election of learner members at a school.
- The guidance educator shall determine a date, time and place for election of learners to the council.
- The guidance educator shall prepare a notice of the nomination meeting, at least 10 days in advance and shall display the copy at school.
- Parents of learners shall be construed as reference to a learner who is entitled to vote.
- Any learner who is entitled to vote may attend and participate in the election process.
- Any learner may attend the poll meeting at which learner members are elected, but only those who are entitled to vote may participate.
- Only those learners who are representatives of their classes may be elected to the council.

Co-opted members

In terms of Section 23(c), a learner council shall consist of co-opted members. In addition to the members elected to the council, it may also ask other learners in the school to become members. Such members are known as co-opted members. In terms of Section 23(8) of the Act, co-opted members do not have voting rights in the council.

Nominations

In terms of section 22(a-f) of Act No. 84 of 1996:

- The principal shall make available to the election officer a school register containing names of all eligible learners for control at the nomination meeting.
- A learner may be nominated or seconded as a member only by learners who are eligible to vote.

Nomination may be made

- by lodging a nomination form completed by the proposer, seconder and candidate with the election officer not more than seven days and not less than one day before the nomination meeting; or
- by proposing a learner member during the nomination meeting, provided that another learner seconds the nomination and a nomination form duly completed by the seconder and candidate is lodged with the election officer within the time allotment in the nomination meeting.
- After the allotted time, the election officer shall consider all nominations and reject those which do not comply with the requirements of these measures.
- If the total number of valid nominations is less than the required number of learner members, the election officer shall dissolve the nomination meeting and convene a new one within 14 days.
- If the total number of valid nominations is equal to the required number of learner members, the election officer shall declare the nominated candidates to be duly elected.

Voting

In terms of section 24 (a–g) of Act No. 84 of 1996:

- Voting shall be held at the date, time and place indicated in the notice of the nomination meeting and may be held the same day as the nomination meeting.
- Voting shall be by secret ballot.
- The electoral officer shall issue one officially marked ballot paper to each learner eligible to vote.
- The electoral officer shall reject any spoilt ballot papers before counting the votes recorded for every candidate.
- Where the number of votes in favour of two or more candidates is equal and affects the results of the poll, the electoral officer shall draw lots to ascertain a result.

- Candidates may be present when the electoral officer rejects spoilt ballot papers and count the votes. Candidates shall be made aware of this provision before counting commences.
- The electoral officer shall decide all matters relating to the nomination of candidates and the poll, and his/her decision shall be final.

Office-bearers

In terms of section 29 of Act No. 84 of 1996:

- A learner council must, from amongst its members, elect office-bearers, who must include at least a chairperson, a treasurer and a secretary.
- Only a learner who amassed the most votes may serve as the chairperson of the learner council.
- No member of the learner council may hold more than one office.
- An office-bearer of the learner council ceases to hold office if he/she ceases to be a member of the council.
- The chairperson/deputy chairperson of a learner council shall convene and chair the meetings of the council. In his/her absence, members of the council shall appoint a member to chair the meeting.

Committees of the learner council

In terms of section 30(1) (a-b), a learner council must:

- establish committees, including an executive committee;
- appoint learners who are not members of the council to such committees on grounds of
- expertise, but a member of the council must chair each committee.

Term of office of members and office-bearers of the learner council.

In terms of section 31(b-d):

- The term of office of a council member may not exceed a year.
- The term of office for an office-bearer may not exceed a year.

- A member or office-bearer may be re-elected or co-opted, as the case may be, after the expiry of his/her term.

The provincial documents as part of the official documents, are discussed below.

2.5.2 Provincial documents

The provincial documents formulated from the South African Schools Act also helped to improve governance of schools. The Transvaal Education Department (1990) was the sole document used to implement the prefect system in schools. However, this resulted in the protest by black learners that the system, be rejected, as it did not represent the interest of the learners but the school authorities. However, after the 1996 elections, the provincial documents such as the North West and the KwaZulu–Natal were formulated to improve standard in schools.

The document of the Transvaal Education Department is discussed below.

2.5.2.1 Transvaal Education Department (1990)

In the past, the above department was perceived by most black learners as being representative of white domination. As the pioneers of the prefect system that was regarded by black learners as being more inclined towards the school hierarchy instead of the learners, the said department stood its ground and went on to implement the system inspite of the protest by blacks. A closer look will now be taken at how the prefect council was structured under the TED:

Nomination procedures

- All the senior learners in the school including personnel staff can nominate members of the council.
- Members belonging to other committees may also nominate candidates.
- In the final nomination list, the names of the candidates can appear many a time.
- Personnel staff has the right to reject a particular nominee if it so wishes.
- Nomination takes place in the presence of the class teachers.

- The nomination lists should be clearly drawn wherein boys nominate boys, and the girls nominate girls.
- The weight for nomination differs according to authority.
- The nominations are controlled by the principal of a school.
- Interviews are conducted with the nominated candidates.
- The head boy/ head girl is nominated on grounds of having amassed the most votes.

Constitution of the learner council

The constitution shall include the following:

- The aims of the learner council.
- Nominations.
- Functions of the learner council.
- Responsibilities of the members.
- Observance of the constitution.
- Role of the guardian teacher.
- Membership.
- Election of members.

Election of members

- All senior learners as well as personnel can elect members; and so can prefect members. The final lists should not exceed the required number of candidates.
- The personnel members have the right to object to nomination and can forward these to the top management structure.
- The personnel members are not limited in as far as nomination of candidates is concerned.
- They may elect as many members as they wish without any restriction whatsoever.
- The elections take place in the presence of class teachers, guidance teachers as well as the organisers.

- The election ballots should be clearly drawn up, wherein members of each sex vote only for candidates of their own sex.
- The weight of the votes should be evenly spread between the prefect council, personnel and learners, for example personnel 50%, prefect council 25% and the learners 25%.
- The elections process is controlled by the school principal and the interviews are conducted with the elected candidates.
- The elections take place democratically and include the objections of the educators.
- Head prefects are elected on grounds of having amassed most of the votes wherein interviews are conducted with the elected members.

Voting

- Voting takes place by secret ballot.
- The final voting list is written alphabetically, males and females separately, each being prepared on its voting ballot.
- The voting ballots should be clearly drawn, so that voters may understand what is expected of them.
- Only senior learners in the school have voting rights.

The KwaZulu-Natal Education Department follows next.

2.5.2.2 KwaZulu-Natal Education Department

(Act No. 3 of 1996).

The Act concerns itself with the establishment of a representative council of learners at a public school. However, the contents thereof will be used as guidelines for the successful establishment of a prefect council. The structure of a learner council comprise the following in terms of the above Act:

Election of members.

In terms of section 2 (a-c) of Act No. 3 of 1996:

- The election of members shall take place during the fourth term of each year.
- The election of members of the learner council shall take place on a date determined by the principal of the school.
- The principal shall appoint members of the staff to act as electoral officers.

Representatives

In terms of section 3 (a–c) of Act No. 3 of 1996:

- The learner council shall consist of a representative elected by each class in the school.
- A council is elected for a period not exceeding one year until the election of a new council.
- Members may be re-elected for office.

Voting

In terms of section 4 (a–f) of Act No. 3 of 1996:

- Voting is by secret ballot.
- Learners may nominate representatives for election immediately before the election is to take place.
- Each learner has one vote for the election of a representative for his/her class.
- A representative is elected if he/she received the majority of votes in the class.
- If no candidate receives a majority of votes, the name of the candidate with the least number of votes must be deleted from the list of candidates, whereafter voting must be repeated. This procedure must continue until a candidate is elected.
- If there is a tie between two candidates, the representative must be determined by lot.

Office-bearers

In terms of section 5 (a–d):

- Class representatives elected accordingly, must meet within seven days of their election for the purpose of electing office-bearers.

- Office-bearers are elected under the supervision of the principal of the school or an educator nominated by him.
- The following office-bearers must be elected:
 - Chairperson (head boy/girl).
 - Vice-chairperson (deputy head boy/girl).
 - Secretary.
- Office-bearers are elected using the same procedure as for the election of class representatives.

Meetings

In terms of section 6 (a-d):

- A council must meet at least once a term.
- The secretary must keep minutes of meetings, which must be read and confirmed at the following meeting.
- Seven days' notice must be given of each meeting.
- The notice must set out the business to be transacted at each meeting.
- Class representatives must keep their constituencies informed of all deliberations and decisions taken by the council.

Constitution of the learner council.

The constitution of a learner council shall set out the following:

- The composition of the learner council
- The election of members for the learner council.
- The election of a chairperson (head boy/girl), vice-chairperson (deputy head boy/girl) and a secretary.
- Term of office of members.
- Meetings to be held by the learner council.
- Voting procedures to be followed at meetings.
- Keeping of minutes.
- Functions and duties of office-bearers.

In the following section, hereafter, the North West Education Department will be discussed with reference to the composition of a learner council.

2.5.2.3 North-West Education Department (2000)

The above department provides the following guidelines with regard the structure of the prefect council. As stated earlier on, the guides are meant for the learner representative council, but also apply to the prefect system as well.

Elections

- The learner council has to be elected by all senior learners in the school.
- Each class has to elect its own representatives.
- From the class representatives, a learner council is elected.
- Elections are held towards end of the fourth term.
- The principal appoints certain members of the staff to oversee the whole process.

Voting

The same procedure as practiced at KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education is also applied in the North-West.

Office-bearers

The appointed educators must convene the first council meeting, wherein the office-bearers must be elected. The office bearers consist of:

- The chairperson (head boy/ head girl).
- The vice-chairperson (deputy head boy/ head girl).
- The secretary.
- The treasurer.

Committees of the learner council

The learner council may establish committees such as:

- entertainment committee
- arts and culture committee
- fund-raising committee
- executive committee

Meetings

- Meetings should be held once quarterly.
- The head boy/ head girl shall convene such.
- The responsible head of department should attend meetings.
- Learners' inputs are conveyed to the meeting.
- The secretary shall keep records of meetings held.
- Minutes of the previous meeting should be read and adopted before the meeting starts.

Constitution

The constitution is a document that guides the learner council and its activities. Furthermore it sets out the principles and rules to be followed by those who belong to or have recently joined the council. A constitution generally includes the following items:

- The name of the learner council.
- Aims and objectives.
- Membership of the council.
- Meetings.
- Voting.

Focus will now be placed on policies of schools consulted as part three of the official documents.

2.5.3 School Policies

The school policies consulted and discussed in the research were obtained from primary schools that make use of the prefect system. However, the procedure they follow with regard to aspect such as nominations and voting, to mention but a few, is a democratic one, unlike in the past.

The first school to be investigated as to the creation of a prefect structure is the Unieskool.

2.5.3.1 Unieskool Policy (2001:2-4)

The above school policy states that members to serve in the council are to be elected from class grade 7 only. The election of members takes place at the end of October each year. Representatives are elected to office by all learners in the school except those from grade 1-3. Personnel members are also granted voting rights. Voting takes place during school hours under the supervision of the guidance teacher and his/her assistants.

The school policy determines the following:

Nominations

- A separate nomination list for male and female learners is arranged by personnel members.
- There is no limit to the number of names appearing on the nomination list.
- All qualifying and deserving learners must be nominated for the council.

Election of members

- The list of nominees should appear alphabetically on the voting polls.
- The names of both male and female learners should be written separately on the voting papers.
- Elections take place during school hours under the supervision of guidance teacher.

- Elections papers are controlled by each class teacher.
- Election papers are limited to one learner from grade 5 to 7.
- If more than the required number of learners are elected, the ballot papers will be declared as spoilt.
- Voting should be restricted to a few learners.
- Learners should only vote for their own sex, i.e. boys vote for boys and girls vote for girls.
- Personnel staff shall vote for both male and female learners.

Head boy/ Head girl

- One male and a female learner who acquire the most votes are regarded as candidates for the above posts.
- Interviews are held with the said candidates, conducted by the principal and the head of department responsible.
- The head boy and head girl are appointed by the management team of the school.

Committees of the prefect council.

- Committees are classified into:
- Media committee.
- Hall committee.
- Security committee.
- Entertainment committee.
- Refreshments committee.
- Scholar patrol.
- The guidance educator shall appoint two learners per committee. One will serve as the chairperson and the other as secretary.
- Personnel shall be appointed yearly by the principal to serve as guiders for the different committees.
- The appointed personnel shall see to it that meetings of the different committees are held and that they function effectively.

- The appointed personnel shall prepare a duty list to make sure that every member of the committee knows exactly what is expected of him/her.

The policy for La Hoff Primary follows next.

2.5.3.2 La Hoff Primary Policy (2001:3-5)

According to the policy of the above school, learner prefects are to be elected from grade 6-7 only. The voting rights are limited to learners in grade 5-7. Male learners vote only for males and female only vote for females. Personnel members are also granted voting rights. Votes are counted by personnel and the results are announced before the school closes at the end of each year.

Election of members

- Personnel draw up the requirements the learners have to satisfy to stand for election.
- Personnel staff and the principal make the requirements known to learners beforehand.
- Nominations of candidates are forwarded.
- A voting list containing names of candidates is arranged by personnel.
- An election of candidates is done through ballot papers.
- Counting of votes is done by personnel staff.
- After the votes have been counted appointment of candidates is done by the principal of the school.
- Staff members also elect members of the council.

Voting

- The final list containing names of male and female learners is written alphabetically on the poll roll.
- The rules with regard voting are clearly explained to learners so that they know what is expected of them.
- Only learners from grade 5-7 are allowed to vote.

- Male learners are to vote for males only, and female learners for females only.

Committees of the prefect council

The same procedure and committees as at Unieskool are used by Lahoff Primary School.

Head boy and Head girl

- The principal and management team shall appoint the head boy and girl.
- The election of head boy and head girl takes place in the presence of other members of the council.
- One head boy and head girl shall be elected.
- Furthermore, two deputy head boys and head girls are elected.
- They receive portfolios of leadership, are given to them to lead, that is, general responsibilities, culture and sports.

Alabama Primary Policy is presented below.

2.5.3.3 Alabama Primary Policy (2001:1-3)

The above school believes in developing learner prefects from as early as the grade ones. However, they firstly use the system of class captains from grade one through to the senior phase. This does not guarantee those chosen to be class captains automatic entry into the prefect council. They will have to be voted for like any other learner in the school. In the lower classes, captains are nominated by class teachers towards the end of the first quarter.

The structure of a prefect system for the above school is as follows.

Class captains

- Grade 1 educators must appoint 2 learners, that is, a boy and a girl, to be class captains.
- After each term the class must elect a new pair of captains.

- Every term the same procedure is followed.
- If the class decides to keep the two captains, it is their prerogative.
- This procedure continues through to grade 3.

Elections (Senior Phase)

- In this phase, the system of class captains continues but educators are not compelled to make use of the same captains as per grade 3 for prefect purposes.
- Prefects are elected from grade 6 and 7 only.
- Only the senior learners in the school may elect candidates into the council.
- Educators discuss about the elected candidates and make some recommendations.
- The staff has the right to veto the elected candidates if they so wish.

Head boy/ Head girl

- The above positions are provided only to those learners who must have started at the above school from grade 1 to 4.
- The head boy and head girl should only be chosen from grade 7.
- No newcomers to the school should receive this honour.
- The principal and the management team shall appoint the head boy/ head girl into the council.

Assistant head boy/ head girl

- The policy stipulates that the assistant head boy and head girl should only be from grade 6.
- The assistants for the current year will not automatically become head boy/ head girl the following year.
- The assistants, like the head boy/ head girl shall be appointed to office by the principal and management team of the school.

Nominations

Nominations for learners to serve in the council shall be conducted in the same manner as at Unieskool.

Committees of the prefect council

The different committees of the prefect council are the same as those for the La Hoff and Unieskool respectively.

The policy of Meiringspark Primary is discussed in the following sections.

2.5.3.4 Meiringspark Primary Policy (2001:1-4).

The above school is of the opinion that the intermediate phase (grade 4-6) as well as those from the senior phase be allowed to vote. However they are of the opinion that head prefects be elected from grade 6 so as to serve in the office the following year. Personnel members also vote for the candidates.

The structure of a prefect council as determined by the above school is as follows:

Election of members

- Only learners from grade 5 to 6 should stand for election into the council.
- The grade 7 learners are to elect members only, and not to stand for elections, as they are to leave the school soon.
- Only senior learners in the school are to elect members.
- Elections take place at the beginning of the fourth school term.

Nominations

- A nomination list containing the names of elected candidates is drawn up by staff.
- 20 male and female learners are to be nominated.
- Nominations are held with learners from grade 4-7.

- Staff has the right to remove the name of a nominee from the list if they deem it fit.
- Nominations are then counted, with only 20 names remaining.

Voting

- Voting is by secret ballot.
- Only learners from grade 5 to 6 are to be voted to office.
- All senior learners that is, from grade 4 to 7 are allowed to vote.
- Staff has voting rights also.
- If there are more than the required ballot papers, they shall be regarded as spoilt papers.
- In that case, the personnel have the right to reverse the whole voting process.
- After voting, counting takes place.
- The results are announced before school closure.

Head boy/ Headgirl

- The male and female learner, who respectively amasses the most votes, is appointed to the said positions.
- The candidate with second most votes for a male and female learner shall be appointed deputy head boy/ head girl respectively.
- The election of a head boy and head girl and their deputies is done from amongst the elected members.

Meetings

- Meetings of the prefect council shall be held once every school term.
- The head boy/ head girl shall chair such.
- In their absence, the deputy head boy/ head girl shall chair the meeting.
- Notice for meetings together with the agenda should be made available to members at least seven days in advance.
- The secretary shall keep records of meetings and make them available to learners on request.

- Inputs from learners should be obtained prior to the meeting.
- Feedback should be given at least two days after the meeting.
- The guidance educator or head of department responsible should also attend.

The last school policy to be looked into is Klerksdorp Primary.

2.5.3.5 Klerksdorp Primary Policy (2001:1-6)

The above school is of the opinion that as a democratic structure, the prefect council has to be fully representative. This implies that the council has to accommodate both sexes, each being represented equally in the council.

Voting

- Voting shall be by secret ballot.
- All senior learners shall have the right to vote.
- The results shall be published not later than three days after the elections.
- Until the new council assumes office, the outgoing council shall be legitimate.

Meetings

- The prefect council shall meet at least once a month.
- In case of an emergency, the head boy/girl, together with the secretary, shall convene an emergency meeting.
- The head of department responsible, shall attend meetings as well.

Nominations

- Nominations shall be in writing and shall be made before nominations close in offices chosen by the guardian teacher.
- No person with a proven criminal record and gross misbehaviour may be nominated.
- Should the nomination of the candidate be unsuccessful, he/she should be notified within 24hrs before finalisation of nominations.
- All senior learners shall be entitled to nominate candidates.

Composition of a prefect council

The council shall comprise the following members:

- The head boy/ head girl.
- The deputy head boy/ head girl.
- The secretary.
- The treasurer.
- Sports chairperson.
- Entertainment chairperson.
- Building and grounds chairperson.

2.5.4 CONCLUSION

The official documents consulted were made up from Acts of parliament, provincial documents and policies from various schools. All these documents arrived at a common ground regarding the composition of a learner council. According to them the composition of a prefect council must be as follows: the chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, treasurer, elected council members, educator guardian and the co-opted members.

The voting procedure should be a secret ballot. The learners vote for their own sex, that is, males for males and females for females. The date and time for voting, is determined by the guardian educator. Personnel staff shall have voting rights. Only senior learners in the school should elect prefect members. After elections, members should from amongst themselves elect office-bearers. Thereafter council members should establish committees wherein council members are to chair those committees.

The second part of the chapter is dedicated to various literature books consulted to get views from different authors regarding the creation of a possible structure for a prefect system in primary schools predominantly attended by black learners.

2.6 CRITERIA FOR THE STRUCTURE OF A PREFECT SYSTEM FROM LITERATURE VIEWPOINT

After going through the official documents, focus is on what the literature documents have to say regarding the structure of a prefect system. As most of the literature derives facts from the official documents, in most cases some aspects from the literature are in line with those from the official documents. The official documents, as part of the legislation, are the basis from which policies of the different Departments are formulated, hence literature has to be in line with these at all times.

As explained in the introduction, the literature viewpoint on the prefect system will be looked into with reference to the following aspects, i.e. the structure, elections, nomination as well as the constitution of the prefect council.

2.6.1. Organisational structure of a prefect council

In order to attain a common aim, the learner prefect council in a school should be arranged and structured in a manner that will bring about effectiveness in school governance structures. If properly structured, it will ensure that duplication of work is avoided at all costs, that tasks are grouped properly and logistically, that relevant people are chosen to perform tasks familiar to them and to ensure the creation of a good organisational climate (Kok, 1997:62).

The learner prefect council can be introduced as a line-staff organisation because use is made of people who provide expert advice in the council but are not directly involved in the council themselves (De Beer, 1992:6). The learner prefect council can be divided into various sub-committees each under the chairmanship of a male/female council member. The council also needs to clearly indicate the role of each sub-committee with regard to their relevant duties or tasks they have to carry out. Based on the above statement, Prinsloo and Van Rooyen (1999:367) stress that every member of the council will be in a position to know exactly which tasks he/she is responsible for.

Cawood *et al.* (1989:138) states that learners who are not full members of the council but are class representatives, can also serve in the standing committees. If for example there are vacancies existing in other committees, class captains may be roped in to give assistance and keep the committees going. This provides encouragement to class captains that their contribution towards maintaining discipline in class will not go by unnoticed; hence their inclusion in these committees. This will help to spur them on to work even harder, knowing that their contribution in ensuring effective school governance is also of prime importance.

When creating a prefect council, it is important that gender equality be considered in terms of the ANC policy framework for education (1993:20). It furthermore indicates that the disproportionate number of women in positions of authority is indicative of the gross gender bias in the educational bureaucracy.

Thus, according to De Beer (1992:11), it is important that whenever representation of learners in the council is made, every learner has to be provided the opportunity to prove his/her worth in the said council.

In trying to form a cohesive structure, its name has to be considered also. This is supported by Shaeffer (1991:88) that some individuals prefer to use the name of the school to refer to the council, whilst others prefer terms like prefect council, council or learner support council. Furthermore, the name of the *council* shall depend upon individuals (Stead, 1985:68)

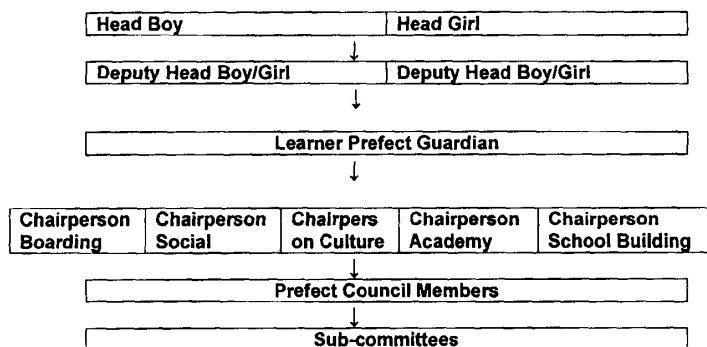
Ornstein (1980:52) points out that in structuring a prefect council, the dominating ethnic group wherein the school is located, will have an added advantage over the others. This will mean that more learners from that particular ethnic group will be represented within the council. This is well supported by Stead (1985:79) who mentions that if a school is situated in an urban area, more whites will be represented than to the township where blacks dominate. However, procedures to

be followed when putting up a structure should not be affected by that but be maintained throughout for fairness (Van Wyk, 1992:87)

According to Van der Westhuizen (1999:170-178), the organisational structure of a prefect council is usually introduced as an organisational card schematically presented to indicate how the distribution of work is organised. This emphasises the correct distribution of work amongst learner prefects to ensure that a person is delegated a job in which he/she will show commitment and competency in carrying it out, thus rendering the whole council effective.

A typical and possible organisational structure of a prefect council can be arranged as follows:

Figure 2.1. A possible organisational structure of a prefect council (Van der Westhuizen, 1999:173, Prinsloo & Van Rooyen, 1999:368)



The way in which members are nominated to the council is discussed below.

2.6.2 Nominations

- Nominations for learners to serve in the prefect council is done with the sole purpose of eliminating factors such as subjectivity in order for learners to perform the required tasks effectively and be in a position to initiate new ideas in the school (Stead, 1985:29). This implies that when nominations are made with regard to finding suitable candidates for the positions, it is important that the task to be performed by elected members must be clearly outlined, so that they know exactly what is expected of them.
- De Beer (1992:34) indicates that in America, learners make themselves available for nominations as representatives of a "home-room" system. On the other hand, learners from the "home-room" system can nominate somebody as their possible candidate for representation in the council.
- Cawood and Swartz (1981:108) are of the opinion that every class has to nominate one male and female learner to the council. In cases where boarding is available, one male and female learner has to be nominated. Nominations have to take place under the guidance of the coach, a liaison officer and the guidance educator over a period of four weeks. Thereafter, personnel members have to fill the nomination list containing all the names of potential and possible candidates. This will ensure that every learner who has the potential and willingness to serve in the council gets the opportunity to be nominated and chosen.
- Firmani (1982:289-90) believes that learners in the school, and not the staff, must choose and nominate candidates for the council. He further states that learners should be given ample time, to go through the nomination forms before the process can take place. This will give them the opportunity to nominate correctly, as they will have gone through the names of all candidates appearing in the form.
- Coetzee (1987:261-3) argues that learners make themselves noticeable through their actions. That is the reason why he believes that it is right and acceptable for them to nominate candidates for the council. He further states that although learners may sometimes nominate somebody who is not yet ripe and ready to serve in the council, it is their wish to take an active role in the nominations of the prefect members. He also is of the opinion that only senior learners in the school

should be allowed to nominate candidates as they understand them better than the junior ones. It is the wish of the every learner to take an active part in the nominations of the prefect council members. However, the requirement a candidate has to satisfy before being nominated, should be considered. Because of the fact that the requirements are known to all, this will help to eliminate negative factors attached to it.

Nominations, therefore display democracy in that learners are provided the opportunity to nominate preferred candidates. However, with regard to Coetzee's nomination procedure, it is unacceptable for personnel members alone to have the right to remove or omit names from the nomination list without consulting the voters. This displays autocracy in that learners are not consulted when this is done. However, it becomes acceptable if they are consulted and a consensus reached. Although the rights of learners may be limited in some management areas, it is important that they be consulted, especially regarding matters affecting them directly.

The election of a head boy/ head girl is discussed next.

2.6.3 Election of a head boy and head girl

According to Blaauw (1992:85-88), it is important that the head boy and head girl display some character in them to be good enough to serve in those positions. It is therefore clear that the head boy and head girl stand out as the two most prominent role players in the prefect council. They have to display some kind of responsibility and self-respect so as to give proper guidance and direction to the council itself, as well as all the learners in the school. They have to be the first to perform any particular task diligently, be it academic or any other activity they are expected to carry out. By doing this, other learners will be able to follow suit, thereby enhancing discipline in the school. This will also go a long way in creating an atmosphere or educational situation conducive to learning.

Cilliers (1979:3) states that in order for a head boy/ head girl to be elected, they must be in a position to handle peer group pressure in a distinct possible way. This demands from the two to show honesty and fairness in dealing with their peers as they will be subjected to tremendous pressure when dealing with cases involving them. The statement demands from them to be neutral at all times, especially when they are faced with a situation where a decision has to be made regarding the behaviour of a particular learner for an example. According to De Beer (1992:iii), potential head boys and head girls (according to the number of votes they received) ought to be invited for interviews with the staff or a selection committee, where they are to be evaluated according to a certain criteria. Candidates who acquire the highest marks are appointed to serve in these positions.

De Beer (1992:39) indicates that the election of a head boy/ head girl in a school cannot be done randomly as was the case in the past. He further states that factors such as duties of a head boy and head girl, faithfulness they display towards their duties and colleagues play an important role in electing them.

According to Blaauw (1992:85-88), the head boy and head girl should amongst others display the following characteristics:

- Creativity
- emotional stability
- sociality
- reliability
- discipline
- self respect
- motivation
- integrity
- sportsmanship
- loyalty
- insight
- honesty

- good working relations
- be exemplary to others
- display good character
- be able to differentiate between good and bad
- take initiative
- be calm at most times and
- be in a position to accept criticisms.

A lot is therefore expected from the head boy and head girl in terms of the way they need to present themselves before other learners. These characteristics help to improve the individuals inwardly and outside, thereby enhancing self-discipline in himself/herself. The two positions require learners who are deemed to be ready for the task and who will always strive to handle peer group pressure with distinct possibility (Cilliers, 1979:3).

In conclusion, one can only agree that the election of a head boy and head girl should not be done randomly but should be handled professionally; hence the inclusion of personnel in the interviews for the said positions is of utmost importance in order to provide the necessary guidance.

The different ways for electing head prefects is the next aspect to be discussed.

2.6.4 Different ways of electing head prefects

Following below are the different ways recommended by various authors, which can serve as guide to the election of the head prefects in a school. These ways will be briefly discussed, so as to determine whether they display democracy or not.

- Coetzee (1987:263) is of the opinion that the election of head prefects should solely rest upon the personnel staff in a school. He further argues that their expertise can be used positively in determining the right candidates for the said positions. Furthermore, the head of the institution as well as his/her management

team could then be in a position to interview the candidates and make the necessary appointments.

This does not display democracy, in that the learners do not take part in the election process. Both the learners and the personnel staff are regarded as part of education stakeholders and thus it is important that they be involved in the election process. It is also of importance that within the interview, two or more learners (depending on the size of the school) should form part of the panel as observers so that the whole process becomes a fair one.

- Firmani (1982:289-90) is of the opinion that only learners in the school and not the personnel staff should elect head prefects. That is a reason why he believes that before any electing of candidates can be made, all the learners in a school should be enlightened on the requirements candidates have to fulfill, the responsibility of the voters and the manner in which voting is to take place.

The above does not display democracy, in that learners are the only ones to elect the head prefects whereas other stakeholders are ignored. The expertise of the educators with a view to provide the necessary guidance with regard the election of candidates is vital at this stage.

- Ornstein (1980:61), believes that it is the right of every learner in the school to elect head prefects of his/her own. He further states that all senior learners in the school should be allowed to vote for the said candidates. The candidates' votes should be controlled by the various representatives of learners in classes and that no objection to the elected candidates be entertained.

The latter seems to have an element of biasness with regard the exclusion of the personnel staff of take part in the election process. The inputs from the staff will ensure that equal representation in the council is achieved.

- Wexler (1984:25-31) explains that the head prefects in the school should be elected by learners themselves. However, he believes that additional members to the council should be chosen by personnel staff to ensure equal

representation on all levels, both with regard racial groups and gender respectively.

The above displays democracy in that both the learners and staff are involved in the election process. Guidance from educators in the election process will ensure that correct decisions are made that could ultimately lead to effectiveness.

- Olivero (1985:11) makes use of socio-metric tests as a barometer in electing head prefects in a school. The reactions of a learner to a variety of questions posed to him/her, is good enough to warrant him the attention of both the personnel staff and learners in a school. He further points out that although there is a possibility for various reactions to different questions posed, it will help give both learners and personnel in the school an insight as to which candidates can be elected.

This process is democratic in that both personnel members and learners are involved in the interviewing process. This could ultimately lead to both reaching a common decision regarding the elected candidates.

- Cawood and Swartz (1981:106-9) are of the opinion that the overall number of prefect council members be limited. They further explain that only learners with the most number of votes are elected to serve in the council. In mixed schools, they believe that half of both male and female learners should serve in the council to ensure equal representation.

Because both advocate an idea of equal representation within the prefect council, democracy will be achieved. Equality as one of the principles of democracy is emphasised in terms of this approach.

- Kok (1997:64) believes that the election of head prefects should take place in the presence of class teachers, guidance teacher and the organisers. He believes

that male and female learners should elect from among their own respective genders. He further states that head prefects should be elected on grounds based upon the number of votes they receive. Thereafter, the candidates be interviewed by the relevant authorities within the school.

The latter approach displays democracy to a certain extent. The election of head prefects before the presence of everybody is an indication of a fair and just administrative action, as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) section 33 (1), wherein it indicates that everyone has to receive a fair and just administrative action.

In conclusion, it can be said that the election of head prefects in a school should be made the responsibility of both the learners as well as the personnel staff. The involvement of personnel in the election process is vital in that their expertise and experience will assist profitably to help strike a balance and to see to it that correct decisions are made. On the same note, the pivotal role played by learners in the election process cannot go by unnoticed, in that they will know that they have contributed a lot in the elected candidates and that their votes and voices have spoken.

The next aspect concerns the election of prefect members.

2.6.5 Election of prefect members

In terms of the Mini Oxford School Dictionary (1998:204), the concept "*election*" means the choosing of representatives for a committee by voting. This implies that in order for any person to serve in an organisation or a prefect council as a member thereof, he/she had to be democratically elected by people to act as their representative in the said council.

De Beer (1992:35) is of the opinion that it is important that the election process be conducted properly and democratically. Furthermore, although proper rules and procedures can be laid down for the best possible council to be elected, factors

which might prevent the operation of an acceptable and most envisaged council by learners, need not be allowed to play a role in the election process. How and by whom a council is to be constituted depends entirely upon the voters (Pretorius, 1997:88).

Prinsloo and Van Rooyen (1999:321) argue that any advantage a school might obtain, clashes of interests in the micro-politics of the school and prejudice of one or two educators should not play a role in the election of a prefect council.

The following election procedure is proposed by (De Beer, 1992:25-26; Kok, 1997:63-64):

- All senior learners in the school, including the staff, can elect candidates into the council.
- The staff has the right to reject nominees and forward the objection thereof to the top management structure in the school.
- The elections should take place in the presence of class teachers, guidance teachers and the organisers to ensure that they become free and fair without any prejudice. A clear prescriptive ballot paper accompanied by a nomination list, must be distributed amongst learners wherein each sex vote accordingly, i.e. boys elect boys and the girls elect girls, to ensure equal representation. In a case whereby a school requires 10 candidates, it is only fair that 5 candidates from each sex be voted into the council.
- The weight with which the votes carry, can be distributed between the prefect members, personnel staff as well as learners in the school.
- The election process is controlled by the principal and interviews are conducted with elected members. The elections take place democratically and include amongst others the objections of the educators.
- Head prefects are elected on the grounds of the most votes, and interviews with the elected candidates.

The right to vote is limited to senior learners in the school. This aspect is discussed next.

2.6.6 Voting rights

- Firmani (1982:226) is of the opinion that educators as well as senior learners in the school should have voting rights in determining learner representation in the council. This, he based upon the survey he held in Cape Town primary schools wherein 94% of the school voted in favor of both learners and educators to have voting rights in electing prefects.
- Ornstein (1980:61) believes that all learners in the school should vote for prefects into the council. He further states that because all learners are involved in the election process, elected members will receive more co-operation and acceptance by all.
- Coetzee (1987:261-3) indicates that because learners may sometimes elect a person who is not yet ready for the challenge, only senior learners in the school should have voting rights. He bases this on the fact that their judgement might carry more responsibility than the junior ones.
- Wexler (1984:25) is of the opinion that members of the prefect council should be elected and voted for by all learners in the school. He further states that educators in the school should also have voting rights ensuring equal representation on all levels including gender.

When members should be appointed and inducted is the topic of the next section.

2.6.7 Appointment and induction of members

According to Van der Westhuizen (1999:251), there are two types of appointments, namely permanent and temporary. Permanent appointments are sometimes preceded by a trial period before they are confirmed. According to Armstrong (1998:124) the trial period should be held in the last two months of the year after nominations and voting. A candidate may thereafter be omitted or retained in the list on the basis of his/her performance during the trial period. The latter is only done after consultation with learners in the school wherein a common ground is laid.

Armstrong (1998:111) is of the opinion that nominated candidates be allowed to act as prefects under the supervision of the existing council as well as the guidance

educators. This is what they refer to as an orientation period, in which the candidates are given certain tasks to perform, although they have not as yet been appointed and inducted. Inauguration to the council is done in the new school year after the learners have passed the trial period.

As Van der Westhuizen (1999:251) puts it, personnel induction endeavours to help the various categories of new personnel to fit into and to adjust to a new working environment as quickly as possible. He further states that these should be done with minimum disruption, so that the goals of the organisation can be achieved as effectively as possible. He further states that this presupposes that all "new" staff have adjustment problems in varying degrees which justifies the planning and implementation of integration or orientation programme.

These two arguments imply that newly elected prefect members of the council have to be inducted so as to enable them to adjust to new environment in which they find themselves. By engaging them in such programmes, minimum disruption will occur as members will have been inducted as to the tasks they are to perform. Armstrong (1998:98) believes that in order to intensify the induction programme, learners are to be exposed to some kind of training during the first two weeks of the new school year.

Furthermore, Blackmore (1993:98) is of the opinion that appointments and induction be done during the first week of the re-opening of a school by the principal. This is done during assembly in the presence of all learners in the school. This is later followed by the displaying of badges attached to blazers belonging to members of the council. The appointed learners are then welcomed into office by way of receiving applause and a standing ovation from learners to indicate their approval of the said appointments.

In order to execute their duties effectively, the council has to be guided by its constitution. This aspect follows next.

2.6.8 Constitution of a prefect council

Because literature derives information from the official documents, most of the facts relating to constitution of the council are common to both. The constitution of a prefect council is formulated in writing with the aim of reaching the following (Cawood & Swartz, 1981:101):

- To compel learners and educators to reflect over the functions of the prefect council.
- Making good use of the school tradition and be tied to it.
- To serve as guideline for activities of the prefect council.
- To limit the prefect council.

The constitution of a prefect council includes, amongst others, the following (Cawood & Swartz, 1981:101, Squelch 1999:29-32):

- The name of the council
- Aims of the council
- Nominations
- Voting
- Election of members
- Election of executive committee
- Committee of the prefect council
- Functions of the prefect council
- Meeting
- Term of office

2.6.9 Conclusion

The second part of the chapter concerned the literature viewpoint obtained from various authors regarding the creation of a cohesive prefect structure. A well-organised prefect structure can lead to achievement of set objectives. From the literature sources a structure of a prefect system comprise the following: head boy/

head girl, deputy head boy/ head girl, secretary, treasurer, educator guardian and co-opted members.

The next aspect is the synthesis of the whole chapter, which includes facts from both official documents and literature sources regarding the creation of a cohesive prefect structure.

2.7 SYNTHESIS

From both official documents and the literature overview a prefect system in primary schools predominantly attended by black learners can make use of the following structure:

2.7.1 Nominations

The following procedure for nomination of candidates is considered fair and just.

- The principal shall make available to the election officer a school register containing names of all eligible learners for control at the nomination meeting.
- A learner may be nominated or seconded as a member only by learners who are eligible to vote.
- Nominations may be made by lodging a nomination form completed by the proposer, seconder and candidate with the election officer seven days and not less than one day before the nomination meeting, or
- By proposing a learner member during the nomination meeting, provided that another learner seconds the nomination and a nomination form duly completed by the seconder and candidate is lodged with the election officer within the time allotment in the nomination meeting.
- After the allotted time, the electoral officer shall consider all nominations and reject those, which do not comply with the requirements of these measures.
- Nominations shall be in writing and the list shall contain names of male and female learners separately.
- Any person with a proven criminal record may not be nominated.
- Personnel staff and all senior learners in the school shall nominate candidates.

- If the total number of valid nominations is less than the required number of learner members, the election officer shall dissolve the nomination meeting and convene a new one within 14 days.
- If the total number of valid nominations is equal to the required number of learner members, the election officer shall declare the nominated candidates to be duly elected.

2.7.2 Voting

The following is regarded as fair when voting for candidates into the council.

- Voting shall be held at the date, time and place indicated in the notice of the nomination meeting and may be held the same day as the nomination meeting.
- Voting shall be by secret ballot.
- All senior learners from grade 5-7 as well as personnel staff shall have the right to vote.
- The electoral officer shall issue one officially marked ballot paper to each learner eligible to vote.
- The electoral officer shall reject any spoilt ballot papers before counting the votes recorded for every candidate.
- Where the number of votes in favour of two or more candidates is equal and affects the results of the poll, the electoral officer shall draw lots to ascertain a result.
- Candidates may be present when the electoral officer rejects spoilt ballot papers and count the votes. Candidates shall be made aware of this provision before counting commences.
- The electoral officer shall decide all matters relating to the nomination of candidates and the poll, and his/her decision shall be final.
- Personnel staff shall have the right to veto the name of an elected candidate after consulting with the learners.

2.7.3 Elections

The following procedure is regarded as fair for election of candidates.

- The learner council members have to be elected by all senior learners and the personnel staff in the school.
- The principal shall appoint a guidance educator to act as an election officer, for all electoral procedures relating to the election of learner members at a school.
- The guidance educator shall determine a date, time and place for election of learners to the council.
- The guidance educator shall prepare a notice of the nomination meeting, at least 10 days before and shall display the copy at school.
- Parents of learners shall be construed as reference to a learner who is entitled to vote.
- Any learner who is entitled to vote may attend and participate in the election process.
- Any learner may attend the poll meeting at which learner members are elected, but only those who are entitled to vote may participate.
- Only those learners who are representatives of their classes may be elected in the council.

2.7.4 Office-bearers

The following office-bearers are to be elected by members of the council only:

- Chairperson
- Vice-chairperson
- Secretary
- Treasurer

2.7.5 Educator guardian

The educator guardian appointed by the principal and other personnel members shall perform the following duties:

- To act as an electoral officer for all electoral procedures relating to election of members.

- To determine a date, time and place for elections.
- To prepare a notice of the nomination meeting at least ten days before and shall display a copy at school.
- To attend all meetings of the council.
- To liaise between the council and school authorities.
- To serve the interest of both personnel and council.
- To ensure that the council reach its objectives and goals.
- To be part of the panel conducting interviews for learner representation.

2.7.6 Co-opted members

The following are to form part of the learner council as reinforcements.

In terms of Section 23(c), of Act No. 84 of 1996, the learner council shall also comprise co-opted members. In addition to the members elected in the council, it may also ask other learners in the school to become members. Such members are called co-opted members. In terms of Section 23(8) of the same Act, co-opted members are allowed to forward suggestions and inputs but do not have voting rights within the council.

2.7.7 Structure

The cohesive structure of a prefect system to be voted and elected for by all senior learners in a school including personnel shall be as follows:

- Head boy/ Head girl
- Deputy head boy/ head girl
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Elected members
- Co-opted members
- Educator guardian

2.8 SUMMARY

In the first part of the chapter a brief look at the explanation of the concepts structure, learner prefect as well as the prefect system was made. This was done in order to get a clearer picture as to their meaning and relevancy in the research. The three together form the plot upon which the research is based.

Participative democratic governance with reference to participation of learners in school governance was discussed. Aspects such as what its goals and objectives are were looked into. The different levels of participative democratic governance were discussed with focus on the extent to which participative democracy can be obtainable. The advantages and disadvantages of learner participation in school governance were discussed, focus being on the question: what are the advantages and disadvantages of participative democratic governance?

Reasons for learner participation in school governance was discussed, with emphasis on the reasons, why it is important for learners to participate in school governance. The official documents with regard to the creation of a prefect structure with reference interpreted from Acts of parliament, the provincial documents as well as policies of schools consulted were discussed as well.

The second part of the chapter was devoted to what various literature sources stated with regard to the creation of a cohesive prefect structure in primary schools predominantly attended by black learners.

The organisational structure of a prefect council was looked into, with emphasis on the way a prefect council should be constituted, and the way members of the council are to be nominated. The election of head boy/ head girl was discussed, followed by the different ways in which learner prefects can be elected. Thereafter a discussion of the election of prefect members followed. The right to vote was also investigated with focus on the learners who are entitled to vote for candidates.

This was followed by an explanation of the appointment and induction of members, with the emphasis on when members should be appointed and inducted. Lastly, the focus was on the aspects that made up a constitution of the prefect council.

The last part of the chapter presented a synthesis of the correct procedure to be followed in creating a cohesive prefect structure. Aspects such as nomination, voting, election and office-bearers were discussed.

The following chapter has to do with the functions of a prefect system.

CHAPTER 3

FUNCTIONS OF A PREFECT SYSTEM

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the functions of a prefect system in primary schools predominantly attended by black learners. Both, official documents and literature will be used to provide the necessary guidance as to the correct usage of a prefect council in a school. According to Behr (1989:19) the way in which a prefect council performed its duties in the past raised concern amongst black learners, as they felt that the council did not serve their interest but those of the school authority. As Du Plessis (1994:64) explains, the council was turned into a monitoring team for both learners and teachers. In other words, it was used by the school authority to monitor the behaviour of both teachers and learners inside and outside the school premises. This also included primary schools as the whole country was affected.

This created a volatile situation in schools as a result of the misuse of the prefect council by the school authorities. Lauglo (1990:86) argues that such volatile situations resulted in tensions between learners, educators and council members. Furthermore, learners lost faith in the council, resulting in the decline of educational standards in schools. This resulted in the scrapping of a prefect system and its substitution with the Learner Representative Council (LRC) in schools (Behr, 1989:86).

However, through an introduction of a well-constructed, cohesive structural prefect council, such volatile situations can be avoided. Grobler (1992:9) emphasises the fact that it is the responsibility of educational authorities at school level to address the matter of training and proper utilisation of learners to bring about a conducive educational environment. It is therefore clear that if properly trained to perform allocated duties such as the implementation of the code of conduct for learners, a prefect council can help to restore the culture of learning and teaching in primary

schools predominantly attended by black learners. This can be achieved by effecting and seeing to the implementation of the code of conduct for learners in a school.

Activities in the council have to be properly guided and arranged to bring about effectiveness and stability. This can only be accomplished through the drafting of a constitution. This aspect is discussed next.

3.2 CONSTITUTION OF A PREFECT SYSTEM

The ideas about the purpose of the prefect council and its members, which have been gathered from educators, learners and other sources must be put together into a document known as a constitution. A constitution is a basic document that contains the rules and principles according to which a prefect council should function (North-West, 2000:18).

Participants who have been earmarked for the drafting of the constitution of the council have to follow certain guidelines, as indicated below.

3.2.1 Drafting the constitution

The following steps can serve as guidelines to the council on how to draft its constitution (Karklina, 1997:98; Langer, 1998:76 & North-West, 2000:18):

- The executive committee of the council and the educator guardian form part of the committee that has to draft the constitution of the prefect council.
- After having written down a proposed constitution, the committee may provide copies of its proposal to a few learners, educators and other role-players to study and comment on.
- Any changes suggested may be voted on by the committee and if approved, included in a revised version of the first proposal.
- The constitution is then ready to be examined and approved by all the learners.
- Prefect council constitution should be written in a language that can be understood by all the learners to whom it applies. Sentences and sections should be brief, simple and clear.

3.2.2 Contents of a constitution

The constitution of a prefect council in a school has to include the following as its contents (Moles, 1990:88; Leatt, 1998:75 ; North-West, 2000:20):

- **Section 1:** The name of the council

This section states the name of the council, for example: "The name of this council is ... "

- **Section 2:** Aims of the council

This section includes details about the general aims and objectives of the council.

- **Section 3:** Nominations.

This section deals with how members are to be nominated into the council.

- **Section 4:** Voting

This section deals with the correct procedures to be followed in voting for the council members.

- **Section 5:** Election

This section outlines the entire procedure for the election process, gives guidance on the time for elections, who may vote and provides information on general procedures.

- **Section 6:** Committees

This section lists the names of all standing or permanent committees and states how members must be appointed to such committees..

- **Section 7:** Functions

This section spells out what the functions of the council are in terms of the South African Schools Act.

- **Section 8:** Meetings

This section stipulates how often should meetings of the council be conducted.

- **Section 9:** Term of office

This section deals with how long a member should serve in the council.

3.2.3 SYNTHESIS

From the above, it seems that a prefect council for primary schools predominantly attended by black learners shall consider having the following as part of its constitution:

The name of the council

The name of the school shall be used in this regard.

Aims of the council

The general aims of the council shall be based upon the creation of an educative environment within the school by building unity amongst learners themselves as well educators within the school.

Nominations

The following shall be considered when candidates are nominated:

- The principal of the school shall make available to the election officer a school register containing names of all eligible learners for control at a nomination meeting.
- Only learners with the right to vote are entitled to nominate candidates.
- Nomination shall be in writing and the list shall contain names for male and female learners separately.
- Personnel members and all senior learners in the school (grade 4-7) shall nominate candidates.

Voting

- The following is regarded as a fair procedure when voting for candidates:
- Voting shall be by secret ballot.
- All senior learners in the school as well as personnel shall have the right to vote.
- Voting shall be held at the date, time and places indicated in the notice of the nomination meeting.

Election of members

The following procedure shall be followed:

- The principal shall appoint a guidance educator to act as an election officer for all electoral procedures relating to the election of learner members at a school.
- The guidance educator shall determine a date, time and place for election of learners into the council.
- If a class consists of both male and female learners, one male and a female learners shall be elected.
- Election shall be by secret ballot.

Election of executive committee

The following shall apply in respect of the election for the above:

- At its first meeting convened by the educator liaison officer within seven days after the election of the council, the prefect council shall elect an executive committee.
- The executive committee shall be elected from amongst the members.
- The election shall be by secret ballot.
- No member of the executive committee may hold more than one office.

Committees

- The council may appoint one or more committees to perform certain functions determined by it.
- Every committee of the council shall be chaired by a member thereof.
- Committees shall co-opt learners to help them fulfill their tasks.

Functions

The prefect council shall:

- Promote the culture of learning in the school.
- Support the principal, educators and non-teaching staff in performing their duties.
- Help to organise cultural and sporting events.

Meetings

- Ordinary meetings of the council shall be held at least once a term.
- The executive committee shall meet at least once a month.
- A quorum of the council shall be 20% of the members.

Term of office

- Members of the prefect council and the executive committee will hold office for a period not longer than a year.
- A member or office-bearer shall give up his office if:
 - he/she leaves the school;
 - he/she resigns in writing;
 - he/she dies; or
 - he/she is guilty of repeated misconduct and acts in a manner that is harmful to the interest of the council.

Following below are the duties of office-bearers in the council.

3.3 DUTIES OF OFFICE-BEARERS

The office-bearers of the council have certain duties to perform in order to ensure that activities within it proceed smoothly without any interference. The following office-bearers are important for the success of the council:

3.3.1 Head boy and Head girl

According to Unieskool (2001:3), La Hoff primary (2001:4), TED (1990:6) and Klerksdorp Primary (2001:4), the head boy and girl are the most important figures in the council. They have to lead other council members by having to do right things, as expected of any leader. They have to be the first to sacrifice their time for the sake of the council's success. The conduct of the head boy and girl will help spur other members on to serve the council with pride and dignity.

Besides their normal duties as members of the council, the head boy and head girl have other responsibilities and duties to perform. King (1993:148) indicates that they will have to lead and organise other members of the council to work as a unit. Furthermore, it is of importance that they always have to be exemplary to both their colleagues and other learners in the school.

Wachholz (1994:92) furthermore remarks that the head boy and head girl must always be given the opportunity to make public speeches whenever such situations become available. They must also be in a position to welcome guests at school, be able to conduct assembly and finally pray at the end of it all.

The following are the normal duties that the head boy and head girl have to perform at school (Van Wyk, 1992:69; Unieskool, 2001:3; Klerksdorp Primary, 2001:5; Meringspark Primary, 2001:6):

- To be a representative of learners in the school.
- To interpret the wishes of both, council and learners in the school.
- To provide guidance to the council.
- To symbolise and familiarise learners with the mission of the school.
- To chair meetings of the council.
- To represent the council and learners of the school on particular occasions.
- To hold discussions at least once a week together with the principal of the school about the latest developments within the jurisdiction of the council.
- To liaise between the principal and the council.

In conclusion, the position of a head boy or head girl is one of the most important within the council. It has to be occupied by a person who is responsible enough to lead and be exemplary to fellow learners in the school. The individual has to show dedication in the duties assigned to and carry them out effectively to the benefit of the learners, council and the school.

The next aspects to be discussed are the duties of the other office-bearers.

3.3.2 Deputy head boy and head girl

Klerksdorp Primary (2001:5), Meiringspark Primary (2001:6) as well as Van Wyk (1992:69) indicate that the deputy head boy and head girl shall perform the duties of the head boy and head girl when the latter are absent, as well as those duties specifically allocated to them.

3.3.3 Secretary

As Weintraub (1998:39) explains, the secretary as one of the office-bearers, is a person who has to see to it that activities within the council are made known to all learners in the school on time. Oosthuizen (1998:194) emphasises the fact that a secretary is the key person of any meeting.

Although the chairperson sets the tone and provides direction to a meeting, the secretary is the expert who is acquainted with all the facts regarding the council and who sees to it that the meeting proceeds smoothly (North-West, 2000:11).

The following are the duties to be performed by the secretary (Van Wyk, 1992:7; Oosthuizen, 1998: 194; North-West, 2000:11):

- Informing members and learners about meetings.
- Taking minutes at each meeting.
- Handling council correspondence.
- Keeping records and files.
- Providing all the requirements and requisites needed for a meeting.
- Reading minutes of meetings at the request of members and to amend them when necessary.
- Reading relevant correspondence.
- Compiling a draft annual report together with the chairperson.
- A secretary should be impartial, loyal to the chairperson and serve every member to the best of his abilities, except when a member acts in conflict with the constitution or policy of the council.

- A secretary avoids a clash of interests, serves the association and works behind the scenes.

Thus, the secretary has to make sure that the minutes of meetings and all other records are kept in a safe place. The impartiality of the secretary, just like that of the chairperson enables him/her to gain the confidence of participants. He/She should always be ready to read minutes of the previous meeting when asked to do so. Whenever amendments and omissions are made to the minutes, he/she should gladly accept the corrections and not to see them as degrading to his/her stature as a being.

3.3.4 Treasurer

Shor (1992:89) argues that the treasurer has to be taught how to keep funds safely. This means that he/she should be in a position to keep records of income and expenditure of the council. However, assistance from other members of the council is needed.

The following are regarded as duties of the treasurer (John, 1995:35; James, 1997:88; North-West, 2000:12):

- Keeping records of all monies that come in (e.g. donations, fund-raising).
- Keeping records of all money spent.
- Regularly informing other members about the finance of the council.

The treasurer, as a person handling the affairs of the council, has to make sure that records are kept in a safe place. After collecting funds the treasurer has to report the money to the school treasurer for banking purposes (Human Resource Management, 1998:93).

It is therefore important that each office-bearer has to know what is expected of him/her in as far as their duties is concerned. Outlining the functions of each makes

it possible to avoid future clashes and no duplication of work can be expected. Office-bearers have to work as a unit to enable the council to function effectively.

3.3.5 Synthesis

From the above, the following may be considered as duties that office-bearers have to perform:

Head boy and Head girl

The head boy and head girl are learners that acquired most votes in the elections. They are regarded as the central figures within the council. Together they are expected to perform the following duties:

- To be representatives for learners in the school.
- To provide guidance to the council.
- To chair meetings of the council.
- To represent the council and learners in the school on particular occasions.
- To liaise between the principal and the council.

Deputy head boy and head girl

They are expected to act as replacements in the absence of both the head boy and girl. In such an event they shall perform their duties as well as duties specifically allocated to them.

Secretary

The secretary has to make sure that he/she keeps records of all proceedings relating to the council. Before a meeting can be held, he/she has to make it a point that he/she issues out a circular timeously to inform members about such occurrences.

Above all, the secretary is expected to perform the following duties:

- Informing members and learners about meetings.
- Taking minutes at each meeting.

- Keeping records and files.
- Reading relevant correspondence.
- To be impartial, loyal to the chairperson and serve every member to the best of his/her abilities.
- Drafting the agenda in co-operation with the chairperson.

Treasurer

The treasurer as the person handling the funds of council, has to make it a point that records of income and expenditure are kept up to date and are made available at any given moment when needed. However, it is of the utmost importance that he gets assistance from other council members.

In particular, the treasurer shall perform the following duties:

- Keeping records of all monies that comes in (e.g. donations, fund-raising).
- Keeping records of all money spent
- To regularly inform members about the finance of the council.

Now that the duties of each office-bearer have been outlined, focus will be placed on the different committees that a prefect system may establish in a particular school.

3.4 COMMITTEES OF A PREFECT SYSTEM

According to North-West (2000:12) and Archilles (1994:111), the prefect council needs to organise itself properly if it is to be successful in its work and achieve its goals. It has to ensure that there are people available to carry out its functions and do the work it needs to. Work has to be fairly and evenly distributed among the council members. One way of achieving this is by establishing committees that will address the specific needs and interests of the council and the school as a whole. The number of committees to be established depends entirely upon the size of the council to ensure contribution towards effective governance. The larger the size of the council is, the more committees will be established to ensure that every member takes an active part in their success.

The executive committee, considered to be the core committee of the council, is investigated in the next section, and thereafter the different committees of the prefect council will be explored.

3.4.1 Executive committee

In terms of Act No. 84 of 1996 section 29 (1-3):

- At its first meeting, convened by the Teacher Liaison Officer within seven days after the election of the council, the prefect council shall elect an executive committee.
- The executive committee shall be elected from amongst the members.
- The election of the executive committee shall be by secret ballot.

Makhubu (1993:76), Treslan (1996:88) and North-West (2000:12) points out that the executive committee is generally made up of office-bearers, namely the chairperson, deputy chairperson, secretary and a treasurer. Its role is to perform the administration of the council allocated to it by the entire council membership.

The executive committee meets more frequently and is able to deal with matters that need urgent attention. It is also important to note that no member of the council is allowed to hold more than one position or office in the executive committee.

The executive committee may function as a link between the school management team (SMT) and the council itself. This is emphasised by Jain (1993:65), who explains that the executive committee as representatives of the council negotiates with the SMT on its behalf. This is being done to foster and strengthen relations between the personnel staff and the council. The executive committee does this per mandate it receives from the council members. They should without failure report to the principal of the school about the latest developments and findings within the environment of the school. After reporting the matter to the school authorities, feedback is given to other members of the council. From there, it will be

disseminated to all the learners in a meeting (Levin, 1994:96). Other duties of the executive committee are as outlined in par. 3.3.

A member of the executive committee shall give up his office in the following instances (North-West, 2000:29). If:

- he/she leaves the school.
- he/she resigns in writing.
- he/she dies; or
- he/she is guilty of repeated misconduct and acts in a manner that is harmful to the interest of the council.

3.4.2 Sports committee

According to North-West (2000:13), Jain (1993:78) and Levin (1994:102), the council may establish committees such as the sports committee for the purpose of taking responsibility for other activities of the council. Furthermore, before engaging in any sporting activity, the sports committee members as well as the staff come together to map the way forward. Co-opted members (as explained in par. 2.5.1.1) are also invited to these gatherings in order to put forth their inputs regarding the itinerary for the year. Levin (1994:104) further explain that the itinerary for the year includes both internal and external fixtures for the year.

Jain (1993:86) argues that the sports committee must establish its own executive committee that will comprise of the chairperson, secretary and a treasurer. The chairperson has to direct meetings of the committee and present a comprehensive report to the entire personnel staff and the council members in the school. The secretary receives and forward challenges to schools they may intend visiting or those whom they intend hosting. The treasurer collects money from the learners in cases of fundraising and school trips. He/She is, however, assisted by one or two committee members (Grace, 1995:113). Thereafter, money is handed over to the school treasurer for banking.

Liebertrau (1997:86) indicates that the sports committee has to see to it that visitors to school are kept safe at all times. They have to see to it that visitors are catered for, that they deploy prefect members as well as co-opted ones to particular areas in the school for safety purposes. Any mishap or disturbances have to be reported to the relevant school authorities (Jain, 1993:88). After the events of the day have been played to a finish, transport used by visitors has to be escorted out of the school premises either being watched by learner and staff securities or through the invitation of the local police (La Hoff, 2001:5).

According to Meiringspark (2001:4) if a school undertakes a trip, it is the responsibility of the sports committee through its guidance educator to provide learners with indemnity forms to be completed by parents. In these forms parents of learners may find information that requires of them to either approve or disapprove their children undertaking a trip. La Hoff (2001:8) argues that in the event of them signing and approving of learners to undertake the trip, parents agree to take full responsibility of paying medical costs, should a learner sustain an injury during the trip. However, that does not exonerate educators from taking care of learners and to account for any mishap that may occur (Unieskool, 2001:5).

The sports organiser of the school has to inform their hosts about the number of learners and educators undertaking the trip so that they could be in the know as to how many people are to be catered for. This will also help them to know how much security will be needed to ensure the safety of their visitors (Alabama, 2001:4).

3.4.3 Fund-raising committee

North-West (2000:46) defines fund-raising as those activities that are undertaken by the school in collaboration with its learners, for the purpose of raising money for the institution to meet its obligations. This may either be obtained through donations from the business people or the community it serves.

Oosthuizen (1998:18) argues that as school fees remains the primary source of funding in education, educational institutions through the assistance of the fund-raising committee have to employ a variety of methods to supplement it. These may be in the form of school functions, admission and subscription fees for sporting events as well as the letting of school facilities after hours to both learners and parents.

Schroeder (1995:5) has found that the fund-raising committee should market the institution positively and honestly to those people who may support it. Furthermore, the committee must continually inform learners in the school about the latest developments or activities within the school. In this way the attitude of learners towards supporting the school will be positively influenced. Thus, Niemann (1995:398) emphasises the importance of effective channels of communication between the school authorities as well as learners.

The following may serve as guidelines that the committee together with their guidance educator may use for its success in raising funds (North-West, 2000:47):

- To raise more money than they spend and to do market research before starting with the project
- To budget for fund-raising
- Try and avoid risky ventures, which requires big investments. They should start with something small and an event that they know will be successful. If it works out fine, plan a bigger event next time.
- Raise money for specific projects rather than for the school as a whole.
- Build on past successful events. Once an event is a success, repeat it on an annual basis.
- Keep a proper administration system. Keep records of all the expenses, money collected.
- After the event, they can then evaluate and write down the lesson learned.
- To maintain high ethical standards. They must be honest and accountable for the fund raised.

- Build leaders. They should use the rotating system of allocating duties in the fund-raising committee.
- To devote as much time to fund-raising as they possibly can

The following serves as potential sources of income and financial possibilities that a fund-raising committee can engage in to augment school fees and contributions to school fund (Bolton, 1992:7; Oosthuizen, 1998:183; North-West, 2000:46):

- Donations and bequests.
- Fund-raising campaigns.
- Letting of sports facilities.
- Net profit from sales.
- Fund-raising enterprises such as bazaars and concerts.
- Selling raffle tickets.
- Jumble sales.
- Engaging in educational trips or tours.

3.4.4 Education committee

Another committee that a council may establish in a school is the education committee. According to North-West (2000:17), because of the fact that the council's objective is to see to it that each and every learner receives quality education in a school, it remains their mission to see to it that it is accomplished. Furthermore, the committee has to see to it that learners attend to their studies without any hassles.

In order to see to it that learners attend school regularly, the SABC (2003:16) advises that the committee must from time to time call a meeting inviting the parents of learners in a school to discuss areas of concern. According to La Hoff (2000:8) in these meetings the committee will be in a position to understand difficulties learners encounter at home, thereby devising strategies to render assistance where possible. Because of the fact that they do have the services of some educators in it, is enough evidence that the committee might just be the right tonic needed to help

assist both learners and parents find a common ground regarding problems encountered (Bottery, 1997:67).

SABC (2003:16) is of the opinion that the involvement of parents in the education of their children remains one of their priorities, if not an obligation they have to fulfill. Furthermore, the committee in consultation with educators needs to call parents to address the issue of average by some of the learners. Learning difficulties experienced by learners also have to be communicated to parents. Makhubu (1993:77) adds that it may be that learners experience these learning problems due to the fact that parents do not take an interest in their education. Another problem may be attributed to the home situation that can affect the performance of a learner at school (Levin, 1994:76). These factors can be avoided through contact with parents to find a common ground on how to overcome them (Lauglo, 1990:89).

The committee has to address the issue of learning problems experienced by learners together with their parents in order to assist them with regard their future aspirations (Levin, 1994:88). This view is shared by the SABC (2003:16) namely that the committee needs to remind parents in meetings that if a child has learning difficulty it does not mean that he/she is stupid or is unable to learn. However, it may be that the child needs to be taught in a different way. The learner may, for example, need extra professional help to learn (Archilles, 1994:87).

In their meetings with parents the following may be regarded as tips that the committee can forward to parents in helping learners overcome difficulties in their learning process (SABC, 2003:16):

- Read together as a family.
- Visit the library with the child and read with him/her.
- Do activities that will help the child practice writing and reading.
- Give him tasks and activities to do alone.
- Do corrections with him/her as a way of doing remedial work.

- Encourage him/her to join social clubs and take part in sporting events to help boost his self-confidence.

In order to accomplish all these, La Hoff (2001:8) argues that the committee, through their guidance educator, can also as a way of helping learners cope with their learning difficulties enlist the services of subject or learning area advisors. This is echoed by Leatt (1998:79), who points out that expert advice from these department officials may be of help regarding the employment of a variety of methods that may assist learners with their learning problems. The very officials can assist them with regard to their preparations for exams as well (Leatt, 1998:80).

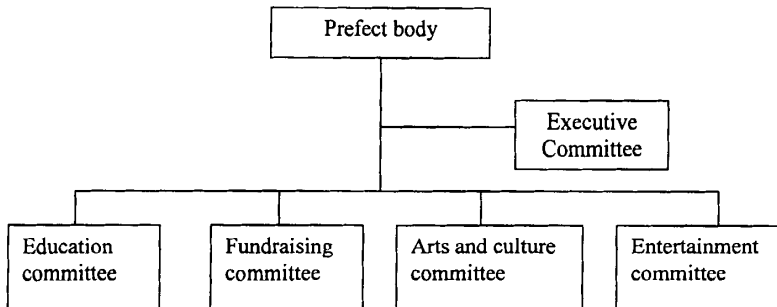
Another way of helping learners overcome their learning difficulties is for the committee to use an educational programme prepared by the SABC for those particular grades. After receiving the programme from the SABC, the committee can then forward a suggestion to the school authorities to accommodate it in the general school timetable (North - West, 2000:8).

According to La Hoff (2001:8) the committee has got to have a plan for the year with regard visits to places of interests relevant enough to their education. Furthermore, they shall have to hand over their plan to the school authorities for scrutiny and recommendations. After that the two have to reach a common decision regarding the proposed places.

In conclusion, the above-mentioned committees (depending on the size and needs of a particular school) will be able to add value to the prefect council as it will help increase participation of other learners in the activities of the council. However, it must be emphasised that every committee established, in a school shall be chaired by a member of the council as stated in par.2.5.1.1 (g).

A typical way in which the different committees may link up can be arranged as follows:

Fig. 3:1 A possible way on how committees of the council may link up (North-West, 2000:13)



3.4.5 Synthesis

Based on the above, the following are regarded as some of the committees that may assist the council reach its main objective, which is to help the school authorities create an educative atmosphere in the school.

Executive committee

The above committee is considered the most important in trying to steer the council towards a particular direction. After the election of members into the council, the said members are supposed within seven days of their assumption, to elect the executive committee. The election of this committee is done by secret ballot.

The executive committee shall perform the following duties:

- To perform the administration of the council.
- To act as a link between the school management team (SMT) and the council itself.
- To report to the principal about the latest developments and findings within the school environment.

- To represent the interests and aspirations of all learners in the school.
- To assist the school authorities in creating a safe and educative environment in the school.

Sports committee

The above committee assists the school authorities in promoting health and recreation within the school through engagement of learners in sporting activities. Because of the fact that learners have to be educated in totality, including physically, the sports committee is a very relevant aspect.

The sports committee shall perform the following duties:

- To draw up the sports itinerary for the year.
- To keep visitors of the school safely at all times.
- To cater for the visitors.
- To help escort visitors transport inside and outside the school premises.
- To provide learners with indemnity forms and to make certain that they are signed for and returned to school.

Fund-raising committee

In order for a school to acquire the necessary resources needed to uplift its educational standard, it needs enough money to be able to purchase them. It is the responsibility of the council members to help the school raise funds to acquire the needed resources.

The fund-raising committee as a co-function of the council has the following as its duties:

- To do market research before starting with a project.
- To budget for fund-raising.
- To raise money for specific projects.
- To assist needy learners pay for fees.
- To engage in fund-raising campaigns.

Education committee

The above committee has the responsibility for ensuring that each and every individual learner in the school gets quality education. It has the following duties:

- To assist where possible, that both learners and parents find a common ground regarding problems encountered.
- To assist average learners with learning difficulties by inviting subject or learning area advisors.
- To arrange educational tours for learners.
- To encourage learners to actively participate in council activities.

The next aspect to be discussed is how meetings of the council may be conducted successfully, with the emphasis on the roles played by the chairperson, the secretary and the participants in a meeting.

3.5 MEETINGS OF THE PREFECT SYSTEM

According to Landman (1980:12) people have become so used to meetings that their value and meaning are not always appreciated. Furthermore, meetings are often considered as something which happens simply because they have to happen. Such gatherings are sometimes thought of as places where people sit and argue for hours and waste time (HRM, 1998:83). It is precisely for this reason that attention of participants should be drawn to the importance and value of meetings.

A meeting may be defined as a gathering of two or more people to discuss and decide on mutual matters (HRM, 1998:83). When a decision is taken in a meeting, it is binding on all members present as well as those who tendered their apologies.

Lauglo (1990:83) advises that as a council, the prefect members including the guardian educator have to hold meetings to discuss matters and agree on a course of action. These meetings must be productive. At each meeting progress must be made towards building an effective council. According to KwaZulu-Natal (1996:5(1-

5), La Hoff Primary (2001:6) and Klerksdorp Primary (2001:5), the council has to hold meetings at least once a quarter.

Du Plessis (1994:120) argues that notice for meetings should be in writing and handed to each member personally. He further emphasises the importance of dispatching notices timeously to inform members about meetings. This is done for the sole purpose of giving them enough time to think about the agenda given so as to come to meetings being well prepared to partake in it (Landman, 1980:12). He is also of the opinion that other learners in the school should also be informed well in advance about meetings so as to obtain inputs and comments from them as to what they would like to see discussed in that particular meeting.

In order to convene an effective meeting, a valid notice has to be dispatched. The notices dispatched have to meet the following requirements (HRM, 1998:87):

- There may be no conditions such as that if it rains the meeting will not take place.
- In the notice it must be clearly stated what sort of meeting is going to take place, for example, a general or management meeting, etcetra.
- Once a notice has been sent out about a meeting, it must take place on that day.
- All members should receive notices of a meeting even if they have indicated that they will not be able to attend.
- The period of notice should be according to the constitution, in other words, at least seven days before the meeting or as otherwise determined.
- The notice should clearly indicate the time, place, date, etcetra.
- When a notice is sent to a member's registered address and he does not receive it, the meeting may not be declared invalid.
- The method of notice must be given according to regulations, that is, either in writing, verbally, etcetra.

Notices should be sent out by a person authorised to do so. The notice should be clear and the most important matters that will be discussed should be mentioned in the agenda.

It is therefore important for a notice to be dispatched early enough to allow members to prepare themselves for the meeting. The active participation of members in a meeting will definitely contribute immensely towards its success. It is also worth mentioning that council members need to be made aware that a meeting is a place where ideas are shared for the benefit of the school as a whole and not a political arena.

The role of different members during the meeting will be explored in some detail below.

3.5.1 The role of the chairperson

Van Wyk (1992:70) points out that before commencing with the meeting, the chairperson should ask the secretary to read minutes from the previous meeting. After having been accepted by the house as a true reflection of what transpired last, the chairperson may read the agenda to be discussed.

Van Wyk (1992:69) further states that the chairperson is one of the most important person for a successful meeting. He/She is also the one who should call and chair meetings of the council. Lauglo (1990:79) explains that in his/her absence, the deputy chairperson should take over the reigns. In the absence of both the chairperson as well as the deputy, members in the meeting may elect any person to act as one.

In addition, Oosthuizen (1998:192) explains that if the meeting so wishes, the secretary may serve as a chairperson in the absence of both the chairperson and the deputy. Furthermore, the chairperson may delegate his/her duties to another person depending on the nature of business to be discussed at a particular meeting.

Shor (1992:76) indicates that the role of the chairperson in a meeting is to remain neutral at all times. He/She has to give each and every member a chance to put his opinion on the table. Whenever a point has been raised, discussed, agreed or rejected to the satisfaction of all participants, the chairperson has to move on to the next item on the agenda. The latter statement implies that the role of a chairperson is to direct the meeting.

In his/her capacity as the driver of the organisation, the chairperson has to see to it that there is a quorum before commencing with the meeting (Landman, 1980:23). A quorum is seen as the minimum number of people who must be present at a meeting to be able to make binding decisions (HRM, 1998:92). Furthermore a meeting without a quorum as well as decisions made, are regarded as being invalid.

The following requirements are specified to ascertain whether the meeting has a quorum (HRM, 1998:92):

- There can only be a quorum of members if they have been advised beforehand that the meeting is to take place.
- Decisions taken by a quorum are the valid decisions of the meeting and are binding to all.
- The amount of people required to form a quorum is laid down in the constitution. In the case where it has not been specified, it is usually more than 50% of the elected members.
- Only those members who have the right to vote can be counted as a quorum.
- To determine a quorum, a member has to be personally present. Proxies are not applicable in such cases.
- The quorum must be present for the duration of the meeting. As soon as the quorum has been broken, the meeting must be adjourned because matters may not be discussed further.

Landman (1980:24) states that in his/her role as a chairperson of a meeting, there are certain characteristics he/she has to display in order to earn the respect of members attending it. Furthermore, not all chairpersons will display them, but the following is a guideline according to which such can be measured in their roles as chairmen (HRM, 1998:90):

- He/She must be knowledgeable about the matters of the council as well as matters to be discussed in a meeting
- A chairperson must have the ability to plan and organise well.
- People should have the desire to listen to him/her- in other words he should be someone with a charming personality.
- He/She should be able to motivate people to participate in school activities.
- He/She should be able to grasp things quickly and be able to formulate an answer with ease.
- He/She should be able to summarise a matter without difficulty once he/she has heard various opinions.
- Tact should be part of his/her behavior and discretion must be used calmly to give the correct leadership.
- He/She may not air his/her opinion at a meeting or enforce his/her will and decisions.
- He/She must learn to develop the ability to listen.
- He/She should be resolute in his conduct.

The role a chairperson has to play in a meeting is vital in the sense that he/she holds the key to its success and failure.

3.5.2 Rights and duties of a chairperson

Armstrong (1998:104) states that the chairperson should ensure that the meeting starts at the scheduled time. The chairperson should make it a point that he/she arrives first at the venue where the meeting is to be held. Upon his/her early arrival in a meeting, the chairperson will be in a position to ensure that a quorum is present

before commencing with a meeting (Boyd, 1990:69). It is also within the rights of a chairperson to control a meeting and to maintain order throughout the duration.

In this regard the chairperson must allow only one person to speak at a time. In order to achieve this, he/she should determine the sequence of speakers (Squelch, 1999:118).

Landman (1980:17) argues that a chairperson has a duty to ensure that resolutions that are adopted adequately express the will of the majority of the members. Thus a chairperson has to be impartial and should give each member sufficient time to express his/her views without being intimidated (Du Toit, 1991:78). The chairperson has to keep reminding participants to confine themselves with the agenda before them whenever deviations occur.

If under certain circumstances a chairperson considers it to be appropriate, he/she may allow each member the opportunity to address the meeting. However, the member who proposed the original motion retains the right of replication (Landman, 1980:17).

It is the right and duty of a chairperson to rule that any motion contrary to procedure is out of order (Grace, 1995:126). In cases where two parties are arguing over a point, it is the duty of the chairperson to intervene and make a ruling over the two motions. Furthermore, a chairperson's ruling with regard a point of order is final and may not be disputed by the meeting. The chairperson does this in order to direct the meeting, which is of course one of his/her rights and obligations (Johnson, 1991:62).

Levin (1994:108) postulates that the chairperson remains a member of a meeting and retains all the rights and privileges of a member despite his/her duties to act neutrally at all times. In addition, should a chairperson wish to express his/her personal views, he/she must temporarily vacate the chair and request the deputy to act in his/her place (HRM, 1998:91).

All announcements and submissions of reports by members are subject to the permission of the chairperson. Permission can be granted by the meeting, should the chairperson refuse (Oosthuizen, 1998:193).

Landman (1980:18) describes that the chairperson has the right to propose and vote for himself/herself, provided that he/she does not occupy the chair at the time. In addition the chairperson has a second or casting vote, which he/she is not obliged to use. His/Her ordinary vote should be casted together with those of other members. He/She should only exercise his/her casting vote when the number of votes for and against the motion proposed, are equal (HRM, 1998:91).

The following are regarded as duties of the chairperson (HRM, 1998:91):

- He/She must ensure that a quorum is present in meetings.
- The meeting must be properly constituted and he/she must open it.
- It remains his/her duty to see that all rules and regulations of the council in connections with meetings are fulfilled.
- Matters must be dealt with in the order indicated on the agenda.
- The order at a meeting should be maintained to allow each speaker a reasonable chance.
- Speakers, both for and against a proposal must be given a chance to state their case.
- No discussion may be allowed unless a proposal has been submitted for discussion.
- Approval of minutes from the previous meeting must be obtained. Thereafter, the minutes have to be signed to confirm approval.
- He/She must make sure that no speaker is interrupted by continuous interjection or chatting.
- Once the agenda has been dealt with, the meeting must be closed.

The chairperson has the right to adjourn a disorderly meeting if the disorder makes its continuation impossible. He/She may also warn a misbehaving member that he/she will adjourn the meeting because of his/her behaviour (Landman, 1980:20).

In addition to the above-mentioned duties, the chairperson only has control over a meeting and for those matters for which he/she has authorisation. He/She has the following rights in order to maintain a successful meeting (HRM, 1998:92):

- To maintain order and if a member's behavior offends, he/she may ask him/her to leave the meeting.
- To determine the procedure to be followed regarding inputs and comments from members.
- His/Her decisions regarding matters such as a point of order is final.
- Over and above his/her normal vote, he/she also has a casting vote when both sides have voted equally.
- He/She may adjourn the meeting before the agenda has been dealt with completely.

He/She may do this in the following cases:

- When people leave the meeting and there is no longer a quorum.
- Once the meeting has become chaotic and the chairperson is no longer able to restore order.

From the above it is clear that the character that a chairperson has to display in a meeting is vital. His/Her impartiality during the meeting makes it possible for participants to express themselves freely without being disrupted in any way.

As one of the most important office-bearers, the chairperson has a final responsibility of ensuring the smooth running of the council. His/Her conduct must ensure that council and learners develop confidence in him/her. It will also help to convince learners that he/she is committed to the upliftment of the council and the creation of an educative environment in a school.

3.5.3 The secretary

Squelch (1999:125) describes that the secretary as the key person of any meeting, as he/she keeps records of proceedings in his/her file. The secretary, like the chairperson, has to see to it that the meeting proceeds smoothly without any disruption. Armstrong (1998:87) believes that as he/she has to record minutes of a meeting, the secretary has from time to time to remind participants to speak clearly and summarise their points to make his/her job easier.

At the beginning of every meeting, the secretary has to read minutes from the previous meeting and ask members to adopt the minutes as a true reflection of what transpired last. If there are omissions from the minutes, the participants have to highlight them so as to be discussed by the house to the satisfaction of all. After corrections have been made and indicated in the minutes, they are adopted as a true reflection of what transpired last. After adoption, the meeting commences (Squelch, 1999: 127).

In order to speed up the next meetings' process, Armstrong (1998:77) recommends that a secretary may after every meeting, that is, a week or two after the meeting has taken place, make photocopies of minutes and distribute them to all members. This will help members make the necessary corrections well in advance before the next meeting. When the next meeting is opened, members will then be in a position to come with omissions they detected from the minutes if there are any (HRM, 1998:92). This will save a lot of time, as minutes need not be read.

In addition to par. 3.3.3, the following may be summarised as the duties of a secretary (Van Wyk, 1992:70; Oosthuizen, 1998:194; Human Resource Management, 1998:93; Squelch, 1999:127; North –West, 2000:11):

- Drafting the agenda in co-operation with the chairperson.
- Reading relevant correspondence.

- Sending out notices of the meeting.
- Keeping the membership list on hand.
- Ensuring that a quorum is present and that it remains there for the duration of the meeting.
- Taking the chair temporarily as chairperson when the latter is still being elected.
- Distributing the minutes of the previous meeting among the members or reads it to the next meeting.
- Ensuring that the attendance register is signed.
- Making notes of what occurs and the decisions taken during the meeting and then draws up minutes.
- Ensuring that he/she is knowledgeable on all matters and activities pertaining to the council.

The secretary as one of the office-bearers, has to see to it that records of meetings and relevant correspondence are kept in a safe place. He/She has to make sure just like the chairperson, to remain impartial so as to gain the confidence of participants.

Members in a meeting also have a role to play to ensure its success, as will be indicated below.

3.5.4 The role of members attending a meeting

As Lauglo (1990:98) describes it, members attending a meeting have to be given notices timeously regarding the meeting. A member, who is unable to attend, should also notify the secretary so as to forward his apology in the meeting. Armstrong (1998:126) emphasises that a resolution taken in a meeting and democratically accepted by all, also binds a member who is absent.

Tsipane (1997:2) states that the members attending a meeting have to be punctual so that it starts at the scheduled time. He defines punctuality simply as promptness; the quality of being on time. Armstrong (1998:96) adds further that meetings often

start late as a result of members not honouring time. Appointments are not kept on time and tasks are not carried out promptly due to late arrivals.

It is therefore important for members attending a meeting to consider the following implications of not being on time (Tsipane, 1997:2):

- By coming late, latecomers show disrespect for those who were on time.
- They show lack of consideration for those who were kept waiting. Those who came early could have spent their time doing more useful things than waiting for others to pitch up.
- It goes without saying that since the meeting started late, it will end up later or the business of the meeting will remain unfinished. If not, matters will be discussed hurriedly and without the consideration they deserve.
- Lateness also encourages an attitude amongst those members who were on time, to be late in future. This will ultimately lead to a situation where more and more members will arrive late, and lateness will then become the order of the day.
- Lateness will also encourage the idea that if one can put off attending on time, one can put off doing other things such as the council's tasks for a later time-again retarding its progress.

However, it needs to be pointed out that at times there are valid reasons for members arriving late. It is desirable for explanations to be formally made for lateness and the necessary apologies tendered. Repeated infringement of punctuality by latecomers (unless valid explanations are made and accepted) should incur an official reprimand of the offender (Tsipane, 1997:2).

Despite all this, a member attending a meeting has the right to propose resolutions, to take part in the discussions and to vote. Oosthuizen (1998:195) adds that the right of members in a meeting to take part in the discussion is restricted in some instances to ensure that the meeting is conducted efficiently. Kruss (1998:76) is of the opinion that members should refer to other persons in an indirect form and

should avoid mentioning names. They should rather refer to them as the "previous speaker". Furthermore, participants should first obtain permission from the chairperson before speaking.

Members attending a meeting thus also have a role to play to make the meeting a success. Co-operation of members is vital, in that it makes the job of both the chairperson and secretary much easier.

3.5.5 Synthesis

From the above, it has become clear that there are individuals who can be relied upon to ensure that meetings of the council are successful. Those individuals are the following:

Chairperson

The chairperson as the driver of the council has an important role to play towards its success. He/She has to be conversant with all activities of the council. The following are some of the duties he/she has to perform:

- Call and chair meetings of the council.
- See to it that a quorum is present before the meeting commences.
- Remain neutral at all times.
- Develop the ability to listen.
- Motivate learners to participate in school activities.
- Maintain order in council's meetings.
- Adjourn chaotic meetings.

Secretary

The secretary, like the chairperson, has to see to it that meeting proceeds smoothly, without any disturbances. As the recorder of proceedings in meetings, a secretary has to ensure that minutes are accurate and kept in a safe place.

The following are some of her duties:

- Drafting the agenda in co-operation with the chairperson.
- To read relevant correspondence.
- To ensure that a quorum is present and that it remains there for the duration of the meeting.
- To take the chair temporarily as a chairperson when the latter is still being elected.
- To draw up minutes.
- To send out notices regarding meetings.

Members attending a meeting

When members are not present, there is no such a thing as a meeting. This proves how important members are in any meeting. The role played by members in a meeting cannot be overlooked, as they form the core of any particular meeting. No decision can ever be taken in any meeting without the approval of members

The following are regarded as their duties in a meeting:

- If possible, to attend meetings regularly.
- To forward apologies in time if they are unable to attend.
- To take part in discussions during meetings
- To propose resolutions within meetings.
- To co-operate with the chairperson.
- To address one another properly and to show respect towards others.

There are documents in the meeting that need to be observed and taken note of in ensuring its success. This is the topic of the next section.

3.6 THE FORMAL DOCUMENTS OF A MEETING.

The council must hold meetings to discuss matters and agree on a course of action. However, there are valid documents that make it possible for a meeting to be run successfully. The following are regarded as necessary to holding a valid meeting (North- West, 2000:21-23; Oosthuizen, 1998:196):

3.6.1 The agenda

Oosthuizen, (1998:196) defines an agenda as a list of matters to be attended to at a meeting drafted in the sequence in which they are to be dealt with. Furthermore, it is drafted by the secretary in co-operation with the chairperson. The agenda is sent to members together with the notice to enable them to prepare themselves for those matters to be discussed at a meeting (Human Resource Management, 1998:88).

An agenda ensures the following (Oosthuizen, 1998:196; Human Resource Management, 1998:88):

- Matters to be discussed are dealt with in a particular order.
- Members are afforded the opportunity to prepare for and contribute to a meeting.
- It prevents proposals being submitted prematurely for matters that will only be discussed later.
- A proper agenda prevents matters being forgotten.
- An agenda serves as an important method of control as a decision can be made in advance whether matters on the agenda fall within the powers and activities of the meeting.

The following matters amongst others should appear in the agenda (Human Resource Management (1998:88-9):

- Welcome by the chairperson.
- Attendance register (list of persons present).
- Apologies for non-attendance.
- Reading and approval of minutes.
- Fixing the agenda (in case a member still wishes to add a matter).
- Matters arising from the previous minutes (matters not yet finalised).
- Finances.
- Reports.
- Correspondence.
- General.

- Date of next meeting.
- Closing.

Furthermore, matters such as the election of the chairperson or a secretary in cases where they are absent, motions lodged, announcements, etcetra, can appear on the agenda regularly or from time to time.

In planning the agenda, it is advisable to start with easy issues, the important issues in the middle and to end with light issues. This can be of help in that such a plan will take away boredom as people are often tired at the end of a meeting and want to leave. Furthermore, the agenda has to be reviewed by participants beforehand. Additional issues, after the agenda has been drawn up, can be accommodated under the heading "General" (Oosthuizen, 1998:196; North - West, 2000:21).

Time must be allocated for each item on the agenda (North - West 2000:21). In this way, the chairperson will be able to ensure that each item is addressed fully in the meeting and can thus prevent prolonged discussion. Oosthuizen (1998:196) believes that matters to be dealt with in the meeting should be clearly stated in the agenda and that any deviations from the meeting, should only be approved by members or participants.

From the above it is clear that an agenda should be planned beforehand to ensure success in a meeting. It is of importance that participants be involved in a meeting so that a fruitful atmosphere can ultimately prevail at the end of the discussion. It is of vital importance that deliberation on matters discussed from the agenda be minuted.

In conclusion, a meeting without an agenda is like a car without an engine. This shows how important an agenda is in a meeting.

Minutes, as a record of what transpires during the meeting, is discussed next.

3.6.2 The minutes

The secretary of the council must compile notes on everything discussed at meetings. These notes are called minutes. A minute book or a file must be obtained exclusively for this purpose (North-West, 2000:25). As Oosthuizen (1998:196) explains, minutes are a concise accurate and impartial report of what was transacted at a meeting. In addition, the Human Resource Management (1998:98) defines minutes as a presentation of what was discussed and decided upon in a meeting. In other words, it is the official report of a meeting. Furthermore, minutes must be objective and place matters in the correct perspective.

The minutes are to reflect the following (Oosthuizen, 1998:196; Human Resource Management, 1998:98; North-West, 2000:25):

- The date, time and venue of the meeting.
- The names of both the members who are present and those who are absent.
- Proposals made and names of the proponents and seconders.
- Resolutions adopted together with a record of the votes cast.
- Reports on the meeting.
- Important rulings made by the chairperson.
- They must give a clear, impartial and objective view of the proceedings at the meeting.
- They should be displayed in a short and precise manner.
- They should be so complete that a member who was unable to attend the meeting may obtain a clear impression of the decision taken.
- They should be a true reflection of discussions and decisions.

According to Human Resource Management (1998:99) when minutes are signed, it serves as proof that they are a true reflection of the proceedings at a meeting. Minutes are therefore, signed by the chairperson and usually the secretary as well. Bottery (1997:82) further emphasises that minutes are only signed once they have

been approved in the next meeting. When minutes are circulated among members, they are not read at the next meeting.

Bottery (1997:84) stresses that amendments to the minutes can only be made regarding the accuracy thereof, and then only if the actual decisions taken are not affected. If there are amendments made in the minutes, the incorrect portion is deleted and the correct wording is written above it. The chairperson must initial all amendments (HRM, 1998:99).

In conclusion it can be said that it is important that minutes be kept in a safe place because of its confidentiality. They will only be made available in the next meeting for the purpose of being read or amended (if possible) and finally being adopted by the house as a true reflection of what transpired in the last meeting.

3.6.3 Synthesis

The following documents are regarded as essential in conducting a successful meeting:

Agenda

People cannot be expected to attend meetings when they do not know what and why they are being called for. That is the reason why there should be an agenda that contains a list of items to be discussed.

The following may be regarded as the importance of having an agenda:

- To make sure that matters to be discussed are dealt with in a particular order.
- To afford members an opportunity to prepare for and contribute to a meeting.
- To prevent matters from being forgotten.
- To prevent deviation from what is supposed to be discussed.

Minutes

There are notes recorded on everything discussed in a meeting. A book or a file must be obtained exclusively for this purpose. The secretary, as the person who is entrusted with the job of seeing to it that proceedings are minuted, has to make sure that they are kept in a safe place so as to be made available during the next meeting.

The following has to be reflected in the minutes:

- The date, time and venue of the meeting.
- Names of both present and absent members.
- Proposals made and the names of the proponents and seconders.
- Reports on the meetings.
- Important rulings made by the chairperson.
- They should be displayed in a short and precise manner.
- They should be a true reflection of discussions and decisions.

Attention is paid to miscellaneous procedural rules below, as means to attain order and success in meetings.

3.7 MISCELLANEOUS PROCEDURAL RULES

Members attending a meeting may sometimes behave in an unacceptable way, thereby disrupting the smooth running of a meeting. It then becomes the duty of every member attending a meeting (chairperson included) to call the culprits to order so as to maintain and lay foundation for a successful meeting (Squelch, 1999: 104).

Certain aspects will be briefly looked into as part of the miscellaneous procedural rules (Oosthuizen, 1998:201-2; Landman, 1980:18; Squelch, 1999:108; Human Resource Management, 1998:96):

When is a motion regarded out of or in order is the next aspect to be looked into.

3.7.1 Order motions

As Oosthuizen (1998:201) explains, any member in a meeting is entitled to propose an order motion on which a chairperson can make a final ruling. Human Resource Management (1998:96) adds that an order motion is put to the chairperson in the form of a question, to draw his attention to a violation of or deviation from the requirements of a constitution or regulations. Furthermore, an order motion draws the attention of the chairperson to irregularities in the procedure.

The following are regarded as examples of situations demanding order motions (Landman, 1980:18):

- Members present do not constitute a quorum.
- Proceedings are contrary to procedural rules.
- Discussions deviates from subject at hand.
- A speaker or member misbehaves.
- When no more decisions have to be made.

3.7.2 Postponement

A meeting may be postponed after notices have been given, but before it has been convened (Oosthuizen, 1998:202). The latter can also mean that a meeting can be postponed indefinitely or that a later date may be circulated amongst members (Squelch, 1999:108).

3.7.3 Closure

Squelch (1999:109) believes that any member attending a meeting is allowed to propose closure if the member wishes to. The chairperson will then ask for a seconder to a motion proposed. If there is a seconder to the motion proposed, the chairperson can thereafter declare the meeting closed (James, 1997:116).

King (1993:89) describes instances where closure can be proposed. This can be attributed to a member feeling that the agenda has been prolonged due to many

deliberations and counter deliberations. Another instance is where boredom creeps in as a result of fatigue. In these and other matters beyond his control, the chairperson can declare the meeting closed after all matters on the agenda have been dealt with (Oosthuizen, 1998:202).

3.7.4 Synthesis

Some individuals may deliberately retard the progress of the council through their unacceptable behaviour. It is then left to other members in a meeting to assist the chairperson in calling the culprits to order.

The following are part of miscellaneous procedural rules:

Order motions

Any member attending a meeting can propose an order motion on which a chairperson can make a final ruling. The following are some examples of order motions:

- Members present do not constitute a quorum.
- Proceedings are contrary to procedural rules.
- A speaker or member misbehaves.
- Discussion deviates from subject at hand.

Postponement

A meeting can be postponed in the following instances:

- When the majority of members have not attended the meeting.
- When members present do not constitute a quorum.
- When there are clashes of dates with other school activities.

Closure

A meeting can be closed in the following instances:

- When people leave the meeting and there is no longer a quorum.

- Once the meeting has become chaotic and the chairperson is no longer able to restore order.
- When the agenda has been prolonged due to many deliberations and counter deliberations.
- When all matters of the agenda have been dealt with.
- When someone proposes closure and there is a seconder to the motion without any counter forthcoming.

There are specific functions that a prefect council has to perform in order to assist the school authorities maintain a safe and a secure environment in a school. This aspect receives attention below.

3.8 ADVANTAGES OF A PREFECT SYSTEM

As stated in paragraph 3.1 the prefect council was misused in the past and never represented the aspirations of the learners but the hierarchy instead. However in this research the aim is to eradicate the said problem and to present the council with its proper functions. By performing the underlining functions properly, it will help improve the educative standards in schools.

The following are regarded as advantages of a council (De Beer, 1992:12-15; Van Wyk, 1992:86-95; Mashamba, 1992:69-87; North-West, 2000:31; Unieskool, 2001:2-7; La Hoff Primary, 2001:7-12):

3.8.1 Representation of learners

The prefect council has a role to play in promoting democracy when representing learners in schools. North - West (2000:15) states that the most important aspect of democracy is the involvement of people in problem-solving and decision-making with regard issues affecting their lives. Furthermore, it will be ideal to practice democracy in which everyone is involved in discussions and decision-making about matters, but this is not possible. That is why in most cases, a few people are elected

to represent a bigger group. This is then known as representative democracy (Archilles, 1994:56).

In representing learners, the council has to be aware of the fact that it not only represents their aspirations, interests or inputs but that they also face a challenge of making learners aware of their legal obligations as well (Grace, 1995:88).

According to Bondesio (1995:41) the council has to make learners aware that submission to authority, discipline and regular school attendance must be expected from any learner who has been placed under the control and custody of the school authority. The council has to inform learners that their right to education places specific obligations on them such as compliance to compulsory school education, submitting to authority and participation in school and governing body activities, for example, helping in fund-raising events (Bottery, 1997:88).

De Beer (1992:12) points out that in representing learners of a school, the council acts as agents of learners regarding decision-making process with the school authorities. He further states that inputs learners present to the council are taken up by the executive committee and forwarded to the school authorities. Thereafter the council meets with the learners to provide them with a feedback on whether their inputs were met, rejected or suspended.

According to Unieskool (2001:2) a prefect council is to represent the interest of learners for the betterment of the school results. It has to represent learners equally; that is, it must not be seen as biased regarding problems of particular learners.

With regard to regular school attendance, Beckmann et al. (1997:8) agree with the former authors in that "it is a learner's right, if not obligation, to attend school..." This is further emphasised by Maithufi (1997:257) that "a learner who has been admitted to a public school is, unless exempted, obliged to attend such school ...". A learner who does not attend school regularly must also be called in together with his parents

their needs to authority in the school, learners will develop trust in the council, knowing that they have representatives they can rely on.

In fostering educative links between learners and educators, Grace (1995:79) explains that the challenge facing the council is that of creating a platform conducive to learning. Communicating problems experienced by learners both at home and at school, together with the authorities, can lead to better links being created between the two. As stated in par. 3.8.1, James (1997:88) points out that in most cases the non-attendance as well as the drop-out of learners in schools can also be attributed to problems persistently existing at home, like conflict between parents or lack of parental care. Another contributory factor can be the ignorance of parents or a lack of interest in their children's education.

In his response to the above two concerns, King (1993:113) mentions that it is incumbent upon the council to step in and remedy the situation. Because of the fact that an open channel of communication exists between the council and all learners in the school, the individual learner will freely communicate his/her problems to the council knowing fully well that it will be disseminated to the school authority for attendance (Jain, 1993:88).

In settling confusion and seeking an amicable solution, parents of a learner, the school authority together with the executive committee of the council should sit together and settle the issue to the satisfaction of all concerned (Armstrong, 1998:69).

The open link of communication makes it easy for all education stakeholders to reach a consensus regarding a particular issue. This should always be encouraged as it leads to the creation of an educative environment within the school.

3.8.3 Participation in school governance

Van Wyk (1992:88) defines participation as "to take part in or become actively involved". From the definition it can be agreed upon that council members have to actively take part in certain school governance activities where they are allowed, to promote the culture of learning and teaching. This can also lead to striking balance with regard governance of schools, as all education stakeholders will have taken part in decisions leading towards the creation of an effective school governance (James, 1997:95).

Based on past experiences, the governance of schools was greatly affected by the absence of learner participation (Van Wyk, 1992:88). Learners as part of education stakeholders were the missing link to correct the situation by then. With the introduction of legislative Acts like the South African Schools Act, it was realised that learners had to actively participate in school governance to bring about stability. Although the Act refers to secondary schools, learners in primary schools can also contribute positively towards effective governance in activities they are allocated in a school.

Van Wyk (1992:87) further postulates that the active participation by learners in school governance will result in maximum co-operation between learners and educators, as they tend to participate fully where their ideas and inputs are recognised. Being assigned certain duties to perform will help the council in ensuring that success is easily achieved and objectives realised. It is therefore important that learners' ideas and inputs be also considered as they contribute towards improvement in school governance (Unieskool, 2001:6).

According to North-West (2000:1) the main purpose for maintaining good governance in schools is to provide quality education for all learners in the school.

The council, together with educators, must decide what to do about problems that make teaching and learning in the school difficult. Levin (1994:66) stresses that

problems such as poor toilet facilities, lack of enough textbooks, drug-dealing in schools can be resolved through joint discussions between the school authority and the council. The use of drugs in schools remains one of the most important challenges facing schools and in particular prefect councils.

In South Africa most learners grow up in a culture where different types of drugs are widely used and easily available. They see parents and family members smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol and use tablets for headaches, colds and constipation (SABC, 2003:23). In addition, they may also see members of society use other types of drugs such as dagga and mandrax. As they grow up, learners may also try and experiment with various drugs at school (Levin, 1994:73).

Armstrong (1998:104) regards it as the duty of the council to see to it that they inform learners about the dangers with which the drugs carry. Children who have taken drugs also become more vulnerable to being hurt through violence and getting involved in motorcar accidents, SABC (2003:25). The use of drugs can also lead to learners interfering with their schooling. It can also influence their personalities negatively and have a detrimental influence on their behavior at home and in school. Taking drugs can also lead to risky behaviour for learners especially sexual, which would make them vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and other related diseases (King, 1993:98).

In addition to the above influences, Kruss (1998:98) indicates that the use of drugs by learners continues to ravage schools recently. Thus, it is important for the prefect council to hold regular meetings with learners regarding the dangers drugs poses to their lives and also how they can impede on their future aspirations. Furthermore, in dealing with the said issue, the council may rope in the services of some expertise from the Police Intelligent Unit to come and address learners at schools (King, 1993:88).

Participation of the council in school governance can therefore help towards the upliftment of educational standards in schools. The joint participation of school authorities and the council will further fortify links between them, thus leading to better and effective governance in schools.

3.8.4 Maintenance of discipline and implementation of the code of conduct for learners

De Beer (1992:14) sees a prefect council as an extension of management control in the school. Furthermore, it has to help with the supervision of learners with emphasis on the maintenance of discipline. Most importantly, the council, principal together with the personnel is jointly responsible for maintenance of order in a school and therefore can jointly contribute towards developing a good conduct amongst learners (Mashamba, 1992:73).

According to La Hoff Primary (2001:10) the prefect council can effect discipline in instances such as, not wearing school uniform properly and control of late comers to morning devotion. However, transgressions such as fighting between learners should be forwarded to the school authorities (Mashamba, 1992:83)

Beckmann et al. (1997:43) postulate that the council needs to remind the learners about their obligations towards the school authority. In their obligations towards the school authority regarding discipline, the learner should submit to the rules of order within the school and at the same time show obedience to their educators. Section 8 of the South African Schools Act is dedicated to a school's code of conduct: following a consultation process with learners, parents and educators of the school. Such a code should help establish a disciplined and purposeful school environment and should aim at improving and maintaining the quality of the learning process. Provision should also be made for the due process in order to safeguard the interest of the learner and any other party involved in the disciplinary proceedings (Langer, 1998:78).

Thus, the maintenance of discipline that has been lacking in primary schools predominantly attended by black learners, has to be restored through the implementation of the prefect system. No school can run smoothly without discipline. It is important that the council emphasises discipline among fellow- learners. This will no doubt put them in good stead towards their future aspirations as responsible and disciplined parents.

The council has to make as its obligation, to regularly inform learners about the importance of maintaining a good conduct among themselves and towards their educators. This will result in the creation of an educative environment and effective governance within the school.

3.8.5 Upholding and maintaining school tradition

According to Van Wyk (1992:90) the school tradition can be upheld and maintained by building a positive image of the school before the school participants. In addition, the school tradition can be upheld by cultivating the interest of learners in the school as well as the loyalty they display towards it. This can be achieved by keeping the school surroundings clean as well as those for buildings and grounds (De Beer, 1992:14).

In upholding and maintaining a good image of the school tradition, the council may be faced by another challenge in the form of the ravaging epidemic that continues to steal the lives of the youths of this country and worldwide, namely AIDS (Kruss, 1998:97). "Aids" is an *acronym for acquired immune deficiency syndrome*, which it is acquired in the sense that the infection is not inherited or genetic but is caused by a virus that enters the body from outside (SABC, 2003:29). The prefect council thus has an enormous challenge in informing learners about the disease.

In their meetings with learners, the council has to continually encourage learners not to engage themselves in sex, as this may lead to acquiring the disease. SABC (2003:30) indicates that it is important for the council to help learners know and

understand the HIV and AIDS issue because they might have family members who are living with or have died as a result of this terrible disease. In order to keep them safe from being infected, the council needs to make learners aware of the following in order to avoid contact with aids (Van Bueren, 1992:259):

- Intimate social contact with an infected person.
- Exposure to contaminated blood and blood products.
- Intravenous drug users.
- Accidental exposure to the blood of an infected person.

In case of a learners' death in a school or neighbouring schools due to the epidemic or any other natural cause, all schools within the area contribute an agreed amount that is collected from all the learners and forwarded to the bereaved family (Alabama, 2001:2).

Therefore, it is important for the council to maintain and uphold the school's tradition in order to help market the school positively with regard to investors. Expert advice from the health service personnel to attend to and address learners can come in handy in promoting and upholding the school tradition through information they will be disseminating to the learners.

3.8.6 Assist in the administration of the school

Section 5(3) of the South African Schools Act (Act No.84 of 1996) states that a learner may not be refused admission to a public school if his/her parent is unwilling or unable to pay school fees. However, it is equally important to note that activities within the school cannot function effectively without funds.

King (1993:101) points out that schools are unable to provide quality education due to lack of funds. He further adds that schools are unable to purchase the necessary materials needed for the education of the learners. This sentiment is shared by Alabama (2001:6), who mention that as a result of the change in the education

system in South Africa through the introduction of the Outcome Based Education (OBE), more material is required due to much paper work required by the system.

This requires the council to assist the school in acquiring the said materials for the benefit of the learners at school. King (1993:97) adds that the council has an added responsibility in that it has to see to it that learners receive quality education at school. Because the council acts in the capacity of foster parents to some learners, it furthermore has to see to it that their needs are also fulfilled. Because they act as a link between learners and the school authorities, the council has to see to it that needy learners are assisted with funds.

The council members can engage themselves in fundraising projects to help needy learners pay their fees. Behr (1989:78) also indicates that needy learners sometimes develop a feeling of resentment and feel that they are a burden to their colleagues as a result of them not being able to pay school fees. In that way the council will have to assist the administration of the school in purchasing the required material.

De Beer (1992:15) maintains that in every school there are certain aspects where the presence and active participation by learners can be of help, such as the opening and closing of school gates in the morning and afternoon, preparation of school hall for parent meetings and the ironing of the school flag after school (Unieskool, 2001:3).

Van Wyk (1992:88) states that administrative duties such as the implementation of the code of conduct for learners can also be assigned to the council. Because they took part in its formulation, the council members will make a point of observing school rules. This will help create an educative environment in the school that will benefit both the learners and teachers (Mashamba, 1992:78).

In conclusion, it is the responsibility of the council to see to it that quality education is provided to learners at a school. Helping needy learners pay their fees is proof of them protecting the interests of all learners in the school irrespective of gender, colour or race. This is also proof of their unqualified support to assist the school authorities in their effort of streamlining their administration.

3.8.7 Promotion of a culture for learning in the school.

North-West (2000:12) explains that in order to create and promote a culture of learning in a school, the prefect council must know that their main purpose of being at school is to learn. Furthermore, they must know and understand that the principal cannot morally or legally hand over the management of the school to anyone and not certainly to the learners.

Treslan (1996:88) indicates that the council has to see to it that a culture of learning and teaching is promoted in the school. Furthermore, in their quest for this promotion the council has to assist struggling learners to cope with their school subjects and learning areas where they encounter problems. They could accomplish that by organising and conducting extra classes after school or during weekends, where good performing learners can act as educators. Van Wyk (1992:78) agrees that in some instances, one may find that some learners sometimes find it difficult to acknowledge that they have problems regarding lessons in classes, for fear of being labelled as average by other learners (Treslan, 1996:91).

Dlutu (1996:98) states that through engagement in extra classes conducted by fellow learners, learners themselves may be in a position to freely express their concerns and may receive assistance in their problem areas. These extra classes may also be another way of boosting the confidence of those under performing learners with regard to asking questions where they are not clear. Another advantage of these extra classes is that those learners who act as educators will be motivated enough to work harder in classes knowing fully well that they are suppose to guide fellow learners later during the day (James, 1997:66).

Another way of helping the school promote the culture of learning is by encouraging afternoon lessons in schools. Mashamba (1992:86) has found that the council needs to engage learners to attend afternoon lessons as a way of assisting them cope with the demands of their studies. They could help supervise those afternoon classes by controlling the attendance register as well. This does not in any way exempt them from studying themselves, as each one of them will be required to study in a particular class whilst maintaining order at the same time (Squelch, 1999:102).

In order to help promote the culture of learning and teaching at schools, the council has to know and understand the following (Van Wyk, 1992:93; North-West, 2000:12; La Hoff Primary, 2001:6):

- That the main purpose of being at school is to learn.
- That the council must know its rights and responsibilities (obligations).
- That the council must support or contribute to the sound management of the school authorities and act in accordance with it.
- That the council must contribute to the smooth running of the school and support governance of the school.
- That the council must understand that each school is unique and cannot be identical in their governance.

The promotion of a culture of learning and teaching in a school remains the main objective of the council. Through engagement in extra classes, it goes without saying that the council is in pursuit of the mission set, that is, the creation of an educative environment in the school. Not only is the school environment of concern to the council but the academic achievement of the learners as well.

3.8.8 Participation in official fundraising events

In terms of Act No. 84 of 1996 section 20(2), it is the responsibility of the School Governing Body (SGB) to raise funds for that particular institution. In addition, North - West (2000:3) states that the function of a governing body in a school shall be to

engage in fundraising activities. This is done in order to enhance the quality of education for all the learners within the parameters of policy established by the national and provincial departments of education in terms of their legal responsibilities and competencies.

This places enormous responsibility on the governing body to see to it that funds are available in a school. The fact that the governing body is constituted of parents of learners in a school, is an advantage, in that they will be motivated enough to raise funds for the school in order for their children to receive quality education (King, 1993:104). In the same light Johnson (1991:96) indicates that council members will also get motivated to assist their parents in their desires to provide them with a better education. Oosthuizen (1998:183) also feels that the learner council, as part of the education stakeholders, has to be roped in to fully participate and assist in official fundraising events organised by the SGB.

Oosthuizen (1998:183) further argues that learners are usually employed in fundraising events organised by the SGB and the perception frequently exists that they are exploited in that regard. King (1993:89), however, denies this when saying that the active participation of learners in these events is enough motivation to promote a competitive spirit between them. He calls on a learners' feeling of honour and status, and the knowledge that he has taken an active role towards his studies.

According to Mashamba (1992:79) the council should negotiate with the school authorities regarding funds available. He further states that it is important for the council to take an active part in fundraising events organised in the school. Van Wyk (1992:93) adds that council members should lend a hand by selling products sold at school to help generate funds. Furthermore, learners must take an active part in selling tickets to learners at school as well as to the community when events such as beauty contests are being organised at school as fundraising (Mashamba, 1992:81).

As they are to benefit from the quality education provided by the school, it is important that the council assists the SGB in pursuing that goal through their engagement in raising funds for the school.

3.8.9 Organising cultural and sporting events.

Organising can be seen as an activity where people are arranged so as to accomplish organisational objectives (King, 1993:111). The council thus has to lend a hand in assisting the SGB organise cultural and sporting events in a school. As Levin (1994:96) explains it, they should willingly come to the aid of the SGB when their services are required. In that way, they will have played a major role in assisting the governing body accomplish its goals with regard to the stated events. The feeling that they also took part in accomplishing the set objectives becomes a motivation on its own (Johnson, 1991:81).

Unieskool policy (2001:3) states that it is important that learners participate actively to help organise cultural and sporting events at school. With regard to cultural events, the council can help clean and prepare the school hall so as to accommodate anticipated guests during the event (Van Wyk, 1992:93).

Furthermore, the executive committee can discuss possibilities of selling tickets to learners at school as well as their parents for the event. Before the scheduled time of the event, the council members are deployed to different entrances in order to guide visitors to the venue where it is to take place (Bottery, 1997:56).

With regard sporting activities, La Hoff Primary (2001:5) mentions that council members can assist educators in selling soft drinks and other products during the activity. Furthermore, council members are deployed throughout the school entrances as well as among spectators to keep a close eye on transgressors and to present them before the authorities (Van Wyk, 1992:93). Council members will then also be in a position to bring about discipline among the crowd and the spectators.

3.8.10 Synthesis

The prefect has certain duties to perform in order to ensure that correct and solid foundation is laid for an educative environment in the school. The following are regarded as advantages that a prefect system has:

Representation of learners

The council has to engage itself in the following ways to represent learners:

- To involve learners in problem-solving and decision-making regarding issues affecting their future (e.g. drawing a code of conduct for learners).
- To represent the interest of the learners.
- To make learners aware of their legal obligations.
- To ensure that learners attend school regularly.
- To ensure that learners observe school rules.

It serves as a link between educators and learners

The above can be realised through engagement in the following ways:

- The creation of an open and honest line of communication channel between educators and learners.
- To openly and honestly present their needs and inputs to the school authorities and provide a feedback.
- To openly present whatever problems they encounter that might hamper their learning progress to the school authorities.

Participation in school governance

Through active involvement in school governance, the following can be attained:

- Maximum co-operation between learners and educators.
- Realisation of objectives and success.
- Inputs and ideas forwarded may contribute towards effective school governance.

Maintenance of discipline and implementation of the code of conduct for learners

Discipline as one of the worrying factors facing the present education system, can be effected through engaging in the following:

- Supervision of activities engaged in by learners.
- Joint contribution by all stakeholders in developing a good code of conduct for learners.
- By making learners observe school rules.
- By respecting educators and non-educating staff within the school.
- By drawing up a code of conduct for learners.

Upholding and maintaining school tradition

The above can be achieved by doing the following:

- Building a positive image of the school before school participants.
- Building and cultivating the interest of learners to partake actively in school activities.
- Encouraging learners to display loyalty and obedience towards their school.
- By keeping the school's surroundings clean.

Assist in the administration of the school

Through their active involvement in the administration of the school, the council members can be able to improve the administration of the school by engaging in the following:

- Assisting the school authorities acquire the necessary educational resources through involvement in fund-raising.
- Acting as foster parents for some learners.
- Fulfilling the needs and aspirations of learners.
- Assist the school authorities in developing a code of conduct for learners.

Promotion of a culture of learning in the school

To promote and create the culture of learning in a school, the council has to do the following:

- To assist struggling learners cope with their learning problems, and to help overcome them.
- To engage in extra classes to help struggling learners.
- To encourage attendance to afternoon studies.
- To rope in the services of subject or learning area advisors.
- To encourage regular school attendance.

Participation in official fund-raising events

Although it is the responsibility of the School Governing Body (SGB) to raise funds for the school, in terms of Section 8 of the South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996), it is equally important for the council to be fully engaged in those events as they are the main beneficiaries.

By active participation in official fund-raising events the following can be achieved:

- Provision of quality education.
- Promotion of competitive spirit amongst learners.

Organising cultural and sporting events

The assistance of council members in the organisation for both cultural and sporting events is essential in any institution. The following can be achieved through their active involvement in events of this nature:

- Maximum co-operation when taking part.
- Giving their all when required to render assistance.
- Ensuring that the events gain success.
- Helping to apprehend transgressors who try to disrupt such.
- Ensuring that tight security prevails at all times.

In conclusion it can be safely said that the above general functions of the council if correctly implemented can help to restore the culture of learning in schools. The joint participation of both learners and educators in school governance can help raise educational standards in schools.

3.9 SUMMARY

In the first instance, the chapter dealt with the constitution of a prefect system, with emphasis on the way it should be drafted as well as the contents that are expected to appear in it. This was based on the question of how a constitution of a prefect system should be drafted.

Thereafter, the duties of office-bearers were discussed, with emphasis on the role each has to play to ensure the success of the council. The different committees that a council may establish in a particular school were also discussed, with reference to their importance in ensuring the prevailing of an educative environment in a school.

Meetings that a prefect council has to hold were also discussed. The emphasis was placed upon the role a chairperson has to play, together with the rights and duties he has to exercise in ensuring that a successful meeting is attained. In addition, the roles played by both the secretary and members attending a meeting were also discussed with emphasis on their contribution in conducting a fruitful meeting.

The formal documents that make up and contribute to the attainment of a successful meeting were also discussed. In that regard, emphasis and focus was placed on the agenda and minutes as the two most important documents that gives proper guidance in holding a successful meeting.

The next aspect for discussion concerned the miscellaneous procedural rules with focus on order motions, postponements and closure of meetings. Emphasis here on was placed on the correct procedures that may be followed leading to the keeping of order in meetings as well as how it should be regarded as closed.

The last aspect which was explored, was the advantages that a prefect council has, with emphasis on the question, what role does a prefect system play in ensuring success in a school.

The empirical research is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

4.1 INTRODUCTION

From the literature study it seems that there is no definite structure and functions of a prefect system that is common and acceptable in all schools. It therefore becomes important that more information is required with regard to the structure and functions of a prefect system in a school.

This chapter determines what the position is at schools, by means of using a questionnaire as a measuring instrument, a discussion of the statistical technique and by providing the interpretation of data gathered. The discussion focuses on the research methods used and its central place with regard to the collection of data as well. The following are included in the discussion, namely the questionnaire as a research instrument and its advantages and disadvantages.

An explanation is offered of the construction of a questionnaire, pilot study, finalisation of a questionnaire, population and sample, statistical technique, and finally the interpretation of data.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Best and Kahn (1999:94) views a research design as a blueprint or a detailed plan of how it is to be conducted. Cooper and McIntyre (1999:10) refine this definition by specifying that this plan or blueprint, offers the framework according to which data is to be collected to investigate the research hypothesis or question in the most economical manner.

4.2.1 Aim of empirical research

The aim of empirical research is to gather data on the structure and functions of a prefect system, with reference to learners in primary schools in the Klerksdorp

district of the North - West Province in order to determine guidelines for learner participation in primary school governance.

4.2.2 Questionnaire as a research instrument

In order for a researcher to conduct his/her research successfully, he/she has to consider the following two approaches that may lead towards its effectiveness. These two approaches are qualitative and quantitative approaches. Creswell (2001:7-8) calls the two approaches "paradigms" and states unequivocally that he prefers a researcher to identify a single research paradigm for the overall design of the study. Furthermore, there are compelling reasons that exist for a single paradigm.

Leedy and Ormrod (2001:98) are of the opinion that pragmatically to use both paradigms adequately and accurately consumes more pages than journal editors are willing to allow. It also extends postgraduate studies beyond normal limits of size and scope. In addition to the stated reasons, using both paradigms in a single study can be expensive, time-consuming and lengthy (Rothman & Thomas, 2001:94).

Another reason for use of one paradigm rather than combination of the two, according to Bailey (2000:102), is that researchers are seldom trained in the skills necessary to conduct studies from more than one paradigm. Thus, individuals learn one paradigm and this perspective becomes the dominant view in their research. Reid and Smith (1999:87-89) state that in qualitative approach methods such as participant observation and interviewing are used. Furthermore, methods such as questionnaire and checklists are for quantitative approach.

Dixon (1999:15) stresses that there are various ways employed in order to gather as much information on a particular topic as possible, for example through interviews, telephone and post delivery. However, despite all these ways, a questionnaire remains one of the most effective ways for gathering information and the most convenient one.

Based on the above, a quantitative approach is preferred in this research.

4.2.3 Reasons for choosing quantitative approach

In summary, the reasons for choosing the quantitative approach (par. 1.4.2.1) are as follows (Gall et al., 1996:269; Bailey, 2000:103; Mouton & Marais, 2000:55-56; Creswell, 2001:28):

- It is more explicitly controlled than the qualitative approach.
- It is close to physical science.
- Its range is more exactly defined than the qualitative approach.
- In it, the researcher's role is that of an observer.
- Questions and hypothesis remain constant throughout the investigation.
- It is more highly formalised than the qualitative approach.

There are also various methods that can be applied in quantitative approach to collect data. These methods are the questionnaire, checklists, indexes and scales (Dane, 2000:96). However of the four types, the most popular and preferred one is a questionnaire (Dixon, 1999:15).

4.2.4 Reasons for choosing a questionnaire

The following are reasons why a questionnaire (par. 1.4.2.1) was chosen in this research (Gall et al., 1996:228; Dixon, 1999:17; Tuckman, 1999:216; Vockel & Asher, 1999:92; Babbie, 2000:88; Schuerman, 2000:138; Gall & Borg, 2002:152):

- Respondents have enough time to think objectively before attempting to answer a question, for example, educators who are very busy will in their own spare time channel all their energy to answer the questionnaire faithfully,
- It is used intensively in educational research to gather information that is not directly perceptible, for example, being able to gather information or ideas from educators about their feelings regarding how things should be done. It also has

to do with enquiries with regard their motivations, attitudes, accomplishments and experience as individuals.

- It asks the same question to all respondents in the test sample, for example, the questionnaire is distributed over a wide area to get different responses/opinions from the test sample using the same type of question.
- It saves time and costs, for example, by distributing it over a wide area, it saves the researcher's time of moving from one end to the next. Through enclosure of a stamped enveloped it becomes easier for respondents to mail it back timeously. It rests squarely upon the respondent's shoulders to answer the questionnaire in the manner that he prefers.
- Respondents could answer questions in any order of their choices. for example, it does not force respondents to follow a particular order in answering questions.
- Information over a wide field and a large sample can be easily gathered, for example, the sample in this research refers to principals of primary schools, whereby information can be obtained from each to determine what the situations at the different schools is. This is with reference to how the prefect council is structured and what its function at the school is.
- Uniformity of questions ensures reliable results, for example, the same type of questions with the use of clear, unambiguous language will enable respondents to understand questions faithfully and to yield reliable information and results.
- It saves time and costs, for example, because respondents have similar interpretation of questions asked, they can be answered within the same framework resulting in time being saved for data to be processed. Follow-ups to explain certain questions are not necessary and can save researchers time and costs as questions are put to respondents in a manner that could easily be understood by all.

4.2.5 Different forms of questionnaires

The two types of questionnaires, namely the structured and unstructured questionnaires were looked into to find the most suitable form for this research. According to Hudson (2000:88) unstructured questionnaires give the respondent the

opportunity of writing any answer in the open space provided. Furthermore, it has an advantage when a variable is relatively unexplored or unknown to the researcher.

However, the unstructured questionnaire has the following disadvantages (Badat, 1999:123; Snyman, 1999:88; Bailey, 2000:105; Mc Murtry 2000:145; Creswell, 2001:18):

- It lengthens the time of completion.
- It lengthens the time necessary for the processing of data.
- Coding of open questions with a view to computer processing is very time-consuming.
- Inclusion of many open questions in the questionnaire makes it more expensive and liable to error.

The unstructured questionnaire was not used in this research, because of the disadvantages mentioned above. In addition, unstructured questionnaires (Dane, 2000:98) give the respondent the opportunity of writing any answer in the open space without interpretation to a question by all. In that regard, the data collected cannot be relied upon as a true reflection of what was initially intended. Another reason for not using the unstructured questionnaire is that it requires the selection and training of well qualified and motivated field-workers (Dixon, 1999:15).

This implies that the researcher has to employ the services of well-qualified field workers in order for them to explain questions fully to the respondents so that all the questions be interpreted similarly. Thus, inclusion of open questions in the questionnaire makes it more expensive, time-consuming and more liable to error. When it has to be done with a large number of questionnaires, it requires special perseverance and reliability (Anderson, 2000:105). It then needs to be cross-coded and in many cases the project leader himself/herself has to make the final decisions. Thus, open questions increase the time of completion and respondents may be tempted to leave notes incomplete which decreases the real value of the data

obtained from the questionnaire. Based upon the above arguments, it was decided not to use it in this research.

Schuerman (2000:128) mentions that a structured questionnaire offers the respondents the opportunity of selecting (according to instructions) one or more response choices from a number provided. It is advantageous when a substantial amount of information about a subject exists and the response options are relatively well known (Vockel & Asher, 1999:89). In addition, Dixon (1999:17) indicates that the degree, frequency and comprehensiveness of a phenomenon can be ascertained meaningfully by means of closed questions. These closed questions are also advantageous in that the results of the investigation can become available fairly quickly (Tuckman, 1999:76).

Another advantage is that respondents are able to understand the meaning of the questions. These questions can be answered within the same framework and responses can consequently be compared with one another (Schuerman, 2000:135).

Based on the above explanation, a structured questionnaire is preferred in this research. The advantages and disadvantages of a mailed questionnaire will be described below.

4.2 6 Advantages and Disadvantages of a mailed questionnaire.

Ary et al. (1998:344) points out that one of the most important advantages of a mail questionnaire is its ability to cover a large geographical sample. Furthermore, it is more practical than a personal interview. Standardised instructions are usually given, so that the respondents know exactly what is expected of them (De Wet et al., 1999:163).

Advantages of a mailed questionnaire

The advantages of a mailed questionnaire are as follows (Gall et al., 1996:241 Neuman, 1997:241; De Vaus, 1999:103; Dixon, 1999:18):

- The respondent remain anonymous.
- It is relatively expensive.
- Respondents have the freedom to choose whether to fill in the questionnaire or not, without any pressure.
- Large survey is finalised within a short period of time.
- Processing takes place early and fast.
- Easy and quickly to complete.
- Repetition is easy.
- Mail questionnaires are the least demanding in terms of staffing requirements.
- A researcher can send questionnaires to a wide geographical area.
- The respondent rate of mail questionnaires may be high for a target population that is well-educated or has a strong interest in the topic or the survey organisation.
- Mail questionnaires are probably the best at obtaining accurate answers.
- Permission from education authorities can be given easily, since the contents of the questionnaire can be pre-viewed.
- Processing is made easy by the questionnaire being carefully structured and pre-coded as well as not using of open-ended questions.

The disadvantages of a mailed questionnaire, are described below.

Disadvantages of a mailed questionnaire

The greatest threat and disadvantage of a mailed questionnaire is the high non-response rate of respondents (Dixon, 1999:19). Another disadvantage is the non-explanatory nature of some questions because it is difficult to formulate a question that can easily be understood by all (Ary et al., 1998:345).

The following adds to the disadvantages of a mail questionnaire (Gall et al., 1996:241; Neuman, 1997:251; Best & Kahn, 1999:230; De Vaus, 1999:100; Dixon, 1999:19-20):

- Negativity among the public towards questionnaires.
- The length of the questionnaire can lead to inaccurate response and low response rate.
- With the mail questionnaires, it is much more difficult to control who fills out the questionnaire. Although one asks the person who receives the mail questionnaire to pass it on to the appropriate person, one cannot be sure that this happens.
- A researcher cannot control the conditions under which a mail questionnaire is completed.
- Mail questionnaires provide no control over the order in which people answer questions, thus obscuring the extent to which answers might be affected by later questions.
- Different respondents can complete the questionnaire weeks apart or answer questions in a different order than intended by researchers.
- Mail questionnaires are therefore not well-suited to open-ended questions.
- Mail questionnaires are ill-suited for the illiterate or near illiterate in English.
- Questionnaires mailed to illiterate respondents are not likely to be returned. If they are completed and returned, questions are probably misunderstood and answers are then meaningless.
- Respondents may simply give up if they find the questionnaire difficult.

In spite of these disadvantages, the questionnaire is still a valid instrument for data collection and is still commonly and widely used.

In order to overcome some of the disadvantages of a mailed questionnaire, for example, high non-response rate, the researcher can deliver the questionnaire by hand at the selected schools in order to save time and increase the response rate. Another way is for the researcher to allow respondents to form groups and fill in one

questionnaire by way of group discussion. In this way respondents can easily find a common ground with regards certain questions that need in-depth thinking. One other way is to make use of principals to explain some questions to respondents by virtue of the quality experience they possess.

The use of a covering letter can be of assistance, with special reference to the negative attitude displayed by some respondents regarding questionnaires. The anonymity of respondents as guaranteed in the letter, will motivate them to go all out and fill in the questionnaire. Thus, from the above, the disadvantage of questionnaires can easily be overcome.

4.2.7 Construction of a questionnaire

As Anderson (2000:170) explains, a questionnaire has become the most used means of collecting information. If well constructed, a questionnaire permits the collection of reliable and reasonably valid data in a simple, cheap and timely manner. While time-consuming, constructing a questionnaire is good to sharpen what needed to be known and if done thoroughly, it will greatly facilitate the data analysis of the research (Jago, 1997:127).

The following guidelines can be applied when constructing a questionnaire (Ary et al., 1998:429, Cooper & McIntyre, 1999:178; De Vaus, 1999:202-204; Snyman, 1999:84; Grinnell & Williams, 2000:128; Conley, 2001:148):

- Keep it short.
- Use simple, clear unambiguous language.
- Make the questionnaire attractive.
- Keep the respondent's task simple.
- Include brief, clear instructions, printed in bold types.
- Begin with a few interesting and non-threatening items.
- Conduct pilot test.
- Do not put important issues at the end of a questionnaire.
- Provide clear instructions.

- Make the questionnaire attractive and professional looking.

During the construction of a questionnaire, the above rules are considered in earnest. Instructions with regard to how questions are answered are to be provided for in each section (Moloko, 1996:92).

Sections of the questionnaire

Section A

- **General Information (cf. Appendix A, questions 1-12)**

Section A consists of the general information to help understand and explain the response and serves as “ice breaker” in the beginning of a questionnaire (Moloko, 1996:92). The information serves to inform the researcher regarding the capacity in which the respondent is regarding filling in the questionnaire. The aim with the questions in this section was to determine the background about the school.

Section B

- **Structure of a prefect system (cf. Appendix A, questions 13-33)**

The aim with the questions in this section was to determine the extent of respondents’ level of agreement / disagreement in creating a prefect system at a school with reference to the following:

- Questions 13-17. : Nominations (cf. par. 2.7.1).
- Questions 18-22. : Voting (cf. par. 2.7.2).
- Questions 23-25. : Elections (cf. par. 2.7.3).
- Questions 26-29. : Office-bearers (cf. par. 2.7.4).
- Questions 30-33. : Co-opted members (cf. par. 2.7.6)

Section C

- **Functions of a prefect system (cf. Appendix A, questions 34-45)**

The aim with the questions in this section was to determine the extent to which a prefect council perform their duties in creating effective school governance. This is with reference to the following:

- Questions 34-37. : Constitution (cf. par. 3.2.2).
- Questions 38-40. : Committees (cf. par. 3.4).
- Questions 41-45. : Meetings (cf. par. 3.5)

Section D

• Advantages of a prefect system (c.f. Appendix A, questions 46-55)

The aim with the questions in this section was to determine perceptions of respondents' about the level of their agreement/disagreement regarding advantages of establishing the council in a school. This is with reference to the following:

- Question 46. : Representation (cf. par. 3.8.1).
- Question 47. : Communication (cf. par. 3.8.2).
- Question 48. : Discipline (cf. par. 3.8.4).
- Question 49. : Participation (cf. par. 3.8.3).
- Question 50. : Learning (cf. par. 3.8.7).
- Question 51. : Events (cf. par. 3.8.9).
- Questions 52-55 : Administration (cf. par. 3.8.6)

4.2.8 Pilot study

It is important that a thorough pretest be done before a questionnaire can be sent to the intended population and sample. For the pretest, it is advisable that a selection of a sample similar to the one planned to draw research subjects from, be conducted (De Vaus 1999:102). However, the pretest sample of individuals should not form part of the final population (Badat, 1999:123).

Consequently, the questionnaire was given to four principals of primary schools who do not form part of the intended sample. This was done to determine whether the instructions were clearly given, whether questions were well formulated and understandable and how long it takes to complete it. It was discovered that it took respondents an estimated ten to fifteen minutes to complete. However, some of the questions had to be re-formulated, as they were not clear enough.

The latter statement confirms the importance and usefulness of a pilot study in helping to identify defects in the question items. These defects were later attended to and changes effected in the questionnaire. Co-operation from principals was overwhelming in that prior arrangement was made followed by a letter requesting them to fill in the questionnaire (see Appendix iii).

4.2.9 Finalisation of a questionnaire

On the basis of the problems identified and later corrected in the pilot study and with the District Manager effecting no changes to the question items, the questionnaire was finalised (see Appendix i).

4.2.10 Reliability of factors (sections) as identified in the questionnaire

In order to test if the questions are a reliable instrument, the Chronbach- alpha co-efficient is used. Interrelated items are grouped together with the sole purpose of testing the reliability of the scale. Correlation between items are grouped together to bring about reliability. A well-accepted reliable co-efficient size is larger than 0,7 (Nunnally, 1978:69).

Table 4. 1: RELIABILITY OF FACTORS

RANK	FACTOR	CRONBACH ALPHA COEFFICIENT
1	Structure	0,81
2	Advantages	0,70
3	Functions	0,68

From the table it can be concluded that the questions asked are a reliable instrument for factors, given the fact that they are approximately 0,7 or large.

4.2.11 Administrative procedure

The questionnaire was submitted to the Klerksdorp district in the Southern Region of the North-West Education Department, where permission to distribute it to the intended population was sought. The District Manager gave approval without

altering any question, thus giving it the thumbs up. According to the permission letter to conduct the research, the questionnaire should not be completed during school hours. In addition, it was emphasised that under no circumstances should principals be forced to complete it (see Appendix ii). This was avoided at all costs as a result of the co-operation the researcher got from principals.

4.2.12 Population and sample

The target population consisted of 82 principals of primary schools in the southern region of Klerksdorp, Orkney, Stilfontein and Hartbeesfontein (KOSH) areas, located in the North-West Province.

Based on the non-probability sample (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:218) using the convenience sampling design, a representative subset of a population was identified, from which people or other units that are readily available are taken. Thus, principals of selected schools were chosen on the basis that they represent a subset of a population in the southern region of the North-West Education Department. Furthermore, the size of the sample should be reasonably small for reasons of time and costs whilst being sufficiently representative of the overall population (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:219).

In choosing this non-probability sampling technique for this research, the following criteria were taken into consideration (Gall et al., 1996:227-228; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:218-219):

- The sample is located at or near where the researcher works.
- The schools are reachable in terms of distance.
- Time and money is saved.

Anderson (2000:182) recommends a sampling procedure using a combination of various procedures for a research. In this research, the procedure was employed to achieve representativeness and to overcome the problem of low response rate experienced in the pilot study (par. 4.2.8.).

In addition, a purposive sampling was used wherein it concerns itself with choosing people or other units for a particular purpose. In this research, units chosen refers to the 122 primary schools in the southern region of the KOSH area, of which 82 were chosen as target population with a view to producing the final outcome of the data collected.

The following table shows the number of questionnaires delivered as well as the response rate received.

Table 4.2. Response rate

Total Sent Out	Total received back	% feed back
82	70	85,4%

Table 4.2 shows the response rate among principals was 85,4%, which was well above the rate of 70 % that provides a quantity of data large enough to draw valid and reliable conclusions (Ary et al., 1998:453; Anderson, 2000:169). This is proof of the overwhelming co-operation from principals.

4.2.13 Statistical analysis

The data was processed by the Statistical Consultation Services of the North-West University. The SAS programme (SAS Institute Inc., 1985:403) was used. Mean scores were calculated as well as the standard deviation through the means procedures of the SAS programme. Frequencies and percentages (%) were determined through the Frequency Procedure. The reason for choosing these descriptive statistics were to obtain an idea about the structure, functions and

advantages of having a prefect system prevailing in primary schools predominantly attended by black learners.

Use was also made of effect sizes to determine practical significance difference (d-value) that will further be discussed in par. 4.4.1.

4.3 RESULTS

This section deals with presentation and interpretation of data collected. As background to and interpretation of responses, personal as well as school details with regard to responses are given. Data collected regarding structure and functions of a prefect system in a school are presented and analysed. The mean scores, standard deviation as well as frequencies were jointly used for presenting data on the study population consulted. In this case it was the principals of schools selected on the basis of them forming a subset of a population in the southern region of the North-West Department of Education.

4.3.1 Data on general information

The aim with this section as already explained in (par.4.2.7 (a)) was to determine the gender of principals consulted and to get the school background.

The responses in this section, as shown in (Table 4.3), may be analysed and interpreted as follows:

TABLE 4.3. DATA ON PERSONAL AND GENERAL INFORMATION

Number	Question		Frequency	%
1	Gender	Male	42	60
		Female	28	40
		Total	70	100,00
2	Involvement in the council's elections	Yes	69	98,6
		No	1	1,4
		Total	70	100,00
3	Existence of a committee responsible for elections	Yes	67	95,7
		No	3	4,3
		Total	70	100,00
4	Yearly elections	Yes	69	98,6
		No	1	1,4
		Total	70	100,00
5	Equal representation of both male and female learners	Yes	42	60,9
		No	27	39,1
		NR	1	0
		Total	70	100,00
6	Involvement of educators in elections	Yes	65	94,2
		No	4	5,8
		NR	1	0
		Total	70	100,00
7	Existence of a teacher guardian	Yes	65	94,2
		No	4	5,8
		NR	1	0
		Total	70	100,00
8	Number of learners at school	200 – 500	15	21,4
		500 – 800	21	30
		800-1000	28	40
		1000 and more	6	8,6
		Total	70	100,00
9	Number of learners in the prefect council	0-5	18	25,7
		5-10	41	58,6
		10 and more	11	15,7
		Total	70	100,00
10	Dominance in schools	Black	53	76,8
		White	16	23,2
		Coloured	0	0
		Indian	0	0
		NR	1	0
		Total	70	100,00
11	Geography of school	City	17	24,3
		Township	32	45,7
		Farm	21	30
		Total	70	100,00
12	Representative body	SRC	2	2,9
		LSC	0	0
		Prefect	51	73,9
		Council	16	23,2
		NR	1	0
		Total	70	100,00

NR= Non-Response

- **Gender (Question 1.1)**

The majority of respondents are males (60%) while females constitute the remaining percentage (40%).

- **Involvement in council's elections (Question 1.2)**

Most of the respondents, 98,6% are actively involved in the council's elections, while 1,4 % of respondents are not.

- **Existence of a committee responsible for council's elections (Question 1.3)**

About 95,7 % of respondents, agree that such a committee, exist in their schools, while 4,3 % of them deny having such.

- **Yearly elections (Question 1.4)**

From the survey conducted, most of the respondents 98,6 %, hold elections yearly, while 1,4 % do not.

- **Equal representation for both male and female learners (Question1.5)**

Principals 60,9%, agree that male and female learners are equally represented in their structure, while 39,1% do not agree. One respondent did not respond to the above activity, citing no reason for engaging in this.

- **Involvement of educators in the elections (Question1.6)**

The majority of principals, 94,2% agree that educators are involved in the council's elections whilst 5,8% indicated the non-involvement of educators in such an activity. One respondent did not respond, with no reason being given.

- **Availability of a teacher guardian (Question 1.7)**

About 94,2% of respondents have a teacher guardian in their schools, while 5,8% do not. One respondent did not respond to the above, citing no reason.

- **Number of learners at school (Question 1.8)**

About 21,4% of principals indicated that they have a total roll of between 200-500 learners at school, 30% has a total roll of between 500-800 learners, while 40% has between 800-1000, and finally 8,6 % has a total of 1000 and above at school.

- **Number of learners in the prefect council (Question 1.9)**

25,7% of principals have a total of between 0-5 learners in the prefect council, 58,6% have between 5-10, while 15,7 % have 10 and more in the council.

- **Dominance in school (Question 1.10)**

Most schools 76,8%, are dominated by black learners, 23,2% are dominated by whites, while none are dominated by Coloured or Indians. One respondent did not respond citing no reason.

- **Geography of school (Question 1.11)**

About 24,3 % of schools are located in the city, 45, 7 % are in townships, while 30 % are located in farm areas.

- **Representative body (Question 1.12)**

2,9 % of schools use the term *SRC* after its representative body, 73,9% calls it a *prefect council*, while 23,2 % prefer the word *Council*. Only one respondent did not respond to the above item.

The general information gathered from different schools indicated the following:

Most of the respondents were male principals, as shown by the percentage received (60%), with most of them (95,7%) indicating that they are actively involved in the councils' elections. A committee responsible for running councils' elections is also found in most schools. It is quite pleasing to find that the majority of principals (98,6%) hold elections yearly in order to give other learners a chance to be elected as well. In most schools, learners are equally represented in the council with reference to different sexes. The majority of respondents indicated the presence of a teacher guardian, with black learners dominating most schools in the southern region of the North-West Education Department. Most schools are located in the townships, with a smaller percentage in farm areas. About 73,9% of schools prefer to use the word '*prefect council*' for its representative body for learners.

4.3.2 Methodology

In structuring items on the report, the mean score was calculated. It appeared that the majority of respondents scored mostly three, which is an indication that most of them were conversant with information regarding the creation of an effective and cohesive prefect structure. The percentages were then calculated. These ranged between 54% and 87%, indicating that most respondents had no problem following

procedure in creating such a structure. As those calculations did not serve the purpose of this research, it was decided to calculate the frequency and percentages of each item on a four-point scale used in the questionnaire.

To make meaningful deductions from respondents, the four-point scale was divided into two groupings: the *totally disagree* and *disagree* response (Sections B and D) are grouped together to form a negative response, while *agree* and *totally agree* form a positive response. The latter also applies to *no* and *little extent* as well as to *some* and *great extent* (Section C).

Use was also made of a comparison of factors making up the questionnaire (i.e. structure, functions as well as advantages of a prefect system). This is indicated in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: COMPARISON OF FACTORS BY RANK ORDER AND MEANS PROCEDURE

RANK	FACTOR	NO.	MEAN	STD.DEV.	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
1	Structure	69	3,21	0,28	2,29	3,76
2	Advantages	69	3,33	0,28	2,10	4,00
3	Functions	69	3,33	0,31	2,42	3,92

These factors will now be analysed in more detail.

The factors were compared with one another from the smallest to the largest according to how they rank. According to this table, it seems that school principals were more certain about questions relating to functions and advantages of a prefect system than about its structure. This is confirmed by the mean scores acquired by the former two (3.33) as compared to the one obtained in structure (3.21).

It seems as if some school principals are not quite familiar with procedures regarding structure. Therefore it is important that they receive frequent workshops to enable them to formulate and organise effective structures in accordance with what was found in the literature study (par. 2.6.1).

With reference to functions and advantages, a high mean score obtained, which is indicative of their importance. By putting such a structure in place, school principals are confident of an educative environment being created at their respective schools. This is in accordance with what was found in the literature study (par. 3.8).

4.3.3 Analysis of responses obtained on the structure of a prefect system

The aim with these questions (13-33), as explained in (par 4.2.7(b)), were to determine the extent of respondent level of agreement/disagreement in creating a prefect system in a school. Responses will be analysed using the mean scores as they appear in Table 4.5 All the mean scores are below 3,50. The difference between the highest and the lowest mean score is 0,42. The responses are summarised in Table 4.5.

TABLE 4.5: RESPONSES OF PRINCIPALS ON THE STRUCTURE OF A PERFECT SYSTEM

Rank	Number	Question	Mean	%	St dv	RESPONSES							
						1 F	%	2 F	%	3 F	%	4 F	%
NOMINATIONS													
1	15	Nomination list for male and female separately	3.46	86	,63	1	1,45	2	2,90	30	43,48	36	52,2
2	16	Nomination of a person with a proven criminal record	3.33	83	,58	0	0,00	4	5,80	38	55,07	27	39,1
3	13	A learner is nominated or seconded as a member by learners who are eligible to vote	3.23	80	,59	1	1,45	3	4,35	44	63,77	21	30,4
4	14	Nominations is made by lodging a nomination form six days before	3.18	79	,62	1	1,45	5	7,25	43	62,31	20	29,0
5	17	Personnel staff and all senior learners in the school to nominate candidates	3.04	76	,63	3	4,41	3	4,41	50	73,53	12	17,7
VOTING													
1	21	Candidates to be present when spoilt ballot papers are rejected	3.39	84	,64	1	1,45	3	4,35	33	47,82	32	46,4
2	19	Voting shall be by secret ballot	3.34	83	,53	0	0,00	2	4,35	39	56,52	27	39,1
3	22	Personnel staff have the right to reject name of an elected candidate	3.31	82	,67	1	1,45	5	7,25	34	49,28	29	42,0
4	20	One officially marked ballot paper to be issued to each eligible learner	3.30	82	,52	0	0,00	2	2,90	44	63,77	23	33,3
5	18	Voting to be held the same day as the nomination meeting	3.28	82	,66	1	1,45	5	7,25	36	52,17	27	39,1
ELECTIONS													
1	23	Election process provide for free and fair elections	3.39	84	,59	0	0,00	0	0,00	42	60,87	27	39,1
2	24	Teacher guardian determines date, time and place for elections	3.36	84	,59	1	1,45	1	1,45	39	56,52	28	40,6

SCALE 1: =Totally disagree 2= Disagree 3.=Agree 4.= Totally agree

SCALE 1.=Totally disagree 2.= Disagree 3.=Agree 4.= Totally agree

Rank	Number	Question	Mean	%	Std. dev.	RESPONSES							
						1		2		3		4	
						F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
ELECTIONS													
3	25	Any learner entitled to vote to participate in the election process	3.24	81	,57	1	1,45	2	2,90	45	65,22	21	30,4
OFFICE-BEARERS													
1	26	Election of office-bearers by council members only	3.34	83	,56	0	0,00	3	2,90	41	59,42	26	37,7
2	28	Secretary forms part of office-bearers	3.33	83	,47	0	0,00	0	0,00	45	66,18	23	34,0
3	27	Head boy and girl shall be chairperson of the council	3.30	82	,55	1	1,47	0	0,00	44	64,71	23	33,8
4	29	Availability of the treasurer	3.23	80	,62	1	1,47	4	5,88	41	60,30	22	32,4
CO-OPTED MEMBERS													
1	31	Co-opted members to forward inputs and suggestions	3.21	80	,48	0	0,00	2	2,90	50	72,46	17	25,0
2	30	Council may ask other learners in school to become members	3.10	77	,68	2	2,90	7	10,14	42	60,87	18	26,1
3	32	Co-opted members may be granted voting rights	2.75	68	,69	3	4,35	18	26,09	41	59,42	7	10,1
4	33	Co-opted members are elected through favouritism by principal	2.17	54	,68	7	10,14	47	68,12	11	15,94	4	6,0

SCALE 1 =Totally disagree 2= Disagree 3.=Agree 4.= Totally agree

The responses in this section may be analysed and interpreted as follows:

- **Nominations** (questions 13-17)

All the items received a high mean score (mean between 3,04-3,46). If the mean scores are analysed in more detail, it seems that the respondents agree to totally agree (91,23%-95,68%) that there must be a separate nomination list for male and female learners; a person with a proven criminal record may not be nominated; a learner must be voted for by all eligible learners; nominations must be made six days prior to voting and that the personnel and senior learners can nominate candidates.

This overwhelming positive response can be ascribed to the fact that most respondents are quite familiar with procedures for nominating candidates as contained in various legislative documents the Department is providing them. This response confirms with what was found in literature study (par. 2.7.1).

- **Voting** (questions 18-22)

This category also received a high mean score (mean between 3,28-3,39). If the mean scores are analysed in more detail it seems that the respondents agree to totally agree (91,27%-94,22%) that it is important that candidates must be present when spoilt ballot papers are rejected; that voting must be by means of secret ballot; staff must have the right to reject the name of an elected candidate; one officially marked ballot paper must be issued to each eligible learner and voting must be held the same day as the nomination meeting.

Again the response in this category was overwhelming as indicated by the percentages received. This positive response can be ascribed to the training most respondents have undergone (learner councils included) as well as procedures for voting as contained in the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) documents. Respondents are quite aware of these since most of the institutions they are heading are used as voting stations, with them as administrative officers, when

general elections are held countrywide. This positive response is in line with what is contained in literature study (par. 2.7.2)

- **Elections** (questions 23-25)

The items in this category received a high mean score (mean between 3,24-3,39). If the mean scores are analysed in more detail, it seems that the respondents agree to totally agree (95,62%-99,97%) that the elections should be free and fair, that the teacher guardian should determine the date, time and place for elections and that any learner who is entitled to vote should participate in the election process.

The response in this category was overwhelming. This can be ascribed to the fact most respondents have undergone various training skills conducted in educational workshops. This is being done to better equip them in case they are confronted with such situations. Another reason for this response may be that most principals make use of the relevant documents at their disposal. This is in accordance with literature documents (par. 2.7.3).

- **Office-bearers** (questions 26-29)

Items in this category received a high mean score (mean between 3,23-3,34). If the mean scores are analysed in more detail, it seems that the respondents agree to totally agree (92,70%-97,12%) that office-bearers must be elected by council members only; the secretary must be part of office-bearers; the head boy and head girl must both be chairpersons of the council and that a treasurer must also be made available.

The overwhelming positive response in this category can again be attributed to the fact that most respondents read relevant documents at their disposal and try hard to familiarise themselves with the contents thereof. This positive response is in accordance to the literature study (par.2.7.4)

- **Co-opted members** (questions 30-33)

This category did not receive the same high mean scores as the previous categories (mean between 2,17-3,21). If the mean scores are analysed in detail, it seems that for questions 31 to 32 the respondents agree to totally agree (69,52%-97,46%; i.e. ranks 3-4) that co-opted members must only be allowed to forward inputs and suggestions to the council and that other learners can only become members after being asked to by the council itself. This positive response can be attributed to the fact that most respondents are aware of the contents as they appear in section 23(c) of Act No. 84 of 1996 regarding co-opted members. This response is in line with literature documents (par.2.7.6).

In question 33 it seems that the respondents disagree to totally disagree with the question.

Co-opted members are elected through favouritism by the principal (question 33, mean 2.17).

The respondents disagree to totally disagree (78,26%) on this question. The reason for this response is the fact that respondents are of the idea that members can only be co-opted by the council itself and nobody else, as contained in terms of Act No. 84 of 1996, section 23 (c). The response is in line with literature (par. 2.7.6).

4.3.4 Analysis of responses obtained on the functions of a prefect system.

The aim with these questions (34-45) as described in (par. 4.2.7(c)), was to determine the extent to which a prefect council performs its duties in creating effective school governance. The same procedure as indicated in par. 4.3.3 has been followed here. Again, it has been discovered that all the mean scores are below 3,50. The difference between the highest and the lowest mean score is 0,25. The responses are summarised in Table 4.6.

TABLE 4.6. RESPONSES OF PRINCIPALS ON THE FUNCTIONS OF A PREFECT SYSTEM

Rank	Number	Question	Mean	%	Std. dev.	RESPONSES							
						1		2		3		4	
						F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
CONSTITUTION													
1	36	Election procedures are spelt out in the constitution	3.44	86	,61	1	1,49	1	1,49	32	47,77	33	49,3
2	37	Constitution serving as guidance to learner activities	3.41	85	,52	0	0,00	1	1,47	38	55,88	29	42,7
3	35	Council's goals and objectives are reflected in the constitution	3.24	81	,60	1	1,45	3	4,35	43	62,32	22	31,9
4	34	Involvement of learners in the draft of the constitution	2.97	74	,74	5	7,25	5	7,25	46	66,67	13	18,8
COMMITTEES													
1	40	Each committee to determine its own needs	3.33	83	,76	2	2,90	6	8,70	28	40,58	33	48,0
1	39	Various committees to draw up a year programme	3.33	83	,70	2	2,90	3	4,34	34	49,28	30	43,5
3	38	Active participation by learners in committees	3.26	81	,61	1	1,45	3	4,35	42	60,87	23	33,3
MEETINGS													
1	45	Punctuality of members attending meetings	3.49	87	,53	0	0,00	1	1,45	33	47,83	35	51,0
2	41	Elected members set agenda items for meetings	3.40	85	,64	1	1,45	3	4,35	32	46,38	33	48,0
3	43	Decisions are made collectively	3.39	84	,55	0	0,00	2	2,94	37	54,41	29	42,7
4	42	Learners freely exchange opinions and ideas in meetings	3.37	84	,68	2	2,90	2	2,90	33	47,82	32	46,4
5	44	Agenda items are made available to learners before	3.28	82	,66	2	2,90	2	2,90	39	56,52	26	37,7

SCALE 1.= No extent. 2.= Little extent. 3.= Some extent. 4.= Great extent

The responses in this section may be interpreted and analysed as follows:

- **Constitution** (questions 34-37)

The first three items in this category received a high means score (mean between 2,97-3,44). If the mean scores are analysed in more detail, it seems that the respondents to some and great extent (85,47%-98,58%) believe that election procedures must be spelt out in the constitution; that it must serve as guide to learner activities, that goals and objectives of the council must be reflected in it and that learners should be involved in the constitutional draft.

This positive response can be ascribed to the fact that as managers of schools, respondents are quite aware of the fact that in order for any organisation to be a success (including schools), it must have certain rules that govern it and to set its own objectives that it needs to achieve. This positive response is in accordance with the literature study (par. 3.2.).

- **Committees** (questions 38-40)

All the items received a high means score (mean between 3,26-3,33). If the means scores are analysed in more detail, it seems that the respondents to some or to a great extent (88,58%- 94,17%) believe that each committee must determine its own needs; that various committees must draw their yearly programmes and that learners have to participate actively in those committees.

This overwhelming positive response can be attributed to the fact that as managers of schools, respondents are aware of the fact that in order for committees to be run successfully, their different needs as well as their yearly programme must be clearly outlined. This response is arguably supported through literature study (par. 3.4)

- **Meetings** (questions 41-45)

All the items in this category received a high means score (mean between 3,26-3,49). If the means scores are analysed in more detail, it seems that the respondents to some or to a great extent (88,58%- 94,17%) believe that each committee must determine its own needs; that various committees must draw their yearly programmes and that learners have to participate actively in those committees.

respondents to some or to a great extent (94,22%-98,83%) believe that members must be encouraged to be punctual when attending meetings; elected members must set agenda items for meetings; decisions must be made collectively; members must freely exchange ideas and opinions and that agenda items must be made available to members prior to meetings to enable them to prepare thoroughly.

This overwhelming positive response can be attributed to the fact that as people responsible for chairing meetings at their respective schools, it seems that the respondents are aware that for any meeting to be termed successful, it is important for members to be punctual at all times so as to enable it to start at the scheduled time. This response is in accordance to literature study (par. 3.5.4).

4.3.5 Analysis of responses obtained on the advantages of a prefect system.

The previous categories had mean scores below 3,50 and this category is no exception. Regarding the above activity, the mean scores will be used as they appear in Table 4.7. The difference between the highest and the lowest mean scores is 0,19. All the items received a high means score (mean between 3,46-3,14). The responses are summarised in Table 4.7.

TABLE 4.7: RESPONSES OF PRINCIPALS ON THE ADVANTAGES OF A PERFECT SYSTEM

Rank	Number	Question	Mean	%	Std. Dev.	RESPONSES							
						1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
						F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
REPRESENTATION													
1	46	Representation of learners fully	3.14	78	,49	1	1,45	1	1,45	54	78,26	13	18,8
COMMUNICATION													
1	47	Improves communication channels	3.27	81	,44	0	0,00	0	0,00	50	72,46	19	28,0
DISCIPLINE													
1	48	Improves learner discipline	3.44	86	,50	0	0,00	0	0,00	38	55,07	31	45,0
PARTICIPATION													
1	49	Increase learner participation in school governance	3.17	84	,57	1	1,45	0	0,00	40	57,97	28	40,6
LEARNING													
1	50	Promotion of a culture of learning	3.31	82	,46	0	0,00	0	0,00	47	68,12	22	31,9
EVENTS													
1	51	Increase learner participation in school events	3.39	84	,57	1	1,45	0	0,00	39	56,52	29	42,0
ADMINISTRATION													
1	52	Assist in school administration	3.46	86	,67	1	1,45	4	5,80	26	37,68	38	55,1
2	55	Creation of co-operative atmosphere between stakeholders	3.33	83	,50	0	0,00	1	1,45	44	63,77	24	34,8
3	53	Training of young ones about democracy	3.28	82	,59	1	1,45	2	2,90	42	60,87	24	34,8
4	54	Decrease workload of educators	3.27	81	,59	0	0,00	5	7,25	40	57,97	24	34,8

SCALE 1.= Totally disagree 2.= Disagree 3.= Agree 4.= Totally agree

The response in this section can be analysed and interpreted as follows:

- **Representation** (question 46)

This item received a high mean score (3,14). If it is analysed in more detail, it seems that the respondents agree to totally agree (97,06%) that a prefect council must be in a position to fully represent learners. The reason for this positive response can be ascribed to the fact that respondents, as members belonging to various teacher unions, seem to be aware that a prefect council must fully represent the aspirations of learners at school. This response is in accordance with the literature study (par. 3.8.1).

- **Communication** (question 47)

This item received a mean score of (3,27). If it is analysed in more detail, it seems that the respondents agree to totally agree (100%) that a prefect council assist in improving communication channels between educators and learners. This positive response can be ascribed to the fact that as people responsible for seeing to it that a healthy environment exists in schools, the respondents are aware that an open line of communication between the two must be created so that the said objective should be realised. This response is in accordance with the literature study (par. 3.8.2).

- **Discipline** (question 48)

This item received a mean score of (3,44). If it is analysed in more detail, it seems that the respondents agree to totally agree (100%) that through the creation of such a council in a school, discipline of learners is improved. This positive response can be ascribed to the fact that as experienced people, respondents seem to be aware that by allocating certain duties to the council, responsibility is spread and that it will have a positive bearing on the conduct of learners. This positive response is arguably supported through the literature study (par. 3.8.4).

- **Participation** (question 49)

This category received a mean score of (3,37). If it is analysed in more detail, it seems that the respondents agree to totally agree (98,57%) that through establishment of the council, participation by learners in governance of schools is increased. This positive response is ascribed to the fact that as experienced people, respondents are aware that isolation of learners in school governance may lead to a chaotic environment being created. Learners also tend to participate more in activities where their inputs and opinions are considered. This response is supported through the literature study (par. 3.8.3).

- **Learning** (question 50)

This item received a mean score of (3,31). If the response is analysed in more detail, it seems that the respondents agree to totally agree (100%) that co-operation between educators and learners leads to promotion of a culture of learning and teaching in a school. This overwhelming response can be attributed to the fact that as being one of their primary objectives, respondents are aware that promotion of such a culture can only be created through establishment of a healthy relation between educators and learners. This positive response is in line with the literature study (par. 3.8.7).

- **Events** (question 51)

This item received a mean score of (3,39). If it is analysed in more detail, it seems that the respondents agree to totally agree (98,52%) that through establishment of a council, participation of learners in school events increases. This positive response can be ascribed to the fact that by assigning certain duties to the council during sporting for example, will lead to learners developing an interest in events hosted by the school, thus increasing their level of participation. This response is in accordance with the literature study (par. 3.88 & 3.89).

- **Administration** (question 52-55)

All the items in this category received a high means score (mean between 3,27-3,46). If the means scores are analysed in more detail, it seems that the respondents agree to totally agree (92,77%-98,57%) that the council must assist in administration of schools; a co-operative atmosphere between all stakeholders must be created; young ones must be trained on what democracy is all about and that educators' workload will decrease as learners will take care of certain activities they are allocated for. This positive response can be ascribed to the fact that as experienced people, the respondents are aware of the fact that administration of a school cannot be in isolation from inputs by other stakeholders but through joint co-operation between them. This positive response is in line with what is stated in terms of the literature study (par.3.8.6).

4.4 PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE

It was necessary to analyse the respondents' level of agreement/disagreement about the creation of a prefect system, with reference to its structure, functions and advantages. This was done in order to determine if the differences in averages were significant or not. The average count of all the questions in a section was used to represent a factor count. For this purpose the d-value was computed to determine the effect size of the significant differences.

4.4.1 The d-value (effect size)

According to Ellis and Steyn (2003:51) the effect size can be understood as a large enough effect to be important in practice and is described for differences in means as well as for the relationship in two-way frequency tables and for multiple regression fit.

According to Steyn (2000:52) a natural way to comment on practical significance is to use the standardised difference between the means of populations, that is, the difference between the means divided by the estimate for standard deviation. In this instance it will be for the differences in responses between factors. Hence, an

introduction is made of a measure known as the effect size, which not only gives the difference in independents of units and sample size, but also relates it to the spread of data (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990:197; Cohen, 1998:64).

Table 4.8 : Effect sizes for means

Test	Conditions	Effect size
T	Take $s_{\max}$ = maximum of s_1 and s_2 , the sample SD's.	$d = \frac{ \bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2 }{s_{\max}}$

Where $\bar{x}_1$ = the mean of group 1

$\bar{x}_2$ = the mean of group 2

$s_{\max}$ = the largest standard deviation of the two groups

d = the effect size

The interpretation of the effect size was done on the basis of the following guidelines of Cohen (1998:26):

d = 0,2 (small effect) * not indicating practical significant differences.

d = 0,5 (medium effect) ** which may indicate practical significant differences.

d = 0,8 (large effect) *** which indicates practical significant differences.

4.4.2 Practical significance between sex and the different factors (question 1)

The aim with this calculation was to determine if there was any practically significant differences between male and female educational managers and the different factors. As the effect sizes were small (0,2), it shows that there was no practical significant difference between male and female principals regarding the structure, functions and advantages of a prefect system.

Another reason is that both male and female educators have in their possessions the same kind of documents the department provides them to use. This is confirmed

through the literature study (par. 2.5.3) where the different schools consulted do not differ much regarding the way the council should be structured, its functions or the advantage it brings. Those schools are headed both by male and female educational managers.

4.4.3 Practically significant difference between equal representation or not and the different factors (question 5)

The aim with this calculation was to determine if there were any practical significant differences between equal representation of learners or not and the different factors. The fact that the effect sizes were small in all factors (0,2), clearly indicates that there were no practical significant differences for equal representation. The reason for this small effect size can also be attributed to the fact that respondents may believe that irrespective of whether there is equal representation or not, the procedures for establishing up an effective prefect structure through the use of a ballot paper does not have to depend upon that (par. 2.6.5).

4.4.4 Practically significant difference between number of learners and the different factors (question 8)

The aim with this calculation was to determine, if there was any practical significant differences between number of learners and the different factors. Accordingly, most of the factors had a small effect (0,2) indicating, that there was no practical significant differences between number of learners within the council.

However, with regard to advantages, nos. 1 (200-500) and 3 (800-1000), the effect size ($d=0,63$) is medium, which might indicate practical significance difference.

- **Practically significant difference regarding advantages and number of learners ($d=0,63$) between group 1 (200-500) and group 3 (800-1000)**

Group 1 (200-500) obtained a mean score for advantages of 3,24 and group 3 (800-1000) a mean of 3,41, with an effect size of ($d=0,63$) which is of medium effect. There may be significant differences pertaining to advantages of having a

perfect system. Larger schools have larger mean scores for advantages than smaller ones. This can be attributed to the fact that respondents believe that larger schools will have an added advantage in that the council will consist of brighter learners who in turn will assist average learners with their studies and that they will thus become more involved in school activities than in smaller schools. This is in accordance with the literature study (par. 3.8.7).

4.4.5 Practically significant difference regarding council size and the different factors (question 9)

The aim with this calculation was to determine if there were any practically significant differences for council size and the different factors. This is indicated in Table 4.10.

Table 4.9: Council size (Means and Standard deviation) (question 9)

Factor	Group 1 (0-5)		Group 2 (5-10)		Group 3 (10+)	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Structure	3,31	0,18	3,28	0,19	2,79	0,32
Functions	3,36	0,28	3,44	0,18	2,89	0,35
Advantage	3,38	0,23	3,38	0,21	3,09	0,47

Table 4.10: Practically significant difference regarding council size and the effect size (question 9)

(Effect size between groups)

FACTOR	1 & 2		1 & 3		2 & 3	
	(0-5) and (5-10)	Effect size	(0-5) and (10+)	Effect size	(5-10) and (10+)	Effect size
Structure	0,14	*	1,61	***	1,53	***
Functions	0,29	*	1,34	***	1,57	***
Advantages	0,02	*	0,60	**	0,61	**

Small effect = 0,2 - * Not indicating practically significant differences

Medium effect = 0,5- ** Might indicate practically significant differences

Large effect = 0,8- *** Indicate practically significant differences

From the large effect sizes in Table 4.9, it follows that large councils with learners (10+) have in practice a lower mean score for structure and functions than smaller councils. The reason for the differences can be attributed to management.

Respondents may believe that a smaller council is more manageable than a bigger one. This is in accordance with the literature study (par. 2.6.1), which indicated that if properly constituted, the council will ensure that people are chosen to perform tasks familiar to them than to have many people clinging on to positions they cannot handle.

For advantages the effect sizes are also medium, indicating that the mean score for advantages may also be lower in practice for large councils (10+) than smaller councils. This can be attributed to the fact that respondents may believe that the smaller the council is, the better organised it will be in helping to promote the culture of learning in a school (par 3.8.3). Respondents are of the opinion that because of its manageable size, both educators and learners will be in a position to quickly identify those learners who can assist the average ones to cope with their work. This also includes the number of committees to be established in which learners are expected to take an active part in striving towards their success. This is supported by the literature (par. 3.8.7 & 3.4): assisting others to cope with their learning problems, will help cultivate an educative environment in a school. It also supports the idea that the size of the council determines the number of committees to be established.

It therefore appears that the two questions (8 & 9) are interrelated. This can be attributed to the fact that the size of the school determines the size of the council. If, for example a school is large, more learners will be required to serve in the council than in a small school.

4.4.6 Practically significant difference regarding dominance and the different factors (question 10).

The aim with this calculation was to determine if there were any practically significant differences between dominance and the different factors. Because all the effect sizes from the three factors were small (0,2), it is clear that there was no practically significant differences regarding dominance of learners.

4.4.7 Practically significant differences regarding geography and the different factors (question 11)

The aim with this calculation was to determine if there were any practically significant differences between geography of the school and the different factors. Again, most of the effect size for the three factors were small (0,2), indicating that there was no practically significant difference. The reason for this effect size can be attributed to the fact that respondents believe that the area where the school is located will not determine the level of its improvement and educational change. This is in accordance with literature study (par. 2.4.3.b).

However, with regard items 1 & 3 (city & farm), which referred to functions, the effect size is ($d=0,52$). This implies a medium effect size that might indicate practical significance.

- ***Practically significant regarding functions and geography ($d=0.52$) between group 1 (city) and group 3 (farm).***

Group 1 (city) received a high mean score of 3.25 and group 3 (farm) a mean score of 3.42. This factor has a medium effect size of ($d=0,52$), which might indicate a practically significant difference. This can be ascribed to the fact that respondents believe that principals of farm schools may agree more than the principals of city schools about functions. This can be also be attributed to the fact that respondents may believe that geography is likely to play a role in ensuring that learners take an active role in school activities. This is in accordance with literature study (par. 2.4.3.b), which found that the location of the school will determine the level of learner participation.

Respondents may also believe that the environment in which the two schools find themselves, will play a role in learners' involvement in school activities. Respondents who are principals of farm schools believe that the council in those schools will function more effectively than the ones in cities, in that learners will be

more focused, as there are fewer outside influences that may distract their commitment than in cities. This is supported by the literature study which showed that learners in rural areas are more likely to participate fully than their city counterparts, because of the geographical influence (par.2.4.3 (b)).

4.4.8 Practically significant differences regarding representative body and the different factors (question12)

The aim with this calculation was to determine if there were any practically significant differences regarding the representative body and the different factors. The three factors all had a small effect size (0,2), meaning that there was no practical significance difference. The reason for this small effect can be ascribed to the fact that respondents may believe that the representative body, irrespective of the name attached to it, should be in a position to act as a link between educators and learners to help create an educative environment in a school. This, the literature supports (par. 3.8.2) in that a healthy link between the two will help reduce tension between them and create a conducive educative environment.

In conclusion it can be said that, based upon the data collected, most of the respondents were quite familiar with procedures followed in creating an effective prefect system at a school. This can be attributed to the fact that most principals have recent and relevant educational documents at their disposal. The functions performed by the prefect system at a school convinces one that through its establishment, especially in predominantly black primary schools, joint participation by other stakeholders can indeed be guaranteed, thereby upholding standards of the schools in question, in terms of section 10(3) of Act No. 84 of 1996.

4.5 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the research data indicating the structure, functions and advantages of a prefect system from an empirical viewpoint. In the first instance, a presentation and analysis of personal and school details were made. The results of the research were presented and analysed.

Thereafter an analysis of principals' response with regard to their different perceptions regarding the structural composition of a prefect system and its functions and advantages, were presented and analysed. This was done through application of various statistical techniques, including the mean scores.

The practically significant differences (effect sizes) between biographical data and the different negotiation factors were calculated to determine whether the effect sizes indicated practically significant differences. From the discussions, all the different effect sizes, that is, small, medium and large, were noted for the biographical data and the negotiation factors. These were also analysed and discussed.

The following chapter is a summary of the research and findings.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, a brief look into the previous chapters is given. Secondly, some of the findings derived from literature study are indicated. Thereafter recommendations are formulated based on problems identified from the respondents' perception of the structure, functions and advantages of a prefect system in primary schools predominantly attended by black learners.

5.2 SUMMARY

Chapter 1 served as an orientation to the study and set out an introduction of the importance of the research. It outlined the statement of the problem that led to this research. The problems derived from the statement of the problem include the way a prefect body should be structured. In the past, the structure of the prefect council was composed of learners chosen by the principal and the staff only. This was done without the inputs of learners. However, currently notice has been given by various legislative Acts that learners who are to serve in the council, have to be democratically elected jointly by learners and staff. Another problem concerns the nomination of candidates.

In the past, the popularity of a particular candidate earned him/her the nod over the other candidates. However, this has been replaced by criteria such as the potential and conduct that a candidate has to display. Another problem concerned the way a prefect council should function. Previously, it was used to serve the interests of the school management and the staff. Learners' interests in this regard were ignored. With regard to the present situation, the function of the prefect council is such that it should cater for the interest of both the school and the learners, to help create an educative atmosphere in a school.

The chapter continued by formulating the research aims. For this research the aim was based upon the determination of a proper and an effective prefect structure, the determination of the functions of a prefect council as well as the advantages of having such a structure in place. It also explained how data was collected and which section of the population was involved, and it stipulated the division of chapters.

Chapter 2 dealt with the structure of a prefect system. An explanation of concepts of their relevance in the research was given. The chapter discussed participative democratic governance of all education stakeholders towards the improvement of education. Aspects associated with participative democratic governance such as its particular goals as well as the different levels at which it may be implemented, were discussed. The advantages and disadvantages of participative democratic governance were also identified.

Here it was found out that participation of learners in school governance provides them an opportunity to play an important role in certain decisions affecting them. One disadvantage is that some of the decisions still lie in the hands of those in authority.

Various concepts associated with participative democratic governance were explored and the conclusion was reached that it can be defined as a system of school administration and control, where learners actively participate in the school's decision-making process. The reasons for learner participation in school governance were outlined and discussed. Among the reasons discussed were bridging the gap that existed in the past between democracy and bureaucracy, improving the performance of the school, and introducing changes in education that will ultimately lead to the improvement in schools.

The criteria for the structure of a prefect system were discussed from both official documents as well as literature study. Official documents included the National Policy Act, with reference to the South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996), the

provincial documents as well school policies. From the official documents consulted, a discussion followed with regard to the procedure to be followed for election, nomination and voting of members into the council. Various committees that a prefect council may establish in a school were also identified and discussed. A conclusion was reached as to how a prefect council should be composed. The characteristics of people who make up the executive committee were also described, as well their term of office.

The criteria for an effective prefect system was later sought from the literature viewpoint. A discussion followed on how a prefect council should be organized, in which it was found that the council has to be organised in such a way that duplication of work is avoided and that people are given tasks with which they are familiar. This was followed by a discussion of how members should be nominated into the council. It was discovered that all senior learners in the school and the staff have to nominate candidates.

Thereafter, the election of the head boy and head girl was discussed. It was found that certain characteristics have to be displayed by both the head boy and girl before they are elected. In addition, the two have to be elected by members of the council and not by the entire school. The different ways of electing head prefects as well members of the council were later analysed and discussed from the literature point of view. In addition, the use of a secret ballot was emphasised by some of the authors as a means to ensure that no intimidation is entertained.

A discussion followed with regard to those people with voting rights. The latter was restricted to all senior learners in the school, because of their experience as well as the staff. Thereafter, it was indicated when members should be appointed and inducted into their positions. The latter was left in the hands of principals of schools to see to it that they induct as well as appoint members into office. This should take place at the beginning of the season, with elections towards the end of the fourth term.

Finally, the constitution of the council was investigated. The aims of developing a constitution as well as the different aspects of a constitution were identified. A synthesis which provides guidelines regarding procedures to be followed in establishing an effective prefect system concluded the chapter.

Chapter 3 mainly dealt with the functions of a prefect system. In the first instance, the constitution of a prefect system was considered as well as how and by whom it has to be drafted. Thereafter, its contents were discussed. In conclusion, a synthesis, which is the summary of the first part of the chapter, was presented. The duties of office-bearers, such as the head boy and head girl, their deputies, the secretary as well as the treasurer, were discussed and analysed.

The different committees that a prefect council may establish in a school were also researched. The committees, however, depend upon the size of the school, as more of them (other than those mentioned earlier) can be established. This was followed by a discussion of how meetings of the council may be conducted and of the different roles that a chairperson, secretary and members attending meetings can play in ensuring that they are successful. The rights and duties of a chairperson in meetings were also discussed.

Further investigation was made into the formal documents of a successful meeting, in particular the agenda and minutes. The next aspect under discussion was the miscellaneous procedural rules, with emphasis on the maintenance of order in meetings, the way they should be postponed as well as the procedure for their closure. The last aspect discussed in this chapter was the advantages of a prefect system in a school. The latter included the representation of learners, with emphasis on their rights and obligations

Chapter 4 presented the results of the empirical investigation. The questionnaire as a research instrument was discussed with reference to its advantages and

disadvantages. Thereafter the general information, including the mean scores as well as frequencies, was discussed. The main features discussed include analysis of responses obtained on the structure, functions and advantages of a prefect system. The last aspect, which the chapter discussed, was the practically significant differences regarding the effect size of the different factors. It was determined whether the different effect sizes indicated practically significant differences.

5.3 FINDINGS

This section deals with the findings of the research, in accordance with those in paragraph 1.3

5.3.1 Findings with regard to research aim 1

With regard to the aim to determining the structure of a prefect system (par. 1.3), the following were found:

- Although various concepts and theories are on offer to explain what participative democratic governance is, it derives its greatest meaning from the concepts of representation and consultation. In a school situation, it refers to a system where learners actively participate in the decision-making process where policies are formulated and implemented (par. 2.3.1).
- Creation of effective school governance ought to be realised through productive interaction between participants. Learner participation in school governance can create interest from other stakeholders in striving towards promoting education (par. 2.3.2).
- The procedure for creating an effective prefect council ought to be determined by official documents. Emphasis is on procedures for nomination, election and voting (par. 2.5.1; 2.5.2; 2.5.3).
- In an organised prefect council, duplication of work ought to be avoided and that people should perform tasks they are familiar with (par. 2.6.1).

5.3.2 Findings with regard to research aim 2

With regard to the aim of determining the functioning of a prefect system (par.1.3), the following were found:

- The constitution as a legal document, contains legal rules and principles according to which the prefect council functions. The executive committee of the council as well as teacher guardian must draft it (par. 3.2; 3.2.1).
- The head boy and head girl ought to be considered the two most important figures in the council and thus have to display exemplary behaviour to other members (par.3.3.1).
- The prefect council established different committees to reach its goals to be successful. In these committees, work ought to be evenly distributed among council members (par. 3.4). In a school situation, learners have to take an active part in various committees to promote the culture of learning (par. 3.4.1; 3.4.2; 3.4.3; 3.4.4).
- The success of a meeting depends on the role of members attending it as well those of the chairperson and a secretary (par. 3.5.1; 3.5.3; 3.5.4).
- The agenda and minutes as valid documents make it possible for meetings to run smoothly (par. 3.6.1; 3.6.2). In addition, to ensure that a meeting is a success, order ought to be maintained throughout its duration (par. 3.7.1).
- The council not only has to represent the aspirations of learners but ought to make them aware of their legal educational obligations as well (par.3.8.1)

5.3.3 Findings with regard to research aim 3

With regard to the aim of gathering certain empirical information, the following was found:

- Personal details of respondents are indicative of the fact that the majority of principals are males, while women constitute a lesser percentage. The population was thus found to be imbalanced and this requires attention to bring about equality as enshrined in the Constitution (par. 4.3.1.1; table 4.3).
- Co-opted members are not elected through favoritism by the principal, (par. 4.3.3.5; table 4.6).

- Punctuality of members is considered important for meetings to start promptly (par. 4.3.4.3; table 4.6).
- Participation of learners is greater in activities where their opinions and inputs are considered and recognised (par. 4.3.5.4; table 4.7).
- There is no practically significant difference between equal representation and the different factors (par. 4.4.3).
- It is advantageous for a prefect council to have brighter students, who in turn have to assist the less gifted ones to cope with their studies (par. 4.4.4.1).
- The size of the council is largely dependent upon that of the school. This also includes the number of committees to be established (par. 4.4.5.4).
- Members of the dominant ethnic group in a school, have an added advantage over others when representation within the council is being sought (par. 4.4.6)

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

With reference to both literature study and the empirical investigation, the following recommendations are offered:

Recommendation 1

It is highly recommended that all primary schools should make use of a representative system for learners.

Motivation

Legislative Acts form the basis for implementing the above. In addition, use can be made of the Independent Electoral Commission's (IEC) documents for more information.

Recommendation 2

Principals must appoint a mentor/ guardian for the learner representative councils.

Motivation

Principals should carefully explore the extent to which an educator guardian can assist in placing and guiding an effective prefect council. The use of the different legislative Acts such as the South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996) provide guidelines as to how these mentors can be utilised best to stabilise these councils.

Recommendation 3

Training must be provided in meeting procedures.

Motivation

As for conducting meetings orderly and procedurally, the staff has to arrange in-service training so as to fully equip learners for this. Learners have to be exposed to all kinds of documents contributing towards a successful meeting.

Recommendation 4

Criteria must be developed for the identification and selection of learners for the representative council, especially in primary schools predominantly attended by black learners.

Motivation

The use of legislative Acts can be of assistance in this regard. A study of legislation is essential for the specification of the criteria and for the identification and selection of a representative council for learners, to avoid conflicts and to protect all stakeholders against prejudice.

5.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter an overview of the previous chapters and the most important findings were given. Recommendations and motivations regarding the structure and functions of a prefect system were provided.

The research proved that learners no longer wish to be onlookers in the system. They prefer to be active role-players in helping to reshape the education system. Through participative democratic governance, a platform is being created in which all stakeholders shall contribute towards restoring the culture of learning and teaching especially in primary schools predominantly attended by black learners.

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APPENDIX 1

477 Extension 6
Jouberton Location
2574

17-11-03

The District Manager
Department of Education
Klerksdorp
2570

Dear Sir

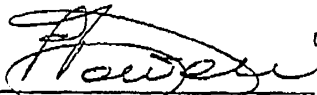
**RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT STUDY ON THE STRUCTURE AND
FUNCTIONS OF A PREFECT SYSTEM IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS
PREDOMINANTLY ATTENDED BY BLACK LEARNERS**

I am currently studying for an M.Ed degree in educational management. I need to conduct my research on the structure and functions of a prefect system in primary schools within the KOSH area of the North West Province.

Attached you will find a copy of the questionnaire that will be mailed to primary schools. Questionnaires shall be filled in by the principal of each school and need not be completed during school hours.

Hoping for a positive response from you.

Yours sincerely


G.P. BOWEN (MR)

THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF A PREFECT SYSTEM IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS
PREDOMINANTLY ATTENDED BY BLACK LEARNERS.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

□ □ □ (1-3)

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION

Instructions to the respondent

1. Read all the questions carefully.
2. Decide which of the answer given suits you best and circle it.
3. Do not write your name in the questionnaire.
4. There are no wrong or right answers.

1. What gender are you?

Male	1
Female	2

(4)

2. Are you involved in the running of the prefect council's elections?

Yes	No
1	2

(5)

3. Is there a committee responsible for the running of a prefect council's election?

Yes	No
1	2

(6)

4. Do you hold elections yearly?

Yes	No
1	2

(7)

5. Are both male and female learners equally represented in the council?

Yes	No
1	2

(8)

6. Are teachers/educators taking part in these elections?

Yes	No
1	2

(9)

7. Do you have a teacher guardian?

Yes	No
1	2

(10)

8. How many learners are there at school?

200-500	1
500-800	2
800-1000	3
1000 and more	4

(11)

9. How many learners are there in the prefect council?

0-5	1
5-10	2
10 and more	3

(12)

10. The school is predominantly attended by the following learners

Black	1
White	2
Coloured	3
Indian	4

(13)

11. Geography of the school is

City	1
Township	2
Farm	3

(14)

12. What name do you use for learner representative in the school?

S.R.C.	1
L.S.C.	2
Prefect System	3
Council	4

(15)

SECTION B: STRUCTURE OF A PREFECT SYSTEM

Answer by marking with an "X" the number that most represents the extent of your agreement/disagreement with the statement below. Circle the number and write the number in the space provided. At the end of the section a space is provided for you to state your comment.

the following scale: 1. Totally disagree 2. Disagree 3. Agree 4. Totally agree

For an effective prefect system the following procedures should be carried out

	Totally disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally agree	
1. A learner is nominated or seconded as a member only by learners who are eligible to vote	1	2	3	4	(16)
2. Nomination is made by lodging a nomination form completed by the proposer, seconder and a candidate with the election officer six days before the nomination meeting.	1	2	3	4	(17)
3. Nomination is in writing and the list contains names of male and female learners separately.	1	2	3	4	(18)
4. A person with a proven criminal record may not be nominated.	1	2	3	4	(19)
5. Personnel staff and all senior learners in the school shall nominate candidates.	1	2	3	4	(20)
6. Voting is held the same day as the nomination meeting.	1	2	3	4	(21)
7. Voting shall be by secret ballot.	1	2	3	4	(22)
8. One officially marked ballot paper is issued to each learner eligible to vote.	1	2	3	4	(23)
9. Candidates may be present when the electoral officer rejects spoils ballot papers before counting the votes.	1	2	3	4	(24)
10. Personnel staff shall have the right to reject the name of an elected candidate if it seems fit.	1	2	3	4	(25)
11. The election process followed gives provision for free and fair elections to be conducted.	1	2	3	4	(26)
12. The teacher/guardian determines the date, time and place for election.	1	2	3	4	(27)
13. Any learner who is entitled to vote may participate in the election process.	1	2	3	4	(28)
14. Office-bearers are elected by members of the council only.	1	2	3	4	(29)
15. The head boy and girl shall be the chairpersons of the council.	1	2	3	4	(30)
16. A secretary forms part of office-bearers.	1	2	3	4	(31)
17. The treasurer of the council is also available.	1	2	3	4	(32)
18. The council may ask other learners in the school to become council members.	1	2	3	4	(33)
19. Co-opted members are allowed to forward suggestions and inputs in meetings of the council.	1	2	3	4	(34)
20. Co-opted members may be granted voting rights in some instances.	1	2	3	4	(35)
21. Co-opted members are by virtue of them being favoured by the principal.	1	2	3	4	(36)

Any comment:

SECTION C: FUNCTIONS OF A PREFECT SYSTEM

Indicate by marking with an "X" the extent to which the prefects carry out the following duties in creating effective school governance.

Use the following scale: 1. No extent 2. Little extent 3. Some extent 4. Great extent

The prefect council ensures that:

	No extent	Little extent	Some extent	Great extent	
34. Learners are involved when a constitution is being drafted.	1	2	3	4	(37)
35. Council's goals and objectives are reflected in the constitution.	1	2	3	4	(38)
36. Various election procedures are spelt out in the constitution.	1	2	3	4	(39)
37. The constitution should serve as guide to various learner activities within the school.	1	2	3	4	(40)
38. Learners take an active part in committees organised by the management body.	1	2	3	4	(41)
39. Various committees established have to draw up a year programme of school activities.	1	2	3	4	(42)
40. Each committee determines its own needs and present them to the school authorities.	1	2	3	4	(43)
41. Elected members of the council set agenda items for meetings.	1	2	3	4	(44)
42. Learners freely exchange suggestions, opinions and ideas in meetings.	1	2	3	4	(45)
43. Decisions are only made when almost everyone is in agreement.	1	2	3	4	(46)
44. Agenda items are made available to learners a few days before the meeting.	1	2	3	4	(47)
45. Members attending meetings are punctual.	1	2	3	4	(48)

Any comment:

SECTION D: THE ADVANTAGES OF A PREFECT SYSTEM

Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement to each of the advantages by placing an "X" on the number that closely reflects your opinion.

Use the following scale: 1. Totally disagree 2. Disagree 3. Agree 4. Totally agree

The prefect system:

	Totally disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally agree	
46. Enables it to fully represent learners.	1	2	3	4	(49)
47. Improves communication between educators and learners.	1	2	3	4	(50)
48. Leads to improved discipline amongst learners.	1	2	3	4	(51)
49. Increases the level of learner participation in school governance.	1	2	3	4	(52)
50. Promotes the culture of learning in the school.	1	2	3	4	(53)
51. Increases participation of learners in cultural and sporting events in the school.	1	2	3	4	(54)
52. Assists in the administration of the school.	1	2	3	4	(55)
53. Trains young ones about democracy.	1	2	3	4	(56)
54. Decreases the workload of educators.	1	2	3	4	(57)
55. Creates an atmosphere of co-operations between parents, educators and learners.	1	2	3	4	(58)

Any comment:

Thank you for your support



Department of Education
Lefapha la Thuto
Departement van Onderwys

NORTH WEST PROVINCE

KLERKSDORP DISTRICT OFFICE

ENQUIRIES/NAVRAE: **J.C. MOTAUNG**

Tel. No. : 018 - 4627523

Fax No. : 018 - 4627529

E-Mail: CMotaung@nwpg.org.za

Ref. No:

Private Bag A23

KLERKSDORP.

2570

TO: G.P. BOWENI
447 EXTENSION 6
JOUBERTON LOCATION
2574

FROM: DISTRICT MANAGER
KLERKSDORP DISTRICT

DATE: 28 NOVEMBER 2003

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: STRUCTURE AND
FUNCTIONS OF A PREFECT SYSTEM IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS
PREDOMINANTLY ATTENDED BY BLACK LEARNERS: M.Ed
EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT:

Your letter dated 17 November 2003 refers.

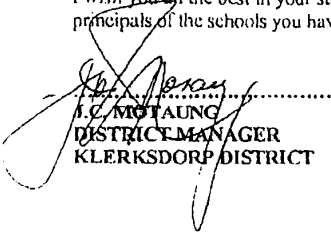
Permission is hereby given to conduct research on the "Structure and functions of a prefect system in primary schools predominantly attended by black learners", in the Kosh area, for the M.Ed degree.

You are however, requested to observe and adhere to the following conditions when conducting your research:-

- Your research should under no circumstances, disrupt the smooth running of the schools.
- Principals should not be coerced to participate in the completion of the questionnaire.
- Names of the schools which participated in this exercise should remain confidential.
- Prior arrangements need to be made with principals of the schools you have selected.

Principals of schools in the Kosh area will be informed that permission has been given to you to conduct the research.

I wish you all the best in your studies and I remain confident that you will enjoy the support of the principals of the schools you have identified.



.....
J.C. MOTAUNG
DISTRICT MANAGER
KLERKSDORP DISTRICT

APPENDIX 111

477 Extension 6
Jouberton Location
2574

22/11/2003

The Principal
School _____

Dear Sir

RE: FILLING IN OF A QUESTIONNAIRE

The Faculty of Education at the University of Potchefstroom (PU for CHE) is interested in determining the extent to which the structure and functions of a prefect system can contribute towards success in a school. I am presently doing an M.Ed degree course with the said institution handling a research topic on the structure and functions of a prefect system in primary schools predominantly attended by black learners. The filling in of the questionnaire will enable me to complete the empirical research which forms part of the study.

You are earnestly requested to accurately complete the questionnaire accompanying the letter. You have also been selected as part of the sample by virtue of the position you hold as well as the amount of experience that goes with it. I am aware of your tight and busy schedule. However, I hope that the 15 minutes it will take you to complete the questionnaire will help lead towards the improvement and restoration of the culture of learning and teaching in primary schools predominantly attended by black learners.

I would appreciate your completion of the questionnaire within 3 days upon receipt thereof. I have provided a stamped, addressed envelope for you to use in returning the questionnaire. You need not put your name on the questionnaire, as this will be treated with the strictest confidentiality.

If you need clarity about some of the questions, you can contact me at 082 627 6698 or (018) 465 6307 (Home tel.)

Thank you in advance for your co-operation and participation.

Yours faithfully



G.P. BOWEN (MR)

**THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF A PREFECT SYSTEM IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS
PREDOMINANTLY ATTENDED BY BLACK LEARNERS.**

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

☐ ☐ ☐ (1 - 3)

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION

Instructions to the respondent

1. Read all the questions carefully.
2. Decide which of the answer given suits you best and circle it
3. Do not write your name in the questionnaire
4. There are no wrong or right answers.

1. What gender are you?

Male	1
Female	2

(4)

2. Are you involved in the running of the prefect council's elections?

Yes	No
1	2

(5)

3. Is there a committee responsible for the running of a prefect council's election?

Yes	No
1	2

(6)

4. Do you hold elections yearly?

Yes	No
1	2

(7)

5. Are both male and female learners equally represented in the council?

Yes	No
1	2

(8)

6. Are teachers/educators taking part in these elections?

Yes	No
1	2

(9)

7. Do you have a teacher guardian?

Yes	No
1	2

(10)

8. How many learners are there at school?

200-500	1
500 - 800	2
800 - 1000	3
1000 and more	4

(11)

9. How many learners are there in the prefect council?

0-5	1
5-10	2
10 and more	3

(12)

10. The school is predominantly attended by the following learners

Black	1
White	2
Coloured	3
Indian	4

(13)

11. Geography of the school is

City	1
Township	2
Farm	3

(14)

12. What name do you use for learner representative in the school?

S.R.C	1
L.S.C	2
Prefect System	3
Council	4

(15)

SECTION B: STRUCTURE OF A PREFECT SYSTEM

Indicate by marking with an "X" the number that most represents the extent of your agreement/disagreement with regard to procedures followed in creating a prefect system at your school. At the end of the section a space is provided for you to state your comment.

Use the following scale: 1. Totally disagree 2. Disagree 3. Agree 4. Totally agree

In an effective prefect system the following procedures should be carried out:

	Totally disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally agree	
13. A learner is nominated or seconded as a member only by learners who are eligible to vote	1	2	3	4	(16)
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Any comment:

SECTION C: FUNCTIONS OF A PREFECT SYSTEM

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SECTION D: THE ADVANTAGES OF A PREFECT SYSTEM

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Any comment:

Thank you for your support!