

Establishment imperatives for governance
of a school for learners with
intellectual impairment

by

Nyamende, Mercy Moleboheng

(HDE (UWC); BED (UWC); BED. HONS (UNISA))

In the

Faculty of Humanities

School of Governance and Political Transformation

Supervisor: Dr K. Teise

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DECLARATION

I, Mercy Moleboheng Nyamende, declare that this mini-dissertation is the result of my own investigation and research. All the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by references. I also declare that this research has not been submitted in part or full for any other degree to any other University.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

M.M. Nyamende

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Chapter 1

Orientation

1.1 Introduction

The South African (SA) Constitution bestows on every learner the right to basic education. Section 29(2) of the SA Constitution (RSA, 1996) states that “everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where education is reasonably practicable.” This right to education implies that every learner should have access to education, and this is confirmed by governmental policies on free basic education in most of SA public schools, which articulates into no-fee schools.

Furthermore, the SA Constitution also prohibits “discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, color, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion conscience, belief, culture, language, and birth” (RSA,1996: Section 9.3). In addition, this Constitution promotes equity, equality, democracy, and tolerance, (RSA, 1996: Section 9. (2-3)). The educational implication of these stipulations and of the right to education is that government should equally provide in the educational needs of *all* learners, irrespective of their impairment. As such, provision should be made for learners with impairments such as intellectual impairment to have access to education.

To give effect to the stipulations of the Constitution and to ensure that *all* learners, irrespective of impairment, will have access to education, in 2001 the Department of Education adopted the *White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: building an Inclusive Education and Training System* (2001). This White Paper, commonly referred to as White Paper 6, focuses on the special educational needs of learners. As such this policy document aims at strengthening special schools and improving quality education across all schools

for supporting learners with special education needs. In addition, this policy also provides for the establishment of different schools that would cater for the specific educational needs of learners. With this policy, SA envisions an education and training system that takes into consideration and accommodates the diverse range of learning needs of all learners.

Placed within a broader context, the stipulations of White Paper 6 resonate with the Sustainable Development Goals to which South Africa is a signatory. In this regard, Goal 2 of the Sustainable Development Goals deals particularly with universal primary education, and it explicitly emphasizes and promotes basic education to every child, irrespective of disability (Martinez, 2015:76-92). By placing a focus on access to education for persons with disability, the Sustainable Development Goals call on all its signatories, SA included, to take special measures to ensure and guarantee that learners with impairments are not discriminated against and so prevented from accessing education. For Africa in general and for SA specifically such access would create an opportunity for the empowerment of citizens, which in one way or the other would also eradicate poverty and hunger and enhance development. So, a responsibility therefore rests on the South African government to provide in the educational needs of learners with impairments, and to eradicate all possible threats to this effect.

1.2 Research problem

The Eastern Cape Province is experiencing serious problems with regards to providing for the special educational needs of its learners, especially those learners who are intellectually impaired, to the extent that some of these learners have never been to school (Council, 2007:10). Balfour (2015:17) maintains that these learners are not considered for schooling due to their special education needs. They are subsequently not admitted into either mainstream schools or into special schools in the province. In many instances learners with intellectual impairment are not admitted into these learning facilities, because of overcrowdedness of existing special schools, due to high numbers of learners with challenges and barriers in learning.

Even though White Paper 6 makes provision for the admission of learners with special educational needs into mainstream schools, many factors affect the successful implementation thereof. Christie (2008:122) believes that teachers at schools are not aware of the content of the White Paper 6, thus they seem to display a degree of resistance when it comes to learners with barriers. In addition, it also appears that the Department of Basic Education is not giving their full support to these schools. This ultimately means that learners with special educational needs end up not being granted the opportunity to attend school and as such they are deprived of their Constitutional right to education.

The Eastern Cape Education Management Information System (EMIS) (RSA-DBE, 2016) states that currently, there are 45 special schools in the Eastern Cape Province. Of these schools, 20 provide in the special educational needs of intellectually impaired learners. It further states that the distribution of these schools is also uneven because of the 23 districts in the Eastern Cape only 14 districts have special schools. Most of the special schools are in the urban areas of the Eastern Cape. What is even more worrisome is that the numbers of intellectually impaired learners seem to increase on a yearly basis (Schierenbeck, Johansson, Anderson, and Van Rooyen, 2013:249). There is a danger that if these learners are not admitted to schools, they might never acquire any skills. This will not only prevent intellectually impaired learners from fully developing their potential, but will also ensure persistent dependency on government grants. Because of their condition, learners with intellectual impairment are also variously abused by those who are supposed to assist and protect them (Jones, Bellis, Wood, Hughes, McCoy, Eckley, and Officer 2012:902).

South Africa is a democratic country. In line with this, SA adopted a decentralised system of governance. The implication for education is that the state is not the only entity responsible for and in control of the governance of schools (Smit and Oosthuizen, 2011: 55-73). Rather, the state shares that responsibility with those closer to the school. The decentralization of education therefore implies that various stakeholders are collectively involved in the governance of schools. As such, schools are not only given back to the communities, but communities also accept ownership for the governance of the schools.

To facilitate and improve the involvement of various stakeholders in education and in schools, schools are supposed to establish governance structures. Although variously defined, school governance concerns developing policies for the school and ensuring that the school is governed according to those policies (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017:49). For Frederick, Agbor and Alan (2014:105) school governance is primarily about the distribution of authority and voice.

Every school in SA is obliged by law to have a democratically elected school governing body (SGB). Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard and Henry (2013:38) explains that School Governing Bodies are supposed to govern their schools fully, manage the funds, improve and protect property; they have powers in the employment of staff: professional and non- professional; design school policies and the code of conduct for learners and learner misconduct. The SGB is supposed to achieve these aims through the execution of various core and additional governance functions.

To fulfil the Constitutional obligation of education to all, the Eastern Cape Department of Education embarked on building more schools for learners with intellectual impairment. However, given the perceived realities with regards to the governance of schools in SA in general, the question arises:

What are the establishment imperatives for governance of a school for learners with intellectual impairment?

1.3 Subsidiary research questions

Based on the above stated overarching research question, the following subsidiary questions are asked:

- 1.3.1 What is the nature and extent of school governance in the South African Education system?

- 1.3.2 What policies inform governance in South African schools and schools for learners with intellectual impairment?
- 1.3.3 What are the realities with regards to the establishment imperatives on governance in schools for learners with intellectual impairment?
- 1.3.4 What comments could be made about the establishment imperatives of a special school for intellectually impaired learners?

1.4 Aims and objectives of the study

Informed by the preceding, this study wants to realise the following aim:

To explore, the establishment imperatives for governance of a school for learners with intellectual impairment.

Informed by the above stated aim, the following objectives will underpin this study:

- 1.4.1 To determine the nature and extent of governance in education.
- 1.4.2 To investigate the policy directives concerning governance of SA schools and of schools for learners with intellectual impairment.
- 1.4.3 To investigate the realities regarding the establishment imperatives for governance of schools for learners with intellectual impairment.
- 1.4.4 To make comments on the establishment imperatives for governance of special schools for learners with intellectual impairment.

1.5 Research motivation

The researcher's study interest is influenced by the observation that in SA in general, and in the Eastern Cape a limited number of special schools exist, and that most of such schools are in urban centers. Therefore, most children in need of special care are taken away from their homes and families and placed in resource centers far away. The researcher believes that such conditions negatively affect relations and family bonds and that it also hampers

the development of the learner. In addition, the researcher has also witnessed that several learners with barriers to learning and serious impairments are not placed in special schools.

With this study, the researcher investigated the establishment imperatives of governance of a special school. By this being done, she hoped to elicit findings and make recommendations, which probably assisted and improved ways through which special schools in South Africa are governed.

1.6 Research methodology

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:8) define methodology as the study of how research is done and how knowledge is gained. They also regard research methodology as a systematic and purposeful way of enquiry. As such, it informs the various aspects of a study.

1.6.1 Research design

To achieve the stated aim and objectives of this study, a qualitative research design approach will be followed. Creswell (2009:201) states that qualitative research tries to discover what is assumed to be a dynamic reality rather than universal laws of behavior. In addition, qualitative research is designed to reveal the participants' behavior and their perceptions, the 'why' and 'how' rather than the 'what', 'when', 'where' or 'who' of the research (McMillan and Schumacher 2010:38). Green and Salkind (2012:213) explain that qualitative research is used for understanding behavior. The researcher therefore opted to do a qualitative study, because it will make it easy for her to understand the establishment imperatives for governance of schools for intellectually impaired learners from the perspective of the participants that will be involved in the study.

1.6.2 Research methods

According to Maree (2007:107) a research method is a special technique used in a field of study to achieve a research goal. As such, a method is a strategy or tool one can use to gather evidence or get information or data about a topic, and it assists in answering the research question. In line with her methodology and research design, the researcher intends using the following research methods: literature study, policy analysis and interviews. By

using these methods, the researcher hopes to gain information on the establishment imperatives for governance of special schools for learners with intellectual impairment.

1.6.2.1 Literature review

Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014:101) argue that a literature review involves “searching for, reading, evaluating and summarizing as much as possible of the available literature that relates both directly and indirectly to your research topic”. Fowler (2014:17) also believe a literature review makes it easier for the researcher to go deeper for getting results on the research topic. As such, a literature review enables one to interpret and evaluate the existing information collected by other researchers, and to review it to see where it relates to the research being done. In addition, a literature review also enables one to compare the views of other researchers on the same topic. For this study, the researcher used primary, as well as secondary sources to gain more information and knowledge on the governance imperative of special schools for learners with intellectual impairment.

1.6.2.2 Policy analysis

Frank, Gerald and Mara (2017:44) explain policy analysis as a broad field of study that critically analyses the existing policies. Policy analysis is also a multi-disciplinary field that concerns the theoretical and methodological approach that is relevant to the problem under investigation. Starting from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), various policies, which articulate issues pertaining to governance in general and governance of schools were enacted since 1994. These policies, for example: The South African Schools Act (SASA,1996), the National Education Policy Act, no 27 of 1996, the White Paper on Democracy (1996), Governance and Funding, White Paper 6 and numerous other policy documents, declare in various ways government’s position with regards to school governance and the education of learners with intellectual impairment. Analysis of these policies will enable the researcher to explore the establishment imperatives for governance of schools for learners with intellectual impairment.

1.6.2.3 Interviews

For Bryman (2012: 89) an interview is a communication between two people, the interviewer and the interviewee where the main aim is to get information from the interviewee on a phenomenon. An interview is also a participant orientated activity (Marinos and Askoxylakis, 2013:147). Thus, the participant must do most of the talking. In this study, the researcher will use semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews allow the interviewee to be given a chance to elaborate and give more details on his or her answers (Jansen, 2010:114). However, a disadvantage of this method is that it is time consuming (Pachana and Laidlaw, 2014:184). The researcher regards semi-structured questions as appropriate for this study, because it will enable her to easily explore the realities of schools and communities with regards to the establishment imperatives without making assumptions. This form of interviewing also creates a platform to the participants to express their experiences, thoughts, feelings, views and suggestions on the topic.

1.6.3 Participant selection

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:129) defined a sample as a selected group of participants from whom data will be collected, representing the bigger group or population. There are different types of sampling or participant selection methods. For this research, purposeful selection was used. Leedy, and Ormrod (2009:49) confirmed that it is good to select the participants according to the relevant characteristics of the research to serve the correct aim. Purposive participant selection assists in making the research more meaningful as the responses related to what was researched.

For this study the participants selected consisted of 2 members of the steering committee currently responsible for establishing the school (the school has no SGB, because it is newly established); 1 parent whose child is enrolled at the school, but who is not a member of the steering committee. In addition, 1 educator, who was not on the SMT of the school was also interviewed. Lastly, the principal of the school as the ex-officio member of the steering committee and the manager of the school was also interviewed. The reason for interviewing these participants was to get their views and experiences with regards to governance imperatives of the school.

1.6.4 Data analysis

De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont (2011:397) refer to data analysis as “the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of data”. And therefore, data analysis assumes that the volume of information will be reduced to a manageable size. The aim of data analysis is to unpack patterns, and to identify different concepts and themes to attach meaning to them (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:241). In the study, the researcher used thematic analysis to analyze the generated data. Bland (2016:569) view thematic data analysis as a process where themes are derived and deduced from the data, then coded for analysis. The aim is to look for similar patterns and codes and categories in the data. The process of analysing data begins with the categorisation and organisation of data. This process is sometimes called “open coding”, as patterns, meanings and themes were identified.

1.7 Ethical considerations

Ethics is basically about what is wrong and what is right when it comes to the conduct of the researcher and research (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:263). Schermer (2011:36) defined ethics as a set of moral principles an individual is expected to follow. When doing research, it is important that researchers conduct themselves and carry their research out in an ethically acceptable manner. This ensured that the research findings are universally acceptable. In ensuring that research subscribes to basic ethical principles, the following ethical aspects were to be considered during my research: voluntary participation, confidentiality and non-maleficence.

1.7.1 Voluntary participation

For McMillan and Schumacher (2010:118) voluntary participation is about participants taking part in the research without being compelled to do so. As such, participants should take part voluntarily and be given the right to withdraw whenever they felt like it. Before commencing the research, the researcher informed her participants that they were free to quit if they felt uncomfortable about the research. It was communicated to them that they

were not compelled at all to complete the research just because they have started with it and gave permission to be interviewed.

1.7.2 Confidentiality

Du Plooy *et al.* (2014:268) assert that confidentiality implied that information was known to the researcher only and there was no way participants' information, as well as their response could be easily matched by anyone. Confidentiality thus assumes that the identities and other information collected during the research was accessed by the researcher only. The identity and confidentiality of participants involved should therefore be protected. The use of pseudonyms was always a good idea to keep the identity of participants confidential (Wiles, Crow, Heath and Charles, 2008:422). In this study, the researcher did not use the real names of the participants, rather pseudonyms, letters or numbers. The identities of participants were to be protected by requesting participants not to mention any names during the interviews.

1.7.3 Non-maleficence

For Schermer (2011:38) non-maleficence is about ways of minimizing harm to the participants. As such there is a responsibility on any researcher to ensure that participants are not harmed in any way during any research. The emotional, psychological, and physical safety of participants therefore needed to be guaranteed. Part of the responsibility as a researcher was to disclose possibilities of harm or risk to the participants and took precautionary measures to ensure that no one is harmed during the research.

1.8 Demarcation

1.8.1 Geographical demarcation

For this research, data was collected from the Mount Fletcher Special School for learners with intellectual impairment. This school is in the Mount Fletcher Sub-District, Joe Gqabi District in the Eastern Cape. This is the only special school in the entire sub-district of Mount Fletcher. Data was collected over the duration of a month through conducting interviews. Mount Fletcher is one of the 12 educational districts in the Eastern Cape Province. Mount

Fletcher is situated at the foot of Drakensberg Mountains on the South West of Kwa-Zulu Natal.

1.8.2 Scientific demarcation

This study was conducted in the scientific field of Governance and Political Transformation. Governance and Political Transformation represents a very broad scientific field, as it combines Governance and Politics. Governance deals with decision making and it focus on the implementation of the “Batho Pele principles”. These decisions are guided by policies. Policies are political tools to either change or maintain the status quo. With this study, the researcher planned to explore establishment imperatives for governance of a school for learners with intellectual impairment. Since this study was focused on governance and political issues the researcher located it within the Discipline of Governance and Political Transformation.

1.9 Proposed lay out of the study

Chapter 1 provided an introduction into the research topic and the motivation. Research problems with the aims and objectives were discussed. The research methodology that was used was detailed with how data was collected following different methods. Steps of data analysis, limitations and demarcation were discussed.

Chapter 2 dealt with the literature review on governance and intellectual impairment. In this chapter, special focus was placed on governance within the SA education context, as well as within special education. Governance policies was discussed as well.

In Chapter 3 the researcher conducted a policy analysis of significant SA education policies, notably the South African Constitution of 1996, South African Schools Act, no.84 of 1996, as well as White Paper 2 and White Paper 6 of 2001.

Chapter 4 was devoted to the empirical leg of the study in which the researcher investigated the realities with regards to establishment challenges of governance of schools for learners with intellectual impairment.

Chapter 5 was the culmination of the study. In this chapter the researcher made comments on the establishment challenges for governance of schools for intellectually impaired learners. These comments were informed by the conclusions in all preceding chapters.

1.10 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to provide a broad and general orientation with regards to this study. In this chapter a background to the research was given and the aim and objectives of the study were articulated. Furthermore, the researcher also highlighted the methodology and the methods to be used, as well as the ethical issues she regards as applicable to this study. In the next chapter the researcher focused on literature study, as well as give details of what specialised education was all about. The understanding of impairment and policies were discussed.

Chapter 2

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

Chapter one provided an introduction and background to the study. Building on chapter one, in chapter two the literature on governance and intellectual impairment will be explored. The aim of this literature review is to gain more insight into governance and governance of special schools, with a specific focus on schools for learners with intellectual impairment. Subsequently, the researcher is also going to explore literature on intellectual impairment, to come to a better understanding of what it entails. It is anticipated that a better understanding of the concepts: school governance and intellectual impairment will assist the researcher to achieve the objective of this study, which is to establish imperatives for governance of schools for learners with intellectual impairment. However, before giving an overview of the literature, the researcher will first briefly discuss the social inclusion theory as framing theory of this study.

2.1.1 The concept 'social inclusion'

This investigation is based on the social inclusion theory, which is parallel to the establishment imperatives for governance of schools for intellectually impaired learners will be studied in relation to the social inclusion theory.

2.1.2 Contrasting social exclusion and social inclusion

Social inclusion is defined in relation to social exclusion. Some analysts Bland, (2016:171) has argued that both inclusion and exclusion are inseparable sides of the same coin. Social exclusion is the process of being shut out from the social, economic, political and cultural systems, which contribute to the integration of a person into the community (Bryman, 2016:9). Booth and Ainscow (2011:139) state that the socially excluded often lack the necessary skills and capabilities to get and keep a job and are often cut off from the world of work and education. Social exclusion can also manifest itself in numerous ways such as

failure at school, job insecurity, social isolation, poor housing and excessively frequent illnesses, to mention but a few examples. Social exclusion constitutes a violation of human dignity and urgent steps are necessary to achieve better knowledge of social excluding to promote the human rights of the socially excluded, and to put an end to social exclusion and promote the enjoyment of the fruits of social progress (Lemmer and Van Wyk, 2010:64).

2.1.3 A socially inclusive society

According to the social inclusion theory all groups of people within a society should feel valued and important (Sheppard, 2012:373). This theory also provides an explanation for the provision of certain rights to all individuals and groups in society. These rights include the right to healthcare, employment, protection from abuse and exploitation, protection from arbitrary arrest, education and training, adequate housing and welfare services (World Bank, 2013). Importantly it also includes the right to have access to education.

The World Bank defines social inclusion as the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of people, especially the previously disadvantaged groups, including people with impairments. A socially inclusive society is therefore defined as one where all people feel valued, their differences are respected, and their basic needs are met so they can live in dignity (Hall and Lamont, 2009:37). A socially inclusive society is furthermore described as a society where all people are recognised and accepted and have a sense of belonging (Hayden, Levy and Thompson, 2015:30). Social inclusion aims at ensuring that every member of society feels valued and forms part of the country's citizenry (Ansell and Gash, 2008:98).

The concept 'social inclusion' is variously associated with different words. Social inclusion, community inclusion, social connectedness, normalisation, social integration, and social citizenship are all terms that describe social inclusion and which also links the individual to the society (Rawal, 2008: 82)). In addition, various values that underpin social inclusion, includes that everyone needs support; everyone can learn; everyone can contribute; everyone can communicate; everyone is ready, and together we are better (Dwyer and Shaw, 2013: 60). It is assumed that the establishment of schools for the intellectually impaired learners will benefit such learners as they might become fully part of the community,

occupy their space in society and contribute in various forms to society, as all other learners would ultimately be able to do.

Including intellectually impaired learners will give expression to the stipulations of the Constitution, especially as it relates to the right to basic education to all (RSA Constitution, 1996: Section 29).

The researcher understands social inclusion as a way of including every member of the society and thus trying to bridge the gap between various groups in our society. In every society, there are disadvantaged people who do not get any form of recognition, are often discriminated against and treated unfairly. Social inclusion is targeting all the differences and bringing awareness to the societies to include everyone in the activities taking place in society. This normally leads to acceptance and fair distribution of resources. In governance, this leads to more inclusive policies that involve children, women and people living with impairments. In addition, social inclusion also facilitates the emancipation of the disadvantaged, which in the case of South Africa, should be a primary concern and responsibility of all South Africans.

2.2 Governance

Governance is a complex process that deals with the exercise of power by those in authority for the smooth running of the country or the institution (Chhotray and Stoker, 2009:214). Governance is also responsible for all the structures and processes that are designed to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, rule of law, stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment, and broad-based participation (UNESCO, 2009:32). In addition, governance also represents the norms, values and rules of the game through which public affairs are managed in a manner that is transparent, participatory, inclusive and responsive (McNeil and Carmen, 2010:21). Governance is therefore about the culture and institutional environment in which citizens and relevant stakeholders interact among themselves and participate in public affairs (Ansell and Gash, 2008:561).

The South African government acknowledges that governance entails more than the organs of the government (RSA-DoE, 2006a). In South Africa, the process of governance follows certain principles as outlined in the South African Constitution (RSA, 1996) and the King Reports 1-4 (King, 2016). The Constitution of SA (RSA, 1996: Section 1) encourages co-operative governance, which is underpinned by, amongst others, accountability, mutual trust and representativeness. According to the King Report 1 (2016: Section 2), governance in SA is characterized by the participation of those affected and those who have a stake in the governing structure concerned. This model of governance provides for democratic participation of all those affected by governance. The implication of which is that those affected by education, should participate in the governance of schools. The Constitution (RSA, 1996: Section 2) and the King Report 3 (2016: Section 4) further state that South Africa's democratic system of governance promotes the interaction between the national, provincial and local levels through co-operative governance. Cooperative governance is a form of governance that focuses on working together as a team, answering questions and ensuring that people are accountable for their actions (Naraian, 2017:76).

The same governance principles which informs governance on national, provincial and local levels, also inform governance of government departments and public institutions, such as schools. Informed by the above, SA education therefore adopted a governance structure that resembles a co-operation between the national, provincial and local governance spheres of government. In the case of education this means that instead of the National Department of Education having sole decision-making powers, both Provincial Departments of Education, as well as local structures also have decision-making powers. In South Africa, democratic governance, also governance of schools, is particularly important as it is constitutionally mandated.

2.2.1 School governance

School governance is about creating a conducive environment for learning inside and outside the classroom, implementing policies, supervising, managing and evaluating changes (Pont, Nusche and Moor-man, 2008:57). For Gann (2016:17) school governance is also about fund raising for the school to meet the needs of the school. School governance

is therefore concerned with the development of policies for the school and making sure that schools are ran according to a set of policies based on the South African Constitution and other education legislation, that were democratically developed.

The governance model adopted in SA education and as it is manifested in schools, is a result of the de-centralization of education. De-centralisation is a process of sharing through which powers, functions, responsibilities and resources are transferred from the center to the periphery and or moved from one central point to many other (Atherton and Crickmore, 2011:10). In practical terms, de-centralisation is therefore a process of striking a balance between the claims of the periphery and the demands of the core. It also implies the transfer of all basic services like education, health, safety, political, financial, administrative and legal authority, from central government to provincial and local governments or school level authorities. According to Davies, (2016: 8) the main aim of de-centralisation is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public services. As such, the de-centralisation of SA education and the subsequent devolution of power to parents as governors of schools, are aimed at improving the effectiveness of the South African education system and in schools for learners with intellectual impairment.

In line with Constitutional imperatives concerning governance in SA (cf. 2.1.1), but also to promote participatory democracy (RSA, 1996, Section 3(16)), South African education gave educational stakeholders power to manage their own institutions (RSA-DoE, 1996a: Section 16 (1-3)). The expectation within education is therefore that all schools should establish governing structures in which all relevant stakeholders should take part. It is against this background that Fullan (2010:8) states that parents and communities should be involved in the school's multi-faceted activities. The adoption of democratic governance principles and the promotion of participation in the governance of schools are deemed necessary, because it was observed that, before the democratic South Africa, governance of schools was in the hands of educators and a few bureaucrats and this situation led to addressing the needs of a few South Africans at the expense of many others, (Pinzaru and Bratianu, 2016:223). In addition, having the governance of schools in the hands of educators and bureaucrats, resulted in education not addressing the educational needs of the locals (Christie, 2010:29).

The danger of this situation was of course that it created the opportunity for decisions to be taken that did not necessarily reflect the needs and aspirations of the local people and the people concerned and affected. Likewise, in the absence of democratic governance principles, the needs and aspirations of intellectually impaired learners might also not be effectively served and catered for.

In South African education, a school governing body is a statutory structure established in terms of the South African Schools Act 84 (RSA-DoE, 1996a). School governance and the establishment of SGB's at all SA schools are therefore legally required. Thus, individual school governing bodies have a legal mandate to make some decisions on behalf of the stakeholders of the school (Gaskell and Levin, 2012:89).

SASA (1996) distinguishes school governance and school management. According to SASA (RSA-DoE, 1996a: Section 16(3)) the responsibility of the school governing body is not to manage the school, but to govern it. For SASA (RSA-DoE, 1996a Section 19(1-2)) governance is about stipulating standard terms for schools, making rules and regulations based on policies and governing finances as based on the (Public Finance Management Act, No 1 of 1999).

It is within this framework of SASA (RSA-DoE, 1996a, Chapter 3: Section 20), which recognises the role of learners' parents, guardians and the broader school community in the education of their children, and has made it legally obligatory for them to be actively involved in the education of their children as equal partners and stakeholders. SASA (RSA-DoE, 1996a: Section 18) lay down clear guidelines with regards to the constitution of SGB's. Whilst SASA (RSA-DoE, 1996a, Chapter 4: Section 36), makes provision for all stakeholders to be involved in education and be represented in school governing bodies, it also states that learners' parents or care-givers of learners should be the majority members of a school governing body, because they have the primary responsibility for ensuring that the school is running well to serve the needs of their children. Therefore, it is anticipated that various stakeholders will actively be involved in the education of SA children.

In line with the above, the post-1994 South African education dispensation promotes inclusive education and the full participation of all in, and affected by, education. However, though SA education embraces full participation, Christie (2010:29) maintains that in education, full stakeholder participation is elusive. In the provision of education to learners with intellectual impairment it therefore becomes necessary that we take cognizance of Christie's concern, and familiarize ourselves with the functions of school governance in South Africa.

2.2.2 Functions of school governance

We noted that, SASA (1996a, Chapter 3: Section 16) places the responsibility of school governance on the shoulders of the school governing body. SASA lays down various functions that SGBs are to perform as their governance responsibility. However, the governance responsibility of the SGB falls into two categories: there are 'core functions' and "allocated functions". The core functions are those which SGBs must perform as they are the governors of the school. These functions are therefore primary functions and as such non-negotiable.

According to SASA (1996a, Chapter 3: Section 20(1)(d)) the core functions of the school governing bodies include: promoting the best interest of the school, adopting a Constitution and a code of conduct for learners, developing a vision and mission statement for the school, supporting the principal, teachers and other staff members in the execution of their duties and determining times of the school day. Furthermore, SGBs are also primarily responsible for administering and controlling school property and school funds, encouraging stakeholders to render voluntary services to the school, and to recommend the employment of educators and general workers (DoE, 1996a, Chapter 3: Section 20 (1)(i)). Whilst they have the powers to create additional posts, they also have the power to appoint teachers and non-academic personnel into these positions, if such appointments are in line with basic principles of fairness and equity, as laid out in legislation.

As governors of the school, SGBs are therefore primarily responsible for monitoring the implementation of the policies they have developed to ensure that quality education be delivered to all learners at the school. Since SGBs also act as a bridge between educators,

parents and the principal, they also have the responsibility to mediate and dissolve tension among stakeholders. Furthermore, SGBs are also legally responsible to formulate the code of conduct for learners and be part of disciplinary measures at schools (RSA-DoE, 1996a, Chapter 3: Section 20(1)(d)).

Apart from the core functions SGBs are primarily supposed to perform, they also have the right to apply for and perform certain allocated functions. As the name suggests 'allocated functions' are those functions which a governing body may apply to the Head of Education in writing to be allocated to perform in addition to the core function. These functions are thus allocated to them. Should they wish to, SGBs may thus apply to the Head of Department to also be granted permission to maintain and improve the school's property and hostels; to determine the school's extra-mural curriculum and subject choices; to procure whatever the school needs – books or equipment; to pay for services rendered to the school or to provide adult basic education and training classes (RSA-DoE, 1996a, Chapter 3: Section 21(1)(c)).

All these functions are performed with the sole function of ensuring and promoting "teaching and learning for the benefit of the school and strive to ensure the schools develop through the provision of quality education" (RSA-DoE, 1996a, Chapter 3: Section 20(1) (a)).

From the above one can infer that for SGBs to effectively perform their duties, they need to have certain skills, knowledge and expertise. However, indications are that SGBs in some schools lack the basic skills, knowledge and expertise to effectively execute their roles and responsibilities (Grindle, 2007:19). Challenges that SGBs are facing and which inhibits the execution of their roles and responsibilities, include poor understanding of their roles and responsibilities, poor training and poor capacity building, lack of knowledge and school governance skills, a lack of trust, and poor teamwork among the school governing body (Lekgotlo, 2014:60-61). Bisschoff and Mestry (2009:18) also confirm that SGBs do not have skills and yet they are expected to run schools and deal with conflicts within.

In addition, Mestry and Govindasamy (2013: 431- 452), also points out that the collaboration problem between the principal and the school governing bodies is hampered by principals who feel their power is taken away from them and therefore they are not willing to share

responsibilities with SGBs. In supporting the school principal and staff to improve the school in general, as well as school performance, the SGB is supposed to advise, guide and direct the principal on different issues pertaining their roles and responsibilities. From the above it is discerned that the effective governance of schools is demonstrated in the ability of the SGB, also the SGB of schools for intellectually impaired learners, to develop policies that will suit the needs of their school and serve in the best interest of the learner.

2.3 Special education in South Africa

A special school is a public school whose responsibility it is to educate learners with special educational needs (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 1.5.6.1). Such learners are inclusive of, but not limited to, learners that are blind, deaf, gifted learners, slow learners, and physically challenged, emotionally disturbed, and intellectually impaired. Inclusive education is defined as an education system that accepts the diversity of learners, acknowledging that learners are different, with different learning needs, but with support they can all learn if different learning methodologies are followed (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 1.4.1). Following the definition of inclusive education, the education of learners with intellectual impairment is classified as education for learners with special educational needs (LSEN) and therefore supposed to be done in special schools.

According to the Education White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 3.2.5), special schools are established to improve learning and develop social skills for learners with impairments, such as intellectual impairment. Such schools are supposed to be equipped with curriculum workers and specialists to support learning educators, the principal, and the medical practitioners, speech therapists, psychologists and social workers (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 4.3.10.2).

This means that special schools are supposed to provide an environment which is conducive for the development of learners with special educational needs and which caters in various ways for the challenges such learners are facing. The support learners are supposed to get in these facilities should therefore ease their learning and make it possible for the educators to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes required (Lemmer and Van

Wyk, 2010:66). In addition, security measures in a special school are specifically designed to suit the different challenges impaired learners are faced with, making them particularly safe for these learners to attend (Salvia, Ysseldyke and Witmer, 2012: 18-19).

In SA, the establishment of special schools is a way to redress the pre-1994 imbalances, which prevented children with impairments from having access to education and schools (Brundenius and Goransson, 2016:10). In addition, it addresses challenges with regards to the failure of parents to send their children to school, due to their impairment (Grobbelaar-Du Plessis and Van Reenen 2011:34). Evidently special schools play a very important role in redress, equity and inclusion – three principles that are not only embraced, but also actively promoted by the SA Constitution.

2.4 Intellectual impairment

2.4.1 The prevalence of intellectual impairments

The Mental Disability Rights International (2007:106) regards intellectual impairment as one of the most common and easily visible impairment that is found in all races and in all developmental stages. Brault (2012:83) states that in America, about 6.5 million people are intellectually impaired, of these 545 000 are children between the ages of 6 and 21 and they accordingly need special education services either in public schools or in specialised institutions.

Maistry, A. (2018: 59) suggest that South Africa has a population of 600 000 learners of school going age who are intellectually impaired. The Eastern Cape Education Management Information System (EMIS) (RSA-DBE, 2016) explains that the Eastern Cape Province, where this study is conducted, has 45 special education schools. Of these 45 special education schools, 20 cater for the intellectually impaired learners. According to the Eastern Cape Education Management Information System (EMIS) (RSA-DBE, 2016) the 20 special schools for intellectually impaired learners have a total intellectually impaired learner population of 4288. This amounts to an average of 214 learners per school. Although the researcher's observation, as departmental official working in this space, is that the situation with regards to special schools in the Eastern Cape has improved over the years, more can

still be done to support learners with impairments, and to ensure that special schools are effectively governed.

2.4.2 The nature of intellectual impairment

Intellectual impairment is a very complex condition where there is limited understanding of learning social skills to cope with everyday life challenges like the ability to follow and obey rules (Falvo and Holland, 2018:7). Intellectual impairment not only varies in degrees of severity, but it also limits functionality.

Turnbull, Turnbull and Wehmeyer (2007:143) define the term intellectual impairment as a condition where the person has some limitations in their intellectual functioning. This term is used to substitute the pervasive label of mental retardation, which has historically been used, but which carries with it a negative stigma. Lately, mental health experts and other health professionals are using the term intellectual developmental disorder in replacing the term mental retardation (Singh, 2016:139).

Intellectual impairment is usually caused by some genetic disorders, infections or sicknesses; accidents in some rare cases (Ambrosino, Heffeman and Shuttlesworth, 2016:261); personal background or the social environment of the learner (Grant, Ramcharan, Flynn and Richardson, 2010:138). The condition of intellectual impairment can be traced back as early as in the developmental stages of a human being (Byrne and Rosen, 2014:121). However, it is also easily identified in the childhood stage of development, using various methods of identification. Intellectual impairment is commonly identified through vision or hearing problems where small babies, for example, do not respond to noises made to trigger their senses. Intellectual impairments are further easily visible when a child starts schooling, when the academic performance of such a learner demonstrates that there might be a problem.

In this regard, learners with intellectual impairment portray symptoms like slow language development, poor social skills when it comes to relationships with family and friends, they may need to be reminded about basic hygiene and may not understand personal safety challenges (Fletcher, Lyon, Lynn, Fuchs and Barnes, 2018:26). Singh (2016:23) also alludes to problems in communications, and not being able to take care of oneself as

compared to one's peer age group, as some of the symptoms of intellectual impairment. In addition, intellectually impaired learners also demonstrate some delayed milestones. They would typically take longer to crawl, to walk and to talk, and as such they are generally referred to as functioning below the average or sub-average (Westwood, 2009: 15).

Makoelle, (2016:27) maintain that the South African context deals with intellectual impairment focusing on three main issues. Firstly, it strives towards building an inclusive education system, which can provide for the diverse range of learning needs. Secondly, it transforms the curriculum to enable a comprehensive response to diversity; and lastly, it focuses on the possibility of skill acquisition, which will enhance participation in the world of work with the support of teacher training.

From the above the researcher deduces that intellectual impairment is not a disease or a condition that can be corrected or changed overnight, simply because it is a condition in which the learner displays limited ability in the functioning of the mind compared to peers of the same age. Such learners are also not able to perform the same activities as to what expectations of the parents and of the educators at school are.

Intellectual impairment is categorised into different levels depending on its severity. There is a distinction between mild, moderate and severe or profound intellectual impairment, and they are characterised by different features on learners. A mild intellectually impaired learner can independently participate in most activities in the communities, while maintaining a good relationship with people in life. Although it is highly possible that they may struggle in some social situations, such learners can manage to develop reading, writing and mathematical skills, but only to a minimal or basic level of development (Kirk, Gallagher, Coleman and Anastasiow, 2012:46).

For learners who are moderately intellectually impaired, planning a trip or handling money independently may not be easy. To keep up with the daily routine, the help of pictures is needed. The last category of intellectual impairment is severe or profound impairment. In this instance learners, need visual prompts for daily unchanged routines, and some may

have little or no speech and depend on gestures for communication (Mansell and Beadle-Brown, 2012: 15).

In the South African context, the White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001, Chapter:1.3.7) also differentiates between different levels of intellectual impairment, ranging from low to severe. Irrespective of the severity of the impairment these learners need special educational care - something which special schools need to provide and SGBs need to ensure that such schools are effective and providing in the needs of these learners.

2.4.3 Characteristics of learners with intellectual impairment

2.4.3.1 Academic performance

As indicated above (cf. 2.4.2), intellectual impairment is identified on a range of levels, ranging between mild, moderate and severe. Gargiulo and Bouck (2017:26) argue that learners in the mild range lag behind their classmates in the same age group. They struggle with basic learning skills throughout their school years. This happens in their language development as they cannot read and mathematics is the greatest challenge for them in general. The delay in language development impacts negatively on the academic performance of all the learners.

Based on the view of Richards, Brady and Taylor (2015:182), learners with intellectual impairment have trouble when it comes to more advanced skills, some can cope with basic arithmetic skills like time, simple measurement and money, whilst others struggle to grasp these concepts.

2.4.3.2 Cognitive performance

There are three important cognitive skills deficits exhibited by learners with intellectual impairment. These are attention, memory and generalisation (Westwood, 2015: 15-16).

a) Attention

Indications are that learners with intellectual impairment have trouble with different types of attention like orientation to the task, selective attention and sustaining attention. Hoefs-Bascom and Sleeter (2012 :111) defines these three types of attention as follows: orientation to a task requires a learner to get the instructions clear from the beginning.

Selective attention is when a learner must attend to some specific task. Sustained attention is when a learner must continuously maintain the attention for a specific period.

b) Memory

Learners that are born with intellectual impairment also have difficulty with remembering information, especially information in the short-term memory. Powell (2015:77) explains that they struggle with simple information like remembering spelling of words or mathematical facts. Some learners may be able to spell their names today and not be able to do the same activity the following day.

c) Generalisation

Learners with intellectual impairment also find it difficult to generalize information. Indications are that it is difficult for such learners to apply information from one sector to a different sector. For example, if they learn about a concept in one learning area, they cannot apply the same concept in the different learning area (Mechling, 2011:482). They believe every learning area is totally different.

2.4.3.3 Social skills performance

According to Atherton and Crickmore (2011:17), learners with intellectual impairment are characterised by delays in language development, which lead to difficulty in understanding expectations in the society. In this case, learners will not be able to read social cues, at school they cannot affiliate in school activities and their self-concept is negative. Sometimes they may struggle to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behavior and may behave in an unacceptable manner, based on the societal rules of what is right and wrong (Clever, Uneall and Aldgate, 2011:24). Because it is common for learners with intellectual impairment to feel unimportant among their peers and educators, they easily withdraw from the school community (Downing, 2010:93).

These characteristics of intellectually impaired learners demonstrate that such learners require special educational care, which will provide in their needs. Since SGBs are responsible for the governing of schools, it assumes that SGBs of such schools must ensure that this care is available to these learners.

2.4.3.4 Support to learners with intellectual impairment in South Africa

In-line with the differentiation between various levels of intellectual impairment, the Education White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001, Chapter: 2.1.2) also differentiates the various levels of support needed by intellectually impaired learners. Similarly, to the classification, these levels of support also ranges from low level of support to high level of support. Low level of support assumes that a learner can get support from a mainstream school. In such a case, learners are supposed to be absorbed in mainstream schools where they interact with, and is taught in, mainstream schools.

Where moderate support is needed, the White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001, Chapter:4.3.5.1) pronounces that such learners must be accommodated in full-service schools. A full-service school accommodates both learners with impairments and those learners without impairments, however, the impairments of such a learner must not be severe (Singal, 2014:58). Severe mental impairment means that a learner can only master basic skills like self-care and communication skills, while some may be able to live in a group situation (Yssel, Engelbrecht and Oswald, 2007:102). Lastly, in the case of support to learners whose impairment is severe and requires for them to get high levels of support, such learners are supposed to be enrolled in, and supported in, special schools.

Special schools are defined as institutions that offer specialised services to the learners with barriers to learning and provide services like basic education, self-care skills, communication and life coping skills (Snell and Brown, 2011:59). These schools are established to accommodate learners' educational needs, since it is not easy for the learners to learn like those in a 'normal classroom' in the mainstream. Special skills are needed to attend to teaching and learning for the benefit all the learners (Theron, 2011: 465). These schools are of great importance to the country and their governance is of similar value to all South African Schools. This is confirmed by Frank (2014:157) who believe the establishment of special schools is of great importance, as special schools assist learners to minimize their challenges, and it is where learners can easily adapt to the environment suitable to their condition, surrounded by learners that look like them and where the level of bullying is very low. Furthermore, the low learner-teacher ratio in these schools also allows for teaching and learning to take place more effectively.

Within a special education context or school, educators provide educational support for learners who experience barriers to learning and holistically developing learners so that later in life they become independent with sufficient support.

2.5 Approaches to intellectual impairment

Intellectual impairment used to be approached from the perspective of a medical model (Rogers, 2016:132), which regarded intellectual impairment as a medical disease (Brown, 2015:142). Accordingly, the medical model diagnoses the individual and believes the person needs treatment to be cured, as the person has limitations in performing A or B. Certain treatments are therefore also prescribed, intended to 'cure' the person. The aim of the medical model is to cure the disability from an in-depth clinical perspective (Billett, 2011:59).

However, this model led to stereotypes where learners are given treatments believed to control the mental condition. The medical model not only led to the stigmatization of the patient - thus leading to exclusion and the inability to integrate him/her into society, but it also emphasised the disability. Clearly, less focus is placed on education, resulting in less socialisation and the perpetuation of dependence on families and or government for survival, because of less employment related skills (Brown, 2015: 149).

However, currently, intellectual impairment is dealt with using the social model (Rogers, 2016:25). This model acknowledges that people with impairments live in societies. Therefore, instead of using drugs, the focus is on the society to accommodate and support the person living with the impairment (Fisher and Goodley, 2007:66). The social model theory does not attempt to change the person with impairment; rather it tries to change the society to accommodate the person. This model further understands and supports the fact that every individual has equal rights. The advantage of the social model is that it, if applied correctly, helps the learner to receive the necessary learning while his/her medical condition receives attention (Mittler, 2012:11). The focus is therefore on the individual and his or her need to receive education (Rogers, 2016:27). Thus, this models also promotes the inclusion of the learner into society.

The South African education system embraces the social model when it comes to learners with intellectual impairment (Mittler, 2012: 49). The approach is deemed appropriate as the post-1994 education dispensation seeks to use education to advance the social, economic and political integration of all formerly socially excluded sections of South African society. People living with intellectual impairment is one such section of our society that used to be socially excluded in the economy, politics and societal activities, and which now can be part of the inclusive South African society. White Paper 6 (2001, Chapter 2: 2.2.7.1 – 2.2.7.2) promotes public awareness as a means of assisting in the development of an inclusive society.

2.6 Conclusion

The focus of this chapter was on social inclusion, which is also the focus of this research. The concept of inclusion was defined and applied to the inclusive society. The contrast of the social exclusion and social inclusion was also done. Definition of the main concepts, governance and intellectual impairment were also discussed. Governance was discussed on different levels, school level and governance of schools in South African context. Special education in the South African context was also discussed. Furthermore, the concept 'intellectuality' was discussed. The prevalence and nature of intellectual impairment were discussed. The characteristics of learners with intellectual impairment were discussed as well. The support given to learners with intellectual impairment in South Africa was discussed.

Chapter 3

Policy analysis

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter a brief overview of what governance and intellectual impairment entail, were given. In this chapter the focus will be on the analysis of the education policies in the context of South Africa, with the focus on policies informing the governance of schools for learners with intellectual impairment. This is done to analyse pronouncements made in these policies, concerning school governance in South Africa, especially as it relates to special needs education and by implication to schools for learners with intellectual impairment.

The focus of the policy analysis will be on the content of the Education White Paper 6 on Inclusive and Special Needs Education (RSA-DoE, 2001). In this regard, the focus of the content analysis will be on aims and objectives, as well as directives and values of the policy. However, because policies do not function in isolation, with this analysis the researcher also draws on other relevant policies and legislation, such as the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996); White Paper on Education and Training (2001) and the South African School's Act, (No 84 of 1996). The selection of these policies is informed by the fact that these policies in one way or the other, paved the way for the establishment of schools for learners with special educational needs. Before these policies are analysed, the researcher will first briefly elaborate on the concept policy analysis.

3.2 Policy analysis

Policy analysis is an approach used in public administration to enable civil servants, activists, and other sectors governmental or private to examine and evaluate the available options, as well as to implement the goals of laws and elected policies. For Dunn, (2015:2) policy analysis represents a multidisciplinary inquiry used for assessment, communication and

problem-solving. Policy analysis can further be defined as the process of determining which of the various policies will achieve a given set of goals, considering the relations between the policies and the goals.

Patton, Sawicki and Clark (2015:22-23) differentiates two major fields of policy analysis: that is analysis of an existing policy and analysis for new policies. The former approach to policy analysis is involved in assessing whether a policy is working for the community or not. This type of analysis is called analytical and descriptive analysis and it attempts to explain policies and their development. On the other hand, the latter approach that is analysis for new policies, is more prescriptive in nature and it is used to verify the effectiveness of a policy even before its implementation. This approach is mainly concerned with formulating new policies and proposals.

Weimer and Vining, (2017:34) confirm that policy analysis is done to identify what worked well and what did not work well in the existing policy context to improve lives. Such information is valuable as it will assist in the implementation of policies to ensure that less mistakes are encountered during the implementation. Similarly, an analysis of policies pertaining to the establishment of schools for learners with intellectual impairment and the subsequent establishment of governance structures at these schools will highlight the governance needs of such schools and that of the governing structures to ensure the effectiveness of both.

The following section will focus on the analysis of the Education White Paper 6 (2001). As indicated earlier this policy document creates the platform for the establishment and governance of schools for learners with special educational needs like intellectual impairment.

3.2.1 Analysis of the Education White Paper 6 Special Needs Education: Building an inclusive and training system (2001)

For this study, the analysis of White Paper 6 will focus on the aims and objectives and the pronouncements made in relation to the establishment and governance of special schools for intellectual impaired learners. Before continuing, here follows the contextual background to the said policy.

3.2.2 Context of White Paper 6

In South Africa, the apartheid era has caused irreversible damages in the field of education. During the apartheid era, learners were segregated, based on both their race and their abilities (White paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 1 (1))). Within the context of special needs education and thus learner ability, white disabled learners were treated differently than black learners with the same educational needs. This manifested in the special schools of white learners being better equipped and resourced in contrast to that for black disabled learners who also struggled to access education. According to White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 1 (1)), during the previous dispensation, few special schools existed, and this led to limited admissions for particular groups of disabled learners. Under these conditions, admissions were determined by affordability and, given the socio-economic conditions of most South Africans, most could not afford special schools and thus did not qualify for admission into these facilities

In addition, the system that provided in the needs of disabled learners was also based on the medical model (Gaddes, 2013:3-4). Because of this, only learners with medical and organic impairments were regarded as qualifying for support programmes and thus admission into special schools, whilst most of the learners with other learning disabilities were not included in any educational programs. This overt discrimination and ignorance towards the needs of all learners, also those with intellectual impairment, resulted in many learners suffering gross human rights violations, and they either not attended school at all or they dropped out of school at a very young age (Kirk, Gallagher, Coleman and Anastasiow, 2012:19).

Informed by this reality the dawn of the new South Africa and the focus on basic human rights of all people saw the rights of learners with intellectual impairments respected and their educational needs catered for through the development of policies and education legislation that protects the right to equality and non-discrimination (RSA, 1996: Section 9) and the right to education of all people (RSA, 1996: Section 29). Within this legislative framework, certain policies, such as the White Paper 6, were also promulgated with the aim of promoting the rights enshrined in the Constitution.

3.2.3 Aims and objectives of White Paper 6

White Paper 6 (2001: Chapter 1.1.7) focuses on building an inclusive education and training system. White Paper 6 therefore aims at the inclusion of learners who are experiencing barriers to learning, and who were excluded from education. The Education White Paper 6 (2001: Chapter 2.1.1) emphasises that learners are different and that it is important for both parents and educators to accept these differences and support learners to do their best. Thomas and Loxley (2007:67) are of the view that 'the essence of thinking of inclusion is in the acceptance of diversity and striving for equity for all members within the same education system'.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) came into effect in 1997, and it is regarded as the supreme law of the country (Oosthuizen and Botha, 2009:46). The Constitution of South Africa is guided by the universal principles of human rights, which include the right to basic education, equality and democracy (RSA-DoE, 2001). As such the Constitution of South Africa (1996, Chapter 2: Section 7(1)) aims at ensuring that the Bill of Rights is a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa and that people affirms to the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom.

In South Africa, the right to education is engrained in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, (RSA, 1996a, Chapter 2: Section 29(1)) and this forms the basis of all educational policies and acts that are promulgated and implemented in the country. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1996, Chapter 2: Section 10), guarantees the right to equity and equality. As such, access to and therefore admissions to educational institutions catering for the needs of intellectually impaired learners is a basic Constitutional guarantee, and in line with principles of equality and social justice. Access of learners with intellectual impairment to education and learner admission to schools is therefore central to the country and its moral vision. Thus, no child should be denied admission to education under any circumstances, as this would be against their constitutional right.

Everyone has the right to basic education and learners should be admitted to schools and to other places of learning. This means that school governing bodies of schools for learners

with intellectual impairment also has a responsibility to ensure that the school develops policies that are in line with the SA constitution.

The South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996, is developed in line with the Constitution, and it intends to govern all the South African schools in a way that will address the injustices of the past and will give support to all stakeholders to govern schools effectively. In responding to this responsibility, school governing bodies should make sure that learners are admitted and not discriminated against, irrespective of their impairments.

3.2.4 Preparing special needs school

Special needs schools are catering for learners with special educational needs. As such, such schools need to be prepared in accordance with the needs of the learners they are supposed to serve. A school for special needs must also be prepared in such a way that it improves access of education and so accommodates learners experiencing barriers to learning. According to White Paper 6 (2001: Chapter 2.1.11-13), schools must be prepared by improving access and by improving the capacity of education and training so that transformation can affect the entire education and training system.

When the school is ready it will be fully transformed in terms of attitudes for those working in the institution. The preparation of the school also includes the training of those who will be working in the school. Such training is important as it will prove readiness and will enable educators and the support staff to be able to accomplish the objectives of the school for learners with barriers, according to White Paper 6, (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 2.1.11-2.1.14).

3.2.4.1 Admissions

According to White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 2.2.1.1- 2.2.1.2), the policy framework of special needs schools begins with the admission policy that accommodates learners experiencing barriers to learning. The value of such an admission policy is that it will ensure that norms and standards are met, considering the age and the grade learners are supposed to be accommodated in. The admission policy is further supposed to ensure that learners are admitted in a way that ensures their educational needs are met and they are not discriminated against in anyway (RSA-DoE, 1996, Chapter 2: Section 9(5). White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 2.2.1.5) further explains that the physical environment

of the school must be developed to suit the needs of learners. This means, the school must not act as a barrier to the learner's mobility. The White Paper 6 (2001: Chapter 2.2.3.3) assigns various roles to different stakeholders to ease the admission of learners. In this regard the Department of Social Development is supposed to provide the welfare needs of learners, whilst the Department of Health is supposed to provide assistive devices like wheel chairs and hearing aids depending on the needs of the learner.

3.2.4.2 Funding of special schools

According to the Education White Paper 6 (2001: Chapter 2.2.1.7), the funding of special schools is one way of addressing equity and to redress the educational and social injustices of the past. This is particularly true as it relates to the establishment of special schools for all population groups and the treatment of learners with special educational needs, such as learners with intellectual impairment. According to SASA, (RSA-DoE, 1996, Chapter 4: Section 34. (1)), the state has the responsibility to fund all public schools, special schools included. Public funding of education is supposed to ensure that learners' rights to education are protected and inequalities in educational provisioning are addressed. The South African Schools Act (RSA-DoE, 1996, Chapter 4: Section 35) emphasises that the norms and standards for the funding of public schools should be done in consultation with the Council of Education and the Minister of Finance. A focus on the funding of special education is in line with the Bill of Rights (RSA, 1996, Chapter 2: Section 29(1) (a-b)), which not only guarantees the right to basic education, but also supposes that this right should be promoted, respected and fulfilled. SASA, (RSA-DoE, 1996: Chapter 4: Section 38 (1)) further expects the governing body of a public school to prepare a budget each year, this encourages accountability on how funds are managed.

3.2.4.3 Building capacity

In the establishment of schools for learners with special educational needs, White Paper 6 also promotes the idea of capacity building. It is the view of Salvia, Ysseldyke and Witmer (2012:4) that schools must provide different levels of support for learner development and they emphasize that, capacity building is the responsibility of all society members. White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 4.3.1.1) states that capacity building will require the development of an inclusive education and training system that will be effective for policy,

planning, monitoring and management in the education system. The White Paper 6, (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 4.3.1.1.) further explains that, capacity building will be the responsibility of the Department of Education at provincial level, which will be expected to lay the first brick in capacity building. The next step in capacity building will be planning, management and monitoring of the policy implementation. This includes the provisioning of financial information systems and curriculum development. Capacity building is all about introducing change in the education system so that the system can accommodate all the learners. This capacity building will include training in different fields like information systems, financial management, the development of the curriculum and the assessment program (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 4.3.1.2). During the capacity building, inclusivity will be introduced and the norms and standards for the cooperative governance will be strengthened, (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 4.3.1.3).

3.2.4.4 The establishment and role of advisory bodies

According to Education White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 4.3.2.1- 4.3.2.3), the establishment of an inclusive education system is vital to everyone and therefore it requires that the Minister of Education be assisted by relevant bodies who will advise on how educational goals and targets can be reached. One such advisory body is the SGB. This is according to SASA (RSA-DoE, 1996, Chapter 4: Section 36) which stipulates that the governing body is the advisory body at school level and that it must be established in every school to maintain the normal functionality of the school processes holistically. It is therefore incumbent that a SGB be formed in a school established for learners with intellectual impairment. SASA, (RSA-DoE, 1996: Chapter 3: (23) (1-9)) states that the SGB should compose of elected parents whose children are learners at a school, learners at the school, the principal, educators at the school, the non-teaching staff at the school and some members of the community maybe coopted as well. The functions of the SGB, as stated in SASA, (RSA-DoE, 1996, Chapter 3, Section 20(1) (a—m)) include promotion of the school's interest for purpose of development. This will be done by the provisioning of quality education for all the learners. It is the responsibility of the SGB to adopt the constitution, develop the mission statement and the code of conduct of the school. Not only does the

principal depend on the SGB for support, but the control of school property is also their responsibility (Farrell, 2012:28).

3.2.4.5 Training of staff

Walton (2010:11-15) encourages staff training as a very important aspect when it comes to the education of learners with special educational needs. It could be inferred that the same requirement is applicable to the education of learners with intellectual impairment that is that the training of staff who are going to work with these learners are equally important and should take center stage. Training of staff is needed immensely at all levels of the school – that is from the management of the school to the educators and the non-educative staff at the school. In this instance is it important that the principal have knowledge and a sound understanding of how to manage special schools and how to deal with intellectually impaired learners.

According to the White Paper 6 (2001: Chapter 1.5.2), educators are the first people to be trained on methods that will support all learners experiencing barriers to learning and also to adapt the curriculum to suit needs of learners. It is anticipated that this training will equip them with the relevant skills and knowledge on how to deal with learners experiencing barriers to learning. Children with learning impairments begin school like all other learners with expectations to learn and to be successful in life. For this dream to come true the educators must be fully skilled on how to educate and support learners with disabilities (Browder and Spooner, 2011: 45). Educators must be equipped with organisational skills for their classes with good communication. Although special schools are developed to accommodate learners with challenges, the researcher's experience is that teachers lack skills, information and knowledge in differentiating the curriculum to address a wide range of learning needs and challenges of these learners.

The SGB also needs to be trained on how to govern the school. Such governance, according to SASA (RSA-DoE, 1996, Chapter 3: Section 16 (1-3)), includes amongst other policies, to guide the finances of the school, conduct of employees and learners, as well as the maintenance and improvement of the surroundings of the school and school buildings. SASA, (RSA-DoE, 1996, Chapter 3: Section 19(1: a-b) (2)) states that, the Head of

Department must be responsible for the training as soon as the SGB is elected, this will assist the SGB in assuming their functions.

White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 4.3.6.1) encourages the training of School Based Support Teams (SBSTs) on the implementation of Screening Identification Assessment and Support (SIAS) and ensuring that educators design Individual Support Plans (ISPs) for the struggling learners and those with impairments. In addition, School Based Support Teams must also be trained [to be able] to support learners effectively in and out of the classroom, according to White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 4.3.6.1). In line with White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 4.3.6.1) every school is expected to establish a support team at school level known as the School Based Support Team with one aim: to support learners experiencing barriers to learning. The aim of such a team is to create a learning environment for inclusive purposes of support. SBSTs are teams that directly assist and deal with learners facing barriers to learning. The aim of having these teams and having them trained is to coordinate the level of support to be provided by the teacher to the learners experiencing barriers to learning.

Furthermore, White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001) provides for the involvement of District Based Support Team's (DBSTs), should learners need further assessment. These DBSTs should be composed of relevant support members from sister departments like Department of Social Development, Department of Health and Department of Home Affairs and other stakeholders, like the disability forum that should assist where special needs learners need a high level of support or referral (RSA-DoE 2001: Chapter 4.3.6.1-4.3.7.1). After continued support without expected results, the District Based Support Team (DBST) can do further support and assessment and only then referral will be the last stage if there is a need (Motitswe, 2014:9). Intense training is needed to make sure learners are assessed according to their challenges and given the necessary support and to make sure that learners are referred, should there be a need. All support staff that works in a special school must therefore also be trained and be given the basics of dealing with impaired learners.

Finally, special schools also require that the support staff must be trained to get to know how learners must be supported (Glazzard, Stokoe, Hughes, Netherwood and Neve,

2015:17). It is the view of Farrell (2012:92) that the training provided by special schools may benefit parents, educators and governors to develop and orientate them on reception of intellectually impaired learners.

3.2.4.6 Community involvement

Education is a societal matter and it therefore involves the broader community. White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 4.3.10.2) encourages the involvement of all the community members in the education of learners with challenges and barriers to learning. Likewise, White Paper 6 also encourages the involvement of these stakeholders in the education of learners with intellectual impairment. This includes involvement of community-based clinics and health professionals, which are supposed to assess learners immediately after birth (Oswald and Swart, 2011:389-403). Furthermore, White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 4.3.10.2) also indicates that as social structures, NGOs also have a role to play, just as much as SBSTs should be involved in the teaching and learning of disabled learners. NGOs play a role in both advocating and supporting the role of inclusive education.

In addition to the above, White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 4.3.10.3) also emphasises the importance of parental involvement. In this regard, it encourages parental involvement at school by making use of the expertise parents may have to offer. This promotes inclusion and since parents will be part of the school, relationships between the school and parents will also be forged. In this way, White Paper 6 helps to equip parents with participatory skills, as parents must form part of the learning of their own children for inclusion activities to be implemented effectively. Similarly, The South African Schools Act (RSA-DoE, 1996, Chapter 4: Section 39 (1-4)) holds that all learners, parents and educators promote the acceptance and responsibility for the organisation, governance and funding of schools in partnership with the state. This implies that parents are equal partners and are compelled to participate in activities aimed at the development of their school. Johnson, (2012:4), believes parental involvement is related to focusing positively on the child's academic performance, which is lacking to most parents. This is worse if the child has a challenge, because under such conditions parents tend to become less involved in the schooling of their children. Bandlow (2009:20) also encourages the involvement of parents in the learning of their own children.

However, the right to parental involvement does not mean that parents should take over the task and responsibility of the school, as both these societal institutions have their own tasks, responsibilities and authority as far as education is concerned. Parents and schools should rather work together in ensuring the success of the learners.

3.3 Principles and values guiding special needs schools

According to The Constitution of South Africa, the law caters for all the people who live in the country (RSA, 1996, Chapter 2: Section 9 (1). Oosthuizen and Botha, (2009:46) believe the Constitutional values in Section 9 of the Constitution are designed to accommodate all South Africans. These values include, equity, non-discrimination and equality, as well as access and diversity. To this end inclusive education must be realised in South African schools. For the country to succeed in implementing inclusive education, informative support is imperative (Landsberg, 2010:35). Educational support is very important for all the learners, both in the mainstream schools and special schools. This support comes in the form of the school.

3.3.1 Equity and redress

In South Africa, the Education system is informed by the principles of the Constitution of the Republic (RSA, 1996), which amongst other aspects, promotes justice for all (RSA, 1996: Section 9 (1-5)). Justice implies fairness and equity. Thus, everyone must have equitable access to basic education. With regards to access of education, equity supposes the development of an inclusive education system in South Africa, as opposed to the system that used to divide the people of South Africa and secured access to only a few. Under the latter system, disabled learners were unfairly treated with some consequently being mis-directed while others were kept in the mainstream where their educational needs could not be met. Under these conditions the rights of learners with special educational needs were grossly disrespected, and this led to a high drop-out rate amongst the learners with impairments. White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Executive Summary) acknowledges that a new inclusive education system that caters for the needs of learners with special educational needs, must be informed by the values of equity and redress for historically disadvantaged

communities and institutions. This commitment is further articulated in the White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 1.1.4) where it states that:

Government's obligation to provide basic education to all learners and its commitment to the central principles of the Constitution are also guided by the recognition that a new unified education and training system must be based on equity, on redressing past imbalances and on a progressive rising of the quality of education and training.

To realise the ideal of equity and redress, White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 2.2.1.7) suggests that the National Norms and Standards for School Funding will apply to the new Inclusive Education and Training System and its application will be customized to ensure equity and redress.

3.3.2 Diversity

Education White Paper 6 explains that learners with barriers to learning have different learning needs. Attention shall be given to achieve these objectives through a realistic and effective implementation process that moves responsibly towards the development of a system that accommodates and respects diversity. According to White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 1.1.5) government promises to establish an education system that will accommodate the diversity of learning needs of those learners who experience or have experienced barriers to learning and development or who have dropped out of learning and for those learners who continue to be excluded from the education system.

Thus, the White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 1.5.2) provides for different special schools that will cater for the educational needs of the learner. However, White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 1.5.1) also provides for diversity in the learning needs of every learner. These include for example the inflexible curriculum which accommodates learners without impairments or those with low levels of impairment. In revising and aligning education support service, White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 2.2.2.7) commits government to focus efforts on "establishing a coordinated education support service along a continuum from national through to provincial departments of education, through to schools, colleges, adult and early childhood learning centers, and higher education, which

is sensitive to and accommodates diversity, with appropriate capacities, policies and support services”

3.3.3 Non-discrimination and equality

It is common knowledge that during the previous dispensation, race and cultural discrimination played a significant role in provisioning unequal education in South Africa, to the extent that certain racial and cultural groups were excluded from basic education opportunities. This reality is acknowledged by White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Introduction), as it claims that “race and exclusion were the decadent and immoral factors that determined the place of our innocent and vulnerable children”. To reverse this situation, and to protect Constitutional guarantees of non-discrimination and equality, White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Introduction) expresses a determination to create special needs education as a non-racial and integrated component of our education system. The values of non-discrimination and equality is further emphasised in the pronouncement that the place of special needs children (or children with intellectual impairment) “is not one of isolation in dark backrooms and sheds” (RSA-DoE, 2001: Introduction). Rather, it is with their peers, in schools, on the playgrounds, on the streets and in places of worship where they can become part of the local community and cultural life, and part of the reconstruction and development of our country. White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Introduction) envisions that it is only when “these ones among us are a natural and ordinary part of us that we can truly lay claim to the status of cherishing all our children equally”. Slot-Nielsen, (2016:315) supports the admission into schools, of learners with special educational needs without discriminating. This will ensure that historical inequalities and injustices are addressed.

3.3.4 Access

White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 1) contends that learners with disabilities experienced great difficulty in gaining access to education. This was partly because very few special schools catered for the needs of learners with special educational needs, but these institutions were also limited to admitting learners according to rigidly applied categories. Thus, learners who experienced learning difficulties because of severe poverty did not qualify for educational support. In addition, only those learners with organic, as well as medical disabilities gained access to support programs (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 1).

Furthermore, it also appears that learners experience barriers to learning or drop out primarily because of the inability of the system to recognise and accommodate their diverse learning needs, typically because of inaccessible physical plants, curricula, assessment, learning materials and instructional methodologies (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 2.1.2).

It is against this background that White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 2.1.11) aims to ensure increased and improved access to the education and training system for those learners who experience the most severe forms of learning difficulties and are most vulnerable to exclusion. To affect this, White Paper 6 provides for the conversion of some schools into special schools and so expands accessibility and provision of education to all. White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 2.2.3.3) also envisions that access for learners with special educational needs be expanded to give access to disabled learners within neighborhood schools alongside their non-disabled peers.

In addition, White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 1.5.3) also proposes that the curriculum be made more flexible across all bands of education so that it is accessible to all learners, irrespective of their learning needs. In realising this, White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 3.6.1) proposes funding strategies that will ensure access to education for all learners. In addition, White Paper 6 (2001: Chapter 2 2.7.2) highlights the importance of all students having access to the general education curriculum.

In making schools and institutions of learning more accessible to learners with special educational needs, White Paper 6 (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 2.2.6.6) promises to work together with the Department of Public Works, and try and make a special effort to develop sites of learning that provide physical access to most learners - in terms of buildings and grounds.

Accessibility will also be expanded to make sure that materials and equipment, devices such as hearing aids and wheelchairs, will be made progressively accessible and available to those learners who cannot gain access to learning, because of a lack of appropriate resources (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 2.2.6.7).

3.4 Key strategies for establishing special schools

According to White Paper 6 (2001: Chapter 1.5.6.1-2), special schools will be established to serve as resource centers, which are to provide specialised professional support to the needy learners. These resource centers should be integrated into District Based Support Team (DBST) for further assessment and support of learners experiencing barriers to learning. In this regard, a responsibility is also placed on parents at home and educators at school to play a more significant role in identifying, assessing and supporting learners with specific needs. It is so that well established special schools assist in the mobilization of those disabled learners and young people of school going age who dropped out of school and so create an opportunity for them to be included in a special school.

According to the Ministry of Education, (White Paper 6, 2001: Chapter 2.2.1.1), advisory bodies will be needed for their expertise in the implementation of policies like the South African Schools Act (1996) and the education White Paper 6 on special needs education (2001). The policies provide guidance for the admission of learners and provide overcoming the causes and effects of barriers to learning. White Paper 6 (2001: chapter 2.2.1.2) also provides for the collaboration of other departments like Department of Health and the Department of Social Development. It is anticipated that these departments will assist in designing and the implementation of programs that help identify learners on time for support in teaching and learning. Furthermore, special schools must be developed in such a way that they are barrier free for learners with barriers to assist learner's independence, not only at school, but in the community as well.

As a follow-up to the above, Chapter 3 of the Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education also encourages advocacy of acceptance of learners that experience barriers to their learning (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 3). Advocacy of inclusive education ensures that all learners are included in the education and that no one is excluded because of their impairments. Advocacy also helps with public awareness to ensure that people have facts and that information is not based on stereotypes. Advocacy is important for the success of

any program or a project, this will assist in mobilization of out of school youths of school going age.

In this regard, it is the responsibility of the school governing body to help create a conducive school climate in their school. Such a climate should help encourage the advocacy activities and the attendance of school by learners who are experiencing barriers to learning.

3.4.1 Key strategies and level for establishing and maintaining special needs schools

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, (1996, Chapter 2: Section 29 (1)(a)) states that everyone has the right to basic education. This is confirmed by the Education White Paper 6 (2001: Chapter 1.5.6.2), which encourages mobilization of out of school children and youths of school going age to ensure that all learners are given the equal opportunity of attending school. In Section 1.5.6.1 of the White Paper 6, it says the special schools must improve to become resource centers that will provide expertise and professional support.

3.4.2 Advocacy

Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education encourages advocacy of acceptance of learners that experience barriers to their learning (RSA-DoE, 2001: Chapter 2.2.7.2). Advocacy of inclusive education ensures that all learners are included in the education and that no one is excluded because of their disabilities. Advocacy also helps with public awareness to ensure people have facts and that information is not based on stereotypes. Advocacy is important for the success of any program or a project, this will assist in mobilization of out of school youths of school going age.

In this regard, it is the responsibility of the school governing body to help create a conducive school climate in their school. Such a climate should help encourage the advocacy activities and the attendance of school by learners who are experiencing barriers to learning.

3.4.3 Silences

The White Paper 6 (2001) is about inclusion and disabilities, yet it is very silent about skills development even though one would expect that for learners with intellectual impairment, skills development would be the best option. The SASA (1996) is not clear about the parental involvement in the case of learners with intellectual impairment, even though for

such learners' parents must be fully involved and making sure learners get full support at home and at school. Pronouncements to this effect is important, because learners with intellectual impairment must get support from home for their performance to improve, because education is the responsibility of all relevant stakeholders, namely the teacher, parent and the learner.

3.5 Implications for implementation

As the supreme law of the country, The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) supersedes all other laws and as such has implications for education in the country. Amongst these are the responsibility placed on education to build a nation and upholding values that will ensure justice for all and improve the dignity of South Africans. This responsibility is further articulated in Chapter 2 where the Bill of Rights requires education to promote, protect and advance basic human rights such as the right to education, equity, non-discrimination, equality, human dignity and privacy (Joubert, 2015:18-19). It is against this background that SA education is required to create an environment and school climate where these rights of learners with intellectual impairment is protected, respected and promoted.

Furthermore, White Paper 6 also requires that SIAS procedures be implemented. SIAS provides the basic guidelines on early identification and support, the determination of nature and level of support required by learners, and identification of the best learning site. The Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) (Department of Education 2011) provide practical guidance to school managers and teachers on planning and teaching to meet the needs of a diverse range of learners.

The framework for an inclusive education system is laid out in Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (Department of Education 2001). The scope of this policy is broad as it attempts to address the diverse needs of all learners who experience barriers to learning. The policy calls for a significant conceptual shift that is based on the following premises:

- The policy asserts that to make inclusive education a reality, there needs to be a conceptual shift regarding the provision of support for learners who experience barriers to learning, and
- The National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS); (Department of Education 2008) guides inclusive education policy by defining the process of identification, assessment, and enrolment of learners in special schools, and it curbs the unnecessary placement.

3.6 Conclusion

The focus of this chapter was on the analyses of SA education policies, the Education White Paper 6 Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001). This policy was analysed to discern what it broadly pronounces on the governance of schools for learners with special educational needs, for schools of learners with intellectual impairment. In the next chapter the researcher will report on the findings of the empirical part of this study.

Chapter 4

Empirical research findings

4.1 Introduction

In line with the objectives of this study, in Chapter Three, the researcher explored certain pronouncements in Education White Paper 6 Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001) which, as a policy focusing on special needs education, is supposed to guide the establishment of schools for the intellectually impaired learners. This was done to realise the aim of this study, which is to investigate the establishment and governance imperatives of a school for the intellectually impaired learners. However, to come to a clearer understanding of what the perceptions of people are regarding the establishment and governance imperatives of schools for intellectually impaired learners are, an empirical investigation needs to be conducted. The focus of this chapter will be on the findings of the empirical investigation conducted to investigate the realities with regards to the establishment challenges of governance of schools for learners with intellectual impairment.

However, before the researcher reports on the findings of this study, she will first give an overview of the research method employed during this leg of the study.

4.2 Interviews

Interviews are regarded as the effective method of gathering information. Niewenhuis (2010:87) defines an interview as a two-way conversation where questions are posed and answers given. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:205) regard an interview as a vocal questionnaire, which will ensure that one acquires all the questions answered. Interviews are advantageous as it enables one to use probing questions to obtain more from the interviewee for the benefit of the research process (Bombaro, 2012:35). Moreover, in interviews, a researcher has direct control over the flow of the primary data collection process and have a chance to clarify certain issues during the process as a need arises. In

this way one can collect detailed information about the topic under investigation. In addition, an interview is a participant orientated activity, hence their responses are very important to the researcher and they make the interview effective.

Booyse, Le Roux, Seroto and Wolhuter, (2011:21) suggest that interviews allow one to get first-hand information from the primary sources as the eyewitness sources, where information is gathered from people who were involved in the event. Seidman (2012:81) emphasises that in an interview the participant must do most of the talking. Not only will interviews allow the researcher to learn more about specific events, it will also enable me to gain deeper insight into people's interior experiences, specifically how people perceived and how they interpreted their perceptions (Greenberg, 2009:105).

In this research, semi-structured interviews were used. This interview method has features of both structured and unstructured interviews and therefore the interviewer can use both open and closed questions (Clark, Flewitt, Hammersley and Robb, 2014:136). Whilst semi-structured interviews also allow one to ask questions in any order, it also holds the benefit that information is easy to analyse as the format allows the interviewer to compare notes on the views and opinions and also minimises biasness (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014:188).

The researcher regards semi-structured interviews as relevant for this study since they are flexible as they allow different ways of conducting the research (Kambereli and Dimitriadis, 2013:8) The primary advantage of interviews is that they provide much more detailed information, which is what is needed in a research compared to what is available through other data collection methods (Wimmer and Dominick, 2013:87). Interviews were conducted after school so as not to interfere with the normal functioning and tuition programme of the school.

4.3 Participant selection

For the interviews, the researcher used purposeful sampling, which is an example of non-probability sampling. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:138) define purposeful sampling as

a selection method where the researcher selects participants from the population that will be information rich to address the purpose of the research.

The researcher collected data from participants involved in a newly established school for learners with intellectual impairment. Interviews were conducted with 2 members of the steering committee. The purpose of interviewing these participants was to explore, from their perspective, the governance imperatives of this newly established school and the possible challenges they are facing. One parent whose child is enrolled at the school, but who is not a member of the steering committee, was also interviewed. This parent was selected to give his or her insights and views about the governance of the special school. In addition, 1 educator, who is not on the SMT of the school, was also interviewed. The selection of the teacher is justified on the basis that he/she will assist in informing us what educator's expectations are or what the governance realities are concerning the establishment of a school for learners with intellectual impairment. Lastly, the principal of the school, as the ex-officio member of the steering committee, was also be interviewed. The principal is responsible for managing the school and as such he or she is assumed to have valuable knowledge and information about what is happening in the school or what should take place at the school. The interviews were therefore conducted with the principal to get an understanding of his/her experience with regards to the establishment of a school for learners with intellectual impairment. In short, the reason for interviewing these participants was to get their views and experience with regards to governance imperatives of the school for the intellectually impaired learners. In total, the participants comprised of 2 males and 3 females. The interviews were conducted at the school.

4.4 Research site

The research site is a newly established special school for intellectually impaired learners. The school is situated in the Joe Gqabi District in the Eastern Cape Province. It is a fairly new school that started to operate in 2017. The school houses 80 learners, and 3 educators (including the principal), 14 support staff and 7 members of the steering committee who are responsible for the governance, management and administration of the school and for

assisting with the learners. Since it is a newly established school, it has no School Governing Body, rather the steering committee performs the functions of the Governing Body.

4.5 Data analysis

Data analysis is the interpretation of what was collected (LeCompte and Schensul, 2013:16). Data analysis also focuses on the different methods that the researcher will use to analyse and interpret collected data (LeCompte and Schensul, 2013:17). This is done with the aim of addressing the objectives of the study. In qualitative data analysis, the main aim is to understand reasons behind actions, it is also important to get different views, as we get information from the people involved and reasons why things happened the way they did (Bernard and Ryan 2010: 72). There are different types of data analysis methods; for this research, thematic data analysis was followed. Thematic analysis will be employed in order to identify particular themes from the data. It is assumed that the themes will assist in answering the following question; what are the realities with regards to the establishment imperatives on governance in schools for learners with intellectual impairment and to realise the subsequent objective which is to investigate the realities regarding the establishment imperatives for governance of schools for learners with intellectual impairment. There are policies that inform the governance of South African schools and schools for intellectually impaired learners. This research question has reference on the realities regarding the establishment of imperatives for governance of special school for intellectually impaired learners.

4.6 Research ethics

Although ethical considerations were highlighted in chapter one (cf.1.7), it is important that a brief overview is given of the ethical aspects the researcher considered during the interviews. The aim of doing research ethics is to protect all the research participants, securing their privacy and confidentiality by ensuring that participants' identity is always kept confidential, as respecting their views, will be a priority in the process. This is done by representing participants by numbers and not by their names. In a qualitative research, the

ethical principles that form part of the research are issues like honesty and trustworthiness between the interviewer and interviewees (Alvesson, 2014:14).

Ethical considerations also protect the basic human rights of participants. For this part of the study, the researcher first had to apply for permission to conduct research at the special school from the Eastern Cape Department of Education (see Annexure A). This empirical part of the research only commenced after the researcher received permission from the Eastern Cape Department of Education (see Annexure B). The researcher personally spoke to, and got verbal permission from, the principal after she explained the nature of her study and the aims and objectives thereof to him/her. The researcher also gave him/her a copy of the letter permitting her to conduct the research and the school also responded in writing (see Annexure C). Similarly, the researcher first asked and got verbal permission from all the other participants which was followed up with a written request that was sent to the school. The researcher submitted the same copy of the letter which was submitted to the department of education, to the school and the other participants, requesting permission to conduct interviews at the school and with them. All the participants were requested and strongly advised not to mention or to refer to any names during the interview to ensure confidentiality. Not only did the researcher make sure that no participant was harmed during the interview, but she also assured participants of their right to withdraw at any time from the interview or research process. In order to protect the identity of the participants, pseudonyms were used: the steering committee members are the chairperson, participant 1 and the other steering member as participant 2, the parent is participant 3, the teacher participant 4, the principal is participant 5.

4.7 Findings

In this section, the researcher reports on her research findings. These findings are presented according to the themes identified from the data on the basis of research questions and objectives. The themes identified are: need for a special school; understanding of intellectual impairment; functions of a school for intellectually impaired learners; need for governance structures; support needed; qualities of potential SGB

members; challenges experienced by newly established special schools; responsibilities of the governance structure; and community involvement.

4.7.1 Need for a special school

Although participants gave various reasons, their responses were trying to respond to the last question that talks about the establishment imperatives of a special school for intellectually impaired learners. All of them indicated that indeed there is a need for a special school in their area. In this regard participant 1 indicated that there are *too many learners in the area and there are no special schools*. Similarly, participant 2 also said *there are disabled children and there is no school suitable for them around us*. Participant 3 also agreed that there was a need for special school by indicating yes *there is a need because many kids need special care*. The views of these participants were confirmed by participants 4 and 5 who respectively confirmed the need for such a school *because there are many learners with challenges and special schools are far from our area and there is a population of disabled learners in this area*.

Participant 1 further elaborated by saying *parents do not have full knowledge of how to take care of the learners and parents are so stressed by the situation they find themselves in*. The need is further based on the community's *high hopes that in a special school learners will get full support and live a normal life*.

From the responses, it seems that there is indeed a need for a special school in the area. This need is informed by the many learners in the area who apparently need special care, the apparent lack of facilities to cater in the demand and the apparent inability of parents to care for these learners. What furthermore transpires from the responses is that parents hope that the special school will contribute in the intellectually impaired learners, living normal lives.

4.7.2 Understanding of intellectual impairment

For participant 1 intellectually impaired learners *think slow compared to other learners of their ages*, and that the learner's *understanding is different from that of other learners*. According to participant 2, intellectually impaired learners *cannot cope with what other*

learners of the same age can do. For participant 5 intellectual impairment meant *that the intellectuality does not function well to the learner's level compared to their age and peers.*

From the responses above, it seems that participants associated intellectual impairment with thinking and coping skills, as well as intellectual capabilities. Participants also seem to draw heavily on comparisons with the average learner in their determination of what intellectual impairment entails. Their conceptualization of impairment is also influenced by social expectations, because they indicated that such learners do not behave according to the expected level of the society.

4.7.3 Functions of a school for intellectually impaired learners

Participants appear to have different expectations of a school for intellectually impaired learners. For participant 1 the school must be able to *train learners so that they can be able to use their gross motor skill and other parts of their bodies and develop skills for their survival in the future.* For participant 2 the school must be a place where *educators can work very closely with the disabled learners.* Participant 3 furthermore indicated that such schools *function differently from mainstreams; they are more helpful to learners [and learners] can even learn from one another.* For Participant 4 the school *should accommodate all the learners depending on their IQ levels as they all have different abilities and skills.* In addition, participant 5 suggested that the special school must *function different from mainstream in terms of the curriculum layout and coverage, learner's involvement, welfare, time allocation and timetable itself must be different.*

Generally, participants seem to agree that a school for intellectually impaired learners should function differently than mainstream schools and that it should cater for the intellectually needs of the learners. Participant 1 *suggested that from the community we should look for people who have interest, need work, to help mobilize funds for the school.* Participant 2 said *the school governing body members should take care of everything at the school including the structures and the surroundings.*

4.7.4 Need for governance structures

All participants agreed that there is a need for governance structures in such schools. For participant 1 governance structures are needed *because this is a normal school with learners*

and employees and therefore the governance structure will assist in the needs of the school. Participant 2 believes that governance structures play a major role in education of learners and that the Constitution of the country will be followed accordingly with the help of the governance structures. Whilst participant 3 believes that a governance structure will support the educators, as educators need assistance on a lot of things for the smooth running of the school, participant 4 wants a governance structure to assist in the smooth running and governing the finances from the government. Participant 5 believes there is a high need because a special school is a government school like any other government school therefore policies must be followed.

About the composition of such a structure, participant 4 indicated that it must comprise of therapists and officials from the Department of Education. Participant 5 said the governance structure should be formed by parents, including the impaired people so that they can fight for the rights of learners, however learners at school cannot form part as they are not able to make informed decisions. Participant 3 also indicated that teachers should be part of the governing structure of the school because they spend most of their working hours with the learners in class taking part in some activities or in sport, helping them in decision making.

In terms of how schools for the intellectually impaired should be governed, is it the view of participant 1 that such schools should be governed differently, and that governance should be from people with the full understanding about intellectual impairment coupled with the interest to the learners with challenges. Participant 5 supports the view of participant 1 and stated that special schools must be governed the same like other schools, because these schools follow the same policies, and that staff development and rights of learners are the same in all the schools. However, participants 2 and 3 hold different views, as they state that special schools should be governed like other schools, because a special school is a school like other schools. Participant 4 also stated that special schools should be governed differently because they deal with different learners, experiencing different impairments.

4.7.5 Support needed

Participant 1 believes there is a need for resources like a school vehicle, therapists, a clinic in the school yard and the specific equipment that will train the gross motor and fine motor

skills. Participant 2 indicated that such a school would need financial support that are the same in all the schools irrespective of whether a school is a mainstream or a special school. For participant 3 it is important that special schools are supported with and by stakeholders who have specific knowledge of dealing with learners with intellectual impairment and staff to be fully capacitated. Participant 4 indicated that support in the form of workshops to the support staff and educators will assist in dealing with learners. Such training would be important as most educators have basic teacher training. Participant 4 also expressed the view that school structures should be able to suit the needs of learners in terms of ramps, the clinic with nurses employed to assist learners with epilepsy and a therapy room. Participant 5 believes that the special schools have more needs and therefore they need more finances compared to mainstream [schools]; this will assist in the subsidy of assistive devices for the welfare of learners.

Participant 3 raises an issue when she says that learners should not be made to notice they have an impairment and are different from other learners and that they should not be called by discriminating names. Participant 4 further said that classrooms need assistant educators because of the ration, which is 1:10.

4.7.6 Qualities of potential SGB members

Participant 1 is of the view that a member of the SGB should be in possession of a grade 12 qualification as the minimum requirement, [must] love the learners, [and] must be mentally sound and stable. For participant 2, such a person must at least read and write, [and] be a responsible parent who is passionate about the development of the school. Participant 3 also feels that SGB members should be people who are passionate about intellectual impairment and have the understanding that intellectual impaired learners are human beings and they can do their best. Similarly, participant 4 opined that SGB members must be passionate, patient, very honest, can read, be willing to learn, be a creative person who will develop learners so that they can survive in the future when they leave the school. Participant 5 also said, that it must be parents of learners at the school who have passion about disabilities, it could be different stakeholders, forums for impaired people who know and understand the rights for disabled people, officials with interest, qualities and the potential to be part of the SGB.

Based on the responses above, people in the governance structure must have some qualities. This explains that this is not a task that can be tackled by anybody, but it must be someone with specific qualities, ranging from passion for learners, a minimal level of literacy; that is little education, which is also important to be able to assist. The needs and support needed, vary from more financial support for getting enough devices and making sure the infrastructure is conducive to the needs of learners. Capacitation of all staff members, professional and non-professional is highly needed.

4.7.7 Responsibilities of the governance structure

Concerning the responsibilities of the governance structure, is it the view of participant 1 that governance structures should *focus on school finances, to mobilize learners, monitor how the support staff is working, looking at their job descriptions, and link the community with the school*. For participant 2 the governance structure of such a school should *perfect the running of the school, they should monitor educators, attend meetings at the school and most importantly support the principal and generally take care of everything done at school*. Although participants 3 indicated that governors *should be responsible for everything taking place around the school*, he/she expressed certain reservations *as distance is always a challenge because parents do not live around the school*. Participant 4 also indicated that the governance structures should be responsible *for everything happening within the school premises, this should include damages and danger to the learners and employees and the finances of the school*. Participant 5 responded by saying *they should take care of the learner's welfare, functions of the school without harm to kids, proper resources to be used and suit the learners needs*.

4.7.8 Challenges experienced by newly established special schools

Challenges that participant 1 experiences are that, *all members have no knowledge about intellectual impairment and were never trained*. A challenge participant 2 is confronted with is that *the community does not accept the school and they do not understand the disabilities*. For participant 3 the main challenge appears to be the timeous availability of resources: *resources that are not available on time, infrastructure takes longer due to the procedures of the government that needs to be followed*. Participant 5 also mentioned that *structures are not proper for the disability since the school was converted from an ordinary mainstream*

into a special school, the delays in the financial assessment of government personnel and the awareness to the community where the school is. Furthermore, administration issues are also a serious problem and disable the functionality of the school.

In addition to the above, participants also identified various other challenges they are faced with. According to participant 1 *the distance from the school to all makes things difficult for everyone as the parents are not able to avail themselves regularly to school.* Participant 2 indicated that *the learners do not have equipment, there is a serious shortage of personnel and available educators need more training on how to deal with learners.* Participant 5 suggested that it is not easy to manage the newly established school, because *the school is blended as everything is under one roof. In addition, the administration has a lot of staffing needs, while learner's problems including their sicknesses or impairments needs time and knowledge ... what is worse is that parents hide some information concerning the health of their children ... so one must be a first aider for all and expect anything at any time.*

Despite the challenges, they are currently facing, participants seem to be optimistic about the effectiveness of SGBs at their school. Participant 5 indicated that the SGB will be effective if *parents and therapists are equipped and understand the learners.* In the same vein participant 1 said *governance is the same irrespective of the type of school therefore he said it will function well.* Participant 2 said *it will function if the school is given rules and policies followed by workshops even though coming to school regularly will be vital they must monitor the school and cooperate with the principal for the functionality of the school.* Participant 4 indicated that the governance structure currently at the school is *functional and they give us all the necessary support and advice.* Participant 5 endorsed the view of participant 4 by stating that the *governance structure at the school is proper, supportive and functional.*

4.7.9 Community involvement

Participant 1 feels that the community should be involved, because *they should be an eye in the school, assist in the school garden, can verify learners in the community to ensure learners are not deprived of their rights.* Participant 2 said *community members can do a lot if they are asked to assist and do things as expected by the governmental policies.*

Participant 3 indicated that parents should be involved in the governance of the school, because *it is important so that the community can know that intellectual impaired learners have skills developed by the school and therefore parents can bring their own children along and let them mix with other learners.* According to participant 5 the community can be involved by being *part of the structures, form part of information sharing sessions, be invited to awareness campaigns, be allowed to work on site, this will create jobs and good relations with the community.* Participant 4 also indicated that the community can be involved by being given the chance to *work in the school garden and those with plumbing skills can assist the school and develop the learners.* This, participant 5 believes, would *secure the safety of the school and prevents vandalism during school holidays.*

There seems to be a willingness on the part of some participants to form part of the governing structure of such a school. This is evident in the response of participant 3 who indicated that he/she would like to be part of the governance because *the school is about their own children, and it would help him as a person and a parent of an intellectual impaired learner to understand more about the disability not only for his child alone but for other children as well.* Participant 4 also responded that she would like to be part of the governance structure of the special school, because *assisting other people is her passion, and she likes to explore, in so doing she learns from other people, respecting and learning other cultures as well other languages.* However, participant 3 expressed a need for *guidance and support on how to do things and follow the policies correctly.*

Participant 1 *suggested that from the community we should look for people who have interest, need work, to help mobilize funds for the school.* Participant 2 said *the school governing body members should take care of everything at the school including the structures and the surroundings.*

4.8 Presentation of findings

The purpose of conducting the interviews was to try and answer the research question, it appears that intellectual impairment is a serious challenge in the community and surrounding area where the research was conducted. Respondents indicated that there was

indeed a serious need for a school for learners with intellectually impaired learners. This need seems to stem from the fact that there are too many learners of school going age who are intellectually impaired and who are not and cannot, for various reasons, be accommodated in mainstream schools or in special schools, due to the shortage of the latter.

There is therefore a need for the government to build special schools that function as resource centers to support learners with barriers to learning in general, but also those learners with intellectual impairment. Participant 1 justified the need for a school for intellectually impaired learners on the hopes of the community and the parents of this area that their disabled children will be able to live normal lives. What also came out from the interviews is a concern by some participants that the community does not accept the school and have no understanding of intellectual impairment.

In terms of the kind of support a governance structure would need, participants indicated that such a structure would need financial support, infrastructure and training.

Respondents also indicated that the governance of special schools should not be different from that of other schools, because all schools are governed by the same national policy and legislative framework, except for policies that are specific to special schools. In this regard, it was also the view of respondents that special schools must have a governance structure like all other schools. Furthermore, all respondents suggested that the people in the governance structure of such a school should be committed to the development of the school for the benefit of the learners; they should care and look after the children and look after the infrastructure of the school. Although some participants believe that people with a passion for disabled learners should serve on the governance structure of the schools, as others expect such people to at least have some basic level of education to be able to do basics like understanding policies and finances of the school. The participants' view about the composition of the governance structure for a school for learners with intellectual impairment, is that such a structure should comprise of various people such as therapists, officials from the Department of Education, parents, and impaired people.

When it comes to their understanding of what intellectual impairment means, they all had different views about what intellectual impairment entails. For some it is about how learners' reason and the extent to which they can do the same things their peers can do or what society expects from them, while others view it as a gift from God and how learners behave generally.

The researcher's findings also suggest that stakeholders have different expectations pertaining to the responsibilities, governance structures of a school for intellectually impaired learners, should perform.

Participants agreed that parents and the broader community should be involved in the governance of the school, and in other school matters. Such involvement will assist the community in understanding what intellectual impairment is and how a school for such learners should be governed. Some participants believe the community can be involved by being employed at the school. Some participants also highlighted some challenges they experience with the governance of the school. These challenges range from a lack of resources to administrative issues. They have different ways of understanding the reason why special schools must be established. When it comes to the issues that relates to the government's responsibility like the funding of the school, all participants feel the government should do more for the special school. Participants suggested that a governing structure at the school should assist in managing the funds of the school. There is a feeling that the budget should be more, because some learners have needs that require a bigger budget due to their medical conditions. Participants also share the same sentiments, that a governance structure will have a lot of work to do to improve the standard of this newly established special school in the rural area that does not have a quality special school. Furthermore, it also appears that those interviewed during the study, are keen to assist in the governance of the special school. Despite their willingness to assist in the governance of the school, some participants raised their reservations about the availability of other parents to serve on a school governance structure. This is largely because of their proximity to the school as many parents with disabled learners live scattered and far away from the

school. However, participants feel that if supported and trained, a governing structure will be effective and of value to the school.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter was based on research methodology. It focused on the method used for the research. The qualitative research method was discussed in deeper details for this research. Research design was also discussed with more focus on ethnography. Data were collected through interviews from the five members who make the steering committee, an educator, the principal and a parent. Reasons for conducting interviews were outlined. Sampling was defined, sampling of participants with and reasons for sampling were discussed. Before data was collected, the research ethics were discussed. Data was collected in the form of interviews and analysed. After interviews were done, analysis of data followed. Based on the analysis, the researcher finally presented the findings. The final chapter will focus on the summary of previous chapters, conclusion of the research will be done and some recommendations will be made concerning the establishment imperatives for governance of a school for learners with intellectual impairment.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This study aimed at exploring the establishment imperatives for governance of a school for learners with intellectual impairment.

Informed by the above stated aim, the following objectives were pursued:

- To determine the nature and extent of governance in education.
- To investigate the policy directives concerning governance of South African schools for special educational needs in general and intellectual impairment in South African education.
- To investigate the realities regarding the establishment imperatives for governance of schools for learners with intellectual impairment.
- To make comments on the establishment imperatives for governance of special schools for learners with intellectual impairment.

These objectives were realized in the various chapters of which are as follows:

- In Chapter 2 an exposition of the various literature on school governance and intellectual impairment was given.
- Chapter 3 provided a brief analysis of relevant policy documents aimed at investigating the policy directives, concerning governance of South African schools for special educational needs in general and intellectual impairment in South African education. In this regard, the researcher drew heavily on the Education White Paper 6 Special needs Education: Building an inclusive education and training system (2001) for insights into policy pronouncements on special schools. Whilst policies do not function and exist in isolation, the researcher also relied on various fundamental SA education policies such as SASA, WP1 and WP2 to inform her understanding of the SA education policy context.

- In Chapter 4 the researcher investigated through interviews, the realities regarding the establishment imperatives for governance of schools for learners with intellectual impairment. In this chapter the researcher also presented the findings of the empirical leg of this study.

In this last chapter, the researcher will present the conclusions of the study and conclude with certain comments on the establishment imperatives for governance of special schools for learners with intellectual impairment. These comments are geared towards answering the main research question of this study, which was: **What are the establishment imperatives for governance of a school for learners with intellectual impairment?** Conclusions are drawn from, and informed by, the previous chapters of this study. Although data analysis in Chapter 4 was done and presented thematically, and findings presented in the same way, in this chapter the researcher will present and discuss the data in a narrative form.

5.2 Discussion of findings

From the literature review it appears as if intellectually impairment is a global challenge with quite many of the learners displaying intellectually impairment (cf. 2.4.1). The interviews revealed that intellectual impairment was also a serious challenge in the community and surrounding areas, where this study was conducted (cf. 4.7). It appears as if the SA government realizes the extent of intellectual impairment, hence the development of WP6, which as a policy respond, caters amongst others, also for the needs of intellectually impaired learners (cf. 2.4.2).

Because of the rather high number of intellectually impaired learners in the community and surrounding area, participants in this study expressed a sincere need for government to build special schools that function as resource centers to support learner's barriers to learning (cf. 4.7). The policy analysis revealed that provision is made for the establishment of special schools to serve as resource centers, which are to provide specialised professional support to the needy learners (cf. 3.4). This is in line with tendencies in the

USA where intellectually impaired learners, depending on their needs, are also catered for in specialized schools (cf. 2.4.1).

However, participants expressed strong views with regards to the government's responsibility towards special schools for the intellectually impaired (cf. 4.7). In this regard, participants felt that government should make more funds available and do more for the special schools (cf. 4.7), because learners in these schools have needs that need to be catered for.

Although the literature seems not to yield any information on governance of specialized schools, it does provide that school governance is about the creation of a conducive teaching and learning environment (cf. 2.2.1). Likewise, SA policy documents seem not to distinguish between the governance of specialized schools and that of mainstream schools, as no evidence to this effect could be found (cf. 3.3.1). During the interviews, participants also suggested that the governance of special schools should not be different from that of mainstream schools (cf. 4.7). However, participants expressed a desire that those who are to be involved in the governance of special schools should be committed to the development of the school and should have a passion for learners with disabilities. They should also have some level of education for them to be able to do the basics like developing policies and managing the finances of the school (cf. 4.7). The interviews also revealed that participants expect people to be elected onto the governing body of a specialized schools to be able to perform various responsibilities in the governance of such a school (cf. 4.7), like *taking care of the structures and the surroundings* (cf. 4.7).

SA policies on school governance distinguish between core and allocated functions that the SGB are obliged to perform or might apply to perform (cf. 2.2.3). In addition, participants also indicated that different stakeholder's *forums for disabled people who know and understand the rights for disabled people, officials with interest* (cf. 4.7). This is in line with the stipulations of the policy, which makes provision for different stakeholders, in addition with parents, to form part of a school SGB (cf. 3.2.5.6). The call for school governors who are knowledgeable about their duties and responsibilities are in line with the literature who

indicate that SGBs in some schools lack the basic skills, knowledge and expertise to effectively execute their roles and responsibilities (cf. 2.4.4).

The policy analysis reveals that parents are supposed to make up the largest percentage of the representatives on the governing body (cf.2.2.1). However, from the interviews it appears as if the school in this study is located rather far from the community and that parents might have difficulty accessing the school (cf. 4.7). This holds a challenge to the governance of the school, as the composition of the school governing body is legally mandated (cf. 2.2.1).

Clear definitions on what intellectual impairment entails are found in the literature (cf. 2.4.2). In a similar vein, SA policy documents also clearly define intellectual impairment (cf. 2.4.2). However, from the interviews it appears as if the different participants have different understandings and conceptualizations of what intellectual impairment is all about (cf. 4.7).

SA education policies make provision for parents of learners and the broader community, to be involved in the governance of schools (cf. 2.2.1). Findings from the interviews show that participants support the idea and expect that parents and the community should be involved in the governance of a special school (cf. 4.7), as it will assist the community in understanding intellectual impairment and its governance (cf. 4.7). However, perceptions were also expressed that *the community does not accept the school and they do not understand the impairments* (cf. 4.7). This poses a challenge to the governance of the special school as school governance in SA assumes that the community in various ways, take part in the governance of schools that belong to them (cf. 3.2.5.6).

Although SA policy on governance clearly distinguish between governance and management (cf. 2.2.1), the two cannot function independently. This according to the literature review, which suggests that school governors need to support the school principal and staff to improve the school in general and school performance by advising, guiding and directing the principal on different issues (cf. 2.2.1).

Governance at the school could therefore also be seriously hampered by the management challenges faced by the school. In this regard participants raised issues like equipment and

personnel shortages, personnel training needs, and administration, which could hamper the effective functioning of the school (c.f. 4.7).

Participants also share the same sentiments that the government has a lot of work to do to improve the standard of this newly established special school in the rural area that does not have the qualities of a special school. The research divulged that educators should be more creative inside and outside the classroom for the support of learners experiencing barriers to learning. SA policies for the governance of schools make provision for the training of school governing bodies and members serving on these structures for them to effectively perform their responsibilities (c.f.3.2.5.4). In addition, SA policies also acknowledge that learners with special needs, like those with intellectual impairment needs special educational care (cf. 3.2.5.1). It is for this reason that WP6 makes provision for curriculum workers and specialists to support learning educators, the principal, and the medical practitioners, speech therapists, psychologists and social workers (cf. 3.2.5.1).

During the interviews, participants expressed the wish that government will plan and capacitate educators with relevant skills needed to support learners with challenges (cf. 4.7.).

5.3 Findings

From the preceding account, the following findings are made with regards to the governance imperatives of a school for intellectually impaired learners. The research questions were linked to the findings and supported by the researcher's views:

- (What is the nature and extent of school governance in the South African Education system?) That the location of newly developed schools might have an impact on the involvement of stakeholders, and parents in the governance of the school; if the school is established it is important that all relevant stakeholders be represented.
- (What policies inform governance in South African schools and schools for learners with intellectual impairment?) That parents must and want to form part of the governing structure of the school.

-That there is a perceived lack of governmental support to ensure that the school is effectively governed: Policies also confirm that parents must form part of the school governance.

- (What are the realities with regards to the establishment imperatives on governance in schools for learners with intellectual impairment?) That there is a shortage of special schools to provide in the needs and increasing number of learners with impairments.

-That some of the parents in the steering committee might not have the expertise, skills and knowledge to govern the school.

-That participants might not be sure about the difference between governance and management: it is clear, there could be plans and policies in place but the realities will always reveal what is happening; policies allow people a place to grow as some members might not be knowledgeable and therefore they must be capacitated so that policies are implemented effectively.

- (What comments could be made about the establishment imperatives of a special school for intellectually impaired learners?) That parents and people in general appears not to understand what intellectual impairment is all about.

-That communities around the school want to and need to be more involved in activities taking place in the school.

-That there are certain training needs both on the side of parents, as well as teachers; it is evident that development does not happen overnight.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the above findings the following corresponding recommendations are made:

- That newly established schools should be located closer to the community for parents to have access to these institutions and for them to be part of the governance structure of such schools; there is generally a shortage of special schools to provide for the needs of learners with impairments.

- The Department of Education should embark on more advocacy and training sessions to enhance people's understanding of intellectual impairment; this is confirmed by fact that parents and people do not understand what intellectual impairment is all about.
- More opportunities need to be created for the community around the school to be more involved in the activities taking place in and around the school; this is confirmed by the fact that communities around the school need to be involved in activities taking place in the school.
- The government needs to become more involved in the school, and make more resources, such as additional personnel and equipment available and increase its financial support to the school. Although raising additional money for the school is a governance function, in an area characterized by poverty, raising additional money for the school will be a difficult thing to do; as it is clear there is a lack of governmental support to ensure the school is effectively governed.
- There is a need for all the staff members, both professional and non- professional, to be trained on both school governance, as well as on how to deal with and support learners with intellectual impairment; because there are training needs for both parents and educators.
- The researcher therefore suggests that government do a thorough assessment of the extent of learner intellectual impairment so that recent and reliable statistics are available on which government is supposed to base their provision of schools for learners with impairment; the location of newly developed schools might have an impact on the involvement of stakeholders and parents in the governance of schools.
- Training of SGBs to perform their core (and or allocated) functions should therefore be strengthened and SGB members must be trained and skilled to be able to govern the school's finances and the infrastructure; that some of the parents in the steering committee might not have the expertise, skills and knowledge to govern the school.

5.5 Limitations of the study

This research was influenced by the fact that there are many learners with impairments that are out of school, because of their impairments, while some are misplaced in main stream schools without any academic progress. The problem that was picked up, was non-availability of special schools in Mount Fletcher. This research was challenged by the fact that there is very little information available on the governance of special schools, as well as schools for learners with intellectual impairment. Finding participants and getting them to take part in the study was also a challenge, especially when it relates to non-educator staff, parents and the steering committee members because they are not always at school. In addition, the transport of participants, who in this case stay very far from the school, to the school where the interviews were conducted, as well as the time of the interviews, posed challenges as the interviews could only be done after school to maintain order at the school.

The researcher also experienced that some of the research participants, such as public servants, appeared not to be comfortable and relaxed when discussing or had to disclose some of their concerns, as these issues relate to their jobs and the protocol does not allow them to expose or discuss the employer, which is the Eastern Cape Department of Education. This means that it is possible that the researcher only got portion of the reality and some information might have been concealed. Lastly, the researcher is also convinced that the ease with which the teachers participated in this study was influenced by the fact that as the primary researcher and the one who conducted the interviews, this researcher is also a departmental official, responsible for and overseeing special schools in the Mount Fletcher district.

5.6 Prospects for future research

This research only focused on the establishment imperatives for governance of a school for learners with intellectual impairment. The literature suggests that there is relatively little information available on the governance of special schools. The researcher therefore suggests further research on this topic to put forward sound recommendations to enhance the governance of these schools. Further research could also be done to investigate how

education in the democratic South Africa helps the intellectually impaired learners to cope well in the workplace with little support or total independence if possible, as grown-ups.

5.7 Conclusion

In South Africa, *the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (Act 108 of 1996) envisages that education is a human right and therefore no learner should be denied access to education. *The South African Schools Act* (1996) has echoed the right to education by outlining how schools should be governed as institutions for learning.

If policies articulate education as a right, then it means the government has the full responsibility to not only provide relevant learning institutions to all the learners, but also to make sure that such institutions are effectively governed by all people who have an interest in it. The aim of this study was to **explore, the establishment imperatives for governance of a school for learners with intellectual impairment.** From the research, the researcher concludes that there are certain **establishment imperatives that need to be in place for the governance of a school for learners with intellectual impairment.** **The** conclusion is that if those imperatives are not in place, the effectiveness of such a school will be jeopardized.

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APPENDIXES

ANNEXURE A – LETTER OF REQUEST



11 September 2017

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, the undersigned, hereby declare **Ms M.M. Nyamende**, student number **2016321826**, is a registered student in the Master's Degree in Governance and Political Transformation at the University of the Free State for 2017.

Please note that to successfully complete her mini-dissertation; Ms Nyamende needs to conduct research at Mount Fletcher Special School. Her topic is: ***What are the establishment imperatives for governance of a school for learners with intellectual impairments.***

Please be so kind as to allow her to conduct interviews and collect information in order to write her mini-dissertation. Also note that all the data collected will be used **solely** to compile an **academic** document.

If you have any queries in this regard, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0514012271.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Coetzee', written over a dotted line.

DR TANIA COETZEE
PROGRAMME DIRECTOR
PROGRAMME GOVERNANCE AND POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION
DEPARTMENT POLITICAL STUDIES AND GOVERNANCE
UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

205 Nelson Mandela Drive/Ryalaan, Park West/Parkwes, Bloemfontein 9301, South Africa/Suid-Afrika

P.O. Box/Posbus 339, Bloemfontein 9300, South Africa/Suid-Afrika, T: +27(0)51 401 9111, www.ufs.ac.za

Governance & Political Transformation, Internal Mailbox 123, Tel: +27(0)51 401 2271/9308

Fax: +27(0)51 401 9351, E-mail: governance@ufs.ac.za

ANNEXURE B – DEPARTMENTAL APPROVAL



Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
EDUCATION

STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY RESEARCH AND SECRETARIAT SERVICES

Steve Vukile Tshwete Complex • Zone 6 • Zwelitsha • Eastern Cape
Private Bag X0032 • Bhisho • 5605 • REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: +27 (0)40 608 4773/4035/4537 • Fax: +27 (0)40 608 4574 • Website: www.ecdoe.gov.za

Enquiries: B Pamla

Email: babalwa.pamla@ecdoe.gov.za

Date: 04 December 2017

Mrs Mercy Moleboheng Nyamende

Private Bag X 1133

Mount Fletcher

4770

Dear Mrs Nyamende

PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE A MASTERS THESIS: ESTABLISHMENT IMPERATIVES FOR GOVERNANCE OF A SCHOOL FOR LEARNERS WITH INTELLECTUAL IMPAIRMENT

1. Thank you for your application to conduct research.
2. Your application to conduct the abovementioned research involving 5 participants from Mt Fletcher Special School under the jurisdiction of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) is hereby approved based on the following conditions:
 - a. there will be no financial implications for the Department;
 - b. institutions and respondents must not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation;
 - c. you present a copy of the written approval letter of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) to the Cluster and District Directors before any research is undertaken at any institutions within that particular district;
 - d. you will make all the arrangements concerning your research;
 - e. the research may not be conducted during official contact time;
 - f. should you wish to extend the period of research after approval has been granted, an application to do this must be directed to Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation;

- g. your research will be limited to those institutions for which approval has been granted, should changes be effected written permission must be obtained from the Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation;
 - h. you present the Department with a copy of your final paper/report/dissertation/thesis free of charge in hard copy and electronic format. This must be accompanied by a separate synopsis (maximum 2 – 3 typed pages) of the most important findings and recommendations if it does not already contain a synopsis.
 - i. you present the findings to the Research Committee and/or Senior Management of the Department when and/or where necessary.
 - j. you are requested to provide the above to the Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation upon completion of your research.
 - k. you comply with all the requirements as completed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE document duly completed by you.
 - l. you comply with your ethical undertaking (commitment form).
 - m. You submit on a six monthly basis, from the date of permission of the research, concise reports to the Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation
3. The Department reserves a right to withdraw the permission should there not be compliance to the approval letter and contract signed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE.
 4. The Department will publish the completed Research on its website.
 5. The Department wishes you well in your undertaking. You can contact the Director, Ms. NY Kanjana on the numbers indicated in the letterhead or email nykanjana@live.co.za should you need any assistance.



NY KANJANA

DIRECTOR: STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY RESEARCH & SECRETARIAT SERVICES

FOR SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL: EDUCATION

ANNEXURE C – SPECIAL SCHOOL APPROVAL

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
MOUNT FLETCHER SPECIAL SCHOOL**



XAXAZANA A/A
MOUNT FLETCHER
4770



P.O. BOX 666
MOUNT FLETCHER
4770

Principal : 073 640 6703 Email: fuzmalembe@gmail.com

EMS : 200501604

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Re: recommendation for utilising our school and research

The school management and SGB has allowed Mrs M.M Nyamende student no 2016321826 to conduct interviews for purpose of her research. We have stressed that she must not disturb our tuition time, we agreed with her to work after hours.

Yours in quality
Mrs Fuzeka Mjikwa

Mount fletcher special school
P.o.box 666
Mount fletcher 4770
Principal 
Date 20/08/2018

ANNEXURE D - INTERVIEW TOOL

Interview questions

What are the realities with regards to the establishment imperatives on governance in schools for learners with intellectual impairment?

QUESTIONS TO THE STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1. Is there a need for special schools in this area? Why do you say so?
2. What does intellectual impairment mean to you?
3. What is your understanding of the functions of a school for intellectual impaired learners?
4. Do you think that schools for intellectual impaired learners need to have governance structures? Why?
5. Do you think special schools should be governed like other schools or differently? Why?
6. What **kind of SUPPORT? FINANCIAL, OR WHAT?** of support must be provided to special schools in general, and schools for intellectual impaired learners?
7. What qualities, according to you, should a potential member of the governance structure of a school for intellectual impaired learners have? In other words, who should be on the governance structure of such a school?
8. What should be the responsibilities of the governance structure of the school?
9. How legitimate are SGB's of special schools since most are boarding schools?
10. How do you suggest should the governance structure of schools for intellectual impaired be structured? Who do you think should all be on such the governance structure?
11. What do you experience to be the main challenges in the governance of this newly established special school?
12. How can **(or should)** the community be involved in the support of intellectually impaired learners? How should the community be involved?
13. What challenges do you foresee or experience with the governance of a school for intellectual impaired learners?
14. Do you think a SGB for a special school such as this, will function effectively? Why? Why not?

QUESTIONS TO A PARENT

1. Is there a need for special schools in this area? Why do you say so?

2. What does intellectual impairment mean to you?
3. What is your understanding of the functions of a school for intellectual impaired learners?
4. Do you think that schools for intellectual impaired learners need to have governance structures? Why?
5. Do you think special schools should be governed like other schools or differently? Why?
6. What **kind of SUPPORT? FINANCIAL, OR WHAT?** of support must be provided to special schools in general, and schools for intellectual impaired learners?
7. What qualities, according to you, should a potential member of the governance structure of a school for intellectual impaired learners have?
8. Do you think you possess those qualities to be an effective SGB member?
9. What should be the responsibilities of the governance structure of the school?
10. How legitimate are SGB's of special schools since most are boarding schools?
11. As a parent, who do you think should all be on (or not on) the governance structure of the school? Why? Why not?
12. As a parent, do you think parents should be involved in the governance of a special school?
13. As a parent, do you want to be on the governance structure of a school for intellectual impaired learners? Why? Why not?
14. Do you think other parents would want to be involved in the governance of such a school? Why? Why not?
15. As a parent, how can (**or should**) the community be involved in the support of intellectually impaired learner? How should the community be involved?
16. Do you think a SGB for a special school such as this, will function effectively? Why? Why not?

QUESTIONS TO THE EDUCATOR

1. Is there a need for special schools in this area? Why do you say so?
2. What does intellectual impairment mean to you?
3. What is your understanding of the functions of a school for intellectual impaired learners?
4. Do you think that schools for intellectual impaired learners need to have governance structures? Why?
5. Do you have a governance structure at your special school (at the school for intellectual impaired learners)? **Why not or how functional is it?**
6. Do you think special schools should be governed like other schools or differently? Why?
7. What **kind of SUPPORT? FINANCIAL, OR WHAT?** of support must be provided to special schools in general, and schools for intellectual impaired learners?

8. What qualities, according to you, should a potential member of the governance structure of a school for intellectual impaired learners have? In other words, who should be on the governance structure of such a school?
9. What should be the responsibilities of the governance structure of the school?
10. How legitimate are SGB's of special schools since most are boarding schools?
11. How do you suggest should the governance structure of schools for the intellectual impaired be structured? Who do you think should all be on such a governance structure?
12. Do you think that teachers should be part of the governance of special schools? Why? Why not?
13. As a teacher, would you want to be part of the governance of the special school?
14. How can (**or should**) the community be involved in the support of intellectually impaired learners? How should the community be involved?
15. Do you think a SGB for a special school such as this, will function effectively? Why? Why not?

QUESTIONS TO THE PRINCIPAL

1. Is there a need for special schools in this area? Why do you say so?
2. What does intellectual impairment mean to you?
3. What is your understanding of the functions of a school for intellectual impaired learners?
4. Do you think that schools for intellectual impaired learners need to have governance structures? Why?
5. Do you have a governance structure at your special school (at the school for intellectual impaired learners)? **Why not or how functional is it?**
6. Do you think special schools should be governed like other schools or differently? Why?
7. What **kind of SUPPORT? FINANCIAL, OR WHAT?** of support must be provided to special schools in general, and schools for intellectual impaired learners?
8. What qualities, according to you, should a potential member of the governance structure of a school for intellectual impaired learners have? In other words, who should be on the governance structure of such a school?
9. What should be the responsibilities of the governance structure of the school?
10. How legitimate are SGB's of special schools since most are boarding schools?
11. How do you suggest should the governance structure of schools for intellectual impaired be structured? Who do you think should all be on such the governance structure?
12. What do you experience to be the main challenges in the governance of this newly established special school?

13. How can **(or should)** the community be involved in the support of intellectually impaired learners? How should the community be involved?
14. What challenges do you experience with the governance of a school for intellectual impaired learners?
15. Do you think a SGB for a special school such as this, will function effectively? Why? Why not?

ANNEXURE E - ACRONYMS USED

- **SIAS** – Screening Identification Assessment and Support
- **SASA** – South African Schools Act
- **DBE** – Department of Basic Education
- **EMIS** – Education Management Information System
- **DoE** – Department of Education
- **SMT** – School Management Team
- **SEA** – Special Education Advisor
- **ISP** - Individual Support Plan
- **NGO** – Non-Governmental Organisation
- **SBST** – School Based Support Team
- **DBST** – District Based Support Team
- **CAPS** – Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
- **LSEN** – Learners with Special Education Needs
- **IDEA** – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act