

CHAPTER 4

EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter (3) provided a broad overview of education accountability in the four countries studied: Chile, Canada, Uganda and England. Some of the common characteristic features of these systems were also outlined with a view to benchmarking the South African education system against them. This chapter will trace the history of education governance in South Africa in order to gain an understanding of the issues and factors that informed the nature and character of education governance at particular historical moments. To achieve this, two distinct periods, namely, the pre-democracy (i.e. before 1994) and the post 1994 periods will be used as defining landmarks with a particular focus on education governance and accountability issues. The key levers of accountability in the country (national, provincial and institutional) will be discussed in the context of existing legislative framework. The context and demand for education accountability will be analysed and the chapter will conclude by isolating key accountability features of the South African education system in order to lay the foundation for the empirical study that will follow.

4.2 HISTORICAL DETERMINANTS ON THE GOVERNANCE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

4.2.1 Introduction

According to Steyn *et al* (2003), comparative education is a science of analyzing education systems. In this sense, education systems can be studied from any three of the following perspectives:

A system perspective which focuses on the study of the structure and function of the education system with a view to establishing the most effective way of providing the education that would meet the needs of a particular target group.

A comparative perspective occurs when an analysis of different education systems is made. It entails the study of the different aspects of an education system with a view to finding a way of improving a particular system or components of the system.

A determinant perspective focuses on the different factors and influences that impact on the nature, structure and functioning of a particular education system. These factors could include, among others, the current state of the system (i.e. internal determinants) and the demographical, political, economic and cultural factors of the target group (i.e. external determinants).

Whilst all three perspectives are relevant to this study, more emphasis will be placed on the determinant perspective to better serve the intentions and objectives of this study. It should also be borne in mind that studying education systems from these perspectives help in ensuring that these systems remain responsive to the needs of their respective societies, thereby enhancing accountability.

4.2.2 Historical Origins of Education Governance in South Africa

Education systems evolve over time in response to the forces and factors impacting on them at different historical times. History of education as a scientific study is therefore aimed specifically at understanding the historical factors that influence the evolution and development of education systems. The study of the history of education is therefore important for the reasons advanced by the following authors. According to Nkomo (1990), the creation of a future education system should be informed by the knowledge and experiences of the origins and evolution of the past system.

In order to understand and appreciate the education transformation that occurred after 1994, an overview of the historical determinants of the South African education governance system will be provided below. For the purposes of this study, the governance of education will be discussed using the following time periods: 1652-1910; 1910-1948; 1948-1994 and the post 1994 period. The common thread throughout these periods has always been an attempt on the part of the government of the day to enhance education accountability through the involvement of the different communities that were served by the education system at different historical times.

4.2.2.1 Education Governance Issues 1652-1910

According to Venter and Verster (1986) the foundations for a formal education system were laid by the Dutch East India Company after their arrival at the Cape in 1652. The system of education during this period mirrored very closely that of their motherland which had a very strong religious character. Steyn *et al* (2003) report that the origins of the Dutch education system was crystallized in a document developed during the synod of the Reformed Church that was held in Dordrecht between the years 1614 and 1619. This document spelt out the different roles and responsibilities of all the role players in education: parents, teachers, the church and the state. Emphasis during this period was placed on the Christian character of education. In effect, the responsibility for education was shared between the state and the church.

Education in the Cape during this period was vested in the Political Council comprising the Commander and three to five members. The Political Council was responsible for the implementation of education policy; recruitment and teacher discipline. The Council and the church collaborated very closely in all matters relating to teacher development and discipline. The church's specific mandate was to ensure that schools complied with the doctrines of the church.

The Cape became a British colony in 1806. The British administration of education was different from that of the Dutch because, unlike that of the Dutch, the British approach to

education was influenced by different religious groupings e.g. Presbyterians, Anglicans, Catholics and Baptists. Some of these groupings (Presbyterians and Baptists) were opposed to state control of education, given the close relationship between the Anglican Church and the state. Apart from the influence of church groupings, the advent of industrial revolution and the concomitant role of schools in developing appropriate skills and competencies became a matter of concern for education planners (Steyn *et al.*, 2003).

At the beginning of the British colonial rule at the Cape, the system of education was left unchanged by the government. However, when Lord Charles Somerset came into office in 1814, far reaching changes were made with regard to education provisioning. He considered education as key in advancing his Anglicization policy in the Cape. To that effect, he recruited highly qualified teachers from overseas to teach in Cape schools. The role of the church in education was therefore ended and the state assumed full responsibility for education. The Anglicization policy of Somerset was met with great resistance from the Dutch communities. Apart from the mushrooming of private schools in the Cape, which led to the closure of some state schools, lobby groups such as GRA (Genootskap vir Regte Afrikaners) Afrikanerbond (1879) and Taalbond (1890) were established to advocate for the promotion of Afrikaner language and culture. As a result of the pressure from these groupings, a decision was taken in 1882 allowing the teaching of *Nederlands* in all public schools.

After the Anglo- Boer war (1899-1902), Transvaal and the Free State also became British colonies. Efforts made by the Transvaal colonial administration to promote anglicization were met with resistance. Afrikaners refused to send their children to state schools when English was declared a medium of instruction. A powerful lobby group called Beweging van Christelike Nasionale Skole (BCNS) was formed with the exclusive purpose of defending and promoting Afrikaner language and culture. The number of Christian National Schools grew to more than 200, almost a quarter of the number of schools in the Transvaal. Rose and Tunmer (1975) report that when the Transvaal obtained its self governing status in 1906, a new education law (the Smuts Education Act) was enacted.

This Act encouraged independent schools (Christian National Schools) to merge with state schools.

It is apparent from the discussions above that the role played by the parents and the community at large was critical in influencing education policy during this period. It could be said that the evolution of the South African education system for whites was to a large extent rooted in the accountability tradition.

Education for Blacks

The historical determinants discussed above relate almost exclusively to the education of whites in South Africa. This is so because formal education for blacks during this period was largely in the hands of missionaries. Missionary stations were established in South Africa towards the end of the eighteenth century. According to Christie (1998), at the turn of the nineteenth century there were more missionaries in South Africa than anywhere else in the world. Their main objective was to spread the Christian religion. Their involvement in education arose out of their desire to teach the converts to write and to read the Bible. Consequently they played a critical role in establishing educational institutions particularly for blacks in this country. Only a few black learners attended missionary schools which in the majority of cases provided primary education only. The standard of education was generally poor due to inadequate resourcing and insufficiently qualified teachers. Several criticisms have been levelled against missionary education during this period. These criticisms include, among others, the following (Mphahlele & Mminele, 1997): position of foreign cultures on learners while undermining their indigenous cultures. Their teaching focused on obedience to God, and thus inadvertently encouraging acceptance of the political status quo.

Despite the criticism levelled against the missionaries, they played a critical role in providing for the educational needs of blacks where government was unwilling or unable to do so. Wolpe (1995) reports that there were 5000 state-aided mission schools that catered for black education during this period.

The provision of education for blacks by missionaries, though laudable, tended to fall short of meeting accountability demands in the sense that it was more prescriptive and its main aim was to convert blacks to Christianity.

4.2.2.2 Education Governance Issues 1910-1948

Education governance and administration will always be a terrain for contestation because of the different political perspectives and views (cf 3.1.3). The first national education system was established in 1910 when the Union of South Africa came into being. Education control was one of the major challenges that confronted the Union Parliament. After much deliberation, an uneasy compromise was made to give the control of all education other than higher to provincial administrations.

According to Buckland and De Wee (1996), in the years preceding the coming into power of the National Party in 1948, there was a series of investigations aimed at resolving the province versus national control of various aspects of the education system. *The Jagger Commission (1917)*, for instance, recommended the transfer of education to central government. The commission expressed the fear that disparate education systems in provinces were not assisting in developing a common education system. There were indications that the system was drifting apart, according to the commission (Rose & Tunmer, 1975).

Subsequent education commissions, like the *Malherbe Commission Report* that was released in 1920, argued strongly against a centralized control of education and instead recommended the establishment of District Councils to create local involvement in education. The Commission went further to support provincial administration of education. Whilst acknowledging the weaknesses of the school boards and committees, the Commission endorsed their continued existence because they represented some form of local control of education (Rose & Tunmer, 1975).

The *Nicol Commission's Report of 1939* also noted that there was general satisfaction with the decentralisation of primary and secondary education to provincial

administrations. The commission went further to recommend the establishment of a *Union Council of Education* as an advisory structure. This structure was to replace the *Inter-provincial Consultative Committee* because it was considered ineffectual in dealing with professional and technical aspects of education delivery in provinces. It was envisioned that the proposed Council would provide a platform for provinces to network and exchange ideas on matters of educational policies.

The *De Villiers Commission Report of 1948* also supported the establishment of an Education Council that should comprise representatives from the Union Department of Education, the heads of provincial education departments, the teaching profession and representatives of universities, technical colleges and schools, industry, commerce and organized labour. The terms of reference of the Council were wide ranging and covered all aspects related to education delivery. This council was to report to and advise the Minister on all matters relating to education,

From the discussion above, it is evident that education policy during this time was largely influenced by the need to maintain a healthy balance between centralized and decentralised provisioning of education. The need for local control of education was necessitated by the commitment of the government to involve local communities in running their local schools so that education remained relevant and responsive to the local needs whilst at the same time also meeting the broader needs of the Union.

4.2.2.3 Education Governance Issues 1948-1994

During the National Party rule (1948-1994), national policy focused more on promoting racial segregation in all aspects of human endeavour. Racially and ethnically based legislation was developed to legalise racial discrimination. The architects of the apartheid policy believed that the separation of races and cultural group would advance development among their own cultures. The creation of ten self-governing states for each of the black cultural groups gave practical meaning to the notion of separate development.

With regard to education, the nationalist government established the Eisselen Commission in 1949 to formulate the principles and objectives for the education of blacks as a separate group and based on their own cultures and needs. The Eisselen Commission report led to the promulgation of the Bantu Education Act 47 of 1953. According to Wolpe (1995), the Bantu Education Act was an instrument formulated by the Nationalist Government to restructure African education. In terms of this Act, the control and responsibility for black education was transferred from the missionaries to the state and for this purpose, a separate department of education was established. Over time, separate departments were also established for the ten homelands, as well as those for coloureds and Indians. The education for whites was governed by the National Education Policy act no 39 of 1967. This Act stipulated among others that education will have a Christian and a broad national character, and declared Afrikaans as well as English as mediums of instruction.

As a result of the above, the decentralisation of education in South Africa was largely based on the notion of '*own education*'. Wolpe (1995) makes the point that the decentralisation of the administration of education to Bantustans did not entail democratization. The notion of own affairs as propagated by the nationalist government met with resistance from many quarters. The pressure that was exerted on government at the time came mainly from three sources. Firstly, the business sector raised concern about the relevance of the education system that was not in sync with the needs of the economy; secondly, teachers also questioned the authoritarian nature of the education system that did not allow them scope for professional growth and finally, the greatest resistance came from the black and coloured communities that were no longer prepared to accept without protest the inferior and discriminatory education system.

According to Steyn *et al* (2003), resistance to the Bantu Education Act was led by the African National Congress (ANC) that was formed in 1912 in response to the South Africa Act that brought about the union of South Africa. The ANC was opposed to the provisions of the act that denied blacks voting rights. The dominant thinking of the ANC was the creation of a political dispensation that would provide equal rights to all the

inhabitants of the country. The passing of the Bantu Education Act was therefore an affront to the ideals espoused by the ANC. The movement declared itself opposed to the Act during its congress in 1954 when it called for the scrapping of the Act (Wolpe, 1995). Bantu Education was regarded as inferior because it was aimed at subjugating blacks to inferiority in the economy and within society.

In 1955 at a mass meeting called by the ANC in Kliptown, the 'People of South Africa,' formulated the Freedom Charter that subsequently became ANC policy. The Charter declares, among others that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white. It advocates for the equality of rights and opportunities, that the doors of learning and culture shall be opened and that 'education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children'.

Education governance under the National party rule was decentralised along racial lines. This decentralisation was intended to achieve the goal of separate development in that every racial and ethnic group was expected to involve itself to education matters affecting its own group. To the extent that every group was specifically catered for, education under the National Party rule could be said to have been accountable. However, given that education for the different groupings was unequal and discriminatory, the education system lacked credibility and legitimacy and cannot therefore be regarded as having been accountable, hence education delivery during this period was characterized by conflict.

4.2.2.4 Contestation over education Governance and Control Pre-1994

The 1976 student uprisings remain a watershed in the resistance against the struggle for equal education in South Africa. The widespread systemic and institutional dysfunctionality that characterized the schooling system post 1976 and the accompanying political turmoil indicated that the country was faced with serious education delivery challenges.

During the late 1980s, black education was in constant crisis that manifested itself in school boycotts by learners and general resistance to the political system because it was

considered illegitimate. Little or no effective teaching took place in many black schools, particularly those in townships. Education towards the latter part of the 1980s and the beginning of 1990's was in turmoil and suffered a serious legitimacy crisis.

The period between the 1980s and the early 1990s was characterized by different views on the governance and control of education in South Africa. Despite the many commissions that had been instituted to investigate education governance, different opinions on the best model of governance continued to prevail. The Education Renewal Strategy Report supported the decentralisation of education for the following reasons (National Education Policy Investigation, 1993):

- Improvement of administrative efficiency
- Enhancement of the effectiveness of the education system
- Increased local participation in the delivery of education

The advocates for a unified education system on the other hand argued that a decentralised system of education governance would impede rather than facilitate education reform; that it would further the interests of privileged groups in that it would not deracialise the schooling system. They argued that a unified system would ensure a centralization of major education policies and effect equity and redress. A unified system, it was further argued, would ensure mass access to quality schooling and promote equal opportunities to all citizens (cf.2.2.2).

In order to heighten resistance to apartheid education, many education forums were established. For instance, in 1984, the *Peoples' Education Movement* was arguing for community control of schools within a strong national system. Many of the struggles waged in the 1980s led to the emergence of the mass democratic movement in education. The National Education Policy Investigation Report (National Education Policy Investigation, 1993) also argued for district control of education. According to Nzimande (2004, p. 16): '*Mass struggles against apartheid education had set a radical tone for educational transformation in the transition.*'

Local participation in education delivery was seen as an answer to education crisis during this period. It was argued strongly that community involvement in schools would make them more responsive and relevant to their needs and thereby enhance education accountability.

4.3 Education Governance Legislation post 1994

After many decades of institutionalized racial discrimination, colonial and apartheid rule, South Africa became a constitutional democracy in April 1994. One of the immediate challenges facing the young democracy was to address the education question. The dismantling of the 19 ethnically and racially aligned education departments therefore became a priority.

According to Rose and Tunmer (1975) and Metcalfe (2007), this dismantling entailed the replacement of erstwhile departments with one Ministry of education comprising the national and nine provincial departments of education. The transition from apartheid education to a democratic dispensation was not without serious challenges. The schooling system experienced widespread dysfunctionality, particularly in those schools that catered for the previously disadvantaged communities. This issue will be addressed in greater detail in the paragraphs that will follow later. The country promoted the devolution of power to a large degree from the centre to the nine provinces. The national ministry of education is responsible for tertiary education and for establishing a national policy framework, i.e. the Norms and Standards for education in general. The national framework for education policy is encapsulated in the *White Paper on Education and Training* (South African Department of Education, 1995) that stipulates among others that:

- Parents/guardians have a primary responsibility for the education of their children.
- Communities must take ownership of their schools through the establishment of legitimate and representative structures.

- The principle of democratic control of education must be embraced at all levels of the system and consultations with relevant stakeholders and role players must be promoted.

The National Education Policy Act no 27 of 1996 (NEPA) (South African Department of Education, 1996a) marked a decisive departure from the fragmented and racially segregated education system under apartheid. This Act also provides for a balance between the role of the national education department and provincial departments. Education delivery is a concurrent responsibility of the national and provincial departments. Among others this Act gives the national Minister the power to establish national policy norms and standards for education. These would include planning, resourcing, curriculum, monitoring and evaluation and the overall performance of the education system. It also provides for the creation of consultative bodies which the Minister must consult when making policy.

The South African Schools' Act (SASA) of 1996 and Related Regulations (South African Department of Education, 1996b) created a framework for a single public schooling system in the country. It lays the basis for a democratic, non-racial and equitable public schooling system. It sets out the establishment, role and functions of a democratically elected governance structure at school level. According to SASA, a school governing body (SGB) is composed of the principal, elected representatives of parents, teachers, non teaching staff and learners (in secondary schools). Parent representatives should be in the majority. The purpose of the SGB is to give effect to the principle of democratization of schooling, by giving power to the school stakeholders. The establishment of SGBs represents a significant decentralisation of power in the South African schooling system. Squelch (2000) points out that the introduction of SASA has changed the legal status of public schools by making them juristic persons. Through this Act, parents are placed in a stronger position to influence decisions on very fundamental issues like school budget, language policy and discipline.

Decentralised decision making and authority places a greater responsibility and accountability on school governing bodies. In the event that the SGB fails to perform its functions properly, the head of department may appoint persons to act in its place in line with the procedures outlined in the SASA. It is also worth mentioning that since the passing of this Act, a number of amendments have been made. These amendments have led to a gradual reduction of the powers of the SGBs. The general trend in all these changes is to centralize powers away from schools. It would therefore appear that education governance will continue to be a key issue in the education system.

4.4 KEY LEVERS OF EDUCATION GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The major mediating structures in education governance in South Africa are the national department of education, the provinces, the districts and the school governing bodies. Historically, education governance in South Africa has been a mixture of both centralized and decentralised. Chrisholm (2003) makes the point that democracy must also entail decentralisation of education control. Consequently, the distribution of powers of educational administration at the national, provincial, local and school levels has been the characteristic feature of the South African education system post 1994 as described in the paragraphs that follow.

4.4.1 National (Macro Level Accountability)

Whilst provincial autonomy has been established in principle and in practice, the national department in effect dominates this relationship since many provinces face a myriad of challenges in terms of human and material resources. It is for this reason that issues of redress and restitution have tended to be centrally driven by the national department. The role of the national government in the development of relevant policies in the areas of quality assurance, teacher development, minimum norms for infrastructure development and strategic allocation of resources continue to be dominant (cf. 4.3). The national department also helps provinces to establish appropriate operational structures and

procedures and assists in developing, implementing, promoting and even funding redress strategies.

There is an increasing acceptance of central accountability and problem solving in education. The then Minister of education, Kader Asmal, for instance has always understood the unity of the education system to imply national accountability for provincial administration. Structures such as the Committee of Education Ministers (CEM) and the Committee of Education Heads (HEDCOM) give practical expression to the notion of cooperative governance. The recently published Education Amendment Bill also seeks to strengthen accountability frameworks by forcing provincial administrations to account to the Minister annually on the performance of their schools.

4.4.2 Provincial (Meso Level Accountability)

The 1996 Constitution devolved powers over basic education to the nine provincial departments. The White Paper on Education and Training (South African Department of Education, 1995) does not spell out the responsibilities and relationships between national and provincial ministries in implementing education programmes. This lack of clarity often leads to ongoing tensions. According to Hindle (2004) provinces are expected to become effective technical resource agencies, reliant on national guidance and support in managing the educational enterprise effectively. He further points out those provinces are reasonably stable after experiencing serious delivery challenges during the forming years of democracy. Other challenges faced by provinces revolve around inadequate budgets to address all priority areas, high personnel costs with very little to spend on non-personnel costs.

The administrative tier between the province and the school is the district or region. Being at a point where the education system interfaces directly with schools, districts are ideally positioned to provide administrative and professional support to schools. Districts are therefore delivery arms of provinces; however, there is currently no legal provision to devolve responsibility to districts. Education districts are part of the provincial sphere of

government. They have no original powers or functions prescribed by law but operate in terms of national and provincial legislation and delegations.

In recognition of the critical role that districts must play in the effective administration of the school system, the education ministry released a draft policy framework on *The Organisation, Roles and Responsibilities of Education Districts*. The objective of this policy is to provide a policy framework for the organization of education districts as well as to outline the powers, roles and responsibilities of district officials in relation to the schools they are responsible for.

Murphy (1991) argues that if schools are to be transformed, then the role of the district has to change. The role of districts changing from that of controllers to coordinators and enablers. According to Lindelow (1981) the job of district officials is to facilitate, not dictate. They need to serve and assist schools, to act as service providers or support centres that offer technical assistance to schools. He argues further that schools can contract with the district office for services as needed. The school has a choice whether to use these services or not. According to him, districts need to build the capacity of schools to manage the decentralisation. Lindelow (1981) argues that districts are to perform functions such as the monitoring of school programmes and also focusing their energies on those parts of the organization experiencing difficulties (or management by exception).

4.4.3 Schools and their Governing Bodies (Micro Level Accountability)

Squelsh (2000) points out that decentralised school governance or site-based management is considered to be a more appropriate form of governance in recent times. This is so because it promotes democratic principles of representation, participation and shared decision making. South Africa is no exception. The recommendations of the Review Committee on School Organisation, Governance and Funding (Hunter Committee) and the Minister's draft White Paper that followed it (November 1995), that education

decision making be entrenched at grassroots level, has committed the country to a decentralised system of education.

According to Tleane (2000), parental involvement in the education of their children is ill conceived. Whilst he acknowledges the critical role of parents in the education of their children, he argues that the operational mechanism of SGBs as provided for in the SASA, is largely based on the British system that was influenced by Thatcherite policies. He contends that the responsibilities given to parents, governance (formulation and implementation of policies) and school funding policies, restrict the role of parents to financial obligations. Further, not all parents are involved in the day to day running of their schools. According to him some SGBs are elitist because they favour educated parents. As a result most parents are excluded and alienated from full participation in schools. He contends that large classes make it impossible for teachers to provide parents with adequate information on the performance of their children. Teachers lack competency in dealing with parents because their training has mainly equipped them to deal with pupils.

The fact that teachers are poorly perceived by parents tends to make it difficult to establish a healthy relationship between teachers and parents. All these factors combined make it difficult for parents to get involved in schools. The need to bring back the parents en masse into the schooling system must be recognized. Education forums in the past helped to provide parents with an opportunity to interface with the education system e.g Soweto Education Crisis Committee and the National Education Coordinating Committee. Such forums would offer parents an opportunity to become part of the solution to the many problems confronting education.

The Report of the Review of School Governance (South African Department of Education, 1985) made the observation that there was wide acceptance of SGBs, not only as part of the school but also as embedded within the broader community building project. There were, however, concerns raised by many communities, both rich and poor, about the ways in which SGBs had exercised their powers and functions. Some had

neglected these and others had abused them. Some of the following areas of concerns were highlighted about the activities of some SGBs in exercising their powers:

- Admission policies were manipulated to resist transformation, often through the mechanism of school fees.
- Language policy was also misused for gatekeeping purposes.
- Staff appointments and the lack of transformation in the staffroom.

The report also recognised the need for links between school governance and local government, particularly in regard to sharing of resources such as libraries, sports fields and others. Some clustering of SGBs into district level School Boards could be more effective as it will encourage cooperation between schools rather than competition. It will also allow for closer liaison with district level officials.

4.4.4 Statutory Structures and Education Accountability

As alluded to earlier (cf.4.3.3) the Hunter Report laid the foundation for governance in the public schooling sector. In addition to formal governance structures, education legislation also makes provision for the establishment of advisory structures and oversight structures to promote accountability in education. The role of these structures will be described in the following paragraphs. Form (the establishment of democratic structures) is easier to achieve than content (the functioning of these structures). Ensuring participation by the citizenry in the democratic process through public engagement has always been a challenge. The following statutory structures have been provided for in the legislation to enhance education accountability:

4.4.4.1 Portfolio Committees on Education

One of the major achievements of parliamentary democracy was the revamping of the parliamentary system through the creation of open portfolio committees. This structure creates space for the general public to engage with policy and legislation through public hearings. These public hearings are intended to receive inputs from the general public before any legislation can be passed by Parliament. These committees have also played a crucial role as oversight to the executive. All government departments are, for instance expected to present their strategic plans to the committee and to report on progress made

in implementing their plans. They therefore deepen the practice of democracy and accountability. Unfortunately, these committees face enormous challenges in the execution of their mandates. They have limited resources to leverage greater public participation and engagement. The strengthening of these committees could go a long way towards enabling them to fulfil their mandates.

4.4.4.2 The National Education and Training Council

This structure is provided for in the National Education Policy Act of 1995 and its operations are regulated by the Regulations to Provide for the Establishment, Composition and Functioning of the National Education and Training Council (NETC). The regulations provide for the establishment of a stakeholder body that advises the national Minister on all education matters including general education and schooling. It is envisaged that this structure will enhance participatory democracy in the education sector. Similar structures were to be established at provincial level. Apart from advising the Minister and provincial political heads, it is also expected that these politicians consult with them on the actions of their departments.

Stakeholders from previously disenfranchised communities, i.e. community based organisations and student formations, were ineffective in utilizing these structures to serve their needs. On the other hand, those organisations representing advantaged groupings in society tended to make effective use of these structures.

4.5 THE CONTEXT AND DEMAND FOR EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY

The education sector, like all other public sectors, has been subjected to greater scrutiny to account for its operations. The demand for accountability in education is exerted from both internal and external pressures. The following paragraphs will highlight some of the factors that ensure that the South African education system is continuously called upon to respond to the demands for accountability.

4.5.1 The Impact of Globalisation on Education Provisioning in South Africa

It is increasingly recognized that all countries, regardless of their history or stage of development, have to contend with forces of globalization and how these impact on their national economies. Kraak and Young (2001) make the point that the global context, as dictated by international corporations and organisations, has to a large extent shaped South African Education policy. According to these authors, the pressures for improved performance and for making public services more accountable, and the search for measurable educational outcomes, are found to varying degrees in most countries, both developed and developing. These observations notwithstanding, there are unique sets of circumstances that have also had an impact on the development of education policy in South Africa.

According to Christie (1998), the White Paper on Education and Training (1995) commits itself to an integrated approach to education and training. She sees this development as a response to international trends in curriculum development and globalization. Global trends point to the bridging of the gap between schools and the world of work with its attendant technological and organisational changes in work patterns.

The global trends towards the production of a skilled workforce place high demands on schools to produce more qualified workers. If schools are to respond to the emerging trends in the job market, they will be expected to provide their learners with a sound base in general education and promote transferable rather than job-specific skills. Education provisioning must therefore be anchored on the following qualities: versatility, flexibility, problem solving abilities, technological competencies and ability to work in teams.

According to Claasen (2000), a country's success is dependent on the ability of its citizens to sell high-value skills in the world market. Countries that fail to be globally competitive will fall behind and become economically marginalized. South Africa is not immune to these world developments. It is for these reasons that the education system came under public scrutiny and the call for accountability intensified.

4.5.2 State of Public schooling post 1994 (cf.1.3)

The matric results that showed a rapid decline since the late 1990s directed the attention of the nation to focus sharply on the poor performance of public schooling in the country. The media, both print and electronic, were in the forefront in demanding more accountability from the education system. Several articles from various commentators appeared in the print media debating the state of education in the country (Mkhatshwa, 1999b). Public debates on education intensified in the late 1990s and continued to gather momentum up to the present day. According to Johnson (1999), the challenges facing the education system ranged from lack of discipline to poor resourcing and poor culture of teaching and learning.

The poor state of public education has been blamed on the inability of the national and provincial departments to provide the necessary resources to schools. Many provincial education departments have in recent times threatened to close schools that are consistently underperforming. The Gauteng Education Department's threat to close down 200 underperforming schools was met with resistance from teacher unions, some opposition parties and student organisations. The attack was directed at the department's failure to support schools adequately (Fihlani, 2007). It is apparent from these discussions that accountability cannot be enforced when the necessary support and resources are not given to schools to enable them to do their work. The Minister for Basic Education, Angie Motshekga has in recent times attributed the widespread school dysfunctionality to a poor accountability culture among the majority of stakeholders in the education system. The following paragraphs will highlight the role of the media in holding the education system accountable.

4.5.3 Role of the Media in Promoting Education Accountability

One of the most effective tool used to promote education accountability in South Africa is the media, both print and electronic. The call for more accountability in education started in earnest in the nineties, and by the turn of the century the media virtually dictated the pace and direction of education delivery in the country. The role of the

media in promoting accountability in education intensified with the publication of a list of 5 500 high schools under the caption “The Best and the Worst of our Schools.” Included in this list were schools with pass percentages ranging from 0% to 100% (Pretorius, 2000). For the first time in the history of the department the ministry opened up its schools to public scrutiny in the name of public accountability (cf.2.2.2.2 and 2.10).

The media continues to be vigilant on all matters relating to education delivery in South Africa and the Minister of Education is often called upon to account for the performance of public schools. The role of the media in promoting education accountability in South Africa thus remains fundamental in ensuring that schools account for their performance to learners and their parents (Chuenyane, 2008). The following paragraphs will focus on how the ministry of education attempts to respond to pressures brought to bear by the media.

4.6 THE OUTCOMES BASED APPROACH (OBA) AND MINISTERIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Public pressure on the Minister to account for the poor state of education in the country is increasing. The question of Ministerial Accountability was brought under sharp focus by the media (Business Day, 2007). The then education Minister, Naledi Pandor, lamented the fact that she did not have the power to hold provinces accountable because the Constitution makes schooling a concurrent responsibility of the national and provincial governments. Consequently, the national department drafts policies but does not have the legislative space to act. She pleaded with parliamentarians and provincial legislatures to hold provincial education MECs accountable. In responding to the pressure to hold her accountable, she initiated a change in legislation to give her more powers to intervene in provinces.

The South African Schools’ Act (SASA) as amended in 2007 (South African Department of Education, 1996b) seeks to achieve, among others, the following:

- Identify underperforming schools and hold provincial MECs accountable for their improvement.

- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of principals as well as their relationship with their SGBs (cf.2.2.2.5).
- Provide for the search and seizure of learners to eliminate the problem of drugs and dangerous weapons in schools.
- Provide for the establishment of norms and standards for school infrastructure and learning and teaching support material.

The above Act is without doubt intended to empower the Minister to hold provinces accountable so that she can fully exercise her ministerial accountability. This Act will also have far reaching implications for the relationship between the provincial education departments and the national department. The demand for more accountability will, in terms of this Act, also extend to school principals (micro level accountability, cf. 2.2.2.5).

- In an effort to improve service delivery and to hold departments and local governments accountable, the South African cabinet adopted Outcomes Based Approach (OBA) to service delivery in January 2010. The outcomes approach seeks to improve service delivery by: Developing high level and measurable outcomes.
- Developing and implementing detailed inputs, outputs, activities, metrics roles and responsibilities.
- Concluding performance agreements between Ministers and the President, and in turn Ministers and their MECs are expected to sign Service Delivery Agreements.
- Establishing Implementation Forums to support service delivery, monitor performance and respond to challenges of non-performance.
- Carrying out periodic evaluations to assess the impact of government's work on society and to promote evidence based policy making in order to improve government programmes.

The OBA as highlighted above is intended to strengthen the position of the Minister to hold the provincial MECs and their provincial administration heads accountable for the performance of schools through the signing of delivery agreements. To give effect to the

OBA, the Ministry of Basic education released a document entitled: *Action Plan to 2014-Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025*. The purpose of Schooling 2025 is to turn schools around and to hold provincial MECs and administration heads accountable for the performance of schools in their respective provinces. Paragraph 4.7 below describes features of education accountability in the South African Schooling system.

4.7 FEATURES OF EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLING SYSTEM

The history of education governance in South Africa is inextricably linked to the need for accountability. The demand for accountability was, however, dictated by the type of government that was in power and its related political agenda. This trend can be discerned from the literature consulted in this chapter. With the advent of the new democratic order, the notion of education accountability assumed greater significance and a decisive shift from previous dispensations. This shift was also informed by international approaches to governance in general and education governance in particular.

Consistent with international trends (cf.3.5), the following features of accountability are discernable from the South African system.

The Constitution establishes three spheres of governance viz. National, Provincial and Local. This refers to schools in the case of education. In terms of the Constitution, these spheres are distinctive, interrelated and interdependent. The Constitution further promotes the principles of cooperative governance. Two functions are further delineated in terms of the delivery of public service programmes, viz. concurrent functions (those that are shared between different spheres of government) and exclusive functions (those that are performed by one sphere only). School education is a concurrent function in terms of policy development, legislation, implementation, monitoring, and performance assessment. The Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act (2005) is intended to promote cooperative governance. The OBA as described above is intended to further enhance accountability relationships between the national and provincial administrations in the delivery of education programmes.

Table 4.1 below provides a broad overview of levels of governance and accountability in the South African education system. The table also attempts to delineate the key roles, responsibilities and relationships of the different spheres of government.

Table 4.1 Levels of Governance and Accountability in the SA Education System: A Broad Framework

Level	Key Responsibilities	Modes of accountability	For Noting
Macro National Department of Education	Policy formulation and regulatory framework Setting norms and standards Monitoring of policy implementation at provincial level	Ministerial Accountability. Consultative Structures e.g NETC Education Portfolio Committee (cf.4.4.4)	Concurrent responsibility with provinces in terms of policy development
Meso Province and District	Implementation of policies in line with national policy frameworks. Resource Mobilisation. Monitoring and support to schools	Provincial Consultative Structures. Education Interest Groups. (cf. 4.4.2)	Districts are the delivery arms of provinces and are therefore not legislated for
Micro School Based Management and	Curriculum management and delivery. Exercise	SGBs are to exercise their governance	Education Laws Amendment Act of 2007 clarifies the

Level	Key Responsibilities	Modes of accountability	For Noting
SGBs	responsibilities in terms of SASA as amended	responsibilities in terms of SASA as amended (cf.4.4.3)	roles of SGBs and principals.

From a policy point of view it is apparent that adequate provision has been made to promote education accountability within the broad principle of cooperative governance in the South African context. The extent to which these provisions translate into the enhancement of accountability in the South African schooling system will be partly answered by the next chapter when a deeper analysis of the issues highlighted in this study will be made. For the purposes of this study, two levels viz. district (meso) and school (micro) will be focused upon.

4.8 SUMMARY

This chapter traced the history of education governance in South Africa with a view to establishing the extent to which political developments at particular historical moments impacted on education delivery. Two periods (pre and post 1994) were juxtaposed to illustrate the point that both internal and external determinants could have consequences for how education can be governed. Perhaps the point that has been poignantly made is that decisions about decentralising control and governance of education are largely driven by the political agenda of the government of the day, as has been described under models of education governance. This chapter also identified the legal framework that drives the provisioning of education in South Africa. The increasing demand for education accountability by statutory and non- statutory bodies in the country was also highlighted to anchor this study.

The empirical study that will follow will test the opinions of education stakeholders in as far as they experience the effectiveness and relevance of education governance and accountability frameworks as gleaned from the literature study in the preceding chapters.