The effectiveness of school governing bodies regarding their overall school governance mandate in the Free State Province

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P.J. Serero

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Dedication

This work is dedication to the following unforgettable people in my life:

- My late parents Mr Zabulon and Mrs Elizabeth Serero , who initiated the journey of studying. They wished me to become a better person in life;
- My wife, Ivy and two kids, Lebule and Lesego;
- My dear sisters and brother, Dongo, Pinkey and Aupaki who encouraged and prayed for me on the journey of my studies; and
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Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of school governing bodies (SGBs) regarding their overall mandate in the Free State Province. The governance mandate, as stated in the South African Schools Act, requires the SGB to "*promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school*".

An in-depth literature review on governance and international and intercontinental practices revealed the school governance mandate as meaning that the SGB must *provide the school with a strategic direction; act as critical friend to the school; and hold the school to account*. These roles essentially describe the school governance mandate. To this end, a questionnaire was used to determine how effective SGBs executed this mandate in the Free State Province, with a population of principals, SGB chairpersons, educator-governors and non-teaching staff-governors.

Results obtained through computing frequency analyses, rank orders, Pearson's correlation, ANOVA and the Tukey HSD tests of respondents' perceptions of governance effectiveness items and dimensions indicated that there were statistically different perceptions regarding how effective SGB were and that these were of significant and practical effect. This meant that the effectiveness of SGBs regarding their overall mandate was indeterminate and that SGB did well in some areas of governance and not too well in others.

The conclusion drawn from the study was that the structural composition of SGBs was limited SGBs' effectiveness regarding their governance mandate. Therefore, the main recommendation is that the SGBs need to be restructured. The recommended Two-Tier Approach to school governance proposes a structure consisting of the executive tier: responsible for policy formulation and implementation, which is a strategic-accountability role; and the non-executive tier: responsible for scrutiny-accountability, which entails the roles of acting as a critical friend and holding the school to account.

KEYWORDS: School governance; school governance mandate; strategy; strategic direction; accountability; holding to account; critical friend; school development planning; school governance typologies.

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1. The reference technique and the reference list are written according to the NWU referencing guide (2012) available at http://www.nwu.ac.za.
2. Where page numbers are not indicated in sources cited, this is because these sources are from websites that do not indicate page numbers.
3. Where page numbers are not indicated in citations from journal, reference is made to the entire article and not to a particular section or quotation.
4. Where page numbers are not indicated even though the source is numbered, reference is made to the theme of the whole publication and not a specific page reference.

Chapter 1

Orientation

1.1 Introduction

> "*It seems that everywhere one turns today, education is in the news. And most of what we hear and read about is really serious stuff: education is in crisis, pupils are under prepared and badly behaved, teachers are not performing as they should, parents are not supportive – the list goes on*" (Phosa, 2011:11).

This quotation indicates just how much of a challenge education has become as well as how much attention it currently demands in society. The notion that education is in crisis elicits the question of just how effective education structures are in overseeing education processes. Of major concern, is the effectiveness of structures that are supposed to govern education in South Africa. Such structures would include all education designations like the National Ministry and the Provincial Departments of Education as major governance structures responsible for policy development and implementation and most notably, schools as operational levels of education policy implementation (Xaba, 2011:201). The School Governing Body (SGB) is such a structure and is responsible for education policy implementation at school level, which in essence and according to Section 20(a) of the South African Schools Act[2] (Republic of South Africa, 1996), carries the overall mandate which charges it to:

> *promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school;*

Therefore, given this School Governing Body (SGB) mandate and the concern expressed in the quotation above, it stands to reason that the effectiveness of

2Hereafter the Schools Act

SGBs in the country seem questionable and thus raises the following question which also undergirds this study:

- How effective are SGBs regarding their overall school governance mandate in the Free State Province?

1.2 **Rationale**

The overall mandate of the SGB calls for the provision of quality education for all learners at schools by promoting the best interests of the school. This is, indeed, the way in which the effectiveness of the SGB would be manifested and evaluated in practice. The very structure of the SGB as legislated seeks to facilitate this mandate. In this regard, numerous educational changes made worldwide, including South Africa, direct public school governance towards the strategy of decentralisation of education governance to local levels (Kuye & Kakumba, 2008; Heystek, 2006; Fareed & Waghid, 2005; USAID, 2005; Van Wyk, 2004). According to USAID (2005:1), decentralisation brings decision-making closer to the people and affords them a greater opportunity to take part in schooling decisions and it grants parents an opportunity to hold education service providers accountable.

Advocates of decentralisation base reforms on the assumption that in order to ensure improvement in schools, those closest to the learners should be offered the authority to make key decisions (Parker & Leithwood, 2000:38). For this reason, SGBs in South Africa comprise stakeholders at school level, who include: the principal as *ex officio* member, elected representative of educators, parents and learners (in secondary schools) as well as co-opted community members acting as resource people to the SGB. Of significance to decentralised school governance, parents must be in the majority of the SGB membership (Republic of South Africa, 1996) and their ability to govern depends on their skills, knowledge and experience regarding governance (Heystek, 2006:488).

A critical requirement for decentralised governance to succeed is that governors should understand their own roles and functions (Heystek, 2006:488) as

stipulated in sections 20 and 21 of the Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996). This would mean that SGBs are effective and carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively.

All SGBs are required to and must perform section 20 functions while section 21 functions are allocated to specific SGBs at the discretion of the Head of Department (HOD) (Heystek & Nyambi, 2007:227, Republic of South Africa, 1996:16). However, decentralisation poses numerous challenges of effectiveness (Mestry, 2006:29; Chisholm, Motala & Vally, 2003:246) for instance, allowing different competences and inequalities of power and influence among SGB members. Mncube (2009:32) argues that decentralisation does not necessarily bring about school democracy, but school democracy is brought about by stakeholder participation in SGBs. Notwithstanding these views, positive aspects with regard to decentralisation have been reported in South Africa. For example, among other positive reports, Mahlangu (2008:43) reports that SGBs do hold meetings regularly and their composition, membership and elections are of good standing.

However, as reported by various researches, current SGB practices mostly in previously disadvantaged schools, generally indicate that there are challenges to SGB effectiveness as they show that:

- there are difficulties in realising the main role of SGBs, that of promoting the best interests of the school (Xaba, 2004:316);
- the parent component in SGBs is allegedly reported to be mostly illiterate or semi-literate and as such, policy formulation and interpretation is a problem; consequently parents cannot differentiate between management and governance roles (Xaba, 2011:205; Mavuso, 2009:16; Tsotetsi, 2005:177);
- SGB members reportedly struggle to manage resources and lack financial management skills (Tsotetsi, Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2008:396; Mestry & Hlongwane, 2009:332; Mahlangu, 2008:141);

- SGBs are overloaded with overcomplicated work (Zondi, 2005; Tsotetsi, 2005:107); and
- negative social/contextual factors, namely, poverty and unemployment impact negatively on the role of SGBs (Tsotetsi, 2005:156).

While numerous studies indicate challenges in the execution of particular aspects of school governance as pointed out above, there is a dearth of studies reflecting on the effectiveness of SGBs in terms of their overall mandate in South Africa. Thus, the results of this study led to a proposal of an approach intended to promote the effectiveness of SGBs in South Africa. This aim was achieved by operationalising an applicable methodology to investigate the effectiveness of SGBs in the Free State Province as its primary focus, as in-depth and as extensively as possible.

1.3 **Purpose statement**

The intent of this pragmatic quantitative study was to investigate the effectiveness of SGBs regarding their overall school governance mandate. A questionnaires was utilised to investigate the effectiveness of SGBs regarding their overall school governance mandate in the Free State Province. The study purposefully involved ordinary mainstream public schools in education districts of the Free State Department of Education. Furthermore, ordinary public schools were used because while school governance functions for ordinary public school SGBs are largely similar to schools catering to learners with special educational needs, numerous specialised features relating to the latter schools' governance would require a specific focus and falls outside the scope of this study.

1.4 **Research questions**

The research questions for this study comprised the primary and the secondary questions, which were further translated into research objectives.

1.4.1 **Primary research question**

The primary research question of this study is: *How effective are SGBs regarding their overall school governance mandate in the Free State Province*?

1.4.2 **Secondary research questions**

In order to explore the primary research question fully, the following secondary questions were addressed:

- What does the overall school governance mandate entail?
- What does school governance effectiveness entail in relation to the overall SGB mandate?
- How effective are SGBs with regard to their overall mandate of school governance in the Free State Province?
- What approach can be used to enhance the effectiveness of SGBs regarding their overall school governance mandate in the Free State Province?

The secondary research questions translated into the following research objectives:

- To examine what the overall school governance mandate entails;
- To examine what school governance effectiveness entails in relation to the overall SGB mandate;
- To explore how effective SGBs are with regard to their overall mandate of school governance in the Free State Province; and
- To develop an approach that can be used to enhance the effectiveness of SGBs regarding their overall school governance mandate in the Free State Province.

The study was located within school governance roles and functions as outlined in the School's Act and as contextualised in various literature sources by

numerous experts in the field of school management, leadership and governance.

1.5 **Conceptual framework**

For purposes of this study, school governance is conceptualised on the basis of school governance roles and functions as outlined in the Schools Act. School governance is regarded as an act of determining policy and rules by which a school is to be organised and controlled. It includes ensuring that such rules and policies are carried out effectively in terms of the law (Smit & Oosthuizen, 2011:58). In this sense, the roles and functions attendant to school governance are encapsulated in the prescript contained in Section 20(1) of the Schools Act, which, as stated earlier, states the overall mandate of the SGB thus:

> *to promote the best interests of the school and to strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education and to support the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions*.

In executing this overall mandate, the SGB provides the school with a strategic direction, acts as critical friend and holds the school to account. This is in fact, an exposition of the school governance mandate by many scholars as will be indicated later in the study.

In essence, the three elements of the overall school governance mandate are given expression in the listed Section 20 and 21 functions of SGBs. I view the listed nature of the functions of the SGBs as being the possible cause of challenges regarding the effectiveness of SGBs in executing their overall governance mandate.

- **Providing the school with a strategic direction**

Providing the school with a strategic direction means that the SGB sets the general direction of the school, supports the work of the school and holds the school to account (Open University, 2011). In this regard, Business in the Community (2008:14) states that

> *taking a largely strategic role in the running of the school, includes setting up a strategic framework for the school, setting its aims and objectives, setting policies and targets for achieving the objectives, reviewing progress and reviewing the strategic framework in the light of progress*.

This implies reviewing and agreeing on policies, targets, priorities, monitoring and reviewing aims and objectives. James, Brammer, Connolly, Fertig, James and Jones (2011:418) broaden this role to imply quality assurance and standards of education in the school by bringing high expectations; ensuring full deliberation and questioning of policies, budgets, and practices; and putting systems in place for monitoring and reviewing the standards of achievement, financial plans and policy developments. According to Xaba (2011:203), providing a strategic direction also implies establishing strategic objectives and/or long-term goals which will bring the school closer to its ultimate vision in the sense that a time frame is attached to such objective.

- **Holding the school to account**

According to Balarin, Brammer, James and McCormack (2008:30), accountability defines a relationship of formalised control between parties one of whom has the authority to hold the other to account for what they do and typically includes an evaluation of what has been done in relation to the required standards. To this end, Balarin *et al*. (2008:30) argue that to be accountable usually carries with it a sense of being responsible for something and answerable to another for the discharging of that responsibility. In this regard, Open University (2011) states that the SGB has to ensure accountability through the provision of information both to, and from, the SGB, which implies receiving the school's report on performance and progress and reporting to stakeholders. This means that the principal and staff report to the SGB on the school's performance, and in its turn, the SGB must be accountable, implying that it must explain or justify the school's overall performance to parents and wider local community (Zondi, 2005:28).

Accountability of the SGB is facilitated through stakeholder representation. The Schools Act prescribes that the SGB be comprised of the parent component in the majority. Hence, accountability is inextricably linked to democratic management and other related concepts such as participation, decentralization, empowerment and transparency (Maile, 2002:326). Ranson (2011:402) makes the point that good governance provides scrutiny and accountability to assure quality and standards by:

- bringing high expectations to the school;
- ensuring full deliberation and questioning of the policies, budgets and practices of the school; and
- putting in place systems for monitoring and reviewing the standards of achievement, financial plans and policy developments of the school.

- **Acting as a critical friend**

According to Swaffield (2007, 205) critical friendship is a term referring to a supportive yet challenging relationship between professionals. Within this broad frame it is being used in a variety of ways, reflecting differing contexts such as school improvement and professional development. Whatever the specific context, the critical friend is generally portrayed as a detached outsider who assists through questioning, reflecting back and providing another viewpoint. The critical friend prompts the other person towards honest reflection and re-appraisal, a seeing anew that may be challenging and uncomfortable, yet enhancing. The relationship is neither cosy nor collusive, but rather one that cultivates constructive critique (Swaffield, 2007, 206).

School Governing Bodies should work with the principal and create a clear understanding of the challenges faced in managing a school. In this sense, acting as a critical friend implies that the SGB provides advice, support and challenge to the school and principal (Business in the Community, 2008:14). Furthermore, Business in the Community (2008:27) emphasises that the SGB, in acting as a critical friend, asks questions and tries to understand what the school is doing well and where it needs to do better. To this end, Balarin *et al*.

(2008:15) assert that this includes monitoring and evaluating schools' progress and, in acting as critical friend and giving support to the school and principal, the SGB supports the principal in the performance of his/her functions and offers constructive criticism. Therefore, it can be inferred, as pointed out by Heystek (2006:403) that the SGB should feel able to 'question and challenge' and in a good working relationship, this will be accepted and be seen as positive, while in a poor relationship, it will cause conflict. Indeed, real critical friendship is only achieved where there is trust and mutual respect (Heystek, 2006:403). Trust and mutual respect are critical in the SGB's responsibility for monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes of the school's effectiveness, asking challenging questions, and pressing for improvement and friendship because it exists to promote the interest of the school and learners. This means that SGBs must channel their helpfulness and offer critical friendship during the provision of quality education for learners.

The conceptual framework is illustrated in figure 1.1 below.

Figure 1.1 **School governance mandate: conceptual framework**

In appraising SGB effectiveness in public schools, this study investigated the execution of the overall governance mandate to promote the best interests of the schools and to strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education and to support the principal, educators and other staff members of the school in the performance of their professional functions. To achieve this, a suitable research method was used.

1.6 **Overview of the research method**

This study intended to explore how effective SGBs are with regard to their overall mandate of school governance in the Free State Province. It was quantitative in design and, as such, was grounded in the positivist paradigm. A survey method for data collection was employed, using a questionnaire to elicit perceptions of respondents concerning main dimensions denoting school governance effectiveness.

Respondents in the study comprised school principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors in the Free State Province.

A detailed exposition of the research method is presented in Chapter 3.

1.7 **Possible contribution of the study**

The study's contribution was envisaged to be in both theory and practice. The theoretical contribution was in terms of the school governance mandate as prescribed in the Schools Act, that is, unpacking the context thereof and contextualising it within the listed functions of SGBs as prescribed in Sections 20 and 21 of the Schools Act.

The study would also contribute to the practice of school governance effectiveness by locating the limitations in practice and recommending an approach to enhance the effectiveness of the overall school governance mandate of SGBs in the Free State Province.

1.8 Challenges of the study

Challenges related to the study included factors involving participants' reluctance to participate and to divulge information they deemed sensitive or a risk to their positions. This was, however, addressed by firstly, adhering to ethical measures, especially regarding confidentiality and anonymity. Secondly, the researcher ensured that the research report contained respondents' authentic perceptions as derived from the statistical analysis of data. Thirdly, participants were shown the permission from the Free State Department of Education (cf. Appendix D), which assured them that permission for their voluntary participation had been obtained. Finally, participants were assured that their partaking would be for research purposes only and that nowhere on the questionnaire would their personal and/or their schools' identities be required, thus assuring anonymity.

1.9 Overview of the study

Chapter 1 presents an orientation and purpose statement. This includes an overview of the research method.

Chapter 2 presents the literature review pertaining to the overall mandate of SGBs. This includes clarification of the theoretical aspects of school governance and also entails an analytical comparison of the study phenomenon with current relevant and similar studies concerning school governance.

Chapter 3 presents the empirical research methodology. This entails a discussion of how the research was conducted, especially the empirical survey, which details matters pertaining to the paradigmatic orientation, design, strategy of research, data collection and analysis, quality standards and ethical measures.

Chapter 4 presents data analysis and interpretation in terms of the quantitative statistical computations. This entails the use of statistical presentations in tabular and/or graphic forms and the discussion of the findings and implications are also offered in this chapter.

Chapter 5 presents the findings of the study, conclusions and recommendations. This is in the form of a summary of findings and conclusions. Recommendations include a specific recommendation in the form of an approach to enhance school governance effectiveness. Recommendations for further research are suggested. Finally, limitations of the study are also outlined.

1.10 **Chapter summary**

This chapter presented the rationale and purpose statement. This included an indication of the primary research question and secondary research questions. These were further translated into pursuable research objectives. In addition, this chapter presented the conceptual framework; an overview of the research method; possible contributions and challenges of the study. Finally, the chapter division for the study was outlined.

The next chapter presents the literature review on the overall mandate and effectiveness of SGBs.

Chapter 2

Literature review: What the overall mandate and effectiveness of school governing bodies entails

2.1 Introduction

This chapter intends to examine the nature of the overall effectiveness of SGBs regarding their roles and functions. To this end, the focus of this chapter is on the meaning of the school governance mandate, on what it entails and on the contextualisation of the South African school governance mandate as provided for in the Schools Act.

In order to investigate SGB effectiveness, the concept school governance, its approaches, typologies as well as school governance models are defined and discussed. The genesis of the school governance mandate is presented by showing how the school governance mandate is conceptualised in the four selected countries, namely Britain, Australia, United States of America and Botswana. The South African conception of school governance is then presented and finally, the meaning and implications of school governance are presented. The chapter is rounded off with a contextualisation of the school governance mandate in South Africa and its implications for effective school governance.

2.2 School governance: The concept

School governance can best be understood within the context of the meaning of the word governance. The Oxford Dictionary (2012) defines governance as the action or manner of governing a state or an organisation. Shipley and Kovacs (2007:215) contend that governance is a vibrant interaction involving structures, functions, processes and organisational traditions that an organisation or department uses to accomplish its vision and mission. According to Ontario Education Service Corporation (OESC) (2010:22), governance is defined as "*the exercise of authority, direction, and accountability to serve the purpose of*

public education". Gordon (2005:4) defines school governance as referring to a "*decision-making processes that reflect accountability, responsibility and a commitment to innovative school improvement*". According to United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP, 2012), governance means "*the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented)*".

From the above discussion, school governance seems to entail the responsibility for school outcomes in that it provides a framework and process for the allocation of decision-making powers and the implementation of such decisions (Gordon, 2005:4). School governance can therefore be regarded as a process of decision-making that involve the exercise of authority, direction and accountability to serve the purpose of a school. It is a unique process of providing the school with direction in the pursuit of the school educational outcomes. Indeed, in exercising this authority, decisions-making is critical as all activities towards achieving educational goals are dependent on decisions made by the governance structure(s) to direct the school's activities. This implies that school governance takes place within a formal structure which comprises role players in the exercise of governance. This structure is the SGB, and in South Africa, it derives its mandate from the Schools Act.

In exercising school governance in line with this definition, Balarin *et al*. (2008:37) qualifies the concept of school governance as being "*concerned with the system by which organisations are directed and controlled"* and "*relates to the authority structure of an organisation and hence to the arrangements that determine what organisations can do, who controls them, how that control is exercised, and how the risks and returns from the activities they undertake are allocated".*

Therefore for purposes of this study, the researcher defines school governance as:

> *the process of governing the school by a mandated group or team of role players whose governance responsibility is to provide a framework for*

taking and implementing decisions in pursuance of the school's educational goals in such a way that lines of control and accountability are clear.

From this characterisation of school governance, it can be deduced that accountability is an important and integral aspect of school governance. In this regard, the notions of what organisations can do, who controls them and how; and how risks and returns are allocated clearly imply an element of being accountable. This implies that school governance does not only relate to governing the school, but in essence, relates to good governance as is implied by the notion of accountability.

According to Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi (2004:209) good governance means "*traditions and institutions by which authority … is exercised for the common good"* which includes elected leaders, the capacity to govern and respect for the state. Graham, Amos and Plumtree (2003) assert that good governance is participatory, transparent and accountable and subsequently, it is valuable, fair and encourages the rule of law. Van der Waldt (2004:5) points out that good governance is the effective, efficient and economic use of inadequate and limited resources grounded on political authority which is accountable, responsible and answerable in leading society and convincing its various interest groups to embrace common goals and strategies. Adding two more dimensions, Fourie (2009:1114) articulates the view that the common denominator in the definitions of good governance is that, in essence, it addresses the allocation and management of resources to respond to collective challenges such as fraud and corruption. Thus good governance needs capacity, knowledge, skills and the resources to fight challenges by taking cognisance of key requirements, the establishment and administering of sound institutional mechanisms, to do so.

According to Independent Advocacy Project (IAP), (cited by Jonas & Cloete, 2006:109), good governance is promoted through activities such as:

- organisational and administrative policy reforms;

- decentralisation of power;
- accountability; and
- governing structure efficiency.

Ranson (2011:4000) adds his contention that good governance is dependent on a variety of approaches such as indirect leadership of the governance structure which mainly influences the ability of professional leaders to develop and sustain the school's culture, capability and capacity during the provision of quality education. Accordingly then, Lewis and Petterson (2009) propose eight essentials surmising the elements of good governance, namely:

- *consensus orientation* – all decisions taken should be grounded on agreements between all stakeholders and in the best interests of the whole community;
- *accountability* – all public officials should be answerable for the provision of their services;
- *transparency* – all decisions making is carried out publicly;
- *responsiveness* – organisations and their processes should try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe;
- *equitability and inclusiveness* – local communities' wellbeing depends on ensuring that all its members feel that they have a stake in organisational decisions;
- *effectiveness and efficiency* – an organisation's processes produce results that meet the needs of the community while making the best use of resources at their disposal;
- *following rules* - fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially; and
- *participation* – men and women from the community should participate and their participation could either be direct or be through legitimate structures.

Jonas and Cloete (2006:110) cite Graham and Wilson (2004) who aptly surmise the essence of good governance in the following model:

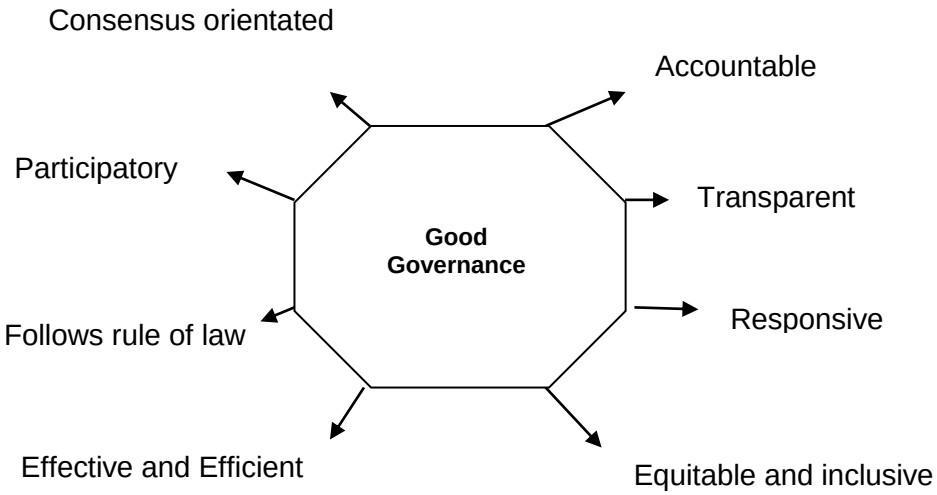


Figure 2.1 Good governance model (Adopted from Graham and Wilson (2004) as cited by Jonas and Cloete (2006:110).

The exposition of good governance above seems grounded on a number of key elements. These elements include the presence of authority that assumes decision-making on behalf of the society or groups of people, which implies legitimacy. This authority's governance is thus mandated and as such, is required to be accountable, hence the need for being participatory, transparent, accountable and promoting the rule of law. Furthermore, as a mandated entity, governance structures exercise good governance through effective, efficient and economic use of inadequate and limited resources. This aptly describes what the SGB is and describes its legitimacy when acting on behalf of the school community in exercising good governance that seeks to pursue and achieve the school's educational goals.

The definition of governance and in particular, good governance, indicates a possible variability of approaches in the exercise of governance. In so far as school governance is concerned, this suggests different modes of governance to maintain the ideal elements as exposed above and therefore, implies the existence of different approaches to school governance.

2.3 School governance approaches

In considering approaches to school governance, a distinction is made between governance typologies and models.

2.3.1 School governance typologies

Due to considerations of how school governance is exercised in various settings, Balarin *et al.* (2008:29) distinguish between four typologies of school governance: a deliberative forum, consultative forum, executive board and the governing body.

2.3.1.1 *School governance as a deliberative forum*

In the deliberative forum, the principal undertakes leadership in all school governance activities, including meetings. Other governing body members (the parent governors) are not supposed to question the principal's power (Wylie, 2007:10). According to Marishane (1999:50) an alternative name given to this typology is '*the traditional school governance model'* wherein there is lack of collaboration among the principal, parents and other stakeholders when school decisions are made. In this model, power play is prominent; it damages the relationship of trust and mutual support is poorer between all the stakeholders (Bagarette, 2011: 231; Heystek, 2004:3). A study by Mahlangu (2008:169) revealed that principals often adopted the deliberative forum because they perceived other SGB members as being detrimental to school operations because members gave the impression that they governed schools by themselves.

2.3.1.2 *School governance as a consultative sounding board*

In a consultative sounding board forum, the principal is responsible for the design of policies and strategies for the school and the SGB exists only to endorse these plans (Balarin *et al*., 2008:29). Subsequently, the SGB permits policies and strategies in which they did not participate as decision makers in their design, to be implemented in the school. Adopting this approach implies that the SGB is not entitled to design school policies but hands over this role to

the principal. Notably, this approach allows the SGB and the principal to hold meetings. However, the principal will ultimately make the final decisions, because he/she is perhaps viewed as having acquired many years of experience in school management that put him/her in an advantageous position to decide on school matters (Heystek, 2004:309). Mahlangu (2008:154) points out that often principals realise that parents are not clear concerning their roles, which renders them highly ineffective as school governors.

This type of school governance forum seems to exist in many ways in SGBs. For instance, Bagarette (2011:233) found that SGBs are not actively involved in the decision-making of the school, while Mncube (2009: 99) found that the reason for this lack of participation by the SGBs is that they lack confidence and that they need to have a certain level of competency, literacy and skill to be able to make positive contributions as they lack knowledge and experience in school matters. Mncube (2009:99) also argues that SGBs are not always given sufficient opportunity to participate in the decision-making process.

2.3.1.3 ***School governance as an executive board***

In the executive board typology, there exists a partnership between the governors and the school, especially between the principal and the chair (Ballarin *et al*., 2008:29). According to Ballarin *et al*. (2008:29), *"there may be a division of labour, in which governors have overall responsibility for the business aspects of the school: the budget, staffing, and the infrastructure of the building"* and the principal assumes *"overall responsibility for curricular and pedagogic aspects of the school"*, in which case *"there is likely to be a strong structure of subcommittees with considerable delegation of responsibility"*. Wylie (2007:10) points out that in an executive board, there is a partnership wherein the governing body scrutinises performance as well as take overall responsibility for the business aspects of the school.

2.3.1.4 ***School governance as a governing body***

In the approach to school governance as a governing body, the principal maintains strong leadership, but is seen as a member rather than leader of the SGB that acts as a corporate entity while the chair has the main role in agenda setting and leading meetings (Balarin *et al*., 2008:29). In this case, the SGB takes overarching responsibility for the conduct and direction of the school. This typology is likely to engender collaboration and accountability in that the SGB is involved in the decision-making and the scrutiny of the implementation of such decisions. Wylie (2007:10) typifies this approach to school governance as providing systematic scrutiny and strategic leadership of the school with the principal being a strong professional leader but does not lead the SGB. It is notable that the principal takes strong leadership, which, depending on the SGB's expertise, knowledge and skills can either be an advantage or disadvantage in a converse situation.

The different typologies of school governance indicate how variable school governance is described. However, one particular aspect that pervades these typologies is the description of how SGBs function and especially the different roles prescribed to governors, particularly the principal. Balarin *et al.* (2008:29) provide the rationale to explain the variety of demands placed on SGBs that influence their roles as follows:

- a managerial rationale which emphasises efficiency in the administration of resources as well as the importance of meeting standards of school achievement, which requires governors with managerial skills;
- a localising rationale which stresses the importance of adapting public services to the demands of local communities, and requires governors from and with knowledge of the local communities in which schools are located; and
- a democratising rationale which highlights democratic participation and active citizenship and places requirements for governors who can enhance accountability and representation as well as tighten the links

between schools and their communities, but who will also serve a broader democratising agenda.

The governance as school governing body as an approach to school governance seems to be in line with the approach advocated in the Schools Act and thus denotes school governance effectiveness. In essence, this typology implies that the effectiveness of the SGB lies in the SGB taking overarching responsibility for the conduct and direction of the school. For one, it propounds the principal's strong leadership as being important while at the same time stating that he/she is seen as a member of the SGB. An essential aspect of this typology is that the strategic direction, systematic scrutiny or critical friendship and accountability are key levers of school governance effectiveness.

The variability in school governance typologies as exposed above indicates how differently school governance is viewed. Perhaps much more explicit and relevant to contemporary school governance are the different theories or models underpinning school governance.

2.3.2 **School governance models**

School governance models portray various approaches to how schools are governed and mainly originate from corporate governance models. McCrone, Southcott and George (2011:4) postulate that governing bodies typically represent a range of interests that include parents and community groups, the school and the local authority. Therefore, school governance is normally either of the business or stakeholder model.

2.3.2.1 **The business model of school governance**

McCrone *et al*. (2011:4) describe the business model of school governance as being,

> *commonly used in academies and the head teacher and the governing bodies are responsible for governance and are noted to be more prevalent in federations and academies, where governing bodies may*

include sponsors and a larger business and community representation than maintained schools.

The academies and federations can be considered as sponsored institutions, the equivalent of which in South Africa would be independent schools.

At these schools, the business model is suitable because the financial interests of the sponsors as investment in the communities are paramount. As such, the sponsors are major decision-makers and this includes the recruitment of personnel and budget considerations. Consequently, at these schools, the principal in collaboration with the SGBs are in charge of school governance.

According to Casadesus-Masanell and Zhu (2013:464), when the SGB of an independent school adopts the business model of school governance, they should note that at root, the business model serves as an improvement that searches for new reasons and new ways of the school to create and capture value for stakeholders; focuses primarily on finding new ways to generate revenues and define value propositions for customers, suppliers, and partners.

Casadesus-Masanell and Zhu (2013:464) suggest that the business model of school governance is currently highly preferred considering the economic downturn in the world where tax collections are minimised and thus education departments are faced with severe cuts in budgets, resulting in impacts on the education system. Therefore, in order for schools to survive financially, SGBs partner with sponsors who reward schools financially and in turn, SGBs channel these funds into projects and activities which contribute towards school improvements and effectiveness. To this end, examples of such partnerships can be found in, for instance, a school's lack of specialist educators or therapists who usually come at a price. The SGB can strategically enter into partnership with a company that can be permitted to advertise its goods in and around the school premises. Part of the revenue collected through such a partnership can then be used remunerate the appointed specialist educators or a therapist. Sometimes, the state is unable to supply or procure the necessary learning and teaching aids for a school. If the business model is adopted in a

school, then a sponsor can either procure or supply the needed aids for a school. Similarly, sponsors can maintain and/or improve on school facilities which are used during teaching and learning.

Ranson and Crouch (2009:54) are of the view that in a school where the business model is prominent, people from the world of business and commerce are often attracted to participate in school activities and eventually become members of SGBs because this model emphasises the importance of leading a large-scale significant business, contributing to the school's provision of quality education and largely contributing to the nation's knowledge economy. Additionally, this allows an opportunity for these expert SGB members to present their skills on a voluntary basis. For this reason, Ranson and Crouch (2009:54) point out that the attraction of highly skilled personnel makes the business model even more relevant for schools (Ranson & Crouch, 2009:54) because of SGB inefficacy typified by too many governing bodies 'rubber stamping' decisions because they are unskilled. Furthermore, recruitment, especially of parents who are skilled, is difficult and results in sustaining retention leading to inertia of membership.

2.3.2.2 ***The stakeholder model of school governance***

The stakeholder model of school governance, as the name suggests, involves the majority of members of the governing body (who are parents that are elected) and anybody who might be added as stakeholders of the school, to ensure accountability and wide representation (McCrone *et al.,* 2011:4). The stakeholders include, as pointed out by McCrone *et al*. (2011:4), "*the local communities, the local authorities and educators*".

According to Ranson and Crouch (2009:52), the stakeholder model of school governance is based on the principle of partnership between all the groups with a 'stakeholder' interest in the school namely, elected parents, educators and support staff. In South Africa, the stakeholder model of school governance includes the election of learner representatives at secondary schools. Accordingly, all the interests of each group are regarded as equal, one no more

important than another and those included as members of the SGB should not regard themselves formally as representatives, or delegates, of their stakeholder constituencies, but rather as bringing an understanding of a perspective to a corporate body within which they would form common membership. Ranson and Crouch (2009:53) make the point that:

> *The principle underlying the constitution of such stakeholder governing bodies has been that schools will only work well when the different constituencies which have an interest in the success of the school are provided with a space to express their voice and reach agreement about the purpose and practices that will shape the education of children in the school.*

According to Asiimwe (2012:60), the stakeholder model is branded with the collegial model – where systems, organisational functioning and decision making approaches are achieved through agreement, decision making and professional authority of a school's staff members. The model relies on the assumption that schools as a community of scholars are to be governed according to collegiality principles.

In South Africa, school governance was fashioned according to the stakeholder model after 1994. This is premised on the notion that *"the democratisation of education includes the idea that stakeholders such as parents, teachers, learners and other people (such as members of the community near your school) must participate in the activities of the school"* (Department of Education, 1997:6). Bush and Heystek (2003:131) point out that the stakeholder model in South Africa provides for learner membership in secondary schools; parents constitute a majority of the governing body; the governing body chair must be a parent governor; and co-opted members have no voting rights. The school governance effectiveness in this model clearly entails principles of participation and collaborative decision-making. In line with the typology of governance as the school governing body, this model propounds participatory and inclusive efforts from stakeholders involved in school governance in

providing the school with direction, scrutiny and accountability as pointed out above.

School governance models indicate the various ways in which schools can be governed. However, while there may be numerous approaches to the task of governing schools, the purpose of school governance remains of paramount importance. Therefore, the school governance mandate lays the basis for school governance.

2.4 **The genesis of school governance: From centralisation to decentralisation.**

School governance has seen an evolution through the years of public schooling. Notably, school governance has evolved from forms of top-down and centralised governance, with little or no stakeholder involvement and participation, to what is contemporarily regarded as decentralised, participatory and inclusive school governance. This has largely been necessitated by the change in school management and governance into site-based management and self-governance of schools. It is, therefore, imperative to gain insight into decentralisation as a cornerstone of contemporary school governance.

According to De Villiers (2010:24) as well as Karlsson, McPherson and Pampallis (2002:141), decentralisation of school governance means that decision making is devolved from the state to schools and SGBs become responsible. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO: 2005) highlights that decentralisation involves the transfer of all or part of the decision-making, responsibilities and management vested in the central authority towards ‘communities’. Usually, it is conveyed through political and financial changes that occur in the governance system (De Villiers, 2010:24). When SGBs are conferred with school governance, the message is that the state alone cannot manage schools, but other stakeholders are invited to participate in processes that determine how public schools should be governed (Beckmann, 2006:182).

Decentralisation is often associated with democracy (Sayed, 2002:38) meaning that when the decentralised school governance model is followed, decision making involves a wide number of people and *inter alia* power is diffused (Karlsson *et al.,* 2002:143). In South Africa, decentralised school governance is adopted and is aimed at achieving the political goals of the political party in power (Serfontein, 2005:18) which are founded on democracy and community participation in the education of their learners. This is important because the previous government with its 'dishonest' education system, did not permit community participation in education matters because the old education system was built on racism, oppression and authoritarianism.

According to Karlsson *et al. (*2002:141) school governance which is decentralised allows democratic participation which is aimed at the promotion of democracy and effective use of school resources; increasing collaboration among all stakeholders with vested interest in education; promoting the philosophy of satisfying people's educational needs; and advocating the sharing of financial load between the state and local communities during teaching and learning.

Bush and Heystek (2003) scrutinised the locally established SGB approach immediately after the democratisation of South Africa and found that the approach to school governance relates the emergence of school governance to wider issues of democracy and participation. This study reported that despite the significant difficulties faced by the educational system locally, decentralised school governance provides a good view of enhancing local democracy and improving the quality of education for all learners. For this reason, decentralised school governance has critical significance for the way in which the contemporary roles of SGBs and their functioning are conceptualised and understood in practice.

2.4.1 **The contemporary school governance mandate**

The contemporary school governance mandate displays commonalities in many countries with a shift from centralisation of education control to decentralisation

and devolution of school governance decision-making to local and operational levels of education. This can be gleaned in how school governance is legislated and carried out in different countries, both internationally and intercontinentally. In essence, the last fifty years have seen major shifts in school governance patterns globally. In countries like Britain, Australia, United States of America (USA) and Botswana, public schools have been given major powers to manage their own affairs within clearly defined national frameworks. The Republic South Africa South Africa has also instituted decentralisation of school governance. This section outlines the development of school governance in selected countries, namely: Britain, Australia, the United States of America, the Republic of Botswana and the Republic South Africa.

Reasoning for the selection of the above-mentioned countries, pertains to the areas of similarity in educational demographics and their models of school governance to contemporary school governance in South Africa. The intention of comparing these countries' educational demographics and models of governance was to show that while regional differences existed, these countries have followed a similar course towards school governance. The central theme running through the history of these countries' public schooling is the importance of the influence of parents in education.

Three international examples and one African example are discussed in the next section for purposes of comparison and understanding the genesis of the contemporary school governance mandate. Trends in South Africa are also discussed.

2.4.1.1 ***School governance in Britain***

Education reforms in Britain concerning school governance began in the 1940s with the Education Act of 1944 making way for governing bodies as they currently are constituted (Singh, 2006:35). However, throughout those years up to the 1970s, school governance was mainly the responsibility of the Local Education Authorities (LEAs) who operated at the district level until the late 1970s (Balarin *et al*., 2008:10). Parents and other local structures were

sidelined in school decision-making processes because the state wanted to attain uniformity and take governance out of people's lives (Arnot & Raab, 2000:182). While governing bodies or school boards existed at school level, they were constituted mainly of politicians and clergy who did not have control over schools because much power was vested in LEAs.

Therefore, during this period, school governance was highly centralised because the state was the primary steering mechanism concerned with the operation of schools. LEAs were the only custodians of school governance because they controlled school finances; had the power to appoint and dismiss staff; and they would even take final decisions on learner admissions in all schools without parent involvement (Arnot & Raab, 2000:182).

As time progressed, the politicians or liberals in Britain became unhappy with this high level model of centralisation – schools did not produce learners of high quality because they could not fit market needs, which meant that there was no value for money in education (Chambers & Cornforth, 2010:1). In trying to redress this situation, the state introduced the Education Reform Act in 1988.

The Education Reform Act of 1988 directed public schools to establish a form of site-based management which fundamentally means LEAs were diminished and replaced with school boards and other stakeholders (Balarin *et al*., 2008:11). According to Singh (2006:36), governance in British schools evolved from passive to a more participatory and effective type of school governance.

Following the publication of the Education Reform Act, British schools became autonomous because parents and other interests group were allowed to participate in school governance (Hooge, Burns & Wilkoszewski, 2012:7). This Act stipulated that all LEAs' roles and functions had to be transferred to school boards and prescribed how power was to be distributed in that no single constituency was supposed to be dominant over the other. Instead, collaboration between all governing members was propagated and governing bodies were given the responsibility of strategic planning and accountability. As

part of the drive for these principles, there was a shift from ‘education markets’ to partnerships and performance management (Balarin *et al*., 2008:11).

As a result of many people becoming involved in education, public schools in Britain adopted multifaceted patterns of school governance and currently, schools have their own distinguishing school governance arrangements (Dean, Dyson, Gallannaugh, Howes & Raffo, 2007:2). According to McCrone *et al*. (2011:4) two models of school governance are currently practiced in Britain: the business model and the stakeholder model. In terms of the latter, which appears dominant, public school governance is shared between all community members in the system and public schools are obliged to work within a framework of national policy and regulation. As such, each public school is maintained by a governing body which is responsible for its conduct. With this cooperate stakeholder model used in many British schools, various stakeholder groups are represented on the governing body, for example school staff, parents, the local authority, the local community and the school principal (Ranson, Arnott, McKeown, Martin & Smith, 2005:361). Some public schools with religious affiliations are permitted to have a representation within governing bodies (James, Brammer, Connoly, Spicer, James & Jones, 2013:84).

It was during the late 1990s that governing bodies became very keen on school governance matters (Sallis, 2003:62). According to Balarin *et al*. (2008:11) and Chambers and Cornforth (2010:8) the Education Reform Act of 1988 paved the way for how school governors were assigned the overarching responsibility for the conduct of the schools with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement with the specific duties related to elements of setting strategic directions; holding schools accountable and acting as critical friends to the school by monitoring and evaluating the school’s progress.

The school governance mandate is expressed succinctly by the Department for Education (2015:7) as a requirement by law that states that the purpose of school governors is to “*conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement at the school*” and that “*governing bodies should have a strong focus on three core strategic functions:*

- *Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;*
- *holding the principal to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils; and*
- *overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent*".

In the realisation of these core strategic functions, Balarin *et al*. (2008:15) assert that school governors in Britain perform a wide range of duties including:

- drafting the school's vision and strategic aims and objectives;
- monitoring and evaluating the school's performance;
- approving the school's budget;
- holding the school accountable;
- appointing the head teacher (principal); and
- acting as critical friends by providing support to the principal.

Ranson *et al*. (2005:360) suggest that for SGBs to properly undertake their roles and functions they:

- set aims and objectives for the school;
- design policies for achieving aims and objectives; and
- set targets for achieving aims and objectives.

Consequently, school governors monitor and evaluate school's progress in the achievement of the aims and objectives set and they must from time to time review the strategic framework for the school with regard to progress made (Balarin *et al*., 2008:16).

Critically analysing the roles and functions of school governors in Britain, one key element is observed: that school governors operate at a strategic level where they undertake strategic planning as opposed to an operational role, which means that they provide non-executive leadership (Bell, 2002:408). Accordingly, their role is to operate as a board similar to the board of directors of a company.

The Education Act further required principals to define aims and objectives of the school for monitoring and review purposes and to manage staff development (Bell & Chan, 2005:5). This requirement suggests that principals of British public schools were central to the process of strategic planning, as expressed by Bell (2002:411) that

> *They [principals] were to lead and manage their school's improvement by using pupil data to set targets for even better performance while being subject to inspection and the publication of the inspection report. … Specific targets that inform the strategic planning in individual schools are set in conjunction with LEAs but must move towards those set nationally.*

From the above discussion, the roles and functions of the school governors versus that of the school principal are clearly outlined: the principal is responsible for the educational performance of the school and for the internal organisation, management and control of the school – which includes the performance management of staff. The strategy of the school is designed by the school governors and the principal makes inputs and implements the strategy (Ranson *et al.*, 2005:362; Bell, 2002:411). The school governors act as a critical friend i.e. school governors support the principal during the implementation of the strategic framework and constructively criticise him/her and the principal reports to school governors the progress made on the implementation of the strategic framework drafted by the school governors at least once a year (Balarin *et al*., 2008:16).

School governors hold principals to account for exercising their professional judgement in these matters and for the performance of all of their other duties and having advised school governors, the principal must comply with any reasonable direction given by school governors (Department for Education, 2015:4).

In conclusion, it can be deduced that prior to the enactment of the 1988 Education Reform Act, planning in British schools was predominantly LEA's responsibility. When changes came in, the devolution of power to schools

resulted in school-based planning being performed by school governors. While there is no legislation that required schools to design SDP, the 1988 Education Act placed the responsibility of planning on principals who are key members of the governing body. It also is evident that in Britain, school governance is in the hands of school governors who constitute the principal, parents, teaching and non-teaching staff, local community members, local diocese where applicable and other benefactors. School governors have greater powers to manage school affairs within clearly defined national frameworks and have a clear mandate and they operate within a legal framework that ensures accountability and democratic participation of other stakeholders.

2.4.1.2 ***School governance in Australia***

According to Birrell (2001:59) for the past hundred years, the state governments in Australia controlled the provision of education while schooling was largely in the hands of religious groups. Though the State subsidised schools, school governance was highly centralised, fairly rigid and very bureaucratic – an influence that came from Britain. Like in Britain, the constitutional powers for making laws in relation to education in Australia are tied with local education authorities such as LEAs. The state through LEAs used its powers to finance programmes related to empowering local schools programmes such as funding science laboratories, libraries and providing scholarships to encourage students to complete high school (Steward & Russo, 2001:31; Caldwell, 2012:6). According to Connel (cited by Lingard, Hayes and Mills, 2002:7), education in Australia was economically funded and thus tended to be funded rather than managed.

Birrell (2001:59) indicates that as the level of funding increased, so did community dissatisfaction. Many liberals were unhappy with these arrangements because the education system encompassed schools with varying standards. In view of this dissatisfaction, in 1972 an interim committee, chaired by Professor Peter Karmel was set up by the state to evaluate the functioning of schools within the centralised model of school governance in Australia. That committee, known as the Karmel Report, found out that there

were many discrepancies in Australian public schools. It was found out, among others, that resources were unevenly distributed and opportunities given to both boys and girls from varied backgrounds differed in many schools (Chan & Chui, 1997:103). In order to resolve these challenges, the report highlighted that:

> *The values governing the organisation of the school, and the behaviour of the people in it, should be those that contribute to a society not averse to change but prepared for it to be evolutionary rather than revolutionary.*

This view was based on the idea that schools are the microcosm of the society; therefore centralisation of power at the level of the state creates social inequities rather than ameliorate them and that the only way to minimise challenges brought by centralisation in public schools was to adopt a decentralised model of school governance (Chan & Chui, 1997:103). Actually, it was necessary to overhaul school governance and allow parents and other stakeholders to participate in the decision-making processes in Australian schools. It was only in 1973 when Australia aligned itself with the Karmel report where subsequently an interim Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Act of 1974 was pronounced.

The ACT prescribed the decentralisation of school governance in Australia, which meant that schools councils, in the form of cooperate bodies, had to be established in all Australian schools (Gamage, 2008:665). This model of school governance was adopted in Australian schools because during that time, large business and industrial organisations had already adopted decentralised decision-making in their organisations and this shift, as it occurred in private companies, was carried over into school governance because parents and other stakeholders were now permitted to participate in school decision-making processes (Gamage, 2008:665).

The ACT prescribed how school councils in Australia should be constituted. Similar to the British model of cooperate stakeholder school governance, the ACT required that there be representatives of parents, school employees (teachers and non-teaching staff), learners (in case of secondary schools), with

the principal as *ex officio* member of the school board (Gamage, 2008:666). This formation and shift, where LEAs' roles were now undertaken by school councils, was viewed as a formal amendment of governance structures and a form of decentralisation that identified the individual school as the primary unit of improvement and relied on the redistribution of decision-making authority through which improvements in schools might be stimulated and maintained.

Currently, Australia does not have a single school system, and unlike in Britain, local government plays no role. Each state is responsible for funding and regulating its own schools. Under the federal political structure, education is the responsibility of the eight states and territories. Although schooling across the country has many differences that affect school operations, concerning the extent to which the authority and responsibility necessary to manage at the local site has been devolved to people at that school, there are commonalities too. One difference is that there are schools which have given the discretionary power to the principal, whilst in other schools this power is given to the school council as the *de facto* owners of the school. Notwithstanding these difference, many schools work on the basis of school councils (Dempster, 2000:47).

As one of the states in Australia, Victoria is the most prominent state as far as the practice of school self-management is concerned (McKenzie, Mulford & Anderson, 2007:52). According to these authors, in this state, school councils use high-involvement management approaches with their job being to focus on reforms which provide more flexible, autonomous and responsive, high-performing schools that meet complexities of a global knowledge economy. According to Bush and Gamage (2001:39) all school councils' activities are intended to improve learner performance. Lingard *et al*. (2002:11) maintain that many schools exhibit the characteristics of the business/corporate model in their school governance the sense that:

- school councils focus on defining policy and formulating strategic plans and schools develop their own School Development Plans (SDP);

- schools are audited by the school councils for both educational and financial purposes; and
- schools receive support from the school councils.

Australian Capital Territory (ACT) (2012) lists the roles and functions of school boards in Australia and prescribes that school councils must:

- establish strategic direction and priorities for the school;
- monitor and review school performance and to report on it to the director-general, parents of students at the school and staff;
- develop, maintain and review the curriculum for the school;
- develop and review education policies at the school;
- establish budgetary policies for the school and approve the school budget;
- establish policies for the efficient and effective use of school assets and the management of financial risk; and
- develop relationships between the school and the community and between the school and community organisations.

The report: *Improving school leadership: Australia country report 2007* - prepared in accordance with the structure and processes, summarises responsibilities of school councils as being expected to offer strategic direction, hold schools accountable and act as critical friends to the school.

From the above discussion, it is clear that school reforms in Australia bear similarities with the British reforms. Both moved towards a decentralised local governance structure. The motivation may have been to give more decision-making authority to individual school councils. The decision-making authority, pertaining to resource allocation, was increasingly transferred to the local school levels and school based personnel were held accountable for their performance and student outcomes. School staff were appointed by the school heads. According to Soga (2004:13), Australia moved towards uniting international policy, increasing school autonomy and the new regulatory

regimes. There are, however, major differences in the ways in which these governments implemented education governance reforms.

According to Lingard *et al*. (2002:18), in all school sectors across Australia, school principals in both primary and secondary schools play a critical role in curriculum and organisational decisions This has increased their roles and functions enormously due to accountability systems put in place. Principals dominate school's strategic planning, thus making them more managerial than oriented towards educational leadership (Chan & Chui, 1997:106). They are the levers of change in the sense that they are required to draw on both leadership and management skills and competencies in response to the raft of educational reforms that have led to enhanced responsibilities and accountabilities for schools. For them, it means a greater need to consult with their communities regarding decisions affecting their schools and an almost pragmatic imperative to delegate and empower others in the school to share leadership responsibilities.

2.4.1.3 ***School governance in the United States of America***

The United States of America exhibit similar education reformations like Britain and Australia, specifically on the era of implementation and the type of models adopted. For instance, Herbst (2006:2) suggests that in the USA, LEAs governed schools for the past hundred years; they operated at the district level although at a school level school councils existed; LEAs retained most control over schools because there was distrust among communities who were racially divided; and distant political bodies could not satisfy local needs and preferences.

In other words, in the USA, a group of schools were governed by a specific and separate district school council which was funded by local taxes. Each district council was vested with powers over its local schools and had financial and administrative authority over those schools. This model of school governance spread all over the USA and subsequently a number of school boards mushroomed and while there was variation in governance structures, local

school boards primarily oversaw and managed public education. While local schools boards were in charge, there were perceptions that many public schools were subjected to corruption and the belief was that schools were not adequately educating an increasingly diverse student population, especially those from lower classes. Proponents of religious instruction also believed that learners were not provided with moral education (Herbst, 2006:1). Timar (2003:177) maintains that a common prediction among all USA citizens was that the USA will fall as an international trade leader if flaws that were brought by the LEA type of governance were not corrected within the USA school system.

In response to many other concerns, the state published the Education Act 2004. It required that school governance be re-organised and it be decentralised and fragmented, but with a strong tradition of centralisation (Manna, 2010:683; Brazer, Rich & Ross, 2010:197). According to Hansen and Roza (2005:1) decentralisation of school governance was necessary because the USA and the federal state needed an improvement in learner performance and the provision of quality education. Like in Britain and Australia, school councils in the USA were given the latitude to hire and fire principals and teachers, decide on budgets, and within the guidelines laid by the state, decide on what was to be taught in schools. By moving power to school councils, an assumption was that most stakes were empowered to do something about how the school was performing. It was expected that schools would understand their roles and functions and would take appropriate actions to improve performance.

In the twentieth century, a new trend of school governance emerged to boost school governance within the federal nature of the USA. The *No Child left behind Act* of 2001 (Herbst, 2006:1) and *Race to the Top* (Finn & Petrilli, 2011:3) were enacted in support of a decentralised model of school governance. The *No Child left behind* Act advocated for the establishment of school councils, through democratic processes, who subsequently will be held accountable for school governance (Brazer *et al*., 2010:202). In other words, power was totally removed from LEAs and directed to school councils who

constituted parents and community members. An intention with this move was to bring school decision-making closer to the communities. A suggestion was that parents, local communities and learners (where possible) and other stakeholders should constitute school councils. Even with this formation, the USA liberals felt that a more centralised type of school governance modelled on corporate boards, similar to the British and Australian models, was suitable for their schools and it should be designed to be more focused on policy and less involved in daily administration (Land, 2002:1). These changes to education in the USA, have typically, not invariably, been characterised by school councils in order to reflect the values and beliefs of and meet the needs of the local communities (Land & Stringfield, 2005:261).

According to Land (2002:4), in the USA, school councils are responsible for:

- policy making and leadership;
- budgeting; and
- monitoring and evaluation.

Lingenfelter (2000:2) maintains that school councils in the USA undertake strategic planning and budgeting and frequently have responsibilities for authorising any new programs or reviewing existing academic programs. Land (2002:18) clearly expressed that school councils are responsible for *appropriate overarching foci,* which include a focus on students' academic achievement and attention to policy; *good relations* with the superintendent and between council members, with other local agencies and with the public and state; *effective performance* in the areas of policymaking, leadership, and budgeting; and *adequate evaluation and training.*

It can be averred that if school councils 'authorise and review' school programs which are either new or existing and responsible for *appropriate overarching foci* then it implies that school councils are responsible for the school's direction. By suggesting that school councils are responsible for *good relations* it implies that they should act as critical friends to the school because of their capacity to

develop productive, positive, and long-term relationships with all identified stakeholders.

In the past, the role of superintendent was largely instructional and tightly confined by the school council. Due to new reformations, the roles of superintendents were extended to include many more management responsibilities and became professionalised. This shift in the role is critical because superintendents are viewed as the chief executives of the school council (Mcguinn & Manna, 2013:1) where their roles match those of superintendents in Britain and Australia.

It can be concluded that school principals in the USA are mandated to lay their oversight on policy makings and give advice to the school councils. This view is supported by the study undertaken by Brazer *et al*. (2010) in which researchers investigated how superintendents in US school districts work with stakeholders (school councils) in the decision-making process and to learn how different choices superintendents make affect decision outcomes. One of the findings is that superintendents are concomitantly held accountable for collaborative strategic planning in US public schools. In other words, in the USA, the school's strategic planning is driven by the school principal who subsequently reports to school governors.

From the discussion above, it is eminent that the school governance mandate in the USA has similar characteristics to the mandate of governors in Britain and Australia. It must also be noted that the principal of the school, as the member of the SGB, plays a very effective role during the implementation of the three key school governing mandates.

2.4.1.4 ***School governance in the Republic of Botswana***

When Botswana was colonised by Britain for a period of 81 years, schooling was segregated. The aim of the education system during that time was to produce a limited number of manpower required for the few available positions of employment in the Colonial Government and Tribal Administration. During that time, there were community schools under tribal authorities and missionary

schools under the authority of churches (Jotia & Pansiri, 2013:103). Community schools were mainly located in the rural areas, owned by citizens who were characterised by poverty and low levels of education, whilst missionary or English schools were located mainly in the urban areas owned by rich individuals and companies. Through these developments, missionary or English schools in urban areas were highly favoured. Learners who were in the rural areas could not access these English schools because they were a distance away. In other words, the colonisation of Botswana by Britain hugely impacted the type of schooling, hence, after her independence in 1966, Botswana maintained a district council model of school governance.

Subsequent to her independence, the state introduced formal schooling. As a result, the Education Act of 1965 was enacted which emphasized the establishment of LEAs or district councils who were mandated to govern primary schools. To a large extent, parents and other stakeholders were not involved in school decision-making processes (Boaduo, Milonzo & Adjei, 2008:97). According to Jotia and Pansiri (2013:103) this creation maintained segregation of schools because two types of (primary) schools currently still exist (Pansiri, 2014:27). There were LEAs for poor schools and LEAs for rich schools. The core for all LEAs was their responsibility to govern schools and perform roles and functions similar to roles and functions of LEAs in Britain.

School governance in Botswana after her independence was highly centralised; similar to its coloniser (Moswela, 2010:71). Earlier discussions on school governance in Britain indicate that centralised school governance brought dissatisfaction among communities. Moreover, communities disliked state governed schools because they were poorly financed. Similar patterns are still traceable in Botswana.

In the nineteenth century, Botswana was already post-modernised (Moswela, 2008:197). In other words, communities or citizens were already informed about the pitfalls of a centralised model of school governance, which Botswana had adopted. Among other pitfalls, which the Tswana communities were faced with, include lesser number of schools within their reach because not all leaners

could be accommodated in state schools. Although church schools existed, not all learners could be enrolled there either. According to Tshireletso (1997:173), what shocked the Tswana nation, was that the state did not take into account the culture and socioeconomic background of the children, specifically those who were from the rural areas even when they were enrolled in state schools. Tshireletso (1997:173) asserts that as a result, many children 'dropped' out of school and remained poor, unemployed and on the fringes of the national economy.

In response to these challenges, Botswana communities, with their limited and inferior education, built and financed their own private and independent schools (Boaduo, Milonzo & Adjei, 2008:97) and these schools were governed by their own school councils. Though these schools were privately owned, they followed the same curriculum that the state schools followed. However, the academic standards of learners from community privately owned schools were very low compared to learners who came from state-aided schools because parents had inferior knowledge and minimum skills. Moreover, resources in private schools were limited because schools were financed by parents and during that era, Botswana was a third world country wherein people survived in the most adverse conditions characterised by poverty, ill-health, unemployment, lack of infrastructure, powerlessness and illiteracy.

According to Jotia and Pansiri (2013:102) Botswana is not a homogeneous state and it is not ideal to set up an education system that tends to promote the marginalisation of other groups by not embracing them within the curriculum. Therefore, it would make sense that all those who are mandated with school governance, should structure it in such a way that all communities benefit from the curriculum and educators deliver cross-cultural content so as to accommodate all racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Given many unpleasant conditions that prevailed in Botswana, it was necessary for the state to intervene and institutionalise decentralisation and adopt a school-based management system which would improve the quality of education. After several commissions, the state committed itself to release

private schools from their financial difficulties but without taking away the people's involvement in the schools (Moswela, 2007:153). This shift, which occurred in 1994, initiated the people's loss of independent control over their schools. Progressively, the schools' management evolved from private and independent to a partnership and eventually to sole government control.

Like in Britain, Australia and the USA, Botswana's decentralised model of school governance implies that more decision-making powers are devolved to school councils which constitute principals as *ex officio* members, parents, educators and sometimes learners and other stakeholders. However, school councils are expected to function within the state's framework (Pansiri, 2008:447).

Currently in Botswana, the governance mandate of public schools is located within the Botswana's National Policy on Education, or Government Paper No. 1, otherwise known as Education for Kagisano (Republic of Botswana, 1977a) which subscribe to the fact that Botswana is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural state (Jotia & Pansiri, 2007:103). Education should promote cultural pluralism whereby each group should be given an opportunity to manage their own educational approaches in a democratic way. The other document called *Vision 2016* (Republic of Botswana, 1997b) which advocates the goal of the education sector as being to achieve "*an informed and educated nation"*. In order to deliver this goal, clear mandates are needed. The Department of Secondary Education introduced pastoral policy in all secondary schools in 2007 to improve the quality of education as a contribution towards achieving *"an educated, informed nation"* (Department of Secondary Education (DSE), 2007:1). The pastoral policy is concerned with psychosocial, academic and co-curricular development of the learner. On the psychosocial level, the policy focuses heavily on students' welfare. The academic aspect of the policy deals with instructional delivery and reception of the curriculum and on the co-curricular level, the policy improves and contributes to the mental, social and physical development of individuals. The pastoral policy states that *"central to the schools existence is the academic performance and measures of good*

performance should include the concept of value addition" (DSE, 2007:1). The output of the pastoral policy is:

- improved school discipline;
- improved effectiveness and efficiency in leadership;
- improved management of schools;
- improved academic performance; and
- increased stakeholder performance.

According to Mohiemang (2008:6) schools are to collect and report to the inspectoral regions on these components every term which, in turn, report to the Department of Secondary Education and ultimately to the Ministry of Education and Skills Development. The reported components are: leadership and management; school discipline; students' academic performance; guidance and counseling; stakeholder involvement in school governance; and co-curricular activities (DSE, 2007:5). Mohiemang (2008:6) asserts that schools are to collect and report on the pastoral policy, this implies that the pastoral policy enforces accountability measures, which in the researcher's view, accountability is regarded as the core of school council's mandate in Botswana. The implication of the submission of reports is that schools must account on each aspect of the pastoral policy. In other words, school leadership is accountable to the community on all aspects of the pastoral policy. Literature concerning school governance clearly states that in a decentralised model of school governance, the SGB is the main voice of the community. As such, it is the structure that should report and update the communities, meaning that in Botswana, school councils have the duty to report progress on the pastoral policy back to their communities and the state.

The pastoral policy embraces the notion of '*caring*' (Republic of Botswana, 1997a). In the Botswana schools, the pastoral care policy is perceived to be a whole-school responsibility although it is driven by the pastoral care staff (Davies, 2010: 25). Usually, pastoral care staff are made up of caring friends who intentionally seek to walk the path of learning with learners (Davies, 2010:25). Those who are willing to support learners in schools can be referred

to as critical friends. Therefore, the rollout of pastoral care staff in Botswana can be viewed as being critical friends of the school. To this end, acting as a critical friend to the school can be regarded as one of the mandates of school governance in Botswana.

Furthermore, the pastoral policy declares that *"schools must ensure an element of improved discipline, effectiveness and efficiency in leadership and school performance"* (Republic of Botswana, 1997a). These elements seem to be exhibited by effective schools as facilitated by effective school leadership. The elements imply offering strategic direction by school leadership. This is a confirmation that the other central pillar of Botswana's pastoral policy is the provisioning of strategic direction by school councils. This provision, as outlined in the pastoral policy, is also similar to the school governance mandate in countries such as Britain, Australia and the USA.

It can, therefore, be deduced that in Botswana, pastoral policy embraces three mandates of school governance namely: offering a strategic direction, accountability and critical friendship.

For any institution to achieve its goals and objectives, other stakeholders should be involved in planning, implementation and evaluation of strategies. In Botswana, the success of the pastoral policy depends on the effectiveness of school councils (Boaduo *et al.*, 2008:103). Central to their success is the principal who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the curriculum as is the case in countries like Australia, Britain and the USA where they are obliged by the law to oversee its implementation. Botswana holds a different view on the role of the principal as the member of the school council in terms of curriculum implementation. Principals simply have a role to maintain general oversight of curriculum implementation (Moswela, 2008:72).

Like in Britain, Australia and the USA, in Botswana, SGBs have corresponding mandates and core to the implementation of these mandates is the school principal.

2.4.1.5 ***School governance in the Republic of South Africa***

In South Africa, the contemporary school governance mandate or obligation emanates from the purpose of school governance as articulated in the Schools Act. To reiterate what the school governance mandate is, according to Section 20(a) of the Schools Act, is about "*promoting the best interests of the school and striving to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school".* As pointed out earlier, this defines the school governance mandate and it means the SGB in exercising school governance becomes a unitary body of members whose pursuit is promoting the best interests of the school. Doing so requires the SGB to be effective. Open University (2015a) makes the point that:

> *In order for governors to be effective and to stand any chance of being involved in the process of raising standards, they must first have a clear understanding of their role.*

This involves as their main tasks to *"provide a sense of direction; support the work of the school; and to hold the school to account"* (Open University, 2015a).

The Schools Act, however, does not provide the actual meaning behind the stated mandate of promoting the best interests of the school. Rather, as prescribed in Sections 20 and 21, it tabulates roles and responsibilities of SGBs. It seems, therefore, that these are left open to the understanding and interpretation of SGBs, school communities and stakeholders. Notwithstanding this openness, it is important that the mandate as described in the Schools Act be analysed to derive its true meaning and attempt to arrive at an understanding the effectiveness of SGBs. However, deriving lessons from other countries makes it possible to unpack the school governance mandate in South Africa.

2.4.1.6 *Concluding remarks on t*he contemporary school governance mandate

A common feature of school governance in countries highlighted above seems to be the requirement that governance of schools should aim at decentralising control and decision-making of schools and empowering governing bodies to execute roles and responsibilities geared towards promoting effective teaching and learning and learner academic achievement. This clearly is a responsibility that requires knowledge of setting school visions, missions and objectives that give direction to schools' activities. This, in essence, implies firstly, providing a strategy for school operations in pursuit of effective education provision. Secondly, this implies vigilance and scrupulous monitoring and evaluation and thus being critical of school operations and activities in pursuit of effective education delivery. Finally, this implies exercising accountability as a way of ensuring that the schools execute its educative activities in ways that deliver on the mandate of providing quality education for all learners.

Therefore, it can be accepted that the school governance mandate of the SGB is to execute three main functional responsibilities, namely: (a) providing the school with a strategic direction;(b) acting as critical friend; and (c) holding the school to account (James *et al*., 2012; Ranson & Crouch, 2009; Balarin *et al*., 2008; Business in the Community, 2008; Barton, Lawrence, Martin & Wade, 2006; Heystek, 2004).

2.5 The meaning and implications of the elements of school governance

As alluded to in the foregoing section, it is necessary to explore and expose the meaning of the school governance mandate in terms of the three common elements identified in various countries. While these elements cannot be isolated in practice, they are discussed separately in this text in order to gain an insight into the meaning and implications of each for school governance. Providing the school with a strategic direction seems to be the basis of any functioning of a governing body and is thus discussed first.

2.5.1 *Providing the school with a strategic direction*

According to Mireless (2013), providing the school with the strategic direction is a course of action that ultimately leads to the achievement of the stated goals of a school. It is established during the strategic planning phase where leaders create a strategic business plan and establish a written vision and mission statement for the school. While a strategic plan is a type of a business plan, there are several vital distinctions between a strategic plan and a business plan. Ballowe (2005) suggests that a strategic plan differs from a business plan in the sense that a strategic plan is primarily used for implementing and managing strategic direction of an existing organization such as a school; it is used to provide focus, direction and action in order to move the school from where it is now to where it wants to go and such a plan is critical to prioritizing resources (time, money and people) to grow the returns and increase the return on investments. Additionally, it is futuristic in direction and subsequently it is used to communicate the direction of the school to staff and stakeholders over a period of three to five years. A business plan is mainly used to initially start a business, obtain funding or direct operations and normally does not encompass more than one year (Ballowe, 2005). To this end, it seems necessary to contextualise strategic direction and show how SGBs can apply it in a school setting. In this approach, the concept strategy is defined and providing the school with strategic direction is described.

According to (Davies & Ellison, 2003:3) the word strategy means "*a plan you will adopt in order to reach your vision*" and such a plan must be time-bound, perhaps three to five years. Strategies deal with broad aggregated data, rather than detailed approaches. Davies (2003:295) suggests that strategies need a specific pattern of decisions and actions that will help to achieve organisational goals.

Providing the school with a strategic direction is established during the strategic planning phase of the school. During the strategic planning process, a school creates a strategic plan and establishes a road map that should be followed in

order to achieve a set number of goals and objectives (Welcome Trust, 2012, 1).

SGBs are responsible for providing the schools with a short to medium strategic direction while balancing the competing interests of key parents. William (2009:127) suggests that in order to accomplish this undertaking, one vital question that SGBs must ask and respond to is: *who are we?* A clear understanding of their role is the starting point of all their strategic planning which will anchor evaluating the effects of planned change and for planning the steps needed to advance the standards of the school. When SGBs provide strategic direction, they also need to respond to the question *what is our business?* This question should be answered from three perspectives:

- who is being satisfied?
- what is being satisfied?
- how are our customers' needs satisfied?

Direction is not only about what the 'school's business' is, but it also requires asking future based questions like: *what will schoo*ls *be?* and *what should schools be?* The first future-based question refers to the direction that the school is heading towards. In other words, it determines where the school will end up if it continues in its current course. The second future-based question allows adjustments to the existing strategy to move the school in a suitable direction. As such, SGBs must think in terms of what the school is acquainted with and the assets, resources and capabilities are in order to attain suitable direction (Open University, 2015b).

Providing strategic direction entails SGB activities that are aimed at promoting the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school. This, Xaba (2006:13) regards as a strategic role and implies setting a strategic framework, aims and objectives within the school's vision and mission; setting policies and targets for achieving objectives; and monitoring and evaluating progress.

Open University (2015b) argues that:

if strategic direction is about setting aims and targets, devising plans and policies, and taking decisions that will raise standards, then strategic management is concerned with ensuring that all the necessary elements are in place in order that success can be achieved.

This exposition about the strategic direction highlights four key components of strategic management, namely: the destination that the school is aiming for; the path or the map to the destination; the vehicle to be used; and the drive mode required (Winkley, 2002). These components define, in essence, the product of a strategic management process as it should occur in schools – the production of a strategic plan – and its implementation which involves a range of activities that begin with the drawing up of the School Development Plan (SDP) sometimes called the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

The SDP as the product of strategic planning (Harwood-Smith, 2008:3), is regarded as the improvement strategy and the thrust of the Education Quality Improvements Partnership Programme (EQUIP) that is expected to provide school direction. Simply put, the SDP is an essential tool used for reviewing the school's progress and for challenging any strategies that do not appear to be delivering expected results. This provides a systematic check that everything is in place when a school is to be provided with direction. Mchunu (2010:47) suggests that for the SDP to be regarded and used as a means to achieve strategic objectives, the SGBs must prepare it in collaboration with the School Management Team (SMT), because they have a mix of professional competencies and a wealth of experience needed for the provision of quality education; and their contribution will add to the proposed 'road map' that must be followed. In other words, the SDP is a product of the team that articulates the overall business direction which the school should embark on.

In this endeavour, SGBs facilitate the design of the school's strategic plans which need to be adhered to and followed with discipline. Strategic plans are fundamental to school activities because they shape and guide the school in what it does and why it does it. Thus, the ability of the school to successfully achieve its concrete actions, organisational mission and vision and to promote

accountability is dependent on its strategic direction (Kohtamäki, Kraus, Mäkelä and Rönkkö, 2012:161; Hellriegel *&* Slocum, 2007:71).

In drawing up the SDP, Xaba (2004:16) suggests that SGB members need to understand the development planning process, what its aims are and how it should be undertaken as well as differentiate between planning for school improvement, innovation or change and simply planning for management aspects of the school which translate to the mere operational planning. This implies understanding of the basics of the strategic development planning process is essential. The basics of the strategic development planning process entail three questions to be answered in the process as depicted in Figure 2 below.

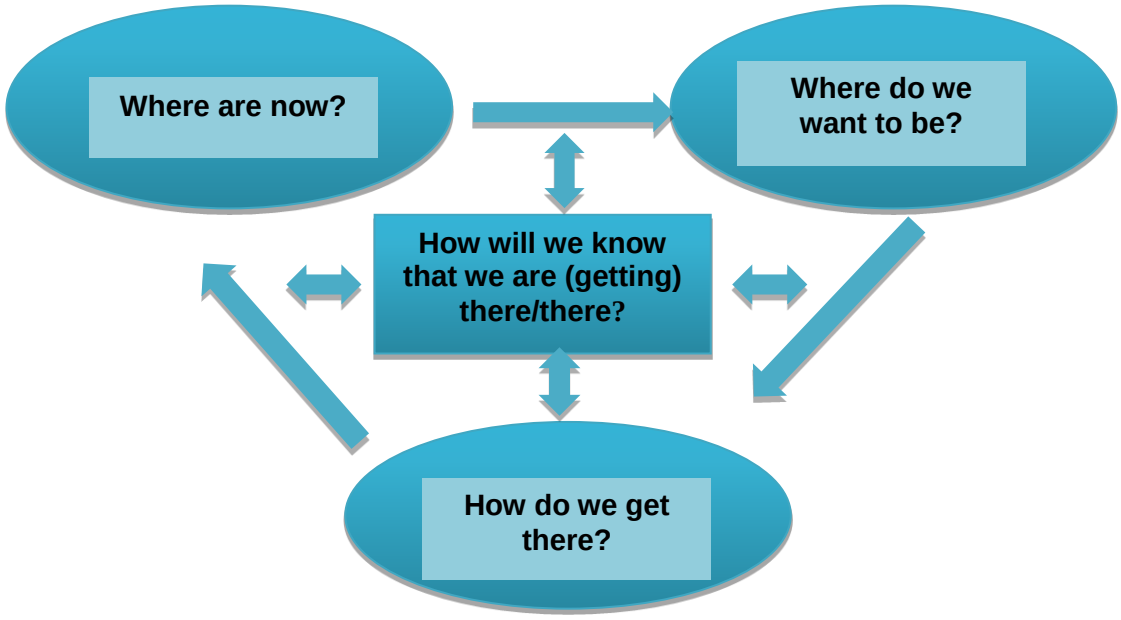


Figure 2.2 The basic questions of the strategic development planning (Adapted from Xaba, 2014)

As illustrated above, the thrust of providing a strategic direction is grounded on determining the current status of the school; the desired status; the *how* of attaining the desired status; and the evaluation of the process outcomes as the implementation proceeds. To execute this process successfully, the SGB must

engage in a strategic development planning process that begins with the core areas of the school. These include the determination of the school's vision, mission, aims and objectives, which should then be followed by the actual development planning process as represented in Figure 3 below.

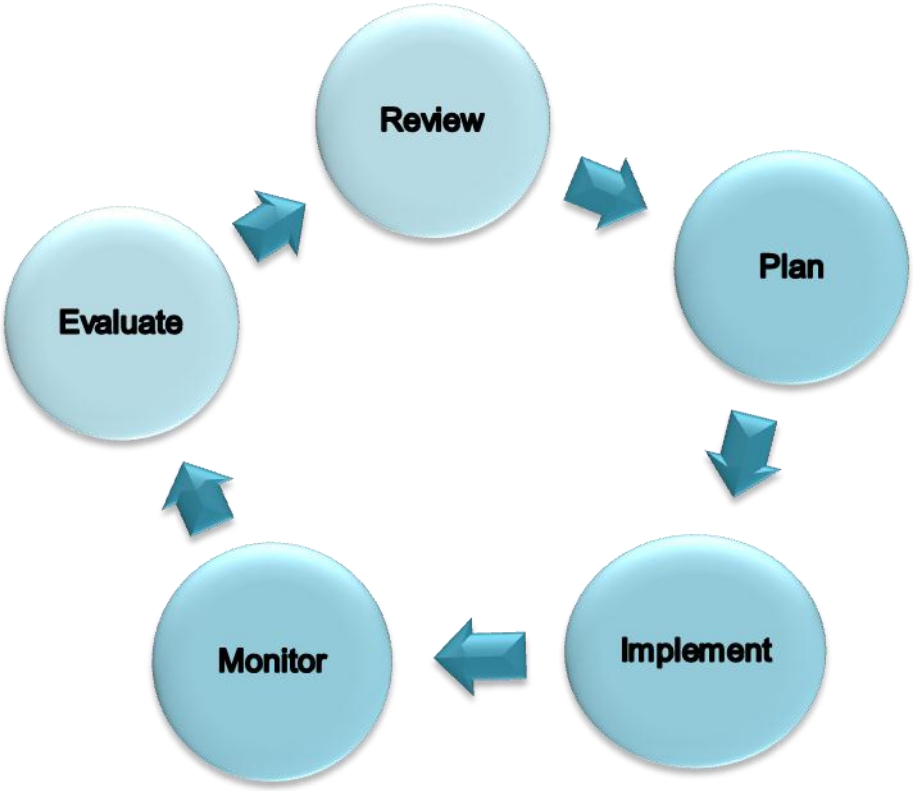


Figure 2.3 The strategic development planning cycle (Adapted from Xaba, 2014).

As illustrated above, the strategic development planning cycle begins with the review phase, which essentially addresses the basic questions mentioned earlier. The outcome of this stage defines the core areas of the school's strategic direction and comprises the vision, mission, goals and objectives for a period of determined years. From the review phase, the needs for school development are identified and prioritized. This is followed by the actual planning phase, which in essence describe planning for development and addresses the needs identified in the review phase as well as planning for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation process. A careful scrutiny of the entire process reveals the actual three responsibilities of

the SGB, which are setting the strategic direction of the school as is applicable in the review and planning phases; being a critical friend as it applies to the implementation and monitoring phases; and holding the school to account as applicable in the monitoring and evaluation phases.

The underlying principle for having the school strategic development plan is to provide an operational structure together with a clearly identified direction involving priorities to meet the needs of the school at any particular time. For that reason, strategic planning as a way of providing a strategic direction for the school, essentially covers the following areas of school functionality:

- the total curriculum;
- school's organisation of resources including staff, space, facilities, equipment, time and finance;
- school policies on diverse range of administrative and organisational issues;
- school strategies for implementing official guidelines, circulars and regulations;
- mechanisms for reviewing progress and taking corrective actions where necessary; and
- matters relating to school governance and infrastructure.

Harwood-Smith (2008) reports that it is possible for SGBs to function both as equal partners with the principals and as strategic leaders of schools. However, the following would first need to be in place:

- clear and shared understanding between principals and SGBs on what the strategic function is;
- presence of a subcommittee of SGBs to act as a strategic steering group;
- school climate conducive to collaborative leadership with trust and mutual respect between principals and SGBs as pre-requisites; and
- principal who is prepared to share all aspects of the school's work with SGBs and not act as gatekeeper.

2.5.2 *Holding the school to account*

According to Figlio and Loeb (2011:283) holding schools accountable is the process of evaluating school performance on the basis of student performance measures. According to Balarin *et al.* (2008:30) holding the school to account defines a relationship of formalised control between parties one of whom has the authority to hold the other to account for what they do and typically includes an evaluation of what has been done in relation to the required standards. To this end, Balarin *et al*. (2008:30) further argue that to be accountable usually carries with it a sense of being responsible for something and answerable to another for the discharging of that responsibility.

In this regard, Open University (2011) states that the SGB has to ensure accountability through the provision of information both to and from the SGB. This implies receiving the school's report on performance and progress and reporting to stakeholders. In other words, the principal and staff must report to SGBs on how the school is performing and, in turn, SGBs are held accountable to that performance, which means that they must explain and justify to parents and the broader local community, the school's overall performance (Zondi, 2005:28).

Literature on SGB accountability suggests that there is concern in the way school accountability is currently being practised (Transparency International, 2011; Xaba and Ngubane, 2010; Lekalakala, 2006; Mestry, 2006; Tsotetsi, 2005). The main contributory factor seems to largely be attributed to the lack of capacity to execute managerial accountability functions as manifested in budgeting, accounting and reporting functions. While there could be reasons for this, including the supposed illiteracy of the parent-governors, the implications seem to relate to the very core of legislation concerned with school governance. Subsequently, school accountability appears to be more about bureaucratic accounting, considering that *"schools as collective entities are accountable to the higher levels of the educational system"* (Maile, 2002:326).

Accordingly, true school accountability should be a shared responsibility for improving education, not only among educators and students, but also

administrators, policy makers, parents, and educational researchers. In other words, accountability is inextricably linked to democratic management and other related concept such as participation, decentralisation, empowerment and transparency (Maile, 2002:326).

A key intention of the Schools Act is to mandate the SGB to hold schools accountable for ensuring that all learners receive quality education. Schools must focus on moving learners toward actual and real proficiency, not simply attaining standards of proficiency. This has led to a shift in accountability values; namely that schools be held accountable for the growth of their learners.

2.5.3 *Acting as a critical friend*

The critical friendship role exists only within a relationship involving another (often school-based) person and in a context such as school improvement (Swaffield, 2007). In whatever specific context it is used, the most popular accepted portrayal of critical friendship is a 'detached outsider' who support and challenge the one he/she is in a relationship with. As such, SGBs are viewed as critical friends to a school because they are autonomous outsiders who assist the principal and staff with support, advice and information, drawing on its members' knowledge and experience. They pay attention to issues of school improvement, professional development and school evaluation and monitoring. Usually, critical friendship includes self-appraisal. To this end, SGBs try to figure out what the strengths and weakness of the principal and staff are and tries to intervene and offer help.

Business in the Community (2008:27) emphasises that SGBs, in acting as a critical friends, ask questions and try to understand what the school is doing and where it needs to do better. To this end, Balarin *et al.* (2008:15) assert that this includes monitoring and evaluating schools' progress and in acting as a critical friend, the SGB supports the principal in the performance of his functions and gives him constructive criticism. Therefore, it can be inferred, as pointed out earlier by Heystek (2006:403), that the SGB should feel able to question and challenge, and in a good working relationship, this will be accepted and be seen

as positive, while in a poor relationship it will cause conflict. Indeed, as pointed out by the same author, real critical friendship is only achieved where there is trust and mutual respect (cf. 1.5).

According to Barber, Stoll, Mortimore and Hillman (1995:2) this role is defined as *critical* in the sense of the responsibility for monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes of the school's effectiveness; asking challenging questions; and pressing for improvement. The role of a *friend* denotes the promotion of the interest of the school and learners. This means that SGBs must channel their helpfulness and offer critical friendship during the provision of quality education for learners. This, according to Shelvin (2014), the SGB can successfully do by *"asking challenging questions and not 'rubber stamping' decisions made by the principal"* and making sure that they have the information necessary to enable them to make the right decisions.

In critical friendship, trust is of paramount importance to those who are in the relationship (Swafffield, 2007:7). When the SGB works with the principal, mutual trust is built and they learn more about each other. Personal qualities such as openness, honesty, respect and commitment contribute positively to this critical friendship. Factors such as preparation, timekeeping and being focused are also infused as time passes (Swafffield, 2007:3).

In light of the exposition of the concept of school governance above, it becomes imperative to explore the context of the school governance mandate in South Africa.

2.6 **Contextualising the school governance mandate in South Africa**

The contemporary school governance mandate in South Africa derives its mandate from the struggles against apartheid education governance and the aspirations of the struggle for democracy and self-determination by the country's population majority, which mainly sought to see a need for the emancipation of black people from education that served mainly the needs and welfare of the minority white population. It is a well-documented fact that apartheid education sought to promote white supremacy, consolidate white

power and privilege - and entrench black oppression and exploitation through, *inter alia*, the provision of poor and inferior education. This was well-articulated in 1954, after the National Party electoral victory, by Verwoerd, the then new Minister of Education who stated according to Weber (2002:618) that:

> *When I have control of native education, I will reform it so that the natives will be taught from childhood to realise that equality with Europeans is not for them.*

Resultant from this pronouncement, education for blacks during apartheid was controlled by policies fashioned after Verwoerd's ideal of entrenching white supremacy. Consequently, power over decision-making at schools was, as stated by Weber (2002:619):

> *centralised in racial, ethnic and regional governance authorities. This applied to school organization, curriculum and teaching methods, examination and supervision, teacher recruitment and pay, finance of recurrent expenditure, and school construction and finance.*

Webber (2002:619) states that as a direct consequence of apartheid policies,

> *there were few structures which could make decisions or determine policy. Districts were regarded as administrative machines which carried out the instructions of the centre. There were few structures at the bottom which could respond to local needs. At school level all departments provided for participation in councils … Their powers were limited: in the case of the DET*[3]*they were advisory and confined to raising additional funds. These bodies were rejected by local communities and were perceived as part of the machinery of black oppression.*

Weber's (2002) statements basically trace and indicate the origins of the contemporary school governance in South African schools. Due to apartheid's segregationist policies, parental involvement in school governance was largely curtailed, mainly because under the apartheid education departments, the idea

3 (Own footnote) Department of Education and Training, which replaced the Department of Bantu Education and was in control of black education, mainly in the urban areas.

of parents being involved in school governance was considered as "*an absurdity of the first order*" (Duma, Kapueja & Khanyile, 2011:49) and even worse for black education. A prominent feature of school governance during that era was the heavy involvement and control of school governance in the education of both black and white populations. This was so that the state could control the aspirations of public education and direct what education had to achieve in a segregationist manner aimed at benefiting mainly the white minority population of the country.

The pre-democratic era, climaxed by the struggles of the student uprisings in 1976, heralded a new dispensation that would determine the direction of education in South Africa. Consequently, the 1981 De Lange Commission recommended that autonomy be given to schools so that parents would have a major share in decision-making processes (Duma *et al*., 2011:45). This recommendation can be seen as one of the first moves towards the recognition of the importance of a greater say by parents in educational matters. The National Party government subsequently introduced changes that were meant to address parental involvement in education. While some changes were a significant move away from Verwoerd's conception of education for blacks, these were resisted strongly and received little or no support from the black majority, whose intent during the 1980s was nothing short of a complete change in the apartheid system. This ultimately led to the 1994 democratic elections and the democratic dispensation led by the African National Congress.

The post-1994 era saw large scale changes and direction in education. Swartz (2009:1) states in this regard that

> *post-apartheid South Africa has been characterised by a shift from a highly centralised, top-down approach to education provisioning by the National Department of Education (DOE) to the devolution of powers to the Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) and down to the level of the school*.

This is indeed a major shift from the apartheid education mandate to a new dispensation which saw the enactment of the Schools Act. The Schools Act was a product of the changes in education and it set a new path to school governance in the country as it sought to "*provide for a uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools; to amend and repeal certain laws relating to schools; and to provide for matters connected therewith*". In its preamble (Republic of South Africa, 1996), the Schools Act states:

> *WHEREAS the achievement of democracy in South Africa has consigned to history the past system of education which was based on racial inequality and segregation; and*
>
> *WHEREAS this country requires a new national system for schools which will redress past injustices in educational provision, provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners and in so doing lay a strong foundation for the development of all our people's talents and capabilities, advance the democratic transformation of society, combat racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance, contribute to the eradication of poverty and the economic well-being of society, protect and advance our diverse cultures and languages, uphold the rights of all learners, parents and educators, and promote their acceptance of responsibility for the organisation, governance and funding of schools in partnership with the State; and*
>
> *WHEREAS it is necessary to set uniform norms and standards for the education of learners at schools and the organisation, governance and funding of schools throughout the Republic of South Africa;*

The Schools Act thus set the path to the new school governance mandate in South Africa. For the record, Section 20 of the Schools Act states that the governing body of a public school must promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school, and in so doing, must -

- adopt a constitution;

- develop the mission statement of the school;
- adopt a code of conduct for learners at the school;
- support the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions;
- determine times of the school day consistent with any applicable conditions of employment of staff at the school;
- determine the admission policy of the school, subject to certain limitations;
- administer and control the school's property, and buildings and grounds occupied by the school, including school hostels, if applicable;
- encourage parents, learners, educators and other staff at the school to render voluntary services to the school;
- recommend to the Head of Department the appointment of educators at the school, subject to the Educators Employment Act, 1994 Proclamation No.138 of 1994), and the Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act No. 66 of 1995);
- recommend to the Head of Department the appointment of non-educator staff at the school, subject to the Public Service Act, 1994 (Proclamation No. 103 of 1994), and the Labour Relations Act, 1995(Act No. 66 of 1995);
- at the request of the Head of Department, allow the reasonable use under fair conditions of the facilities of the school for educational programmes not conducted by the school;
- discharge all other functions imposed upon the governing body by or under this Act; and

- discharge other functions consistent with this Act as determined by the Minister by notice in the Government Gazette, or by the Member of the Executive Council by notice in the Provincial Gazette.

Section 20 further highlight that the SGB may allow the reasonable use of the facilities of the school for community, social and school fund-raising purposes, subject to such reasonable and equitable conditions as the governing body may determine which could include the charging of a fee or tariff which accrues to the school. The SGB may also join a voluntary association representing governing body of public schools).

Section 21 of the Schools Act lists all the allocated roles and functions of SGBs. Accordingly, some SGBs may:

- maintain and improve the school's property, and buildings and grounds occupied by the school, including school hostels, if applicable;
- determine the extra-mural curriculum of the school and the choice of subject options in terms of provincial curriculum policy;
- purchase textbooks, educational materials or equipment for the school; and
- pay for services to the school.

The above list includes a number of complicated roles and functions which SGBs must fulfill. In this regard, Sections 20 and 21 list the functions of the SGBs in point form. This, it is argued, promotes a unidimensional view of school governance and thus tends to limit SGBs to performing functions that are listed. It would, therefore, be prudent to contextualise the listed functions into a broader description and understanding of what the school governance mandate implies in terms of the three major elements as pointed out above (see 2.6).

The functions listed in Sections 20 and 21 of the Schools Act are the functions of the SGB in order to promote the best interests of the school by ensuring quality education to all learners at the school. In actuality, this is the school governance mandate as alluded to earlier. Therefore, trying to execute these roles and functions without understanding the context of the school governance

mandate, may lead to numerous challenges for SGBs. For instance, this might lead to roles and functions being perceived as administrative functions and see school operating in ways deviant from the purpose of school governance. This might also lead to conflicts in SGBs with regard to overlapping functions and consequent power struggles. Finally, this might lead to ineffective and dysfunctional SGBs as members see functions being above the scope of their capacity and difficulties especially in executing specialised functions like managing finances and recommending appointments of professional staff. An important consideration for the effectiveness of the SGB is how it (SGB) executes this mandate. Most importantly, is the meaning attached to effective functioning of the SGB.

2.7 Implications of the context of the school governance mandate for effective school governance

The first aspect that requires insight is the context of the listed Section 20 and 21 functions within the three elements of the school governance mandate namely: providing the school with a strategic direction; acting as a critical friend; and holding the school to account.

- **Providing the school with a strategic direction**

As pointed out above (cf. 2.6.1), providing a strategic direction to the school is established during the strategic planning phase where a strategic business plan is created and a written vision and mission statement for the school is established. This, in the context of South Africa, is captured in Section 20 (1)(c) of the Schools Act that SGBs must do to "de*velop the mission statement of the school*". This, in essence, implies the starting point of the process of providing a strategic direction to the school. Accordingly, the Schools Act lists functions that can only be executed within the framework of a school's strategic plan because they essentially require a strategy to execute. For example, some of the listed functions can be classified as belonging to the element that requires the provision of a strategic direction as follows:

- adopt a constitution – because this requires a strategy that must direct the activities of the SGB and spell out clear functional and role demarcations and the necessary protocols attached to such demarcations;

- develop the mission statement of the school – because this is the very first step after envisioning the school's desired destination;

- determine times of the school day consistent with any applicable conditions of employment of staff at the school – because school times form part of pursuing school goals and therefore are part of the school's strategy in the pursuit of such goals and also involves the effective use of available human and material resources;

- determine the admission policy of the school, subject to certain limitations; administer and control the school's property, and buildings and grounds occupied by the school, including school hostels, if applicable and adopt a code of conduct for learners at the school – because these are policy matters that are inextricably linked to the school's vision and mission and therefore, the strategic plans of the school and require strategies for effective execution as well as specialist knowledge and skills to execute;

- encourage parents, learners, educators and other staff at the school to render voluntary services to the school – because the 'how' of performing these tasks requires thorough planning and know in terms of effective strategies, especially in diverse school communities; and

- recommend to the Head of Department the appointment of educators at the school, subject to the Educators Employment Act, 1994 Proclamation No.138 of 1994), and the Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act No. 66 of 1995) – because appointments of staff are tied to school education goals and mission and require knowledge, skills and strategies to execute effectively. In fact, one could venture to say that poorest performance at schools can be attributed in part, to poor appointments of staff and poor

strategic thinking about the curriculum implementation needs of the school.

Furthermore, as a strategic direction requirement, the SGB is mainly tasked with the determination of school policies including policies for religious observance, dress code, language for teaching and learning, and code of rights and responsibilities – all of which require a strategy and plan to be in place including the strategy for policy implementation.

Perhaps the most important strategic issue relating to the school governance mandate is the SGB's responsibility to set academic standards and learner achievement standards and targets. This crucially requires a thorough strategy formulating process and a well thought out strategy for both formulation and implementation. This, Taylor (2009:5) asserts can be achieved by SGBs being involved in three areas, namely: developing the academic performance improvement plans; being involved in the purchase and management of books; and taking full responsibility for the selection and professional development of educators.

Setting targets for learner academic achievement actually brings in the involvement of the SGB in curriculum matters. Arnold (2007) argues that this involvement determines what support the SGB can offer to the school and ultimately the learners as governing body members bring a wealth of expertise from their life experiences and working environments, many of which are transferrable skills that can be utilised by the school.

- **Acting as critical friend to the school**

As pointed out earlier in this text, acting as a critical friend to the school as pointed out above (cf. 2.6.1), involves the responsibility for monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes of the school's effectiveness; asking challenging questions; and pressing for improvement. The role of a *friend* is important because it exists to promote the interest of the school and learners. The following roles of the SGB as listed in the Schools Act can be classified as belonging to this element of the school governance mandate:

- support the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions; and
- encourage parents, learners, educators and other staff at the school to render voluntary services to the school.

In performing the role above, the SGB acts as a critical friend, which Birmingham City Council (2012:4) confirms as

> *developing positive relationships with school leaders, respecting roles and a degree of emotional intelligence; properly considered protocols and discussions about ways that both help to identify areas for demarcation and encourage governor participation; remembering that governors have an unquestionable right and responsibility to question and re-affirm their views that management is running the school according to strategic direction set; and also remembering that governors must not get involved in hands-on issues that should be left to day-to-day managers, or handling issues out of their remit.*

This is at the core of the SGB's holding the school to account. However, the critical friend role must be seen in the context of constructive criticism and support in order to enable the school to stay in line with the set strategic course.

It must, however, be stated that the three elements of the school governance mandate cannot be executed in isolation of each other. In fact, they are interwoven and are executed together. For instance, in providing a strategy, planning around monitoring the implementation if plans and the strategy, also involves demanding accountability and being a critical friend are involved.

- **Holding the school to account**

Holding the school to account or demanding accountability can be considered the most important act of ensuring that the SGB executes its school governance mandate effectively. Accountability in this sense concerns a scrutiny of performance against set targets of implementation of the school's strategic direction. In this regard, Birmingham City Council (2012:4) states that

demanding accountability intends to ensure high standards of education; ensure value for money by demonstrating efficient and appropriate allocation of resources; ensure effective school management and organisation; and to ensure that everything is done and everyone is operating to agreed aims and objectives.

Holding the school to account is implied among the functions listed in the Schools Act. Listed functions require the SGB to account to interested parties with regard to their achievement. The strategic direction culminated into the school strategic plan, which as indicated earlier, has to be monitored and account must be given of the achievement of targets set. This, in essence, includes all functions performed in the pursuit of achieving the school's aims and objectives.

The Schools Act specifically requires the SGB to to maintain and improve the school's property, buildings and grounds including school hostels, occupied by the school; to determine the extra-mural curriculum of the school and the choice of subject options in terms of provincial curriculum policy; purchase textbooks, educational materials or equipment for the school; and to pay for services to the school. Because these functions are aimed at promoting the best interests of the school, the SGB must hold the principal and school accountable for their execution. Furthermore and importantly, because the execution of these functions require the use of funds for which the SGB is responsible, the Section 37 of the Schools Act specifically states that the "*The governing body of a public school must open and maintain a banking accoun*t". This is for purposes to ensure that the use of school funds is done according to prescribed directives. For this reason, Section 37(6) states that the school fund, all proceeds thereof and any other assets of the public school must be used only for-

> *(a) educational purposes, at or in connection with such school;*
>
> *(b) educational purposes, at or in connection with another public school, by agreement with such other public school and with the consent of the Head of Department;*

(c) the performance of the functions of the governing body; or

(d) another educational purpose agreed between the governing body and the Head of Department.

This prescription implies the accountability factor. In other words, the school is obliged to account for the use of school funds as prescribed above. Furthermore, Section 38 states:

(1) A governing body of a public school must prepare a budget each year, according to guidelines determined by the Member of the Executive Council, which shows the estimated income and expenditure of the school for the following financial year; and

(2) Before a budget referred to in subsection (1) is approved by the governing body, it must be presented to a general meeting of parents convened on at least 30 days' notice, for consideration and approval by a majority of parents present and voting.

The accountability factor can be seen in the requirement that the budget must be prepared according to guidelines determined by the Member of the Executive Council and that, before approval by the SGB, the budget must be approved by the general meeting of parents. Even more specifically, the Schools Act sets requirements for accountability in Section 42 and 43 in terms of financial management at schools. Section 42 states the following requirements:

The governing body of a public school must-

(a) keep records of funds received and spent by the public school and of its assets, liabilities and financial transactions; and

(b) as soon as practicable, but not later than three months after the end of each financial year, draw up annual financial statements in accordance with the guidelines determined by the Member of the Executive Council.

Section 43 states the following:

> *(1) The governing body of a public school must appoint a person registered as an accountant and auditor in terms of the Public Accountants and Auditors Act, 1991 (Act No. 80 of 1991), to audit the records and financial statements referred to in section 42.*
>
> *(5) A governing body must submit to the Head of Department, within six months after the end of each financial year, a copy of the annual financial statements, audited or examined in terms of this section.*
>
> *(6) At the request of an interested person, the governing body must make the records referred to in section 42, and the audited or examined financial statements referred to in this section, available for inspection.*

Although these sections refer to the SGB's accountability onus, the SGB, because it allocates and delegates the implementation of these prescription to the school, specifically the principal, must hold the principal and school to account by ensuring that these are followed as prescribed.

2.8 Summation and exposition of essential implications of SGB effectiveness regarding the governance mandate elements

From the discussion of the three elements of the school governance mandate, it is clear that their execution holds implications for the effectiveness of the SGB. In other words, the effectiveness of the SGB depends on the proper and effective execution of these elements. Therefore, this has implications for how the SGB functions; and in terms of being effective, the following requirements are essential (James, Brammer, Connolly, Fertig, James & Jones, 2010:105):

- The induction and training of SGBs, which aims to make sure that elected SGB members are familiar with their roles and responsibilities and in essence, capacitated to fulfill their school governance mandate

through knowledge and skills necessary to carry out all their functions effectively.

- Attributes necessary for the effectiveness in SGBs, which concern personal characteristics and abilities to work with others in the SGB to promote the best interests of the school and learners as well as their capabilities stemming from what they are, have and are seen to be in addition to being trustworthy and reliable members of the community and school. This includes their standing in the community, their expertise and skills relevant to the task of governing a school and their ability to work as a team and collaborate with others.

- The functioning of the SGB which entails the actual functioning of the SGB in terms of carrying out its school governance responsibilities including such aspects as understanding of roles and responsibilities; sharing a common vision; being able to speak openly and constructively; and other features signifying a well-functioning SGB.

- The actual task of governing, which includes such tasks as strategic planning, supporting the principal, challenging the principal, managing finances, monitoring plans and targets, ensuring accountability of the SGB, representing stakeholder interests especially community and parental and collaborating with other community institutions and schools.

These requirements, it must be re-emphasised, are important for an effective SGB and are in fact the standards upon which the effectiveness of governing bodies can be measured. It must be further emphasised that for SGBs to be effective and possess these requirements, aspects of effective functioning also include the actual processes of election of members, training of members to understand and be able to carry out their responsibilities and the induction process they undergo to carry out their governance mandate.

2.9 **Chapter summary**

This chapter presented the concept of school governance. The school governance approaches and models are discussed. On this basis, it was important to explore how school governance is exercised in various settings. Lastly, the meaning and implications of the elements of the school governance mandate are discussed.

The next chapter outlines the empirical research design.

Chapter 3

Empirical Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The study's main question is reiterated here for purposes of ease of reading, namely:

> *How effective are SGBs regarding their overall school governance mandate in the Free State Province?*

In consideration of this question, the following objectives were formulated:

- to examine what the overall school governance mandate entails;
- to examine what the school governance effectiveness entails in relation to the overall SGB mandate;
- to explore how effective SGBs are with regard to their overall mandate of school governance in the Free State Province; and
- to develop an approach that can be used to enhance the effectiveness of SGBs regarding their overall school governance mandate in the Free State Province.

The first two objectives were explored through the literature review as presented in the previous chapter. This chapter presents the empirical research methodology, which addresses the third objective using empirical investigative methods. In this regard, the research method is first explained.

3.2 Research methodology

The quest to answer the question of how effective SGBs are regarding their overall school governance mandate in the Free State Province was located within a paradigmatic orientation that facilitates collecting large scale numerical data as well as gaining insight into the research phenomenon. This approach, according to Maree and Pietersen (2007a:145) is essentially quantitative in that:

quantitative research is a process that is systematic and objective in its ways of using numerical data from only a selected subgroup of a universe (or population) to generalise the findings to the universe that is being studied.

Shields and Twycross (2003:24) contend, regarding quantitative research, that it "*usually contains numbers, proportions and statistics, and is invaluable for measuring people's attitudes, their emotional and behavioural states and their ways of thinking*". Based on these descriptions of quantitative research, this study is quantitative in nature in that the intent was to collect quantifiable data that would be used to generalise to the research population in response to the primary research question.

In terms of the quantitative approach adopted in this study, the following discussion focuses on essential elements of its methodology, starting with an exposition of the research paradigm.

3.2.1 **Research paradigm**

A research paradigm is defined as "*a set of assumptions or scientific beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality which gives rise to a particular worldview*" and in this sense, a research paradigm serve "*serves as a set of organising principles by which reality is interpreted*" (Nieuwenhuis 2007:47-48). Accordingly, Taber (2013:288) explains that a research paradigm, "*generate(s) a brief guideline of how research is conducted, what strategy to select as well as selecting the appropriate data collection techniques and data analysis methods*".

In this study, a collection of quantitative data was carried out with research respondents. This means a positivist paradigm guided data collection. The rationale, as advanced by Burton and Barlett (2009:20), is that positivists hold the view that social science is an organised method for combining deductive logic with precise empirical observations of individual behaviour in order to discover and confirm a set of probabilistic causal laws that can be used to predict general patterns of human activity. Furthermore, Burton and Barlett

(2009:20) indicate that positivist researchers prefer structured methods of data collection which can be carried out on a large scale. For these reasons, quantifiable and generalisable data were collected through the use of questionnaires. This was considered suitable and acceptable in order to investigate the effectiveness of SGBs regarding their overall school governance mandate in the Free State Province.

3.2.2 **Research design**

A research design is defined as the overall strategy chosen to integrate the different components of a study in a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring effectively addressing the research problem (USC Libraries, 2015). In this sense, a research design provides direction regarding how the study is conducted in order to answer the research question.

Data collection for this study was mainly quantitative and thus used the survey research design. The survey research design, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:233) investigates a selected sample of respondents from a large population wherein a questionnaire is administered to collect information on variables of interest. Survey designs use procedures to identify trends in attitudes, opinions, behaviours or characteristics of a large group of people or population, where data collected is quantitative, numbered, using questionnaires and is statistically analysed (Creswell, 2012:376).

The questionnaire was administered to the research population made up of principals, chairpersons of SGBs, educator-governors and non-educator-governors as component members of SGBs. Since the aim was to answer the question of what the effectiveness of SGBs is at schools in the Free State Province, data was collected at one point in time and thus measured perceptions of the selected population at that period of their school governance activities and mandate. In this sense, the study used a quantitative cross-sectional survey design (Creswell, 2012:377).

It was decided at this stage that the SGB parent population would be represented by the chairpersons, who are parents themselves. Furthermore, for

purposes of convenience and in recognition of the limited involvement and participation of learner-governors at secondary schools, and the fact that they do not have voting rights as minors according to Section 32(1-3) of the Schools Act, they were not be surveyed.

3.2.3 **Data collection**

The quantitative survey design of the study necessitated the use of a data collection tool that would enable the quantification of data for purposes of analysis and interpretation. For this reason, a self-developed close-ended questionnaire was used for data collection.

3.2.3.1 ***The questionnaire as a data collection instrument***

Since this study was quantitative in nature and in line with the view of Krosnick and Presser (2010:263) that at the heart of a survey is a questionnaire, it became necessary to use it as a data collection instrument. Leedy and Ormord (2005:30) opine that quantitative research involves the use of questionnaires and uses descriptive statistics as a way of organising data, facilitating the organisation and the interpretation of numbers obtained from measuring a characteristic or variables. According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2005:166), a questionnaire is "*a set of questions on a form which is completed by a respondent in respect of a research project*" and is used to attain facts and opinions from the respondents who are informed about the subject (De Vos *et al*., 2005:166). The questionnaire was thus used for data collection and in addition, it was for the following reasons as put forth by MacMillan and Schumacher (2006:194) and Creswell (2009:146):

- *A questionnaire is the most widely used technique for collecting data from the research population.*
- *It is economical nature.*
- *Having same questions for all respondents and being able to ensure anonymity and as such, questionnaires use statements or questions,*

which in all cases, require responding to something written for specific purposes.

- *It has rapid turnaround times.*

There are various types of questionnaires and in this regard, De Vos *et al*. (2005:167) list among others, mailed questionnaires, telephonic questionnaires, group-administered questionnaires, self-administered questionnaires and questionnaires delivered by hand. In this study, a hand-delivered questionnaire was used. The researcher, with the assistance of contact persons at schools (educators) and district offices (school management and governance development officers), personally distributed the questionnaires.

The questionnaire was furthermore deemed appropriate for data collection because of the advantages it had for the researcher in this study. In this regard, advantages that were influential, as stated by De Vos *et al*. (2005: 168), are that the responses were gathered in a standardised way, so questionnaires were more objective than interviews; and it was relatively quick to collect information using a questionnaire.

It was, however, noted that questionnaires generally have disadvantages. Among other disadvantages, Teddlie and Tashakorrie (2009:238) note the following:

- Questionnaires, like many evaluation methods occur after the event, so respondents may have forgotten important issues and completing a questionnaire was that it might have missed other data which might be vital.
- Questionnaires are standardised so it is not possible to explain any points in the questions that respondents may have misinterpreted.
- Respondents may answer superficially if the questionnaires take a long time to complete.
- Respondents do not have an opinion of or knowledge concerning the subject, may have answered the questions instinctively and participants

who had little interest in a particular problem, might have answered the questionnaire indiscriminately;

- As motivation of the respondents is difficult to check, misleading responses and misinterpretation may questions can occur;
- Respondents may be forced to give simple answers to complicated issues;
- Questionnaires may not probe deep enough and they may not reveal a true picture of opinions and feelings; and
- The length of a questionnaire may extract inaccurate responses and a low percentage of feedback.

Notwithstanding these disadvantages, the questionnaire for this study was seen as appropriate. Firstly, the constructs pertaining to school governance were relevant and made interesting to respondents as it was ensured that they as SGB members were to try and make sure that items focused on issues reflecting SGB effectiveness and appealing to respondents' knowledge and interest of current issues in school governance.

Secondly, the questionnaire was made to be of reasonable length and to elicit data that could allow for inferences and conclusions based on the respondents' perceptions of current SGB effectiveness. Finally, because the subject of school governance is of current interest and concern nationally, the questionnaire items were compiled such that they probed matters as they are reported in various studies and in debates on both the academic and social discourses in order to motivate respondents' as accurate and as honest responses as is possible (Check & Schutt, 2012:163). To this end, the language was made relevant and devoid of any academic and intellectual jargon.

In consideration of the process of ensuring that the issues mentioned above, and the fact that the questionnaire was piloted with about 102 respondents who shared the same characteristics with the sample surveyed, as well as the fact that the questionnaire proved reliable pre- and post-administration, the researcher was convinced of its suitability and that the advantages thereof outweighed the disadvantages.

3.2.3.2 *The construction of the questionnaire items*

The construction of a questionnaire needs thorough planning. The literature study served to identify the main dimensions relating to school governance effectiveness. This means that earlier research studies, theories and experience of experts who are knowledgeable about the setting under investigation were of benefit in the construction of the questionnaire for this study. In addition, this served to enhance the reliability of the questionnaire and implies meticulous questionnaire construction (Check & Schutt, 2012:163). To this end, three main elements of the effectiveness of SGBs namely: the strategic development direction; critical friendship; and accountability were identified (cf. 2.6). Questionnaire items were constructed using these elements as the point of departure. Other literature studies on the functioning of SGBs globally, including South African studies were studied to better understand various aspects of SGB effectiveness and were instrumental in refining and ensuring the suitability of the questionnaire items pertaining to South African linguistic requirements. The following steps, as proposed by Krosnick and Presser (2010:264), were followed in constructing questionnaire items:

- simple, familiar words should be used – technical terms, jargon, and slang were avoided;
- simple syntax must be used;
- avoid words with ambiguous meanings, i.e., aim for wording that all respondents will interpret in the same way;
- strive for wording that is specific and concrete as opposed to general and abstract;
- make response options exhaustive and mutually exclusive;
- avoid leading or loading questions that push respondents toward an answer;
- ask about one thing at a time; and
- avoid questions with single or double negations.

The questionnaire items were phrased in such a way that enabled respondents to indicate their responses regarding the extent to which they agreed or

disagreed with each questionnaire item (cf. Appendix A). Therefore, respondents had to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each item by responding on a four-point balanced Likert-type scale indicating:

1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Disagree; 4 = Strongly Disagree.

The Likert Scale is used in an attempt to quantify constructs which are not directly measurable (Gliem & Gliem, 2003:82; Edelmann, 2002:280). The balanced four-point scale was deemed appropriate for the questionnaire as it eliminates respondents' tendency to provide what they consider as expected or desirable responses, which Garland (1998) argues, can be minimized by eliminating the mid-point category from the Likert-type scale.

3.2.3.3 **The structure of the questionnaire**

The final questionnaire was subdivided into the following two main sections (cf. Appendix A):

Section A: General information (1-8)

Items in this section related to the biographical information of the respondents. The questions related to the respondents' gender, age, position in the SGB, terms as the SGB member, level of education, number of learners in a school, type of school and the location of the school. These items would assist in statistically determining reasons for any discrepancies in responses.

Section B: Dimensions related the effectiveness of school governing bodies

Section B consisted of 46 questions. The questions in this section were categorised according to SGB effectiveness dimensions derived from the literature study (cf. 2.8). Questions were then allotted to the following dimensions:

- The functioning of the SGB (questions: 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 44).

- The actual task of governing (questions: 5, 6, 7, 8, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 45, 46).
- Attributes necessary for the effectiveness of school governors (questions: 27, 28, 29, 37).
- The induction and training of SGBs: (24, 25, 26, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44).

As pointed out above, items of the questionnaire in Section B sought to elicit respondents' perceptions and they had to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with the statements regarding their SGB's effectiveness.

3.2.3.4 **Questionnaire administration**

The most important consideration in the questionnaire administration concerns reliability and validity of the questionnaire.

- **Reliability of the questionnaire**

Reliability is an indispensable characteristic of quantitative data. If a test is administered repeatedly under indistinguishable circumstances, but different results are obtained each time, one will conclude that the test is unreliable. If, however, similar results are obtained each time the test is administered, the results will be considered to be reliable and, therefore, potentially useful for research purposes (Mertler, 2009:126). In this study, the questionnaire was first piloted with 102 respondents from the Sedibeng Districts, randomly selected for purposes of helping to ensure that the questionnaire items were understandable, devoid of jargon, non-ambiguous and generally balanced in terms of the data it sought to elicit. The respondents in the pilot test comprised principals (n = 6), educator-governors (n = 15), SGB chairpersons (n = 58) and non-teaching staff-governors (n = 23).

It is critical to put a final questionnaire to the test to determine whether respondents in the sample are able to complete the survey and that they comprehend the questionnaire items or not (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005:192, Shukla, 2008:91). This is necessary because it will enable testing of content,

wording, order, form and layout of the questionnaire. In other words, piloting shows the researcher whether the research instrument is appropriate for the study envisioned or not (Shukla 2008:91, Creswell, 2002:367). All respondents were requested to respond honestly and note any questions that were either confusing or ambiguous and to make comments and suggestions so to that questionnaire could be readjusted before being distributed to the target population.

After making the necessary corrections and adaptations to local linguistic requirements according to responses of the pilot test, the questionnaire was then statistically analysed for the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient. The coefficient that is used to measure the internal reliability of an instrument is called the Cronbach alpha coefficient and is based on the inter-item correlations (Akbaba, 2006:183).

Pietersen and Maree (2007b:216) point out that the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient normally ranges between 0 and 1 and that the closer the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is to 1.0 the greater the internal consistency of the items in the scale. All questionnaire items generated a Cronbach alpha coefficient and an average inter-item correlation as depicted in Table 1 below.

Table 3.1 Reliability statistics: Pilot test

Cronbach's alpha	Inter-Item Correlations	N of Items
0.980	0.509	48

Of the 102 respondents, three were excluded in the computation of the reliability test. As shown above, the Cronbach's alpha co-efficient (0.980) was highly acceptable and thus indicated high reliability. In addition, from the analysis of statistics, the questionnaire items were reduced to 46 for the final questionnaire because repetitive items were identified.

The analysis of the final questionnaire also tested the questionnaire reliability and the reliability score are depicted in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2 Reliability statistics: Post-administration

Cronbach's alpha	Inter-Item Correlation	No of Items
0.948	0.285	46

As was the case with the pilot questionnaire, the final questionnaire yielded high reliability at a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.948 and an inter-item reliability of 0.285.

- ***Validity of the questionnaire***

Questionnaire validity refers to the extent to which a questionnaire measures what it is supposed to measure (Pietersen & Maree, 2007b:216). This can be achieved by ensuring that the instrument has content validity, face validity, criterion validity or construct validity (Delport, 2002:167-168).

Face validity, according to Pietersen and Maree (2007b:217), refers to the extent to which an instrument 'looks' valid or, it can be said, the extent to which a questionnaire appears to be appropriate for its intended purpose based on simple inspection of the test or questionnaire itself. The questionnaire was subjected to thorough scrutiny for face validity by the researcher's promoter and his colleagues who are experts in the field of school governance. Their recommendations assisted in ensuring that the final questionnaire indeed appears to be appropriate for measuring the effectiveness of SGBs in the Free State Province. It was noted, however, that face validity is largely considered as a cursory review of items and can hardly count as a measure of validity at all, because it is subjective and ill-defined (Kitchenham and Pfieeger, 2002:22). Consequently, other validity types were considered in this questionnaire's validation.

Content validity, which is perhaps the most important validity type, refers to, according to Pietersen and Maree (2007b:217), "*the extent to which the questionnaire covers the complete content of the particular construct that it is*

set out to measure". In this regard, the questionnaire was intended to measure the effectiveness of SGBs in executing their governance mandate. The literature review was the starting point in this regard and resulted in the identification of, firstly, elements of the school governance mandate namely: the strategic direction; critical friendship; and accountability. These three elements were further unpacked to pinpoint their exact meanings. This process was combined with a scrutiny of various existing questionnaires that had been used to measure school effectiveness and the three elements of the governance mandate. In particular, the questionnaire used in the Bath University study of school governance effectiveness (Balarin *et al*., 2008) was highly useful. Finally, the content of the questionnaire was deemed valid supported by the statistical reliability as presented earlier.

Criterion validity, as pointed out by Pietersen and Maree (2007b:217), is "*probably the ultimate test as to whether an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure*" Kitchenham and Pfieeger (2002:22) elaborate that, "*Criterion validity is a measure of how well one instrument compares with another instrument or predictor*". In this regard, and as discussed earlier, the questionnaire for this study was compared with other questionnaires, in particular, the questionnaire used in the Bath University study in Britain for measuring the same constructs as this study – SGB effectiveness in executing the school governance mandate (Balarin *et al*., 2008).

3.2.3.5 ***Final questionnaire***

Subsequent to the pilot study and noting the results thereof, the necessary adjustments were made and the final questionnaire was developed (see Annexure A). The questionnaire was thereafter distributed to schools by the researcher and contact persons, as mentioned elsewhere above. A covering letter was enclosed (Annexure B) with the aim of orienting the respondents to the questionnaire and assuring them of confidentiality and anonymity (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005:203).

3.2.3.6 *Questionnaire distribution*

A total of 793 questionnaires were randomly delivered to the principals, SGB chairpersons, educator-governors and non-teaching staff-governors at selected schools in the five districts of education in the Free State Province. The school principals were asked for permission to conduct the survey (cf. Appendix B). The questionnaire was distributed with a covering letter that stated that the questionnaire would take no more than 20 minutes to complete. SGB members were requested to complete these questionnaires and hand them back to the researcher and the contact persons (at the venue) as soon as they were completed.

3.2.4 **Data analysis and interpretation**

Data analysis was computed using the SPSS programme by the Statistical Consultancy Services of the North-West University: Vaal Triangle Campus. Firstly, quantitative data were analysed to derive descriptive statistics. This was done through the computation of grouped frequency distributions to indicate location or central tendencies, variations and shape or form of responses (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:248; Pietersen & Maree, 2007a:186; Creswell, 2009:152).

Secondly, frequency analysis and interpretation were done yielding trends and tendencies in perceptions regarding the dimensions relating to the three elements of the effectiveness of SGBs in executing their school governance mandate were analysed and interpreted.

Thirdly, it was deemed important to analyse the rank order of the dimensions to determine which groups of functions relating to the school governance mandate were regarded highest and thus presented possibilities of being carried out better than the others. This was done on the basis of ranking according to respondents' strata, namely: principals, chairpersons, CS educator-governors and non-teaching staff-governors as well as the ranking of dimensions per stratum and overall ranking of the dimensions of school governance effectiveness.

Realising that there were marked differences in responses among the respondents, it was deemed necessary to determine the reasons for the differences and if the differences were of practical effect, thus dictating a need for changes in practice. For these reasons, probability analysis was done to derive statistical inferences among key variables pertaining to respondents' strata, for example, comparison of data relating to parent- and educator-governors in SGBs. The main aim in this process was to determine the nature of statistical significance and the attendant practical significances and effect (Pietersen & Maree., 2007b:214).

3.2.5 **Sources for data collection**

Sources for data collection were selected to ensure the elicitation of quantitative data. For this reason, the population for data collection consisted of all members of SGBs stratified into school principals as *ex officio* officers of SGBs, CS educator-governors (educators), chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors of SGBs in the Free State Province.

The Free State Province consists of 1 422 public schools (Department of Basic Education, 2012:4), which translates to 1 422 SGBs. In identifying data collection sources, the first step entailed deciding on a sample for the SGBs. This was done by the consulting a table of required sample sizes developed by Creative Research Systems (2012), which yielded a sample of n = 373 SGBs, based on a 95% degree of confidence and a 0.05 margin of error. This sample implies that the population for the quantitative survey would be drawn from 373 SGBs.

A snap survey of SGB membership numbers indicated an average of 9 members per SGB, broken down into one principal, one chairperson, two educator-governors and one non-teaching staff-governor member. This yielded a total population of 3 357 SGB members for the sampled SGBs (373 x 9). Because the population is stratified into different governor affiliations in the SGBs, the sample for the survey was decided on a stratification basis (Strydom & Venter, 2002:205). For principals, chairpersons and non-teaching staff-

governors, the table of required samples sizes (Creative Research Systems, 2012) yielded samples of 182 *per* stratum as representative of their populations in the Province, if one member per SGB is selected.

For educator-governors, it was decided to double the population per SGB on account of there being two educators per SGB. This was done with cognizance of Creative Research Systems' assertion (2012) that "*The larger your sample size, the more sure you can be that their answers truly reflect the population*" and that "*However, the relationship is not linear (i.e., doubling the sample size does not halve the confidence interval)*". Therefore, doubling the educator-governors' population yielded a population of 692. Similarly, the table of required sample sizes yielded a sample of 247 educator-governors as a representative sample of educator-governors in the Province. Therefore, the sample for the study was as depicted in the Table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3 Population samples and questionnaire return rates

Population	N	N *per* stratum	Sample n =	Questionnaire return rate	
				f	%
SGBs	1422	1422-	373	-	-
SGB members (1422 x 9)	3357	3357	793	708-	89.3
Principals	1422	373	182	165	90.7
SGB chairpersons	1422	373	182	154	84.6
CS educator-governors (1 422 x 2)	2844	692	247	236	95.5
Non-teaching staff-governors	1422	373	182	153	84.1

From Table 3.1, it can be seen that the overall return rate of the questionnaire was 89.3% which, according to Delport (2002:172), is an acceptable return rate. Furthermore, the return rates for the four strata were similarly acceptable in that they were 90.7% for principals, 84.6% for SGB chairpersons, 95.5% and 84.1% for CS educator-governors and non-teaching staff-governors.

3.3 **Quality standards**

Due to its pragmatic nature, this study adhered to careful quality standards of data collection, analysis and interpretation. The questionnaire exhibited strong reliability and validity features as pointed out earlier in the text. Pietersen and Maree (2007:215) describe reliability as that feature of a measuring instrument that ensures repeatability and consistency in application and to this end, internal consistency is crucial. The questionnaire used in this study was subjected to a scrupulous pilot study after which an analysis was carried out to determine its reliability through a Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Furthermore, the validity of a measuring instrument describes the extent to which an instrument adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration, and also whether measurement is done accurately in order to yield appropriate results (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:134). The questionnaire in this study was designed and developed to exhibit validity in terms of face, content, construct and criterion validity.

Pietersen and Maree (2007b:216) provide guidelines which were applied in ensuring the validity of the questionnaire as a measuring instrument for this study. The following was undertaken:

- The questionnaire was made to look valid by ensuring that the questions asked could be grouped into dimensions measuring the effectiveness of SGBs regarding their mandate, particularly with regard to being strategic partners, critical friends and accountability holders.
- The three main dimensions of SGB effectiveness in their overall mandate also served to ensure content validity in that they purported to cover all aspects of the study phenomenon, for example, promotion of the best interests of the schools through strategic planning and accountability.

Similarly, with data analysis and interpretation, measures were taken ensuring that the data were analysed both as a whole and in parts by focusing on the frequency analysis as well as on inferential statistics. These processes were

undertaken carefully with the assistance of the study promoter and the Statistical Consultant at the North-West University.

3.4 **The role of the researcher**

The researcher's role was, for all intents and purposes, a pragmatic one. This implies a role of seeking out what works best by engaging with the quantitative data from the collection stage to the analysis and interpretation. For the quantitative data this involved, as recommended by Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2007:41):

- the compilation, piloting and validating of the questionnaire;
- administering the questionnaire, including seeking the necessary permission and ethical approval, developing consent forms, recruiting respondents and gaining their support for completion of questionnaires and identifying and soliciting the help of contact persons for questionnaire distribution and retrieval; and
- analysis and interpretation of data.

A statistics package for the social sciences (SPSS) was used with the assistance of the Statistical Consultancy Services at the North-West University: Vaal Triangle Campus.

3.5 **Ethical standards**

This research was conducted according to prevailing ethical principles (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:101). This included seeking permission from all relevant gatekeepers (cf. Appendices B, C and D) and applying for ethical approval from the North West University Ethics Committee: Vaal Triangle. In so far as respondents to the questionnaire, the following were considered:

- *Informed consent and voluntarily participation* (cf. Appendix E for informed consent form): which implies apprising respondents of their rights to accept or decline participation and that participation is voluntary, including

full disclosure of the purpose of this research (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002:88; Strydom, 2002:74);

- *protection from harm*: which means striving to be honest and respectful towards respondents and ensuring that no situation put them at risk (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002:88); and
- *ensuring respondents' privacy, confidentiality and anonymity*: which implies making sure that flowing from respondents' rights to participate, they were guaranteed that their participation would treated confidentially; their privacy would respected; and the findings of the study would ensure the anonymity of their participation (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002:88; Creswell, 2009:89).

In addition to these measures, the findings analysed and reported were such that that ethical research standards were reflected. This includes keeping analysed data for the prescribed period of five years; providing accurate accounts of data; and using acceptable scientific language in the write-up (Creswell, 2009:91).

3.6 **Chapter summary**

This chapter has focused on the empirical research methodology of the study. The research methodology, coupled with the design, allowed for the selection of the questionnaire and its items. In particular, the chapter has provided for the dimensions that were revealed by the literature review.

The next chapter provides the analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the school principals, SGB chairpersons, educator-governors and non-teaching staff-governors under study.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis and Interpretation

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data. The aim thereof is to determine the effectiveness of SGBs in executing their overall school governance mandate in the Free State Province. It must be reiterated that the effectiveness of the SGB in executing their overall school governance mandate is based on the following dimensions derived from the implications of the three school governance effectiveness elements as pointed out in Chapter 2:

- the functioning of the SGB;
- the actual task of governing;
- the induction and training of SGBs; and
- attributes necessary for the effectiveness of school governors.

This implies looking at the SGB from its election to its actual execution of school governance roles and responsibilities. Therefore, this chapter presents data in order address the third objectives, thereby answering the third research question. Data analysis and interpretation is based on the frequency analysis and rank order of responses to questionnaire items grouped into the four categories listed above.

The demographic profile of respondents is presented in the next section.

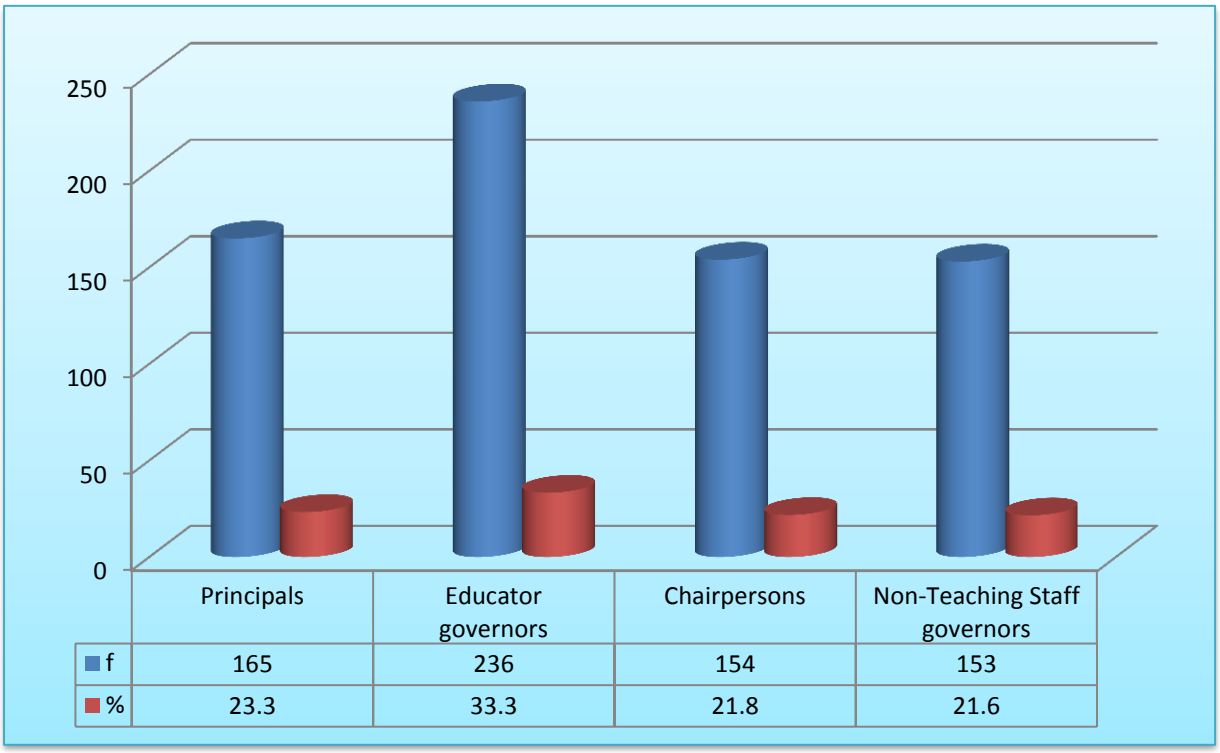
4.2 Demographic profile of the respondents

The demographic profile helps to determine the respondents' biographical information and personal characteristics for purposes of comparing "*the sample to the population characteristics to see if it is representative of the population and to explore the possible relationships between biographical variables and other variables in the study*" (Mertens, 2010:121; Maree & Pietersen, 2007b:164). This subsection presents the demographic profile of respondents in this study starting with their overall number.

4.2.1 The overall number of respondents surveyed

As indicated in the previous chapter, the overall number of respondents to the questionnaire used was N = 708 and comprised respondents stratified as depicted in Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1 Overall data of each stratum of respondents



The overall data as illustrated above indicate frequencies and percentages as fractions of the combined total of 708 respondents. As illustrated in Figure 4.1, principals made up 23.3% of the respondents, while educators-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors made up 33.3%, 21.8% and 21.6% respectively. This data was useful in determining the overall extent of respondents' perceptions on school governance effectiveness dimensions and items. However, most of the analysis and interpretation in the frequency counts was based on the respondents' strata.

4.2.2 **Gender of respondents**

The table below depicts data on respondents' gender.

Table 4.1 Data on respondents' gender

Gender	Principals		Educator-governors		SGB chairpersons		Non-Teaching Staff-governors	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Male	90	54.5	98	41.5	67	43.5	39	25.5
Female	75	45.5	135	57.2	84	54.5	114	74.5
Missing	00	00	03	1.3	03	1.9	00	00
Total	165	100.00	236	100.00	154	100.00	153	100.00

Table 4.1 indicates that there were more male principals than female principals. This is in line with the general national gender profile of staff in managerial positions at schools as pointed out by, for instance, the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshega who stated that 36% of school principals are women (Makhanya, 2013:1).

The majority of SGB chairpersons, educator-governors and non-teaching staff-governors were female. This could be seen as typical of the gender mix in South African public organisations, especially schools, where females are almost always in the majority. It is, however, noteworthy that the majority of SGB chairpersons were female, especially because this was not the trend in the past with males dominating leadership positions. It could be that campaigns for gender equity are beginning to take effect in SGBs. This could also be construed as a coincidence emanating from SGB election trends where there possibly are more women attending meetings and school activities. However, this is not a fact that can be supported scientifically, except that in the researcher's experience, this has always seemed the case – mothers and women take part more in school activities than men and fathers.

4.2.3 **Age distribution of respondents**

Table 4.2 below illustrates the age distribution of respondents.

Table 4.2 Data on the age distribution of respondents

Age	Principals		Educator-governors		SGB chairpersons		Non-Teaching Staff-governors	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
20-30	35	21.2	73	30.9	53	34.4	6	3.9
31-40	47	28.5	44	18.6	35	22.7	62	40.5
41-50	19	11.5	81	34.3	51	33.1	77	50.3
51^{+}	60	36.4	30	12.7	11	7.1	8	5.2
Missing	04	2.4	08	3.4	04	2.6	00	00
Total	165	100.00	236	100.00	154	100.00	153	100.00

The majority of principals (28.5%) were in the 31-40 and the 51^{+} (36.4%) age brackets. The next group of principals (21.2%) comprised the age bracket 20-30. A minority of principals (11.5%) were in the age bracket 41-50. In totality, the majority of principals can be said to be above 30 years at 76.4%. Taken together with the number of terms served as school governors as depicted in Table 4.3 below, these findings can have significant implications for the effectiveness of school governance and the execution of the governance mandate. This is because, considering that the majority of principals (58.7%) was in their second, third and fourth terms, this implies years of experience as school managers and as members of SGBs. For example, this implies that principals are largely experienced in governance matters and would proffer valuable responses regarding the effectiveness of SGBs in executing their governance mandate. Furthermore, older and more experienced principals may be more knowledgeable when working with other governors as opposed to much younger principals who might be inexperienced.

The majority of educator-governors (34.3%) were in the age bracket 41-50. The second and third groups were in the age bracket 20-30 and 31-40 respectively. A minority of educator-governors (12.7%) were in the age bracket 51^{+}. This finding means that educators-governors are generally spread across the 20-30 year ages bracket to the 40^{+} age brackets with some exceptions falling in the 40^{+} age brackets.

The majority SGB chairpersons (34.4% and 33.1%) were in the age bracket 20-30 and 41-50 years respectively. The second and third groups were in the age bracket 31-40 (22.7%) and 31-50 (7.1%) respectively. Only 7.1% were in the 51^{+} age bracket. A discernable trend with regard to SGB chairpersons is that they are mostly between 20 and 50 years. This represents a mix of young adults and older, more mature adults. This can imply a mix of varied responses to items denoting school governing body effectiveness.

The majority of non-teaching staff-governors (50.3%) were in the age bracket 41-50 years. The 31-40 year age bracket comprised 40.5% of the respondents. Only 3.0% and 5.2% were in the 20-30 and 51^{+} year age brackets respectively. This finding suggests that the stratum of non-teaching staff-governors is dominated by individuals who are in the age bracket 41 and above.

The ages of respondents can have implications when considered together with the terms of office they have served as school governors.

4.2.4 **Data on the respondents' current terms of office**

Table 4.3 below shows the respondents' terms of office.

Table 4.3 Data on respondents' terms of office

Terms of office	Principals		Educator-governors		SGB chairpersons		Non-Teaching Staff-governors	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	61	37.0	127	53.8	51	33.1	102	66.7
2	16	9.7	57	24.2	52	33.8	29	19.0
3	7	4.2	36	15.3	17	11.0	11	7.2
4	74	44.8	11	4.7	23	14.9	2	1.3
5	00	00	00	00	01	0.6	00	00
Missing	07	4.3	05	2.1	10	6.5	09	5.9
Total	165	100.00	236	100.00	154	100.00	153	100.00

The majority of principals (44.8%) had served four terms of office followed by 37% who had served one term only. Principals who had served two terms constituted 9.7% and those who had served three terms constituted 4.2%.

It can be concluded that overall, the majority of principals (58.7%) had had experiences of serving as SGB members for more than one term, which can be considered reasonable experience taking into account that they are *ex officio* members as well, which implies reasonable experience in the school governance duties.

The majority of educator-governors (53.8%) served for one term. Others served for two and three terms respectively. The minority of educator-governors (4.7%) served four terms. This finding suggests that a huge number of educator-governors served a short period as SGB members, which might imply little experience in school governance work.

The majority of SGB chairpersons (33.8%) served for two terms while an almost equal number (33.1%) served for one term only. Others served for three (11.0%) and four terms (14.9%). Only one SGB chairperson had served for five terms. This finding suggests that a huge number of SGB chairpersons served for a very short period. However, those that had served for more than one term (60.3%) would have had considerable experience as school governors since the number of terms the SGB chairpersons serve may determine their acquired experience, depending on how effective the SGB is.

The majority of non-teaching staff-governors (66.7%) served for one term only. Others served for two and three terms. A very low number (1.3%) had served for four terms. This finding implies that the non-teaching staff-governors served for a short duration and possibly did not have enough exposure to various facets of school governance work.

4.2.5 **Level of education**

Table 4.4 below presents the level of education of respondents.

Table 4.4 Data on respondents' level of education

Level of education	Principals		Educator-governors		SGB chairpersons		Non-Teaching Staff-governors	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Pre-Matric	01	0.6	03	1.3	12	7.8	01	0.7
Senior Certificate	14	8.5	28	11.9	97	63.0	16	10.5
Post-Matric	106	64.2	28	44.9	37	17.5	128	83.7
Degree	44	26.7	91	38.6	17	11.0	8	5.2
Missing	00	00	08	3.4	01	0.6	00	00
Total	165	100.00	236	100.00	154	100.00	153	100.00

The majority of principals held a post-matric qualification (64.2%) and only one principal (0.06) held a pre-matric qualification. A sizeable 26.7% of the principals also held degrees. This finding means that the majority of principals are well-qualified, which augurs well for the ease with which they would be able to interpret policy and school governance legislation and regulations.

The majority of educator-governors (83.5%) held a post-matric qualification with 38.6% of that number comprising educator-governors with degrees. Just more than a tenth (11.9%) held Senior Certificates and only 1.3% had educational levels below Senior Certificate level.

The majority of SGB chairpersons had Senior Certificates. The second group possessed a post-matric qualification and completed a degree. A sizeable number held a pre-matric qualification. Few SGB chairpersons missed this question. According to this finding, SGB chairpersons' level of education is acceptable, meaning they are able to read and write. It is possible that SGB chairpersons are able to command SGBs effectively.

The majority of non-teaching staff-governors (83.7%) held a post-matric qualification. Others (10.5%) had obtained Senior Certificates and have a degree. Only one non-teaching staff-governors held a qualification below the Senior Certificate level. It must be mentioned that the non-teaching staff-governors, while including general

workers who tend to cleaning and gardening duties, comprise on the whole, the schools' clerical staff. Therefore, their post-matric qualifications could largely be secretarial and could include computer skills. Their involvement in school governance issues are usually as finance officers of finance committees (cf. Makiri, 2015 & De Bruin, 2014).

An interesting and important finding relates to the educational levels of SGB chairpersons. In contradiction to the often reported low educational level of parent-governors, the data indicates that 91.5% of parent-governors, in fact, hold post-matric qualifications with 17.5% holding degrees. This is a possibility since 21 years have elapsed since the dawn of democracy in South Africa and it is likely that parents of current school-going children could largely be in possession of the Senior Certificate due to, among other reasons, the provision of free and compulsory education in the country for the first ten years since 1994. This finding could be an indication of a change in the educational status of parent-governors and could only bode well for the effectiveness of SGBs generally.

4.2.6 **Number of learners**

The number of learners at schools can be regarded as a factor that can also influence the effectiveness of the SGBs. For example, schools with large numbers requires much more resources and this can have an impact on the funding such schools receive from the state, including the fact that most schools are no-fee paying schools. This can present challenges for SGBs in terms of determining the strategic direction and setting educational and academic standards.

Table 4.5 below depicts data on the number of learners where each SGB component served.

Table 4.5 Data on the number of learners

Number of learners	Principals		Educator-governors		SGB chairpersons		Non-Teaching Staff-governors	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
<500	13	7.9	25	10.6	28	18	13	08
500-600	21	12.7	25	10.6	22	14	59	39
600-1000	112	68	110	46.6	36	23	52	34
>1000	12	7.2	68	28.8	37	24	29	19
Missing	07	4.2	08	3.4	31	20	00	00
Total	165	100.00	228	100.00	154	100.00	153	100.00

The majority of principals (68%) managed schools where learner numbers were between 600 and 1000. The second and the third group of principals were employed at schools where learner numbers totaled 500-600. Less than a tenth of the principals (7.9%) worked at schools with learner numbers totaling above 1000.

The majority of educator-governors (46.6%) were from schools where the number of learners was between 600 and 1000. The second and third groups of educator-governors were employed at schools with less than 1000 and 500-600 learners respectively.

The majority of SGB chairpersons were from schools with more than 1000 learners and between 600 and 1000 (23% and 24% respectively). The third group of SGB chairpersons was from schools with less than 500 learners. A minority of SGB chairpersons were from schools with 500-600 learners. This finding means that the majority of SGB chairpersons generally are at schools with less than 1000 learners.

The majority of non-teaching staff-governors (39%) served in SGBs which governed schools where learner numbers ranged from 500-600. The second largest group of non-teaching staff-governors (34%) was from schools with 600 to 1000 learners. Other non-teaching staff-governors served in SGBs governing schools with learner numbers of more than 1000. A minority of non-teaching staff-governors were from schools with learner numbers of less than 500.

4.2.7 Type of school

The type of school can exercise a significant influence on the SGBs' actual execution of its governance mandate. Among other factors, resource allocation, funding from the state, setting academic and performance standards can be influenced by whether a school is a primary or secondary school and whether a secondary school is a so-called mainstream or technical secondary school. These factors would call for the SGB to be knowledgeable and skilled in setting strategic targets and direction and in dealing with roles that include financial management and facilities maintenance, especially at primary school level in the latter case.

Table 4.6 below shows the type of school where each SGB component operates.

Table 4.6 Data on the school type

Type of schools	Principals		Educator-governors		SGB chairpersons		Non-Teaching Staff-governors	
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
Primary	68	41.2%	107	45	83	53.9%	114	74.5
Intermediate	00	00	04	1.7	00	00	00	00
Secondary	97	58.8	125	53	68	44.2	39	24.5
Missing	00	00	00	00	03	1.9	00	00
Total	165	100.00	236	100.00	154	100.00	153	100.00

Most principals (58.8%) were from secondary schools while 41.2% of principals were from primary schools. Many primary schools are located in the townships as a result of apartheid policies.

The majority of educator-governors (53%) was employed at secondary schools while a minority of 45% was employed at primary schools. Few educator-governors (1.7%) were from intermediate schools; which are largely primary schools also catering for secondary grades like Grade 8.

The majority of SGB chairpersons (53.9%) were from primary schools, while a minority of 44.2% was secondary schools.

The majority of the non-teaching staff-governors was from primary schools while a minority was from secondary schools. No non-teaching staff-governors came from intermediary schools.

4.2.8 Location of schools

The location of schools can be another factor that exerts an influence on the effectiveness of the SGB in carrying out its governance mandate. In this regard, schools located in townships usually have more challenges as compared to town schools and for historical reasons, rural schools are even worse off. The challenges in this regard may be because of the socio-economic and political reasons. Furthermore, attempts at involving parents in school matters are generally less than ideal in township and rural schools. Town schools can also have challenges related to diversity and the management thereof. These factors are likely to affect how SGBs carry out their school governance mandate. Data on the location of schools in this study are presented in Table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7 Data on the schools' location

Location of schools	Principals		Educator-governors		SGB chairpersons		Non-Teaching Staff-governors	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Township	142	86	190	80.5	134	89.3	119	77.8
Town	1	0.6	26	11.0	5	3.3	24	15.7
Rural	22	13.3	18	7.6	11	7.3	10	6.5
Missing	0	0	2	0.8	4	0	0	0
Total	165	100.00	236	100.00	154	100.00	153	100.00

The majority of principals (86%) managed township schools. Principals who were employed at town schools made up 0.6% while those from rural schools comprised 13% of the respondents. Clearly, the questionnaire distribution was, on the whole, biased towards township and rural schools.

Similarly, the majority of educator-governors (80.5%0 were from township schools, while educator-governors employed at town schools totaled 11% and rural school educator-governors represented 7.6% of the total population.

The majority of SGB chairpersons (89.3%) governed township schools, while 7.3% governed rural schools and 3.3% were located in town schools. These figures reflect similar pattern with those of the school principals.

The majority of non-teaching staff-governors (77.8%) partook in the governance of township schools and the minority (6.5%) was in the governance of rural schools; which understandably do not have big learner numbers to warrant non-teaching staff as is the case in town and township schools.

4.3 **Data analysis and interpretation**

The questionnaire (Annexure A) for this research revealed the following themes mentioned below and data collected were then analysed in terms of these themes. The themes referred to are as follows:

- the functioning of the SGB;
- the actual task of governing;
- attributes necessary for the effectiveness of school governors; and
- the induction and training of SGBs.

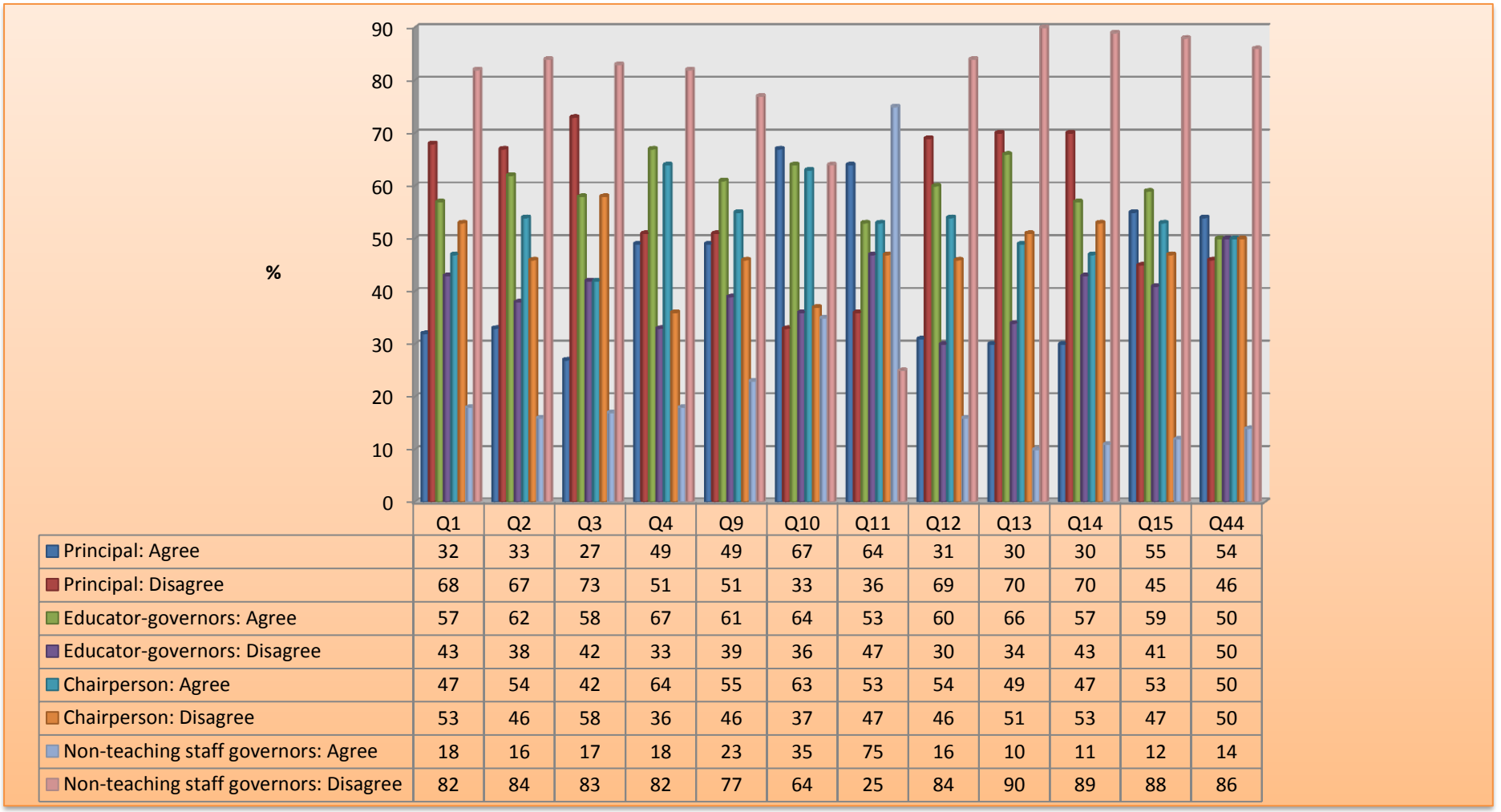
4.3.1 **The functioning of governing bodies**

The dimension of questions concerning the functioning of the SGB seeks to determine how SGBs' functioning is perceived by respondents. The functioning of SGBs is closely linked to the capacity of governors to govern and work as a unit or team in pursuance of school governance responsibilities; including the ability of the SGB to utilise procedures that facilitate and enhance the achievement of goals attendant to implementing the school governance mandate (cf. 2.2; 2.6; 2.8). This includes *inter alia*, SGBs' understanding of their key roles and responsibilities as listed in the Schools Act; collaboration among SGB categories; the procedural conduct of SGB meetings and the roles and responsibilities of the executive members of the SGB (Mahlangu, 2008:197). According to Rangongo (2007:32) the functioning of the SGB relies on how effective and efficient the SGB is in realising the school's goals.

A striking observation from the data concerning this dimension is that some respondent strata agreed while others disagreed with almost all statements in this

dimension. This can be clearly seen in Figure 4.2, which depicts the extent of agreement and disagreement with questions on this dimension.

Figure 4.2 Data on the functioning of the SGB



	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q44
Principal: Agree	32	33	27	49	49	67	64	31	30	30	55	54
Principal: Disagree	68	67	73	51	51	33	36	69	70	70	45	46
Educator-governors: Agree	57	62	58	67	61	64	53	60	66	57	59	50
Educator-governors: Disagree	43	38	42	33	39	36	47	30	34	43	41	50
Chairperson: Agree	47	54	42	64	55	63	53	54	49	47	53	50
Chairperson: Disagree	53	46	58	36	46	37	47	46	51	53	47	50
Non-teaching staff governors: Agree	18	16	17	18	23	35	75	16	10	11	12	14
Non-teaching staff governors: Disagree	82	84	83	82	77	64	25	84	90	89	88	86

As illustrated in Figure 4.2, two strata of respondents indicated agreement with most statements in this dimension. For example, principals agreed with only three statements; chairpersons agreed with seven statements and non-teaching staff-governors agreed with only three statements; while educator-governors agreed with all statements. On the contrary, as depicted in Figure 4.2, principals disagreed with eight statements; chairpersons disagreed with four statements; educator-governors disagreed with three statements; while non-teaching staff-governors disagreed with nine statements – all of which represents a 52.3% agreement and 47.7% disagreement, which gives the impression that the functioning of SGBs is generally perceived as average or poor. This is supported by responses about whether or not there is a high degree of members leaving or abandoning their SGBs. Most respondents agreed (54% of the principals, 50% of educator-governors and 50% of SGB chairpersons) with the statements. This resonates with other research findings. For example, Mahlangu and Pitsoe (2011) as cited by Mthiyane, Bhengu and Bayeni (2014:209) found that SGB members are abandoning their roles and responsibilities as a result of teacher unions manipulating them to recommend appointment of educators into promotional posts. The majority (86%) of non-teaching staff-governors, however disagreed. This could be attributed to most non-teaching staff-governors being in their first term in the SGB (cf. 4.2.4) and therefore have not been exposed much to SGB's functioning.

A further analysis of the respondents' perceptions as indicated in the figures above, indicates that principals, chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors all disagreed on two statements, namely: *members of the SGB feel able to speak their minds on issues* and *the SGB participates in discussions about the effectiveness of its performance.* On whether *members of the SGB feel able to speak their minds on issues*, the majority of principals (70%), SGB chairpersons (51%) and non-teaching staff-governors (90%) disagreed, while the majority of educator-governors (66%) agreed. Furthermore, on whether of the *SGB participates in discussions on the effectiveness of its performance*, the majority of principals (70%), SGB chairpersons (53%) and non-teaching staff-governors (89%) disagreed.

An analysis of some of the statements in this dimension indicates perceptions of the SGBs that are not functioning very well. For example, the statement: *overall, the*

SGB works effectively, elicited the majority response from principals (68%), chairpersons (53%) and non-teaching staff-governors (82%) disagreed. This resonates with most research that has found that SGBs generally do not function optimally for various reasons (Xaba, 2011; Bagarette, 2011; Xaba, 2006; Ngidi, 2004; Van Wyk, 2004).

There were differing views from the respondents on *whether SGBs have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities*. A sizeable majority of principals (67%) and non-teaching staff-governors (84%) disagreed. This strongly suggests that SGBs still experience challenges with regard to understanding their roles and responsibilities, which translates to the functioning of the SGB, and seems to concur with perceptions that imply that SGBs are not functioning too well. This finding is widely reported in recent studies. In this regard, Baruth (2013:288) found that SGBs are not well informed about what their roles and responsibilities entail; as such they find it difficult to enforce their laws. Lekonyane and Maja (2014:18) also found that interpreting national and provincial policies and translating them to school policies require knowledge of and skill in policy development and formulation. As such, it can be concluded that SGBs would need knowledge and skill to have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Ramfol (2011:97) found that in spite of training, the SGBs, especially the parent component, lack a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are unable to interpret policy.

It was, however, surprisingly found that just over half of the SGB chairpersons (54%) and over three-fifths of educator-governors (62%) disagreed with this statement. This finding is surprising because most research reports challenges regarding SGBs' understanding of roles and responsibilities. This can be understood as an indication of understanding roles and responsibilities as listed in the Schools Act, but not necessarily understanding in terms of their implementation. Indeed, most research points to difficulties in the implementation of these aspects of SGB functioning (Duma *et al*., 2011:51).

All the respondents seemed to agree on two crucial statements relating to the functioning of the SGB namely,

- SGB meetings have a well-structured agenda; and

- meetings of the SGB run for a very long time.

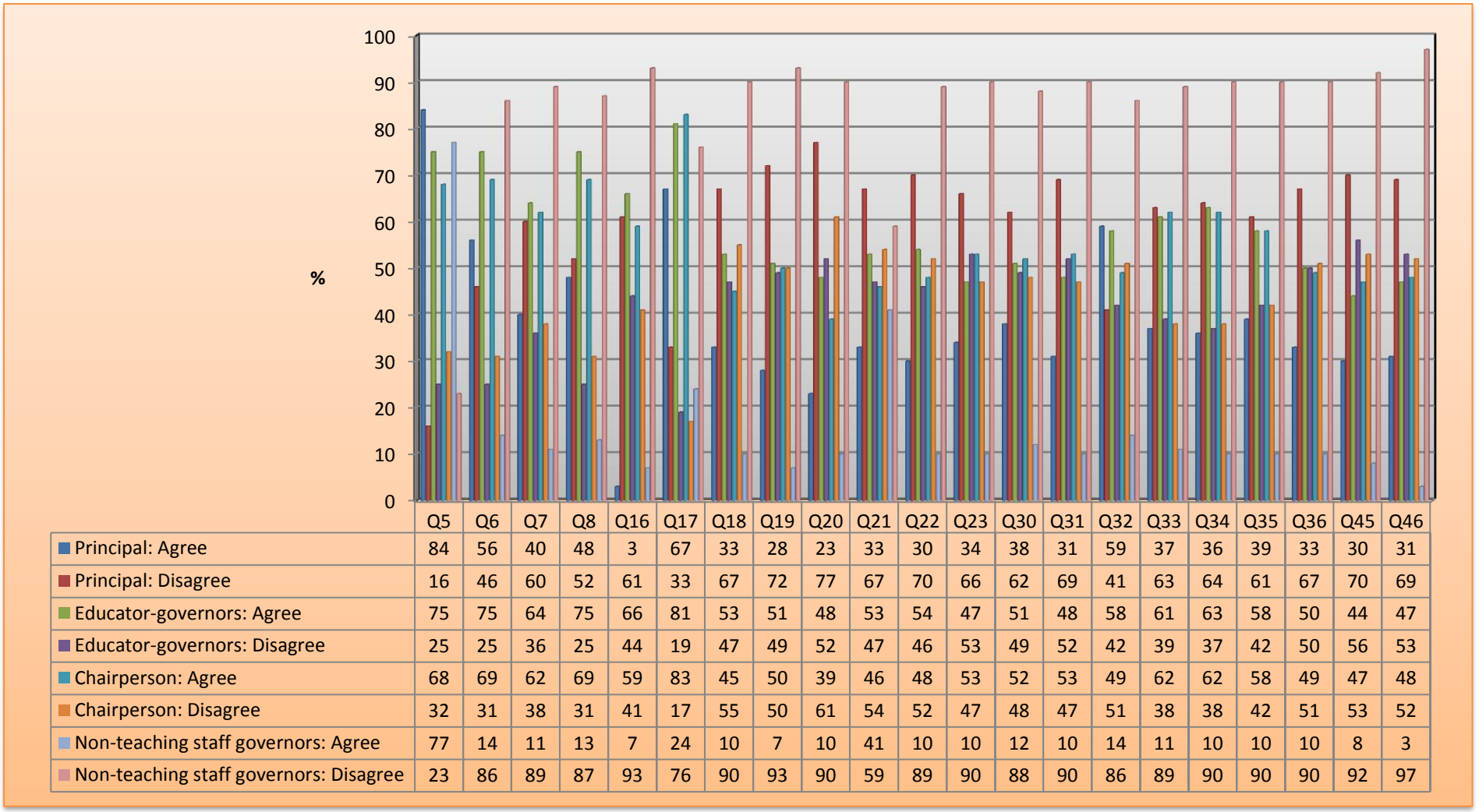
However, on whether SGB chairperson of the SGB plays a very effective role, responses differed. Principals (69%) and non-teaching staff-governors (84%) disagreed, while educator-governors (60%) and SGB chairpersons (54%) agreed with the statement. This is an intriguing finding in that educator-governors and SGB chairpersons seem to support the three statements mentioned above in that it is only when the SGB chairperson plays an effective role that meetings can be well-structured, and not run for a very long time. However, the principals' and non-teaching staff-governors' views could be perceptions about the overall effectiveness of the SGB chairpersons as opposed to meeting procedures only.

Based on the responses of surveyed principals, SGB chairpersons, educator-governors and non-teaching staff-governors, it can be concluded that the functioning of the SGBs is generally not of a standard facilitative of the school governance mandate. However, this is but one of the dimensions of effectiveness regarding the school governance mandate. The actual task of governing is another dimension worth looking at.

4.3.2 **The actual task of governing**

The task of governing refers to the actual implementation and execution of governance roles and responsibilities. Included in the actual task of governing, is the setting of a strategic direction for the school and seeing to the implementation of strategic development plans; acting as a critical friend by executing a scrutiny role; as well demanding accountability from the principal and school (cf. 2.6). Responses to questions in this dimension were found to be varied with some respondents agreeing with most statements and others disagreeing. Figure 4.3 depicts data in this regard.

Figure 4.3 Data on actual task of governing



	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q30	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36	Q45	Q46
Principal: Agree	84	56	40	48	3	67	33	28	23	33	30	34	38	31	59	37	36	39	33	30	31
Principal: Disagree	16	46	60	52	61	33	67	72	77	67	70	66	62	69	41	63	64	61	67	70	69
Educator-governors: Agree	75	75	64	75	66	81	53	51	48	53	54	47	51	48	58	61	63	58	50	44	47
Educator-governors: Disagree	25	25	36	25	44	19	47	49	52	47	46	53	49	52	42	39	37	42	50	56	53
Chairperson: Agree	68	69	62	69	59	83	45	50	39	46	48	53	52	53	49	62	62	58	49	47	48
Chairperson: Disagree	32	31	38	31	41	17	55	50	61	54	52	47	48	47	51	38	38	42	51	53	52
Non-teaching staff governors: Agree	77	14	11	13	7	24	10	7	10	41	10	10	12	10	14	11	10	10	10	8	3
Non-teaching staff governors: Disagree	23	86	89	87	93	76	90	93	90	59	89	90	88	90	86	89	90	90	90	92	97

Figure 4.3 illustrates responses that do not offer a conclusive indication of how SGBs execute the actual task of governing. Educator-governors and SGB chairpersons appear to indicate affirmative execution of the task of governing while a contrast is discernable for principals and non-teaching staff-governors. It is remarkable once more, that the responses to questions in this dimension by non-teaching staff-governors disagree with all statements, and principals disagree with 15 of the 19 statements. This represents 100% and 79% disagreement respectively for non-teaching staff-governors and principals. Nevertheless, responses to individual questions do shed some light onto the SGBs' status of the actual task of governing.

Setting a clear vision for the school is an important step for providing the school with a strategic direction. In this regard, the vision must be clear and be well-communicated to stakeholders. On whether the vision of the school is clear, all the respondents overwhelmingly agreed with the statement, with more than four-fifths (84%) of principals; three-quarters of educator-governors (75%); more than two-thirds of SGB chairpersons (68%); and almost four-fifths of non-teaching staff-governors (77%) agreeing with the statement. This is an indication that all SGB categories are familiar with the schools' vision statements and would imply that schools have a strategic direction as informed by the vision set by all stakeholders led by the SGB.

However, an analysis of responses to whether the SGB provides a strategic direction alongside the senior leadership team, a minority of principals (31%); less than half of educator-governors (47%); SGB chairpersons (48%); and a very small minority of non-teaching staff-governors (3%) agreed with the statement. The responses to the two statements indicate a controversy in that a clear vision that is well communicated and understood, would be the first step in engaging in processes leading to the setting of a strategic direction for the school. Indeed, well pronounced mission and vision statements have the potential to give strategic direction to an institution. Ubben, Hughes and Norris (2007:65) assert that a sense of direction can be developed for the school through the creation of a statement of beliefs (vision), a set of goals (mission) and particular objectives to be attained (outcomes). Furthermore, the responses to the statement on the school vision elicited varied responses regarding questions on whether:

- the vision of the school is communicated to staff (Just over half of the principal (56%) agreed; three-quarters of the educator-governors (75%) agreed; the majority of SGB chairperson (69%) and only 14% of the non-teaching staff-governors agreed);
- the vision of the school is communicated to learners: less than half of the principals (40%) agreed; just over two-thirds of the educator-governors (64%) and SGB chairpersons (62%) agreed; and just a tenth of the non-teaching staff-governors (11%) agreed; and
- the vision of the school is communicated to parents: less than half of the principals (48%) agreed; most educator-governors (75%) and SGB chairpersons (69%) agreed; and just over a tenth of the non-teaching staff-governors (13%) agreed.

The overwhelming agreement and subsequent contrasts in responses regarding other question on the school's vision statements can be understood from the point of view that schools are required to develop vision and mission statements and, thus, as a requirement from the Department, the vision would be formulated and be displayed visibly. Therefore, although it cannot be conclusively deduced that schools have clear visions that are understood and communicated well to all stakeholders, it can be inferred on the basis of contrasting views that most SGBs have vision statements, developed at and articulated at schools, but these seem to be a reaction to departmental directives and not necessarily the basis of strategic development planning processes that are aimed at providing the school with a strategic direction.

Furthermore, responses to other questions on the actual task of governing indicate some weaknesses. For instance, on whether:

- SGBs are involved in long and short term strategic planning: only 3% and 7% of the principals and non-teaching staff-governors agreed respectively;

- SGB members have an effective involvement in developing and monitoring the school development plans: only 34% of the principals, 47% of educator-governors, just over half of SGB chairpersons (53%) and only 10% of non-teaching staff-governors agreed; and

- the SGB is actively involved in self-evaluation: only 30% of principals; 44% of educator-governors; 47% of SGB chairpersons and 8% of the non-teaching staff-governors agreed.

It can be noted that the principals' responses are significant in that principals as school managers, whose responsibility it is to see to the implementation of SGB policies and directives including the strategic direction, would be in a better position to provide a true reflection of this.

The task of governing also requires the SGB to be robust in monitoring school performance in line with the strategic plans. In this regard, and on whether or not the SGB monitors school plans and targets, the majority (72%) of principals; half of the SGB chairpersons (50%); and the majority non-teaching staff-governors (93%) disagreed. Similarly, on whether the SGB ensures that the school monitors the progress of all learners, principals (61%) and non-teaching staff-governors (90%) mainly disagreed, whereas educator-governors (58%) and SGB chairpersons (58%) agreed.

In addition to robust monitoring, the actual task of governing requires the SGB to be knowledgeable about trends of performance locally, provincially and nationally. On whether the SGB knows how the school's performance compares with other schools provincially and nationally, the majority of principals (64%) and non-teaching staff-governors (90%) disagreed, while the majority of educator-governors (63%) and SGB chairpersons (62%) agreed.

It was found, furthermore, on whether SGB members challenge the principal where necessary, that only 33% of the principals, marginally over half of educator-governors (53%), less than half of the SGB chairpersons (46%) and only 24% of the non-teaching staff-governors agreed; and on whether SGB members undertake a scrutiny role and whether the SGB holds the school to account, responses for the two statements indicated that 23% and 33% of the principals agreed, 48% and 53% of the educator-governors agreed, 39% and 46% of the SGB chairpersons agreed and only 10% and 41% of the non-teaching staff-governors agreed.

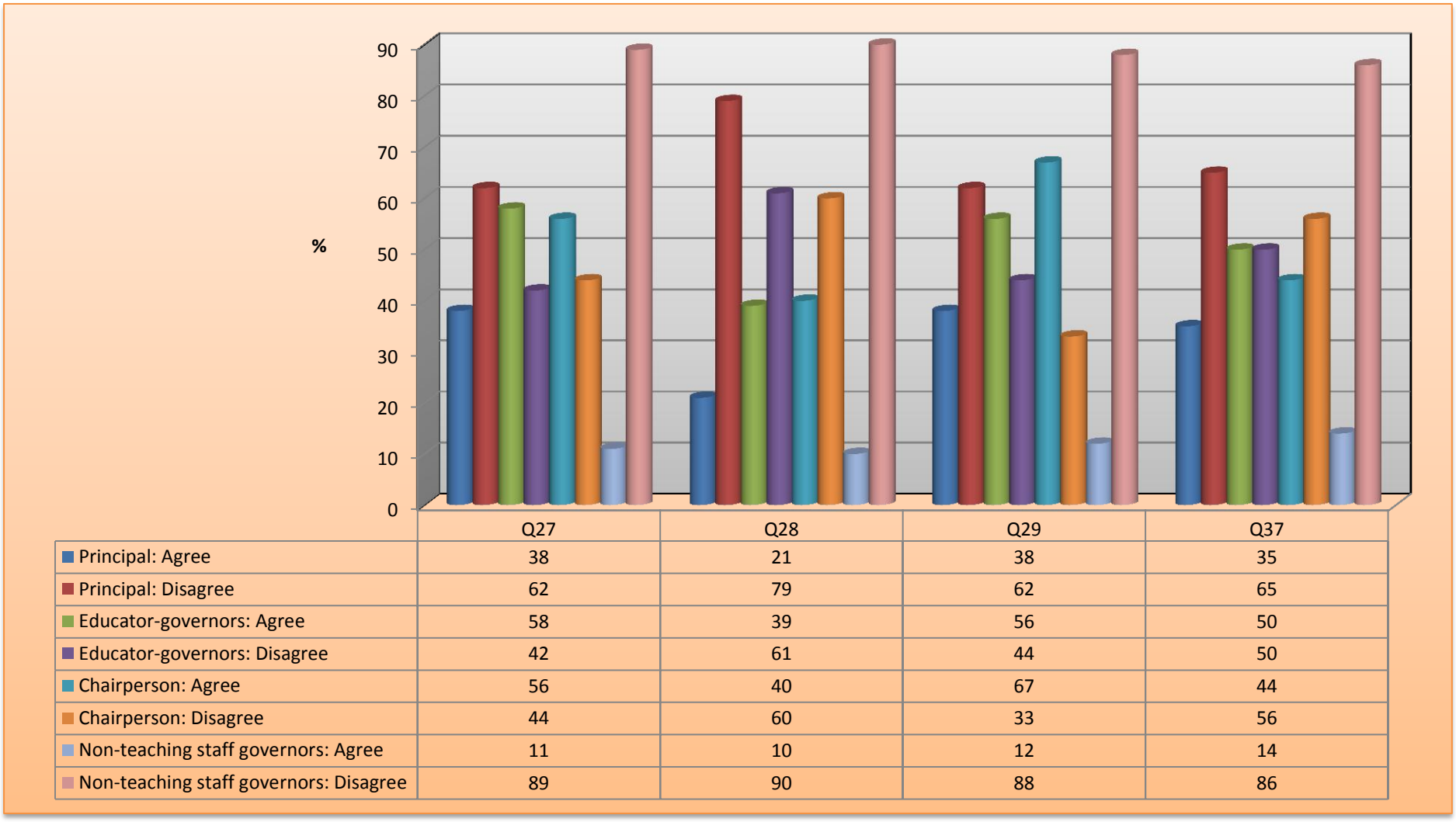
The responses to questions on this dimension, while not conclusive in terms of similar responses, also indicate challenges in the execution of this task. The

implications of the responses are that some areas of the actual task of governing are perceived as being well done, while others are perceived as being poorly executed.

4.3.3 **Attributes necessary for the effectiveness of school governors**

Attributes necessary for the effectiveness of school governors generally refer to qualities enabling school governors to execute the act of governing. These include, among others: being able to engage effectively with stakeholders, especially parents, staff, learners and being able to articulate parent and community needs. This stems largely from their being representatives of these stakeholders and such attributes are particularly biased towards the parent governors, based on the intentions of the Schools Act, in prescribing that parent-governors constitute the majority of the SGB so as to provide space for parents' voices in decision-making at governance levels of the school (cf. 1.1; 2.3.2.2; 2.8). The extent of agreement and disagreement on questions in this dimension are depicted in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4 Data on the attributes necessary for the effectiveness of school governors



	Q27	Q28	Q29	Q37
Principal: Agree	38	21	38	35
Principal: Disagree	62	79	62	65
Educator-governors: Agree	58	39	56	50
Educator-governors: Disagree	42	61	44	50
Chairperson: Agree	56	40	67	44
Chairperson: Disagree	44	60	33	56
Non-teaching staff governors: Agree	11	10	12	14
Non-teaching staff governors: Disagree	89	90	88	86

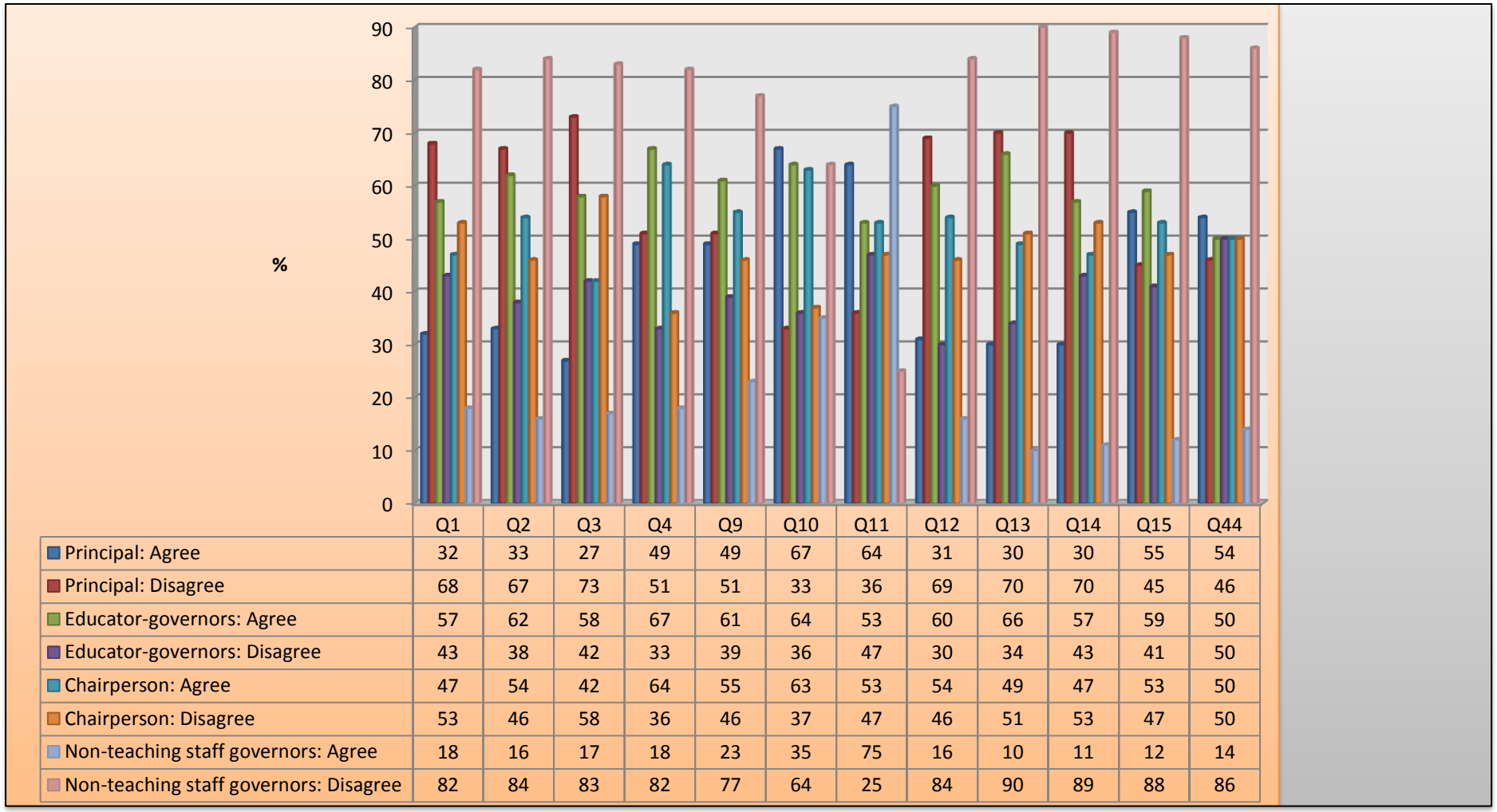
An analysis of data denoting the extent of agreement on the dimension concerning the attributes necessary for the effectiveness of school governors, it was once more clear that perceptions varied, with less than half of the principals (38%); non-teaching staff-governors (11%); and just over half of the SGB chairpersons (56%) agreeing with the statement. The extent of disagreement as depicted in Figure 4.5 below also shows this variation in responses.

From Figure 4.5, it can be seen that the extent of disagreement mirrors the opposite of the extent of agreement concerning this dimension, with non-teaching staff-governors overwhelmingly disagreeing with all statements in this dimension. Interestingly, responses give an indication of the SGBs not doing very well concerning engaging effectively with parents, learners and the community and parental needs. This is an important finding because it implies that stakeholders are generally uninvolved in school matters by way of their own inputs and participation in decision-making in addition to determining the direction of the schools (cf. 2.6.1). This also implies that the ends of the Schools Act's promotion of stakeholder participation as intended by decentralised school governance are generally defeated at schools (cf. 2.4).

4.3.4 **The induction and training of SGBs**

The induction and training of SGBs is perhaps the most important aspect of SGBs effectiveness. Even though SGB members can have appropriate attributes for governing and can be willing to execute the act of governing, without proper induction and training, their efforts would be less effective. Furthermore, this dimension is important because the recruitment of SGB members can lead to members feeling indebted to their 'supporters' or constituencies and fail to promote the school governance mandate (cf. 2.5). Figure 4.5 depicts the responses to questions in this dimension.

Figure 4.5 Data on induction and training



	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q44
Principal: Agree	32	33	27	49	49	67	64	31	30	30	55	54
Principal: Disagree	68	67	73	51	51	33	36	69	70	70	45	46
Educator-governors: Agree	57	62	58	67	61	64	53	60	66	57	59	50
Educator-governors: Disagree	43	38	42	33	39	36	47	30	34	43	41	50
Chairperson: Agree	47	54	42	64	55	63	53	54	49	47	53	50
Chairperson: Disagree	53	46	58	36	46	37	47	46	51	53	47	50
Non-teaching staff governors: Agree	18	16	17	18	23	35	75	16	10	11	12	14
Non-teaching staff governors: Disagree	82	84	83	82	77	64	25	84	90	89	88	86

There were divergent perceptions on the induction and training of SGBs among the respondents. For example, on the one hand, the majority of principals agreed with seven out of ten statements and educator-governors agreed with eight out of ten statements. On the other hand, SGB chairpersons disagreed with three out of ten statements and the non-teaching staff-governors disagreed with two out of ten statements. This represents a 50% split among respondents concerning perceptions on this dimension. Responses to questions presented some remarkable findings. For instance, on the induction of new SGB members, the majority (52%) of educator-governors and SGB chairpersons (55%) agreed that the induction process for new SGB members is effective. Similarly, the majority of principals (52%), educator-governors (62%) and SGB chairpersons (58%) agreed that the induction process for new governors equips them for their school governance roles and functions, while only 39% of the non-teaching staff-governors agreed with the statement. Furthermore, it was found that half of the principals (50%), just over half of the educator-governors (54%) and slightly below half of the SGB chairpersons (49%) agreed that all new members of the governing body are required to participate in an induction process.

The implication of these responses, based on the majority agreement with statements in this dimension, is that: there are induction processes undertaken for new SGB members; these processes do equip them for their school governance roles and functions; and that all new members of the governing body are required to participate in an induction process, though only a minority of non-teaching staff-governors (15%, 39% and 10%) agreed with the statements. In support of the responses indicating the existence of induction processes, the majority of principals (72%), educator-governors (68%) and SGB chairpersons (64%) agreed that a formal document describing the roles and responsibilities of governors is provided to all new governors, which could be seen as part of the induction process or even the most practiced form of induction. Notably, only 29% of the non-teaching staff-governors agreed with this statement.

It was, however, also remarkable as depicted in Figure 4.5 that the majority of principals (64%) and the non-teaching staff-governors disagree with the perception that the induction process for new SGB members is effective. SGB chairpersons (51%) and non-teaching staff-governors (90%) also disagreed with the statement that all new members are required to participate in an induction process.

As pointed out above, the responses to questions on the induction process, while indicating that there are induction processes and that all members are required to participate in them, it is also notable that there were perceptions indicating that these processes were effective and that not all SGB members are required to participate in them. It is also remarkable that non-teaching staff-governors consistently indicate disagreement with the statements.

On whether when a new member joins the SGB, an existing member is appointed as a mentor to help them learn the ropes, the majority (55%) of principals and educator-governors (57%) agreed (cf. Figure 4.5). While they agreed, it is noteworthy that these were marginally over half of the respondent principals and educator-governors. Furthermore, it is also worth noting that only 45% and 14% of the SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff -governors agreed with the statement respectively, while a resounding 86% of the non-teaching staff-governors and though marginal, a sizeable 55% of SGB chairpersons disagreed with the statement.

As important as it is though, training of SGB members was found to be perceived differently. Less than half of all respondents, except for non-teaching staff-governors, agreed that members of their governing body participate in governor training programmes. In this regard, principals (52%), educator-governors (55%), SGB chairpersons (60%) and a large majority of non-teaching staff-governors (80%) all disagreed with the statement. This finding is a source for concern and may account for the less than effective functioning of SGBs as found earlier. It was, however, found that on the quality of SGB training being excellent, the majority of respondents agreed with the statement; with principals (58%), educator-governors (58%), marginally less than half of the SGB

chairpersons (49%) and non-teaching staff-governors (63%) all agreeing with the statement.

Considering the respondents' perceptions of the four dimensions that describe the effectiveness of SGBs in the Free State, a question rises regarding the implications of the findings and whether a conclusion can be drawn regarding whether these SGBs can exhibit effectiveness or not. At this stage of the analysis, a few issues are noteworthy, namely: that perceptions regarding the various statements or questions on the four dimensions are varied; and that there are seemingly no areas of complete agreement and or disagreement.

It is, however, reasonable to conclude that generally, the responses to questions on the four dimensions as discussed in the section above indicate that SGBs seem to do well in some areas while doing poorly in others. The next section investigates areas that are perceived to be the highest and those that are perceived as the lowest in performance ranking.

4.4 **The rank order of items descriptive of SGB effectiveness**

The analysis carried out in terms of frequency counts, while informative, does not really enable a conclusive answer to the question of how effective SGBs are in the Free State Province. A statistical rank order analysis was done in an attempt to understand the frequency analysis further. This was done in relation to the overall ranking of items descriptive of SGB effectiveness across the four population strata as well as in relation to items on each dimension *per* stratum of respondents.

4.4.1 **The overall rank order of each item descriptive of SGB effectiveness across the four population strata**

This analysis sought to determine how the 46 SGB effectiveness items were ranked according to the overall respondents' perceptions. For the purpose of analysis and reading ease, the rank order of items is presented three-fold according to the top 15, middle 16 and last 15.

Table 4.8 Items ranked as the top 15

Principals n = 165		Educators n = 236		SGB chairpersons n = 154		NTSG n = 153	
Question	Mean	Question	Mean	Question	Mean	Question	Mean
B46	3.012	B28	2.797	B28	2.740	B46	3.431
B28	2.994	B38	2.754	B38	2.714	B13	3.085
B20	2.988	B45	2.665	B37	2.708	B7	3.072
B12	2.958	B37	2.644	B20	2.682	B4	3.059
B3	2.945	B31	2.631	B44	2.662	B14	3.052
B22	2.927	B23	2.627	B46	2.649	B15	3.039
B14	2.921	B46	2.623	B3	2.636	B8	3.033
B19	2.921	B44	2.610	B42	2.617	B45	3.033
B45	2.879	B43	2.610	B45	2.610	B31	3.013
B1	2.873	B36	2.593	B36	2.604	B19	3.000
B21	2.873	B20	2.585	B19	2.578	B28	3.000
B31	2.873	B30	2.564	B22	2.571	B12	2.993
B18	2.867	B24	2.555	B31	2.571	B16	2.987
B23	2.848	B25	2.551	B1	2.565	B18	2.987
B36	2.848	B18	2.530	B18	2.565	B20	2.980

NTSG = Non-teaching staff-governors

Items ranked 1 to 15 are, in this study, considered to be those areas that SGBs rank highest. An analysis of the responses regarding these items revealed a number of features about the SGBs' execution of the SGB mandate. Firstly, a number of items were ranked in this group by all the respondents. These were items:

- B46: The SGB provides strategic direction alongside the senior leadership team (Ranked 1st, 7th, 6th and 1st by principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors respectively);
- B28: SGB members engage effectively with learners (Ranked 2nd, 1st, 1st and 11th by principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors respectively);

- B45: The SGB is actively involved in self-evaluation (Ranked 9th, 3rd, 9th and 8th by principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors respectively); and
- B31: SGB members use their knowledge of parents, staff and learners' views to improve school's academic performance (Ranked 12th, 5th, 12th and 9th by principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors respectively).

Secondly, some items ranked within these top 15, according to the perceptions of three strata of the population. These are items such as B20, which is ranked 3rd, 11th and 4th by principals, educator-governors and SGB chairpersons respectively, which relates to whether SGB members undertake a scrutiny role.

Thirdly, a number of items are ranked in the top 15 by one stratum or two strata of respondents. These include among others items such as:

- B12: The chairperson of the SGB plays a very effective role (principals and NTSG);
- B22: The SGB has a clear focus on raising the achievements of learners;
- B14: The SGB participates in discussions about the effectiveness of its performance;
- B43: We have a high degree of members leaving or abandoning our SGB;
- B36: The SGB ensures that the school monitors the progress of all learners; and
- B18: SGB members challenge the principal where necessary.

While significant for understanding the effectiveness of SGBs in the Free State Province, the rank order data indicates the differences with which the effectiveness items are perceived by the different strata of respondents. This

again shows that SGBs generally are doing well in some areas and not doing so well in others.

Similar trends were noticeable in the analysis of items ranked in the middle and those ranked as the last 15 (see Tables 4.9 and 4.10).

Table 4.9 Items ranked as the middle 16

Principals n = 165		**Educators n = 236**		**SGB chairpersons n = 154**		**NTSG n = 153**	
Question	Mean	Question	Mean	Question	Mean	Question	Mean
B37	2.848	B19	2.403	B21	2.552	B24	2.980
B34	2.842	B21	2.373	B32	2.545	B30	2.980
B2	2.830	B22	2.364	B43	2.545	B29	2.974
B13	2.824	B1	2.360	B30	2.539	B41	2.967
B33	2.824	B42	2.356	B39	2.526	B34	2.961
B38	2.812	B27	2.347	B24	2.513	B35	2.961
B24	2.770	B32	2.309	B9	2.500	B27	2.954
B16	2.733	B29	2.297	B15	2.500	B33	2.954
B25	2.733	B41	2.280	B14	2.494	B22	2.948
B27	2.733	B39	2.275	B23	2.494	B23	2.948
B35	2.733	B11	2.216	B27	2.481	B6	2.941
B29	2.721	B14	2.131	B41	2.481	B32	2.935
B30	2.721	B3	2.102	B2	2.474	B36	2.935
B7	2.630	B35	2.064	B25	2.448	B42	2.928
B4	2.588	B15	2.000	B11	2.442	B43	2.928
B41	2.570	B33	2.403	B26	2.429	B2	2.902

From Table 4.9, it can be seen, as noticed in the previous analysis, that only a few items are ranked by all respondent strata in this middle 16 group. Only items B27 and B41 are ranked in this group by all strata of respondents. Other items are ranked mostly by one, two or three strata of respondents. This indicates, once more, how diverse the perceptions of the four respondent strata are regarding SGB effectiveness items.

Table 4.10 Items ranked as the last 15

Principals n = 165		Educators n = 236		SGB chairpersons n = 154		NTSG n = 153	
Question	Mean	Question	Mean	Question	Mean	Question	Mean
B9	2.564	B2	2.564	B13	2.422	B9	2.902
B8	2.533	B12	2.533	B12	2.403	B3	2.895
B43	2.515	B34	2.515	B16	2.403	B1	2.889
B26	2.473	B26	2.473	B4	2.390	B25	2.882
B6	2.442	B9	2.442	B40	2.364	B37	2.882
B44	2.442	B10	2.442	B35	2.357	B38	2.869
B42	2.424	B16	2.424	B33	2.325	B17	2.810
B15	2.358	B13	2.358	B10	2.318	B40	2.706
B17	2.352	B40	2.352	B34	2.312	B26	2.516
B32	2.297	B7	2.297	B29	2.299	B21	2.497
B39	2.285	B4	2.285	B7	2.286	B10	2.405
B40	2.206	B8	2.206	B8	2.169	B5	2.085
B11	2.152	B6	2.152	B6	2.162	B39	2.046
B10	2.097	B5	2.097	B5	2.136	B43	1.797
B5	1.836	B17	1.836	B17	1.981	B11	1.771

In the case of the last 15 ranked items as depicted in Table 4.10, the trends are similar to the ranking of the top 15 items. The only items ranked by all respondents in this last 15 group are items:

- B17: SGB members support the school principal;
- B40: A formal document describing the roles and responsibilities of governors is provided to all new governors; and
- B5: The vision of our schools is clear.

Even then, as noticed in the previous rankings, these items are ranked differently, with B17 at 9th, 15th, 15th and 7th for principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors respectively; B 40 at 12th, 9th, 5th and 8th for principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors respectively; and B5 at 15th, 14th, 14th and 12th for principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-

governors respectively. It can, however, be seen that item B5 is ranked almost similarly by all respondents.

The rank order of all 46 items descriptive of SGB effectiveness still puts the respondents' perceptions at diverse points, thus emphasising differing views about the execution of the effectiveness roles for SGBs, which implies that some areas of the school governance mandate are executed better than other areas. For this reason, it was deemed necessary to determine where execution of the mandate was better in terms of the dimension of effectiveness themselves.

4.4.2 **The rank order of items denoting the SGB effectiveness on the four dimensions**

The four dimensions of SGB effectiveness were also ranked to determine which dimensions per research population stratum were perceived as being well-executed and which were not. This was done with the understanding that the dimensions of SGB effectiveness could give a clearer picture of areas executed better that the analysis of single items; mainly because that analysis as presented above only served to highlight the diverse perceptions on similar items and as such, could not help to conclude on SGB effectiveness. The rank order was done to determine how each item in each dimension ranked.

4.4.2.1 ***The rank order of items denoting the SGB effectiveness on the functioning of the SGB per stratum***

The functioning of the SGB concerns such activities as offering strategic direction, holding schools accountable and acting as critical friends (c.f. 2.6). Table 4.11 presents the rank order of the items on the SGB effectiveness on the functioning of the SGB *per* stratum.

Table 4.11 Rank order of items denoting the functioning of the SGB *per* stratum

Principals		SGB chairpersons		Educator-governors		NTSG	
Question	Mean	Question	Mean	Question	Mean	Question	Mean
B12	2.958	B3	2.636	B43	2.492	B13	3.085
B3	2.945	B1	2.565	B1	2.449	B4	3.059
B14	2.921	B43	2.545	B11	2.445	B14	3.052
B1	2.873	B9	2.500	B14	2.436	B15	3.039
B2	2.830	B15	2.500	B3	2.411	B12	2.993
B13	2.824	B14	2.494	B15	2.403	B2	2.902
B4	2.588	B2	2.474	B2	2.373	B9	2.902
B9	2.564	B11	2.442	B12	2.356	B3	2.895
B43	2.515	B13	2.422	B9	2.347	B1	2.889
B15	2.358	B12	2.403	B10	2.297	B10	2.405
B11	2.152	B4	2.390	B13	2.216	B11	1.771
B10	2.097	B10	2.318	B4	2.610	B43	2.928

Items ranked 1 to 12 in Table 4.11 denotes the functioning of SGBs *per* stratum. An analysis of the responses regarding these items revealed a number of features about the functioning of SGBs. Firstly, a number of items were ranked top in this group by all respondents. These were the following items:

- B14: The SGB participates in discussions about the effectiveness of its performance (Ranked 3rd, 6th, 4th and 3rd by principals, SGB chairperson, educator-governors and non-teaching staff-governors respectively);
- B1: Overall, our SGB works effectively (Ranked 4th, 2nd, 2nd and 9th by principals, SGB chairperson, educator-governors and non-teaching staff-governors respectively); and
- B2: The SGB has a clear understanding of its role and responsibilities (Ranked 5th, 7th, 7th and 6th by principals, SGB chairperson, educator-governors and non-teaching staff-governors respectively).

Secondly, some items within this group were commonly ranked, though differently according to perceptions of three strata of the population. These are items such as B1 and B2. B1 (Ranked 4th and 2nd by principals, SGB chairpersons and educator-governors); and B2 (Ranked 7th and 6th by SGB chairpersons, educator-governors and non-teaching staff-governors).

Thirdly, some items were ranked highly by one or two strata of respondents. Among other items, these include:

- B13: Members of the SGB feel able to speak their minds on issues (Ranked 1st by non-teaching staff-governors);
- B4: Attendance of meetings of the SGB is usually good (Ranked 1st by non-teaching staff-governors);
- B11: Meetings of the SGB runs for a very long time (Ranked 3rd by educator- -governors);
- B12: The chairperson of the SGB plays a very effective role (Ranked 1st, and 5th by principals and non-teaching staff-governors respectively);
- B3: The SGB members from different categories work side by side (Ranked 2nd and 5th by principals and educator-governors); and
- B43: We have a high degree of members leaving or abandoning our SGB (Ranked 3rd and 1st by SGB chairpersons and educator-governors).

It is significant to understand the functioning of SGB in the Free State Province, even if in this dimension the rank order data indicates the difference with which the functioning items are perceived by the four strata of respondents. This also shows that SGBs are generally functioning well in some areas and not function well in others.

4.4.2.2 *The rank order of items denoting the SGB effectiveness on the actual task of governing per stratum*

Table 4.12 depicts data on items of the SGB effectiveness on the actual task of governing *per* stratum.

Table 4.12 Rank order of items denoting the actual task of governing *per* stratum

Principals n = 165		**Educators n = 236**		**SGB chairpersons n = 154**		**NTSG n = 153**	
Question	**Mean**	Question	**Mean**	Question	**Mean**	Question	**Mean**
B46	3.012	B45	2.665	B20	2.682	B46	3.431
B20	2.988	B31	2.631	B46	2.649	B7	3.072
B22	2.927	B23	2.627	B45	2.610	B45	3.033
B19	2.921	B46	2.623	B36	2.604	B8	3.033
B45	2.879	B36	2.593	B19	2.578	B31	3.013
B31	2.873	B20	2.585	B22	2.571	B19	3.000
B21	2.873	B30	2.564	B31	2.571	B16	2.987
B18	2.867	B18	2.530	B18	2.565	B18	2.987
B36	2.848	B19	2.517	B21	2.552	B30	2.980
B23	2.848	B22	2.496	B32	2.545	B20	2.980
B34	2.842	B21	2.496	B30	2.539	B34	2.961
B33	2.824	B32	2.470	B23	2.494	B35	2.961
B16	2.733	B35	2.419	B16	2.403	B33	2.954
B35	2.733	B33	2.407	B35	2.357	B23	2.948
B30	2.721	B34	2.364	B33	2.325	B22	2.948
B7	2.630	B16	2.309	B34	2.312	B6	2.941
B8	2.533	B7	2.275	B7	2.286	B32	2.935
B6	2.442	B8	2.131	B8	2.169	B36	2.935
B17	2.352	B6	2.102	B6	2.162	B17	2.810
B32	2.297	B5	2.064	B5	2.136	B21	2.497
B5	1.836	B17	2.000	B17	1.981	B5	2.085

Items ranked 1 to 21 in Table 4.12 denote the actual task of governing *per* stratum. An analysis of the responses regarding these items revealed a number of features about the actual task of governing according to the perception of the four respondent strata. Firstly, a number of items were ranked top in this group by all respondents. These items were:

~ B46: Providing strategic direction alongside the senior leadership team (Ranked 1st, 4th, 2nd and 1st by principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors respectively);

~ B20: The SGB members undertake scrutiny role (Ranked 2nd, 6th, 1st and 10th by principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors respectively);

~ B22: The SGB has a clear focus on raising the achievements of learners (Ranked 3rd, 10th, 6th and 15th by principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors respectively);

~ B19: The SGB members monitor school's plans and targets (Ranked 4th, 9th, 5th and 6th by principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors respectively);

~ B45: Our SGB is actively involved in self-evaluation (Ranked 5th, 1st, 3rd and 3rd by principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors respectively); and

~ B31: SGB members use the knowledge of parents, staff and learners' views to improve school's academic performance (Ranked 6th, 2nd, 7th and 5th by principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors respectively).

Secondly, some items were ranked high according to the perceptions of three strata of the population. These are items such as: B19 ranked 4th 5th and 6th by principals, SGB chairpersons, non-teaching staff-governors and SGB chairpersons respectively; as well B31 ranked 6th, 7th and 5th by principals, SGB chairperson and non-teaching staff-governors respectively.

Thirdly, some items are ranked on the top by one stratum. These items are:

~ B23: SGB members have an effective involvement (Ranked 3rd by educator-governors); and

~ B7: The vision of the school is communicated to learners (Ranked 2nd by non-teaching staff-governors).

It is significant to realise that even on the actual task of governing of SGBs in the Free State Province, the rank order data indicates the difference with which the actual task items are perceived by the four strata of respondents. This also shows that SGBs generally comprehend their actual tasks differently.

4.4.2.3 *The rank order of items denoting the SGB effectiveness on the attributes necessary for the effectiveness of school governors per stratum*

Attributes necessary for the effectiveness of SGBs relate mostly to the preparedness and amenability of members to engage with stakeholders, especially parents, staff, learners and the community. Data in this regard is depicted in Table 4.13 below.

Table 4.13 **Rank order of items denoting the attributes necessary for the effectiveness of school governors *per* stratum**

Principals n = 165		**Educators n = 236**		**SGB chairpersons n = 154**		**NTSG n = 153**	
Question	Mean	Question	Mean	Question	Mean	Question	Mean
B28	2.994	B28	2.797	B28	2.740	B28	3.000
B37	2.848	B37	2.644	B37	2.708	B29	2.974
B27	2.733	B27	2.479	B27	2.481	B27	2.954
B29	2.721	B29	2.466	B29	2.299	B37	2.882

Items ranked 1 to 4 in Table 4.13 denote the rank order of attributes necessary for the effectiveness of SGB *per* stratum. An analysis of the responses regarding these items revealed similar features in terms of ranking by all strata of respondents. These items are:

~ B28: SGB members engage effectively with learners (Ranked 1st by principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors);

~ B37: SGB members represent community and parental needs (Ranked 2nd by principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and 4th by non-teaching staff-governors);

~ B27: SGB members engage effectively with parents (Ranked 3rd by principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors); and

~ B29: SGB members engage effectively with staff (Ranked 4th by principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and 2nd by non-teaching staff-governors).

It is noteworthy to recognise that the attributes necessary for the effectiveness of school governors are ranked high by the four strata of respondents. It appears that the attributes of governors may have an impact on the effectiveness of SGBs in the Free State Province. This, however, does not explain the differences that were found in the frequency analysis and the ranking of items overall into the first 15, middle 16 and last 16 as illustrated and discussed earlier.

4.4.2.4 *The rank order of items denoting the SGB effectiveness on the induction and training of school governors per stratum*

Items describing the SGB effectiveness on the induction and training of members describe activities engaged in for the preparation of school governors to govern. Firstly, induction, which is an introductory process to governor preparation is essential to ensure that they know what lies ahead of them in being elected as governors. Secondly, training is crucial for ensuring that school governors know what their mandate is, what activities are involved in the governance mandate and what processes are expected in the execution of the

school governance mandate. Table 4.14 below depicts data regarding items descriptive of this dimension.

Table 4.14 **Rank order of items denoting induction and training of SGBs *per* stratum**

Principals n = 165		Educators n = 236		SGB chairpersons n = 154		NTSG n = 153	
Question	Mean	Question	Mean	Question	Mean	Question	Mean
B38	2.812	B38	2.754	B38	2.714	B24	2.980
B24	2.770	B44	2.610	B44	2.662	B41	2.967
B25	2.733	B24	2.555	B42	2.617	B42	2.928
B41	2.570	B25	2.551	B39	2.526	B25	2.882
B26	2.473	B42	2.487	B24	2.513	B38	2.869
B44	2.442	B41	2.458	B41	2.481	B40	2.706
B42	2.424	B39	2.453	B25	2.448	B26	2.516
B39	2.285	B26	2.360	B26	2.429	B39	2.046
B40	2.206	B40	2.280	B40	2.364	B44	1.797

Items ranked 1 to 9 in Table 4.14 denote items on the induction and training of SGB members *per* stratum. An analysis of the responses regarding these items revealed dissimilar features on the induction and training of SGB members according to the perception of four respondents. Some items were similarly ranked top in this group by all respondents. These items include:

- B38: The quality of our SGB training is excellent (Ranked 1st, 1st, 1st and 5th by principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors respectively);

- B24: The induction process for new SGB members is effective (Ranked 2nd, 4th, 5th and 1st by principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors respectively); and

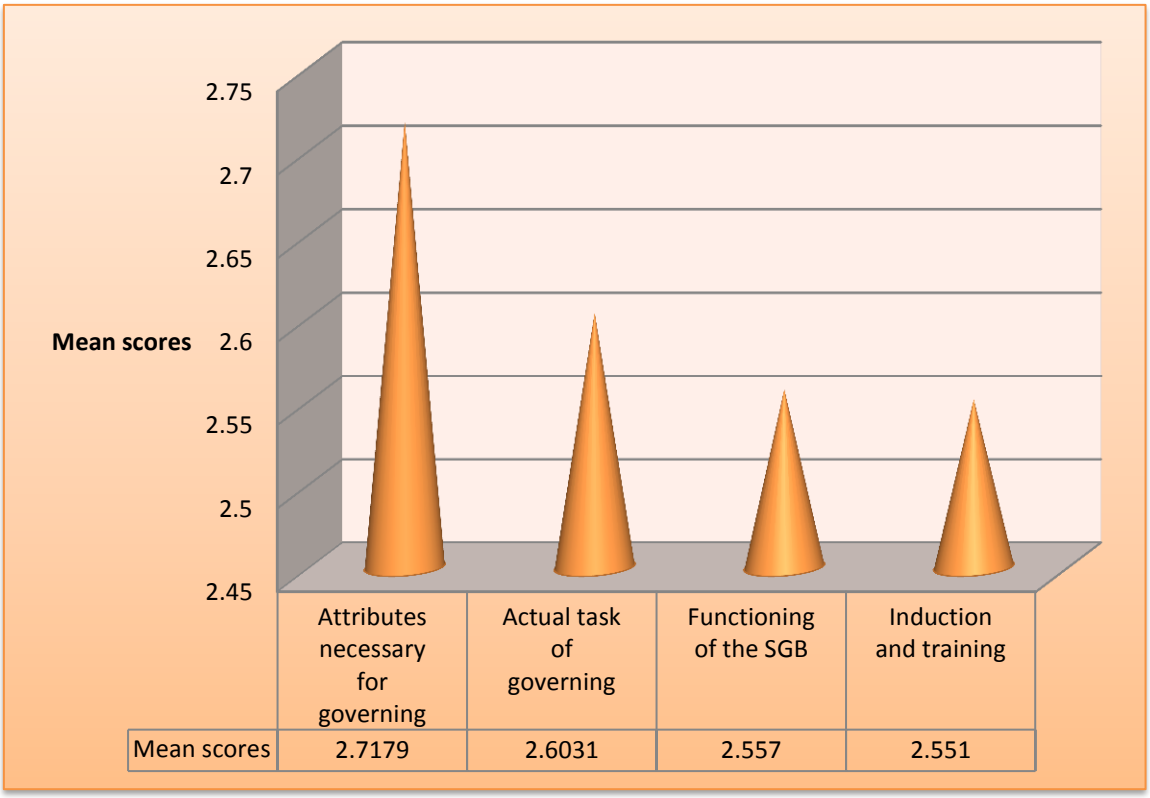
- B41: When a new member joins the SGB, an existing member is appointed as a mentor to help them learn the ropes (Ranked 4th, 6th, 6th and 2nd by principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors respectively).

There are items which were ranked top by the perceptions of three strata. These are items such as: B42 (Ranked 5th, 3rd and 4th by educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors respectively). In this instance, it appears that the items necessary for the induction and training of SGB members are differently ranked high in terms of the perceptions of three and four strata of respondents.

4.4.2.5 *The overall ranking of the four dimensions of SGB effectiveness*

This subsection presents the overall ranking of effectiveness items for all respondents (N = 708) on the four SGB effectiveness dimensions. The intention was to determine how the dimensions were ranked overall by all respondents.

Figure 4.6 The overall rank order of the four SGB effectiveness dimensions



As depicted in Figure 4.6 above, it can be seen that the highest ranked dimension concerns the attributes necessary for SGB members to govern effectively. This dimension is followed by the dimension relating to the actual

task of governing and the functioning of the SGB. Induction and training of SGB members was ranked last.

The following issues were noticeable from the rank order of the four dimensions:

- Although different, the dimensions ranked one and two are relatively close to each as seen from their mean scores, which were 2.7179 and 2.6031 for the two dimensions.
- Similarly, the last two dimensions by rank, with mean scores of 2.557 and 2.551 are also very close.

The ranking of the four dimensions lead to a supposition that SGBs are largely populated by members who have the requisite attributes for governing. This observation is further strengthened by the second ranking of the actual task of governing. This, however, seems to be an anomaly considering the ranking of induction and training. This clearly implies a need for a deeper analysis of data, based on the understanding that statistics have meaning only if interpreted in the context of the research purpose.

4.5 **The analysis of variance on the four dimensions of SGB effectiveness**

It is clear from the analysis and interpretation of data collected thus far that the views of respondents are quite varied and indicate differences in their perceptions about SGB effectiveness features. For this reason, a further analysis was deemed necessary – it was deemed necessary to conduct an analysis of variance to determine if the differences in respondents' perceptions were statistically significant. For this reason, it was necessary to test if there were correlations between and among the dimensions of school governance effectiveness and if they were statistically significant. To achieve this, a *Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient test* was conducted to find out if there were any correlations on the dimensions of SGB effectiveness.

According to De Veaux and Velleman (2004:120), the *Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient* (indicted by *r*) measures the strength of the linear

association between two quantitative variables. Therefore, the Pearson's *product-moment correlation coefficient* gives direction of the relationship between two variables and is always between +1 and -1 (Salkind, 2008:77). To this end, the correlation coefficient is a descriptive statistic in that it describes the direction – positive or negative, and strength of a linear correlation in a particular group of people studied and most important, it does not determine the cause of the correlation (Aron, Coups and Aron, 2011:82). In order to interpret the value or strength of a correlation coefficient, Salkind (2008:85) provides the following table as a guideline:

Table 4.15 Interpreting the correlation coefficient

Size of the Correlation	*Coefficient general interpretation*
0.8 – 1.0	Very strong relationship
0.6 – 0.8	Strong relationship
0.4 – 0.6	Moderate relationship
0.2 – 0.4	Weak relationship
0.0 – 0.2	Weak or no relationship

These guidelines were used in interpreting the correlations between the dimensions of school governance effectiveness as perceived by all the respondent strata (Table 4.16).

Table 4.16 The Pearson's correlation between the four dimensions of school governance effectiveness

Correlations						
		Code	Functioning of the SGB	Induction and training	Actual task of governing	Attributes necessary for governing
Code	Pearson Correlation	1	.263**	.095*	.267**	.150**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.011	.000	.000
	N	708	708	708	708	708
Functioning of the SGB	Pearson Correlation	.263**	1	.571**	.745**	.625**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	708	708	708	708	708
Induction and training	Pearson Correlation	.095*	.571**	1	.629**	.636**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	.000		.000	.000
	N	708	708	708	708	708
Actual task of governing	Pearson Correlation	.267**	.745**	.629**	1	.770**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	708	708	708	708	708
Attributes necessary for effective governing	Pearson Correlation	.150**	.625**	.636**	.770**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	708	708	708	708	708

The data in Table 4.16 indicate that there were correlations between all the dimensions of school governance effectiveness as perceived by the response to questionnaire items. There were indications of a correlation in perceptions on the functioning of the SGBs among **all** respondents (r = 0.263); induction and training of SGBs (r = 0.095); the actual task of governing (r = 0.267); and attributes necessary for effective governing (r = 0.150). All these r-values,

however, indicate correlations that are weak in strength. It was, furthermore, found that there were correlations between dimensions of school governance effectiveness as follows:

- a moderate correlation (r = 0.571) between the functioning of the SGB and induction and training; and strong correlations (r = 0.745 and r = 0.625) between the functioning of the SGB and the actual task of governing and the attributes necessary for effective governing respectively;

- strong correlations (r = 0.629 and 0.636) between induction and training and the actual task of governing and attributed necessary for effective governing respectively; and

- strong correlations (r = 0.629 and r = 0.770) between the actual task of governing and the attributes necessary for effective governing.

The *r*-values generally indicate a relationship between and among the school governance effectiveness dimensions. In addition, the relationships between all dimensions were found to be strong with the exception of one: the functioning of the SGB and induction and training, which was found to have a moderate relationship. It must be emphasised that though there were correlation values indicating strong relationships, these do not in any way predict or measure the effectiveness of SGBs in executing their governance mandate, nor do they indicate any influence of one dimension over the other. In this regard, Salkind (2008:85) argues that "*the correlation coefficient is value not directly tied to the value of an outcome*" and that "*correlation coefficients express the association that exist s between two or more variables; they have nothing to do with causality*". Therefore, the *r*-values determined above only indicate that, in terms of responses to the questionnaire items, the dimensions of school governance effectiveness share something in common, but do not indicate a causal relationship between and among the dimensions.

An important finding with regard to the Pearson's *r*-values determined above, is that the relationships between and among the dimensions measured above are

statistically significant as indicated by significance values of 0.000 for all the dimensions. This necessitated a further analysis to determine the strength of the statistical significance between and within the respondent strata. This was done by computing the analysis of variance (ANOVA).

4.6 **The ANOVA on dimensions of school governance effectiveness**

The ANOVA or the one-way analysis of variance, measures variances due to differences between individuals within groups and differences between groups, which are then compared with one another (Salkind, 2008:202). In essence, the ANOVA measures differences between the means. In the case of this analysis, the ANOVA was computed to determine the variance between the means of respondents' views regarding the school governance effectiveness dimensions within each stratum, for example, within the stratum of principals; and between the other strata of respondents, for example, between principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors. The significance value would then indicate whether the variances or statistical differences are significant or not – which implies that they could be a result of chance or a meaningful difference requiring a further determination of which groups or respondents indicate such differences.

Table 4.17 depicts data on the ANOVA test to determine if significant differences found through the Pearson's correlation test were statistically significant.

Table 4.17 ANOVA test data on the four dimensions of school governance effectiveness

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Functioning of the SGB	Between Groups	19.996	3	6.665	29.911	.000
	Within Groups	156.884	704	.223		
	Total	176.881	707			
Induction and training	Between Groups	2.447	3	.816	3.084	.027
	Within Groups	186.242	704	.265		
	Total	188.689	707			
Actual task of governing	Between Groups	29.462	3	9.821	41.796	.000
	Within Groups	165.421	704	.235		
	Total	194.883	707			
Attributes necessary for effective governing	Between Groups	17.775	3	5.925	16.298	.000
	Within Groups	255.932	704	.364		
	Total	273.706	707			

The ANOVA test as depicted in Table 4.17 indicates that there were indeed statistically significant differences within and between the groups or strata of respondents to the questionnaire. This is evident in significance scores (all of which are below 0.05) of 0.000 for responses to the dimension denoting the functioning of the SGB; 0.027 for responses to the dimension denoting induction and training; 0.000 both for responses to the dimensions denoting the actual task of governing and attributes necessary for effective governing.

The finding on the statistical significance of respondents' perceptions seems to explain, in part, the reasons for differences in perceptions of respondents as found in the frequency analysis as well as the differences in the ranking of individual items of the questionnaire, the ranking of items per dimension and the ranking of dimensions per strata of respondent. However, even this computation of difference within groups and between groups does not explain which groups

can be attributed with the statistical differences. As such, a further test was computed to determine where the statistical differences lay with regard to groups of respondents. For this purpose the HSD Tukey test was computed.

4.7 The Tukey HSD analysis for the dimensions denoting the effectiveness of SGBs

A Tukey HSD (Honestly Significance Difference) analysis is a *post hoc* or after-the-fact comparison to determine where the differences identified by the ANOVA lie (Salkind, 2008:214). For instance, in the case of the ANOVA computation above, there were statistical differences on all the dimensions of school governance effectiveness. The Tukey HSD test would be computed to determine if the differences are meaningful or not. Most importantly, the Tukey HSD would be computed to determine where exactly the differences where between the groups of respondents to the questionnaire and whether the differences were of practical effect or not. The first computation presented below relates to the dimension denoting the functioning of the SGBs.

4.7.1 The Tukey HSD values for the dimension denoting the functioning of the SGB

The question to be answered with the Tukey HSD is: *Which strata of respondents display practically significant differences on items of the dimension denoting the functioning of the SGB?* Table 4.18 depicts data in this regard.

Table 4.18 The Tukey HSD on the functioning of the SGB

Tukey HSD: **Multiple Comparisons**							
Dependent Variable	(I) Code	(J) Code	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Functioning of the SGB	1.0 (Educator-governors)	2.0	-.2622*	.04790	.000*	-.3855	-.138865
		3.0	-.0831	.0489	.321#	-.20940	.0424
		4.0	-.4335*	.0489	.000*	-.55971	-.307357
	2.0 (Principals)	1.0	.2622*	.04797	.000*	.1388	.385
		3.0	.17874*	.0528	.004*	.04254	.3149
		4.0	-.17130*	.0529	.007*	-.3077	-.0348
	3.0 (Chairperson)	1.0	.08348	.04890	.321#	-.0424	.2094
		2.0	-.17874*	.0528	.004*	-.3149	-.04254
		4.0	-.3500*	.05388	.000*	-.4888	-.2112
	4.0 (NTSG)	1.0	.43353*	.0489	.000*	.30735	.559759
		2.0	.17130*	.0529	.007*	.03487	.307712
		3.0	.3500*	.05388	.000*	.21129	.488897

The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

No practically significant effect

* Significant with practical effect

From Table 4.18, it can be seen that there were values less than the 0.05 significance level. These statistically significant values of practical effect were found to be between:

- educator-governors and:
  - ~ principals with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05.
  - ~ non-teaching staff-governors with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05.
- principals and:
  - ~ educator-governors with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05.
  - ~ SGB chairpersons with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05.
  - ~ Non-teaching staff-governors with significance level = 0.007 < 0.05.

- SGB chairpersons and:
  - ~ principals with significance level = 0.004 < 0.05.
  - ~ non-teaching staff-governors = 0.000 < 0.05.
- non-teaching staff-governors and:
  - ~ educator-governors with significance level = 0.004 < 0.05.
  - ~ principals with significance level = 0.007 < 0.05.
  - ~ SGB chairpersons with significance level = 0.004 < 0.05.

In all the above instances, the finding and conclusion drawn is that the differences in perceptions found with the frequency analysis and the pattern-indeterminate rank order of items in the dimension denoting the functioning of the SGB are meaningful because they are of practical effect as indicated by significance values of less than 0.05. This implies that there is a definite need for intervention in practice.

There were, however, no significant differences between educator-governors and SGB chairpersons with statistically practical significance level = 0.321 > 0.05. Thus, the conclusion drawn is that though there were significant differences in terms of the ANOVA computation, these were, according to the Tukey HSD computation, of no practical effect, which implies that the differences were due to statistical chance and do not warrant any change or intervention in practice.

A conclusion that is drawn from these data is that the differences in perceptions of principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors on the functioning of the SGB are significant and are indeed mostly, meaningful and real.

4.7.2 The Tukey HSD values for the dimension denoting actual task of governing

The data on the dimension denoting the actual task of governing as depicted in Table 4.19 below, indicate a mix of results indicating where the significant statistical difference lie among the respondents.

Table 4.19 The Tukey HSD on the actual task of governing

Tukey HSD: **Multiple Comparisons**							
Dependent Variable	(I) Code	(J) Code	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Actual task of governing	1.0 (Educator-governors)	2.0	-.28446*	.04919	.000*	-.4111	-.1578
		3.0	-.00645	.05021	.999#	-.1358	.1229
		4.0	-.49720*	.05031	.000*	-.6268	-.3676
	2.0 (Principals)	1.0	.28446*	.04919	.000*	.1578	.4111
		3.0	.27801*	.05431	.000*	.1381	.4179
		4.0	-.21274*	.05440	.001*	-.3528	-.0726
	3.0 (Chairperson)	1.0	.00645	.05021	.999#	-.1229	.1358
		2.0	-.27801*	.05431	.000*	-.4179	-.1381
		4.0	-.49075*	.05533	.000*	-.6332	-.3483
	4.0 (NTSG)	1.0	.49720*	.05031	.000*	.3676	.6268
		2.0	.21274*	.05440	.001*	.0726	.3528
		3.0	.49075*	.05533	.000*	.3483	.6332

The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

No practically significant effect

* Significant with practical effect

As can be seen from Table 4.19, there were ten values indicating significant levels of less than the 0.05. These values indicate that the statistically significant values in associated with such values are meaningful and real in that they are of practical effect. These statistically significant values of practical effect were found to be between:

- educator-governors and:
  - principals with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05.

- non-teaching staff-governors with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05.

~ Principals and:

- educator-governors with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05.
- SGB chairpersons with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05.
- non-teaching staff-governors with significance level = 0.001 < 0.05.

~ SGB chairpersons and:

- Educator-governors with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05.
- non-teaching staff-governors with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05.

~ Non-teaching staff-governors and:

~ Educator-governors with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05.

~ principals with significance level = 0.001 < 0.05.

There were statistical significant differences in terms of the ANOVA test on the dimension denoting the actual functioning of the SGB (cf. Table 4.17). However, the Tukey HSD test (cf. Table 4.18) indicates that the differences between educator-governors and SGB chairpersons (sig. 0.999) were not of practical significance and therefore, could be discarded as a factor requiring intervention as they were a probable result of statistical chance.

4.7.3 **The Tukey HSD values for the dimension denoting induction and training**

The dimension denoting the induction and training of school governors indicated, as depicted in Table 4.20 below, that the significant statistical differences found through the ANOVA test were mostly above the practical effect significance level of more than 0.05. This implies that the differences in perceptions between the strata of respondents were mostly of no practical effect and therefore do not require any intervention in practice.

Table 4.20 The Tukey HSD on induction and training

Tukey HSD: **Multiple Comparisons**							
Dependent Variable	(I) Code	(J) Code	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Induction and training	1.0 (Educator-governors)	2.0	-.0112	.0522	.997#	-.146	.123
		3.0	-.0180	.0533	.987#	-.155	.119
		4.0	-.1502*	.0534	.026*	-.288	-.013
	2.0 (Principals)	1.0	.0112	.0522	.997#	-.123	.146
		3.0	-.0068	.0576	.999#	-.155	.142
		4.0	-.1391	.0577	.076#	-.288	.010
	3.0 (Chairperson)	1.0	.0180	.0533	.987#	-.119	.155
		2.0	.0068	.0576	.999#	-.142	.155
		4.0	-.1322	.0587	.111#	-.283	.019
	4.0 (NTSG)	1.0	.1502*	.0534	.026*	.013	.288
		2.0	.1391	.0577	.076#	-.010	.288
		3.0	.1322	.0587	.111#	-.019	.283

The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

No practically significant effect

* Significant with practical effect

As can be seen from Table 4.20, there were a few cases indicating significant statistical differences of less than 0.05. These cases imply differences of practical effect and indicate the need for intervention in practice.

Firstly, there were significant statistical differences with practical effect only between educator-governors and non-teaching staff-governors (sig. = 0.026 < 0.05). There were, however, no statistically significant differences of practical effect on perceptions of school governance effectiveness regarding all other strata of respondents. This can be construed as meaning that in exception of educator-governors and non-teaching staff-governors, perceptions on the dimension denoting induction and training can be accepted as they do not require any intervention in practice.

4.7.4 The Tukey HSD values for the dimension denoting attributes necessary for effective governing

The dimension denoting attributes necessary for effective governing was found to have significant statistical differences in the ANOVA test. The Tukey HSD test as depicted in Table 4.21 indicates that some of the statistically significant differences were of practical effect while some were not.

Table 4.21 The Tukey HSD on attributes necessary for effective governing

Tukey HSD: **Multiple Comparisons**							
Dependent Variable	(I) Code	(J) Code	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Attributes necessary for effective governing	1.0 (Educator-governors)	2.0	-.22784*	.06119	.001*	-.3854	-.0703
		3.0	.03958	.06246	.921#	-.1213	.2004
		4.0	-.35622*	.06258	.000*	-.5174	-.1951
	2.0 (Principals)	1.0	.22784*	.06119	.001*	.0703	.3854
		3.0	.26742*	.06756	.000*	.0935	.4414
		4.0	-.12837	.06767	.230#	-.3026	.0459
	3.0 (Chairperson)	1.0	-.03958	.06246	.921#	-.2004	.1213
		2.0	-.26742*	.06756	.000*	-.4414	-.0935
		4.0	-.39580*	.06882	.000*	-.5730	-.2186
	4.0 (NTSG)	1.0	.35622*	.06258	.000*	.1951	.5174
		2.0	.12837	.06767	.230#	-.0459	.3026
		3.0	.39580*	.06882	.000*	.2186	.5730

The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

No practically significant effect

* Significant with practical effect

Table 4.21 shows that there were values less than the 0.05 significance level. These statistically significant values of practical effect were found to be between:

- Educator-governors and:
  - principals with significance level = 0.001 < 0.05.
  - non-teaching staff-governors with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05.

- principals and:
  - educator-governors with significance level = 0.001 < 0.05.
  - SGB chairpersons with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05.
- SGB chairpersons and:
  - principals with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05.
  - non-teaching staff-governors with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05.
- non-teaching staff-governors and:
- educator-governors with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05.
- SGB chairpersons with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05.

It was also found that differences between educator-governors and SGB chairpersons (sig. = 0.921), principals and non-teaching staff-governors (sig. = 0.230) were all greater than the 0.05 level and as such signifies differences with no practical effect. As alluded to earlier, these differences, being of no practical effect, imply that there is no need for intervention in practice.

The results of the Tukey HSD test on all dimensions of school governance effectiveness seem to confirm the findings of the frequency analysis regarding varied responses between and among different strata of respondents. For instance, in Table 12, data analysis indicates that principals agreed with a few statements on the functioning of the SGB; SGB chairpersons agreed with three while non-teaching staff-governors agreed with only three statements. This trend was also evident in the ranking of items denoting the functioning of the SGB (cf. Table 12). In certain instances, the ranking of items did not reveal any pattern that could allow for a determination of the effectiveness of the functioning of the SGB. This was further similar in the case of the overall item ranking where items did not display any ranking pattern. For instance, some items were ranked in the top 15 by some strata of respondents while some and or the same items were ranked in the middle 16 and or last 15 items.

A conclusion that can be drawn about the effectiveness of SGBs in executing their school governance mandate in the Free State Province is that SGBs generally do well in some roles and responsibilities relating to the four data dimensions of this study. This, in effect, implies that the three elements of the school governance mandate as represented in the four dimensions of data are performed differently according to the perceptions of the surveyed respondents. Furthermore, based on the statistically significant differences of practical effect, it can be concluded that the differences in perceptions among the four strata of respondents are real and meaningful and as such, imply the need for intervention in practice. It is also not possible to assign reasons for the differing perceptions as this would require research aimed specifically at understanding why principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors differ so significantly in their perceptions regarding the effectiveness of their SGBs.

4.8 **Chapter summary**

This chapter has outlined the results of the empirical survey and has provided an analysis in terms of the interpretation relating to the frequency analysis, the rank order of school governance items as contained in the questionnaire as well as the rank order in terms of dimensions of school governance effectiveness. This was followed by the computation of correlations between the four SGB dimensions as well as the determination of statistical differences emanating from the analysis variance (ANOVA). The chapter was concluded with the computation of the Tukey HSD to determine the essence of variances between and among respondents as well as determine the practicality or not of such variances.

The next chapter presents the overview of the study, findings, conclusions and recommendations

Chapter 5

Overview of the Study, Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of and a reflection on important findings as found through both the literature review and the empirical study. The research findings and the recommendations of this study are also presented.

5.2 Overview of the study

In Chapter 1, the general orientation to the study was presented, with an introduction setting the tone and presenting the research question. The rationale for the study (cf. 1.2) presented a justification for the study through demonstrating the current scenario as in existing research and exposing the research gap concerning the effectiveness of SGBs in terms of their overall mandate in South Africa. This was followed by the purpose statement (cf. 1.3); research questions – both the primary question and secondary questions and the research objectives (cf. 1.4); and the conceptual framework that guided the study in terms of pertinent constructs pertaining to contextualising the school governance mandate in terms of the three main elements, namely, providing the school with a strategic direction, acting as critical friend and holding the school to account. This was followed by a brief overview of the research method (cf. 1.6); possible contribution of the study (cf. 1.7); and challenges of the study (cf. 1.8). The layout of the study completed the chapter.

Chapter 2 presented the literature review on the overall mandate and effectiveness of SGBs. It began by expounding on the concept of school governance (*cf.* 2.2) and proceeded to expose the various school governance approaches (cf. 2.3) and models (cf. 2.4). Section 2.4 discussed the genesis of school governance from centralisation to decentralisation, after which the contemporary school governance mandate (cf. 2.5) was explained with reference to some international trends comprising the school governance in

Britain (cf. 2.5.1.1), Australia (cf. 2.5.1.2), the USA (2.5.1.3), the Republic of Botswana (2.5.1.4) and finally, school governance in South Africa (2.5.1.5). Section 2.6 then delved into an explication of the meaning and implications of the elements of the school governance mandate (cf. 2.6) which culminated into the contextualisation of the school governance mandate in South Africa (cf. 2.7) and the implications of the school governance mandate for effective school governance (2.8), which intended to locate the Schools Act's listed functions into the three elements of the school governance mandate.

Chapter 3 presented the empirical research methodology (cf. 3.2). It included the research paradigm (cf. 3.2.1), research design (cf. 3.2.2) and data collection (cf. 3.2.3). Data collection presented the questionnaire as a data collection instrument (cf. 3.2.2.1), its construction (cf. 3.2.2.2), its structure (cf. 3.2.2.3) and administration (cf. 3.2.2.4), which included reliability and validity, the pilot study, the design of the final questionnaire, data analysis and interpretation (cf. 3.2.4) and sources of data collection (cf. 3.2.5). Quality standards (cf. 3.2.6), the role of the researcher (cf. 3.2.7), ethical standards (cf. 3.2.8) were also outlined in this chapter.

Chapter 4 focused on data analysis and interpretation. This included a discussion of the demographic profile of the respondents to the questionnaire (cf. 4.2); and data analysis and interpretation (cf. 4.3) in terms of the frequency analysis regarding four dimensions denoting school governance effectiveness, namely the functioning of the SGB (cf. 4.3.1), the actual task of governing (4.3.2), attributes necessary for the effectiveness of school governors (4.3.3) and the induction and training of SGBs (cf. 4.3.4). This was followed by the analysis and interpretation of the rank order of items descriptive of SGB effectiveness (4.4); the analysis of variance on the four dimensions of SGB effectiveness (cf. 4.5); the ANOVA on dimensions of school governance effectiveness; and the the Tukey HSD analysis for the dimensions denoting the effectiveness of SGBs (cf. 4.6).

Chapter 5 concludes the study by presenting the summary, findings, and the recommendations. The next section presents the findings with regard to the research objectives to indicate how each objective was realised.

5.3 Findings from the research

Research findings presented in this section relate to the research objectives as stated in Chapter 1. The objectives of the study were formulated as follows:

- to examine what the overall school governance mandate entails;
- to examine what the school governance effectiveness entails in relation to the overall SGB mandate;
- to explore how effective SGBs are with regard to their overall mandate of school governance in the Free State Province; and
- To develop an approach that can be used to enhance the effectiveness of the overall school governance mandate of SGBs in the Free State Province.

5.3.1 Findings from research objective #1 and #2

The following findings regarding the two objectives were revealed:

- **What the overall school governance mandate entails**

For purposes of this study, school governance is defined as:

> *The process of governing the school by a mandated group or team of role players whose governance responsibility is to provide a framework for taking and implementing decisions in pursuance of the school's educational goals in such a way that lines of control and accountability are clear* (cf. 2.2).

As an act of governing by a mandated group, school governance is thus the responsibility of the SGB, which in South Africa is a legal entity that stands in

trust towards the school. The SGB is, therefore, charged with carrying out the school governance mandate.

The school governance mandate is prescribed in the Schools Act that the SGB must:

> *promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school* (cf. 1.1).

The SGB, in executing the school governance mandate, must engage in all governance activities with the purpose of ultimately providing good quality education to all learners at the school. This implies understanding what the school governance mandate entails. The school governance mandate was found to entail three basic elements (cf. 2.6), namely:

- pr*oviding the school with a strategic direction*;
- *acting as critical friend*; and
- *holding the school to account.*

Providing the school with a strategic direction entails formulating a development plan for the school through engaging in a comprehensive strategic planning process that seeks to "*set aims and targets, devise plans and policies, and take decisions that will raise standards* and involves *strategic management which is concerned with ensuring that all the necessary elements are in place in order that success can be achieved"* (cf. 2.6.1). The strategic planning process involves setting targets for performance and academic standards and focuses on all areas of school functionality including aspects concerned with management and administration; school governance and parents and community involvement; curriculum development and delivery; extra- and co-curricular activities; learners affairs; and the school's physical environment.

Holding the school to account entails a process of evaluating school performance on the basis of student performance measures and defines a relationship of formalised control between parties one of whom has the authority

to hold the other to account for what they do and typically includes an evaluation of what has been done in relation to the required standards (cf. 2.6.2). In essence, the SGB demands accountability from the school and in particular, regarding performance as against set goals, aims, objectives, targets and activities designated to implement the school's strategic direction as laid out in the school development plan. In other words, the school has to answer for its performance in terms of set aims in an attempt to realise the plans designed to implement and achieve the school governance mandate of promoting the best interests of the school and providing quality education to all learners.

Acting as a critical friend to the school entails supporting and challenging the school's actions concerning the various roles and responsibilities. The SGB, therefore, is a critical friend to the school because by being autonomous, it assists the principal and staff with support, advice and information, drawing on its members' knowledge and experience and pays attention to issues of school improvement, professional development and school evaluation and monitoring (cf. 2.6.3). This, the SGB does by monitoring and evaluating schools' progress and in acting as a critical friend, the SGB supports the principal in the performance of his functions and gives him constructive criticism. Furthermore, being a critical friend entails the responsibility for monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes of the school's effectiveness, asking challenging questions, and pressing for improvement, and is a *friend* because it exists to promote the interest of the school and learners (cf. 2.6.3).

- **What the school governance effectiveness entails in relation to the overall SGB mandate**

The effectiveness of school governance in relation to the overall SGB mandate entails contextualising it within the Schools Act's listed function in such a way that the listed functions are given a context and their implications are understood in pursuance of providing quality education to all learners at schools. The point of departure is, therefore, the governance mandate as a response to the new school governance dispensation that, as outlined in the Preamble to the Act, seeks to:

redress past injustices in educational provision, provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners and in so doing lay a strong foundation for the development of all our people's talents and capabilities, advance the democratic transformation of society, combat racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance, contribute to the eradication of poverty and the economic well-being of society, protect and advance our diverse cultures and languages, uphold the rights of all learners, parents and educators, and promote their acceptance of responsibility for the organisation, governance and funding of schools in partnership with the State.

To achieve this, the Schools Act prescribes functions as listed in Sections 20 and 21 for SGBs (cf. 2.7). The question then is: *What are the context, meaning and implications of these functions in relation to the overall school governance mandate?*

Firstly, it must be recognised that the functions as listed in the sections mentioned above, entail a strategic role, critical friendship and demanding accountability as the SGB's basic school governance premise. What is important in this regard, is an understanding of what the listed functions manifest so as to prevent merely focusing on the listed functions and thus putting different emphases on particular functions. The meaning and implications of these functions within these elements are:

- *Setting and providing a strategic direction embraces* (cf. 2.8):
  - ~ adopting a constitution – because this requires a strategy that must direct the activities of the SGB and spell out clear functional and role demarcations and the necessary protocols attached to such demarcations;
  - ~ developing the mission statement of the school – because this is the very first step after envisioning the school's desired destination;

~ determining times of the school day consistent with any applicable conditions of employment of staff at the school – because school times form part of pursuing school goals and are, therefore, part of the school's strategy in the pursuit of such goals and also involves the effective use of available human and material resources;

~ determining the admission policy of the school, subject to certain limitations; administer and control the school's property, and buildings and grounds occupied by the school, including school hostels, if applicable; and adopt a code of conduct for learners at the school – because these are policy matters that are inextricably linked to the school's vision and mission and therefore, the strategic plans of the school and require strategies for effective execution as well as specialist knowledge and skills to execute;

~ encouraging parents, learners, educators and other staff at the school to render voluntary services to the school – because the 'how' of performing these tasks requires thorough planning and know in terms of effective strategies, especially in diverse school communities; and

~ recommending to the Head of Department the appointment of educators at the school, subject to the Educators Employment Act, 1994 Proclamation No.138 of 1994), and the Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act No. 66 of 1995) – because appointments of staff are tied to school education goals and mission and require knowledge, skills and strategies to execute effectively. In fact, one could venture to say that most poor performance at schools can be attributed in part, to poor appointments of staff and poor strategic thinking about the curriculum implementation needs of the school.

Included in these governance activities are such crucial aspects of the strategic role as determination of school policies including policies for religious observance; dress code; language for teaching and learning; code of rights and

responsibilities; and setting academic standards and learner achievement standards and targets, which requires a thorough strategy formulation process and a well thought out strategy for both formulation and implementation.

- *Holding the school to account* (cf. 2.8):

  As indicated earlier, accountability in this sense concerns a scrutiny of performance against set targets of implementation of the school's strategic direction. Therefore, the context and implications of holding the school to account entails such functions as those listed in Section 37(6) that:

  > *the school fund, all proceeds thereof and any other assets of the public school must be used only for-*
  >
  > > *(a) educational purposes, at or in connection with such school;*
  > >
  > > *(b) educational purposes, at or in connection with another public school, by agreement with such other public school and with the consent of the Head of Department;*
  > >
  > > *(c) the performance of the functions of the governing body; or*
  > >
  > > *(d) another educational purpose agreed between the governing body and the Head of Department.*

This also includes functions listed in Section 38, which are that:

> *(1) A governing body of a public school must prepare a budget each year, according to guidelines determined by the Member of the Executive Council, which shows the estimated income and expenditure of the school for the following financial year.*
>
> *(2) Before a budget referred to in subsection (1) is approved by the governing body, it must be presented to a general meeting of parents convened on at least 30 days' notice, for consideration and approval by a majority of parents present and voting.*

Furthermore, the following functions as listed in Sections 42 and 43 are entailed in the demand for or in holding the school accountable:

> *The governing body of a public school must:*
>
> > *(a) keep records of funds received and spent by the public school and of its assets, liabilities and financial transactions; and*
> >
> > *(b) as soon as practicable, but not later than three months after the end of each financial year, draw up annual financial statements in accordance with the guidelines determined by the Member of the Executive Council.*
> >
> > *(1) The governing body of a public school must appoint a person registered as an accountant and auditor in terms of the Public Accountants and Auditors Act, 1991 (Act No. 80 of 1991), to audit the records and financial statements referred to in section 42.*
> >
> > *(5) A governing body must submit to the Head of Department, within six months after the end of each financial year, a copy of the annual financial statements, audited or examined in terms of this section.*
> >
> > *(6) At the request of an interested person, the governing body must make the records referred to in section 42, and the audited or examined financial statements referred to in this section, available for inspection.*

In the final analysis, school governance effectiveness in relation to the overall SGB mandate entails locating the functions listed in the School Act as governance roles and responsibilities in the context of the school governance mandate as a starting point; and translating them into distinct components of the three basic elements of the governance mandate, which are that the SGB in executing its school governance mandate must provide the school with a strategic direction, act as a critical friend and hold the school to account.

- *Acting as a critical friend to the school (*cf. 2.8):

  Acting as a critical friend implies and entails functions listed in the Schools Act which are that the SGB must:

  ~ support the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions; and

  ~ encourage parents, learners, educators and other staff at the school to render voluntary services to the school.

An important consideration of school governance effectiveness in relation to the overall school governance mandate is that the three basic elements of the governance mandate cannot be performed in isolation, but that they give direction in terms of what the listed functions in Section of the Schools Act imply. Taking cognisance of this provides the SGB with a holistic view and understanding of what their mandate means and entails and allows for a whole school approach to effective school governance.

5.3.2 Findings from research objective #3: exploring how effective SGBs are with regard to their overall mandate of school governance in the Free State province

The effectiveness of the SGBs, in relation to their overall mandate, was determined through the analysis and interpretation of data pertaining to four dimensions denoting factors for school governance effectiveness namely:

- the functioning of the SGB;
- the actual task of governing;
- attributes necessary for the effectiveness of school governors; and
- the induction and training of SGBs.

Firstly, a frequency analysis was computed to establish the extent of agreement and or disagreement with statements denoting effectiveness in terms of the items descriptive of dimensions mentioned above.

5.3.2.1 **Findings in relation to the functioning of the SGBs** (cf. 4.3.1)

The responses of the respondents in each stratum were largely varied and did not indicate a distinct pattern of agreement or disagreement with statements denoting the functioning of their SGBs. It was noticeable that while two strata of respondents agreed on an item, the other one or two disagreed. In some instances, three strata of respondents seemed to agree or disagree on some items. Noticeable also, was that of the items constituting this dimension, principals agreed with only three, chairpersons with seven, non-teaching staff-governors with three while educator-governors agreed with all statements. This was a strong indication that there were strong perceptual differences among respondents concerning the functioning of their SGB.

An analysis of some of the statements in this dimension indicates perceptions of SGBs that are not functioning too well. For example, on whether *overall, the SGB works effectively*, the majority of principals, chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors disagreed. This seemed to be confirmed by responses on whether there was a high degree of members leaving or abandoning their SGBs or not. Most respondents agreed, with 54% of the principals, 50% of educator-governors and 50% of SGB chairpersons agreeing with the statement. It was noted, however, that the frequency counts varied marginally at around 50% except for non-teaching staff-governors who overwhelmingly disagreed at 86%.

It was therefore concluded that, overall, while some items were perceived as being effectively executed, generally, SGBs did not do too well in relation to dimension denoting the functioning of the SGB.

5.3.2.2 **Findings in relation to the actual task of governing** (cf. 4.3.2)

Similarly with this dimension, responses did not provide a conclusive indication of how SGBs execute the actual task of governing. For instance, educator-governors and SGB chairpersons appeared to agree on the execution of the actual task of governing while the contrast held true for principals and non-teaching staff-governors. Remarkably, responses to items in this dimension

indicated non-teaching staff-governors who disagreed with all statements and principals who disagreed with 15 of the 19 statements.

The responses to questions on this dimension, while not conclusive in terms of similar responses, also led to the conclusion indicating challenges in the execution of this task. The implications of the responses are that some areas of the actual task of governing are perceived as being well done, while others are perceived as being poorly executed. A conclusive decision arrived at was that the perceptual differences in this case were also quite strong.

5.3.2.3 **Findings in relation to attributes necessary for the effectiveness of school governors** (cf. 4.3.3)

An analysis of data denoting the extent of agreement on the dimension concerning the attributes necessary for the effectiveness of school governors, once again resulted in varying perceptions, with less than half of the principals and non-teaching staff-governors agreeing with the statements, while just over half of the SGB chairpersons agreed. The extent of disagreement also showed this variation in responses.

It was found also that the extent of disagreement mirrored the opposite of the extent of agreement on this dimension, with non-teaching staff-governors overwhelmingly disagreeing with all statements in this dimension. Interestingly, responses gave an indication of SGBs not doing very well concerning engaging effectively with parents and their needs, learners and the community. This is an important finding because it implies that stakeholders are generally uninvolved in school matters by way of their own inputs and participation in decision-making. This also implies that the ends of the Schools Act's promotion of stakeholder participation as intended by decentralised and democratic school governance are generally defeated at schools.

It was noted also that there were differences in perceptions on items within and between strata and these were also strong.

5.3.2.4 **Findings in relation to induction and training of school governors** (cf. 4.3.4)

There were divergent perceptions on the induction and training and recruitment of SGBs among the respondents. For example, the majority of principals agreed with seven out of ten statements and educator-governors agreed with eight out of ten statements. On the other hand, SGB chairpersons disagreed with three out of ten statements and the non-teaching staff-governors also disagreed with two out of ten statements, which as alluded to earlier, represents a split among respondents concerning perceptions on this dimension.

The implication of these responses, based on the majority agreement with statements in this dimension, is that: there are induction processes undertaken for new SGB members; that these processes do equip them for their school governance roles and functions and that all new members of the governing body are required to participate in an induction process, although only a minority of non-teaching staff-governors indicated agreement with the statements..

A rank order of items descriptive of the overall effectiveness of SGBs and the individual dimensions in the Free State Province was also conducted to determine the items that would emerge highest in the rank order and therefore, indicative of the status of SGB effectiveness.

5.3.2.5 **Rank order of the overall items descriptive of SGB effectiveness regarding their school governance mandate**

Ranking was done on a three-level split – the first 15, middle 16 and last 15 items (cf. 4.4.1). A major finding in this regard was that there was no discernable pattern or order of items that seemed to dominate ranking throughout the three levels. Some items that were ranked highest by one stratum or other strata of respondents were found to be ranked either in the middle level or the lower level. Even within the same level, items did not indicate a discernable rank order. For this reason, it was concluded that the rank order of all items descriptive of the overall effectiveness of SGBs regarding

their school governance mandate further confirmed the finding on the frequency analysis, which indicated strong differences among respondents concerning their perceptions of SGB effectiveness regarding their school governance mandate.

5.3.2.6 **Rank order per dimension descriptive of SGB effectiveness regarding the school governance mandate**

The rank order per dimension was computed to determine if any of the four dimensions would indicate being executed well. The following findings were made in this regard:

- *Rank order of items denoting the functioning of the SGB per stratum*

The rank order regarding the functioning of the SGB indicated items ranking differently per stratum. Some items were ranked as top of the dimension by all respondents in terms of perceptions of effectiveness, while others were ranked differently by two and three strata. It was also found that in some instances, perceptual responses of non-teaching staff-governors seemed to result in items ranked differently.

A conclusion drawn with regard to the functioning of the SGB in terms of the rank order of items was that there were indeed strong perceptual differences.

- *Rank order of items denoting the actual task of governing*

It was found that of the 21 items, descriptive of the actual task of governing, six items were ranked at the top although not in similar positions by all respondents in terms of their perceptions. Some items within this dimension were also ranked differently. This led to the conclusion that SGBs did well in some items on this dimension, while generally, there were perceptual differences that could be regarded as strong and prominent.

- *Rank order of items denoting attributes necessary for effectiveness of school governors*

The dimension was found to indicate a discernable pattern or order of items descriptive of attributes necessary for the effectiveness of school governors. Items ranked highest by the three strata of respondents, namely, principals, educator-governors and SGB chairpersons were, in order of ranking and consisting of all four items in the dimension, the following:

~ B28: SGB members engage effectively with learners.

~ B37: SGB members represent community and parental needs.

~ B27: SGB members engage effectively with parents (Ranked 3rd by principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors).

~ B29: SGB members engage effectively with staff.

Although there was a slight variation in the order, non-teaching staff-governors also ranked the first and the third item similarly like the other strata of respondents.

- *The overall rank order of the four dimensions*

The rank order of the four dimensions sought to determine if there would be any discernable pattern or order in relation to the dimensions themselves so as to determine if such a rank order would assist to determine SGB effectiveness in relation to dimensions of the school governance mandate. It was found that of the four dimensions denoting SGB effectiveness regarding the school governance mandate, the dimension denoting attributes necessary for effective governing was ranked highest followed by the dimension denoting the actual task of governing, functioning of the SGB and induction and training. This seemed to confirm the finding on the rank order of items in this dimension as they were almost similarly ranked by the strata of respondents.

A conclusion drawn based on the rank order was that it was likely that school governors had the ability to engage stakeholders. However, since this does not indicate a causal relationship with the other dimensions, it can only be inferred

that SGBs have the necessary attributes and thus would need these to be complemented with knowledge and skills to have an effect on their functioning and the actual task of governing. In particular, induction and training would be critical for this purpose. Furthermore, it must be stated that slight variations of perceptions on the rank order in relation to the non-teaching staff-governors.

The variance between the ranked dimensions also appeared to be sizeable with a means score of 2.7179, 2.6031, 2.557 and 2.551 and seemed to suggest a relationship of some sort between and among the dimensions. For that reason, an analysis of variance starting with a *Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient* was computed to determine: (1) if there was such a relationship; and (2) its statistical significance.

It was found that there are indeed correlations between and among dimensions in terms of perceptions of respondents. The *r*-values found on all dimensions indicated correlations between dimensions although they ranged from weak to moderate and strong (cf.4.5). It was, however, found that the significance values between all the items were statistically significant at values of 0.000. This was found to indicate a causal relationship between the dimensions as computed through the responses indicating the perceptions of respondents on the effectiveness of their SGBs in relation to the school governance mandate. The question to be answered then was where such statistical differences were located. For that reason, the ANOVA test was conducted to provide the answer.

5.3.3.7 **The analysis of variance on the four dimensions of SGB effectiveness in relation to the school governance mandate** (cf. 4.6)

The ANOVA test yielded data results that indicated that there are indeed significant statistical differences between the dimensions denoting SGB effectiveness in relation to the school governance mandate. These differences were found to be within and between groups or strata of respondents.

These findings seemed to explain the differences found in the frequency analysis and the overall rank order of items and the ranking of items within dimensions as well as the ranking of dimensions themselves. Subsequent to

these findings, Tukey HSD tests were computed to determine if the significant statistical differences were of practical effect and could not be ignored as they were meaningful and indicated a need for intervention in practice; or were due to statistical chance and thus could be ignored. The following findings were made in this regard:

- Statistical differences of practical effect on the functioning of the SGB (cf. 4.6.1) were found between:

  ~ Educator-governors and principals with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05 and non-teaching staff-governors with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05;

  ~ Principals and SGB chairpersons with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05; and non-teaching staff-governors with significance level = 0.007 < 0.05; and

  ~ SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors = 0.000 < 0.05.

  The conclusion drawn here is that the differences in perceptions found with the frequency analysis and the pattern-indeterminate rank order of items in the dimension denoting the functioning of the SGB are meaningful because they are of practical effect as indicated by significance values of less than 0.05. This implies that there is a definite need for intervention in practice.

  There were, however, no significant differences between educator-governors and SGB chairpersons with statistically practical significance level = 0.321 > 0.05, which was found to be of no practical effect, implying that the differences were of statistical chance and do not warrant any change or intervention in practice.

- Statistical differences of practical effect on the actual task of governing (cf. 4.6.2) were found between:

- ~ Educator-governors and principals with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05 and non-teaching staff-governors with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05;

- ~ Principals and SGB chairpersons with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05 and non-teaching staff-governors with significance level = 0.001 < 0.05; and

- ~ SGB chairpersons and educator-governors with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05 and non-teaching staff-governors with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05.

There were, however, statistical differences between educator-governors and SGB chairpersons at a significance level of 0.999. These were found to be of no practical effect and therefore, could be discarded as a factor requiring intervention as they were a probable result of statistical chance.

- Statistical differences of practical effect on induction and training were (cf. 4.6.3) found between:

  - ~ educator-governors and non-teaching staff-governors (sig. = 0.026 < 0.05).

  There were, however, no statistically significant differences of practical effect on perceptions of school governance effectiveness regarding all other strata of respondents in relation to induction and training and therefore could be discounted as a factor in the effectiveness of this dimension.

- Statistical differences of practical effect on attributes for effective governing (cf. 4.6.4) were found between:

  - ~ Educator-governors and principals with significance level = 0.001 < 0.05 and non-teaching staff-governors with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05;

- ~ Principals and SGB chairpersons with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05; and
- ~ SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors with significance level = 0.000 < 0.05.

As pointed out in the text earlier, the conclusion that can be made about the effectiveness of SGBs in executing their school governance mandate in the Free State Province is that SGBs generally do well in some roles and responsibilities relating to the four data dimensions of this study. This implies that the three elements of the school governance mandate as represented in the four dimensions of data and are performed differently according to the perceptions of the surveyed respondents. Furthermore, based on the statistically significant differences of practical effect, it can be concluded that the differences in perceptions among the four strata of respondents are real and meaningful and as such, imply the need for intervention in practice. It is also not possible to assign reasons for the differing perceptions as this would require research aimed specifically at understanding why principals, educator-governors, SGB chairpersons and non-teaching staff-governors differ so significantly in their perceptions regarding the effectiveness of their SGBs.

5.4 Recommendations for an approach to enhance the effectiveness of SGBs regarding their overall school governance mandate in the Free State Province

5.4.1 Introduction and justification

The fourth objective of this study was to develop an approach that can be used to enhance the effectiveness of the overall school governance mandate of SGBs in the Free State Province. The study, through the discussion of literature exposed the current school governance challenges and the consequent (in)effectiveness of SGBs in some areas of school governance. Furthermore, the study of literature exposed what school governance, the school governance mandate and its context within the prescripts of the Schools Act entail. Finally,

the empirical study revealed respondents' perceptual differences regarding items and dimensions descriptive of the SGB's effectiveness in relation to their overall school governance mandate. A conclusion that was reached through the comparison of the literature and the empirical studies was mainly that SGBs in the Free State Province appear to do well in some areas of the school governance mandate. This was made evident by the perceptual differences emerging from the frequency analysis and rank ordering of data. In addition, the analysis of variance indicated that such perceptual differences existed and were meaningful because they were found to be of practical effect.

The findings of this study resonate to a large extent with the findings of a similar study conducted by the Bath University in Britain (Business in the Community, 2008:38). In this regard, that study found that while "*governors reported that their governing bodies were effective, a slightly smaller proportion of the head teachers we surveyed agreed with that assessment*" and that "*Ofsted reports that governing is less effective more often in schools in disadvantaged settings*" (Business in the Community, 2008:38). Although, referring mostly to less advantaged schools, an assertion is made in that study is that there is room for improvement in school governance.

In this study, a similar assertion is made, especially with regard to the need for appropriate, relevant and need-based induction and training of school governors and the implementation of the scrutiny or demand for accountability role of the SGB.

A number of observations can be made regarding the reason for respondents in this study being divided on the execution of the overall school governance mandate, namely:

- School governance in South Africa is complex because the school governance mandate in the Schools Act is stated without contextualising it to the functions as listed in the Schools Act.

- The school governance functions are on the whole, too many for the SGB to master and execute, especially if factors like the reportedly low

educational levels of the majority of governors – parents, and the specialist nature of most functions.

- Since functions are listed in the Schools Act, the focus of governance operations may be on the functions as listed and not as a means to executing the governance mandate that requires the SGB to promote the best interests of the school and providing quality education to all learners.

- The structural processes of electing SGBs presents a challenge in that they elected on the year in which they should be governing. This hampers the capacity-building process in that induction and training are not aimed at specific skills for specific functionaries of SGBs, but are largely generic in nature and have numerous challenges of their own.

For the reasons attached to the findings of this study and the matters raised above, there is a need for an approach approach to enhance SBGs regarding their overall school governance mandate in the Free State Province.

5.4.2 **An approach to enhance SGB effectiveness regarding the overall school governance mandate**

The main recommendation of this study is about enhancing SGBs effectiveness regarding their overall school governance mandate. The overall school governance mandate is stated in the Schools Act in the following manner:

> *… the governing body of a public school must-*
>
> *(a) promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school.*

As found in the literature study, this mandate translates into three elements, namely, setting and providing the school with a strategic direction; acting as a critical friend to the school; and holding the school to account. These elements emphasise two main thrusts for the SGB, namely:

- a strategic decision-making and implementation role; and
- a scrutiny-accountability role.

The Two-Tier Approach to School Governance therefore proposes a structure similar to most state entities. To explain this in a basic nutshell example, the National Parliament has the Executive, comprising the President, Cabinet and Deputy Ministers. In addition, there are various government clusters established to foster an integrated approach to governance that is aimed at improving government's planning, decision-making and service delivery and most importantly, ensure alignment of government-wide priorities, facilitate and monitor the implementation of priority programmes, and provide a consultative platform on cross-cutting priorities and matters being taken to Cabinet (Government of South Africa, 2015). The Executive deals with strategic issues and is held accountable by parliament. For instance, the President accounts for the State of the Nation and the Ministers account for their Ministries.

Due to the complexity and the number of functions the SGB has to perform, the approach in this study, proposes a Two-Tier Approach to School Governance, mainly based on the composition of the SGB and the performance of the two roles mentioned above. This implies an organisational structural split in the SGB to facilitate and enhance the performance of the elements of the school governance mandate. To this end, the SGB in this proposed approach is split into two tiers.

The first tier of the Two-Tier Approach to School Governance deals with the strategic decision-making and implementation role and the second tier deals with the scrutiny-accountability role. This is illustrated in Figure 5.1 below.

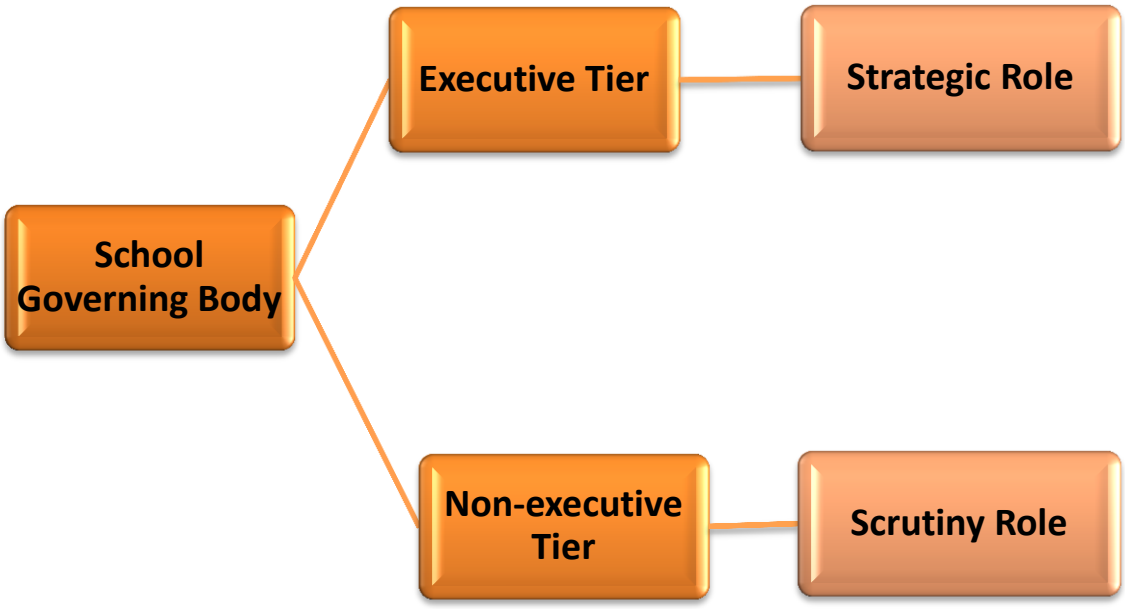


Figure 5.1 The Two-Tier Approach to School Governance

As illustrated above, the Two-Tier Approach to School Governance proposes that the SGB be constituted by a two-tier organisational structure.

The first tier – the executive tier is responsible for the strategic role of the school governance mandate. The second tier – the non-executive tier is responsible for the scrutiny role.

- **The strategic role of the Executive Tier of the SGB**

The executive tier's strategic role entails providing the school with a strategic direction through a meticulous strategic development planning process (cf. 2.6.1), which addresses all areas of school functionality as recommended by departmental policies.

The strategic role as executed by the executive tier would then comprise all the activities developing a strategy for activities concerned with school governance strategic management issues, which entail decision making and strategy implementation roles, while the Non-executive Tier's scrutiny role would comprise a scrutiny of activities other than educational-operational matters. This functional level of the executive tier of the SGB is illustrated in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2 The strategic role of the executive tier of the SGB

As exposed earlier in the text (cf. 2.8), this role involves functions listed in Section 20(1) and include, among others:

- developing the mission statement of the school;
- adopting a constitution;
- determining times of the school day consistent with any applicable conditions of employment of staff at the school;
- encouraging parents, learners, educators and other staff at the school to render voluntary services to the school;
- recommending to the Head of Department the appointment of educators at the school;
- determining of school policies including policies for religious observance, dress code, language for teaching and learning, and code of rights and responsibilities; and
- setting achievement and academic standards.

Scrutinising the functions listed above, indicates clearly that these are functions that require a strategy to execute. Consequently, they can only be executed through a strategic development planning process (cf. 2.6.1). Engaging in a strategic development planning process involves decision-making regarding questions related to determining the current status of the school; the desired status as expressed in the vision and mission statements; the 'how' of attaining the desired status and the evaluation of the process outcomes as the implementation proceeds through a carefully executed process (cf. Figure 2.2).

Once the strategy setting process is completed, the implementation stage comes into play as "*implementation is the process that turns strategies and plans into actions in order to accomplish strategic objectives and goals" (*Sage, 2015). In this regard, the executive tier's role is very important as it involves decision-making on various aspects of the strategic development plan implementation. Being smaller and more focused, the executive tier is better able to direct activities and to monitor their implementation, meet regularly to review progress, give and receive feedback and take corrective and or enhancement action on activities as illustrated below.

Figure 5.3 Proposed strategies for Implementation

The implementation of the school strategy is the most important aspect of the school governance mandate as it translates plans into action. Being the

responsibility of the executive tier, this requires a thorough process of advocacy in order to create ownership, especially because the executive tier is a small team of SGB members. Implementation of the school strategy can entail three key aspects as advocated by Edinger (2012). The first step as indicated in Figure 5.3 is to clarify the strategy so as to bring the often complex language is such a way, as asserted by Edinger (2012), that ‘‘*people in your organization can rally to support its implementation*”. The principal’s role as school manager is crucial in that he/she must ensure that the strategic plan is communicated and other SGB members and stakeholders are familiar with the plan and activities attendant to it.

Clarification of the strategy will involve communication which can be in the form of multiple mediums including brief brochures, detailed action plans, *“internal blogs and message boards, department meetings. the intention will be to communicate what the strategy is and how everybody’s work is informed by that strategy and will include discussions at each level, translating the organisation’s strategy to understandable and contextualized sound bites, which connect to the work of individuals”* (Edinger, 2012).

Cascading involves, according to Edinger (2012), other members of the executive tier, especially staff members and school management team members in further taking the essential of the strategy across the school population through among others, “team meetings, the one-on-one coaching, the process improvements” (Edinger, 2012) and the responses to external factors to be aligned to the school’s strategy. In this sense, the executive tier must develop action plans for individual initiatives within the strategic development plan which will also incorporate a determination of who is responsible for what, when it will be started and completed, and what intermediate accomplishments are needed to achieve results. This will help to determine when adjustments need to be made and will make progress more apparent.

- **The scrutiny role of the non-executive tier of the SGB**

The non-executive tier as indicated in Figure 5.1 is responsible for the scrutiny role. This role, in essence, implies being a critical friend and demanding or holding the school to account. This is a role of 'being critical', albeit a role to be undertaken in a friendly and constructive way, which may not be helpful (Balarin *et al*., 2008) which, "*does not does not necessarily entail criticism but, amongst other things, asks searching questions, checks on the appropriateness of systems and procedures and considers appropriateness in relation to wider concerns*" (Balarin *et al*., 2008:16).

The essence of the scrutiny role requires of the non-executive tier to inspect applicable aspects of strategic management and policy development; they sign off and agree on school policies and strategic plans as proposed by the executive tier; and provide a forum for discussion of strategy and policy matters.

Being the non-executive tier should involve all other elected members of the SGB playing a scrutiny role. This will include educator-governors, non-teaching staff-governors and parent-governors (and learners at secondary schools) who will collectively act as critical friends (cf. 1.5, 2.6). The main aim will be to promote participation, decentralisation, empowerment and transparency.
This would entail the scrutiny role as illustrated in Figure 5.4 below.

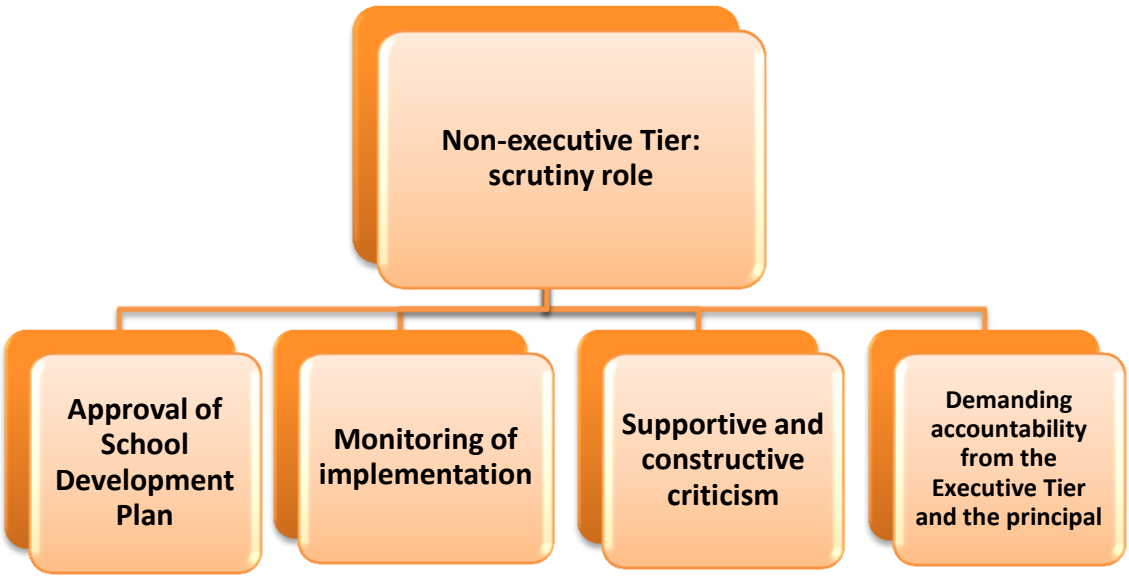


Figure 5.4 The scrutiny role of the non-executive tier of the SGB

As illustrated above, the scrutiny role of the non-executive tier mainly concerns scrutinising all aspects of the school's functioning as based on the approved School Development Plan (cf. 2.6.1). The School Development Plan would be a plan that would have been developed by the executive tier and having been scrutinised and approved by the non-executive tier. This would enable the non-executive tier to monitor the plan's implementation, offer support and demand accountability from the executive tier (cf. 2.6.3). This can involve, as posited by Balarin *et al*. (2008:32):

- assuring quality and standards of education in the school by bringing high expectations;
- ensuring full deliberation and questioning of policies, budgets, and practices; and
- putting in place systems for monitoring and reviewing the standards of achievement, financial plans and the policy developments in the school.

Balarin *et al*. (2008:66) further make the point that "*implicit in the scrutiny function of governing bodies would be a sense of 'what kind of school we want'*

and scrutiny of decisions and plans would take place within that context. Thus the stakeholder dimension of school governing would remain important".

In line with the stakeholder model of school governance, the non-executive tier's first scrutiny role is that of approval of the school strategic development plan as would have been developed by the executive tier and as will have been derived from the vision and mission and school strategy. This is an important activity in that it includes aspirations of the entire school community and the larger community within which the school is located.

Monitoring implementation for the non-executive tier of the SGB entails actually measuring observed school performance against reported implementation of progress from the executive tier. An important consideration in this case, will be the use by the non-executive tier of monitoring instruments, including performance measures and milestones set in the strategic development plan, interrogating reports of other strategy leaders within the school such as management team members and various committee leaders.

Thirdly, and related to the second scrutiny role of monitoring implementation of the strategic development plan, the non-executive tier must provide support and constructive criticism to the executive tier and the school. This can be done by, *inter alia*:

- visiting the school and observing how activities take place in relation to specified directions as provided in the development plan;
- taking part in school activities such as sports, fundraising events, different and relevant ceremonies, joining school trips and responding to invitations to be a guest in staff meetings; and
- acting in accordance with agreed upon and approved protocols for visits and observations at school so as to limit unintended consequences of being perceived as being on fault-finding missions.

The third and most important aspect of the scrutiny role involves demanding accountability from the executive tier and the principal. Demanding

accountability means holding the executive and the school to account about actual performance and implementation of school plans set against approved and supported strategic development plans. The main consideration will be on whether the school delivers on set targets and standards. Discrepancies must be accounted for and successes must be reported and given the necessary prominence and appreciation.

One way of demanding accountability from schools by the non-executive tier is to perform assessments; this is to check whether strategic plans proposed by the executive tier are implemented. Regular reports that include findings – whether satisfactory or not, should be sent to the executive tier as a way of justifying and the legitimising the scrutiny responsibilities. Demanding accountability from the principal will perhaps guide the executive tier when pitfalls exists in the implementation of strategies proposed. This will assist the executive tier to propose new strategies or alter the current ones if needs be and/or take corrective action where necessary.

5.4.3 **Strengths of the Two-Tier Approach to School Governance**

The Two-Tier Approach to School Governance can be a valuable tool for organising SGB effectiveness. Firstly, this approach, instead of trying to address the challenges experienced by SGBs on their inability to implement their mandate fully and to make a differentiation among listed roles and functions, pursues an alignment of roles and functions according to the structural composition of the SGB. It also intends to reduce the SGB's workload by allocating work according to levels of expertise. The main assumption and requirement of the approach being that specialist functions be allocated to the executive tier which inevitably, must comprise members with a level of knowledge-expertise-attitude mix to deal with such functions. The gains begin with the organisational structuring of the SGB into two tiers as opposed to its current practice. The following possible benefits of the Two-Tier Approach to Schools Governance can be discerned:

First, the division of SGBs into two tiers namely creates a distribution of SGB work in such a way that specialist functions are accommodated. The structuring of the SGB into two tiers allows for the executive tier to work with specialist functions from a strategic developmental point of view. This means, once the strategy on such functions is developed, agreed upon and approved, their implementation is such that their difficulty and specialist nature have been simplified and customised to the functional levels of the school and various committees at the school.

Second, the Two-Tier Approach to School Governance fosters a functional split for the SGB in order to simplify governance and enhance its effects on the delivery and implementation of the school governance mandate. This is done by structuring the SGB in a way that separates the strategic decision making and implementation function and the scrutiny-accountability functions. This way, specialist school governance are handled at the executive tier level in terms of planning, implementation and monitoring and the non-executive tier operates at the scrutiny and accountability level where the main drive is for scrutiny of activities related to the approved school strategic development plan and holding the executive tier and the school to account on performance in terms of the school strategy and plans.

Third, the school governance mandate of promoting the best interests of the school and its development through providing quality education to all learners at the school by translating three elements of the governance mandate namely, providing the strategic direction; acting as a critical friend; and holding the school to account, into main roles that are concerned with the strategic decision-making and implementation roles and the scrutiny accountability roles.

Fourth, it encourages communication among all stakeholders. The two tiers talk to each other frequently as a way of ensuring accountability, transparency, participation and rigorous monitoring and feedback on governance and school activities, as well as critical friendship.

Fifth, dividing SGB work according to expertise will make it easier for departmental training developmental programmes to be focused on specific functions for specific functionaries and thus avoid generic and one-size-fits-all types of training. This ensures that each tier understands their school governance mandate in the correct context because currently, various SGB components perceive various roles and functions differently.

Finally, it will be easier to hand over duties to newly elected governors as the emphasis will be on a discernable and documented strategy and its implementation, accompanied by evidence, assisted by an effective process of scrutiny and accountability.

5.4.4 Possible limitations of the Two-Tier Approach to School Governance

While proposing a seemingly working model for school governance effectiveness, the Two-Tier Approach to School Governance is not without limitations.

First, the executive-scrutiny split of functions may be difficult to implement due to the constituency-based election of school governors because this election mode encourages governors to act like politicians and promote the interests of their constituencies. However, the emphasis on the school governance mandate, its meaning and implications for providing quality education to all learners can be an effective mitigating factor in this regard. To this end, effective focused training of school governors is of utmost importance.

Second, the approach assumes expertise at executive tier level, which may not always be the case. However, being comprised of the principal, chairperson, treasures, secretary and school management team members, the effects of training and accelerated understanding of the roles involved at this level are likely to offset this limitation. This is also supported by the finding that most parents, as against most research findings, have educational attainments that are at matric level and above. Furthermore, the role of the scrutiny and

accountability tier will be effective and will likely results in a balance that is required for effective school governance mandate implementation.

5.5 **Recommendations for future research**

The main recommendation for future research concerns the need for further refinement of the Two-Tier Approach to School Governance. The reason for this is that the conclusions and the recommendation of this study are based on the analysis and interpretation of the quantitative data and the deductions made from the statistical computations of the data. A study that will use qualitative data may be useful in further probing reasons for varied responses and will likely lead to a conclusive decision as to the effectiveness of SGBs in the Free State Province and the suitability of the proposed approach.

There is also a need to explore the influence or the effect of research on policy and on how policy makers view recommendations coming out of research like this one. Numerous studies make compelling recommendations that could be translated into practice that benefits the schooling systems as a whole and on specific issues related to practice. While it is mandatory for reports to be submitted to the various provincial departments of educations, there is no evidence that can be directly or indirectly attributed to recommendations coming out of such studies.

5.6 **Contribution of the study**

The study contributes to the practice of school governance in the Free State Province and South Africa in general by providing an approach that addresses the effectiveness of SGBs regarding their overall school governance mandate. School governance practitioners are provided with a context through which they can gain more insight into the meaning and implications of the school governance mandate as stated in the Schools Act. Additionally, the Two-Tier Approach to School Governance can also benefit school governance for School Management, Governance and Development officers in the Free State

Provincial Department of Education with a tool to facilitate effective development, support and monitoring of SGBs.

By contextualising school governance mandate, the study contributed to a conceptual understanding of the context of the school governance mandate in that it unpacks it into distinct areas of functioning, namely strategic decision making and implementation and the scrutiny and accountability levels. In the context of school governance discipline in South Africa, this translates to a contribution of a theoretical framework on which the essence of the school governance mandate as stated in the Schools Act can be based.

5.7 **Limitations of the study**

The study is largely limited by the use of quantitative data collection, analysis and interpretation. Qualitative data could also have shed more light on the investigation of the effectiveness of SGBs regarding their overall governance mandate in the Free State Province. This was mainly due to the large scale nature of the study and the researcher's conviction that there is still space and value for single research data collection methods. Consequently, the study has succeeded in placing the study phenomenon in the academic discourse and expectations are that this will be further pursued by other researchers in the field of school governance. Notwithstanding this limitation, this study has succeeded in achieving the objectives it set out to attain.

5.8 **Conclusion**

The study intended to investigate the effectiveness of SGBs at schools in discharging their overall school governance mandate. This aim was translated into three research objectives to examine what the overall school governance mandate entails; what the school governance effectiveness entails in relation to the overall SGB mandate; and to explore how effective SGBs are with regard to their overall mandate of school governance. This was realised through a careful literature review which examined what is involved in school governance mandate as stated in the Schools Act and included a comparative analysis of

trends internationally and continentally through a study of two international and one continental school governance approach.

The study also sought to quantitatively evaluate the effectiveness of SGBs regarding their overall school governance mandate in the Free State Province. This was achieved through data collection using a questionnaire, which involved principals, SGB chairpersons, educator-governors and non-teaching staff-governors and through different statistical computations was able to draw conclusions and make a recommendation. Based on the findings from both the literature review and the empirical study, the Two-Tier Approach to School Governance was developed and proposed. This approach considers as a starting point, the SGB as a two-tier organisational structure fashioned generally after the structural organisation of the state entities, especially the national government. The study thus achieved its aim and objectives, notwithstanding its limitations in other areas. These, however open avenues for further research in school governance matters.

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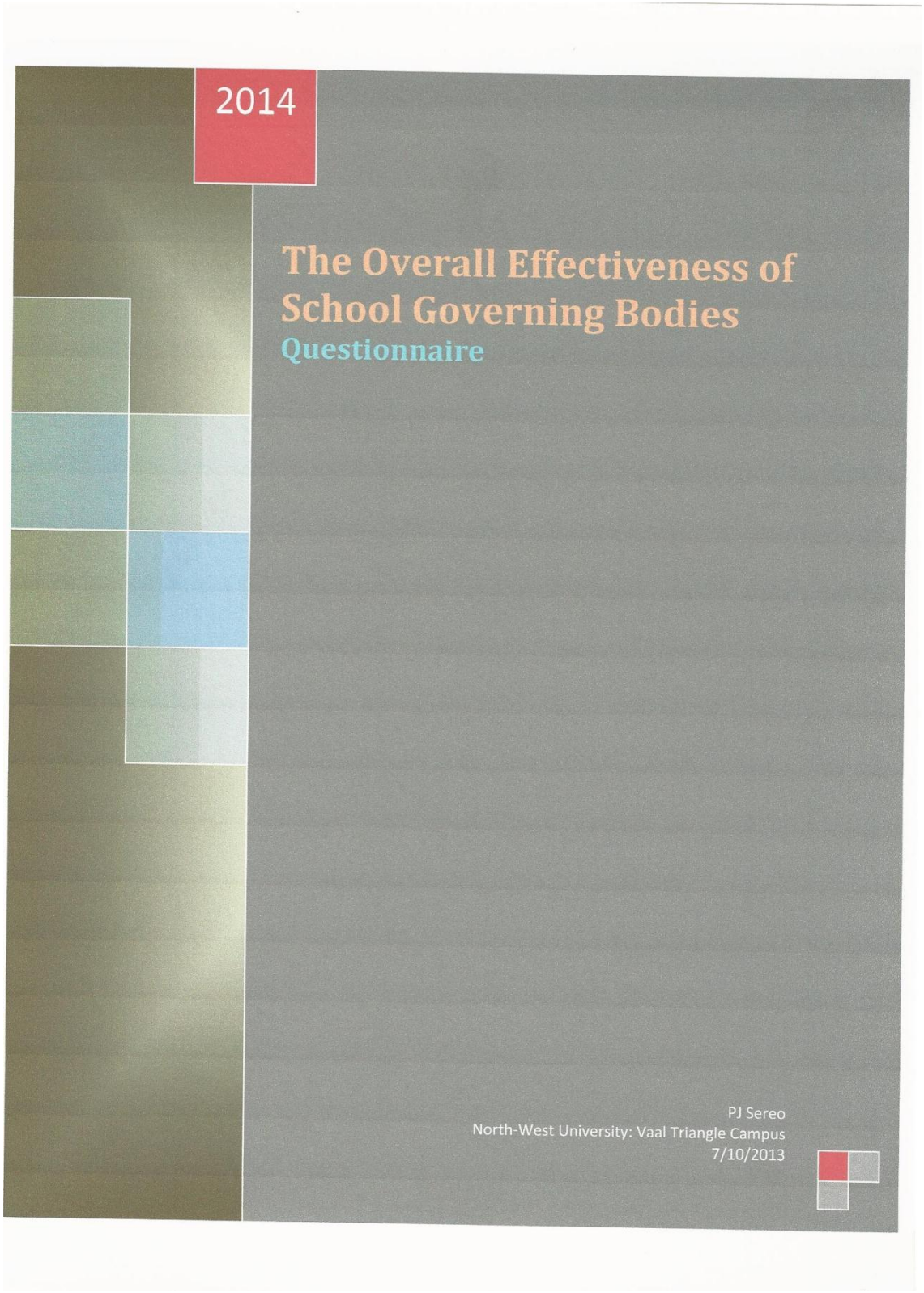
Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire



RESEARCH TOPIC:

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

Instructions for completing the questionnaire:

A. This questionnaire is strictly intended for research purposes only. You may **not** fill in your name, the name of your school, your school stamp or signature anywhere in this questionnaire. Your honest response will therefore be of great value to the research and will accordingly be treated anonymously. Kindly note that there are no wrong or right answers, only honest ones.

B. The questionnaire comprises two sections, viz. Section A: General information, and Section B: SGB effectiveness factors.

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION

Please put a cross **(X)** in the appropriate block that applies to your own situation or you're your present school.

1. Gender

Male	Female

2. Your age in years

20-30	31-40	41-50	51+

3. Terms as SGB member

1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Other (specify):			

4. Level of Education

Pre-Matric	Std 10
Post Matric	Degree

5. Number of learners in school

Less than 500	500 - 600
600 - 1000	More than 1000

6. Type of school

Primary	Secondary

7. Location of school

Township	Town
Rural	

SECTION B:

This section comprises the effectiveness of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) as identified by research. Kindly indicate the extent to which the subsequent effectiveness measures apply in your school.

Column 1: identifies the effectiveness factors

Column 2: indicates the extent / level of agreement with the effectiveness factors as identified in research. Kindly indicate the extent or degree to which you agree with these factors in your SGB.

In each case below draw a cross (×) in the appropriate block.

Factor	Level of Agreement			
	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
1. Overall, our SGB works very effectively.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
2. The SGB has a clear understanding of its role and responsibilities	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
3. The SGB members from different categories work well side by side	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4. Attendance of meetings of the SGB is usually very good	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
5. The vision of our schools is clear	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
6. The vision of the school is communicated to staff	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
7. The vision of the school is communicated to learners	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
8. The vision of the school is communicated to parents	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9. Communication between all SGB members is very clear	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
10. SGB meetings have a well-structured agenda	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
11. Meetings of the SGB run for a very long time	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
12. The Chairperson of the SGB plays a very effective role	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
13. Members of the SGB feel able to speak their minds on issues	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
14. The SGB participates in discussions about the effectiveness of its performance	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
15. Members of the SGB are supplied with good quality relevant information	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

16. SGBs are involved in long and short term strategic planning	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
17. SGB members support the school principal	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
18. SGB members challenge the principal where necessary	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
19. The SGB members monitor school's plans and targets	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
20. SGB members undertake scrutiny role	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
21. The SGB holds the school to account	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
22. The SGB has a clear focus on raising the achievements of learners	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
23. SGB members have an effective involvement in developing and monitoring the school development plan	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
24. The induction process for new SGB members is effective	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
25. The induction process for new governors equips them for their school governance roles and functions	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
26. All new SGB members are provided with a document describing their roles and functions	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
27. SGB members engage effectively with parents	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
28. SGB members engage effectively with learners	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
29. SGB members engage effectively with staff	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
30. SGB members are well informed about parents, staff and learner's views	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
31. SGB members use their knowledge of parents, staff and learners' views to improve school's academic performance	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
32. The SGB receive reports on the quality of teaching and learning	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
33. The SGB has a good understanding of the school's performance	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
34. The SGB knows how the school's performance compares with other schools locally.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
35. The SGB knows how the school's performance compares with other schools provincially and nationally	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
36. The SGB ensures that the school monitors the progress of all learners	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
37. SGB members represent community and parental needs	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
38. The quality of our SGB training is excellent	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

39. A formal document describing the roles and responsibilities of governors is provided to all new governors	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
40. All new members of the governing body are required to participate in an induction process	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
41. When a new member joins the SGB, an existing member is appointed as a mentor to help them learn the ropes	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
42. Members of our governing body participate in governor training programmes	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
43. We have a high degree of members leaving or abandoning our SGB	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
44. Most of our governing body has participated in training activities in the last year	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
45. Our SGB is actively involved in self-evaluation	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
46. Provides strategic direction alongside the senior leadership team	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Thank you for your time and effort in completing this questionnaire.

Appendix B: Letter requesting permission from the Free State Department of Education

Serero PJ STD *(Tshiya coed) BA (VISTA) B Ed Hons BA Hons (NWU)*
M Ed (NWU) DSE (UNISA)
Address: 10 Long Tom Str, Welgelegen, Vaalpark
SASOLBURG
1948
email:**serero.p@dbe.gov.za**
Tel: 012 357 4096 (W), Mobile: 083 300 3429

The Head of Education: Free State Province

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FOR A PhD: EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a registered PhD student at North West University (Vanderbijlpark). I am engaged in a research project investigating the effectiveness of School Governing Bodies. The research topic is; **"The effectiveness of School Governing Bodies (SGB) regarding their overall school governance mandate in the Free State Province".** Principals and SGB members in selected schools in the province will be invited to take part in the study.

Kindly take note that the study will not intrude on the individual rights or privacy, nor will it apply ethically unacceptable procedures. Data collected will be kept confidential and names of participants and school won't be revealed. The investigation will include survey questionnaires. The envisaged starting date is January 2014.

Find attached the questionnaire to be used.

Hoping the request is considered.

Yours truly,

Pule Joseph Serero

Appendix C: Letter to the principal and SGB chairperson requesting permission to administer questionnaires at their schools

Enquiries: Serero PJ
Tel: 012 357 4096
Cell phone: 083 300 3429
09 / 10 / 2013

P.O. Box 62656
Vaalpark
1948

Attention: The Principal and the SGB chairperson

Re: An application for permission to conduct research in your school.

1. The above matter refers.
2. Kindly note that I request permission to conduct research at your school.
3. My research topic is as follows: **"THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES (SGB) REGARDING THEIR OVERALL SCHOOL GOVERNANCE MANDATE IN THE FREE STATE PROVINCE."**
4. The principal, the SGB chairperson and educator-governors will be requested to take part in the study.
5. This research will be conducted mostly after hours or over the weekends especially when the majority of the SGB members are back from work. This research will therefore not interfere with the normal smooth running of the schools.
7. As part of the research ethics, the confidentiality of both the participants and the school will be protected.
8. You will be contacted telephonically in order to make an appointment with you and other participants.

Kind regards.

Serero PJ (Researcher)

Appendix D: Permission from the Free State Department of Education

Enquiries: Pepenene MJ
Ref. Research permission
Tel. no: 051 404 9259
Fax no.:086 430 6223
E-mail: pepenene@edu.fs.gov.za

educate
Department of Education
FREE STATE PROVINCE

Mr. Serero PJ
10 Long Tom Street
VAALPARK

Dear Mr Serero

APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

1. This letter serves as an acknowledgement of receipt of your request to conduct research in the Free State Department of Education.
   Research Topic: The effectiveness of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) regarding their overall governance mandate in the Free State Province.
   Approval has been granted to conduct research in the schools herewith attached.
   Target Population: Members of the SGB: Principal, educator/s, Non-educator/s and parents.
   Period of research: For three months from the date of signature of this letter. Please note that the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth academic quarter of the year.
2. Should you fall behind your schedule by three months to complete your research project in the approved period, you will need to apply for an extension.
3. The approval is subject to the following conditions:
   3.1 The collection of data should not interfere with the normal tuition time or teaching process.
   3.2 A bound copy of the research document should be submitted to the Free State Department of Education, Room 319, 3rd Floor, Old CNA Building, Charlotte Maxeke Street, Bloemfontein.
   3.3 You will be expected, on completion of your research study to make a presentation to the relevant stakeholders in the Department.
   3.4 The attached ethics document must be adhered to in the discourse of your study in our department.
4. Please note that costs relating to all the conditions mentioned above are your own responsibility.

Yours sincerely,

DR. JEM SEKOLANYANE: CFO

07/08/2015
DATE

Appendix E: Informed consent form

RESEARCHER: Mr. P.J. Serero

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: The effectiveness of School Governing Bodies regarding their overall school governance mandate in the Free State Province

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH: to investigate the effectiveness of School Governing Bodies regarding their overall school governance mandate in the Free State Province.

DURATION: The duration for completing the questionnaire will be approximately 10 minutes.

PROCEDURES: The questionnaire requires you to indicate your perceptions to given statements on a four category scale, namely: *Strongly Agree; Agree; Disagree; Strongly Disagree*

POSSIBLE RISKS: There is no risk envisaged in completing the questionnaire, to you, your school, colleagues, learners, parents the Free State Department of Education. However, in the event of questions that may be perceived as threatening or causing discomfort, you may decline to answer such questions without providing any reason for doing so.

BENEFITS: No direct benefits or compensation will be due to any respondent to the questionnaire.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION: Participation in this research is completely voluntary. You are within your right at any stage to and may, refuse to participate and or withdraw at any time.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Data in this study will be confidential. As such all data collected will, in the final research report, use (1) fictitious names; (2) identification keys, which will be known only to the researcher; and will be treated and be kept confidential until they are discarded after five year (University ethics requirement).

CONTACT: The research is conducted by Doctoral student, Mr PJ Serero, under the supervision of Prof. MI Xaba from the School of Educational Sciences: North-West University – Vaal Triangle Campus. Prof. MI Xaba can be reached at 016 910 3068 (o/h) for questions regarding this research project.

This research has been ethical approved by the North West University Ethics Committee.

CONSENT:

I …….. have read and understand the nature of my participation in this research project and agree to participate.

Signature: Date:

Researcher: Mr. PJ Serero Date: