EXPLORING HOW THE PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP CAPACITY INFLUENCES GOVERNANCE AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN THE RURAL SCHOOLS OF SEKHUKHUNE: A CASE STUDY OF TWO POOR PERFORMING SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Submitted by

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I Ntombizandile Dudu Frances Silulwane, hereby make an honest declaration that:

This mini-dissertation that I submit for the Master of Arts in Governance and Political Transformation at the University of the Free State on "exploring how the principal's leadership capacity influences governance and policy implementation in the rural schools of Sekhukhune: a case study of two poorly performing secondary schools" is my independent work, and that I have not previously submitted it for any qualification in any institution of higher education. I have complied with the ethical standards in terms of the University of the Free State Code of ethics for researchers. I also declare that all reference materials used for this study have been properly acknowledged.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ who assured me that in Him, battles can be conquered. I searched Him with all my heart, I found Him. When I trusted only Him, my strength was renewed. Glory unto the Almighty God!

To my family: My mother, Miriam, my six loving sisters and my nephews and nieces, your presence in my life and your support was commendable.

To my dearest son, Karabo Asipile Silulwane whose unending encouragements, support and understanding kept me going during this most challenging chapter of my life. Thankyou son!

I also extend this dedication to my two-little grand-daughters: Onakho Mgwebi and Umphiwe Silulwane for their love and demand for my attention as they are too young to understand my divided attention. I appreciate their love and support (in their own way), their presence, smiles and laughter encouraged me to push through. I sometimes felt that they were missing out on the motherly love and presence they deserved.

This road, I believe, we travelled together, and many thanks indeed.

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EDITING AND PROOFREADING CERTIFICATE

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This certificate serves to confirm that I have edited and proofread Ms NDF Silulwane's dissertation entitled, **"PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP CAPACITY INFLUENCE ON GOVERNANCE AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN THE RURAL SCHOOLS OF SEKHUKHUNE: A CASE STUDY OF TWO POORLY PERFORMING SECONDARY SCHOOLS"**.

I found the work easy and intriguing to read. Much of my editing basically dealt with obstructionist technical aspects of language, which could have otherwise compromised smooth reading as well as the sense of the information being conveyed. I hope that the work will be found to be of an acceptable standard. I am a member of Professional Editors' Guild.

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ABSTRACT

This research studied the principal's leadership capacity and how it influenced governance and policy implementation in the two poor performing rural secondary schools in the Sekhukhune District in the Limpopo province. The study focused on the leadership actions of the principals of these poor performing rural secondary schools when facilitating collaborative processes and collective decision making within the School Governing Bodies to ensure implementation of decentralised responsibilities and mandated directives of the department of education in South Africa. Leadership capacity and its effects on school systems was studied through document analysis to address assumptions that principals of poor performing secondary schools have leadership challenges and cannot lead teams and influence groups within their organisation. These schools have been poor performing below 40% for a period of five consecutive years. This study reviewed leadership activities and leadership types of principal leaders in their attempt to lead and guide school governance through SGBs towards provisioning of relevant support for quality education. The study also looked into the leadership of the principals to determine whether it was able to facilitate effective policy implementation through involvement of relevant stakeholders within these schools. The study has deemed it necessary to also review the level of support provided by the Sekhukhune District of Education to build capacity of these principal leaders so that they could improve learner performance. Contextual challenges that impacted negatively with the leadership capacity of these leaders were identified as reviewed from data collected and analysed. The findings showed that school principals had adequate leadership qualifications and experience that could have influenced school governance and other systems in these poorly performing schools. Results also showed that these two schools were fairly supported by the District but still challenges persisted and the schools continued to poorly perform. Insufficient monitoring and support for educators by the SMTs on curriculum recommendations from the district and high levels of learner ill-discipline might have impacted negatively on the performance of roles and might have resulted to learners performing poorly in the schools. The SGBs and parental involvement in school governance seemed not to have been sufficiently rendered. rendered and knowledge and understanding of legislation on school governance and implementation of policy directives in both curriculum and governance still needed some attention. The study further offered recommendations to assist the District in the implementation of leadership programmes that would be planned to further specifically for poor performing secondary school principals. Based on the studied documents, recommendations are provided to improve the leadership capacity of the principals in poor performing secondary schools ensuring that governance and policy implementation provide a conducive atmosphere for the delivery of quality education aimed at improving learner performance.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAPR   Annual Academic Performance Report

ACE   Advanced Certificate in Education

APIP   Academic Performance Improvement Plan

C 2005   Curriculum 2005

CA   Curriculum Advisor

CAPS   Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement

DBE   Department of Basic Education

District   Sekhukhune District

DMG   Deputy Manager for Governance

DoE   Department of Education

FAL   First Additional Language

FET   Further Education and Training

GAAP   Generally Accepted Accounting Principles

HoD   Head of Department of Education (Limpopo Department of Education)

HOD   Head of the Department (School)

IQMS   Integrated Quality Management Systems

LDoE   Limpopo Department of Education

LTSM   Learner Teacher Support Material

LPMSF   Limpopo Prescripts for Management of School Funds

NCS   National Curriculum Statement

NGOs   Non-Governmental Organisations

NNSSF   National Norms and Standards for School Funding

NSNP	National School Nutrition programme
NSC	National Senior Certificate
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
PAM	Personnel Administrative Measures
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
PLC	Principal's Leadership Capacity
QLTC	Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SA	South Africa
SAPS	South African Police Service
SASA	South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996
SDP	School Development Plan
SES	Senior Education Specialist
SEO	School Electoral Officer
SGBs	School Governing Bodies
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMTs	School Management Teams
TLC	Transformational Leadership Theory

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ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The post-apartheid era in South Africa (SA) did not only bring about changes in the social, economic and political arenas, but also brought magnitudes of radical and revolutionary changes that were aimed at transforming the education system (Jansen, 2004). After the fall of apartheid, South Africa had to insert itself into the rapidly changing world affected by globalisation and this was evident also in every education policy (Vally & Spreen, 2003; Jansen, 2004).

Because of the prevalent status in South Africa then, drastic and rigorous actions in education had to be taken to bring the country to the level of the world and that meant introduction of foreign policies to rescue the education system (Jansen, 2004). Against this background, new education legislations were enacted, mostly with borrowed features (Jansen, 2004), aimed to bring up to speed new changes that would react conclusively with the new demands of the new democratic state, which had inherited a fragmented education system.

The South African education system was further characterised by "very serious inequalities in the education funding, education content and organisation of public schools". (Jansen, 2004; Naidoo, 2005). This new and radical turn of events meant that new public-school systems and policies had to be introduced and amongst those was the South African Schools Act (SASA, 84 of 1996) which brought a revolution in the organisation and governance of schools (Naidoo,2005). SASA (1996) section 15 further accentuates the status of a public school as a' juristic person', performing its functions through a legally appointed School Governing Body (SGB), whose general functions aimed to promote the best interests of the school and ensure that quality education is provided in the South African schools (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2013:78). Joubert and Prinsloo (2013) further assert that when school governing bodies (SGBs) fail to render their services as mandated by the SASA (1996) directives, "the sense of co-ownership and co-responsibility will cease to exist". SASA (1996) in my view, has afforded parents of learners and the public a legal right to be clients

who should receive quality on services delivered by their schools through taking a firm stand and support in the education of their children. This move had serious implications for school leaders and communities whose flexibility and 'buy in' had to be evident through compassionate representation by parents of learners serving the people of the country in school governance.

The presentation of 'rural' secondary schools within this study denotes public schools situated in rustic and impoverished areas within Sekhukhune countryside in the Limpopo Province. These schools are characterised by a majority of learners whose parents are unemployed, uneducated and earning low levels of income.

This new era has placed a great demand for principal leaders who possess good qualities in leadership and management in its attempt to transform and redress schools. In the quest to compete with the global revolution within the education sphere, South African Government brought decentralisation of governance to all public schools (SASA,1996). With regard to Sekhukhune rural schools, the referred education legislations and the radical turn of events might have been of little help to principals. In an attempt for them to move according to the envisaged speed, they happen to miss some important steps and therefore become disconnected from leadership imperatives evident in continuous under-performance by some secondary schools.

Decentralisation brought about a policy shift where responsibilities, powers and authority have been cascaded down to individual schools and actioned through the SGBs (Naidoo, 2005). This shift has placed a magnitude of financial, social, political responsibility, and accountability to principal leaders and SGBs. SASA (1996) has also endowed a greater responsibility to stakeholders interested in education (public schools). These include sponsors, donors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), communities where schools are situated, and the government as a major stakeholder.

Sindhvad (2009) asserts that "shifting decision-making to those closer to the school and community leads to decisions that are more responsive to local conditions and needs". He further argues that in the absence of preparedness for this new level of authority and increased responsibility, "any educational value decentralisation may hold is lost". SGBs have been given authority and powers to make decisions, development and adopt policies,

utilise public funds through approved budgets, and set the strategic direction of their schools in consultation and close collaboration with other relevant stakeholders (SASA, 1996). In the absence of effective leadership capacity to guide their actions, schools are destined for failure.

Communities, political structures, parents of learners and other stakeholders interested in education have greater interest on the leadership skills possessed by principals who get appointed in their schools and this leads to very high expectations, where according to Murphy (1990), strong administrative leadership roles of principals have impact on learner achievement. The study assumes that above all the educators or teachers, there is the principal who is regarded by the government and the community as the head of the school and as a result his capacity to influence school governance and policy implementation is in the spotlight. These principals seem to be battling on their own, uninformed and sometimes possessing minimum qualifications to get the leadership jobs done and, in the process, some secondary schools continue to underperform.

Muhammad (2014:66) highlights the "challenge that developmental objectives are difficult to pursue in the absence of effective leadership". Here the principal's leadership skill is seen as a tool that should guide and drive the organisational imperatives and goals, putting in place strategies that work towards accentuating a governance rich atmosphere informed by policy implementation. Effective school leaders should not be afraid to try new strategies, explore new avenues or unchartered waters while utilising knowledge and skills of their teams in the quest to achieve positive reflectors that could enhance learner opportunities and maintain sustainable schools.

The continuing underperformance in grade 12 in the district of Sekhukhune reflects among other challenges a possibility that principal leaders are experiencing myriads of challenges that might be influencing performance rates in the South African education system. If these challenges are not researched and effectively addressed, the Sekhukhune District might continue to be faced with the problem where a greater number of secondary and primary schools remain poor performing and fail to deliver on the departmental imperatives of quality education and therefore impacting negatively to the economies of education.

In most schools in the district, learner performance is a problem even when systems are in place and being implemented. Principal leaders are seen as having insufficient capacity to lead schools once learners underperform. Sometimes it is evident that some schools are better than others and do things differently and one of the popular deciding factors to judge principals as leaders bearing capacity is based on learner performance (Marishane, 2016). Hallinger and Hack (2010) in their study's conclusions agree that "leadership contributes to learning through development of a set of structural and socio-cultural processes that define the school's capacity for academic improvement". School leaders in poor performing secondary schools should work closely with parents and the community in designing strategies and a creation of an atmosphere that would enable learners to achieve good results.

Toor and Ofori (2008) assert that leaders are "visionary, creative, flexible, experimental and able to initiate changes". Success in leadership is massively dependent on how well the vision has been sold to others; whether, simple and clearly understandable to those structures and teams that are responsible for running with it. Success is also dependent on whether available resources are maximally utilised, including also whether plans, policies and identified programmes collaborate in achieving the set vision.

The restructuring of the South African education system has put a lot of pressure on school principals who according to SASA (1996) as amended (16A), "represent the Head of Department when acting in an official capacity" within the governance of the school. With the continuous challenges of leadership capacity school principals are facing today, it remains a fracas to deliver on the expectations of the above mandate. The demand for principals who could turn around the current state of underperformance by some schools or fill vacant positions that had been left or created as the country was still grappling with the concept of transformation has plummeted significantly. A question that one still needs to ask might be the reason why South Africa is still grappling with this concept after 24 years of democracy, and whether leadership, governance, and transformation at school level do talk to one another. Principal leaders need constant support, capacitation, orientation, and programs tailored to suit their diverse school needs in order to create a 'tight fit' into these demanding positions and in the absence of relevant interventions, some principals find it difficult to lead schools towards high performance. Continuous and constant capacity training programs designed to boost principals to withstand the challenges and the demands

of the changing public education environment can never be overly emphasised. Some of the principals seem to be struggling to deliver on the imperatives of the Department of Education and fail short in their SGBs guiding role on the implementation of policies in the rural areas looking at the "low level of education of some SGBs" (Baloyi, 2015).

As deduced from the above exposition, it is evident that leadership capacity and the role of the principal are vital in leading a school to the desired direction which is an improved learner performance. Strengthening community-based collaboration and participation through stakeholder involvement and maintenance, and, the creation of conditions conducive for individuals to excel in their performance are responsibilities of a school leader functioning within an effective school governance.

In the context of the study, leadership roles refer to responsibilities, behaviours, expectations and activities that relate to principals as leaders. The success or failure rate of systems functioning within a school is deeply rooted within the leadership capacity of the principal.

There is currently a sparseness of literature concerning information on how the leadership capacity of the principal influences governance and policy implementation in rural schools in the Sekhukhune District. The study is worth conducting because no similar study has been conducted previously. This area of study is currently under-researched, in South Africa and in the world**.**

1.2 THE RATIONAL FOR THE STUDY

The amendment of SASA, No. 84 of 1996 through the insertion of section 16A affording public school principals with new functions and responsibilities raises a concern and has prompted me to conduct the study. The study highlights the extent leadership capacity of the principals' influence governance systems and policy implementation within underperforming rural secondary schools and the extent to which this influence impacts with learner performance. Principals need to be competent and effective in the deliverance of leadership imperatives irrespective of the areas in which the schools are situated, be it an urban, semi-urban or rural area. They have to also play a guiding role to school governing bodies and other role players in rendering a supportive role on fair delivery of quality education lest underperforming secondary schools continue to poorly perform thus compromising the delivery of quality teaching and learning in the schools.

The interest to conduct the study was initiated by the researcher's previous work experience as a governance official in the Sekhukhune District. Her work involved facilitating school governance directives, monitoring and supporting secondary and primary school principals and school governing bodies under her jurisdiction. The researcher detected some leadership inefficiencies and poor implementation of governance directives as some of the factors that might be contributing to ineffective school governance and poor learner performance as well as consistent poor performance by some schools in the district. Furthermore, School Governing Bodies recommend appointment of principals and sometimes without leadership or management experience or qualification and these recommendations lead to appointments into leadership positions where they are expected to lead functional schools in order to deliver good learner performance.

These challenges founded and prompted the researcher to investigate the leadership capacities of principals of continuous poor performing schools. Though SASA (1996) directives do not make mention of any leadership role of the principal, it was also important for me as the researcher to establish the effectiveness and the kind of leadership capacity building afforded to poor performing school principals by the district in their effort to fill the leadership gap. Theories of transformational leadership concur that leadership is vital in improving an organisation's performance through utilising individual and group capabilities (Hallinger,1992). Principals do not work in isolation. The School Management Team of each school in which the principal is also a member collaboratively lead and manage; guide and direct the school to the right direction which is mostly evident when learner performance is improved.

The effectiveness of monitoring and support provided by the district through curriculum advisers and governance officials, and the level of receptiveness of all role players concerned including learners in these secondary schools, also called for an inclusive study of the influence leadership capacity in poor performing secondary school contexts and its impact on governance and policy implementation.

I believe that the study's inputs will assist principals of secondary schools, School Governing Bodies in rural secondary schools, and the district in realigning their objectives and designing tailor made programmes that will improve learner performance in the poor performing schools. Generic programmes according to my belief might not bring the

envisaged results for poor performing schools who happen to have diverse school challenges.

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

In 2011, SASA (No. 84 of 1996) has, among its amendments and through the insertion of section 16A, afforded public school principals with new functions and responsibilities. These, among others, include the following:

Representing the Head of Department when acting in an official capacity within the governing body;

Preparing and submitting to the Head of Department an annual report in respect of the effective use of available resources; and, underperforming public schools have to annually, at the beginning of the year:

Prepare and present a plan setting out how academic performance at the schools will be improved;

The academic performance improvement plan must be, presented to the Head of Department; and, tabled at a governing body meeting.

For many years some of the poor performing secondary schools in the district continued to underperform despite the above directives. Challenges portrayed by some principals in poor performing secondary schools in the rural Sekhukhune District impact negatively with learner performance.

Participatory governance seems problematic in that sometimes when viewed from a distance, it seems to be informed by personal agendas and strong community influences that do not necessarily have genuine interests in providing quality services with the most influential people likely to enjoy more benefits than others. Principals should be guided to lead diverse groups towards a common goal which is to improve learner performance.

Sometimes school budgets are compiled but are never fully implemented to the latter (Baloyi, 2015) by some SGBs. Some parents serving in the SGBs are sometimes are not fully involved in the governance of their schools and are not well educated to possess

adequate knowledge and the will to support quality curriculum implementation. In rural schools some parents have a challenge of misunderstanding and misinterpreting policies and directives pertaining to financial management which is one of the core functions of school governance.

The Representative Councils of Learners (RCLs) sometimes seem not to be familiar with their responsibilities looking at the condition and high levels of vandalism and disrespect of some of our secondary schools and might not be fully assisting educators with the implementation of the code of conduct for learners. In addition, some parents and the community are not fully supportive towards their schools and in the education of their children, and, learner absenteeism and dropout rates are high as many school going children are loitering in the streets. Moreover, some school management teams (SMTs) are not fully conversant with their guiding, supporting and monitoring roles towards educators and integrated quality and management systems (IQMS) processes are sometimes minimally complied with and short-circuited or poorly implemented. If these processes could be well implemented, they could boost leadership capacity of some principals and educators as they are developmental in nature.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.4.1 Primary research question

Taking into consideration the continuous poor performance of learners in some rural schools in the Sekhukhune District, the primary research question has been triggered by the interest to determine whether principal leaders of poor performing secondary schools have the relevant leadership qualifications, knowledge and experience in leadership functions and the level these could influence school governance and the implementation of policies in these schools.

To find answers to the phenomenon under study, the following primary research question has guided the proposed study:

- *To what extent does the leadership capacity of the principals' impact with governance and implementation of policy in the poor performing rural secondary schools of Sekhukhune District?*

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1.4.2 Secondary research questions

Secondary research questions facilitating answering the primary research question have been posed as follows:

- *What leadership skills and competencies do principal leaders of poor performing rural secondary schools possess?*
- *How does the leadership capacity of the principal influence collaborative decision-making and planning in the poor performing rural secondary schools?*
- *How do the principals of poor performing rural secondary schools use leadership skills to guide the SGB on policy implementation?*
- *How have principals of poor performing rural secondary schools been supported by the district to improve on leadership capacity?*

1.5   AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The qualitative case study conducted was meant to examine the effects of the leadership capacity of the principals in school governance and policy implementation affairs of poor performing secondary schools in rural Sekhukhune over a period of five years in which these schools continuously poorly performed.

The primary objective was to discover underlying challenges and factors that might be impacting with the leadership capacity roles of the principal leaders in poor performing rural secondary schools.

Further objectives included:

Clarifying the part played by principal leaders in delivering leadership roles and responsibilities;

Checking whether principal leaders of rural secondary schools are coping with the school governance terrain in the South African education system.

Exploring how the leadership capacity of the principal can utilise collaborate processes to deliver school governance imperatives and policy implementation to support learner performance;

Assessing the relevancy of support programmes facilitated by Sekhukhune district to principal leaders of poor performing secondary schools;

Recommending designing of leadership capacity building programmes by the district that are specifically meant for principals of poor performing secondary schools.

1.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Some researchers use a "conceptual or a theoretical framework interchangeably" (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2013) assert that the conceptual framework assists the researcher to explicitly reveal the connections and relatedness of concepts and assumptions about the world, and it enables theorising about the research. They add that it also maintains stance and boundaries while juggling within the relevant subject or discipline. The study was positioned in terms of the following conceptual framework, which has been developed to locate this study within the chosen phenomenon and is believed to be relevant.

- Leadership capacity
- Poor performance
- Decentralisation
- Transformational leadership
- Leadership
- School governance and democracy
- Participatory governance
- Accountability
- Poor performance

1.7 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

1.7.1 Leadership capacity

The Concise Oxford English Dictionary (2004) defines leadership as the ability to be a leader. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) assert that leadership functions in all organisational levels. They further concur that at the core of most definitions on leadership are two functions: providing direction and exercising influence and that leadership encompasses a set of functions that may be performed by many different persons in different roles

throughout the school. Good leaders demonstrate and place a high and special regard for human resource development of the lead (team building) and, the wellbeing of their organisations in ensuring quality of services delivered, while maintaining relations within the society.

- **Capacity** – "power or ability to produce something, Concise Oxford English Dictionary (2004).

For the purpose of this study, leadership capacity refers to the ability of the principal to inspire and influence structures and stakeholders within and outside the school, while at the same time facilitates joint collaboration towards the realisation and attainment of the school's set objectives. The leadership capacity of the principal explored determines the extent to which it could influence different actors, incite and motivate people around to maximally deliver on policy imperatives and good governance or failure thereof.

1.7.2 Decentralisation

Naidoo (2005) presented a vivid picture about the state of education in South Africa after 1994 elections. In his study, he opines that decentralisation in the South African education system was brought in as a way of rescuing the education terrain which was characterised by inequalities. In trying to unite the country, legislations were enacted and amongst them was the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 which aimed to reform the education system. According to him, SASA (1996) changed the "school governance landscape" promulgating "citizen participation, partnerships between the State, parents, learners, school staff and communities". SASA (1996) transferred power down to individual schools and their communities. In terms of the South African democracy and participatory decision making, decentralisation has been a hope to bring about opportunities where different individuals or actors would participate in their local school decision-making processes but challenges pertaining to personal interests by some individuals were not diagnosed early. This is one of the major challenges faced by some schools in the District more especially in rural school communities. Some community members seem to have personal interests in the school affairs which if not effectively dealt with, might derail the school imperatives, bringing about disorder and confusion.

1.7.3 Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership according to Bass and Stogdill (1990), "seeks to change the status quo by appealing to followers' values and their sense of higher purpose, reframing issues so that they align with the leader's vision and the followers' values and operating at a higher stage of moral development than their followers". In the study, leadership capacity is the character of the principal found in his or her personality traits which, if artistically and consistently practiced, will inspire the teachers to do their best in any school situation like in the Sekhukhune District rural schools. In this sense, transformational theory has an element of influencing school circumstances to change to the right direction.

1.7.4 Laissez-faire leadership

Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939) present laissez-faire leadership as a style of leadership where the leader has abandoned the functions and roles of the position though physically present. The leader's presence is symbolic and disregards directives and legislation allowing intrusion into the leadership responsibilities and position. In a laissez-fare type of environment, followers enjoy loitering and doing minimum work.

1.7.5 School governance and democracy

- **Democracy**

Democracy literally meaning, 'rule by the people', is a form of government for a nation state or for an organisation (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2013:75). The South African Constitution (1996) stipulates that the "Republic of South Africa is one sovereign, democratic State founded on democratic principles which, amongst others include, a multi-party system of democratic government to ensure accountability, responsiveness and openness". According to the above, people elect their representatives to govern the state and make decisions on issues directly affecting the people. School governing bodies represent democratic ideals within the South African school system.

- **School governance**

 In the education sphere, SASA (1996) makes provision for democratic structures and processes where stakeholder representatives such as: the principal as a State

representative, educators and non-educators, and, parents of learners, get elected to the SGBs, and in the case of a secondary school, learners in the eighth grade or higher must elect an RCL who elect, among its members representatives to serve in such an SGB (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2013). SGBs have general functions, (sec.20) and allocated functions, (sec.21) as stipulated by SASA (1996). School governance places great emphasis on the process of collaborating elements from within the school community, which have the power and authority to influence public school policy and the making of decisions concerning the school affairs and this places greater responsibility on the principal leader.

- **Governance:**

Altrichter (2015) describes governance as indicating a school system that is controlled by many actors involved in a structure comprising not only the government as the major actor, but also teachers, school leaders, students and support from parents. Governance also implies some conception of accountability so that the actors involved in setting goals also attempt to reach them, whether through public or private action, and must be held accountable for their actions to society (Van Keersbergen & Van Waarden, 2004), whilst delivering on the expectations of governance through "leadership education that highlights service delivery, quality and accountability" (Kolade,2012).

1.7.6 Participatory governance

Participatory governance is about opening up decision making processes to new social actors (Chhotray & Stoker, 2009:179) while at the same time "encompassing a bewildering array of diverse practices". Different individuals characterised by diverse cultural backgrounds, gender, age, socialisation collaborate and collectively make school decisions to promote the best interest of the school.

The study focused on participatory governance as it applies to a school situation and environment in trying to ascertain the extent to which the principals' effectiveness in leadership or lack thereof impacted with the performance and sustenance of systems within the school. It further checked whether actions of different actors were coordinated, and worked towards transforming the schools into delivering and achieving quality in education.

1.7.7 Policy implementation

- **Policy**

For the purpose of the study, policy refers to public education policies whose objectives seek to reform the education system. Luke and Hogan (2006:171) define education policy making as "prescriptions guiding and regulating how resources are distributed, be it human or capital across educational systems regarding normative, social, economic, and cultural ends". In policy formulation, the State takes a firm stand and determines statutes to guide collective institutions that share commonalities of power and authority, and "policy expresses the manner in which decisions that overrule other decisions should be made by political actors who occupy positions of power" (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). These researchers further postulate that public policies are "standardised directives aimed at guiding peoples' actions and behaviours". In my view, policies are guiding commands that clearly and unambiguously state the extent to which some organisational actions can be performed and principal leaders should reflect capacity to implement them.

- **Implementation**

Implementation literally means putting something into effect, carrying out a plan or a task or programme has long been recognised as a "distinct stage in the policy process, unique for representing the transformation of a policy idea or expectation to action aimed to remedy social problems" (Lester & Goggin, 1998). Muhammad (2014:67) asserts that success in policy implementation is massively dependent and embedded in the leadership capacity of the principal and how well informed the leader is on matters of good governance.

Policy implementation is impossible without the adequate understanding of the policy itself and commitment by those responsible for actioning it. Muhammad (2014:67) asserts that success in policy implementation is massively dependent and rooted in the leadership capacity of the principal and how well informed the leader is on matters of good governance. Implementation literally means putting something into effect, carrying out a plan, a task or programme aimed at improving a situation.

For the study, policy implementation refers to actioning statutes, directives and general school policies and the availability of systems with clearly defined objectives, management

controls and accountability reflected within the extent in which the principals' leadership guides and monitors policy implementation. In essence, the study examined the extent to which the principals complied with policy directives and guides and directed the SGB to ensure high levels of commitment towards the achievement of planned goals.

1.7.8 Accountability

Vance, Lowry and Eggert (2015: 347) define accountability as a "process in which a person has a potential obligation to explain his/her actions to another party who has the right to pass judgement on those actions and to administer potential positive or negative consequences in response to them". In the South African Education System, the principal accounts to the Head of the Department and the SGB to parents of learners (SASA, 1996), and has to submit an annual academic performance plan reporting how public resources are being used. In the study, the leadership role of the principal as an accounting officer was explored.

1.7.9 Poor performance

Aremu (2003) identifies poor academic performance as performance that falls below the required standard or level achievement when examined by the relevant bodies. For the study 'poor performance' refers to the inability to achieve a certain standard or criteria of assessment in secondary schooling and is attributed to quite a number of factors which according to Karande (2005) may include, "medical problems, below average intelligence, specific learning disability, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, emotional problems, a poor sociocultural home environment, psychiatric disorders, or even environmental causes". Poor performance has dire effects not only to students, teachers, parents, and educational institutions, and according to (Aremu, 2003), also "affects the society, economy and politics" of a country and may further lead to "disruption of the educational process in the classroom and in the whole school" (Samer & Muhammad, 2015).

1.8 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE

The study has used an interpretivist perspective through a qualitative data collection strategy in order to capture in-depth and detailed findings of the phenomena studied. The interpretivist paradigm has allowed the researcher to probe deeper into the studied context

in order to gain an understanding of how participants in collaboration with other stakeholders create sense and meaning of their own school environments.

Hussey and Hussey (1997) assert that the interpretivist approach facilitates the researcher's understanding of how much the social context influences people's behaviours and what those behaviours are. Interpretive methods of research adopt the position that people view knowledge of reality as influenced by social interactions and how individuals and groups interpret their own behaviours (Koonin, 2017). Interpretivists doubt the possibilities of obtaining "value free data" because the researcher is submerged inside the research process" (Koonin, 2017). In reality, principals' leadership capacities and school environments are uniquely diverse, and in studying this phenomenon, the researcher had gained a deeper understanding of how principals interpret their roles and responsibilities in their everyday interactions in underperforming secondary schools, while implementing policies and guiding school governance and should try to guard self against bias. What underlying challenges might be hindering the principals to lead the schools effectively also became a concern.

1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study had used a qualitative data collection method where two poor performing secondary schools in the rural Sekhukhune district have been sampled for the study. The study explored how principals as leaders incorporate their leadership styles and capacity in their everyday interactions with stakeholders whilst ensuring effective school governance and taking a policy implementation, and the impact their leadership styles have on issues of social transformation and learner performance.

 "A qualitative study is a study presented largely in language and is about the meaning constructed from the language that presents the data", (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2013: 31). According to Nieuwenhuis (2013:78-79) "a qualitative study is based on a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomenon in context or real-world settings where generally the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest". Leadership activities performed by the principal have been studied through document analysis to determine how they interacted and communicated meaning to their actions while leading teams.

Qualitative research study will add in the body of new information as there is no conclusive evidence from literature reviewed that similar studies were conducted on the influence leadership capacity of the principal has on governance and policy implementation in the Sekhukhune District in Limpopo Province.

1.9.1 Research design

Researchers have presented may definitions about what research design is, and Nieuwenhuis (2013:70) purports that, "a research design is a plan or strategy which moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of respondents, the data gathering techniques to be used and the data analysis to be done". Qualitative data will be collected by means of case studies. Yin (2002) defines the case as "a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between a phenomenon and context are not clear and the researcher has little control over the phenomenon and context". Nieuwenhuis (2013) highlights one of the strengths of case studies as offering a "multi-perspective analysis in which the researcher considers not just the voice of and perspective of one or two participants in a situation, but also the views of other relevant groups of actors and the interaction between them".

This qualitative case study design chosen as suitable for this study assisted the researcher to dig into different data sources in trying to understand and bring out meaning from actions and interactions of people within the sampled school sites. The cases have been studied through documents analysis and here the researcher had no control over the school documents as they were generated in the past. Documents and reports generated by different people enabled the researcher to present an analysis informed by views of different people. In this study, the researcher explored two cases (secondary schools that fall within the category of poor performance) and utilised quite a number of source documents to gather data. Data was collected from other relevant variables (SMTs, SGB activities, parents, district support, and, learners), that are potential holders of relevant information useful for understanding the phenomenon under study.

The selection of the case study as the best research design for the study stems from the complexity of studying leadership capacity of principals in poorly performing secondary schools. It was also propelled by what principals perceive to be good governance and

whether they are in full compliance with the governance principles of transparency, accountability, and reflecting responsibilities in guiding school structures in policy implementation.

Some researchers have according to Nieuwenhuis (2013:76) criticised case study research because of its inability to generalise results. School environments are different and there can be differing challenges affecting them. Results from one school context cannot be used to explain another school situation.

1.9.2 Sampling

Qualitative research studies use non-probability and purposive sampling strategies (Nieuwenhuis, 2013:79). The study has utilised purposive sampling where cases were selected because they possess qualities that reflect the presence of useful and relevant data needed for the study.

Stratified purposive sampling has been used to select principal leaders whose schools have been underperforming in grade 12 for five consecutive years. The sample size was not "fixed prior to data collection" (Nieuwenhuis, 2013)) but was informed by available time and resources. One school was sampled first, and the researcher continued to sample the second poorly performing school. The researcher was guided by the following method in her selection of research sites:

- Secondary schools whose grade 12 results show underperformance for a period of five consecutive years.
- These secondary schools are in the rural Sekhukhune District.

The above information was accessed through the internet from NSC (2016) report.

1.9.3 Data collection strategies

Data was collected through document analysis where the two schools' documents were requested, selected and only the relevant ones were reviewed. Bowen (2009) defines document analysis as "an iterative process that combines elements of content analysis and thematic analysis, involving skimming (superficial examination), reading (thorough examination), and interpretation (content analysis being the process of organising

information into categories related to the central questions of the research". According to Bowen (2009:33), "document analysis involves processes where the researcher reviews documents extracting information in such a way that empirical knowledge is produced and understanding is developed while striving a balance for objectivity and sensitivity". Different school documents considered to be relevant to the study were interacted with, reviewed and compared to bring out meaning about the phenomenon being studied.

1.10 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Nieuwenhuis (2013:99) purports that "literature on qualitative data analysis documents a range of approaches, processes and procedures whereby the researchers extract some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation from the qualitative data collected of the people and situations that they are investigating". According to Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2013) this process requires "analytical craftmanship and the ability to capture understanding of the data in writing". Here the researcher has to show excellent skills to extract meaning and bring the best out of the collected data.

Content of governance, policy documents and other relevant documents were analysed and triangulated within themselves and "inferences were made to determine how the data contributed to the overall picture" (Bowen, 2009) to determine how the leadership capacity of the principals influences school governance and to what extent the schools complied with policy implementation within the cases under investigation. The information and meaning extracted was coded into different categories.

For the study, analysis of textual data was guided by both content analysis and hermeneutics (critical). These are "philosophical approaches to human understanding, which provide philosophical grounding for interpretivism" (Nieuwenhuis, 2013). Here, the researcher had interpreted texts of different kinds and identified trends and evidence in actions and interactions of principals, district officials, learners, educators, parents, and SGBs from textual data and related these to the schools' leadership capacities. Their actions were critically examined to assess the extent to which they affected governance and implementation of policy with the two sampled school contexts, and the impact these might have had in Grade 12 performance. Analysis of documentary data facilitated the emergence of themes and trends about the phenomena under study.

1.10.1 Role of the researcher

Qualitative studies argue on the subjective status of the researcher as a "research instrument" (Nieuwenhuis, 2013:79) collecting data in that his or her own interests and expectations might influence the research questions and the way observation is conducted by the researcher (Koonin, 2017). The researcher collected and analysed data by digging for information from the sampled schools' documents, studied and tried to create different meanings from them to develop adequate explanations of the problem being studied. Nieuwenhuis (2013:79) argues that, "the researcher's involvement and immersion in the changing, real world situation is essential since the qualitative researcher needs to record those changes in the real-life context, sometimes before, during and after the change occurs". The researcher selected relevant information from the school documents, compared and triangulated it to ensure authenticity while identifying trends and changing situations and then reported on them.

1.10.2 Quality criteria

1.10.2.1 Trustworthiness and credibility of the findings

Qualitative researchers do not design research tools to collect information, but they themselves are data gathering instruments (Nieuwenhuis, 2013; Koonin, 2017) and when they "refer to validity and reliability, they are usually referring to research that is credible and trustworthy" (Nieuwenhuis, 2013; Koonin, 2017). Qualitative researchers have to maintain trustworthiness of findings either by utilising a number of data collection methods or request other researchers to interpret the same data. This assists the researcher to be really sure that research findings are a true reflection of what happened as reviewed from sources, are reliable and can be trusted. The objective of reliability according to Yin (1994) is to be sure that, if at a later stage an investigator followed exactly the same procedures as described by an earlier investigator and conducted the same case study all over again, the later investigation should arrive at the same findings and conclusions.

In this study the researcher had tried to avoid bias by all means through triangulating information by comparing a number of different documents. Peer researchers were also invited to look into the data and present their interpretations. Their interpretation was similar to the one the researcher had.

1.10.2.2 Ethical considerations

When researchers conduct empirical studies, subjects can either be people or animals who might be hurt either physically or emotionally in the process and researcher have to consider the impacts their actions could have on both if ethical considerations could be disregarded (Rosnow & Rosenthal,1996; Louw, 2017). Researchers then have to ensure that there is full adherence to ethical principles and guidelines from their universities to ensure accepted behaviour whilst conducting research. Koonin (2017:262) assert that "a researcher who acts with integrity adheres to ethical principles and professional standards that are essential for practicing research in a responsible way". Compliance to ethical considerations is an undebatable requisite and is compulsory in any research study and the researcher has tried her level best to ensure full compliance of these research ethics.

Permission to conduct the research was sought from the principals and the SGBs of the two sampled secondary schools before the research could be conducted. Sources and school information collected were kept private and confidential and the school names have not been mentioned. The researcher has complied to the research ethics by ensuring that the sampled schools were clarified about the purpose of the research, and understood that anonymity and confidentiality would be adhered to.

1.11 THE STUDY LAYOUT

- **Chapter 1: Introduction** The chapter has provided introduction, problem statement and rationale of the study, research questions, aims and objectives.
- **Chapter 2: Theoretical framework:** The chapter was based on the exploration of the theories which were provided from the literature reviewed and based on the conceptual framework of the study being: leadership capacity; decentralization; leadership theories; school governance and democracy; participatory governance; policy implementation and accountability and through South African legislations relevant for the studied phenomena.
- **Chapter 3: Research methodology:** The chapter has presented how the study was conducted through using qualitative case studies, collecting data through analysing documents collected from the two schools and identifying trends and themes emanating from them about the phenomena under study.

- **Chapter 4: Research data analysis and interpretation:** The study utilised document analysis to review textual data collected from the two schools and literature reviewed from previous research. Here the researcher designed codes, identified and presented themes in order to locate answers to the research question.

- **Chapter 5: Research findings and recommendations:** The analysed and interpreted data from literature findings and empirical investigation assisted the study to present conclusions and recommendations aimed at contributing to the improvement of support and planning of capacity building programmes for the principals of poor performing secondary schools to assist them in turning their schools to the desired improved state reflected in an improved learner achievement.

1.12 CONCLUSION

Challenges faced by the South African education system, the high failure rate in the Sekhukhune District and the assumptions that there might be underlying factors impacting negatively with leadership capacities of the principal leaders in the poor performing rural secondary schools have prompted the study. Principals are appointed to lead schools towards the obtainment of quality education working together with the SGBs. This entails a relationship which should be characterised by trust and joint processes enabling a conducive atmosphere for the delivery of quality education evident in learner performance. The principals' leadership styles are at stake and transitional demands in the education system have drawn the attention of all stakeholders with vested interest in education to the types of leadership that build and sustain successful schools. There has been a need to conduct the study to identify leadership challenges in rural schools of Sekhukhune District.

CHAPTER 2:

THEORETICAL PRESENTATION OF CONCEPTS: LEADERSHIP CAPACITY, GOVERNANCE AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 Introduction

The study conducted a massive search for literature from books, newspapers, online sources and reviewed international and local journals and articles. The search also tried to include recent sources that could reflect information on how the leadership capacity of the principal influences governance and policy implementation. I also consulted and reflected on earlier leadership theories to find information that would increase my background understanding of the concept and its foundations. However, there has been no conclusive literature that reflects studies on my topic and the study had to break down the literature search into three phenomena: leadership, governance and policy implementation and then collaborate it to suit the topic.

Literature reviewed in the chapter examined theoretical concepts on variations pertaining to leadership capacity as reflected in leadership theories in order to bring a clear conceptualisation of the concept. Through this conceptualisation, the study attempted to explore how much and how far leadership capacity can influence school governance and policy implementation. This distinction and arguments were facilitated through highlighting the relationship between good governance and school governance, by reflecting on both the concepts, and further show the relationship between leadership capacity and policy implementation. This helped to create a contextual understanding of these concepts as they apply to a rural secondary school context.

The advent of democracy in South Africa in the post 1994 elections advocated and implemented several social, political, economic and education reforms which (Jansen, 2004) asserts that they were reflective of characteristics from other countries. leadership of a school whether public or private can be a daunting task because of innumerable factors simultaneously interacting with one another.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has realised the urgent need to "establish a clear and agreed understanding of what the South African education system expects of those who

are, or aspire to be, entrusted with the leadership and management of schools, by developing the Policy on the South African Standard for Principalship (DBE, 2015). The policy fully defines the roles of school principals and key areas of professionalism, image and competencies required" (PD Pointer, 2018: vol. 59). In a statement to support this move, DBE in this volume, stresses the extreme importance of "effective leadership and management tools" that drive school success in the provisioning of "good learning opportunities for students". It further adds that recent evidence reflects "high quality leadership" as impacting positively to "school improvement and learning outcomes". The school principals and school management teams are required to have leadership and management skills to enable them to strategically move their schools' performance to the expected levels. Learner performance is the core business of every school and school leadership, educators, and other stakeholders have to be committed into delivering this core business.

2.2 RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Focusing on the leadership capacity of the principal, the study explored the principal's ability to shape, guide and direct structures functioning within the school towards the attainment of future prospects and objectives, while ensuring school governance deliverables within the school. Altrichter (2015) in his definition of governance, presents a network of inclusive systems of innovation within a school consisting not only the government as a major actor, but also the inclusion of school leaders, teachers, students and parental support. Within the definition he attaches a responsibility for each actor highlighting the success of innovation where:

"*teachers and school leaders must take innovative ideas on board, and they must translate them into actions and organisational arrangements; students must understand the innovation and reshape at least partially their actions (and they may need some support and the understanding of their parents); intermediary institutions, such as the inspectorate, textbook publishers, professional development institutions must act in some accordance".*

He further highlights the need for coordination of actions by the actors. Issues of ensuring the rule of law, improving the efficiency and accountability of the school as a public institution, compliance to policy directives, and "prevention of corruption" (King IV Report, 2016) are key. Internal factors ranging from: lack of learner discipline, proper infrastructure and parental support; the level of education of SGBs; high absenteeism rates; and external

factors (socio-economic) also add more challenges in rural secondary schools and impact negatively with learner performance causing some schools to under-perform.

The approach to the study was shaped by the following assumptions:

- The studies of school governance assess the functionality of SGBs (effectiveness or ineffectiveness in performing SASA (RSA,1996) directives;
- Policy implementation studies assess the extent to which policies contribute to functions and systems that create order and school compliance to directives;
- Policy implementation leadership assess relevant capacity of policy implementers; and
- School governance leadership contributes towards developed, self-motivated and functional SGBs.

The study drew on and integrated a number of concepts and theoretical frameworks on leadership capacity, school governance, and policy implementation to explore leadership capacity constructs and relationships and how they affect school governance and implementation of policy so as to ascertain whether they are contributory factors to school governance and effective policy implementation or not. The study has attempted to create a theoretical and empirical grounding framework to show and create meaning on the leadership capacity of the principal as considered within transforming the school through school governance and policy implementation.

2.3 CONCEPTUALISATION OF LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

2.3.1 Leadership definition

Many researchers around the globe have rigorously attempted to define the term leadership in more possible and relevant ways to bring the concept to life. Bass and Stogdill (1990) define leadership as, "the principal dynamic force that motivates and coordinates the organisation in the accomplishment of its objectives". Northhouse (2010) asserts that in the leadership process one individual carries a role of influencing a group of other individuals towards the realisation of the agreed upon objectives of the organisation. These definitions support the view that leadership must have energy and expertise to transfer and exchange ideas, contribute to peoples' development, and have relevant influence to realign divergent

attitudes and behaviours to reach the planned goals. The focus in the above definitions draws our attention to the collective nature of leadership in decision making where the success of leadership emanates from every member contributing to the effectiveness of the group. The above definitions further consent to leadership as a continuous process and that there can be no leadership without a group following the one who is leading them to a particular destination. The followers should know the purpose of the journey and the choice of a particular direction and creation of common understanding of how well it could be chartered, and how the destination could be reached.

Leithwood, Begley & Cousins (1990) purport that school characteristics such as the type of community and homogeneousness, the size of the school, socioeconomic conditions of students and the school level influence how principals approach their roles and functions. Leadership is a broad phenomenon that is influenced by a myriad of factors (whether internal or external) interacting with one-another in a particular context as studied from different perspectives. Leading also involves best strategies to curb challenges as and when they come, and the leader together with the lead group have to gear themselves up for those areas over which they sometimes do not have control of and would have to rely upon outside intervention.

Leadership definitions identified in the study and summarised together point to leadership as a collective activity by specific actors engaged in a two-way process of sharing a common goal (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). According to Yukl (2012) leadership "improves team performance; utilises diverse individual abilities; must have ability to influence individuals and groups and facilitates shared behaviours and objectives". The principal leader should possess exceptional leadership skills and ability reflected in the day-to-day activities of the school as exercised through human resources (the SMT, educators, SGB). These should impact on the general conduct and performance of learners throughout the school. A leader must be able to lead a group of followers or functional teams and constantly develop own-self to meet the changing demands of the education system.

Deventer and Kruger (2013) assert that "leadership power" must be reflected in the leader's skills   to persuade people's behaviours and attitudes and in motivating subordinates towards the realisation of the organisation's objectives. Globally, research trends reflect a

unanimous agreement that leadership is the core factor in school learner performance improvement (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Gurr, 2015; Marishane, 2016).

A leader must be able to lead a group of followers or functional teams to collaborate and use strategies to bring the best out of an organisation and the school falls under the category of being an organisation.

2.3.2 Capacity defined

Since the scrutinised construct has two words, it is also necessary to define what capacity is and how it fits into leadership. The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus (2004) defines capacity as "the total amount that can be contained or produced, (or especially of a person or organisation), the ability to do a particular thing, or a particular position, job or role", and highlights three areas that have to do with capacity, namely: the amount, ability and position. The Business Dictionary.com (2018) gives a general definition of capacity as a "specific ability of an entity (person or organisation) or resource, measured in quantity and level of quality, over an extended period". Capacity has to do with the extent and quality of doing something bringing in positive results.

Leadership is not set in isolation, but is embedded in the context of the organisation and the wider society. It is imperative that we understand factors within the environment that critically impact with or influence the leadership style to act or react in a particular way, and the presence or absence of circumstances that determine the leadership style to be adopted by the leader (Deventer & Kruger, 2013).

Leadership capacity includes all aspects of the institution and does not refer to a single individual who happens to be the leader. School leadership should also concern itself with designing quality strategies that are aimed at improving learner performance and stakeholder satisfaction.

Leadership success is fast being judged through practices that are evident based and contributing to making clients happy. The aim of school leadership is not only about leading, trend setting and occupying the highest position in a school, but to also input efforts that will satisfy learners, parents and the community at the receiving end of the service. Leadership skills of the principal as seen through systems interacting within a school translate into

leadership capacity and have a bearing on the general performance of all learners in the school.

My study conceptualised leadership on the "group level and organisational levels" (Yukl, 1999). This means that the study looked at the leadership ability of the principal and on the extent to which followers were willing to identify with the leadership capacity, and how existing systems were able to reflect and explain the extent of leadership capacity and not only the principal as an individual authority. Yukl (1999) postulates as follows:

"The group perspective considers not only leader influence on individual members (on their role clarity, skills development, commitment to task objectives, and access to necessary information and resources), but also the leader's influence on how well the work is organised to utilise personnel and resources; how well group activities are co-ordinated; the amount of member agreement about objectives and priorities; the extent to which members trust each other and co-operate in accomplishing task objectives; the extent of member identification with the group; and confidence in the capacity of the group to attain its objectives".

This view was, in my research, relevant for the leadership capacity as reflected in the activities of the SGBs, SMTs, educators and RCLs as groups functioning within the school undertaking group leading roles guided by the school principal. In the study, these have been reflected in the governance activities and in the level of policy implementation within the school.

2.4 EXPLICATION OF LEADERSHIP THEORIES

The world we are living in is challenging and ever changing, and researchers are in the quest to rediscover emerging trends in the characteristics, qualities and traits that distinguish an individual as a leader.

2.4.1 Functional leadership theory

Literature on functional leadership shows that effective organisations could be realised through "environmental monitoring, organising subordinate activities, teaching and coaching subordinates, motivating others, and intervening actively in the group's work" (Vroom 1973:76).

Reviewed literature reveals the usefulness of the functional leadership theory and its ability to identify and address particular leader behaviours that could influence and drive an organisation or unit to be effective. According to this theory, a leader is responsible for scanning the environment by conducting needs analysis to identify and address such needs as and when necessary. The success of a leader can be attributed through functional teams, groups or units ((Vroom, 1973).

2.4.2 Transformational leadership theory

Since the 1980s, researchers have gained more interest in studying transformational leadership and how these leaders tap in and influence behaviours and decisions of their followers in an organisation (Lekka & Healey, 2012). Adanri & Singh (2016) purport that "transformational leaders stimulate the intellectual capacity of their followers and allow for organisational learning, creativity and innovation and support the hope and aspirations of their followers". These leaders are self-motivated, can pitch at a very high-level displaying expertise in systems of collaboration and transformation; generate trust and confidence from groups; emulate self-behaviours; and do things in an unusual way to benefit the organisation. The SGBs has been afforded power and authority to assist their schools to deliver quality education and the principal leader has to use relevant skills to influence the SGB structure for the benefit of the school. Popular leadership researchers like Bass and Avolio (1994) in this study presented transformational leadership as comprising of four distinct yet interconnected behaviours useful in interactions with followers such as: idealised influence (empathy, modelling behaviour, self-confidence), individualized consideration (empowerment), intellectual stimulation (inducing creative ideas), and inspirational motivation (creating a lasting vision and the desired state).

Principals who possess transformational leadership skills are capable situation benders whose inherent focus is to turn the present and undesirable situation for the better and further lead an organisation to the desirable state. Transformational leaders hate to be associated with failure.

The study has identified transformational leadership theory as the best popular choice in studying the principal's leadership capacity (PLC) because of its transforming and binding characteristics necessary to turn schools into centres of quality and excellence performance.

Transformational leadership has the ability to incite the "inner man" and bring outstanding performance from people.

Transformational leadership has important effects at both individual and organizational levels. At the individual level, transformational leadership positively relates to followers' individual creativity where psychological empowerment has been seen as a crucial psychological mechanism through which transformational leadership influences employees' creativity (Gumusluoglu, & Ilsev, 2009; Shin & Zhou, 2003). Bass (1990) identified transformational leadership as bearing positive results in collectivist in that collectivists cultures perform better under transformational leadership. Transformational leadership might tap in and empower followers psychologically by utilising individualised consideration to boost self-worth and increase self-development (Conger, 1999) and is able to empower teams through providing value and challenging situations to their work. (Avolio et al., 2004)

Transformational leaders are inspirational and can influence individuals to realise their self-consciousness (Bass, 1985), are persuasive and capable of "motivating followers in the direction of self-sacrifice" over personal gains for the good of the organisation. Strategic leaders can anchor a school and challenge it to resort to widening its educational plans and processes while identifying areas of need, maintaining strength where it is needed and ensuring continuity and completion of projects. People and teams are motivated to perform beyond their own expectations, emulating good behaviour, building healthy relationships, identifying individual and group skills and building on them and are provided with opportunities for sharing ideas while building trust.

According to Burns (1978) transformational leaders bear particular qualities and attributes that could be used to bring about desired changes within an organisation. These visionary leaders continuously engage themselves in lifelong learning and development and are able to deal with challenging and complex situations even during times of uncertainty (Burns, 1978). Strategic leaders re-design the organisation by re-allocating responsibilities where certain people are moved from one section to another based on expertise. These leaders can identify school environmental issues that need to be changed, redirected or strengthened to allow the vision to be rooted and realised; can create tight fits to particular roles; develop, encourage and maintain stakeholder relationships; and devise ways to encourage parental involvement and support.

The PLC is inferred from previous research conducted on various leadership theories and school leadership studies, though there is no single theory that has been conducted on the phenomenon in the Sekhukhune District. The study fully agrees with literature reviewed, collaborated and analysed by previous studies that jointly assert that effective and successful school leadership results from a collection of key actions relevant for all organisational situations (Gurr, 2015). These actions positively impact on the goals of the school (Marishane, 2016) with each action coinciding with a collection of leadership behaviours relevant to a particular action and enable for determining principals' leadership abilities.

Darbi (2012) considers the vision and mission statements as chief corner stones in every organisational strategic management including public sector or non-profit organisations. When engaging in strategic planning processes, schools should involve all stakeholders and properly identify and formulate the vision and mission statements bearing in mind that these contribute to the school's image and "identity" (Ozdem, 2011), guiding the school's strategic planning processes, future prospects and identification of their customers. The school's mission statement should state what the school is aiming at and on how the services will be delivered to achieve its objectives. Therefore, the research is focused on the influence leadership capacity has on the governance and policy implementation in a school context and will not overtly concern itself with policy formulation.

2.4.3 Laissez-faire type of leadership

Robbins (2007) explains the laissez-fair style as a leadership type where the leader hands over responsibilities to others and avoids making decisions. The leader distances self from work responsibilities and expectations, cares less about the programmes of the organisation, open gaps for others to grab the situation and effect own orders. The environment is characterised by a lot of freedom, the do as I please situation and much loitering. Bass and Avolio (1990) describe it as the "absence of leadership, the avoidance of intervention or both" and is characterised by "passive behaviours" where followers are not motivated or their needs satisfied and recognised. They further purport that this leadership style avoids making quick decisions; does not deliver feedback or rewards; involves self less; followers or teams are never motivated, and important issues are not addressed.

In the laissez-faire leadership style, according to Lewin, Lippitt and White (1939), the leadership position is filled but does not deliver on the imperatives of the position as expected and may be the cause of work stressors. Laissez-faire leadership becomes evident when the leader shuns away from responsibilities. Leaders who possess this type of leadership reflect lack in guiding skills and supervision and "put too much stress within the working group" (Einarsen, 1999). This leadership type affects the way people carry out their responsibilities, is less concerned about what followers are doing and how their actions impact on the organisational objectives and in turn might negatively affect learner performance and lead to some schools to poorly perform. Laissez-faire leadership is demoralising and aggravate stress levels on those that are being lead, and this brings undesired outcomes that impact negatively with learner performance at school.

2.5 GOVERNANCE AND SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Fitzgerald, Mclennan and Munslow (1997) define governance as a manner of "working and listening to citizens in order to manage public's resources and to respond to the needs and expectations of citizens as individuals, interest groups and society as a whole". Pillay (2004) augments this definition and adds that "governance includes active cooperation and engagement in policy processes amongst all stakeholders including citizens". Different people representing different stakeholder groups jointly work together making informed decisions for the delivery of quality education in the school while effectively utilising available resources. If governance actors in a school could understand the concept of governance and what it entails, they would be better able to understand the expectations of school-governance and the roles of actors.

Altrichter (2015) opines that governance school systems involve convergence of "multitude of actors in system formation", and further adds that agreements get translated into actions, and arrangements are achieved through combining efforts by teachers, school leaders and the level these impact on learner behaviour and on evidence of parental support. According to Pillay (2004), "the rules and practices of governance shape the foundations of sustainable development, and if such rules and practices are not effectively monitored and applied, the very basis of development is compromised". Communities have high expectations in the delivery of services within schools and school governance is expected to be highly sensitive to such expectations and should strive to create a balance of both. Kolade (2012) identifies

factors that pose a challenge to the delivery of governance where instances of "positions and power privileges" are misused; failure to account for one's actions, and low levels of stakeholder involvement become evident. Muhammad (2014:66) asserts that "leadership challenges and poor governance account for persistent failure in public policy implementation and development irrespective of the good administrative management practices adopted. As such, effective public leadership and good public governance are regarded as preconditions for proper public policy implementation and imperatives for accelerated and sustained development".

2.5.1 Governance and its implications in school systems- European context Versus South African context

This context reflects literature on governance from different European and local perspectives, that is Germany, England and South Africa.

This study's interest has been drawn from German literature reviewed form the work of Altrichter (2015) where research conducted on "Governance Perspective" brought changes aimed at "critically evaluating possibilities of achieving, sustaining and coordinating the regulation and performance of school systems". This was done under the perspective of "coordination of action between various social actors in complex multi-level systems" (Altrichter & Marki, 2010, in Altrichter, 2015). The leadership capacity of the principals is viewed as whether it enables and facilitates joint efforts by governors within a school system.

Here in South Africa, individual school governors are elected but still have to declare whether they are available and prepared to take on the responsibility bestowed upon them by SASA (1996). In a way, volunteering is at play here because school governors are not compensated by the State for serving in the SGB, so the principal should facilitate creation of an atmosphere conducive for compassionate rendering of voluntary services that would benefit learners in the provisioning of quality education.

2.5.2 Governance and the South African Education System

The South African school governance is experiencing challenges which might not have been properly diagnosed when the country was still grappling with its new born democracy and the revolution of the education system. Xaba (2011) purports that a huge gap still exists

between attempts to create balance between effective school governance and goals though the country had set aside budgets to build capacity of SGBs.

The democratic breakthrough in the post-apartheid South Africa necessitated competent education system and practices that would positively and effectively respond to the fragmented complexities inherent in the education arena, and in the country as a whole (Harley & Wedekind, 2004) in which (Pillay, 2004) refer to as a "distorted system of governance". This turn of events meant that the South African education system had to make significant strides to address disparities amongst schools. This would bring together very diverse stakeholders and role players sometimes characterised with divergent goals to converge in decision making and redress the past inequalities to the satisfaction of the majority of the South African citizens. To mention but a few South African cases, such as: former homeland school systems and former model "C" schools whose practices were far removed from each other, displayed very different schooling systems. There was an importunate need to address this gap so as to bring an end to these past educational inequalities that have been in existence for a very long time and bring peace and unity within the country and its diverse citizens.

Among strategies introduced was the decentralisation of powers from the education department down to local school contexts through the enactment of the SASA (1996) where section 15 declares all public schools as "juristic persons" and further mandated the SGBs as governors in public schools, section16(1). Actions of governing bodies must reflect trust. The principal should guide SGBs on how to carry themselves with integrity and honesty as they deliver services so that they could be trusted. This means that the governing body lead by the principal should faithfully carry out its duties and functions on behalf of the school, put differences aside, join hands and ideas, and fully support schools so that they could prosper and deliver on the imperatives of the South African democracy.

School governance "involves relevant stakeholders, such as parents, educators, learners from grade 8 up in the case of a secondary school and non-teaching staff, who make decisions about how the school should be governed as mandated by the SASA" (Mavuso & Duku, 2014). Mncube (2009) defines school governance as the structure in an institution that carries power to make and adopt school policy on a range of areas interacting together for the smooth running of the school. School governance ensures that basic systems and

policies exist to enable the school to be managed effectively and efficiently as a public institution. School governance formulates, adopts and monitors implementation of policy and directives and accounts to the parents of learners and the community. Xaba (2011) has identified the "capacity to govern" as one of the school governance challenges. The SGBs' level of understanding and implementing policy is very little.

2.5.3 Decentralisation of school governance

Just like most of the countries across the world, South Africa has after 1994 introduced the process of decentralisation in her quest to create self-managing schools through involving communities in school decision-making (Naidoo, 2005). "democratisation of the education system affords power and authority to SGBs in South Africa (Naidoo, 2005) to manage and use school resources for delivering quality education and for the determination of policy as mandated by SASA (1996).

The Head of Department (HoD) has to ensure that SGBs carry out the mandate successfully through provisioning of introductory capacity building programmes to the newly elected SGBs. The mandate also gave directives for the continuity of training programmes through providing necessary assistance to enable them to perform their functions as expected by SASA (1996). In so doing, the HoD must ensure that the principal and other officers of the education department provide necessary assistance to SGBs in the performance of their functions.

The schools have financial management structures actioned through the finance committee and the principal holds a delegated authority by the Head of the Department (SASA,1996:16A). All management and leadership actions of the principal in the daily management of finances are mainly directed by SASA (1996) and, specifically, through the Limpopo prescripts for the management of school funds transferred to schools, and a school generated finance policy to address the daily utilisation of school funds (Baloyi, 2015). Schools in poor communities have been granted a section 21 status (DoE, 2006) by the Limpopo Department of Education (LDoE) affording them additional powers and authority over section 20 status, and further revising their quintile statuses from quintile 2 and 3 to quintile 1 decentralising additional financial management systems (sec 21:1a-d) to the SGB. In utilising section 21 status, the principal is further mandated by section 16A, 1(b (ii) to

prepare and submit to the HoD an annual report fully stating how school resources were effectively used.

According to Baloyi (2015), "school finances are mismanaged because school principals are ignorant of policy governing proper financial management, and school principals fail to be accountable for proper monitoring and control of their school's financial systems". Bush (2004:24) further comments on the literacy levels of SGBs in rural communities that negatively impact with deliverables of section 21 status. Some SGBs in rural communities do not possess understanding of how school finances should be managed and this creates a major challenge of failing to govern schools which undermines the aims and good intentions of decentralisation of school governance in South Africa. Because of the poor financial school systems in some rural schools, the delivery of quality teaching and learning gets compromised owing to failure to procure quality resources and services for the schools.

2.5.4 The King IV Report: Are schools in the right track?

As mentioned earlier, globalisation has not only impacted on the economy of South Africa (Vally & Spreen 2003), which gave rise to the King IV Report (2016) on corporate governance for South Africa, but has also aggravated the focus of the King Committee to include changes in business and society contexts. The King IV Report (2016) in its introduction states that "new global realities are testing the leadership of organisations on diverse issues" in which amongst others include those perceived as relevant for the education terrain and include "equality, social tensions, geopolitical tensions, population growth and radical transparency". Common theme of value creation that is accomplished in a sustainable manner has become the major concept of this report.

As the South African official code of governance, the King IV Report (2016) critically reflects principles and recommendations which are applicable to all organisations whether public or private, big or small, urban or rural. Amongst its principles concerned with leadership, the following are presented: The governing body should lead ethically and effectively through exhibiting integrity by acting in good faith and in the best interests of the organisation, avoiding conflicts, acting ethically and setting an ethical tone of voice; reflect competency through exhibiting enough working knowledge including relevant laws, rules, codes and standards; assuming responsibility to set direction, approve policy and planning, monitor

implementation and execution by management; ensure accountability through reflecting on responsibilities including the delegated ones; and ensure fairness and transparency. This implies that on top of the Constitution and SASA (1996), school governance as clarified in 1.7.5 has to adhere to directives of the King IV Report (2016).

The King IV Report (2016:20) highlights the need for "ethical and effective leadership to complement and reinforce each other". It further asserts that "effective leadership is results driven; is about achieving strategic objectives and positive outcomes, and includes, but goes beyond an internal focus on effective and efficient execution". The leadership capacity of the principal should reflect competitive skills and ability evident in how learners perform and how systems within the school work towards adhering to the principles of the King IV Report (2016). In one of its objectives the report (p. 22) aims to "encourage transparent and meaningful reporting to stakeholders". School leadership should reflect commitment and fair compliance to inform all the relevant stakeholders about the activities, latest developments and use of public resources to improve on the organisational objectives in an endeavour to lead effective schools.

This report has been seen as relevant to serve as a guide to benchmark school governance systems within the education arena (schools) in assisting in the determination of the level of compliance by principal leaders and SGBs working within a school governance context. It is also seen to imply that: leadership in the school should guide school governance to consider the scarcity of resources in their school activities by maximising outputs while utilising less resources; and, that the school leadership should consider compliance to issues of transparency and accountability when utilising public funds. The Report further corresponds with SASA (1996: sec.36) which expects SGBs to "encourage parents, learners, educators and other staff at the school to render voluntary services to the school" taking all practical and realistic ways to add on public funds that get transferred to a public school so that schools could be able to pay for services rendered to improve quality of education and aid learner performance. This mandate in a way directs SGBs to have knowledge of marketing skills, and, the principal leader is expected by SASA (1996) to advise and guide the SGB in this regard. Pillay (2004) calls for the betterment of the public administration characterised by "greater efficiency, transparency and integrity in public institutions" which could be achieved through "improved governance and prevention of corruption".

The concepts of "ethical leadership organisation in society, corporate citizenship, sustainable development, stakeholder inclusivity, integrated thinking and integrated reporting", form the foundation of the King IV Report.

Figure 2.1: The school governance functions
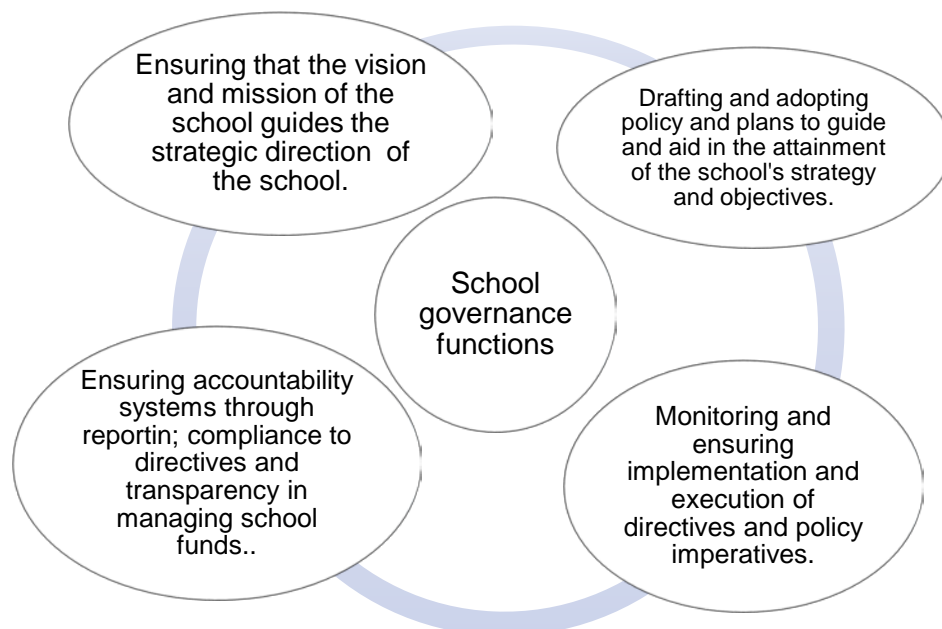
Adapted from the KING IV Report (2016)

2.5.5 The principal as accounting officer in the SGB

The South African government has been in a state of continuous repair which is evident in the amendment of legislation where there were insertions of new sections like section 8A and 16A in SASA (1996) to cater for the changing political and socio- economic factors affecting the country as a whole. This entails that the principal must also comply with these new directives by ensuring that policies: legislation and those formulated or adopted by the SGB are fully implemented. The leadership style and skills of the principal leader must reflect an "official capacity" (SASA, 1996:16A) to interpret these legislations and also guide the SGB on the development and implementation of school policies to address finer details.

The leadership role of the principal must also be evident in the implementation of curriculum policies to ensure professional management of the school through the SMT and the

teachers. SASA stipulates that a principal whose school has been declared a poorly performing school by section 58B, must at the beginning of the year prepare and submit to the Head of Department an Annual Academic Performance Improvement Plan (AAPIP) committing him/herself on how the school will improve learner performance. The AAPIP must be tabulated at a governing body meeting. This mandate directs the principal to fully commit, account and deliver on the imperatives of the community as local stakeholders and customers of the school as expected from a person who occupies a position of a principal.

In his introduction, Muhammad (2014) argues and draws our attention to the need for effective leadership in governance and the adequate delivery of "developmental goals and agendas of a particular organisation". He further asserts that repeated and continuous public policy implementation and development failures are evidence enough of ineffective leadership and poor governance even in the presence of good administrative or management practices.

SASA (1996:16A) directive (1) (a) mandates the principal by "virtue of their position to ensure that school finances are managed in terms of the relevant guidelines, legislation and procedures" (Baloyi, 2015), and to be the representative of the Head of Department in the governing body of a particular ordinary school. The principal has to strategically lead the SGB to ensure that policy and legislation are implemented; transfer skills by training the SGB on policy and legislation; highlight all the statutory laws governing the use of public funds whilst playing a leadership role giving informative advices on financial implications of decisions (good or bad) relating to the financial matters of the school.

The National Development Plan in the PD Pointer (2018) has highlighted the "strategic significance of school governing bodies which involves alignment of all stakeholder interests to converge in and support the common goals of achieving good educational outcomes responsive to the needs of the community and towards improving the economy of the country". The PD Pointer (2018) further communicates the value of SGB elections in building and strengthening "community ownership and school performance improvement facilitated by parental involvement and interest in school affairs".

2.5.6 School governance and fund raising

The governing body of a public school is directed to supplement resources supplied by the State through utilising reasonable measures to improve the quality of education provided by the school to all learners at the school (SASA, 1996:36). The vision behind this mandate is the creation of schools that could manage and sustain themselves, show competence and efficiency in both the leadership and the SGB in areas of intrapreneurship and financial management, augmenting school funds through school fund raising activities and requesting funders and donors. Schools must reflect competency in planning for fundraising activities that are educational in nature actioning intrapreneurial skills, creativity in designing education related and developmental fundraising activities.

The challenge with SGBs in the rural areas is the level of education which puts more pressure on the principal leadership to facilitate this activity through "utilising scarce resources for maximum gain, while taking into consideration the "poverty status of the community; divergent motives of role players and ensuring protection of teaching and learning time" (King Report IV). Here the principal has to present multi-faceted leadership capacity to deliver on this directive. Baloyi (2015) recommends "financial expertise and financial capacity in the development of effective monitoring and control systems of school funds". He further purports that the school principal is the "executive of school finances", calling for a "specific breed of school principalship", fully committing themselves as financial managers facilitating effective structures and functional roles to manage sufficient funds to attain good results". The principal leader should ensure that school finances are utilised to provide relevant school resources and tools to aid and improve learner performance as stated by SASA (1996: 16A).

2.5.7 Responsibilities attached to Finance Committees

The principal of a public school must always ensure that the SGB through the finance committee complies with PMSF (DoE, 2011) in its procurement systems. At least three quotations for services must be sought, be adjudicated, minutes and attendance recorded and proceedings must be presented to the SGB for the appointment of the service provider(s). This process further calls for recusal by any person with a personal interest regarding a particular service delivery issue. The principal must ensure that effective,

efficient and transparent processes are not overlooked as they ensure transparency and neutralise issues of personal interests.

2.5.8 Transformational and collaborative governance leadership

Transformational leadership function has been identified by Yukl (1999) as making certain that there is a tight acclimatisation of the organisation to its environment and acquisitioning of relevant resources to aid its survival. Among actions needed for successfully delivering on this competitive advantage, he identified:

- gathering and interpreting environmental information;
- locating major competencies that could provide a competitive benefit;
- facilitating worthy and beneficial partnerships;
- creation of services and goods that will impact on the image of the organisation as viewed by the clients;
- gaining outside cooperation and support; and
- meaningful and strategic selection and hiring processes.

Serpieri and Vatrella (2017) suggest the following practices to guide the governance terrain:

"*sharing of roles and responsibilities; the planning of internal and well-defined policies; the adoption of specific strategies of communication taking into account viewpoints of the educational community; the support to staff cohesion and relationship which in turn promotes a school climate without hierarchy; and the production of coalitions founded on the basis of issues, rather than individuals"*.

They further encourage "shifting focus towards a participatory vision of decision-making", as informed by the changing educational terrain. Transformational leadership could thrive well within a collaborative governance leadership environment.

Collaboration is defined by Schrage (1995:33) as "the process of shared creation where two or more individuals with complementary skills interact to create a shared understanding that none had previously possessed or could have come to on their own". The study presents the school and the community as characterised by closely knit relationships. The leadership is expected to possess strategies to effectively adapt with and utilise skills within the

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community through attending community developmental activities whose outcomes would contribute to delivering objectives for learner performance improvement. Ansell and Gash (2008) define collaborative governance as "a governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets; and brings multiple stakeholders together in common forums with public agencies to engage in consensus-oriented decision making, and focuses on public policies and issues".

Ansell and Gash (2008) further assert that effective leadership facilitates effective collaborative governance. Collaborative governance leadership therefore should facilitate open discussions while considering meaningful views, ideas, inputs and strategies from other actors. Serpieri and Vatrella (2017) highlight collaborative governance leadership features and amongst others, purport that "the field to be governed suggests the techniques of steering to be employed: the sharing of roles and responsibilities; the planning of internal and well-defined policies; and the adoption of specific strategies of communication, which take into account viewpoints of educational community".

This approach to governance facilitates joint actions by different stakeholders representing diverse constituencies and agendas to make public policy decisions about public issues that directly affect them. The onus rests upon these stakeholders to practically present an environment that would create equal partnerships and representation directed towards reforming and sustaining functional public institutions. Vangen, Hayes and Cornforth (2015) assert that the "governance of a collaboration is also designed with the expectations that specific actors will direct, coordinate and allocate resources for the collaboration and be accountable for its activities". One of the distinguished problems in collaborative governance is power imbalances amongst stakeholders (Warner, 2006), and when "some stakeholders do not have the capacity, organisation, status, or resources to participate, or to participate on an equal footing with other stakeholders, the collaborative governance process will be prone to manipulation by stronger actors (Hallinger & Hack, 2010).

2.5.9 The school principal and distributed leadership functions

Distributed leadership as described by Spillane, Reiser and Reimer (2002) is about "leadership practice" which forms the basis for leadership "roles, routines and structures"

resulting from interconnectedness of systems working within a school situation between the leader(s) and the led. He further adds that "individuals play off one another creating a reciprocal interdependency between their actions". His study on distributed leadership showed interactions and routines "such as monitoring and evaluation teaching practice" by a number of leaders informed by the subject area. Internal school systems warrant the school principal assisted by other SMT members to carry the monitoring and evaluation responsibilities ensuring functionality of curriculum systems while external systems functioning through the district officials facilitate curriculum delivery through support in various ways to ensure that educators are capacitated with the knowledge of the subject matter to enable them to deliver on the teaching practice. Distributed leadership facilitates a school environment that requires attainment of certain goals as directed by policy directives and is characterised by how people interact in particular circumstances and mostly in the presence of challenges. In my opinion leadership capacity must not only be evident in the governance of the school, but also in the overall interaction of systems aiming at improving academic performance of that particular school which is fully actioned through the SMT and educators.

The school principal further monitors curriculum delivery through the SMT, identifies areas that need strengthening and support and then provides relevant capacity.

2.6 LEADERSHIP CAPACITY AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

2.6.1 The distinction between policy and legislation

- **policy**

Policy is defined by Hogwood and Gunn, (1984: 19–23) as "any public policy subjectively defined by an observer as being such and is usually perceived as comprising a series of patterns of related decisions to which many circumstances and personal, group, and organisational influences have contributed" In their introduction, Khan and Khandaker (2016) define public policy as a "guide to action, an execution of a philosophy, principle, vision and decision", transmitted through "programmes, projects and activities", and should be informed by a "broader framework of the government". It encompasses future intents, goals and objectives and reflects on activities for achieving these.

Sabatier and Mazmanian (1983:146) in what they term the "synoptic view of policy development", propose that the first phase in policy formulation is conducted by "experts and elected public officials, followed by its execution which is conducted by administrative officials". This view highlights gaps in consultative processes where the very people expected to implement policy are not involved in its formulation. This disjuncture leads to improper implementation of policy as implementors do not possess adequate capacity. Principals leaders must possess adequate capacity to guide, direct and in turn build capacity of SGBs by fully delivering on the role mandated by SASA.

- **Legislation**

Joubert and Prinsloo (2013:3) define legislation as "generally applicable rules of law made by government authorities, and also include provincial laws and regulations made by ministers. In South Africa, the Parliament is the body that has been tasked by the Constitution (Act 108, 1996: Sec. 44:1) with law making for passing legislation in all the dimensions of the South African government with education included. In the South African Education System, the responsibility to enact education legislation is the task of the Minister of Education. There are pieces of legislation that are relevant for reviewing whether the identified school cases are in compliance with the mandates in their endeavour to transform their schools through implementation of policy processes while ensuring good school governance. And these are:

- The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996;
- The South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996; and
- Public Finance Management Act, 1 of 1999 and its directives as reflected in the Limpopo Prescripts on the management of public funds.

Documents to be regarded as legislation have to "comply with all the constitutional and legal requirements dealing with authority, adoption and publication" (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2013).

2.6.2 Authority of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996)

The South African (SA) Constitution carries a mandate to declare a document as legislation provided that it complies with "constitutional and legal requirements dealing with authority, adoption and publication" (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2013:18). SASA (1996) carries a legal

mandate to all the schools in the country be it public or private. The South African Constitution is considered as the country's piece of legislation that has authority above, and informs all other legislations (Act 108, 1996). The principal's responsibility is to interpret the content of legislation to the SGB so that its actions are informed by the context of the Constitution and other relevant legislation. The Constitution of South Africa remains supreme over all other legislation and the principal's responsibility is to guide the SGB so that all the school generated policies are informed by the Constitution (1996).

Transforming the public service including South African schools would be useless and ineffectively delivered if it is not informed by the Constitution (1996) of South Africa. Chapter 2 of this legislation declares the "Bill of Rights" as a "cornerstone of democracy in South Africa" enshrining on the rights of every person in the country and purports on the fulfilment of these rights by the state. The "State" refers to all public institutions including schools, and 8(2) states that the "Bill of Rights binds both a natural or a juristic person". The SA Constitution's primary aim is the establishment of a representative democracy that affords people an opportunity to take part in making decisions that affect them. The Constitution (1996) informs SASA (1996) mandates and informs all legislation including policies developed by SGBs in the South African Education System.

2.6.3 South African Schools Act (1996) and financial prescripts (DoE, 2011)

SASA makes provision for a uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools as one of its functions.

Section 15 stipulates that all public schools are "juristic persons and have to perform their functions through legally appointed body". The SGB is a democratic structure that fulfils the representative democratic processes stipulated in the Constitution, that also warrants learners in the Grade 8 to serve as school governors (section 23). The SGB must promote the "fiduciary interest" of the school (Joubert & Prinsloo 2013). SGB members sometimes misinterpret this role by acting as if they represent different constituencies.

SASA (1996) warrants the HoD to identify underperforming schools (section 58B) if the learner performance standard falls below the prescription standards set by the National Curriculum Statement; and if there is a possibility that such a school might remain in that position for too long warrants intervention by the HoD by demanding from the principal of

such a poor performing school a plan committing him/herself on the development and improvement of that school including how resources would be effectively utilised. SASA (1996) also provides for SGB committees, SGB constitution and code of conduct, general and allocated functions of SGBs.

The LPMSF (DoE, 2011) address finer details regarding the constitution of the finance committee, daily withdrawals from school funds, issues of three quotations before procurement processes could be done, persons responsible for authorising payments and duties of the treasure and the finance officer regarding handling of public funds. Within all these actions, the principal is held accountable and must ensure that financial management systems are in place.

Figure 2.2 Representation within the finance committee
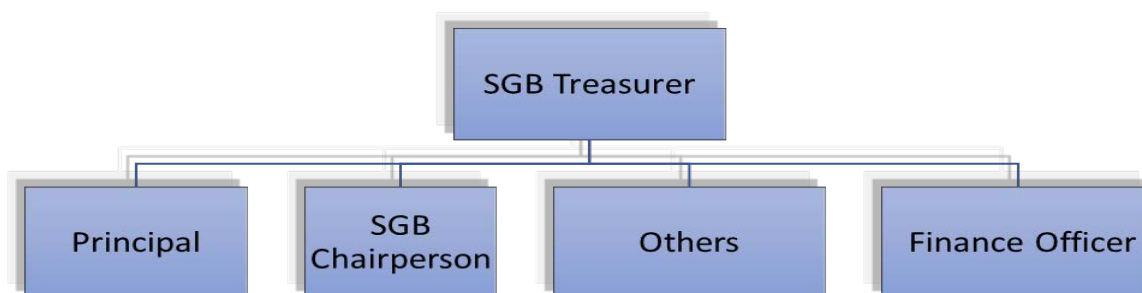
Adapted from: LPMSF (DoE, 2011)

In Figure 2.2, SASA (1996) has afforded SGBs with policy making functions thereby ensuring that they:

- Determine school policies and strategies, develop the vision and mission of the school, school development and improvement plans (SDP & SIP), draft annual budgets, allocate resources, keep SGB records, and annually submit financial records for auditing.
- The principal of a poorly performing school prepares and submits an annual academic performance improvement plans (AAPIP).

SASA (1996) also warrants that newly elected SGBs must be trained so that they could be able to deliver on their roles and responsibilities. The HoD through the district and circuit has to also provide continuity of training programmes so that SGBs could be afforded skills relevant for assuming decentralised powers and allocated functions.

2.6.4 SASA (1996) directives and the code of conduct for learners

Chapter 8 of SASA (1996) stipulates that SGBs must adopt a code of conduct for learners conducting consultative processes with learners, parents and educators of that particular school. The aim must be for the establishment of a disciplined, purposeful and continuous quality learning school environment.

Chapter 8A of this legislation affords the principal the right to randomly search and seize dangerous weapons and illegal drugs held by learners and test learners for drugs in cases where there is reasonable suspicion and evidence of such actions by learners. SASA (1996) also affords the principal the right to declare a school as a drug-and weapon-free zone and communicate this to all parties involved with the education of that school, including educators.

SASA (9966: Sec.11) (1) mandates an "establishment of a legitimate and the only recognised representative council of *learners* at every *public-school* enrolling *learners* in the eighth *grade* or higher", and members must serve in the SGB of that particular school (Sec 23) (d). The implication behind this directive is that these learners have power and must be involved in any school affair that involves learners. This means they must be consulted to be part of deliberations before the code of conduct is adopted by the SGB. The principal's leadership style has to reflect capacity in the involvement of representative council of learners (RCLs) within the school's learner affairs as they are the only legitimate body representing learners. RCLs should be fully utilised to assist with learner disciplinary matters at the school. They should hold meetings to discuss learner issues with the Teacher Liaison Officer.

2.6.5 Public Finance Management Act (1999) and SASA (1996) section 16A

In his statement, Mestry (2004) argues that "some school principals still perceive themselves as accounting officers of the school". Indeed, they are accounting officers through the insertion of SASA section 16A(i) (SASA, 1996) as amended.

The principal of a public school has been given powers of an accounting officer through SASA (1996)16A (1) to be the representative of the HoD within the SGB. Principals have automatic membership within the SGB and account to the HoD.

Section 36 of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) stipulates that HoDs in provinces are accounting officers for their departments. This is the same mandate that has been delegated to public school principals in section 16A of SASA (1996) when they are acting in their official capacities within the SGB. Section 38 clearly articulates the duties of accounting officers and among those duties ensure that schools spend public funds through utilising effective, efficient and transparent financial and risk control systems; have procurement systems in place; and avoid wasteful expenditure.

The appointed auditor reviewing financial statements of the school is also expected to complete a certificate assuring the department that a particular school is indeed complying with PFMA (1999: Sec 38(i), and the principal and the chairperson of the SGB acknowledging compliance to this directive must sign this assurance certificate. This is an assurance to the department that the school has sound financial management systems or has a challenge around this area and as a result, it is failing to deliver on the above expectation so that it could be assisted.

The contemplation behind these legislations is that services delivered by schools to their citizens (parents and learners) must reflect a promotion of democratic ideals of transformation and good governance evidenced within consultative processes. However, they should also ensure effectivity, efficiency, and transparency in financial management systems, the right to access educational facilities and quality education reflexive of expected service standards. Formulated and implemented policies must endeavour to meet these standards.

2.6.6 Policy implementation in the South African Education System

Many research studies have aired their views on policy implementation and have investigated education policy implementation and challenges attached hereto. These challenges have to do with the standard of school formulated policies and the extents to which these policies are implemented (Viennet & Pont (2017). The changing education terrain had prompted the South African Government to look beyond its boundaries and seek help, hence the "borrowed features" as asserted by Jansen (2004). Policy implementation remains a challenge because the very people who are expected to implement policies are not involved in their making (Jansen, 2004), and this results to poor policy implementation at schools.

The success of curriculum policies is highly dependent upon the attitudes, behaviours, and commitment of the SMT and educators interacting within a school situation. The principal's leadership capacity must be evident in the school functionality where on top of being self-compliance with directives, must also monitor compliance by the SMT and educators in the delivery of curriculum policies and directives. The success of curriculum policies is highly dependent upon the attitudes, behaviours, and commitment of the SMT and educators interacting within a school situation. The principal's leadership capacity must be evident in the school functionality where on top of being self-compliance with directives, must also monitor compliance by the SMT and educators in the implementation of curriculum policies and directives. The onus then lies on whether the SMT and educators have the relevant and expected capacity and beliefs to can deliver on the expectations of curriculum policies and whether they trust that they possess the necessary abilities to deliver on these expectations.

2.6.7 Adopting and developing school policies- Whose responsibility?

This study is not concerned about steps to be followed when formulating policy in general, but it would be useful to consider whose responsibility is it to adopt and develop school policies and processes involved to explore the leadership capacity of the principal in facilitating these directives. SASA, (1996: Sec 20) mandates the SGB to adopt a code of conduct for learners and an SGB constitution, develop the mission statement of the school; and determine admission and language policies of the school informed by the Constitution. These activities require collaborated processes by members of the SGB where each

requirement is debated and the best option agreed upon. The Constitution (1996) determines that a school must be a safe place for learners, educators or any other person in the school. This implies that the school must have a safety and security policy to safeguard the rights of all persons at the school. The school principal should facilitate this responsibility in full compliance with the Constitution of South Africa (1996) and the stipulated regulations for safety. The question remains as to whether the SGB has or lacks relevant capacity to deliver on these mandates. In the absence of such capacity, the responsibility lies heavily on the shoulders of the principal as a leader to transfer knowledge, information and skills to the SGB and simplify legislation in line with their level of education. Studies conducted under policy development agree that policy formulation entails capacity by those responsible for formulating it (Spillane et al., 2002).

2.6.8 Policy implementation within schools

The study also reviews the effect of the principal leadership capacity in education policy implementation within a school context and supports Viennet and Pont (2017) who assert that **"**education policy implementation is a complex evolving process that involves many stakeholders and can result in failure if not well targeted". Some of their highlighted causes of policy implementation failures as "a lack of focus on the implementation processes when defining policies at the system level; a lack of recognition that the core of change processes requires engaging people; and the fact that implementation processes need to be revised to adapt to new complex governance systems". They argue that "If policy makers and stakeholders want policies to be effective and improve education, they need to share a common understanding of implementation to be able to work together on the process". Major challenges in policy implementation in rural schools are as a result of SGBs' insufficient involvement in determining policy for their schools which as a result of low literacy levels (Bush, 2004). This low involvement undermines goals of decentralisation and SASA (1996) directives aiming for the full involvement of local communities in the education of their children.

Khan and Khandaker (2016) assert that the implementation process is a vital phase in the policy making process aimed at attaining the set goals, is the execution of law by different stakeholders jointly using procedures and techniques to effect policy in an organisation. These researchers advise that when monitoring performance, policy should be categorised

into three phases, namely: the policy output and outcome; the policy impact; and, assessment of its impact on the country or society.

Viennet and Pont (2017) calls for consideration and alignment of factors that could contribute to effective policy implementation and has presented them as:

Smart policy design (reasonableness, logical and practicability of a policy will increase possibilities of its implementation); Inclusive stakeholder engagement (involvement of relevant actors); A conducive institutional, policy and societal context (favourable school terrain); and, A coherent implementation strategy to reach schools (rational and consistent lines of operation).

Experience has shown us that a good policy becomes the absence of policy if the people responsible for implementing it fail to do so. Over and above the fact that policies have to be developed by competent people who have authority to do so, policies need competency, uniformity and consistency by those responsible for implementing them.

2.7 CONCLUSION

Leadership capacity is summarised as enabling a creation of an atmosphere where SMTs and educators work freely and openly to pursue the agendas of the school, encouraging and fostering a teamwork environment where individuals and group skills are unearthed. Leadership entails possessing skills and strategies to enable for the identification of areas where challenges with a negating impact on the planned activities are identified and strategies to address them are sought and implemented successfully.

School leadership should pay attention to the directives as contained in policies and legislation and assist functionality of structures within a school environment and facilitate joint commitment to working as teams pushing the same agenda and objectives of the organisation even if this would be done from difference angles. The principal leader is expected to work beyond people's expectations creating a conducive atmosphere that would extend the extent to which collaborative processes could unfold, and their contribution to the school performance, and identify areas that need strengthening and continuous support. With the changing context of organisations, a leader should strive to encourage and facilitate open and free discussions, sharing of ideas, transferring skills and developing others,

learning together, clarifying of ambiguous statements, directives or policies and seeking additional support if need arises.

Leadership capacity entails building capacity of the teams or groups and relationships, sharing values, morals, trust, and honesty among individuals. The principal's leadership capacity is expected to encompass all abilities. Unfortunately, these are the expectations rural communities hope to see in a school principal who should always try hard not to disappoint stakeholders by allowing learners to poorly perform.

CHAPTER 3:

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous literature review chapter dealt with leadership capacity of the principal in general, leadership theories, governance, in particular school governance and policy implementation. Research was conducted in two secondary schools in the Sekhukhune District in the Limpopo Province, and both these schools are in the rural communities and are both quintile 1 schools meaning that communities around the schools are in the same socio-economic status and the schools are no-fee schools, (National Norms and Standards for School Funding, 2013). Evidence of the day-to-day activities reflecting the principals' roles and responsibilities, school governance activities and the levels of compliance to directives, and evidence of capacity in policy implementation were reviewed from school documents and departmental archives.

The study also reviewed decentralisation as a theory devolving powers to school governing bodies and affording schools authority to self-manage themselves through involvement of communities, parents and other stakeholders, who engage in local decision-making processes in the quest to support the core business of improving learner performance. This concurs with Naidoo's (2002) argument on the broadness of the concepts of decentralisation with each encompassing divergent characteristic ranging from: policy implications, and conditions for success. He further highlights commonalities reflected in most definitions as evidence of some devolution of a certain amount of power from a central person of authority to the local level as reflected in the South African Education System.

The study was apprised by the following primary research question and sought evidence to answer it.

- To what extent does the leadership capacity of the principals' impact with governance and implementation of policy in the poor performing rural secondary schools of Sekhukhune District?

This question enabled me to reflect on leadership skills and knowledge of the principals in their daily activities while providing direction, taking risks while trying new strategies, guiding

and developing the SGBs to ensure competency in delivering school governance and policy implementation mandates. Leadership activities reviewed also tried to determine whether the schools' visions, missions and school plans are reflective of strategic leadership and direction by the principals. I had an opportunity of understanding how leadership capacity impacts with school governance and learner performance.

Data collected was aimed at answering the primary research question and answers have been sought to attempt to answer the following secondary research questions:

- *What leadership skills and competencies do principal leaders of poor performing rural secondary schools possess?*

Posing the question was aimed at finding out whether the principals of the poorly performing schools possess relevant leadership skills and abilities through having certain qualities, qualifications and experience in leadership roles.

- *How does the leadership capacity of the principals influence collaborative decision-making and planning in the poor performing rural secondary schools?*

The question was aimed at understanding issues of compliance with directives through collaborative processes within the SGBs and to further check the level of involvement of SGBs by the principals in decision making relevant to them as governors in the schools. It also aimed at determining how far the principal attempted to comply with legislation and directives from the Head of Department of Education in the Limpopo Province, and whether the principal guided the SGB towards understanding the juristic position of the schools as actioned through the SGBs.

- *How do the principals of poor performing rural secondary schools use leadership skills to guide the SGB on policy implementation?*

The relevancy of the question was to understand the role these principals play in ensuring that policy directives actioned through the SGBs are implemented. The principals take on the leading role capacitating, guiding and directing these role players for the effective and efficient implementation of policy and the relevancy of asking this question was to understand how the principal leaders carried out the SASA (1996) mandate and any other

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relevant mandates. The question also aimed to check the level of involvement of the schools in policy implementation.

- *How have principals of poor performing rural secondary schools been supported by the district to improve on leadership capacity?*

The above question focuses on the interventions provided to principal leaders by Sekhukhune Education District. Here two divergent roles in the delivery of education directives are at play where the district plays a supportive role while the principal leaders play leading and implementation roles within the secondary schools. The research sites are poorly performing secondary schools, which happen to be in rural areas of Sekhukhune District in Limpopo. The nature of the research question necessitated that supporting evidence be elicited from documents to check whether the district delivered on its mandated roles of delivering leadership capacity building programmes and support aimed at improving learner achievement. The relevance of the question was purported by the fact that leadership capacity can be built and it involves processes where conditions, opportunities, and development experiences are created (Harris & Chapman, 2002). The district has to provide leadership training, constant monitoring and provisioning of extra support to principal leaders in these poorly performing schools.

The setup of this chapter also briefly discusses the underlying philosophical assumptions relevant for this research, followed by the research design and procedures setting boundaries for the study, and the collection of data which is aimed at explaining empirical investigation, validity, reliability and trustworthiness of data and data analysis procedures. The chapter lastly addresses considered ethical issues and limitations encountered in the course of the study.

3.2 The research design

3.2.1 Philosophical assumptions

The chosen paradigm for the study is interpretive in nature. It has allowed the researcher to probe deeper into document analysis in order to gain an understanding of how the principal leaders working with the SMT collaborate with SGBs, parents and the community in creating sense and meaning in their daily school governance activities and policy implementation.

These activities have been interpreted to ascertain whether they were reflective of evidence of compliance to directives and legislation in these school environments.

In the interpretivist research paradigm, the researcher engages in "partnership with participants in the creation of meaning", (Henning et al. 2013), which according to the study has been through uncovering thoughts, decisions, ideas, behaviours, trends and other relevant information buried in school texts. The interpretive approach identifies epistemological focus based on "key role players or knowledge systems" (Henning et al. 2013). They further add that these bear rich data that the researcher interacts with through interpretive processes to unveil how and what meanings people give and the sense that is created through such interactions while highly sensitising contextual roles.

Being an interpretive research project, the study has located "frames of reference" (Henning et al. 2013) principal leaders associate themselves to, and how these have shaped their meaning and created sense in the activities of the schools as captured in the school documents. The study has located trends reflecting information that build on the phenomenon under study.

According to Du Plooy Cilliers, ed, (2017) "interpretivists believe that what is factual depends heavily on the context and people's interpretation of information". He further purports that interpretivists do not support objectivity of knowledge and truth as positivists do, but "see facts as fluid embedded within a meaning system". In the study the researcher has explained and presented information as it arose from the schools' contexts through analysing documents.

3.2.2 A qualitative approach

The nature of research questions is exploratory in the sense that it aimed at revealing and describing leadership capacity as emanating from natural settings of governance and policy implementation in a school context. It also aimed to determine whether it is contributory to development of good governance and facilitating implementation of policies in its quest to transform the school performance. Within the interpretivist research, measurement can never be perfect and without mistakes, and as such interpretivists encourage researchers to use multiple data and different sources and analysis methods to aid validity, (Henning et al. 2013). This study has reflected on the analysed school documents accessed from the

school archives and has not included or interpreted previous studies as there is no evidence of such a study having been conducted before in the Sekhukhune District in Limpopo. The study has located literature conducted by previous researchers on leadership capacity, governance and policy implementation.

As a qualitative study this work has deductively studied data, through comparing the emerging data from school documents with themes, patterns and interpretations of theoretical conceptions emanating from previous studies with the purpose of identifying, testing, and adding on existing theories (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, eds, 2017). I have conducted some search and selections, interpreted, synthesised and found data that were housed in school documents.

The exploratory nature of this study has utilised a qualitative approach aimed to find out how information from the school cases as interpreted, reflected leadership systems emanating from the leadership styles of the principals. When the collected information was analysed, it was able to reveal the influence (whether positive or negative) leadership capacity has on governance and policy implementation.

The study has analysed a variety of the two schools' documents, the South African legislation and physical artefacts to elicit information that builds on this research study. These two schools are in Sekhukhune rural areas and have been poorly performing for a period of five years between 2012 and 2016 consecutively in the sense that their grade 12 results have been below 40%.

The reason why qualitative approach is relevant for this study is that it is presented mainly in language and has not used statistics to present its data findings, (Henning et al. 2013) where the researcher constructs understanding by interpreting peoples' behaviours, interactions, and systems to elicit meaning. The research questions are exploratory in nature facilitating responses and answers to the how and the what questions aimed at describing the effect of leadership capacity on governance and policy implementation in these rural schools. The cases elicited "rich descriptions" (Yin, 1994)) of two school cases obtained from document analysis as a prospective source in which empirical case study data was obtainable from in order to answer the research questions. The study reflects on the necessity to give a detailed understanding of leadership capacity, leadership skills and

leadership types impacting on governance and effective implementation of school policies and legislations and the role played by the SMTs in the school processes.

Merriam (1988:118) contends that documents have an ability to unearth meaning, while assisting the researcher to create understanding and bringing to the fore perceptions to answer the research questions. Through the analysis of school documents, the researcher was able to deduce the types of behaviours, abilities and skills of the principal leaders working within the SMTs, the SGBs and learners, and how these interactions bring about school organisational order in governance and curriculum as reflected through evidence from implemented policies.

3.2.3 Case study research

The definition of a case by Yin (2002:13) is that it is "contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between a phenomenon and context are not clear and the researcher has little control over the phenomenon and context". Yin, further maintains that case studies are conducted when the research has to respond to the "how and why questions"; when behaviour manipulation of respondents is impossible; when unveiling relevant underlying circumstances; and there is inconclusive demarcation between the context and phenomenon. Interpretivist perspective highlight a major distinction of case studies as that of striving towards a "comprehensive understanding of how participants relate and interact with each other in a specific situation" and reflect on the studied phenomenon (Maree, ed, 2013). In agreement with Yin (2002) the study reviews schools' documents that the researcher does not have control or influence over and were generated in the past. It would be very impossible to manipulate them, and her role was just interpreting and bringing the best out of them. These documents are relevant for the study and are believed to contain issues pertinent to the study, and also contain presentations of other people whose inputs contribute to giving meaning of the schools' contexts.

Stake (1995) presents a diverse view of a case as "a bounded system" which should be inquired "as an object rather than a process, specific, complex and an integrated system with a boundary of working parts". This study has bounded the cases to only include years from 2012 to 2016 when these schools were poorly performing. A case should not be open-ended and be too "broad and having too many objectives but should remain in a reasonable

scope" (Baxter & Jack, 2008). I believed that this study was not too wide and contains an adequate number of objectives as reflected in paragraph 1.5.

The study has utilised a qualitative multiple case study design because two school cases have been studied. Bexter and Jack (2008) concur that a multiple case study involves more than one case where each case context is different. They further opine that It affords the researcher an opportunity to study each case in its own environment and across environments to find commonalities and differences and is relevant in "facilitating exploration of the identified phenomenon". Multiple sources of data have been interpreted, as each individual school case is diverse and specific based on its own environment and underlying issues. A multiple case study design has been chosen because the researcher thinks it is worth trying to study poor performing secondary school contexts to identify how behaviours and decisions of stakeholders affect learner performance.

The aim of a case study was not to unveil "patterns, relationships and the dynamic that make a study worth conducting" (Henning et al., 2013). There was a strong belief by the researcher that in these school cases some relevant information might be unearthed. I believed that there are underlying causes impacting to the leadership capacity of the principals that need to be uncovered and might be the contributory factors to poor performance in these rural secondary schools. This research presents a descriptive account on multiple data collected and interpreted and will only concern itself with themes that are within the cases.

The activity afforded the researcher opportunity to identify trends and patterns of behaviour, and how these have been dealt with to aid transformation of schools to improve learner performance. Principal leaders have different leadership styles and these are used interchangeably as prompted by different school contexts and challenges at hand. This approach in my study would assist in the discovery of processes of governance and policy implementation and in providing general support to poorly performing rural schools.

The case studies in the project arise from the need to promote leadership capacity that is aimed at creating a school platform that is transformational and able to develop other group capacities at school. The researcher believes will contribute to good governance and general support to schools to enable them to be centres of quality teaching and learning aimed at improving learner performance.

3.3 CHOOSING THE POPULATION AND CONDUCTING SAMPLING

When identifying population for a research study, the researcher theoretically locates and combines study elements such as "people or social artefacts that share at least one specific characteristic relevant to the research question" (Du Plooy-Cilliers et.al. eds, 2013). For this, study the population refers only to rural secondary schools that have been poorly performing in the district for five consecutive years from 2012 to 2016. Poor performance in the study refers to performance that is 50% and below. These secondary schools share this commonality and is relevant for this study.

Sampling in qualitative studies according to Nieuwenhuis, ed (2013) is the process when the researcher chooses part of the common elements relevant for the study which in the case of this study these two elements are the two poorly performing secondary schools. Sampling these school cases within the population entailed that I had to look for information that would enable me to limit the schools to include only a few cases in order to ensure that such cases would be viable and easily accessible. The schools were identified through purposive, non-probability sampling because of their continuous poor performance status reviewed from a period of five years as reflected in the district records. I considered these schools' performance because I believe that learner performance is always seen as the responsibility of the school principal leader and his or her ability to lead and manage different teams interacting within that particular school environment. This belief led me to the research topic of inquiring as to whether the principals' leadership capacity has a bearing on the effectiveness of governance and policy implementation in these schools and the level to which such impact contributes either positively or negatively to learner performance. Through purposive sampling I have selected documents that only reflect a strong connection with the research questions.

According to Henning et.al. (2013), documents as texts can be studied alone and can be reviewed intensively by the researcher just like any other genre in research after ensuring on their relevance and what meaning they impart about the topic under study. Documents, like all texts, are also open to discursive analysis (Henning et al., 2013) by checking on their originality and their historical meaning. Here documents have served as the sole data collection method and have been interacted with to bring out meaning within the studied cases. The reasoning behind conducting these case-studies was to get information

regarding the leadership capacity of the principal as reflected in the activities of the school; its impact in the functionality of the SMT and school governance as core structures within a school, and whether there is evidence that policies, both curriculum and governance were implemented and whether those implementing them had capacity to do so. The cases presented in the study give a description of identified themes that have been unearthed from documents collected from each school.

This study has examined multiple sources of document evidence in the sampled schools and the researcher had no control of the school events nor has influenced their recording, (Yin, 1994) as the research is strictly an unobtrusive one. The study could not sample individual participants and conduct interviews and questionnaires and direct assessment to examine the phenomena under study due to time constraints. It only focused on document reviews, archival records, and legislation.

3.3.1 Presentation of research sites

This study attempted to present and analyse two case studies conducted in the Sekhukhune District rural secondary schools. The criterion for selection was to only identify schools that have been poorly performing for a period of five consecutive years in the district. The NSC came to my aid as I was able to access the country's performance per province and per district over a period of three years (2013-2016). The NSC also projected schools in the country (South Africa) that have performed below 40% from 2012 to 2016 without improving. About 38 schools in the country within three provinces fell under this category. My focus was in Limpopo where 13 secondary schools underperformed below 40% over the above indicated years, where eight of these schools are in the Sekhukhune District. The data enabled me to tailor my selection to only include two schools from the above category who are in two circuits. This selection enabled rigorous review of the selected sites that were within my financial ability.

The NSC (National Senior Certificate) School Performance Report 2016 consolidated and presented the overall results of Grade 12 learners in the South African schools into a national report that enables easy accessibility by everybody concerned who has an interest and a responsibility in the performance of learners in the whole country. Here the report has packaged school information of the 81 districts and indicates the number of candidates who wrote seven subjects in the examination and the number that obtained the NSC (NSC,

2016). This report makes it easier to analyse and compare schools' performance individually by detailing the total number who wrote 2016 Grade 12 examinations, the number that achieved the NSC and the pass percentage in each of the three years (2014 to 2016). It further reflects schools who achieved 100%, and those who got below 40% over a period of five years, respectively. My school cases project the latter performance. The summary of school performance is presented based on each of the nine provinces in South Africa.

TABLE 3.1: The summary of school performance from 2012-2016

Provinces		Total number of schools	0-19.9 %	20-29.9%	40-49.9%	60-69.9%	80-89.9%	Exactly 0%	Exactly 100%
Eastern Cape	Number	925	43	183	276	231	192	2	44
	%		4.6	19.8	29.8	25.0	208	02	4.8
Free State	Number	328	0	1	4	58	265	0	65
	%		0.0	0.3	1.2	17.7	80.8	00	19.8
Gauteng	Number	875	3	6	47	207	612	2	144
	%		0.3	0.7	5.4	23.7	69.9	0.2	16.5
KwaZulu-Natal	Number	1745	105	240	388	486	526	10	85
	%		6.0	13.8	22.2	27.9	30.1	0.6	4.9
Limpopo	Number	1413	43	217	382	444	327	4	40
	%		3.0	15.4	27.0	31.4	23.1	0.3	2.8
Mpumalanga	Number	551	1	14	64	189	283	0	22
	%		0.2	2.5	11.6	34.3	51.4	0.0	4.0
North West	Number	400	1	3	26	121	249	0	40
	%		0.3	0.8	6.5	30.3	62.3	0.0	10.0
Northern Cape	Number	136	0	4	16	38	78	0	19
	%		0.0	2.9	11.8	27.9	57.4	0.0	14.0
Western Cape	Number	441	0	3	18	99	321	0	89
	%		0.0	0.7	4.1	22.4	72.8	0.0	20.0
National	Number	6814	196	671	1221	1873	2853	18	548
	%		2.9	9.8	17.9	27.5	41.9	0.3	8.0

Source: NSC 2016

Three provinces namely, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo reflected mostly the number of schools that registered for the NSC 2016.

TABLE 3.2 Summary of schools that achieved 100% from 2012-2016

Eastern Cape	7
Free State	12
Gauteng	19
KwaZulu-Natal	32
Limpopo	2
Mpumalanga	3
North West	3
Northern Cape	31

Source: NSC 2016

TABLE 3.3 Summary of schools that performed below 40% from 2012-2016

Eastern Cape	14
KwaZulu-Natal	11
Limpopo	13
National	38

Source: NSC 2016

The table shows schools that performed below 40% in the country and these provinces are Eastern Cape, Kwazulu-Natal and Limpopo. These are the provinces who have most schools as shown in table 3.1 above and are mostly rural. Find source. From the 13 schools of Limpopo that performed below 40% for five consecutive years, 8 schools are in the Sekhukhune District.

Figure 3.1 Provincial presentation of pass rate in 2016

Limpopo
62.5%

North West
82.5%

Gauteng
85.1%

Mpumalanga
77.1%

Free State
88.2%

Kwazulu Natal
66.4%

Northern Cape
78.7 %

Eastern Cape
59.3%

Western Cape
85.9%
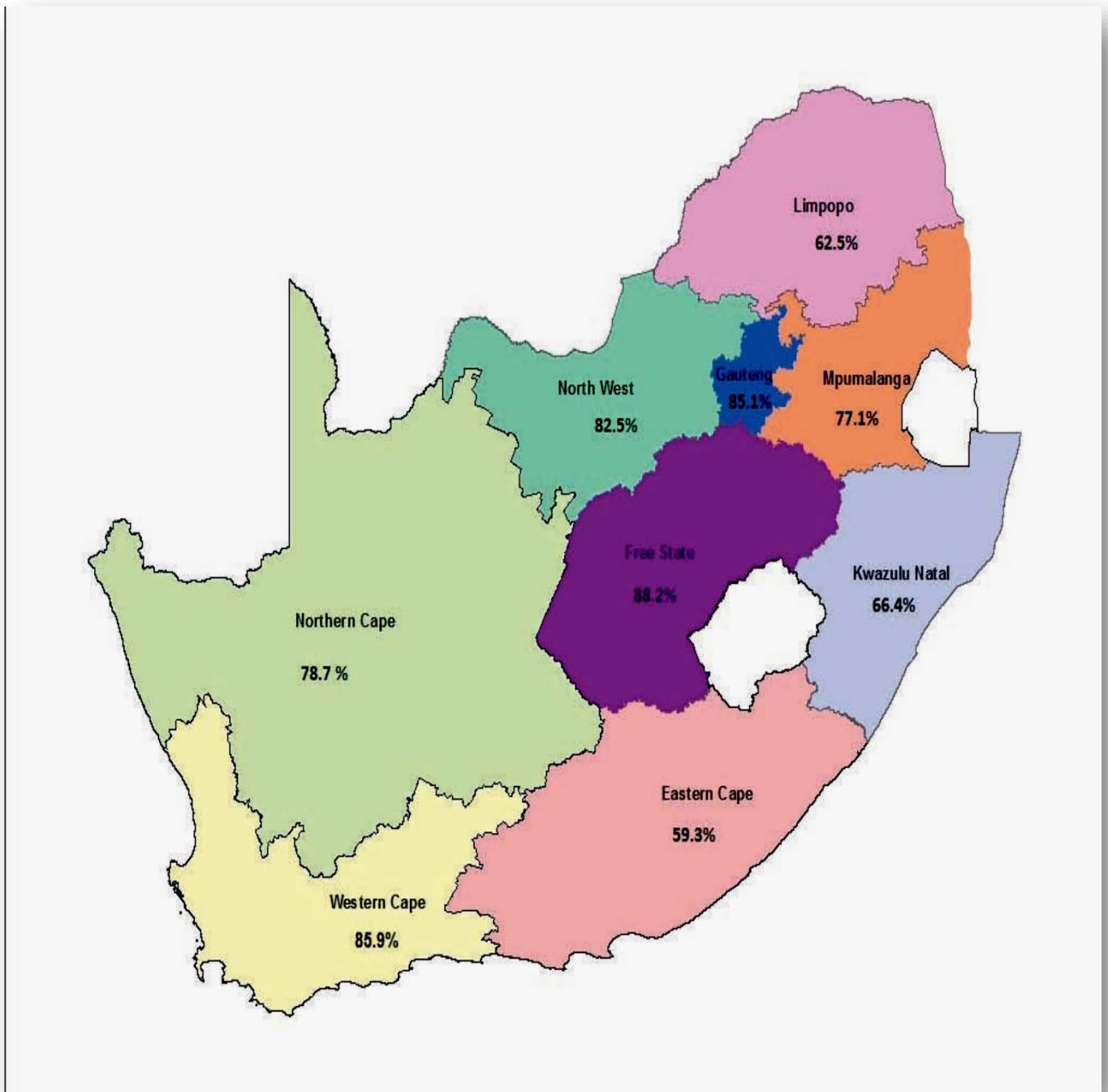
Source: NSC 2016

Figure 3.2: Limpopo Education district performance
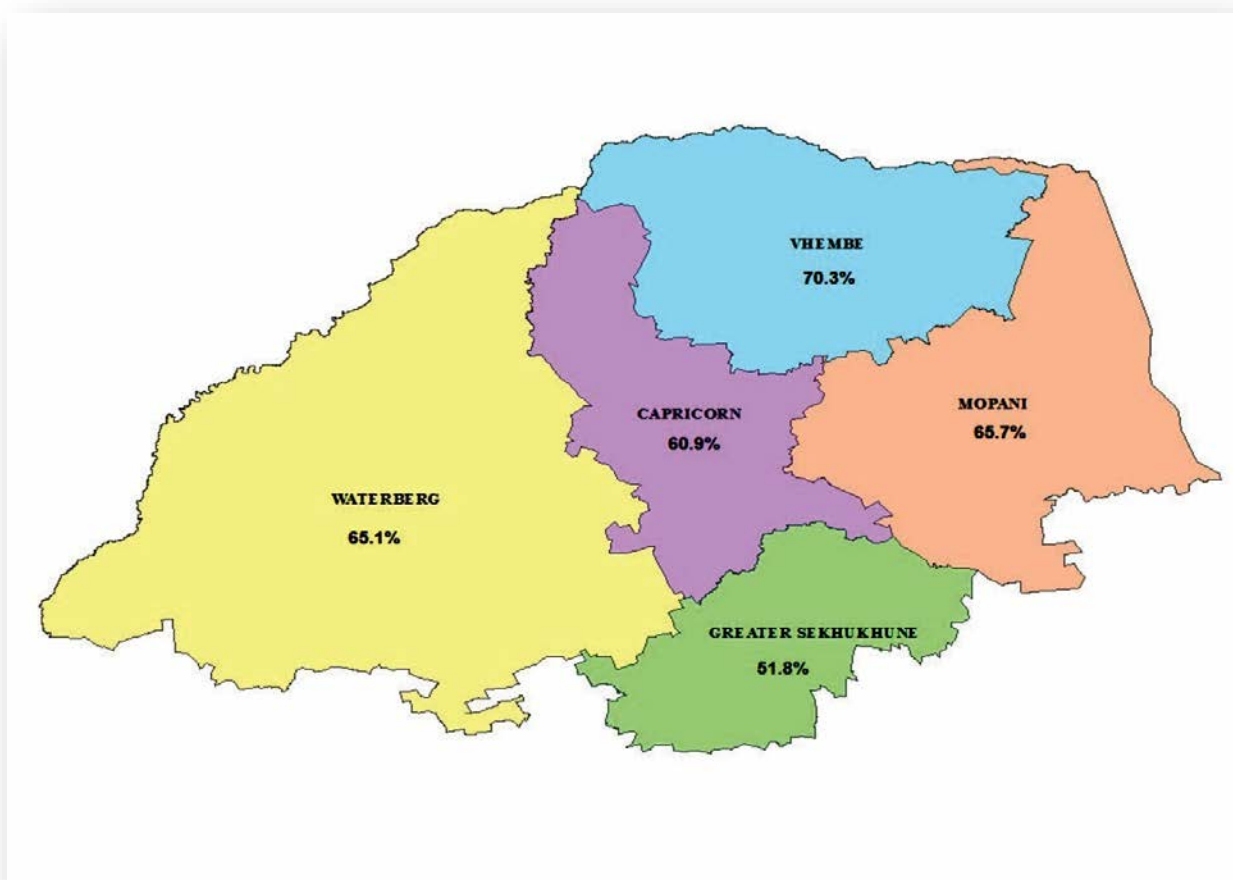
Source: NSC 2016

Over and above the stated criteria, the two schools share social commonalities in terms of size, type, location, socio-economic status, and ethnicity.

TABLE 3.4: Illustration of the social commonalities

School	Size	Type	Location	Socio-economic status	Ethnicity
SCHL A	Medium Sec.	Q1 rural school	Rural Sekhukhune	Low-income pupils	Sepedi speakers
SCHL B	Medium Sec.	Q1 rural school	Rural Sekhukhune	Low-income pupils	Sepedi speakers

Each of the cases studied include sections which are presented in this fashion: the presentation of the school contexts and each case is analysed in reference to the research questions of the study by means of argumentative review statements and findings as mined from school documents, department of education legislation, circulars and directives, and concludes with deliberations that locate the school contexts to the relevant leadership capacity theory. Having this information at my disposal meant I could consider getting approval to access the research information.

Getting approval from the district to collect documents in the two schools proved impossible as I did not get any response from the relevant officials and time was moving very fast. After repeated attempts, it seemed that I would not be able to conduct the research unless I reconsider the strategy of data collection. My cases only involved data from a period of five years, (2012-2016) when these schools were poorly performing and that meant it would not be possible to conduct observations and field notes as stated before as the expected data is historic in nature. Observations and field notes can only be conducted for current issues which in my case were not relevant as my study is only through document analysis which is an unobtrusive form of research (Babbie, 2011). This meant that I would not disturb the running of the schools, interfere with their programmes, or interview people or conduct any form of obtrusive research

Some of the documents (legislation) were accessed through the internet, while most were accessed from the school's files and archives. This then afforded me a chance to divert my request to the SGBs and the school principals as these documents were their primary sources and in their jurisdiction.

Accessing the two schools to present my study and the reasoning behind identifying the them for the research was not a challenge as these schools are in communities closer to where I live and work. I wrote letters requesting to conduct research to the principals and the SGBs clearly stating my topic and the aim of the research and I further promised to uphold confidentiality of the two schools through the use of codes so as not to reveal any school name to anybody. The waiting period for approval was about two months and permission had been granted.

Time to collect the documents fell outside contact time on Fridays and was arranged with the two principals. Each school was given a list of documents to prepare and these were the same for both schools. The challenge encountered was that some of the documents were buried in the school archives and time was needed to unearth them, while others were destroyed or disposed of through the years. The schools were able to retrieve such documents from their sent emails and from discs and computer storage. Documents were collected returned until the researcher felt it was time to stop and that justice has been done in the collection of data.

3.4 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Trustworthiness refers to the truthfulness of the research findings of a qualitative nature which are not as a result of using statistics that could be generalised to the wider population (Koonin, 2017) but have been mined by the researcher to bring out specific experiences and behaviours lived by people in a particular context. Because the researcher is the data collection instrument whose findings must be true and genuine, results in qualitative studies cannot be reliable and valid as these terms refer to the ability of the instruments used in quantitative studies to declare that they were able to test what they were meant to test (Nieuwenhuis, 2013 & Koonin, 2017).

In qualitative studies we see researchers using trustworthiness as a way of declaring the authenticity of results in a particular study (Koonin, 2017). Trustworthiness has been ensured through triangulation even though document analysis was the only method used for data collection. Data collected from school documents could not be compared with other methods the way qualitative researchers guarantee trustworthiness (Nieuwenhuis, 2013). The researcher could not, for example, use observation findings to triangulate findings from document analyses since the study has a historical character where it has only considered documents between 2012 to 2016. Here data were triangulated within documents where information from one source, for example, learner absenteeism was corroborated with information from two other sources (quarterly summary returns; monitoring and support reports on learner attendance by district officials) to ensure "credibility" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The study has ensured credibility of the findings and declares that they are a true reflection of information accessed from documents, studied and analysed. Credibility, which is another way of ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative studies refers to the preciseness of data interpretation provided by participants (Koonin, 2017). Credibility of this study is supported by the fact that I have spent long hours and sleepless nights going back and forth through the school documents, checking and double-checking whether information truly reflects what I think it reflects. The context and the condition with regard to the principal's leadership capacity and its effect on governance and policy implementation within the two cases has been presented to aid understanding of each phenomenon without generalising results.

Transferability in this case study considers whether the same findings could present the same related results even when used in other similar contexts like (another poorly performing rural secondary school). The way the study has been conducted enable the readers to transfer the findings to other similar social contexts without generalising them.

3.5 DATA SELECTION VERSUS DATA COLLECTION

Data selection process is a comprehensive and rigorous process where the researcher looks for evidence to support and find answers to the research questions. This section explains how I had selected data as evidence to support my study by arguing on how the selected method has been used. Documentation, archival records and legislation have been selected from each site and from the internet to provide information related to the cases. Bowen (2009) asserts on the usefulness of documents as witness bearers to events that happened in the past providing background information and historical understanding of specific issues and challenges that might impact with the studied phenomena. School documents were identified as being relevant and containing vast evidence to build, cover and support all the aspects of the study from both schools. I believed that these documents were able to connect different parts of the research to one another where one document filled the gap left by another.

Yazan (2015) states that "it is incumbent upon the case study researchers to draw their data from multiple sources to capture the case under study in its complexity and entirety". This study has widely selected documents from a variety of sources form SMTs, SGBs, RCLs, policies, legislation and financial records to address this need. Baloyi (2015) highlights the

crucial aspect of quality data collection in any study as a determinant for success or failure of the study. The study has utilised an unobtrusive qualitative data collection strategy that analysed documents, legislation, archival data, and physical artefacts collected from each research site and the Internet. Through intensely and rigorously immersing myself in the data, it became possible to address each research question in relation to available sources of evidence.

Table 3.5: HOW KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS INFORM SELECTION OF DOCUMENT SOURCES

Research questions	Topics covered	Document sources
To what extent does the leadership capacity of the principals' impact with governance and implementation of policy in the poor performing rural secondary schools of Sekhukhune District?	Impact of leadership on management of school finances and leadership activities and guidance within the schools' governance, and, school systems responsible for ensuring fair implementation of legislation and policies.	School budgets, audited financial statements, finance committee minutes and SGB minutes.
What leadership skills and competencies do principal leaders of poor performing rural secondary schools possess?	Principals qualifications, evidence of training received and experience.	Human resource files, training manuals and documents.
How does the leadership capacity of the principal influence collaborative decision-making and planning in the poor performing rural secondary schools?	Planning reflecting collaborated and strategic processes, skills in leadership, communication processes, delegation, control measures, and involvement of stakeholders.	Principal's management plans, school year, vision and mission, SDPs, and, SGB programs and meetings, APIP, SDP, SIP and disciplinary records of learner misconduct.
How do the principals of poor performing rural secondary schools use leadership skills to guide the SGB on policy implementation?	Implementation of policy directives and evidence of collaborated efforts.	Legislation, school policies, district directives, circulars, and school journals.
How have principals of poor performing rural secondary schools been supported by the district to improve on leadership capacity?	Provisioning of constant support and monitoring programs.

Capacity building workshops, leadership training and financial management training.

-School visits and support to aid curriculum management and implementation. | Monitoring reports, training manuals, attendance registers, circulars, invitations to meetings and workshops, records of feed-back given to SMTs, and school journals. |

3.5.1 Collection of documents

Documents were assembled within a period of one month and it was not an easy task as I had to make appointments and later be informed that it would not be possible to access the documents because the identified schools had to attend to urgent departmental programmes that had to be prioritised. Sometimes people who were identified to assist me had to prioritise their commitments and that meant a delay of some sort. This required patience on my side as a researcher in compliance with the ethical issues of research (Du Plooy-Cilliers et.al., eds, 2017). Time constraints also meant that I had to withdraw from all forms of socialising and attending to functions, no matter how close they were to my family as it would have consumed a lot of my time and focus. My work on the other side demanded more of me and I had to consider utilising the same leadership strategies to get things done and meet deadlines. Through team work, responsible delegation, motivation and time management, work objectives were realised though challenges would be obvious at times.

Documents were not used to verify or strengthen other data collection methods to support the findings (Bowen, 2009), but have assisted in the grounding of my research to only include the two school cases. Bowen (2009) defines document analysis as a "systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents including printed and electronic versions" and commends document analysis for their efficiency over other research methods as they are less time consuming, have outstanding value use, and can stand alone as source of data, and the researcher conducts 'data selection' rather than data collection. Documents are available and easily accessible from public institutions and school archives and are also within our finger tips obtainable through the internet.

The reason why I had chosen document analysis as the best method for data collection is that, school procedures, school policies, school development, improvement, management and leadership plans are documented, and school activities are always reported so as to track progress covered. Schools are mandated by SASA (1996) to determine and adopt policies and these are contained in the school files and can be accessed easier. School information such as learner performance, learner attendance and cases of misconduct is captured in documents. Documents are like store rooms with different types of relevant and not so relevant information and warrants the researcher to use expertise to can search and identify the worth of such documents for a particular study being conducted. For this study

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it was easier for me to access these documents as the distance between the sampled schools is around 80 kilometres and not far from where I stay.

Bowen (2009) commends on the "unobtrusive, non-reactive and stable characteristics of documents and on their ability to be unaffected by the research process", so the researcher cannot interfere or change them and are cheaper to access and best to use if new data is unavailable. Yin (1994) asserts that they are "exact and broadly cover many events and a long span of time".

The data selection process was at times conducted simultaneously with data analysis because some of the school documents were not readily available as it has been indicated previously in (3.3.1). This meant that the collected data had to be analysed over and over again and once I was satisfied that I had extracted everything I needed, the documents were returned to schools and to further collect other documents to fill gaps until saturation point was reached (Maree, et.al., ed, 2013).

I started by designing a way that would assist me with categorising documents where I assigning them labels. This was done through compiling a table of contents reflecting the school name, name of the document, people who were involved in compiling the document, the dates documents were collected, reasons for collecting the documents and research questions the documents might possible answer. I further indicated where the information of each document was stored so as to gain easy access and minimise confusion. This assisted me as I timeously had to revisit the research questions to ascertain on the relevancy of the data.

3.6 CONDUCTING DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Data analysis followed two stages. Firstly, it commenced with the analyses of each case separately through interpreting what is contained in texts, and secondly a cross case analysis was conducted where the cases were compared with each other in order to identify commonalities and differences. Commonalities in both cases are presented together more especially when reviewing the district interventions and programmes provided as the two schools are in the same cluster.

For data analysis the style used by Bowen (2009) worked for me. Document analysis, like other data collection methods, followed the same procedure where information contained in documents was analysed first and there after interpreted (Henning et.al., 2013) by assigning them a voice to create understanding around the topic being assessed (Bowen, 2009). I designed a way that would assist in the sorting and categorising of data guided by Bowen (2009) as not all the raw information contained in them was relevant for the study. Documents were sorted according to the research questions as shown in table 3.5. above.

The objective behind this analysis was to identify codes within the content and then associate, compare and add the codes to different themes depending on their level of relevancy in order to support the building of theory. Documents according to researchers are a useful tool for theory building.

I employed the same format where I jotted down the would-be questions as in an interview and I located the answers from the texts transcribed from documents. The analysis also incorporated some content analysis where I checked the frequency of words, phrases and concepts used in each text document about that which was being researched. I then sorted the information guided by the research questions (Bowen, 2009). Bowen has raised a concern where he highlights that some researchers do not support the above move in content analysis as they believe it does not bring the best out of interview transcriptions, but for document analysis, I support this analysis strategy as it has aided me to determine how frequently occurrences related to the phenomenon happened where it could have been impossible to obtain answers through observations and interviews. This has helped to point me to a direction or an area that I could not have thought of had it not been for analysing such content. Document analysis is also commended for its ability to combine a number of different forms of analysis by also identifying themes or patterns emanating from the documents (Bowen, 2009). It involves simplifying information for easy handling by bringing out hidden meanings which some people might not have noticed or thought of. It also involves breaking down data into small chunks, grouping and re-grouping similar ones, and then re-assembling them in such a way that sense and meaning is brought and shared with others.

I had collected a lot of school documents and had to sift through the vast information taking what is significant and relevant for the study. Significant trends within the data had to be

identified and were selected. Some information had to be discarded and the researcher only used what was relevant for the study as informed by the research objectives and research questions.

For a deeper understanding of leadership capacity within a school context, it became necessary to fully immerse myself within the school documents. Documents had to reveal how the principal conducts himself or herself in the daily activities of the school through accessing year plans, management plans, daily duty roosters, school journals where daily occurrences and issues like daily visitations and other matters of great importance are recorded. Through studying these documents, I was able to get information needed on the principal leaders. In this study answers from documents were used to respond to questions as no interviews were conducted. The provided responses captured in documents afforded me with relevant information for the study.

Henning et al, (2017:232-233) have identified what they call "common denominators of qualitative analysis methods", and these are: "reduction, organisation, interpretation and substantiation of data". They further assert that data analysis is more demanding and challenging. Indeed, it is painstaking, but also interesting to conduct as it challenges cognitive levels of the researcher. Here the researcher worked like a creative artist who had to use different types of coloured paints, different sizes of paint brushes, transferring mental images and abstract thoughts visible only to herself to bring the best communication message through a portrait.

Documents are inherent of bias and as the researcher I was fully aware of this and I have considered why certain documents were developed by also consulting other source documents like departmental circulars in order to ascertain their purpose and originality. School processes and systems are stored in documents and development of most school documents has been enforced by some directives. Some documents are developed for specific purposes and for a specific audience (Bowen, 2009), and researchers must determine the purpose for the creation of such a document and the personal or subjective aim of the writer must also be considered. In the study, I have checked on the originality of the documents and have ascertained whether they are as a result of second hand information or generated by the author out his or her own experience or thought and I have

presented them as such. Bowen also asserts that documents are not always precise and accurate and calls upon researchers to be very careful when using them for analysis.

I have ensured reliability of documents by comparing different types of documents to identify processes and systems into which each school was engaged to ensure the authenticity of some documents. For example, policy formulation involves a number of steps which also include communication, information gathering, consultation and transparent processes, to mention but a few, and these steps must be evident through school planning and communication. It has been possible for this study to corroborate school documents with one another by checking from other documents whether there is evidence of communicated systems, say in a school plan, journal or in minutes of SMT, SGB or staff meetings. These documents were reviewed to identify joint processes and their accessibility, and whether these documents are a living resource, used and known by all.

3.7 COMPLYING TO ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research ethics highlight a number of sensitive issues that a researcher must be aware of and fully comply with in order to minimise challenges that might erupt as a result of illegitimate research procedures used by the researcher (Du Plooy-Cilliers et. al. eds 2013). Research ethics are researcher's moral and professional code of conduct "setting standards and behaviour" (Henning, et.al. 2013). According to them most research matters are highly sensitive and confidential and this sensitivity demands the researcher to act in a trustworthy and respectable manner. This demand has highly alerted me to carry myself in a manner that reflects compliance to these ethical standards by being respectful and understanding and avoiding situations where I would be seen to be minimally complying with them. This meant respecting that the people around where my study took place and the contexts are different from me and my background, and this meant that I had to tread carefully and with integrity.

Among others, these ethical considerations as cited by Du Plooy-Cilliers et. al. eds, (2013) include: "upholding confidentiality, avoiding bias within the study, avoiding falsifying and misusing information" for ulterior motives other than for the research purpose. To uphold confidential. Accordingly, I have not used school names and have tried to present the school information anonymously. Each school has been assigned a code for easy reference and

identification only to me. The identities of the principal leaders, SMTs, SGB members, and learners' names, and even locations and circuits where the schools are situated are not indicated.

I have also not shared school names in my presentation while requesting school documents in both the schools. The school names and information have not been shared with anybody and this information is only known to me as the researcher, and, through this, the study has highly upheld confidentiality. Moreover, I have also not deceived the two schools by giving them false information on the topic and purpose of my study, or paid people in the schools in order to access the schools' documents. Request to access documents and approval was granted before the documents could be accessed. Accessing public information is a human right according to the South African Constitution (Act 108: 1996), but that right must not be abused or misused to push other agendas. School information must be treated with extreme caution and confidentiality it deserves so as to avoid school targeting and victimisation.

3.8 CARRYING OUT THE RESEARCH THROUGH DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

More than 60 documents were collected from each school and all of them were entered into a checklist and signed for to enable accountability. Documents containing current school affairs were copied and immediately returned to the schools. Only documents from 2012 to 2016 were used as previously stated in the study.

Firstly, all documents with relevant information specifically developed by the principals in both the schools were transcribed word by word by capturing them into the computer together with the indicated dates. This afforded me a clear picture of the information gathered in these documents and I quickly became familiar with it. Moving back and forth within the data gave me ideas and created intuitions within my mind and enabled me to pick up trends and relationships within the data. I then recorded the ideas, impressions and associations as they came so that I did not forget, and this is what researchers call "memoing", and reflections from it can also be used by "as data to be analysed" (Henning et al. (2013). One school's documents were captured at a time and when I was satisfied that all capturing of documents was through, I then moved to the second school. School policies were scanned to enable electronic capturing of data for easy access, coding and theme identification.

3.9 IDENTIFIED LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

My study has been affected by the school holidays where I was unable to access the sampled sites and this meant that I was in a way delayed. Schools had to also prioritise departmental programs and their own school programs and priorities, and I had to respect that. Time constraints and the course duration i.e. course targets, made me panic a lot and could not conduct interviews and field notes as these would have elongated the period of the study. Observations were not possible looking at the time of the year where secondary schools have to conduct revision and close gaps where necessary as it was time for trial examinations and revision for end of the year examinations. This meant that documents still outstanding had to be accessed later than planned and some of those documents were unavailable. For example, not all previous years' learner registers were available but learner attendance information was accessed from the few available and from the schools' journals and quarterly attendance reports. My study only reviewed previous years' documents, hence the historical nature of this study. A high percentage of documents that were needed were accessed and this enabled for the success of my study.

3.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the research design starting with the underlying philosophical assumptions reflecting the specific and distinctiveness of each case as interpreted by the researcher. A qualitative approach has explored leadership capacity as studied from natural school settings within the daily activities of governance and policy implementation. The study has presents how document analysis has been conducted as a stand-alone data collection data analysis method. The chapter also presents how sampling was conducted informed by the nature of the studied phenomenon, the population and the aims and objectives of the research study. In the presentation the chapter has given a description of the research sites and their demography and why they were relevant for the research. A detailed description of how documents were selected and they were assessed, compliance with ethical issues, how trustworthiness was ensured and limitations encountered and how they were addressed where possible are also presented.

CHAPTER 4:

DATA PRESENTED, INTERPRETED AND ANALYSED: THE TWO CASE-STUDIES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is the presentation of two secondary schools' case-studies in the Sekhukhune Education District. Each case starts with the presentation of each school context, then presented reviews for each phenomenon. Answers that relate to the research questions are presented through dialogue informed by information extracted from documents as analysed. For each research question, the analysis presented separates school cases, and where there are commonalities, the analysis presents both cases. This is because the cases are sampled from the same district and same circuit cluster, but different circuits. Presenting them this way served as an illustration of similarities and differences. The chapter concluded by establishing leadership challenges that might be interfering with the delivery of leadership roles within the sampled schools.

For ethical reasons the names of these secondary schools have been presented by means of fake codes that bear no attachment, meaning or relevance to the schools they represent but are mainly for differentiation to enable only the researcher to know and be able to present data from each school. The study has coded the two schools as SCHL-26/SEC and SCHL-43/SEC.

4.2 CONTEXT PRESENTATION OF THE SCHOOL SITES (SCHL-26/SEC and SCHL-43/SEC)

Both the schools are in rural areas of the Sekhukhune district and have been under-performing for a period of five consecutive years. The schools' enrolments have been dwindling between 250 and 300 learners. Only Sepedi speaking learners are enrolled at the schools. Both the schools do not have administration blocks but are utilising classrooms as offices of the principal and other SMT members. Both the schools' environments are almost the same as they are medium secondary schools based on the enrolment figures, number of classrooms and both have enviro-loo ablution facilities for both learners and educators. The schools access their water from local boreholes. SMT members in both the secondary schools comprise of three members and their qualifications and experience is tabled below.

The rational for presenting it this way is to intentionally conceal the principals' identities for ethical reasons.

TABLE 4.1: SMT qualifications and experience for both research sites (SCHL-26/SEC and SCHL-43/SEC

SCHL-26/SEC		
Head 223	Three years teaching qualification, B/ED Honours.	15-25 years teaching experience in P1, between 5-15 years teaching experience in P2.
Head 222	Three years teaching qualification, ACE in Accounting, ACE in Economics.	10-20 years teaching experience in P1, between 5-10 years teaching experience in P2.
Head 224	Three years teaching qualification, BA degree.	15-25 years teaching experience in P1, between 10-15 years Senior teaching experience.
SCHL-43/SEC		
Head 113	Three years teaching qualification, BA, B/ED Honours.	15-25 teaching experience in P1, between 10-20 teaching experience in P2.
Head 223	Three years teaching experience, ACE, B/ED Honours.	10-20 teaching experience in P1, between 5-15 teaching experience in P2.
Head 114	Three years teaching qualification, ACE, B/ED Honours.	10-20 teaching experience in P1, 5-15 teaching experience in P2.

Source: schools' master files

The SMT table above (4.1) showed that the school had well qualified personnel serving in the leadership positions of each of the schools and the qualifications of the principals of these sampled secondary schools are presented in the table above. It was necessary to present this information as such so as to protect the principals' identities. Over and above having a professional teaching qualification, each head had a tertiary degree or advanced certificate in education coupled with more than 10 to 25 years teaching experience in post level 1 (P1) and more than 5 years in post level 2. Experience in P2 positions means that the head had vast experience as a leader as these are leadership positions of respective sections or divisions within the schools. The table answers the first secondary research question aimed to ascertaining whether principal leaders of these two poor performing secondary schools possess relevant leadership skills and competencies. In relation to the

above table, qualifications portray leadership skills, competencies and capacity in leadership positions by the principals of the two poor performing secondary schools.

TABLE 4.2: SGB information- parent component (2012-2016): - SCHL-26/SEC and SCHL-43/SEC

SCHL-26/SEC				
Year	Gender	Level of education	Experience in the SGB	Portfolio
April 2012- March 2015	Male 1	Std 5	6 years	Treasurer
	Male 2	Std 3	3 years	Additional
	Male 3	Std 7	0 years	Chairperson
	Female 1	Std 6	4 years	Deputy chairperson
	Female 2	Std 4	6 years	Deputy secretary
April 2015 – December 2016	Male 1	Std 7	3 years	Chairperson
	Male 2	Std 5	3 years	Treasurer
	Female 1	Std 8	3 years	Additional
	Female 2	Std 6	2 years	Additional
	Female 3	Std 9	0 years	Deputy secretary
SCHL-43/SEC				
April 2012- March 2015	Male 1	Std 8	6 years	Chairperson
	Male 2	Std 6	3 years	Deputy Secretary
	Female 1	Std 7	4 years	Treasurer
	Female 2	Std 5	0 years	Additional
	Female 3	Std 7	3 years	Deputy secretary
April 2015 – December 2016	Male 1	Std 6	3 years	Chairperson
	Male 2	Std 5	0 years	Treasurer
	Male 3	Std 5	3 years	Additional
	Female 2	Std 6	1 year	Additional
	Female 3	Std 9	3 years	Deputy secretary

Source: SGB files

SGB files in the table above (4.2) contained SGB data recorded after each election in 2012 and 2015. The researcher felt it necessary to include this information which reflected that

SGB elections were conducted in March 2012 and in March 2015 where different SGB members served in these schools. The reasoning behind reflecting on this information is to highlight the level of education of the SGBs which could pose challenges of understanding school governance directives and policy directives. This meant that SGBs needed to be capacitated and guided by the principals in the deliverance of school governance activities within these poor performing secondary schools. The table reflects the education levels of the SGB members for the five-year period under study.

4.3 RESEARCH FINDINGS FROM DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

4.3.1 School leadership that builds and influences collaborative decision- making and planning in the poor performing schools

This section tried to answer the second research question by reviewing systems in planning to identify leadership strategies employed by the principals in the daily activities of the schools and to locate areas where the leadership style could have been seen as impacting positively on the development and sustainment of governance within the school. This section also tried to locate areas where collaborative decisions made focussed on learner performance.

4.3.1.1a The principals' leadership and school year plans

SCHL-26/SEC

Review of the principals' activities to facilitate direction in the planned school objectives showed that the principal had fairly tried to deliver on the leadership roles of directing the school to the right direction through year planning and involvement of other stakeholders. From 2012 to 2014 the principal's plans contained daily activities and daily time frames from Monday to Friday. From the list of daily activities, the principal had indicated four governance related activities where on Mondays from 07:45 to 07:55 where the principal checked learners who had bunked classes; and on Wednesdays the principal would monitor late coming of learners from 07:15 to 07:25; attend SGB meetings once a month around 17:30 to 18:00. After 12:00 on Fridays, the principal checked the asset management register. This information gave a fair indication of planned leadership activities by the principal to bring order in the school. The table below reflects consolidated school year plans.

Table 4.3 School year plans (2012-2016) and SGB activities (SCHL-26/SEC

2012	Term 1: Analysis of results and way forward.	Responsibility of SGB
	Term 2: SGB meeting to discuss results and way forward.	SGB responsibility.
2013	Term 1: formation of subject committees and analysis of results.	Staff meeting with SGB.
	Term 2: SGB meeting to discuss results and way forward.	SGB
	Term 4: Parents meeting: Budget approval	SGB and parents
2014	Same as in 2013	
2015	Term 1 had no indication of SGB activities.	
	Term 2: SGB meeting discussed results and way forward.	
	Term 3: SGB meeting discussed June results and finance report.	By SGB and QLTC
	Term 4: No planned SGB activity.	By SGB and QLTC
2016	Same as 2015	

The school's year plans in table 4.3 only reviewed and presented governance planned activities as other activities were not relevant for the study. It has summarised and grouped the activities by indicating term 1 to 4 for each year. Dates for the activities are presented as informed by the original year plans analysed.

(SCHL-43/SEC)

The principal had detailed and informative plans. The plans reflected dates, objectives, activities, the responsible persons and progress. The plans had the same information on objectives, and activities but with different dates and different results on the progress made. Learner information reflected different dates for planned RCL activities where RCL election advocacy and meetings were planned on different dates from the previous year. Staff, SGB and parents' meetings were reflected on different dates each year and progress captured was different where there were sometimes indications that the activity planned for SGB meeting was rescheduled to another date due to labour stay away or clash of departmental programmes where the principal had to prioritise the department programme hence rescheduling.

Evidence from the principal's plans showed that the principal conducted environmental monitoring as the plans contained daily checking of teaching and learning and monitoring learner attendance of classes. This was compared to the list of recorded learner misconduct cases by the principal as reviewed from the school records of misconduct showed that: the principal was the one who caught learners were caught being in contravention with the school's code of conduct and in most cases the principal was the one who caught and recorded learners. 38 cases of learner misconduct were recorded from the period 06-02-2012 to 16-08-2016. After elections, evidence does not reflect SGB orientated on their functions as expected by legislation but were trained by the circuit and district officials. Below is a table with consolidated school year plans.

TABLE 4.4: School year plans (2012-2016) and SGB activities (SCHL-43/SEC)

Year	Activities	Personnel
2012	Term 1: Late admissions; Class rep's elections; RCL Elections and mass meeting.	SMT and educators; TLO and learners; SGB and Parents
	SGB and Parents meeting, SGB elections and handing over.	School electoral officer
	Term 2: SGB; RCL; parents meeting	SGB; TLO; learners and parents
	Term 3: Finance committee meeting.	Finance Committee
	Term 4: Admissions for 2013,	Admission Committee
	SGB and parents meeting.	SGB and parents
2013	Term 1: RCL Elections and mass meeting.	TLO and learners
	SGB meeting. Finance committee meeting.	SGB, Finance Committee
	Term 2: RCL, SGB and Parents meetings.	TLO, SGB and parents
	Term 3: Finance committee meeting: budget preparations.	Finance Committee
	Term 4: 2014 learner admissions	Admission Committee
	SGB and parents meeting-budget adoption	SGB and parents
2014	Same as 2013 in all aspects	
2015	Term 1: SGB Elections, handing over of documents to new SGB	SEO, Old SGB
	Term 2: SGB; RCL; and parents' meetings	SGB, TLO, Parents
	Term 3: 2016 admissions	Admission Committee
	Term 4: Parents meeting- budget adoption	Parents and SGB

2016	Term 1: RCL Elections and mass meeting	TLO and learners.
	SGB meeting, finance committee meeting	SGB, Finance committee
	Term 2: RCL, SGB and Parents meetings	TLO, SGB and Parents
	Term 3: Finance committee meeting	Finance Com,
	2017 admissions	Admission Committee
	Term 4: SGB and parents meeting- budget adoption	Parents and SGB

The school year plans reflected that the principal leader had planned SGB, parents, finance, admission and RCL meetings in consultation with the relevant stakeholders for each year (table 4.4). The plans throughout the years under study show fair involvement of the SGB by the principal on matters pertaining to school governance. Each term reflected an SGB activity and different role players to facilitate the delivery of such activity. The school year plans reflected that collaborative decision-making processes were considered by the principal.

4.3.1.1b Annual Academic Performance Improvement Plan (AAPIP)

SCHL-26/SEC

A principal of a poorly performing school must at the beginning of the year prepare and submit to the HoD a plan stating how academic performance of that school would be improved; how school resources would be effectively used to improve learner performance; and the plan must be presented to the SGB (2.5.5). The academic improvement plan template makes provision for the poor performing school to state subjects that are poorly performing and the percentages of achievement for each subject. It further requires that the principal further commits on the planned target percentage per each underperforming subject, the planned strategies as discussed and agreed upon with each subject educator, additional resources needed, time frames for the completion of planned activities and the responsible people who over and above the educator, the educator's immediate supervisor must also commit to the plan.

The school had developed AAPIPs in line with the provided template. Dates, previous year performance, targeted performance, time frames, responsible persons and progress made were captured as expected. The school was poorly performing in all the subjects it was

offering. Learner attainment strategies addressed subject planned activities. The review could not establish whether the academic plans were outcomes of consultative processes by all educators at the school, or whether they were presented to the SGB as 2012 to 2014 APIPs were not signed by the SGB chairperson as a way of acknowledging consultation and support and no indication could be found from other documents or minutes of the SGB where these activities were deliberated and agreed upon. 2015 and 2016 AAPIPs were signed by the SGB chairperson and were further indicated in the minutes of the SGB held during term 2 in 2015 and term 1 in 2016. Here consultative and collective decision-making processes seemed to have been partly complied with by the principal.

(SCHL-43/SEC)

In the development of the AAPIP, the principal might not have tabled the improvement to the SGB as there is no indication of such an activity in the school documents analysed. The AAPIP indicated percentages of poorly performing subjects, challenges encountered, planned targets and learner attainment strategies and responsible persons. The plans had information that reflected that educators might have been involved in determining activities to improve the situation as each subject information bears the name and signature of that particular educator. Learner high levels of ill-discipline were cited amongst challenges encountered by individual educators under challenges encountered by each subject educator.

4.3.2 Involvement of SGBs in school decision making including financial decisions

4.3.2.1 School governing body and meetings

Minutes of the governing body were scrutinised for the period under study and they reflected that SGB meetings were held though they were fewer than as mandated by policy.

SCHL-26/SEC

Each year the school planned SGB meetings (table 4.3). The minutes reflected that sometimes the school held urgent meetings as was determined by the challenges encountered. When the school experienced a burglary on the 04/09/2013 where the strong

room door was cut/grinded and computers were stolen, an urgent SGB meeting was called and the matter was presented.

Not all the minutes of SGB and parents' meetings were available; some were misplaced or lost in the years. Those that were accessed reflected that mostly the principal was not part of the parents' meetings, and in three instances apologies reflected that the principal was attending departmental meetings. These meetings or were mostly delegated to the HOD in the school.

SGB and parents' minutes accessed also discussed educators' issues. In one meeting, discussions were also about educators who were supposed to be forced to wear the school uniform designed for educators. In another meeting, the SGB and parents discussed the conduct of one of the HODs. The principal could have guided the SGB and parents on the issue of roles and responsibilities indicating separation of powers between school governance and the professional management of a school and further highlight that educators' issues were the responsibility of the principal and not the SGB or parents. The SGB seemed think that they had authority to discuss educators' conduct and issues. The matter about the HOD was supposed to be presented to the principal and from there the principal could have followed disciplinary procedures as directed by policy. The minutes did not clearly state what the conduct was. Moreover, the principal or his delegate could have guided the SGB on policy issues that involve educators as they were not their responsibility and should have run parallel from governance issues. This might have been an oversight and once left unattended, it could cause serious clashes between educators, the SGB and the community. The professional management of educators is the responsibility of the principal and not the SGB in SASA (1996: sec.16).

The principal presented the issue of poor infrastructure conditions as one of the negative factors leading to poor learner performance. This issue was mainly reflecting in the issues of poor learner performance during most of SGB discussions. Learner ill-discipline and infrastructure issues were also seen as major causes of the high failure rate at the school.

School finances were mostly standing items in the SGB meetings and in one parents' meeting held in 2013, it was declared that owing to shortage of money, the school was deeply indebted. PMSF (DoE, 2011) did not allow schools to buy on credit or have their bank

accounts overdrawn. The school documents show that in 2013, the school's bank account was closed and follow-ups through the circuit showed that the school battled for some time as the department was unable to transfer funds owing to the closed bank account.

SCHL-43/SEC

Reviewed minutes showed that the principal guided the SGB on governance matters though discussions deliberated less on learner performance and utilisation of school funds (financial matters). Mostly, matters related to learner ill-discipline, infrastructure, lack of parental support, extra teaching to improve learner performance for Grade 12 learners and safety and security were captured in the minutes of the SGB.

On financial matters, the minutes reflected frustrations with the amounts deposited into the school account as they were never enough to address most needs at the school. The SGB might not have considered fundraising to augment school funds. minutes of the SGB did not make mention of this activity nor were fundraising reflected in the years school's budget. Deliberations in minutes of the SGB meetings seemed to reflect insufficient understanding by the SGB members about how public school's funds were allocated in the Limpopo Province. In a meeting held in term 2 in 2014, the principal explained the issue of school monies deposited in two trenches around May/June and December of each year but was never enough to cater for the school needs. The principal seemed not to have sufficient understanding of the mandate to divide school allocations into two trenches (NNSSF, 2011), and the principal's response as captured in the minutes did not show understanding of the directive (NNSSF, 2011) that amended how public-school funds would be deposited into the school accounts. The principal raised frustrations that the department of education was transferring school funds in two trenches.

There was insufficient evidence that the school engaged stakeholders in the determination of school policies, vision and mission of the school as these were not captured in the SGB minutes of meetings.

4.3.2.2 Delegated appointment of the finance officer

SCHL-26/SEC and SCHL-43/SEC

The study will show the principal's leadership actions within the management of school finances actioned through the finance committee where principals were expected to assist the SGB to ensure that systems were in place as directed by PMSF (DoE, 2011).

The finance officer should be appointed in writing by the principal after consultation with the SGB (National Department of Education Circular 22 of 2002: paragraph 1.4). Further-more, when appointing the finance officer in writing, the finance officer must also accept the delegation in writing as evidence of having accepted the delegated financial responsibilities. There has been no evidence to support this directive and this gave an impression that the finance officer might not have been appointed in writing. In cases where this directive is overlooked challenges leading to non-performance of major financial duties while others might be haphazardly done might surface.

4.3.2.3 The schools' budgets and LDoE directives

The school's budgetary systems are informed by the PMSF (DoE, 2011) and constant budget monitoring and support systems have been seen as contributory factors ensuring school compliance to directives. PMSF (DoE, 2011) directs that 60% of the total allocation must be allocated to curriculum, 17% to administration, 10% to local sporting activities, 8% to buying chemicals for ablution facilities, and 5% for transport services (table 4.3).

SCHL-26/SEC

The school seemed to have battled with budget processes deduced from evidence reflected in the 2012 and 2013 budgets where the budgets did not reflect expected monthly spending. The information from the school documents was inconclusive to determine whether collective budgetary systems were engaged into reflecting collaborated decision making by all stakeholders as this information was not accessed. For 2014-2016, the school's budgets templates projected expected monthly spending for different cost centres and had been spread from January to December. The availability of 2012-2016 school budgets showed

that the principals fairly complied with PMSF (DoE, 2011) directives. The leadership capacity of the principal seemed able to direct budgetary processes in the school.

SCHL-43/SEC

2012 and 2013 budgets show that the school had experienced some challenges in compliance with budget directives. 2012 and 2013 budgets reviewed were not signed by the treasurer and the SGB chairperson or adopted by parents in a budget approval meeting as no information in this regard was found in the documents accessed. From 2014 budgets reflected some improvement and had been approved in meetings specifically scheduled for budget approval though other issues were also discussed and agreed upon by parents. In their 2015 budget approval meeting the issue of responsibility of parents towards textbooks and the issue of 2016 tour were discussed and agreed upon. SASA (1996) states that a budget approval meeting must specifically approve the budget only and not discuss other issues. The budgets were signed by the treasurer, the chairperson, the principal and the circuit manager and were stamped by the school. Budgeting systems at the school after 2013 were seen to be an outcome of collaborated and collective decision making by all the relevant stakeholders.

4.3.2.4 Audit of financial statements (SCHL-26/SEC and SCHL-43/SEC)

A *governing body* must submit to the *Head of Department*, within six months after the end of each financial year, a copy of the annual financial statements, audited or examined. Each SGB must appoint an auditor to audit records and financial statements of a public school (SASA, 996: sec. 43) before the financial books could be audited as stated in LPMSF (DoE, 2011) in 2.6.2.

The schools' financial books were audited annually in the period under study though the minutes of the budget adoption did not fully reflect evidence that the two schools complied with appointing auditors before auditing finance books. Audited financial statements showed fair utilisation of public and as both schools had unqualified reports. The audit reports further contained accounting report engagements stating that their engagement was in line with GAAP which requires planning and performance to get reasonable assurance that fair presentation was achieved in financial statements and presented school's financial performance (2012-2016) as in accordance with the stipulations of SASA (1996).

4.3.2.5 Compliance directives and the finance committee

SCHL-26/SEC and SCHL-43/SEC

Both the schools had scheduled finance committee meetings, the schools' year plans finance committee meetings (table 4.6). Financial reports of income and expenditure were presented in the finance committee meetings. Also, these minutes were not authenticated as truly reflecting the agreed upon decisions and discussions of the finance committees, but there was evidence that some decisions had been actioned. Both the schools had experienced burglaries at different times where computers and photocopiers were stolen and there was evidence that both schools reported the burglary to the SGB and finance committee, and reports were sent to their circuit offices and the police were called. An urgent decision to utilise money budgeted for emergencies was agreed upon and stolen assets were procured.

SCHL-26/SEC decided as indicated in the finance and SGB minutes that the school's assets should be kept in a safe place in the community until the security systems at the school were strengthened. Some argued that arrangement should be made with the circuit office to keep the assets in their strong rooms and this motion was agreed by the finance committee members. Through this action the SGB had fairly delivered on its mandate of managing resources, determining continuity through the procurement of educational resources even in the face of challenges, and had "democratised local controls of decision making, and responded to the schools' needs of provisioning resources in support of teaching and learning" (Naidoo, 2005). Their actions in the management of public funds were in agreement with (Clarke, 2008 in Baloyi, 2015) where members of the SGB should be aware of their responsibilities, conditions of operations and areas that limit their operations.

4.3.3 SGB involvement in policy determination and implementation

4.3.3.1 The safety and security policy

SCHL-26/SEC

The school had a safety and security policy that was used throughout the years under study. It reflected a list of items to be done or expected to be at the school. The policy needed to

reflect more information and directives as informed by safety regulations in public schools. The principal and the SGB chairperson should have signed the policy. The policy needed to reflect compliance with the policy formulation standards and the recommendation guidelines left by the governance officials might have assisted the principal and SGB to address some challenges still evident. The SGB could have tried to create a conducive and safe environment for learners as it is a constitutional right of learners to learn in an environment that is not harmful to their wellbeing (RSA, 1996) and who also have "to enjoy education in a harmonious and carefree environment" (Joubert and Prinsloo, 2013). The risk of not having a standard safety policy is that the principal may be held liable in cases where learners got seriously injured or their safety rights deemed to have been infringed while under the care of the school.

SCHL-43/SEC

The school had a safety and security policy used throughout the years of the study. The policy is well formulated but the challenge is that it is not signed by both the SGB chairperson and the principal and this might challenge the authenticity of the policy. The policy had the name of the school and safety and security policy as heading. The policy had emergency numbers, and had identified the following: hazards on school premises and outside the school; first aid policy; safety precautions in the case of fire; safety of learners during school trips; road worthiness of scholar transport; reporting incidents; and information on the adoption of a school cop. The policy fairly addressed safety issues related to the school. The policy did not mention any form of legislation that mandates on a safety environment in a public school. The policy might not have been adopted by the SGB since it did not have signatures. The principal and the formulators might have overlooked the importance of signing policy document.

4.3.3.2 The admission policy

The admission policy of a public school is determined by the governing body of such a school and must comply with the directives as stated in SASA (1996). It is aimed at promoting fundamental principles ensuring that learners are afforded equal opportunities to access public educational facilities and admissions must be conducted in a fair and non-discriminatory manner. The SGB in its determination of this policy converges in collaborative

process to decide on the criteria directly involving the school that qualify learners to be admitted at the school, such as the feeder zone, parents of learners working in the feeder zone, and learners choosing to attend at the school.

SCHL-26/SEC

Here it will be shown that the SGB might have been moderately involved in consultative processes and collective decision making to deliberate on admission issues directly affecting the community as a feeder zone to the school. The SGB seemed not to be fully involved in the determination of the admission policies throughout the period of my study. Inconclusive evidence from the school documents collected did not clearly indicate that the admission policies was discussed with the SGB, parents or learners. The school had an admission policy which did not indicate the period with sections qualifying learners to be admitted such as feeder zone, documents to present when applying for admission, guardian or parental information and issues where the school promises to uphold non- discriminatory acts by treating all applications fairly. The admission policy was not signed by both the principal and the SGB chairperson and this was an omission that could challenge the school ownership of the admission policy in cases where disagreements about learner admissions erupt.

SCHL-43/SEC

The principal's involvement of the SGB in consultative and collective decision making seemed commendable. The principal's management plans reflected that admission processes were conducted during the third term and the responsible persons serving in the admission committee during each SGB term of office were indicated. The admission committee was chaired by an SGB member and an HOD served in the committee. The school's admission policies were signed by both the SGB chairperson and the principal. Though both admission policies (2012-2015; 2015-2016) were the same in every aspect, they addressed all the admission areas as stipulated by legislation. Admission reports from 2012 to 2016 addressed to the circuit reported that all admitted learners had space at the school and no learners were turned back or refused admission.

4.3.3.3 The constitution of the SGB

SCHL-26/SEC

Here it will be shown that the school complied with legislation regarding the composition of the SGB (SASA,1996: sec. 24 (a-d) as it was clearly stated in their SGB constitution and comprised of parents, educators, learners (RCL) and principal as ex-officio member. The constitution did not reflect information where the frequency of the SGB meetings was agreed upon. This has been seen as an oversight and could have made the SGB to miss out on addressing some urgent issues and could have meant deliberating less on some issues. SASA (1996) section 18 (a) determines that SGB meetings must be held at least once every school quarter.

The SGB Constitution seemed not to have complied with the directive regarding the term of office of an executive member which is one year. The school's constitution stated that *"an ordinary member shall hold office for a period of three years until the announcements in the government gazette made for new term of office".* Failure to indicate the term of office could mean that SGB executive members might have served for three years in office without being questioned and this might have resulted to some SGB members behaving as if they own the positions for ever and could sometimes jeopardise effective school governance. The SGB constitution should assist a school to indicate the legal stance of the SGB (SASA, 1996).

SCHL-43/SEC

The SGB Constitution complied with the directive as stated in SASA (1996). The SGB constitution indicated that an SGB elected member shall hold office for a period of one year and that members to serve in the SGB executive shall be elected annually. The constitution also made reference to the SASA (1996) preamble and also indicated the scope of the constitution. Within the constitution, the code of conduct of the members of the SGB, quarterly meetings and an indication of a parents meeting once a year was indicated. Here fair indication that the principal guided the SGB in issues of policy development was evident.

4.3.3.4 Representation within the finance committee

SCHL-26/SEC

Here the study reviewed and presented the constitution of the finance committee at the school in 2012 which comprised of four members namely the principal, the SGB chairperson, the SGB treasurer and an educator serving as finance officer. LPMSF (DoE, 2011) passed a directive that a school's finance committee should comprise of at least a minimum of seven members and parents must be in the majority. Parents and educators had equal representation within the finance committee. The school seems to have minimally complied with the above directive.

SCHL-43/SEC

The school finance committee complied with LPMSF (2011) directives and comprised of seven members where four members were parents and the three other members were the principal, an educator and the finance officer. The policy seemed to be well documented and fairly addressed all the financial matters of the school. The policy was also informed by SASA (1996) and PFMA (1999) as it made references to these pieces of legislation.

4.3.3.5 Compliance with annual budgets directives

The schools showed relevant knowledge of budgetary systems as copies of their budgets were informed by LPMSF (DoE, 2011) section 2.5.4. This directive mandates schools to allocate different budget percentages where curriculum related activities are afforded a bigger amount which is 60% as it is the core business of the school. It further directs that 10% must be allocated to local sporting activities; 17% for administration; 5% for travelling, and 8% for ablution facilities.

It will be shown that the **SCHL-26/SEC**'s might have encountered challenges with regard to budgetary processes as 2012 budget seemed not fully comply with the directives of both SASA (1996) and the LPMSF (DoE, 2011) directives. The SGB through the finance committee needed to be fully involved in the budgeting processes and invite parents to approve the school budget. Documents and minutes accessed did not contain information

regarding this process. The school had 2012- 2016 budgets signed by the principal and the finance officer with surnames and initials for both the treasurer and the chairperson.

SCHL-43/SEC

From 2012 to 2016 the school's budgets seemed to show compliance to the budgeting directives as mandated by SASA (1996) and LPMSF (DoE, 2011). Here there was evidence that the finance committee and the SGB had tried to follow the above directives as the school's budgets were in agreement with the LPMSF (DoE, 2011) indicating items bearing the directives as tabled in 4.6. Attendance registers and minutes of the budget approval were available. Copies of budgets at the school seemed to have partially involved parents in budgetary processes as they did not reflect evidence of communication notices sent to parents as mandated by SASA (1996). Minutes and attendance registers showed that a small number of parents attended these budget adoption meetings. The budgets for the period under study showed adoption by a small number of parents present and voting and were signed by the SGB chairperson and the principal and were stamped.

4.3.4 Learner disciplinary measures, parental involvement and RCLs

SCHL-26/SEC

Here it will be shown that the principal involved the SGB and parents in matters related to disciplining learners and disciplinary processes were in line with the stipulated directives. The principal seemed to understand the responsibility of involving parents and the SGB in matters concerning learner ill-discipline and deliberations were evident in the SGB minutes and minutes of parents' meetings.

Lengthy discussed between parents and the SGB registered concerns on levels of accelerated ill-discipline where issues of school vandalism by learners was consuming a lot of school money. In a meeting held in 2013 term 1, the SGB and parents recommended expulsion of ill-disciplined learners but the principal was firm to say the circuit manager said policy did not allow them to expel learners.

In 2014 term 3 meeting there was an instance where minutes of the SGB meeting captured the frustrations of the members who felt the department did not value them if they were not allowed to expel learners themselves as the school and the children were theirs.

The principal gave directions and reminded the SGB about disciplinary procedures as stated by SASA (1996), and procedures to be followed were well documented. Here the principal stood ground and defended issues of policy as expected from a principal leader guiding the SGB on policy matters.

The school involved parents of learners and disciplinary hearings were held and learners were given warnings. In very serious cases the school had written recommendations to the Head of Department for expulsion of learners involved in such cases and the acts of misconducts included bullying fellow learners, national school nutrition programme (NSNP) helpers by taking learners' food by force, bullying of educators, bunking classes and school vandalism. The letters were not signed by the SGB chairperson and there was no evidence that the recommendations were submitted to the HoD.

Documents on RCL information showed that in all the years learners serving in the SGB were democratically elected by other learners and the school had indicated two of such learners in their SGB information for the period under study, and had listed different learner portfolios serving as sports desk, disciplinary committee and cultural desk. There is no evidence beyond this information that the principal and SGB fully involved RCLs in the disciplinary issues of the school.

SCHL-43/SEC

The school journal, learners' attendance registers and quarterly returns on learner attendance showed serious challenges with poor learner attendance more especially on reopening of schools. Continuous absenteeism is tantamount to learner misconduct and warrants disciplinary actions by the school. Though not all the cases were presented for disciplinary hearings, the principal had fairly tried to utilise leadership strategies to curb learner absenteeism and effect disciplinary actions within the school. Evidence from the school documents showed learner ill-discipline as one of the challenges facing the school which might have impacted negatively with learner performance. Failure by some learners

to attend school every day showed lack of commitment and this might have caused the school to poorly perform.

The above challenge also showed that some parents were not fully supportive towards the school and the education of their children. Drop-out rates were also very high at the school. Parents might have lacked strategies to encourage their children to attend school regularly. The meeting on the 18-08-2016 for grade 12 learners' parents was held before learners could write grade 12 trial examinations. Minutes of the meeting showed that issues of parents supporting their children by ensuring that they seriously prepare for the examinations were highlighted. Challenges of grade 12 learners' conduct was also discussed including high absenteeism rates, dodging classes, playing cards and dice during school hours. Here the principal involved the SGB and parents in matters related to disciplining learners, disciplinary processes were dealt with and due processes were followed.

Two boy learners were caught drinking alcohol in class on the 06 February 2012 and were sent home to call their parents. The incident was captured by the principal. Learners' parents came and discussions were held. Learners were allowed to present their side of the story. The outcome was an agreement between the school and parents that South African Police Service (SAPS) should be called to strongly reprimand the learners. The matter and how the principal handled it was later reported to the SGB. The principal, the HOD and parents of the two learners signed this agreement.

A grade 10 boy learner was seen drinking alcohol during break on the 19-03-2012 and the witness informed the principal. It was also recorded that the learner had left school early on the previous Friday without permission and that the learner lacked discipline. The captured record of misconduct was signed by the principal and a witness. School documents did not reflect action taken against the learner as there was no other captured information from the school records indicating how the matter was dealt with. Learner records of misconduct showed serious challenges of learner ill-discipline ranging from learners bunking classes, drinking alcohol in class after break, display of rude conduct towards educators, bullying, playing cards in class, playing soccer in class, using rude language in essay writing by swearing at the educators. In some of these cases parents were called.

Most of the learners' cases were conducted in class after break implying that these classes might have been unattended by educators and learners were left alone.

The principal seemed conversant with the responsibility of involving parents and the SGB in matters concerning learner ill-discipline and deliberations were evident in the SGB minutes and minutes of parents' meetings and learner cases of misconduct were captured in the school journal.

The school had RCLs elected annually at the beginning of every year. This learner representative structure according to SASA (1996) section 11 is the only recognised and legitimate learner body at the school. In a matter involving a girl learner (14/02/2013) who dodged school around 07h00 in the morning and came back around 11h00, the school involved the RCLs in the formal hearing and a sanction was passed that the learner should clean all four staff rooms. The collective decision was signed by five members of the disciplinary committee, five RCL members from the disciplinary desk, the parent and the learner. The principal interacted with the RCLs on matters related to learner ill-discipline. Records showed that the principal held RCL meetings to discuss matters ranging from learner ill-discipline, vandalism of school property, uniform and general school work. The principal facilitated fair involvement of RCLs in disciplinary hearings.

4.3.5 Leadership capacity and the vision and mission of the schools

In their strategic planning processes, schools should involve all stakeholders and properly identify and formulate the vision and mission statements, bearing in mind that these contribute to the school's image and identity guiding the school's strategic planning processes, future prospects and identification of their customers (Ozdem, 2011). Here evidence showed that principal leaders still needed extra strategic leadership skills and support that would enable them to utilise their capacity to tap into, utilise and influence behaviours and decisions of the SMT, educators and parents serving within the SGB in order to bring effective change. The leaders' influence on the followers to make sacrifices and converge towards the achievement of the set objectives seemed insufficient.

SCHL-26/SEC

In its vision the school had stated the reason why the school existed but did not fully stated how and what processes would be involved in its aim to combine diverse areas of the organisation to bring a betterment in learner performance. The main purpose of the vision was: *to bring good results that would make the village achieve production of graduates who would compete locally, provincially and nationally.* The purpose of the school existence as stated in the vision and the future prospects were somehow not fully presented. It was not clear whether the village produced graduates or good school results that would enable learners to be admitted in universities resulting upon production of graduates within the village. In this sense the school leadership seemed to be in need of assistance with more strategic planning skills that would enable the school to formulate a living, realistic and specific vision which would clearly set the direction of the school focused on improved learner performance. This reflected a need for further guidance and capacitation with strategic planning as every leader looks forward to being a strategist.

The formulated mission statement seemed more focused on motivating educators so that they would attend classes regularly but did not commit itself by stating how it would deliver on its core business of providing quality teaching and learning to produce the good results stated in the vision. The school should have reflected on its reason for existence. This gave an assumption that in the school educators might not have attended classes regularly or had to be motivated first so as to attend to their classes. Another impression was that the principal leader might have had a challenge to fully commit educators to the delivery of the core business of the school or might not have been involved in the formulation of the vision or the mission. The mission of any organisation should indicate how resources would be effectively utilised to bring good results. The goals set indicated that:

Educators will be motivated to attend classes regularly, giving classes the necessary teaching and learning equipment where possible; request donations to build extra classes and encouraging learners to work hard so that they would be valued by their parents.

SCHL-43/SEC

The vision and the mission statements documents were available but were not signed by both the principal and the SGB chairperson, and did not have a school stamp to indicate

that they were official school documents. This was an oversight that needed to be corrected. The school's vision stated that: *educators and the community would also benefit from the high-quality education steered by the school as targeted areas.* The vision seemed vaguely presented and ambiguous. The school needed to indicate learners as beneficiaries of quality education and not educators and the community, and the focus was supposed to be on learner academic performance rather than educators. There was also a need to encourage educators and the community to commit themselves into how the vision would be realised and this should have been reflected in the mission statement. Exclusions of important information in the vision might lead to lack of understanding and commitment into taking the school to the desired state which will be evident in learner performance. All relevant stakeholders should be fully involved in setting the direction and image of the school. The vision and mission formulation should involve collaborated efforts by all those who will be affected by it. The school's vision further stated that:

"The school will be a unit that steers high quality of education to all learners, educators and the community as a whole".

The mission somehow lacked to reflect commitment by all stakeholders within the school. Quality education is delivered by educators including the SMT and if they do not commit themselves to the mission, it would be a challenge to hold them accountable for failure to deliver on the strategies and objectives set by the school. The school's mission stated that:

 "We are committed to effective and efficient education of our leaners, to lead them to become better citizens to this country through learning".

4.3.6 District support to improve the leadership capacity of the principals

The section has tried to elicit answers from the two schools' documents in order to determine how the principal principals of poor performing rural secondary schools have been supported by the district to improve their leadership capacity. The analysis solicited answers from monitoring reports left at the schools by district and circuit officials, training manuals, district or circuit circulars of invitations to meetings or workshops and information captured in the schools' log books. The documents were analysed to ascertain whether the level and amount of support given to the schools could be viewed as adequate to boost the leadership capacities of the principal leaders.

Here it has been perceived that principals of poorly performing secondary schools were fairly supported by the district through the provisioning of programmes, monitoring, support and recommendations were continuously made aimed at guiding and coaching the schools' leadership to move from their present state to the desire one. The district had reiterated on the issues of legislation and had delivered on the SASA (1996) mandates fairly actioning the roles and responsibilities afforded to the Head of the Department of Education in Limpopo by this legislation.

The study will also show that though fairly supported, the schools' principal leaders still experienced challenges as some recommendations were sometimes not fairly implemented. The two schools fall under different circuits and the study will show the different circuit interventions at times, but mostly the study presents training programmes arranged in clusters and the schools belong to the same cluster.

4.3.6.1 Monitoring and support by the district to poor performing schools. SCHL-26/SEC and SCHL-43/SEC

Monitoring tools at the schools showed that the district through the circuits had provided monitoring and support. Monitoring reports did not indicate whether they were specifically meant for monitoring the schools because of their poor performance or just generic monitoring and support tools. The District monitoring reflected monitoring and support by four different types of officials, namely: the circuit manager, the deputy manager for governance, curriculum advisors from the circuit and curriculum support by the district. Though fairly supported, challenges at these schools still persisted and the need to strengthen monitoring and support was still evident.

4.3.6.2 Monitoring reports by the circuit manager

SCHL-26/SEC

Monitoring conducted at the schools checked whether there were basic school documents that were regarded as building blocks for effective school leadership and management conducted on an annual basis at the beginning of the first term. Monitoring reports requiring the same information for each year (2014-2016) were collected and analysed. The monitoring tools requested that in cases where some of the requested documents were

unavailable, the process should be repeated quarterly to ensure that the school had the required documents by the end of the 4th quarter. In all three monitoring tools analysed, the documents which were unavailable in 2014 were indicated as still unavailable in 2015 and 2016.

The reports showed that the general class and teacher time tables; leave, assets and Learner Teacher Support Material (LTSM) registers; allocation of duties and responsibilities; and quarterly schedules as available and being used. The academic performance improvement plan (AAPIP), monitoring policy, year plan, code of conduct for learners were available but needed refinement. Annual academic performance reports (AAPR), period registers, teaching and learning policy and staff development policy were reported as not available. The report strongly recommended the use of period registers to monitor period attendance by both learners and teachers, and that the school should immediately develop the documents that were unavailable as a matter of urgency.

4.3.6.3 Monitoring reports by governance section

SCHL-26/SEC

Here it will be shown that the district through the circuit governance deputy manager had monitored and supported the school to determine availability of basic school governance documents. The directive in the report was that if some documents were unavailable, the process should be repeated quarterly until such documents became available. The report conducted in May 2012 showed that the school had the following basic governance documents and their status was as follows:

Vision and mission of the school, school development plan, HIV and AIDS policy and the Constitution of the SGB, as available but not in use. Comments indicated that these documents were kept in the school's master file and were not reflected anywhere else in the school for other people to see, not even in the principal's office or in the notice board. Educators did not have copies of them. The code of conduct for learners was available, but there was no evidence that RCLs were consulted or learners given copies of the conduct to ensure that their actions were in line with the code of conduct. The report was signed by the official and the principal.

The official could have provided some recommendations where the importance of using the above-mentioned documents was strongly highlighted. These documents seemed to be available for compliance purposes and the official could have documented procedures where the principal was guided on how to involve all relevant stake holders in the determination of the documents. Copies of the documents could have been given to educators and learners for timeous referencing. There was a need to guide the school on how the documents should be effectively utilised. The principal could have been assisted on how to implement the school's objectives, vision and mission.

The report also showed that the school had: *An approved school budget; finance committee; admission, language, school safety, and religious policies as available and in use though they did not meet the requirements. Audited financial statements were also available and met the requirements.*

The official who completed the report could have guided the principal on how to ensure that policies meet requirements and could have also stated in the monitoring tool what the requirements were.

Reports dated July 2012 showed that the circuit governance conducted routine follow up monitoring and support and the school was assisted and guided on the formulation of the general school policy, finance, language, safety and security and policies. The support as indicated in the report was a follow up response on the challenges identified in May 2012 monitoring where policies were found to have gaps and the activity was to assist the school in the development of appropriate policies. Policy templates with the following information were accessed at the school and analysed:

The finance policy *template was analysed and it guided the school by highlighting questions whose answers once jointly agreed upon would help formulate policy.*

The general school policy*: the school was guided to ensure that the policy has relevant sections like: -regulation school times; year plan; sporting and cultural activities.*

The language policy *indicated the need for indications of the language spoken by a majority of learners, the language used for teaching and learning, teachers teaching the school languages and strategies to improve home language.*

Safety and security policy *indicating: preamble, who the school safety officer was, duties of the school safety officer, duties of educators regarding safety of learners in the school, in sports, in class.*

Admission policy *recommended sections such as quoting of the National Admission Policy, qualification of learners and the feeding area, admitting learners from outside the feeding area and those from outside South Africa, times of admissions, indication of the maximum age requirement and extra consideration if any.*

Monitoring was conducted to check the SGB functionality and determine the frequency of their meetings, availability of minutes, decisions taken at the meetings, and, issues of disciplinary hearings.

Monitoring conducted in October 2015 by the circuit with the monitoring objective of ensuring effective governance and full involvement of SGBs in the financial affairs of the school was reviewed from the school's reports. The report was written in this manner and showed the following*:*

The constitution of the finance committee reflected six members as being the treasurer (chairperson finance committee); finance officer; secretary; additional (SGB Dep.Chair); Ex-officio (principal); Ex-officio (Chair-SGB). The finance policy was properly adopted in the parents' meeting and copies of minutes and attendance registers for that meeting were available; signatories were selected as per LPMSF (DoE, 2011: 8.5.2). The report had no indication to whether the finance policy clearly indicated travelling claims for both public and private transports as the provided yes/ no response was not selected. The report only indicated claim for transport per kilometre using own car and no amount for public transport was indicated.

The finance committee as reviewed from the documents seemed not to be incompliance with the PMSF (DoE, 2011: sec. 5.1) directives where parents must be in the majority. Parents and school representatives had equal representation within the finance committee. There was no indication in the tool by the circuit official that this might be regarded as negligence of directives and had to be corrected and the space provided for comments was not filled. The official could have provided a recommendation to guide the principal to correct the error.

The school's financial management and expenditure had also been monitored and it was reported that: *The school had a finance file with appropriate and accessible information such as the previous audited financial statements, annual budgets, bank statements, bank reconciliation statements were balancing, cash books for monthly payments, claim forms, invoices and returned cheques, and that the school had been trained on financial management in March 2015.*

The school report had not indicated on the following areas because the provided spaces for comments were blank: whether there was a finance officer delegated in writing; availability of monthly scheduled meetings of the finance committee, minutes and attendance registers. Because of the above gaps, there was no conclusive evidence that the principal complied with the directive of consulting the SGB and delegating the finance officer in writing to keep the finance books and document functions. The official could have advised the principal to delegate the finance officer immediately in consultation with the SGB and recommend submission of evidence as assurance and evidence of compliance.

SCHL-43/SEC

This information was accessed as captured from the school journal and filed reports. The school was monitored in many occasions by the governance officials from the circuit office. Governance monitoring reflected that the school was fairly monitored and supported where issues related to learner attendance, learner discipline, frequency of meeting with parents, and availability of policies were deliberated upon. The school journal reflected continuous and general monitoring and support by the deputy manager for governance.

This review showed that the district had fairly tried to deliver on its supportive role (SASA ,1996: sec. 19.2) to the school after SGBs were elected. Constant monitoring and support by the district through the circuit reflected fair compliance with the above mandate.

Table 4.5: Consolidated monitoring and support conducted by the district governance officials as reflected in the school journal.

The table below is also used for analysis monitoring of school effectiveness on day 1 of reopening (4.3.6.5), and learner absenteeism for SCHL-43/SEC to avoid repetition.

16/07/2012	School effectiveness for 2012, learner enrolment, attendance, and availability of mandatory policies were captured in a monitoring report by the deputy manager for governance (DMG). The report indicated poor learner attendance on the day to be 60%.
15/07/2013	Monitoring 3rd term reopening. No teaching and learning. Learners were outside classes. We requested the school to improve on that seriously so. All 9 teachers were present and 90 learners were present and 176 absent. School journal was signed by circuit governance official.
02/08/2013	I visited the school to monitor the situation that was highlighted by the CA on the 29/07/2013. The situation was a bit normal and the school was running normally. Signed by circuit (DMG).
15/01/2014	School visited by a QLTC official.
23/04/2014	"I visited the school for monitoring schools for safety, effective school management and SGB functionality were completed. The school was running smoothly". Signed by circuit DMG.
28/01/2015	We visited school to meet with Grade 12 learners' parents. The meeting was successful. We promise to visit the school on regular base to meet parents. DMG and Circuit Manager.
11/01/2016	We visited the school to check availability of space for learners from another secondary school to be temporarily relocated to this school, as agreed. DMG and two circuit officials signed the journal.
20/01/2016	Visited the school to meet with parents of Grade 12 learners, SMT and Grade 12 themselves. The aim was to motivate learners and to encourage parents to assist with monitoring performance of their learner. Signed by DMG.
18/07/2016	Monitoring school reopening. All teachers were present. Learner attendance is low. School was normal. DMG
18/08/2016	Visit to attend parents meeting. Only nine out of 45 parents came. There is a great absenteeism in the school. Three Grade 12 learners were absent

The above table was analysed and also used as reference to check the authenticity of information accessed from other documents.

Throughout the years of the study the principal had to account for the daily activities and systems within the school as supported by the circuit and the district officials. Though fairly monitored and supported, challenges were still evident around certain areas of school governance and this might have affected learner performance. Leaders can influence followers, but the behaviour of leaders is influenced by followers and the situation (Gordon & Yukl 2004).

In 2012 during the third term the school was monitored and guided on the development of policies. The new SGB had according to the report assumed responsibilities during the second term after SGB elections were completed. The monitoring report showed that the school had mandatory policies, but the policies were not appropriate as they did not contain some relevant aspects and did not clearly address some mandated responsibilities.

The objective of the report indicated that the visit was purely supportive to ensure that the newly elected SGB complies with the mandate of developing and drafting school policies and meant to identify challenges in the available policies and assist the school to address them. The report showed that policies were available but needed some extra information and that there was no distinction between the general school policy and the constitution of the SGB. Recommendations guided the school to separate the general school policy where the affairs of the school like the start and the end of a school day, subjects offered, sporting codes and sporting time, uniform policy etc, were indicated.

4.3.6.4 Monitoring by circuit and district curriculum section

SCHL-26/SEC

The district seemed to have fairly delivered on its monitoring and supportive role to assist the school and the principal to determine strategies, maintain strength and involve stakeholders so as to move the school forward. The school journal recorded a number of school visits by the circuit and district curriculum section from the period 2012-2016, but no monitoring tools could be accessed from the school. Different subject educators from grade 10 to 12 were monitored and supported. There was no indication that grade 8 and 9 were monitored. The following further education and training (FET) subjects were monitored and supported: Mathematics, Mathematical literacy, Sepedi, English, Business Studies, Economics, Accounting and Life sciences. Different reports about the state of affairs in the school indicated that curriculum was suffering and challenges ranged from little content covered, lack of preparation of lesson plans, fewer written assessment tasks, and lack of supervision by the principal and the HODs were reflected.

These monitoring reports captured in the school journal were brief without detailed information, only indicating a summary of the monitoring and support given. These reports have been regarded as reliable as they were signed by both the principal and the curriculum

advisers on the days monitoring and support was conducted at the school. Detailed information on the findings and recommendations could have assisted the school to reflect and re-focus on major areas recommended, and such detailed information could have assisted the school to be realistic in determining its challenges and ways of mitigating them.

SCHL-43/SEC

Here the district conducted intense monitoring and support on curriculum related activities that were aimed at assisting the school to improve on learner performance. The school was guided on how to collaborate systems within the school to bring order, continuity and commitment. The reports and the school journal reflected detailed continuous monitoring and support by the circuit and district and challenges impacting negatively with curriculum deliverables were identified.

Despite continued support, Sepedi educators still showed some challenges with regard to lesson preparation, content coverage and compliance to the policy on assessment. The reports reflected insufficient work covered. The district support registered a concern and commitment to continuously support the school hoping that the situation would improve. The school still needed extra support as the curriculum teaching plan was not in line with curriculum policies as reported by the officials. Repeated curriculum monitoring recorded in the school journal was as follows:

29 July 2013: Curriculum Advisers (CAs) visited the school to support Sepedi educators. Grade 10, 11, 12 educators had no planning, insufficient informal tasks were given. Planning was explained and clarified and planning should be done as a matter of policy. Paper 2 and Paper 3 were clarified and the marking of all was explained. Learners should be given more informal tasks. A follow up is necessary to check on the improvement. Signed by the district CA.

08 October 2013: *CA visited the school to monitor and support Sepedi gr 10 &11 educators. Findings: the CA was actually making a follow up on the issues discussed in term 3. Despite the visit by the CA the explanations and the clarifications that she had made, the 2 educators are not taking any pains to implement the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). They are teaching the old way. Lesson plans and the work schedules were not fully utilised.*

Constant support, follow ups and commitment by the district in helping curriculum improvement persisted. Signs of some improvement were registered in 2014 and 2016 though challenges of insufficient informal written tasks, content coverage and non-attendance of classes by some educators remained a challenge. Curriculum advisors (CAs) conducting monitoring reported the following:

12 February 2014: *Two CAs one from circuit and the other from district visited the school to monitor and support. The one constantly checking Sepedi. Findings; lessons prepared, insufficient written formal tasks given, content coverage not enough: reason given was that workshops and meetings contributed to not being up to date with the annual teaching plan but educators are trying hard to cover up. Educators were urged to give learners more informal tasks as they are stepping stones to academic excellence. Signed by the CAs on 12/02/2014.*

19 March 2014: *CA visited the school to monitor Sepedi gr 10-12 educators. The grade 10 educator has no lesson plan but claims to have left it home. The lesson plans should be made available every day. The educator has insufficient informal tasks. Does not wok according to the programme of informal tasks. She has problem with integration of language structure and use. Nature of support: - the lesson plan template was clarified and integration was explained in full. Signed by the CA on the date.*

05 March 2014: *School visit to monitor and support accounting educator. The educator is still behind with the pace setter but has promised to cover up the work by conducting extra lessons. Signed by the district CA.*

01 September 2014: We v*isited the school for the monitoring of the preparatory examination. The session was well conducted yet the locality was not clean. Teaching for the lower grades was not taking place in all grades. Grade 10 Sepedi were not attended to. The principal indicated that the two staff members did not report for duty. The following 2014 documents were electronically provided to the school: Grade 12 Economics, Business Studies and Accounting examination guidelines; 2013 Business Studies exemplification guidelines. Signed by the CAs.*

05 September 2014: *The CA visited school to monitor preparatory examination and the findings were: The exam sessions were well conducted; The grade 11 class was not*

attended to; The noise of the grade 10 was loud and disturbing. The attendance register was not kept. Recommendations: The educators should assist the chief invigilator to keep order and engage learners while the exam sessions are on. The exam room should be kept neat and tidy after every session.

30 January 2015: Three curriculum advisors visited the school to monitor and give support to grade 8 & 9 educators and grade 10-12 poorly performing subjects. Less work was given in almost all the subjects except grade 9 Maths and EMS. Educators should give more work to learners to improve the results.

04 February 2015: Visited the school to do special monitoring on Accounting grade 10-12. The following was discovered: Insufficient class and homework activities. Signed by the CA.

20 March 2015: Life Orientation and Sepedi CAs, came for the purpose of monitoring and supporting educators, falling under their departments. Findings: Life Orientation lesson plans were available, educator was adhering to policy as far Annual Teaching Plan is concerned, However-informal Tasks were found being inadequate but they were or they are in line with annual Teaching Plan. Formal Tasks are given. Sepedi -The educator is not working according to the pace setter. She has given insufficient informal tasks which are not CAPS compliant and neither marked nor controlled. The educator was advised to work on the policy document and to administer informal tasks. The HOD should monitor the educator closely to track her progress and to assist them.

09 February 2016: Visited the school to monitor English First Additional Language (FAL) in grade 10-12. Work written but insufficient. Educators need to wise teaching plan to address informal tasks in different grades. A follow up work will be made to their development and progress in the subject. SES English.

Further monitoring and support were conducted by the circuit and district curriculum support and were registered as follows:

18 February 2016: Visited the school to monitor the availability of basic management documents and to conduct written work audit in grade 12 Maths, Maths Lit, Accounting and grade 9 Maths and English. Copies of reports are kept at school. Signed by the local circuit manager.

23 February 2016: Visited the school to provide monitoring and support and support of Accounting teacher and HOD in terms of curriculum implementation, content coverage and assessment. Follow-up visit is anticipated to monitor progress. Signed by the CA

Leadership capacity was conceptualised on the "group level" (Yukl, 1999) in 2.3.2 and includes all aspects of the institution and does not only refer to a single individual who happens to be the leader. The HOD seemed to lack commitment and capacity to deliver on the expectations of the supervisory post and some responsibilities seemed to have been neglected. The CA recorded the following on different occasions:

08/10/2013: The HOD is not helping because he is not moderating educators' work though he has a monitoring plan. He was advised to check on their work to assist and develop them. Recommendations: the teachers should implement 'CAPS' and teach the 'CAPS' way. The HOD should also use his monitoring and moderation plan effectively". Signed by the CA.

04/02/2015: Lack of control of educators by the head of the department; the HOD and the educator are referred to the resident senior education specialist to assist them in some of the challenges experienced. Signed by the CA.

Through reviewing these reports, the principal leadership seemed to have been faced with a challenge where some leadership functions at certain levels seemed not to be delivering on the expectations of the supervisory role and responsibility. Sepedi educators needed intervention and leadership skills to realign them to the directives of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). Evidence showed lack of capacity and a need for development as stated in the above reports. These curriculum challenges might have been the cause for continuous poor performance as they directly affected curriculum deliverables which are core in academic learner performance or improvement.

The reports also registered a concern about unavailability of basic school documents being a CAPS compliant time table at the beginning of the year. This indicated challenges that might be related to lack of commitment, evidence of low educator morale, poor planning and ineffectiveness of strategies and extra support for both the educators and the SMT. The principal could have ensured that the time table and the AAPIP for 2014 were ready to guide teaching and learning activities at the school. Failure to have these management plans at

any given time of the year could cause confusion, disorderliness, non-compliance to subject weights and bunking of classes by some educators. The CA's report was as follows:

14 January 2014: *School visited by district CA to monitor the state of readiness for the reopening. Allocation had been done. The time table should be drawn and be CAPS compliant. Due to poor performance of grade 12 the CA worked on the educators' academic performance attainment strategies for 2014 to improve the results. Educators indicated the critical areas and came up with strategies to improve. Signed by the district CA on the date.*

17 March 2014: *LDOE officials visited the school in terms of support and monitoring the AAPIP. The school has an AAPIP from the previous year and is prepared to amend and move forward. The school was provided with the following; -allocation of duties and responsibilities, - teaching and learning policy, year plan, monitoring tools, HOD management plan, subject need audit, - how to study template. The AAPIP should be amended immediately. Head Office official signed.*

14 January 2015: *Deputy manager governance and circuit manager visited the school to check readiness for the year 2015. The SMT was advised to make sure there are management plans in place for monitoring educators and learners and implement their plans. The circuit will be visiting the school to make sure that they monitor educators & learners in line with their plans. Signed by both officials.*

The principal managed examination sessions well but some examination directives were not delegated during his absence from school. The CA captured this:

03 November 2014: *The SES visited the school on this day. Purpose of the visit: Monitoring NSC examination 2014. Findings: The chief invigilator tries hard to manage the examination sessions. The candidates arrived on time for the session. The invigilator was on time to execute his duties. Despite the track of training the exam session was managed well. Challenges: Invigilation training was not done due to the chief invigilators ill-health. He was advised to train the invigilators as a matter of urgency, to draw the invigilation register and strong room register.*

4.3.6.5 Monitoring of school effectiveness on day 1 of reopening

SCHL-26/SEC

The district had shown commitment to its supportive role to the poorly performing school. The school journal showed that there was constant monitoring of school effectiveness in each year (2012-2016). The journal reports reflected that circuit officials visited the school fifteen times to monitor school effectiveness on re-opening of schools and indicted that copies of monitoring tools were left at the school and the district or circuit officials who conducted such monitoring appended their signatures and the principal signed acknowledgement. Few monitoring tools were recovered from the school files and had the following information:

07/04/2014: The circuit official checked on the attendance of educators and learners. The report indicated all nine educators as present and the school learner enrolment of 247 where 201 learners were present and 46 (18.7%) were absent on the day of re-opening. It also checked and indicated that the APIP 2014 was available and being implemented and teaching and learning had commenced and all educators were in class teaching. Both the official and the principal signed the report.

14/01/205: the report monitored and reported that: there was no access control system as the school could not afford to pay for security personnel; the grounds were very neat and atmosphere welcoming; most educators and learners were in class while others were not; not all learners had textbooks and workbooks; some educators did not sign the teacher attendance register, a composite time table for the current year was available.

The report also checked the functionality of the RCL and reported on its dysfunctionality as it was not fully utilised; the learners' code of conduct was not signed by the principal, the SGB and RCL; that parents were not fully supportive over the school. Though the above challenges were indicated, the report general comments highlighted that the attitude to improve was very positive. The report was signed by the principal and the two officials who conducted the monitoring and support.

18/07/2016: The circuit official checked on the attendance of educators and learners. The report indicated 10 total number of posts at the school, nine educators were present where

6 were permanently employed, 3 temporarily filled and 1 post still vacant. The school learner enrolment was at 240 where 145 learners were present and 95(39.58%) were absent on the day of re-opening. It also checked and indicated that the LTSM policy was available, term 1 and term 2 performance schedules were available for all grades and approved, the School Improvement Plan was available but not implemented as there was no indication of progress in the SIP. 50% of teaching and learning was captured and the recommendation was that teachers should attend their periods at all times without being pushed or supervised. Both the official and the principal signed the report and it was stamped.

SCHL-43/SEC.

The circuit and the district curriculum and governance conducted monitoring reopening of schools in the period under review (2012-2016) and poor learner attendance was recorded as a serious challenge in table 4.4 above and the DMG and SES captured the following:

16/07/2012: *School effectiveness for 2012, learner enrolment and attendance and availability of mandatory policies was captured in the school journal by the DMG. The report indicated poor learner attendance on the day to be 60%.*

15/07/2013: Monitoring 3rd term reopening. No teaching and learning. Learners were outside classes. We requested the school to improve on that seriously so. All 9 teachers were present and 90 learners were present and 176 absent. School journal was signed by circuit governance official.

07 April 2014: *The SES visited the school on this day. Purpose of the visit: To monitor the reopening. Findings: There was effective teaching and learning taking place. All educators were available but learners turn up was not appealing. Only 154 learners out of 252. 96 learners were absent and this is a course for concern. The principal was advised to address the learners on this issue.*

21 July 2014: *The SES visited the school on this day. Purpose of the visit: To monitor the reopening of schools. Educators attendance is good. 7 out of 8 educators turned up for duty. Learners attendance is very poor 42% of learners were present. Out of 252 only 106 learners attended school today.*

13/04/2015: *Came for monitoring reopening of schools. Situation was found being conducive for effective teaching & learning to take place, However, attendance on the side of grade 10 learners was poor but other grades have fairly attended. 100% of the educators have attended. Signed by the SES.*

05/04/2016: *School re-opens on the 05th -3-2016. All Teachers are present, some learners are absent. Statistics for the day to be sent to the circuit before the end of the business. Signed by the DMG.*

18/08/2016: *Visit to attend parents meeting. Only 9 out of 45 parents came. There is a great absenteeism in the school. 13 Grade 12 learners were absent. Signed by the DMG.*

4.3.6.6 Capacity building programmes by the district or circuit

(SCHL-26/SEC and SCHL-43/SEC)

The District had delivered on its supportive role as stated in SASA (1996) section 19. The legislation mandates the HoD to ensure that funds are utilised for the "enhancement of capacity" of SGBs through provisioning of introductory and continuous training for new SGBs. The district through the circuits provided workshops to the circuit clusters and the two schools belong under the same circuit cluster. The schools received the same programmes sometimes on the same times and dates and some other times on different dates. The information was accessed from circulars of invitations as contained in the school files together with training manuals. Circulars of invitations were also recorded in the schools' incoming mail.

4.3.6.6a Financial management

The district had provided continuous capacity building training workshops to principal leaders on financial management. The reports and circulars of invitation reflect that the principals were trained together with the SGBs' chairpersons, treasurers and finance officers on management of public funds where the contents of the training were mainly on financial legislative directives pertaining to each role player; composition of the finance committee; financial functions such as: procurement, budgeting with different kinds of income, budget projection and control, and annual financial statements. The schools

received at least one financial management training workshop for each year in the period between 2012 to 2016. These workshops were held at least once each year during term two or three and were mainly on financial directives.

4.3.6.6b APIP, SDP and SIP training workshops

The district had provided the principals of poor performing schools with leadership skills and programmes through school development and improvement workshops in its quest to build the capacity of the principals and the SGBs on behalf of the HoD as stated by SASA (1996: sec. 19). These workshops have been conducted between 2012 and 2016. The information was accessed from the schools' journals, circulars of invitation and training manuals. Circulars reminding the schools to develop and submit the documents were also accessed. Templates for the development of these documents were also attached in the training manuals and in the circulars and these clearly reflected areas to be covered and dates for submissions.

4.3.6.6c SGBs' roles and responsibilities

The district through the circuit cluster had capacitated the SGB on roles and responsibilities regarding performance within the SGB. Training manuals indicated the roles of the principal as ex-officio representing the HoD, the chairperson/ deputy, the treasurer, the secretary/deputy. These roles were clearly defined and legislation referenced, e.g the Constitution, SASA (1996), LPMSF (DoE, 2011) and section 38 of the PFMA (1996). These training manuals were presented in English and did not cater for the level of education of some of the SGB members. Here the challenge might be that SGB members whose education level was low might not have clearly understood the expectations of the department.

4.3.6.7 Provisioning of financial monitoring to ensure accountability

The district had conducted monitoring of school funds utilisation and the schools under review were visited during certain times of the year as determined by their programmes reflected in the circulars reviewed. The same information from both schools was reviewed, compared and analysed for both cases.

4.3.6.7a Circulars

The District had continuous monitored and supported the schools to ensure that finances were managed in accordance with legislation and that systems at schools were in complied with financial directives as declared by the objectives in the circulars. Not only were schools reminded during the period of budget preparations to start budgeting for the following year, but were also given ample time to put their systems in order so that they could comply with the set target dates. The District circulars directed circuits on different dates schools should submit to the district, while circuit circulars addressed finer details and indicated submission dates to the circuit to enable compliance with the district dates. In addition, the district had directed the schools to comply with legislations directing how public funds should be managed, and through these circulars, issues of compliance with financial directives were reiterated. The District had provided leadership support to the principal who was expected to assist the governing body with the management of the school's funds by advising the SGB on the "financial implications of decisions relating to financial matters of the school" (SASA, 1996:16A) in 2.6.4. Both the schools had circulars dispatched by the circuit governance section around September each year reminding schools about budget approval and submission in line with SASA (1996) section 38. The circuit circulars also attached budget templates reflecting how the budget should be allocated for each cost centre. The circulars were the same for each year and further reminded schools through the principals to attach evidence of having sent a 30 days' notice of invitation to parents for the budget approval; agenda and minutes; a signed attendance register showing a majority of parents present; the approved budget and the budget template indicating the expected expenditure for the coming year. The circulars also indicated dates from 31 October until school closing end of the year as the period for submissions, and that the copy of the budget sent to the circuit should be signed and stamped by the circuit manager. The circulars also reminded schools that the law expected them to comply to the directive as failure to develop a budget would mean no expenditure for the following year.

TABLE 4.6: Allocation of school budget as per PMSF (DoE, 2011)

Administration	Curriculum	Sport	Ablutions	Transport
17%	60%	10%	8%	5%

4.3.6.7b Norms and standards allocation

The District had monitored spending in the period under study to ensure that the school complied with SASA,16A (1b) (ii) directive of preparing and submitting to the Head of Department an annual report on the effective use of available resources.

In each of the years under study the district finance section sent circulars requiring schools to acknowledge receipt of the 50% allocation previously transferred by the district to the school's account. The circulars had been dispatched to the schools during the first and the third quarter and all the circulars contained the same directive indicating that the district was preparing for norms and standards transfers to schools. The said reports were compulsory to all schools before payment could be deposited. This was a general requirement for all schools in the district directing schools to also submit bank statements reflecting the transfer, assurance letter as per PFMA, (1999: sec. 38), in financial reports from 1st April to 30 September for each year reviewed, and financial statements audited annually (2.6.6). This further promised schools that payment would be transferred before the end of October each year. These circulars were signed by the District Senior Manager.

4.3.6.7c School financial management

The district through the circuit had conducted school visits to monitor financial management at the schools and compared schools spending to the directives of LPMSF (DoE, 2011) items as quoted in this section. Reports from the schools showed that monitoring was conducted in 2012-2016 during quarter 2 and 3. The monitoring tools had the same information and required evidence of compliance to specific financial directives with reference to LPMSF (DoE, 2011) in 2.6.6.

The monitoring also checked whether: the year's budget was properly adopted in the parent's meeting and minutes and attendance registers were available; school spending was in line with the budget. If the answer was no, further questions were asked to check compliance with processes in this regard. For example, the tool checked whether deviations were presented to the SGB and ratified by parents in a meeting and whether minutes and attendance registers were available for that ratification of item 8.5.12.

Under claim forms and payments, the tool checked if the school claims were properly filled and authorised as per item 6.4.2 xviii and 8.5.3 by comparing same amount in the issued cheques, claim forms and on bank statements, and if cheques were signed by the authorised signatories in item 8.5.2; whether cheques were crossed or stamped with "Not transferable" item 8.5.7; whether blank or cash cheques were signed and if yes, provision for a reason was requested in writing, (item 8.5.5); whether minutes and attendance registers for payments of claims were available.

Quarterly financial report section checked the availability of cash books and receipts for monthly payments, monthly bank reconciliation statements and whether they were balancing, quarterly bank statements, minutes and attendance registers for finance committee meetings and minutes and attendance registers for financial reports to the SGB and an indication of the last financial workshop was held in march 2015. The information was declared as complete and correct by the principals, the SGB chairpersons and the circuit monitors, signed and stamped and submitted around October in each year under study. These accountability monitoring tools were the same in all the years.

4.4 Summary

This chapter began with a brief introduction of how data from documents was analysed guided by each research question as indicated in chapter 1 of the study. In cases where information accessed was the same, the two schools' data was analysed and presented together. By presenting these cases, the study aimed to bring out perceptions on how leadership capacity informed governance and the implementation of policies within each specific school context. Through document analysis the two cases were interacted with and interpreted within and from different angles in the quest to identify codes submerged in different textual data. After the codes were identified, they were clustered under related themes that were then compared to the theoretical framework and the literature reviewed in chapter 2 with the view of testing existing theory or making additions if possible.

4.5 Conclusion

The study's research findings aimed at ascertaining the extent to which the principal's leadership capacity influences governance and policy implementation in rural poorly performing secondary schools in the Sekhukhune District. The study was also aimed at

determining whether the support given by the district was adequate enough to capacitate and support the leadership capacity of principals of the poorly performing schools to improve learner performance. The leadership capacity of the principal in fully involving SGBs in the management of school finances and overall governance systems in the school including policy implementation were reviewed and answers sought.

The research questions were able to reflect on the following:

• The levels of contribution by principal leaders of poor performing schools in involving SGBs within collaborative processes; levels of leading SMTs to improve on poor learner performance; carrying out leadership roles and responsibilities within their daily activities; leadership systems evident through planning; guiding SGBs in policy formulation and implementation; the principals leading role in addressing learner ill-discipline; compliance to financial directives and regulations; monitoring, support and guidance of the HODs to enable them to perform their roles and responsibilities and leadership capacity to interconnect the school systems to transform the school and move towards an improved state.

• Evidence of leadership capacity building programmes provided by the district and circuit during the time the schools were poor performing and the nature of developmental programmes on leadership roles to can mitigate challenges effectively; monitoring and support provided, the level of relevancy to poor performing secondary schools' environments.

• Levels of parental involvement in the affairs of the schools and the implementation of policy directives by the schools.

CHAPTER 5:

THE RESEARCH FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is the presentation of the summary of the research findings and recommendations formulated for principals of poorly performing schools, SMTs, SGBs, parents, DBE and Sekhukhune District resulting from data analysis and presentation conducted in the previous chapter of this study. It is hoped that these findings and recommendations might contribute to guiding the leadership, management and governance systems interacting within a school system towards transformation of a poorly performing secondary school in rural areas.

The qualitative case study conducted was meant to examine the effects of the leadership capacity of the principals in school governance and policy implementation affairs of poor performing secondary schools in rural Sekhukhune over a period of five years in which these schools continuously poorly performed. Attempting to find answers to the above indicated aim, the following primary research question has guided the proposed study and was presented as follows:

To what extent does the leadership capacity of the principals' impact with governance and implementation of policy in the poor performing rural secondary schools of Sekhukhune District?

Secondary research questions appraised by the study in an attempt to facilitate answering the primary research question were:

- *What leadership skills and competencies do principal leaders of poor performing rural secondary schools possess?*
- *How does the leadership capacity of the principals influence collaborative decision-making and planning in the poor performing rural secondary schools?*
- *How do the principals of poor performing rural secondary schools use leadership skills to guide the SGB on policy implementation?*

- *How have principals of poor performing rural secondary schools been supported by the district to improve on leadership capacity?*

The primary objective was to discover underlying challenges and factors that might be impacting with the leadership capacity roles of the principal leaders in poor performing secondary schools.

Further objectives included:

Clarifying the part played by principal leaders in delivering leadership roles and responsibilities;

Checking whether principal leaders of rural secondary schools are coping with the school governance terrain in the South African education system.

Exploring how the leadership capacity of the principal can utilise collaborate processes to deliver school governance imperatives and policy implementation to support learner performance;

Assessing the relevancy of support programmes facilitated by Sekhukhune district to principal leaders of poor performing secondary schools;

Recommending designing of leadership capacity building programmes by the district that are specifically meant for principals of poor performing secondary schools.

5.2 Summary of the study

The study has presented two poor performing secondary school cases sampled from the rural schools of Sekhukhune District who were continuously poorly performing below 40 percent for five consecutive years from 2012 to 2016. The study was conducted through document analyses intended to present responses to the research questions and findings of the study. The study is presented in five chapters and a summary of each chapter is hereby expounded.

In chapter 1, the study presents the introduction and the background of the challenges brought about by the new education dispensation, which demanded for principal leadership

to have capacity to governance schools within the South African Education system. The chapter in the problem statement highlighted insufficient leadership capacity portrayed by some principals in poorly performing secondary schools in the rural Sekhukhune District that might have impacted negatively with learner performance and policy implementation. It also presented the rational for undertaking the study.

Chapter 2 explicates leadership theories and conceptualises leadership capacity, governance and policy implementation through a related conceptual framework.

Chapter 3 presents the research design and methodology detailing how empirical review was conducted where two poorly performing secondary schools in the rural Sekhukhune District were sampled to establish if principal leaders reflected capacity that was able to influence and positively impact with governance systems, facilitate interactions amongst teams and comply with policy directives.

Chapter 4 presents, interprets and analyses data to bring out responses to answer the research questions. Document analysis was used for both data collection and analysis. Robust document selection was conducted and relevant information on the phenomena under study was reviewed. Data collected was analysed and interpreted in order to identify themes within the studied texts and these were related to the literature reviewed in chapter 2 enabling for the answering of the research questions.

Chapter 5 presents a summary of the findings and recommendations that could help improve on schools with similar situations.

5.2.1 Findings from reviewed literature

 The study reviewed literature from a number of leadership theories, governance and policy implementation in an attempt to bring meaning to the principals' leadership capacity. Leadership was conceptualised to check leadership skills principals of poor performing rural secondary schools possess and how these skills are actioned to guide groups or teams working within the schools as principals do not work alone or in isolation but lead groups and teams within a school context (par. 2.3.2). Transformational leaders role model behaviour and set achievement standards for their followers inspiring them to reach higher levels in goal attainment (Yukl, 2010).

School contexts such as the school size, the nature of the community, and the background of learners have a bearing and influence how principals lead their schools and these principals have to utilise leadership skills to influence groups of people within an organisation towards attainment of organisational objectives. Leadership is able to improve performance in teams by identifying and utilising different skills and abilities people have, and that leadership is the driver of learner performance (par. 2.3.1).

Some challenges of ineffectiveness faced by principal leaders are as a result of contextual factors that influence utilisation of different leadership styles (Turnbull, 2011; Gurr 2015), and the leadership capacity of principals and their influence within underperforming rural secondary school can never be studied in a single study. This is a very wide area and calls for further studies as poor performing rural school contexts differ as affected by diverse socioeconomic and other internal and external factors simultaneously at play and impacting on one another. Leadership capacity of the principal and its influence on learner academic performance is under researched in South Africa. Previous research findings are inconclusive about the effects of leadership on learner achievement in that results show very small effects and these are attributed to indirect effects where leaders were seen to influence student learning through provisioning of resources to support teaching and learning (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

Management functions sometimes take precedence over leadership creativity and these limit principals in exercising leadership skills and taking informed risks as determined by contextual factors thus putting them in a box disallowing them to tap into unchartered areas actioning their leadership skills (Marishane 2015). According to him SASA (1996) does not make any reference to school leadership.

Leadership capacity influences school governance systems within a school and impact on deliverance of roles, clarifying of role ambiguities, development of individual skills and commitment to achieving the goals of an organisation, building trust and cooperation amongst followers (par 2.3.2).

School governance challenges have been cited by different researchers and these include:
- Challenges related to low levels of education of parent governors which are reflected when policies are not well interpreted giving rise to individual and different

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interpretations and sometimes sole reliance on what the principal presents (Xaba, 2011) in par. 2.5.2.

- Some SGB members failing to fully commit themselves and show determination in supporting the school to deliver quality education for all learners in their schools (Baloyi, 2015).

- Governance delivery sometimes fails due to some factors that pose a challenge where some people abuse their power and positions, failure to account for their actions, and unsatisfactory levels of stakeholder involvement (Kolade, 2012).

- Decentralisation is failing to achieve its desired outcomes and set objectives based on meaningful participation by local actors, but has accomplished putting in place structures and new governance forms (Daun & Mundy, 2011)

Policy implementation facilitates achievement of set targets and objectives (Khan & Khandaker, 2016).

Implementation of policy is possible if the policy itself is reasonable, logical and practicable; if it involves multiple stakeholders; and whether strategies are well planned; and whether there is a governance rich environment within the school (Viennet and Pont, 2017) in (par.2.6.8). Policies fail because of lack of people involvement; a constant need for modifications of implementation processes to address new developments; and challenging school systems (Viennet and Pont, 2017).

Persistent failure in public policy implementation and development is as a result of challenges associated with ineffective leadership and poor governance reflected in the way public policies are implemented and on the ineffectiveness of development agendas (par. 2.6.8). SGBs' low education levels cause insufficient involvement in policy determination and cause major challenges in policy implementation in rural schools.
Public leadership and good public governance are complementary drivers of policy implementation.

5.2.2 Findings from the empirical study

The study had collected data from the two sampled poor performing rural secondary schools through document analysis in order to identify information relevant for answering the research questions in chapter 1 of the study. Data was analysed to bring out responses and meaning to enable for the interpretation of data and this was not easy as the study only focussed on document analysis as it was the only method used for both data collection and data analysis. As a novice researcher my intellectual skills were challenged and time constraints became an issue. As mentioned earlier I chapter 3 above, it was not possible to corroborate data by comparing it to data collected through other data collection strategies as documents were used as stand alone and identifying some of the themes in documents was very challenging, documents cannot be questioned to bring out and further clarify meaning of responses and in some areas they were silent and I could not make any assumptions. Data analysed and interpreted enabled for the presentation of the following empirical findings from the study.

The principals of poor performing rural secondary schools possessed relevant qualifications and leadership experience to enable them to facilitate leadership skills needed to action school governance processes and implement policies within their schools as reflected in (table 4.1). All SMT members' qualifications and experience jointly presented in which principals are part of, alluded to this finding. Deduced from the empirical review, it was evident that these principal leaders possess leadership capabilities that could be viewed as capacity to lead the poor performing schools but due to contextual factors within the cases, some challenges were encountered.

Collaborative decision-making processes regarding joint budgetary processes were not well implemented by the principals and that communication systems were not as strong as they were supposed to be. Annual budgeting is key in every school and budgetary systems as mandated by PMSF (DoE, 2011), (par. 4.3.2.3). The principals' leadership capacities should be evident reflected in the SGBs' ability to develop annual budgets. The principal should facilitate enough capacity building through provisioning of financial management training for the SGB members serving in the finance committee so that the school spending is informed by collaborative decision making by all stakeholders. Partial involvement in budgetary

processes could challenge the schools in the procurement of quality goods and services to deliver quality education (4.3.2.3).

With regard to policy implementation reviewed evidence reflected that principal leaders had guided SGBs and school committees and facilitated implementation of policies. Challenges with policy determination were evident as some of the policies seemed not to be appropriate and their accessibility, relevance and implementation might have posed a challenge. Policy determination at the schools might have had serious challenges and these were evident in the developed policies where some were not signed by the principal and SGB chairperson as stated in (par. 4.3.3.1; 4.3.3.5). The principal leader for SCHL-26/SEC might have involved SGBs-parent component less. Failure to sign policies challenges the authenticity of the school policies developed, which, in instances where SGBs were partially involved in their determination might pose challenges when they have to be implemented as other people might not take them very seriously.

In school SCHL-43/SEC policies were reflective of consultative processes. The admission policy and, the SGB constitution and the finance policy seemed well documented and evidence from reviewed year plans reflected annual admission activities and these show that the policies were implemented during certain times in each year. The admission policy reflected on its members and an SGB member chaired the committee. An HOD also served in the admission committee. The SGB constitution was implemented.

Implementation of school policies was evident in the school year plans in tables (4.3 and 4.4) and in 4.3.3.5 and 4.3.4 as they were reflective of most SGB activities. Principal leaders had facilitated involvement of stakeholders and had ensured their implementation as reflected in the annual school year plans.

Principals of poor performing schools seemed to experience challenges to effectively monitor and apply rules and practices of school governance that could bring about the basis for a sustainable learner performance improvement and this compromised school development. Principals seemed to be in need of additional monitoring and support skills needed to encourage educators and SMT members to implement the directives of the DBE. These principals seemed to be in need of leadership skills to incite, motivate or influence educators and SGBs and coordinate activities so that followers could jointly deliver and

accomplish the schools' objectives of delivering quality education through effective school governance. The vision and mission of the schools, school development plans, and the constitution of the SGBs were available but registered areas of developmental need to enable for the delivery of appropriate and relevant strategies accessible to all stakeholders including parents and learners so as to bring the required responses (par. 4.3.3.3; 4.3.5; 4.3.6.3).

In 4.3.1, evidence in planning for major school programmes reflected a fair indication that the leadership capacities of the principals were fairly adequate to influence collaborative decision making and planning in the two schools though both the schools registered some challenges with regard some areas. The principals' year plans (tables 4.3 and 4.4) reflected involvement of other stakeholders through school governance planned activities addressing almost all   governance imperatives as expected by SASA (1996). Challenges could still be reflected in in SCHL-26/SEC in table 4.3 where school year plans contained some gaps in some of the columns indicating responsible people and were not accounted for. Challenges related to collaborated budget school processes were identified. Principal leaders did not reflect full commitment to budgetary processes through fully involving parents in budget adoption as evidence show that parents were partially informed. No evidence of communicated notices were available or mentioned any where in the school documents. This was an oversight and a grievous mistake as SASA (1996) legislation mandates parents of learners to adopt the school budget before school funds could be utilised (par. 4.3.3.5).

The principals identified issues of misconduct by learners and leadership capacity facilitating collaborative governance processes were also evident in learner disciplinary measures and discussions in SGBs', RCLs' and parents' meetings though high levels of learner ill-discipline still registered some concerns (par. 4.3.4). Reviewed evidence did not reflect collaborative involvement of educators in learner conduct as records of staff meetings where the principals held discussions and deliberations on issues dealing with learner ill-discipline were not available and reviewed. Non-involvement educators in learners' conduct through effecting the code of conduct could jeopardise the delivery of quality education within a school atmosphere conducive for teaching and learning.   Evidence show that most of the cases of misconduct in SCHL-43/SEC were conducted in class after break. This implied that these classes were unattended by educators and learners appeared to be left alone and did as they liked and ill-discipline plummeted.

The principal leaders in these secondary schools were capacitated by the District and circuit officials through leadership training and school support visits, to enable them to acquire skills and knowledge relevant to arm them as principals (par. 4.3.6; 4.3.6.5; 4.3.6.6) and to also provide capacity through monitoring and support to ensure that leadership teams within the schools jointly work with the principals and assist the schools in the determination of relevant strategies, maintenance of strength in areas that were doing well and in the involvement of relevant stakeholders so as to move the schools forward towards the achievement of an improved state not only on school governance, but also on curriculum related school affairs (par. 4.3.6.4.).School governing bodies were also capacitated in many occasions on roles and responsibilities to facilitate smooth actioning of responsibilities when engaging into collaborated and collective school governance decisions. Capacitation of SGBs in a way was to facilitate a school governance rich terrain reflective of decentralised powers, authority and support for the delivery of quality education.

The District had fairly delivered its supportive role to improve the leadership capacity of the principals of the two poor performing schools through the provisioning of programmes, monitoring, support, and recommendations aimed at guiding and coaching the schools to move from their poor performing states to improve learner achievement. The District had reiterated on the issues of legislation and had fairly delivered on the SASA (1996) mandates actioning the roles and responsibilities afforded to the HoD by this legislation (par, 4.3.6) though some monitoring tools showed developmental challenges. Some of the recommendations offered by the circuit or district officials were not developmental enough to guide the schools to improve on some of their practices (par, 4.3.6.3). Though fairly supported, the schools' principal leaders still experienced challenges on the ground as some recommendations were sometimes not fairly implemented by some educators and HODs.

Repeated findings and recommendations by the district and circuit officials (par, 4.3.6.4) appeared not to have been fully implemented by the principal and HOD and failure to fully implement recommendations by subject educators might lead to derailment from latest curriculum developments and this could lead to continued deterioration of learner performance. Additional to that principals manage schools guided by the SASA (1996) directives and legislation and have to fully comply to such directives in order to ensure school governance and effective implementation of policies. Literature indicated that governance school systems involve convergence by many stakeholders in the determination of systems

resulting into actions that are achieved through joint efforts by all actors and the level of impact these have on learner behaviour and parental support.

The principal leaders have to engage themselves more responsibly to ensure that recommendations and directives are implemented and should not only understand directives and policy, but should also capacitate the SGBs on policy issues so that they could be able to implement governance directives and legislation. In so doing, underperforming secondary schools would be able to build a more responsive and responsible school governance environment conducive for learner improvement.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings from the two cases studied show that the leadership capacities of the principals had fairly tried to influence governance and policy implementation but other contextual factors evident within the schools sometimes challenged principal leaders to effectively utilise leadership skills to effect changes or re-strategize in certain areas as determined by the type and extent of the encountered challenges. These findings from the reviewed literature and empirical study reviewed showed that principal leaders of poor performing schools in the Sekhukhune District, still needed continuous support to boost their leadership competencies, knowledge and skills. Development is continuous and capacity to lead schools to improve learner performance cannot be overly emphasised.

School governance in some South African schools is challenged as some SGBs' level of education is low and challenges of failing to interpret policy have been registered by some researchers. This need creates challenges where school governance imperatives are not well implemented and SGBs falling short of their roles and responsibilities as cited in the literature review findings. Management of school finances also reflects a developmental need around issues of school governance and accountability.

Research theories on leadership have a common understanding as reflected in the literature that every organisational performance is evidence enough of the quality of leadership that organisation has (Avolio et al., 2004). In my view, leadership capacity is the determinant of performance across all organisations and a school context is no different. The principal leaders in the schools need to frequently develop other followers and continue to guide stakeholders to set the direction to be followed, and in the process obviously challenges of

reluctance might surface. Relevant leadership skills could be utilised to motivate those less willing and less able to buy into the objectives of the school, realign and motivate them to achieve the school's dream. Challenges in poor performing secondary schools demand principal leaders to implement innovative strategies and the choice of the relevant ones will be informed by the situation on the ground and also by the dictates of the ever-changing education terrain.

5.4 PRESENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were informed by the findings and conclusions drawn from the study regarding the principals' leadership capacity and the influence it has on governance and policy implementation:

Recommendation 1: The Sekhukhune Education District should consider developing a monitoring and support programme specifically designed for underperforming secondary schools, which also includes training of principals and SMTs on leadership and management issues so that they could be able to lead effective schools and teams. Curriculum advisors should not be the only ones continually monitoring and supporting poorly performing schools on curriculum implementation, Circuit and district managers should monitor and support principals on managing curriculum and a strategy to aid curriculum improvement. The district should also consider using yardsticks like the competency framework from the DBE that talks to an individual's skills and knowledge to identify principals who might need some development to can 'fit' into the role of transformational leadership, participatory decision-making, and facilitate decentralisation within the school governance.

Recommendation 2: In instances where mandatory documents are unavailable, districts officials should determine time frames and strictly adhere to them to ensure availability of such documents and principals should be assisted to develop them and in cases of continuous noncompliance by principals, system should be in place to hold them accountable.

Recommendation 3: District should consider providing practical annual programmes strictly designed for underperforming secondary school principals and ensure continuity and compliance to directives of curriculum programmes.

Recommendation 4: The HoD should consider complying to the directive of affording principals of all underperforming schools with leadership training and enforce accountability for poor learner performance after a period of three years as directed by policy.

Recommendations 5: Parental and community involvement in learner conduct and discipline could be instilled through developing and creating a sense of awareness where principal leaders facilitate relationships, appreciation, open door policy, and participation in educational community activities. Parents could be invited to offer voluntary services where they would benefit in sharing skills and knowledge in projects like gardening, cultural events, HIV, and AIDS awareness campaigns, helping in sports, accompanying learners on educational trips, and on the general school safety.

5.5 CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Owing to the limited time frames for the research, and the confinement to document analysis, future researchers could consider using other data collection strategies such as interviews, field notes, observations, and questionnaires to study the leadership capacity of the principal and its influence on governance and policy implementation in rural schools. This would allow for a rigorous interviewing of SGB members, parents of learners, educators serving in the governing body and principals of the poor performing schools in order to determine some areas that were not addressed by document analysis in this study. Confinement in document analysis has somehow limited the findings of the study.

Future researchers may observe whether poor learner performance in the rural schools of the Sekhukhune District could be because of lack of commitment by learners in the presence of good leadership. Comparisons of leadership capacity between good and poor performing secondary schools and the impact they have on governance could also be considered for future research.

More importantly, the leadership capacity of the principal should reflect the ability to address school challenges as they are uniquely driven by the context of each school and its culture, the SGB involvement, the level of support by the parents and the community, the type of learners and the levels of discipline, and the level of responsibility by educators employed in that particular school.

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APPENDIX A: LETTER TO THE PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Enq: Silulwane N.D.F

Tel: 0736207776

Email: dudusilulwane@webmail.co.za

08 August 2018

The Principal and School Governing Body Chairperson

Dear Sir

Re: Requesting permission to conduct research through document analysis

I am currently registered for a Master's Degree in Governance and Political Transformation with the University of the Free State for 2018 and I request permission to access documents at your school. The focus of my research is leadership capacity and its impact on governance and policy implementation in the rural secondary schools in the Sekhukhune District.

Your school has been identified because it holds rich data relevant for this study as it has been underperforming for over a period of five consecutive years.

Collection of documents will be made in the afternoon so as to minimise any disturbances unforeseen. The school documents and results will only be used for the purpose of the study, and your school name will be used in the study.

I confirm to abide to the ethical conditions for conducting research such as anonymity, confidentiality and to provide participants with copies of the report.

I will be waiting for your positive response into the matter and hope that my research findings will assist the department to also plan for intervention strategies to address the unveiled challenges

_____

The Researcher: Silulwane N.D.F

APPENDIX B: Letter to the School Principal and School Governing Body Chairpersons

Enq: Silulwane N.D.F Tel: 0736207776   Email: dudusilulwane@webmail.co.za

The District Director

Sekhukhune District

LEBOWAKGOMO

03 August 2018

Dear Sir

Re: Requesting permission to conduct research through document analysis

The above matter bears reference.

I am currently registered for a Master's Degree in Governance and Political Transformation with the University of the Free State for 2018.

The focus of my research is leadership capacity and its impact on governance and policy implementation in the rural secondary schools in the Sekhukhune District.

Permission is hereby requested to access documents from two rural secondary schools in the district. These schools have been identified because they hold rich data relevant for this study and have been underperforming for over a period of five consecutive years.

Arrangements for the collection of documents will be made with the principal and the SGB Chairperson so as to minimise any disturbances unforeseen.

The above-mentioned school documents and results will only be used for the purpose of the study, and no school name will be used in the study. I confirm to abide to the ethical conditions for conducting research such as anonymity, confidentiality and to provide participants with copies of the report.

I will be waiting for your positive response into the matter and hope that my research findings will assist the department of Education to also plan for intervention strategies to address the unveiled challenges.

Attached please find a letter from the university as proof to conduct research for the Master's programme.

_____

The Researcher: Silulwane N.D.F

APPENDIX C: CORNFIRMATION LETTER FROM THE UNIVERSITY

8 August 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that **Ms N.D.F. Silulwane**, student number **2017479078**, is

a registered student in the Master of Arts in Governance and Political Transformation at the

University of the Free State for 2018.

Ms Silulwane is currently conducting research for her mini-dissertation with the topic:

EXPLORING HOW THE PRINCIPAL'S LEADERSHIP CAPACITY INFLUENCES GOVERNANCE AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN THE RURAL SCHOOLS OF SEKHUKHUNE: A CASE STUDY OF TWO UNDERPERFORMING SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Please be so kind as to allow Ms Silulwane access to your institution in order to conduct her research. Also, note that her findings will be used solely for the purpose of compiling an academic document.

If you have any enquiries in this regard, please do not hesitate to contact me at (051) 401 2271.

Yours sincerely,

DR TANIA COETZEE

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

APPENDIX D: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH-SCHL-26/SEC

24 August 2018

ENQ. ▆▆▆▆▆

▆▆▆▆▆

To: Silulwane NDF (Miss)

830 Akasia Street

Marblehall

Re: Approval of Your Request to Collect School Documents to Conduct Research

1. The above matter refers.
2. The SGB of the above mentioned school hereby grants you permission to collect school document for the purpose of conducting your research on your topic as requested.
3. The documents can only be collected after school so as to minimise disturbance of classes between the 03 to the 28 September 2018.

Principal: ▆▆▆▆▆

APPENDIX E: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

███████████ SECONDARY SCHOOL

██████████ CIRCUIT

SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT

08-█████████

17 August 2018

To: Silulwane NDF

Marblehall

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH THROUGH STUDYING OUR SCHOOL DOCUMENTS HAS BEEN APPROVED

The SGB hereby grants you permission to access the school document from 2012 to 2016 for conducting for study.

The school will be assisting you with the said documents from the 20 August to the 06 September 2018 after school hours.

We hope that we will be able to give you the assistance you requested and wish you luck in your studies.

Regards

SGB Chairperson: ███████████

Principal: ███████████