University of the Witwatersrand

School of Governance

Leading and Managing Safe Secondary Schools in Gauteng

By

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ABSTRACT

School-based violence in South Africa has reached unacceptably high levels in most public schools; to the extent that it has become a barrier to education. Despite various combined and individual efforts by government, civil society groups and practitioners over the past two decades, the situation shows no sign of abating. As a result, schools are finding it harder to deliver on education outcomes and this, in turn, leads to a situation where government can be seen to be failing in its constitutional mandate to provide physical infrastructure (schools, teachers and teaching materials) and to ensure teaching and learning happens in a safe and secure environment.

The purpose of this research study was to create a better understanding of safe schools and school safety, and to identify and present leadership strategies that were found to contribute to creating safe teaching and learning environments. This was accomplished using a qualitative research approach. The results of the study prove that in the context of South Africa, a social justice approach to school safety is necessary and relevant because it provides an all-encompassing view of factors that impact on school safety.

A general finding that emerged from the study further shows that there is a significant difference between the definition of "school safety" provided by the majority of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and the definition provided by the majority of principals. SGBs defined school safety quite narrowly, focusing mainly on technical aspects of school safety, while principals took more of a broad social justice approach, which included both technical and psychological aspects of school safety. The study concluded that these differences point to one of the reasons why school violence persists and why principals find it hard to lead and manage safe schools.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Renald Morris

08 October 2018

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to all the victims and survivors of crime and violence, including those who continue to fight this scourge in our schools and communities.

It is only through your courage and efforts that we can hope for, and continue to pursue, our goal of having schools and communities that are safe; communities and schools where children are heard, nurtured and protected.

I honour, in particular, my late Grade Six teacher at Roodepoort Primary School, Mr. van der Haar, for defying the odds and being a beacon for child protection, equality and respect for human dignity.

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To my wife Fay, the boys, Aidan and Joey, our family (including those who are no longer with us), thank you for the many unselfish sacrifices you have made to help me achieve this milestone – without your support this would not have been possible and I hope it serves as encouragement for others to follow.

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Finally, to my supervisor Professor Anne Mc Lennan, thank you for your guidance and support throughout this journey, which was paved with many unexpected and often unwarranted challenges. Your belief in me is what kept me going.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CJCP   Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention

CPF   Community Policing Forum

DBE   Department of Basic Education

DC   Disciplinary Committee

DOE   Department of Education

DPME   Department: Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

DSS   Directorate for School Safety

DSSC   District School Safety Coordinator

ECD   Early Childhood Development

ESS   Education Support Services

GDE   Gauteng Department of Education

GPG   Gauteng Provincial Government

HEWS   Hlayiseka Early Warning System

HOD   Head of Department

IPT   Independent Projects Trust

LO   Life Orientation

LRC   Learners Representative Council

LST	Learner Support Team
NDP	National Development Plan
NEIMS	National Education Infrastructure Management System
NPC	National Planning Commission
NSSF	National School Safety Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHSA	Occupational Health and Safety Act of 1993
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SANCA	South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence
SASA	South African Schools Act of 1996
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
SRN	School Register of Needs
SSC	School Safety Committee

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Restoring the culture of teaching and learning in schools is a proposition that has been bandied about in South Africa since the dawn of democracy. Principals are charged with the responsibility of restoring this culture of teaching and learning, but because of school violence (and other contributing factors), many schools have become unsafe. As a result, the culture of teaching and learning is actually eroding, causing difficulties for principals attempting to meet education outcomes.

This chapter aims to provide insights into the structure and constitutional mandate of education, to create an understanding of the cycle and extent of school violence and to explore the role of principals in creating and maintaining safe teaching and learning environments. The purpose is to use these insights as linkages to get a better understanding of school violence as a barrier to education and to explore how principals, as instructional leaders, are empowered and expected to lead the process of restoring a safe teaching and learning culture. The study is located in six secondary schools and focuses on understanding why school violence persists despite numerous efforts to reduce it, and what the leadership and management strategies are that promote or inhibit the creation of safe teaching and learning environments.

1.1   Overview of the study

Education in South Africa has been under the spotlight for a variety of reasons – under apartheid, because of its devastating racial discriminatory policies and practices directed at the majority black population and, in post-apartheid South Africa, for the aspirations and expectations of previously disadvantaged communities to experience a better quality of life. While education is regarded as one of the bastions of the apartheid system, the legacy effects of apartheid are not limited to education only but stretch and are felt across all developmental areas of society. The current government recognises education as the key vehicle for the emancipation from the legacy of apartheid and as such made education a right, which is guaranteed in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Constitution 1996).* This presents government with a huge responsibility, both in terms of delivery and with respect to balancing competing developmental demands.

As the euphoria that engulfed the birth of the new South Africa began to dissipate, levels of violence not seen before (Netshitangani, 2011) began to emerge and take root in schools and communities leaving principals, parents, communities and interest groups stunned and without answers. Various interventions were launched to normalise the situation, but with very little success - the situation grew worse over time to the extent that, as a result of school violence, many schools were struggling to function and meet their education outcomes (Burton, 2008a; Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2015a). The culture of learning and teaching was fast approaching a state of collapse, especially in township schools, where the need for education is greatest (Chauke, 2014; Weeks, 2012). In this context, failure by government to deliver on its constitutional mandate to provide education in safe teaching and learning spaces can be seen as capability deprivation (Sen, 2003)[1] and an act of social injustice.

The broad question that still arises is, why is the situation not improving given the vast amount of financial and other resources invested to normalise the situation? Some of the answers that surfaced revealed that very little or no research had been done on school violence locally (Burton, 2008a) nor was there sufficient local literature on how school leadership and management (Bush, 2007) could provide possible solutions to the problem of school violence. More specifically, it emerged that very little is known about what school safety means as a condition for teaching and learning, how school safety enables the right to learn and what school leaders can do to promote school safety. This gave rise to both a concern and deeper interest to conduct further research into understanding the link between school violence and leadership in order to identify leadership and management strategies that could help principals restore safe teaching and learning environments.

1.2 Structure of education

1.2.1 The national Department of Basic Education (DBE).

In 2009, in order to optimise the efficiency and impact of the education ministry, the Department of Education (DOE) was split into two ministries: Basic Education, concerned with early childhood, primary and secondary education, and Higher Education and Training focusing on tertiary, and basic adult education and training (Van Wyk, 2009). Each ministry is responsible for its level of education across the country, while each of the nine provinces

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[1] This is based on Sen's capability approach which relates to an individual's capability to function. Capability deprivation therefore prevents an individual from having the capability to achieve the kind of life he/she has reason to value.

has its own education department. Provinces are further broken up into education districts where elected School Governing Bodies (SGBs) have a major role to play in the running of their schools. Private schools have a fair amount of autonomy but must comply with certain non-negotiable policies such as no child may be excluded from a school on grounds of his/her race or religion, for example (Southafrica.info, 2015). Because the study focuses on secondary schools, the discussion on the structure of education was limited to the DBE only.

The *Constitution 1996* provides that the three spheres of government (national, provincial and local) are "distinctive, interdependent and interrelated", and should function together collaboratively. Since South Africa had no experience of municipal responsibility for education, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Constitution provides that the national sphere has exclusive legislative responsibility for tertiary education and shares concurrent responsibility with the provincial spheres for all other levels of education (OECD, 2008).

In 2013, there were approximately 11.9 million learners in South Africa, attending 25 000 public schools serviced by 391 708 teachers. Learners in private schools numbered 513 694 attending 1 583 schools serviced by 33 187 teachers (South African Government, 2016). The most recent census, undertaken in 2011, put the overall population in the country at 52 million made up of Black African 79.2%, White 8.9%, Coloured 8.9%, Indian/Asian 2.5% and Other, 0.5% (Statistics South Africa [StatsSA], 2012). Compared with most other countries, education is allocated a very large slice of the national budget – around 19% of total state expenditure. For example, in his 2016 budget speech the Minister of Finance said the budget for Basic Education stood at R204 billion and was likely to increase to R254 billion by 2018/19 (Gordhan, 2016). The budget for the DBE for 2015/16 was R21.511 billion and for 2016/17 increased to R22.270 billion, which was 3.5% more than in 2015/16 (Motshekga, 2016).

All public ordinary schools are categorised into five groups or quintiles for the purposes of the allocation of financial resources in terms of the National Norms and Standards for School Funding contained in the *South African Schools Act 1996* (*SASA, 1996*). Quintile 1 represents schools with the "poorest" learners while quintile 5 represents learners who are "least poor". Schools in quintiles 1, 2 and 3 are classified as no-fee[2] schools and receive a larger allocation

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[2] A no fee school is a public school in that the governing body may not charge compulsory school fees. According to section 39 (7) of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA) a no-fee school should have been placed in a national quintile identified by the Minister as being in need of a total prohibition of compulsory school fees

from the state than schools in quintiles 4 and 5, which are classified as fee-paying schools. For the 2015/16 financial year, schools in quintiles 1 – 3 received R1 116.00 per learner while quintiles 4 and 5 received R559.00 and R193.00 per learner respectively (DBE, 2015c). Three of the schools in this study fall within the no-fee category (quintile 1 -3) with the remaining three schools falling within the fee-paying category (quintile 4 – 5).

1.3   Education's constitutional mandate and challenges

The DBE carried the aspirations of community activists and government to transform the schooling system into one that would guarantee equal education for all. In its manifesto the governing party set out some of its principles for change in the education system as follows (ANC, 1994):

- Make education a priority.
- Upgrade teacher training and conditions of service.
- Encourage a culture of learning and teaching.
- Introduce one education system that provides ten years of free education for all children.
- Assist youths who have been unable to complete their education to do so.

To ensure both the transformation of the schooling system and the eradication of human rights violations of the apartheid past, government moved swiftly to ratify international conventions to ensure that the country reclaimed its rightful place in the international community. As such, education was made a constitutional imperative, which places a responsibility on government not only to establish an education system but also to ensure education is delivered in accordance with the provisions set out in the *Constitution 1996*.

Section 28 of the *Constitution 1996* provides for children's well-being (protection, nutrition etc.), while Section 29 enshrines basic and further education as a right for all South Africans. Furthermore, Section 24 in the Bill of Rights contained in the *Constitution 1996,* provides every person with the right to an environment that is not detrimental to his/her health or well-being and this right extends to learners which, in principle, should protect them from being exposed to harmful environments, including their school.

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and, the school receives as per learner, a school allocation as defined in para 87 and 113 of section 39 of SASA that is greater than or equal to the no fee threshold for the year in question.

In order for government to deliver effectively on its constitutional mandate (*Constitution 1996*), apart from providing physical infrastructure, teaching staff, and education materials etc., government must also ensure that conditions conducive to teaching and learning prevail in all schools. The broad assumption is that basic infrastructure, provision of teaching and learning materials and safe spaces to learn will cultivate an environment conducive to teaching and learning. However, in the context of South Africa, because of prevailing structural inequality, historical legacies and socio-economic conditions, executing this mandate has proven to be quite difficult, especially in poorer and vulnerable areas where the need for quality education is greatest. Even principals with many years of experience have very little idea of how to deal with this problem (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2002) and as Mc Lennan and Thurlow (2003) put it, "the culture of teaching and learning has virtually collapsed in most urban and rural schools and, that teachers and principals have little idea of how to restore the culture" (p.1).

1.4   Gauteng context of education

According to the Gauteng Provincial Government (GPG), in 2015 there were approximately 55 million people in South Africa with 24% (13.2 million) of the population living in Gauteng - despite it being the smallest province. Urbanisation in the province increased from 59% to 64% between 2004 and 2014 with the majority of the population living in the three metropolitan municipalities of Johannesburg (4.9 million), Ekhuruleni (3.9 million) and Tshwane (3.2 million). Gauteng also has the largest number of migrants, with an estimated increase of 543 000 people between 2011 and 2016. (GPG, 2016).

There is a total of 2 649 ordinary schools in the Gauteng education system made up of 2 056 public schools, 157 independent subsidised and 436 independent non-subsidised schools. Of these, 1 358 are public primary schools and 698 are public secondary schools. There is a total of 2 129 526 learners in the system of which 1 899 542 (89%) are in public ordinary schools, 148 715 (7%) in independent non-subsidised and 81 269 (4%) in independent subsidised schools. A total of 1 162 312 learners attend public primary schools while 737 230 learners attend public secondary schools. Approximately 28 407 teachers work in primary schools while 25 000 teachers are employed in secondary schools (GDE, 2014).

Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN) have 132 institutions comprising 109 public, four independent subsidised and nineteen independent non-subsidised institutions. Finally, there are eight Further Education and Training (FET) colleges and fifty-seven Adult Education

and Training (AET) institutions, both public and private, under the control of the GDE (GDE, 2014).

The GDE's budget for 2015/16 was R36 billion, which increased to R39 billion for the 2016/17 financial year (Creecy, 2016). The main cost driver of provincial education budgets is compensation of personnel, which is around 80% of their annual budgets (National Treasury, 2014).

The Gauteng economy has shown slow growth, similar to the national and other emerging economies – it grew by 1.2% in 2015 and accounted for 35.1% of the national economy in 2015. In 2016, unemployment in Gauteng stood at 27.6% while nationally, 24.5% of people were out of work, including a large number of unemployed university graduates (GPG, 2016). This situation is cause for concern because many young people see no point in pursuing an education when job opportunities are almost non-existent. These circumstances further contribute to high levels of domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and crime (Burton 2008a).

Many learners in Gauteng come from poor households and despite government introducing a no-fee policy in some schools, many learners struggle to pay for school uniforms, food and transport costs. Fortunately, the nutrition scheme funded by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) has brought some relief for many learners who are now assured of at least one cooked meal every school day.

Overcrowding in schools is one of the reasons learners flock to other schools where classes are smaller (Marais, 2016:) with the result being that many of them have to travel greater distances to and from school while they can ill-afford it (GDE, 2011). To ensure learners are not deprived of access to education, the GDE has developed a scholar transport policy to ferry learners who have to walk more than five kilometres one way, to and from school. It is the principal and the School Management Teams' (SMTs) responsibility to engage with the GDE should they need assistance with scholar transport (GDE, 2011).

Over and above the deprivation faced by many learners, they are also confronted by high levels of crime and violence where they live. Crime figures released by the South African Police Service (SAPS) show that for the period 2014/15, Gauteng ranked highest among all provinces with 637 332 reported cases (28.9%) followed by the Western Cape with 492 963 cases (22.3%). Nationally, while eleven of the twenty-seven crime categories have decreased,

the remaining sixteen categories showed a rise in crime levels – the biggest increase was in sexual offences cases, while robbery with aggravating circumstances represents the highest number of cases reported (SAPS, 2015).

Education is recognised by the NDP 2030 (NPC, 2011) as a tool to emancipate people from poverty and, in order to increase access to education in line with the NDP 2030, National Treasury has committed in its 2016 budget an additional R16.3 billion over the next three years for this purpose. Education attainment levels in the country and the Gauteng province have improved – 75% of Gauteng learners who enrolled in 2004 completed Grade Twelve in 2015, which is the highest throughput rate in the country. The national average for completion of Grade Twelve currently stands at 50% (GPG, 2016). Nevertheless, poor quality education in poorer schools is evident and remains a serious concern (Maringe & Prew, 2014).

1.4.1   Gauteng school safety

A School Safety Unit used to be located in a sub-directorate in the GDE but because of mounting pressure from interest groups and the GDE's commitment to deal effectively with the unacceptably high levels of violence in schools, a fully-fledged Directorate for School Safety (DSS) was established in 2011 under the branch Education Support Services (ESS). The five programme areas of the ESS include Policy Making and Implementation, Psycho-social Support and Alternative Discipline, Advocacy Programmes, Law Enforcement Agencies, Physical Environment and Occupational Health and Safety.

There are fifteen education districts in the province each with a coordinator responsible for school safety. Each school is required, in terms of the *SASA 1996*, to have a SGB which, apart from assisting the principal in aspects of running of the school, is responsible for enforcing school discipline through an established Disciplinary Committee (DC). The DC hears all cases referred to it and in extreme cases, related to school violence, has to rule on the rehabilitation, prosecution, suspension and / or expulsion of learners.

1.4.2   Systemic challenges and school violence

Over time, many signs began to show a crisis in education in South Africa, for example, high enrolment rates were recorded but increasingly poor Grade Twelve output was achieved. Of those who enrolled in Grade One only half made it to Grade Twelve (Collins, 2015). Additional factors such as poor parental involvement in their children's education, poor performing SGBs, poor teacher training, inadequate basic resources and a lack of good leadership in schools

have been cited as obstacles preventing government from delivering a good quality education (Modisaotsile, 2012).

As government began chipping away at these challenges it became clear just how deep the roots of apartheid had been anchored in the landscape of society – systemic inequality, poverty, huge backlogs in education infrastructure, and pupil-teacher ratio all required substantial work if the education system were to achieve the desired education outcomes (Collins, 2015; Mafora, 2013). Nobody could have envisaged the difficulty that government would face in fulfilling the promise of liberating the masses through a good quality education. However, the National Development Plan (NDP) (NPC, 2011) is hoping that this can be achieved by 2030 when citizens should be saying: "Therefore, in 2030 we experience daily how: We participate fully in efforts to liberate ourselves from conditions that hinder the flowering of our talents" (p. 42).

School violence, whatever its causes, is an additional burden on the education system. It has already been established that that school violence is not unique to South Africa – it has been identified as an international problem affecting both developed and developing countries (Debarbieux, 2007). Despite a growing body of literature showing that effective teaching and learning can only take place in a safe and secure school environment (Xaba, 2006; Burton, 2008a.) schools in townships remain vulnerable by being exposed to unsafe conditions and threats of violence. This presents principals with huge challenges in terms of leading and managing safe schools because, according to Harber and Muthukrishna (2000):

> Schools in urban areas, particularly townships, are regularly falling prey to
> gangsterism. Poverty, unemployment, rural-urban drift, the availability of guns and
> general legacy of violence has created a context where gangsters rob schools and
> kill and rape teachers in the process. (p. 424 & 425).

Similarly, a study conducted by the South African Human Rights Commission (2006) found that "the environment and climate necessary for effective teaching and learning is increasingly undermined by a culture of school-based violence and this is becoming a matter of national concern" (p. 1).

While government explored and experimented with implementing what they thought would be the best-suited education model for the country, growing levels of violence in communities and

schools around the country began to raise concern among parents, learners and educators about their personal safety in schools (Burton, 2008a). Given the rapid progression of violence in schools and communities it did not take long for South Africa to be considered one of the most violent countries in the world - with violence against women and children in particular reaching epidemic proportions (Bower, 2014). Results from the 2015 *Victims of Crime Survey* show that South African households increasingly feel that the levels of violent and property crimes are growing and this makes it unsafe to walk in parks or even allow their children to play freely in their neighbourhoods (StatsSA, 2015a).

The survey further found that the major crime categories that were reported to the police included murder (95,7%), car theft (88,9%), car hijacking (85,8%) and sexual offences (63,0%). It should be noted that many cases are not reported to the police because victims believe the police will do nothing about their cases and as such, the actual figures could still be higher (StatsSA, 2015a). While these numbers are alarmingly high, they do not place South Africa as having the highest crime rate in the world - what makes the South African problem unique is the extraordinary violence that accompanies crime (Altbeker, 2007; Swartz, 2009).

Leoschut (2013) found that the situation in schools is not much different and further reflects the sense of fear that is validated by the violent experiences of learners including, threats of violence (12.2%), any violence (22.2%), physical assault (6.3%), sexual assault (4.7%), online violence (20.9%), theft (44.1%) and robbery (4.5%)[3]. The combined effects of this violence have led to a situation where many schools struggle to reach their performance targets (Burton 2008a) and principals and SMTs find it increasingly difficult to restore the culture of teaching and learning. This notwithstanding a sizeable budget for education that makes up 19% of total state expenditure (StatsSA, 2015d), and numerous efforts by government and other interest groups to create safe teaching and learning environments.

Professor Kader Asmal, who was the Minister of Education from 1999 to 2004, stated that, unless education happens in a safe and nurturing environment where learners are protected

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[3] The difference between theft and robbery, according to the South African Police, is as follows: Theft is the unlawful appropriation of movable corporeal property belonging to someone else with the intent to deprive the owner permanently of the property. Robbery consists of of the theft of property by intentionally using violence or threats of violence to induce submission to the taking of it from another (South African Police Service, 2014).

from risks of victimization and of becoming offenders, the DOE cannot claim to have fulfilled its mandate and promise to the nation (DOE, and Department of Safety and Security, 2002). Commenting on the state of violence in schools, Naledi Pandor (2006) who succeeded Asmal as Minister of Education from 2004 to 2009, ordered that this situation should be stamped out with vigour in order to deny violence a permanent place in education. This call by Pandor is important because the *SASA 1996*, compels children between seven and fifteen years of age to attend school, which by extension makes schools a natural catchment area and agent of socialisation for young people. According to StatsSA (2015b) young people between five to nineteen years of age make up 28.75% of the total population. Further international research shows that the twelve to twenty-one-year age group is most prone to offending and victimization (Sherman et al., 1998). This means that with the average school graduation age (Grade Twelve) at around nineteen years, a significant proportion of the school-going population are "at risk" of being a victim, an offender, or both.

With the release of the first national study on school violence (Burton, 2008a) still fresh on the minds of schools and concerned citizens, former President Jacob Zuma issued a stern warning to schools in his 2009 State of the Nation Address (The Presidency, 2009) saying:

> *…..* we want our teachers, learners and parents to work with the government to turn our schools into thriving centres of excellence. We reiterate our non-negotiables: teachers should be in school, in class, on time, teaching, with no neglect of duty and no abuse of pupils. Children should be in class, on time, learning, be respectful of their teachers and each other, and do their homework. (para. 60).

The Presidency repeated this call again in 2010, "we want learners and teachers to be in school, in class, on time, learning and teaching for seven hours a day" (para. 143). By 2011 the "Triple T" phrase (Teachers, Textbooks and Time) was coined by former President Zuma (The Presidency, 2011) who stated the following:

> We reiterate our call that teachers must be at school, in class, on time, teaching for at least seven hours a day. The administration must ensure that every child has a textbook on time and that we assist our teachers to create the right working environment for quality teaching. (para. 145).

This call was repeated once more in 2012 (The Presidency, 2012) and in order to provide a context with regard to the conditions in the schools that President Zuma was talking about, a random selection of newspaper headlines is provided in Table 1 for illustration purposes (Independent Online).

Table 1. School violence headlines

School violence erupts in Gauteng
As the country reels from a shocking sword attack at a Krugersdorp high school on Monday, violence has since erupted at other schools in Gauteng. While a 16-year-old schoolboy died and three others were injured in Monday's sword attack, only one teenager has been wounded in another three outbreaks of school violence which have since come to light – SAPA, 2008, August 19.
Mayibuye pupils slammed after school violence
The Mpumalanga Education Department on Wednesday condemned the violence of Mayibuye Secondary School pupils, who destroyed school property after accusing the principal of witchcraft – SAPA, 2010, May 20.
SA school violence out of hand
SA pupils still experienced higher levels of violence in schools than most other countries in the world, MPs heard - Chantal Presence, 2015, August 4.
Axed teacher stabs principal in front of pupils
Johannesburg - Gauteng Education MEC Panyaza Lesufi believes the principal of Paul Mosaka Primary School in Pimville, Soweto, wouldn't have been stabbed if her attacker's threats had been taken seriously – SAPA, 2016, November 15.
Child-on-child violence on the increase
Cape Town - violence perpetrated by children on other children is on the increase at schools as pupils mimic the behaviour of violent communities - Lisa Isaacs, 2016, May 27.

(Source: Independent Online)

In 2013 the former President reminded South Africa's citizens that education was declared an apex priority in 2009 because government wanted everyone in the country to realise that

education is an essential service for the nation (The Presidency, 2013). He further stated that the first priority should be taking care of teachers and that by elevating education to its rightful place, government wanted to see an improvement in both the quality of learning and teaching, and the management of schools.

This directive from former President Zuma can be interpreted as government providing support to principals and teachers to deal decisively with factors (such as school violence) that stifle the achievement of the best possible education outcomes. Inherent to achieving the best possible education outcomes would be the rights and interests of learners with respect to being taught in safe and caring school environments.

In 2015, the current Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, announced that the DBE takes the provision of safe school environments seriously by making sure that learners are protected at all times. The DBE also made two new commitments as part of the department's efforts to end violence in South African schools: training teachers on the importance of Life Orientation (LO) to help learners to engage with the issues and attitudes that often lead to violence and, the implementation of the National School Safety Framework for Safer Schools (NSSF) (DBE, 2015a). The Minister further undertook to work with NGO partners to conduct further research into the full extent of school violence to "ensure that all the necessary steps are being taken to protect, nurture and empower our youth" (Motshekga, 2015, p. 1).

A common thread that runs through Asmal, Pandor, Zuma and Motshekga's comments is the need and urgency to deliver quality education and to minimize opportunities for abuse and or victimization of learners and teachers in schools. Government therefore has a responsibility to ensure schools are safe and the failure to do so, has the potential to deprive learners of their right to education and therefore, their ability to participate in the social and economic mainstream of the country (DOE, & Department of Safety and Security, 2002).

The right to education and safety and the ability to participate in the economy speaks to Amartya Sen's capability approach. According to Sen (1999), environments that induce fear and harm can result in an individual being deprived of a good education, which in turn will impact on his/her ability to live a better quality of life. It is therefore not surprising that people who are most capability deprived are often the poorest, weakest and most exploited in society (Alexander, 2008). Based on Sen's capability approach, a major concern that emerges is, if the state continues to fail to deliver on this right to education, it amounts to more than suffering loss and experiencing personal injury, it amounts to deprivation (Leoschut, 2008; Van den

Aardweg, 1987) which, in turn, translates into social injustice. Social justice embraces the concept that we are our "brothers' keepers" and we have a collective responsibility to take care of each other; there is plenty for everyone in society (Hemphill, 2015). Failure to uphold the concept of social justice as we interact with others, causes harm and amounts to social injustice. It is therefore concluded as the rationale for this study that; *school violence is a barrier to education which prevents government from executing its constitutional mandate and as a result, amounts to social injustice.* To ensure government protected the rights of learners and teachers a legislative policy framework was necessary.

1.5   School safety: Legislative and policy framework

All policies and laws must comply with the provisions of the *Constitution 1996* of South Africa, which guarantees children the right to equitable education and to live free from harm, in all environments. The Bill of Rights, contained in the Constitution, upholds the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom and protects the right to basic education, right to life, right not to be unfairly discriminated against, right to privacy, right to bodily and psychological integrity, and the right of children to basic health-care and social services (*Constitution 1996*). Much inspiration for the policy framework concerning the wellbeing and protection of children can be drawn from the quote by Nelson Mandela who said (Daman, 2016) "there can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children" (p. 1).

In order to give meaning to Mandela's quote, a number of policies and legislation directed at improving education outcomes and eradicating school-based crime and violence have been promulgated since 1994 at national and provincial levels. This has provided a framework for both national and provincial departments of education to promote responsible governance, meet their respective mandates, strengthen accountability and implement ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the education system. The following key policies and legislation recognise the importance of the safety of learners and teachers as a prerequisite for effective teaching and learning in schools.

1.5.1   National laws and policies

The *SASA 1996*, which apart from regulating the compulsory ages for schooling, the establishment of Learner Representative Councils (LRCs) and the formation of SGBs, also makes provision for the creation of safe teaching and learning environments. Some of the Sections in the Act relevant to school safety are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: School Safety: Summary of SASA 1996

South African Schools Act	
Section	**Aim**
Section 10	Prohibition of corporal punishment
Section 8(1)	Places an obligation on SGBs to draw up a code of conduct for learners in consultation with learners, parents and educators
Section 8(2)	Demands that the code of conduct is aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of the quality of the learning process
Section 8(4)	Places a legal obligation on learners to comply with the code of conduct of the school they attend
Section 8(5)	The code of conduct must make provision for due process (legal process) to safeguard the interests of the learner and any other party involved in disciplinary proceedings

The *Employment of Educators Act 1998* was promulgated to regulate the conditions of employment of teachers. In the context of school safety, this Act instructs provinces to dismiss any educator found guilty of having a sexual relationship with a learner, irrespective of the willingness or the age of the learner. It has become quite common practice apart from the commission of criminal and violent acts by principals and teachers, for male teachers to demand sex with school girls in exchange for good grades (South African Council for Educators [SACE], 2016).

To further strengthen the resolve by government to promote the professional conduct of teachers, the *South African Council for Educators Act 2000* was developed. This Act makes sure all teachers are properly certified and also sets out how teachers should conduct themselves within the scope of the ethical and professional standards established for teachers (GDE, 2014). Should a teacher be dismissed for sexually abusing a learner, this Act also provides for such a teacher to be deregistered and he/she may not be appointed again by any education provider, including private providers (Prinsloo, 2005).

Lastly, because schools are public spaces, the health and safety of everyone entering a school building is regulated by the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1993* (OHSA). This Act places a responsibility on employers (such as the DBE and GDE) to ensure the health and safety of persons at work (teachers) as well as those who are not employees but are present on the premises (learners and parents). The Act finds relevance in terms of school health and safety hazards such as fire, storing and use of dangerous substances, use of machinery and structural integrity of classrooms, amongst others.

1.5.2   Provincial educational policies and Acts

Educators have a "duty of care" and as such, this *in loco parentis* responsibility is brought to bear on teachers through the Regulations to Prohibit Initiation Practices in Schools (*SASA, 1996*) that ensures teachers have measures in place to protect learners from all forms of physical or psychological violence, including sexual abuse, while in their care. Similarly, the Norms and Standards for Educators under the *National Education Policy Act 1996*, identifies "community, citizenship and pastoral care" as one of the seven roles of educators ordering them to demonstrate a caring, ethical attitude, respect and professional behaviour towards learners.

In order to support learners that abuse substances including learners and staff who are affected by substance abuse, the DOE (2002) developed a policy framework to deal with the effective prevention, management and treatment of drug use. It also provides that all schools should become tobacco, alcohol and drug-free zones and prohibits random drug testing. To help schools at a practical level, the DBE (2013a) issued a guide to regulate drug testing that outlines the process, provisions and devices that may be used when testing learners for drugs. Drug testing should only be conducted by a staff member of the same gender as the learner; the test results should be kept confidential; and learners should be referred to appropriate services for counselling or treatment if he/she tested positive for substance use. The intention of drug testing is therefore not to punish but rather to ensure learners who are addicted to substances get the necessary treatment, care and support services. To give further effect to the policy framework, national guidelines were issued to direct the systems that should be put in place to address the management and prevention of substance abuse in schools (DOE, 2005). The guidelines include, among others, developing a policy for each school with regard to the management of substance abuse by learners, setting up Learner Support Teams (LSTs), creating links with community resources, and implementing procedures for incident management.

To ensure schools are and remain danger, weapon and drug-free zones the Regulations for Safety Measures at all Public Schools (*SASA, 1996*) was introduced. According to the regulations, no person is allowed to bring dangerous weapons or illegal drugs onto the school premises, or to enter the premises while under the influence of alcohol or an illegal drug. If there is reasonable suspicion of the possession of dangerous weapons or substances, the regulations empower a police officer, principal or delegate to search the school premises or person present on the premises.

In response to the high levels of crime and violence in schools, the DBE and the South African Police Service (SAPS), signed a protocol that "sets out the framework for close inter-departmental co-ordination in order to create *Safe, Caring and Child-Friendly Schools*, in which quality learning and teaching can take place" (DBE, 2011. p. 1). Drug and substance use are identified as a key contributors to crime and violence in schools and by signing the protocol, schools are linked to local police stations and provided with local reporting systems on school-based crime and violence. School Safety Committees (SSCs) are expected to assist with the implementation of the protocol (DBE, 2011) and it was reported that by 2014, 1408 SSCs had already been formed (GDE, 2014).

The legislative and policy provisions described in preceding paragraphs demonstrate and confirm the extensive efforts that have been made to deal with the problem of school safety. One would assume that with such an impeccable legislative and policy framework, school violence should occur at levels much lower than what is currently the case. This proves that legislation and policies are not enough when dealing with such a complex issue. Government must do more by taking the lead and responsibility to support principals by ensuring the barriers to implementation are removed and the necessary support is provided for implementation.

All the pieces of legislation discussed (which is not exhaustive) confirm that principals carry a huge responsibility in leading the development of safe teaching and learning environments. In the context of what has been discussed, principals have to 1) transform the education system by leading a management model based on democratic principles (shared responsibilities with SGBs and SMTs); 2) eradicate the violent societal culture (corporal punishment, verbal, sexual and physical abuse) and create a culture of teaching and learning through supervising and managing teachers in a way that ensures professional teacher conduct (protecting learners against sexual and physical abuse).

At face value it may appear that all principals have to do is report teachers who violate children's rights and the rest will be taken care of. Unfortunately, there are serious problems within the SACE, which is charged with instituting action against teachers. The lack of financial and human resources is consistently cited as a reason for the slow processing and finalisation of cases. One of the biggest problems at the moment, based on the principle of the presumption of innocence until proven guilty, is that teachers remain at their schools with the victim until the case is finalised - this is not an ideal situation, especially for the victim.

1.6   Cycle and extent of school violence

Violence in schools presents in different forms, such as violent attacks, verbal aggression and sexual violence and can occur between students and /or between students and teachers – both of whom are capable of being the perpetrator. This type of violence has progressed beyond bullying, which has long been regarded as a common childhood experience, to a more serious and violent form of victimization affecting everyone (learners and teachers) in the school (Leoschut, 2008). School violence can be found in any school but is more prevalent in poor schools (Burton, 2008a) and factors such as a lack of security, poor infrastructure, inadequate victim support, poor learner supervision, lack of policies to deal effectively with perpetrators and weak incident reporting mechanisms were found to help school violence flourish (Gevers & Flisher, 2012). According to Gevers and Flisher (2012), youth violence in schools is not caused by these factors but rather, it merely exploits these vulnerabilities. It is well documented that crime and violence experienced in schools have serious negative implications for the physical, social and emotional well-being of children (Fang, Fry, Ganz, Casey & Ward. 2016; Leoschut, 2008).

From an economics point of view, a study conducted on the impact of physical and emotional violence on children in South Africa, claims it cost the country at least R238 billion or 6% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2015 (Fang et al., 2016). An impact of this nature can only stunt economic growth, which means there is less money in the fiscus for development and as such, communities will continue to face the prospect of capability deprivation. Violence against children must therefore be taken much more seriously.

School violence usually has its origin in the community and is found to be rooted in poverty, family violence, drug and alcohol abuse and gangsterism, the influences of which then tend to spill over into the school terrain (Bloch, 2009; Leoschut, 2008). In cases where children experience emotional neglect in the home or family, boys are most likely to fall prey to drug

abuse and depression while girls will suffer from suicidal thoughts and alcohol abuse (Fang, et.al. 2016). That means, where the social and physical environment of the community is hostile, the school environment will most likely be affected and reflect the levels and patterns of violence evident in the country, community and families (Pinheiro, 2006). Schools have also been identified as places where learners are sexually abused and corporal punishment is meted out. It can be argued that because schools have struggled to deal with violence effectively, these schools also play a role in perpetuating their own unsafe and violent cultures (Weaver, Borkowski & Whitman, 2008). Evidence demonstrates that experiencing physical violence (such as, *inter alia*, corporal punishment) during childhood predisposes children in later life to inter-partner violence perpetration among boys and inter-partner violence victimization among girls (Fang et al., 2016). The SACE, who is responsible for teacher registration and discipline, states in its annual report that a total of 593 cases were reported against teachers involving corporal punishment, verbal abuse, sexual misconduct/rape, fraud, unprofessional conduct and negligence - corporal punishment makes up 45% of reported cases (SACE, 2016). With such high a prevalence rate of corporal punishment the cycle of violence is likely to persist in many schools.

The cycle of violence is further fuelled by the increasing number of youths who are unemployable, as a result of having dropped out of school prematurely. Consequently, joblessness, poverty, disillusionment etc. all contribute to increasing levels of violence in our communities and by extension, in the schools that are intended to serve them. Understanding the context within which school violence occurs is therefore a critical step in the pursuit of understanding and rooting out school violence per se. Failure to do so makes it difficult for schools to deliver a good quality education and therefore amounts to social injustice.

It is this symbiotic relationship between school and community violence that gives rise to the increasingly violent nature of incidents occurring in schools. This disturbing trend prompted Pandor (2006) to state that, "…next to the family, schools are the most important social institution for the community and therefore school violence should be rooted out of our schools" (p. 1).

This statement is given credence by research that shows that second to the family, schools are a critical stabilising force in the lives of young people (Blum, 2005) as schools can promote learner well-being and prevent young people from adopting violent behaviour (Gevers & Flisher, 2012). As such, schools are said to be microcosms of society that mirror the prevailing political and socio-economic conditions, social attitudes, cultural traditions and values, laws

and law enforcement in the community (Pinheiro, 2006). A social justice approach is therefore most appropriate because technical safety measures (metal detectors, security guards) alone are negligible in the face of such deep social problems. According to Witten (2017) vulnerable children may not get another chance if schools fail to address their educational and social needs. Witten (2017) quotes one learner as referring to this as the "moral purpose of schooling" where, "… schools make a difference in the lives of all students (learners) and help produce citizenry who are committed to the common good" (p. 3).

Therefore, the role of schools as change agents in ending the cycle of violence and restoring safe teaching and learning environments cannot be over-emphasised despite these schools themselves often being implicated in the perpetration of such violence. The rationale for this stems from the fact that schools provide access to education for thousands of young people, with 92.7% of South Africans between the ages of five and twenty-four attending public education institutions and 7.3% attending private education institutions (StatsSA, 2012). This cohort makes up 38%[4] of the total population (StatsSA, 2015b) and schools have the ability to reach a total of 11.9 million learners in the primary and secondary school systems (South African Government, 2016).

In order to get a sense of the extent of violence in secondary schools, data obtained from two national studies conducted by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP) in 2008 and 2012 respectively (Burton, 2008a; Leoschut, 2013), has been compiled in Table 3. This data provides a useful comparison of violence trends and shows that, with the exception of robbery (cell phones, money etc.), all other categories have increased over a four-year period.

There were no noteworthy differences between male and female learners and their risk for threats, robberies or assaults. Males did, however, experience slightly higher rates of robbery and assault while females reported slightly higher levels of threats of violence. When looking at the likelihood of being sexually assaulted or raped at school, 7.6% of females were found to have experienced this crime at a significantly higher rate compared to 1.47% of males. The report suggests the increase in violence trends may be due to frequent teacher absenteeism which leaves learners unsupervised and even if present, teachers are unable to manage their classrooms effectively. Schools have also acknowledged that due to staff shortages they were often unable to monitor spaces like toilets and sports fields where learners are frequently

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[4] Own calculation based on figures provided by Statistics South Africa 2015b

victimised. Finally, several community-level risk factors like drugs, alcohol and weapons were found to increase the susceptibility of the school environment to violence (Leoschut, 2013).

Table 3: Types of violence experienced by learners in secondary schools

Type of Violence	% of learners 2012	Total Number of learners across the country 2012	% of learners 2008
Any Violence	22.2%	1 020 597	22%
Threats of violence – most common type of violence experienced in school	12.2%	560 869[5]	14.5%
Physical Assault	6.3%	289 629	4.3%
Sexual Assault/Rape	4.7%	216 072	3.1%
Robbery (of cell phones, money, MP3 players, food and clothing items)	4.5%	206 878	5.9%
Online Violence	20.9%	960 832[6]	Not available
Theft of personal belongings – most frequently reported crime	44.1%	2 027 403	38.9%

School violence is recognised as a global problem and in America, for example, increasing numbers of students experience violence, bullying and classroom chaos on a regular basis as part of their school day (Ayers, 2009; Barter, 2012). In New York, city schools alone reported 6000 violent incidents in 2007 while across the United States one of the leading causes of death among high school students is gunshot wounds (Gerdes, 2011; Langman, 2011; Marsico, 2011).

The shootings at the Columbine High school where fifteen students died and twenty-three were injured and the Sandy Hook Elementary School where twenty students and six adults were shot dead serve as stark reminders of the levels of violence in US schools (Cable News Network, 2012; Columbine High School Shootings, 1999).

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[5] Own calculation based on figures provided by Leoschut, 2013.

[6] Own calculation based on figures provided by Leoschut, 2013.

Locally, while schools have not experienced gun violence to the extent that the USA has, school violence throughout the country has reached unacceptable levels (Bloch, 2009; Burton & Leoschut, 2013). The status quo is summarised by a principal in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, quoted in Bowman (2012) as follows:

> The school violence situation has not improved and it will not improve. The whole
>
> country is lawless, it's everywhere, including schools. Schools are not exempt.
>
> Society is deteriorating and the situation is not going to improve unless there is the
>
> political will to enhance the values and morals that will create a sound society (p. 15).

The complexity of the situation described by Bowan's quote will not be adequately addressed by focusing only on the technical aspects of school safety and in fact it confirms that a social justice approach will allow for a much broader and sustained intervention.

The increased incidence and severity of violence at schools not only points to a deeper social malaise affecting impoverished communities, but also threatens to entrench this malaise as learners are unable to get the education they require to lift them out of poverty and deprivation. Not only does school violence contribute to unsafe teaching and learning conditions it also causes disruptions and reduced contact time in class because of time and energy spent on addressing these issues (Netshitangani, 2011). According to Blaser (2008), regular newspaper and television reports, supported by statements issued by education officials, as well as secret video recordings made by students, reflect societal patterns of violence and seem to indicate that violence has reached alarming proportions in schools throughout the country.

Apart from less serious incidents such as the odd scuffle and petty theft, serious crimes such as murder, rape and robbery (among others) are committed at schools, while gang activity, possession of drugs and weapons have also become commonplace on the school terrain (Burton 2008b; Griggs 2004; Roper, 2002). A *Progress in International Reading Literacy* study ranked South Africa last in terms of school safety as it showed that only 23% of South African pupils feel safe at school, while the worldwide average is 47%. The findings also suggest that "Media reports of school violence were not merely isolated incidents but part of a growing pattern of violence and disorder labelling South African schools as the most dangerous in the world" (Blaser, 2008, p. 1).

While the prevalence of school violence cannot be denied, it must be stated that this situation is brought about by a minority of learners. A national study carried out with twelve to twenty-two-year olds looking at variables such as carrying a weapon to school, substance abuse and self-reported offending found (Leoschut, 2009):

- Out of a sample of 4 391 young people, 94.8% had never carried a weapon to school during the year under review.
- Those who never consumed an alcoholic drink amounted to 68.6% while 94.5% never smoked dagga (cannabis) and 93.8% had never stolen money or anything else from another person.

Of those learners who do step out of line there are some young people who recognise that their behaviour at times is "wrong" (Swartz & Scott, 2014) and continuously call out for lower levels of violence in their environments (De Lannoy & Swartz S, 2015) whether in school or in the community. Many learners are more broadly concerned with issues of social justice and this makes them ideal candidates for being "change agents" that principals can engage with to make schools safer. This scenario provides the foundation on which principals can build in order to make schools safer.

Bloch (2009) disagrees that local schools are the most dangerous in the world, but he does describe schools as "disaster zones" for most learners, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Interestingly, and in strong contrast to Blaser and Bloch, Burton (2008b) found that 96.3% of primary and 85.5% of secondary school learners reported that they felt safe at school. This, despite the presence of corporal punishment at some schools, experiences of violence and facing potential threats on the way to and from school. According to Swartz (2009) this is due to learners becoming desensitised to violence because of their exposure to a range of violent incidents in the family and community. While the numbers on whether learners feel safe at school are contested, the impact of school violence on the culture of teaching and learning is not.

1.7   Importance of monitoring and evaluation

The DBE needs reliable data in order to understand the dynamics underlying school violence as well as to inform and budget for appropriate interventions in this regard. Recording and reporting crime and violent incidents has been lacking and inconsistent across schools throughout the country. For example, in 1999, the School Register of Needs (SRN) showed

that only a total of 35.6% of schools reported, apart from infrastructural and other needs, criminal incidents which include burglaries, assaults, stabbings, rapes and other serious crimes (DOE, 2000b). Similarly, the National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS) set up by the DBE to get information on what is going on in schools, including physical infrastructure, also faces a host of data-gathering problems. A report issued by the DBE (2014a) shows that there is a need to tighten up on the gaps that exist when reporting on key sector indicators such as school governance, school funding and school infrastructure among others. This report shows 81% of SGBs complied with basic effectiveness criteria, while the 2011 School Monitoring Survey (SMS) found only 48% of SGBs were effective (DBE, 2014a). This difference is quite substantial and is brought about by the SMS data taking into account factors that are not considered key in measuring SGB effectiveness such as, securing an auditor to have the school's financial statements audited. In remote areas, for example, auditors are difficult to find hence securing an auditor or not, is not a true reflection of an SGB's effectiveness (DBE, 2014a). It would therefore be necessary to draw distinctions between what critical and non-critical factors are when measuring SGB effectiveness because SGB's do not only deal with finances but are also responsible for dealing with school discipline. It would be important to note as part of SGB effectiveness, how SGBs (and related stakeholders) collate and process data on discipline and violence since it has a direct bearing on leading and managing safe schools. Compounding the problem of reliable data for safe schools even further, a study conducted by Griggs (2004) found that principals are quite reluctant to report all incidents occurring in their schools because they see it as a reflection on their ability to lead and manage their schools.

Problems such as inaccurate information or suppliers of information not getting feedback or, seeing no value in participating in research initiatives are common (Bloch, 2009). While some provincial departments of education have some data on school violence, it is often related to the activities and effectiveness of the departmental School Safety initiative and does not give insight into the broader issues. For example, the specific environment in which the school is situated is often detached from the experiences of its learners outside the sphere of influence of the school. Boxford (2006) stresses that for school violence to be understood it is essential that research on school violence incorporates controls for learners' dispositional and social situational characteristics (social bonds to family etc.). Farrington and Welsh (2007), and Gottfredson (2007) support this argument because failure to control for learners' character and family-level characteristics will increase a school's susceptibility to violence (Leoschut, 2013).

This section on school violence shows that school violence is on the increase and compared to international standards, South African students do not feel safe at school. This, despite the majority of students not engaging in violent acts in school. Similarly, principals are very concerned about the state of violence in schools and the tardiness of government to do something about it. To compound matters for the DBE we have also learned that there is a lack of reliable data to assist with getting a better understanding of the size and scope of the school violence problem. While this scenario presents schools with a huge challenge, it also presents a unique opportunity to break the cycle of violence by providing much needed knowledge and skills on how to deal with conflicts (Burton & Leoschut, 2013; Pinheiro, 2006). As the most important social institution for the community schools are ideally placed to lead the change to eradicate violence (Pandor, 2006) and as a start, principals can begin by realising that people connect with people before they connect with institutions. This explains the value and importance of a social justice approach because through positive relationships with all school staff, students can begin to feel more connected to the school and its ethos, which is essential for building appropriate social behaviour (Blum, 2005). Furthermore, principals and the GDE must ensure that accurate incident records are kept and that all structures in the school are working together to prevent and minimise violence in schools. Schools therefore have it within their powers to turn the situation around and should take greater responsibility to ensure the development processes of young people are harnessed in the best possible ways. Principals therefore has an important role to play in leading the charge to ensure young people are cared for and protected in environments that are conducive to teaching and learning.

1.8   The role of leaders in creating conditions for learning

The Policy on the South African Standard for Principalship (2016) contained in the *National Education Policy Act 1996* defines the role of principals as follows*:*

> The principal has the overall responsibility of leading and managing the school and is accountable to the employer (Provincial Head of Department) and, through the SGB, to the school community. The principal is responsible for leading and managing and evaluating the curriculum. By doing this the quality of teaching and learning will be ensured. (p. 8).

In addition, the policy identified the following eight key areas as core for *principalship* (*National Education Policy Act 1996*):

- Leading teaching and learning in the school – five main kinds of leadership.
- Shaping the direction and development of the school.
- Managing the quality of teaching and learning and ensuring accountability.
- Developing and empowering self and others.
- Managing the school as an organisation.
- Working with and for the community.
- Managing human resources (staff) in the school.
- Managing and advocating extramural activities.

Whilst the role of the principal has been broadened quite extensively by this and previous policies many principals have not received sufficient training to meet the expanded challenges of the job (Chikoko, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2014). It is encouraging to note, however, that under the leading teaching and learning component, a safe school environment is highlighted as part of the principal's responsibility (*National Education Policy Act 1996*). However, this responsibility most likely relates to the physical or infrastructure aspects of school safety and neglects to take into account the issues of social justice that align the focus more closely with the human aspects of safety.

Given the pressure government was under in 1994 to transform the education system into one that was both equitable and reflected the demographics of the country, it is unlikely that principals would have been adequately prepared for what awaited them. Principals and teachers of all races were deployed across the length and breadth of the country, while learners from township schools flocked to better-resourced schools previously reserved for whites. The euphoria that prevailed at the time is probably what obscured the reality of the simmering violence that was to be revealed later at a cost the country could ill afford. There was very little that principals could do to change the situation because South Africa's situation is unprecedented - nowhere else in the world have principals had to contend with the legacy of an apartheid system in order to create suitable and stable teaching and learning environments.

Notwithstanding efforts by government, communities and civil society organisations to stem the tide against the rising levels of school violence, schools not only started losing their grip on keeping learners and teachers safe, but also began to struggle to meet educational and

learner outcomes (Burton, 2008b). In schools beset with violence, the culture of teaching and learning began to crumble with principals bearing the brunt by having to deal with both the causes and the consequences. The statements and appeals made by former President Zuma and the various minsters of education mentioned earlier, are an indication of the need to improve the education system. Given that education is a constitutional right, government is compelled to find ways to make sure it creates conditions conducive to teaching and learning – with principals leading the charge. The importance of the principal's role in restoring a teaching and learning culture cannot be overstated – as an instructional leader he/she is expected to initiate and steer teachers and learners towards the desired outcome of a culture conducive to teaching and learning (Masitsa, 2005).

Despite its current importance, there is no consensus on the definition of the concept of leadership but according to Bush, (2007), Cuban (1988) provides one of the clearest distinctions between leadership and management. By leadership and management Cuban means **"…** influencing others' actions in achieving desirable ends. Leaders are people who shape the goals, motivations, and actions of others. Frequently they initiate change to reach existing and new goals…. Leadership… takes…. much ingenuity, energy and skill" (p. xx).

> Managing is maintaining, efficiently and effectively, current organizational
>
> arrangements. While managing well often exhibits leadership skills, the overall
>
> function is toward maintenance rather than change. I prize both managing and
>
> leading and attach no special value to either since different settings and times call for
>
> varied responses. (p. xx).

In South Africa, even though the difference between leadership and management is fully understood the term "management" is more popular (Bush and Glover, 2009) whereas, international literature refers mainly to "leadership" of teaching and learning or "instructional leadership" (Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach. 1999). In South Africa, management is more popular but of all the different leadership models, instructional, transformational, and distributed leadership models have "particular resonance" (Bush, & Glover, 2016). While these models vary in their structure and approach, they all aim to empower principals so that their schools can produce teaching and learning of a high standard, whatever the context. These models, and their relationship to creating safe teaching and learning environments are discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

Locally and internationally, there is growing recognition that schools need effective leaders and managers if they are to provide the best possible education for their learners because according to Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris and Hopkins (2006): "There is not a single documented case of a school successfully turning around its pupil achievement trajectory in the absence of talented leadership" (p. 5).

The principal is ultimately responsible for what happens at school and the role of school leadership is therefore pivotal in creating the conditions for achieving an effective school (Badenhorst, Calitz, Van Schalkwyk, Van Wyk & Kruger, 2003; Buchel, 1992; Masitsa, 2005). At the heart of an effective school lies good leadership, which Murgatroyd and Gray (1984) identify as a key driver for school effectiveness. They define this leadership role as "one which responds to individual pupil and staff needs and to the changing face of the community in which it is placed" (p. 39).

The above definition embraces a social justice approach and calls for principals to be visionary, understand the context within which they work, know their personal strengths and weaknesses and, in the quest for being an effective leader, be intentional about choosing the type of leader he/she wants to be, whether instructional or transformational (Msila, 2011). For South African principals, such a decision may be a bit more complex because, according to Bush (2007):

> South Africa has one of the most diverse education systems in the world. It ranges from well-endowed city schools, comparable to the best in developed countries, to very poor schools without access to the most basic facilities, such as water, power and sanitation. Given such disparities, it is unwise to prescribe one universal approach to school leadership and management. (p. 402).

The situation described by Bush is clearly linked to the lingering effects of apartheid and is further compounded by the fact that principals work in isolation and enjoy very little or no support from district education offices. In a study conducted on school effectiveness in the Eastern Cape, participants concurred that "district officials were usually aloof" and gave minimal support to schools. One principal said (Msila, 2011):

I normally see them on my premises maybe twice a year, apart from the matric examinations period. We cannot run schools when our immediate supervisors do not know the conditions we work under. They do not see our day-to-day challenges. (p. 442).

Adding to this, Louise Van Rhyn, a local school leadership development practitioner, also called for better principal support and skills development saying (Collins, 2015):

These things are decided centrally and then handed over to schools and districts who don't have implementation capacity. So, there's a skills gap. We need to equip principals and school management committees to lead change in their schools, which means we need about 20 000 change projects – one at each of South Africa's under-performing schools. Because none of those principals knows how to lead the necessary change. (p. 16).

Despite a lack of consistent support, it is encouraging to note that some principals do take the initiative to improve the efficiency of their schools. Acknowledging that addressing some of the challenges to achieve effective schools can be a daunting task, there is evidence that shows many principals are not waiting for help from outside but have decided to do something on their own to improve their schools (Witten, 2017). This is what Witten (2017) calls "agency" – the ability of a school leader to act on a situation and change it. According to Jenkins (1991), it is becoming more evident that if high levels of learning are to take place, school managers (principals) must take responsibility to ensure an orderly and disciplined environment exists within the school. Importantly, within the context of order and discipline there needs to be a balance – teachers must maintain control at all times, but in a manner that ensures an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning is not compromised. Maintaining this balance in practice cannot be easy because as stated before, teachers and principals do not necessarily know how to restore and maintain a culture of teaching and learning.

Results from another study conducted in the Eastern Cape found that in schools where a good school culture existed, lower levels of violence were experienced thereby resulting in viable learning conditions (Barnes, Brynard, & de Wet, 2012). Niemann and Kotze (2006) concluded that school culture comprises sociability (friendship and morale) and solidarity (collective will

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and mutual interest). Bush and Glover (2016) also draw on the work of Niemann and Kotze (2006) who described the links between school culture and leadership as follows:

> Organisational culture [is] cultivated by management and, therefore, it would be a
> true asset to a school if a suitable principal could be appointed: a principal who leads
> in such a way that a culture, in which teaching and learning could thrive, is
> established. (p. 622).

Once principals understood this link they were able to initiate positive action towards using culture and climate as a means to securing safer schools (Bush, & Glover, 2016). Weeks (2012) goes further by arguing that the dysfunctionality of many schools in South Africa requires a desire for learning where cultural heritage is used by all learners and teachers to establish a learning community within the classroom.

With more information becoming available globally on how schools can use culture to improve practice, pressure is mounting not only to share this information but also for schools to compete in order to achieve "world class standards". Lumby (2013b) cautions that this mounting global pressure could pose a danger for countries who succumb to this pressure because it may not be in the best interest of children in schools or their communities to do so. Because culture is recognised as an important driver for lasting school improvement it is advised that such a culture must be appropriate for the local values and broader societies and not something that reflects so-called "world class" practice from elsewhere (Lumby, 2013b).

This requires finding a balance of priorities between social needs and learning (Blum: 2005). In other words, leaders should establish a learning environment that pursues academic excellence within the context of the changing realities surrounding the school. The surrounding environment is particularly important because societal or national culture underpins the organisational culture – this is evident in schools where the predominant culture reflects the wider social structure of the post-apartheid era (Bush & Middlewood, 2005). This is confirmed by Villiers and Pretorius (2011) who found that each school is unique in terms of its culture and practice and therefore, local leaders are presented with a unique challenge. Given the changing demography and migration of learners and teachers across South African schools (Bush & Middlewood, 2005), leaders have an important role to play in ensuring their schools resist the temptation to adopt "popular practices" at the expense of what is relevant and appropriate in creating a culture that builds a safe school.

1.9   School leadership and management challenges

Many schools in most poor communities have become hostile environments where teaching and learning have been severely compromised. The climate of education has undergone dramatic changes in terms of the demographic composition of learners (Rubin, 2004) while issues such as teenage pregnancies, child-headed households, substance abuse, high learner drop-out rate and increasing numbers of special needs learners continues to place the education system under severe pressure, (Smit, 2007). The situation is further compounded by the historical backlog of school infrastructure, poor governance systems, shortage of properly trained school managers, the lack of capacitated teachers, disadvantaged communities and families (Roper, 2010). As a result, schools in poor areas continue to deliver sub-standard education, which drives the intergenerational cycle of poverty predisposing children to inheriting the social standing of their parents regardless of their own efforts (Spaull, 2015).

Principals do not have a uniform understanding of what is meant by "safe schools" and "school safety" because it is left to the individual to interpret. This is not helpful if a uniform onslaught is to be launched in all schools in order to build safe learning and teaching environments. Apart from the confusion that is caused by conflating the different meanings of a "safe school" and "school safety" there is a more serious consequence. This has to do with how prevention programmes are conceived, prioritised, budgeted for and executed.

A common understanding of what constitutes a "safe school" is absolutely critical if any positive impact on school violence is to be felt. The problem is also made somewhat more difficult because there is no clear definition of a safe school at the moment and is something this study explored.   In the context of this research, "safe schools" include all factors associated with "safe schools" as well as those associated with "school safety."

Currently, if viewed from a school management perspective the concept of safe schools and school safety are treated very differently. In fact, compliance with the *OHSA 1993* is what enjoys priority because most of what is required can be detected with the naked eye. It is for this reason that the study considered a social justice approach to school safety because it broadens the scope of school safety to include apart from technical aspects, the social and psychological aspects related to school safety. The safe school approach requires principals to take on more of a leadership role while the school safety approach requires principals to take on more of a management role. The natural transitioning between these two roles is what principals are struggling with and yet it is crucial for the success of school safety and achieving

learner outcomes. Principals need to do things differently. It can therefore be concluded that conflation of the "school safety" and "safe schools" terms can lead to conflation of roles. For example, who is responsible for programming, who is responsible for implementation and who budgets for what?

Principals may no longer manage their schools like they used to. The new democratic governance model requires a more inclusive and participatory model of management and governance which compels principals to set up SGBs and adjust to sharing the leadership with Heads of Departments (HODs), teachers, team leaders and curriculum leaders (Buchel and Hoberg, 2009). Mafora (2013) found that principals have not been properly trained in this model and therefore struggle to implement this new model of governance especially in relation to sharing power. SGBs, especially those in poor schools, were found to be dysfunctional due to a lack of capacity and being unclear about their roles (Xaba, 2011). This has led to much contestation between principals and SGBs (Heystek, 2004; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2002) which stifles efforts to create safe teaching and learning environments. This has led to a situation where many principals suffer from fatigue (Williams, 2011). Teachers' unions have also positioned themselves in such a dominant way that they are able to influence and sometimes dictate how the school and education should be run. Principals concur that in some schools, unions are so powerful they find themselves (Msila, 2011) "impotent and unable to upstage the unions' strength" (p. 440).

This approach by teachers' unions, according to Bloch (2009), has contributed to the negative light within which they are generally viewed and has become a topic not openly spoken or debated about and has become "one of the greatest silences in education" (p. 106). For example, when learners in Alexandra complained about teacher absenteeism and being abused by teachers, the spokesperson of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) Ronald Nyathi led teachers in Alexandra on a strike. He threatened learners with "extreme violence" should they come to school and vowed not to listen to learners, parents or the GDE. Unions tend to defend teachers even when found guilty of serious misconduct (Bloch, 2009). Teachers' unions are seen as one of the prominent factors causing school decline (Mthiyani, Bhengu & Bayeni, 2014) while Thabang Motsohi (2011) blames them for the collapse of leadership and efficient management of school operations in especially poor communities. He accuses the SADTU of interfering in how schools are run by intimidating principals when they try to enforce normal school discipline. He feels the actions by teacher unions in terms of the *Constitution 1996* deprives learners of their right to education which amounts to social injustice.

Clearly, the scenario sketched thus far presents schools as rather hostile and uninviting environments where neither pupils nor teachers would want to spend their time (Bloch, 2009). Apart from the violence, schools are also not physically attractive and the DBE has reported that 41% of schools are in a poor or unacceptable state of maintenance (Bloch, 2009). Broken windows, dilapidated classrooms, worn-down fences and a lack of equipment are but some of the common problems needing attention. To catch up on backlogs (building classrooms and schools) would cost the Department about R153 billion while maintenance costs on existing schools by 2011 were projected to reach R30billion - this amount is R12billion more than what was originally budgeted for (Development Bank of Southern Africa, 2008). Infrastructure allocations to the provinces under the Accelerated School Infrastructure Delivery Initiative (Asidi) for 2013/14 was R6 630 billion which included an amount of R1 956 billion to reduce school backlogs (Tibane & Vermeulen, 2014). For the 2014/15 financial year R6 900billion was allocated for infrastructure delivery which included an amount of R3 170billion to deal with backlogs (Tibane & Honwane, 2015). Infrastructure delivery saw a slight increase to R7 042 billion for the period 2015/16 with a reduction in backlog allocation to R2 912billion (Tibane & Lentsoane, 2016).

The upkeep and maintenance of school buildings and facilities is a function many SGBs struggle with because of a lack of funding and professional expertise. Globally, facilities' management is fast gaining prominence since the link between building adequacy and learner achievement has been established. According to Xaba (2012), facilities management is such a specialised area of work it requires dedicated units to do this work which is the practice elsewhere in the world. Locally SGBs are responsible for carrying out this function and according to Xaba (2012) the DBE will have to look more closely into how they can assist SGBs to improve on and or establish independent units to manage the maintenance of school buildings and facilities.

The chapter on education in the National Development Plan (NDP) stipulates that in order to improve the quality of education the following areas are in need of urgent attention: management of the education system, competence and capacity of school principals, teacher performance, further education and training, higher education, and research and development (DBE, 2015b; NPC, 2011). To give effect to these and other national developmental challenges, former President Zuma appointed the National Planning Commission (NPC) to develop the NDP which outlines government's policy and plans for the country and provides a long-term perspective of where government sees itself going and how it intends getting

there. It identifies the broad goals such as poverty reduction, economic growth, economic transformation and job creation and in specific terms the NDP (NPC, 2011) makes it clear that South Africa should at least in theory, have a world-class education system and yet it seems to be failing. It goes on to say "despite the many positive changes since 1994, the legacy of low-quality education in historically disadvantaged parts of the school system persists. This seriously hampers the education system's ability to provide a way out of poverty for poor children" (p. 269).

While some weaknesses in the NDP have been pointed out and debated, it has generally been well received by the broader society as a roadmap to a "better life for all" by 2030. The plan has the potential to serve as a container and driver for the change that is necessary in education and which this study is espousing in terms of safe learning environments and learner outcomes. However, there are also risks because it is recognised that government has developed several plans in the past to address the crisis in education but none of these plans speak to how schools are supposed implement these plans at local level (Collins, 2015).

To ensure the safety of learners at school and in the community the NDP suggests a well-coordinated approach is required between the education departments, police and local government. Strategies should therefore be aligned to the NDP as it provides a framework to ensure that these targets are met. This call for ensuring inclusive and quality education for all was prioritised again for the global Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015) and by 2017, based on what have been described earlier in the chapter, the indication is there has been little progress.

1.10 The role of leaders in creating safe learning environments

Principals can only achieve the desired conditions for teaching and learning if the school environment is safe – safe schools produce successful schools. Put differently, safe schools are able to produce the safe and orderly environment which is crucial for teaching and learning to take place (Hill & Hill, 1994). According to Quarles & Quarles (2011), in America it was found that the safest schools are the best schools in terms of offering the best teaching and learning experience. It is also well known that school safety features consistently among the factors that create effective learning environments that produce quality, quantity and effective results (Van der Westhuizen, 1993). Of greater significance is the fact that violence directly affects teachers' and principals' managerial and instructional duties thereby exacerbating the

problem of attaining education outcomes (Netshitangani, 2011). This demonstrates that the management and leadership responsibilities of the principal are enormous and crucial to the functioning or non-functioning of a school (Bloch, 2009).

Robinson (2007a) and Hoadley (2007) both argue that direct leader involvement in the core business of teaching and learning has greater impact on student outcomes. This approach also holds true for support programmes for school safety. However, experience has shown that in many instances these are usually treated as "add-on" programmes. Safety at school, in most cases, only takes centre stage once an incident has occurred and Roper (2002) warns that unless effective programmes are treated as part of the management function of the school, efforts to manage, prevent and respond to school safety issues in a meaningful way will be compromised. Addressing delegates at a conference, Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga provided some inspiration through her remark that "good solutions stem from good leadership" (Motshekga, 2012a). That means principals can play an important role in ensuring that school safety becomes a regular feature in staff meetings and becomes fully integrated in the day-to-day running of the school. Nevertheless, the instructional leader that principals are expected to be demands that they are closer to and much more involved with teaching and learning. By the same token, the workload of principals is said to be becoming unmanageable and as a result many principals lack the time to fully understand and live out their management and leadership roles (Caldwell, 2002). This is not an encouraging scenario and therefore, according to the researcher, school safety will remain on the periphery.

Despite the unacceptable levels of violence, schools are still regarded as valued institutions and there are examples in South Africa where schools are performing well despite their circumstances. However, Harber (2007), Lee and Cohen (2008) and Noonan and Vavra (2007), warn that even though schools may still be valued, the high incidence of violence means that many schools are fast becoming unattractive and hostile environments where students are more likely to act out antisocial behaviour or become victimised. Schools are therefore good only to the extent to which they are able to fulfil their purpose (Masitsa, 2005). This includes the ability to contribute to building the resilience of learners to crime and violence, which is one of the most respected international formulas for preventing risk factors relating to youth offending and victimization. Learners should therefore be kept engaged in formal schooling until their final year (Gottfredson, 1996b; Prothrow-Stith, 1991) or, in the case of South Africa, at the very least Grade Nine (Gevers & Flisher, 2012).

The case for schools to be recognised as the ideal change agent has already been made but what is needed is cooperation amongst all affected stakeholders in the broader school community. To make schools safe, leaders (principals) with the help of parents, education officials, teachers and students must be prepared and ready to lead the change. There can be no better alternative if a long-term solution to creating safe teaching and learning environments are to be achieved.

Finally, and most critically, principals need to understand what is meant by a safe school and school safety if they are to make meaningful impact. It is taken for granted and not uncommon to hear the terms "school safety" and "safe schools" being used interchangeably despite them being distinct. Prinsloo (2005) asserts that a safe school is broadly associated with the protection of learners against violence and psychological harm, while school safety is closely associated with the maintenance and upkeep of physical infrastructure of the school in terms of the *OHSA 1993*. It should therefore come as no surprise despite all the available evidence, that managerial practice and strategies to deal with school violence remain separate. It is this disconnect that most likely lies at the heart of the persistence of school violence and it is hoped that this study has demonstrated the importance of this link in dealing with school violence effectively and creating conditions conducive to teaching and learning.

1.11   Local and international responses to school violence

Because school violence is a global challenge it requires the international community to work together to find solutions to this problem (Debarbieux, 2007). In the United States of America for example, gang violence in schools is frequently reported as a concern for school administrators who are trying to create safe school environments. Police departments collaborate with schools on strategies to make schools safer by exchanging intelligence on gang trends, working together on investigations and targeting areas where gang activity is known to be taking place (Welsh, 2003).

Studies in England, Ireland and Norway all indicate that the re-evaluation of peer victimization programmes plays a major part in the creation of safe schools (Stanwood and Doolittle, 2004). They found that most programmes tend to alienate schools from the community hence the indicators for success were misaligned causing bad practices to be reinforced.

In Greece, safe schools remain a national concern while in Japan the government has implemented a national initiative towards safer schools by setting up special telephone hook-ups to report school violence (Smit, 2006).

In Israel, Somech and Oplatka (2009) considered teachers as core agents of student socialisation and conducted a study involving 1 512 teachers (including principals) at 119 elementary schools. They outlined a model for predicting the link between the role breadth of teachers and student violence by connecting the managerial practice of joint decision making and teachers' autonomy to role breadth. Role breadth refers to "employees' perceived capability of carrying out a broader and more proactive set of work tasks that extend beyond prescribed technical requirements" (Parker, 1998, p. 835). The overall results of the study showed that in cases where teachers were willing to engage with school violence as part of their duties and responsibilities (in-role), violent student behaviours were affected leading to a decrease in school violence. These results provide schools with good prospects for managing school violence as they provide an understanding of the drivers that encourage teachers to expand their roles. Therefore, whatever the management model it must encourage staff participation so that staff see themselves as part of the picture in all aspects of school functioning (Somech & Oplatka, 2009; Van Wyk and Lemmer, 2002). It is therefore clear that in order to mobilise joint action, a common framework is necessary to help make sense of the problem confronting education and that human agency can make a difference provided that the role of teachers and principals remains central (Bloch, 2009).

In South Africa, various stakeholders including government departments, civil society organizations, community leaders and business all expressed their concern and dismay at the levels of violence prevalent in schools and called on each other to join forces to make schools both safe and caring. Several initiatives in this regard were implemented in the provinces (Pandor, 2006) with a national *Safe Schools Project* (to create safe, disciplined learning environments) emerging from the *Tirisano*-plan aimed at developing a fully functional education and training system (DOE, 2000a). Some of the responses aimed at addressing school violence were introduced by the DBE and are summarised in Table 4. These interventions focused on:

- Teaching learners how to defend themselves against physical attack.
- Preventing weapons from entering the school premises.
- Encouraging community members to report school-related problems to a centralised desk.
- Dealing with sexual violence and drug abuse in schools.
- Making the school physically safer.
- Strengthening school and classroom management.

Table 4: Responses to school violence

Project	Theme	Aim
Hlayiseka Early Warning System (CJCP & DOE, 2006)	Management and prevention of violence	Toolkit to enable schools to detect safety threats early and respond effectively
Care and Support for Teaching and Learning Programme DOE 2008a	Education system	Identify and deal with barriers to teaching and learning
Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Sexual Violence and Harassment DOE, 2008b	Management and prevention of sexual violence	To support schools and school communities in responding to cases of sexual harassment and violence against learners.
Speak out - Youth Report Sexual Abuse DBE 2010	Self-protection and prevention of sexual violence	Handbook for learners on how to prevent sexual abuse in public schools.
Safety in Education: Partnership Protocol between the DBE and SAPS. (DBE 2011)	Management and prevention of school and violence	Linking schools with local police-stations and the establishment of functional school safety committees.
National Strategy for the Prevention and Management of Alcohol and Drug Use amongst Learners in Schools. (DBE 2013b)	Health promotion and crime prevention	To curb drug use in schools in order to prevent drug use in the communities to render them safe for all citizens.
16 Days of Activism Campaign (DBE, 2014c)	Prevention of domestic violence	Raise awareness of crimes committed against women and children.
National School Safety Framework (DBE, 2015a)	Management and prevention of school and violence	A management tool for education officials and schools to identify and manage risks and threats of violence in and around schools.

Despite much being known about violent incidents at school, very little research has been undertaken in this area of work in South Africa. It was only in April 2008 that the CJCP released a detailed study, which provided valuable insights into the nature and extent of violence in South African schools. This study is regarded as the first of its kind in South Africa (Burton, 2008b) and while it undoubtedly provides much needed baseline data, more research needs to be done to build a body of knowledge that would enable the DBE and practitioners to generate empirical data that could be used to deal with school violence holistically.

1.12   The context of the research problem

One of the most talked about issues in education currently is the restoration of a culture of teaching and learning because in many schools this culture has collapsed (Chikoko, Naicker, & Mthiyane, 2015; Niemann & Kotze, 2006). Features such as gangsterism, vandalism, poor attendance of educators and learners, demotivated teachers, drug abuse, high learner drop-out rate, poor state of school buildings, poor leadership and poor academic results are all indicators of a poor culture of teaching and learning (Kruger, 2003a; Masitsa, 2005; Weeks, 2012). Much has been attempted to remedy the situation without much success.

The literature shows that the principal's role is critical in restoring a culture of teaching and learning, but there is very little (if any) evidence in policy, theory and practice of a close investigation of what "school safety" means as a condition for teaching and learning, how it enables the right to learn and what school leaders are doing about it.

To compound matters further, it took government and the DOE/DBE a while to understand and take seriously the fact that schools are in trouble. It was not until the CJCP released its report (Burton, 2008a) on the first national study on school violence that the DOE acknowledged publicly that school violence has reached alarming proportions in most public schools throughout the country and is in urgent need of being addressed. The impact of school violence, coupled with the legacy effects of apartheid (poverty, unemployment and inequality) hampers the delivery of education (Lumby, 2003). This has a direct and negative influence on governments' ability to execute its constitutional mandate to deliver a good education in a safe and secure environment, thereby adversely affecting millions of learners.

Having said that, all is not lost because despite the high number of dysfunctional schools, there are schools in the same system that are safe and function well (Christie, 2010a). Some of these schools even match the standards of first class schools, especially in relation to

learner pass rates (Chikoko, et al., 2015). This proves the point made by Mayer and Furlong (2010) that schools are not necessarily at the mercy of influences originating from their surrounding communities (i.e. violence) and that schools can be successful. Such schools have adopted an inside-out development approach involving the philosophy of being masters of their own destiny (Chikoko, et al., 2015). A common factor that stands out in these schools, is the manner in which they are lead and managed – good schools always have good leaders (Chikoko, et al., 2015; Witten, 2017).

A fair amount of effort has been made, as shown in preceding sections, to alleviate the impact of school violence and in former Education Minister Pandor's (2006) words "the provinces have not been sitting on their hands in regard to school safety" (p. 3). The problem is, despite the range of safe-school initiatives and resources directed at addressing school-based violence, school managers find it difficult to reduce violence in schools and sustain safe teaching and learning environments. In addition, exploring a broader definition for safe schools would be useful in order to incorporate aspects of social justice as part of defining a safe school. Currently, school safety is limited to the technical aspects of school safety (buildings and equipment), and by incorporating a social justice perspective (freedom from fear; capability deprivation), the combined impact of technical and psychological aspects of school safety can be better understood and analysed. In South Africa, very little research has been done in this area of work hence this problem requires further investigation.

1.13   Purpose and rationale for the study

School violence has reached unacceptable levels both in terms of intensity and scale and various efforts to deal effectively with this problem appear ineffective. As a result, schools are finding it hard to deliver a good quality education resulting in learners dropping out of school, teachers leaving the profession and the classroom becoming a breeding ground for serious forms of violence. Given the history of South Africa and the prevailing inequality in the country, this situation cannot be tolerated and is worthy of further investigation. The approach of the study is multi-pronged. Its purpose is directed at creating a better understanding of safe schools and at identifying effective leadership and management strategies proven to promote safe learning and teaching environments. The research study is located in six urban secondary schools comprising four schools situated in townships and two in suburbs – rural schools are excluded from the study and justification is provided in Chapter Three. Furthermore, based on the findings, conclusions were drawn to inform the DBE, school managers and practitioners on how to make schools safer and as a result, achieve the desired education outcomes in environments that are conducive to teaching and learning.

1.14   The research questions

SMTs and SGBs are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that schools run smoothly in a safe and secure teaching and learning environment. The literature shows that there are many schools that struggle to attain their education outcomes as a result of school violence, but similarly we also know there are schools facing similar challenges that thrive (Christie, 2010a; Chikoko, et al., 2015). There is documented evidence of strategies that were found to make schools safe but none or very little that relate to the local context with reference to:

- The lack of support for principals by the education department in respect of creating safe schools.
- Instructional leadership as a theory for restoring a culture of teaching and learning.
- Legacy effects of apartheid such as inequality, poverty and unemployment.

It is within this context that the research considered the questions, "what is a safe school?" (theory and practice), and "what are the leadership and management strategies that work or don't work, and why?" Therefore, the overall research question the study hoped to answer is: "What leadership and management strategies promote and / or inhibit the creation of safe teaching and learning environments and why?"

1.15   Significance of the study

School violence forms a barrier to teaching and learning and it is generally accepted that well-managed schools not only function better, but they tend to produce better results and are much better prepared to respond to and manage violent incidents (Independent Projects Trust [IPT], 2001). School safety is therefore a precursor for teaching and learning and the significance of the study, guided by the conceptual framework, will be evident at the following levels:

Principals, SGBs, SSCs, LRCs and SMTs will be provided with deeper insight and understanding as to why school violence persists. To deal with the persistence of violence the study aimed to identify which management and leadership strategies to employ when addressing specific problems in order to reduce the levels of school violence and thereby improve education outcomes. This include fostering collaboration between schools and law enforcement agencies to conduct joint planning on both incident management and prevention.

District managers and School Safety Coordinators will be able to use the findings to assist schools to form strategic partnerships internal and external to the school in order to strengthen leadership and management strategies that address school violence proactively. The emphasis is on the prevention of school violence.

Leadership and management training programmes for principals and management teams could be further enhanced by introducing school safety as a key focus area under the rubric of social justice. Provinces will also be in a position to make better budgetary projections to address school violence adequately. Policies around safe school programmes could be better informed based on empirical evidence.

1.16   Delimitation and limitations of the study

The study was confined to observing and interviewing stakeholders in six secondary schools using the phenomenological research approach. Due to purposive sampling and the small sample size, the generalisability of the findings is decreased and will not be generalizable to all schools. In addition, because this is a qualitative study the findings could be subject to other interpretations and this counts for a second limitation of the study (Creswell, 2012).

1.17   Conclusion

In this chapter I provided the context for school safety and leadership challenges by outlining the structure and mandate of the education system at national and provincial levels. I used the constitutional provisions to present reasons why government has a duty to provide education in safe and secure learning environments and why failure to carry out this duty will further disadvantage a society that has already suffered deprivation for many years under the previous government. The legislative and policy framework provided insights into how the government has responded to the problem of school safety and a description of the extent and cycle of violence coupled to the role and responsibility of leaders to make schools safe, made clear the size and scope of the problem. Government therefore has a responsibility, apart from providing safe infrastructure, to also ensure principals and teachers are properly trained to execute this function. Utterances by former President Zuma, successive education ministers and media reports provided a sense of how pervasive (when compared to other countries in the world) violence is in society and schools notwithstanding various efforts by several interest groups to make schools safe. The literature shows that the management and leadership roles of principals are directed mainly at creating conditions that will yield the highest possible standard for learner achievement but without due consideration being given to how they

should deal with school violence in the course of their duties. Furthermore, the legacy effects of apartheid make the South African context very different to countries on whom we rely for leadership development research. This is a serious gap which, in relation to answering the research question, shows that:

- Leadership and management strategies that principals are currently applying to make schools safe are not appropriate and that is why school violence persists.
- Because school violence is context specific, home-grown management and leadership strategies must be developed if we are to succeed in creating safe teaching and learning environments.

This chapter has therefore established the context and justification for the research study and by way of concluding this chapter, a roadmap is provided below detailing how the report is laid out and how the different chapters contribute incrementally to answering the research question.

In Chapter Two, literature drawn from two bodies of knowledge i.e. school violence and school leadership development are reviewed and discussed to establish how these relate to the broader definition of safe schools. The chapter provides an understanding of school violence within the context of South Africa as a violent society, how school violence is generally defined and what the drivers of violence (theories) are. A section on international and local leadership development models follows, which is then narrowed down to focus on understanding the role that principals must play as instructional leaders in order to create safe teaching and learning environments. The main gaps identified during the course of the literature review are then discussed and presented as elements of the theoretical framework that constitute a safe and effective school. Using these elements (theoretical framework) a discussion follows on how the conceptual framework was developed and how it was used to guide and contain the research process.

Chapter Three presents the research methodology, beginning with how the research process was conceived from beginning to end. The researcher then discusses various research methodologies and provides reasons for selecting a qualitative research approach. A research schedule provides details of the timelines employed for the interviews, and a discussion on the preparation and orientation of research participants gives insight into how the researcher built rapport with study participants and ensured their readiness to participate in the study.

A few paragraphs deal with measures to ensure ethical compliance of the study and a detailed discussion follows on how the validation of the data was ensured.

Given that school violence is quite widespread in Gauteng schools, the researcher explains the process of selecting the ideal research site (education district) and the selection of the six secondary schools utilised for the study. The chapter concludes with how the data was transcribed, coded and then analysed, highlighting some of the problems encountered in writing up and presenting the data in an appropriate and comprehensible format.

Having garnered the necessary background information from the preceding chapters, Chapter Four provides the reader with an opportunity to journey through each of the six schools in order to develop a sense of how school safety impacts the daily lived experiences of principals, parents, educators and students. Because there was a huge amount of data gathered it was decided to present each school individually so that there was sufficient basis for drawing the analyses that followed. The data was captured following responses from all the different key stakeholder groups i.e. schools (learners, parents, principals and educators), provincial and district education departments and the police. The thematic areas reported on (in line with the conceptual framework) include the context of each school (legacy effects of apartheid), leadership and governance (how structures work together to identify and deal with school safety factors and achieve learner outcomes), roles and strategies (the leadership and management strategies attempted or employed in the school to produce safe learning environments), safe/unsafe schools (how safe and unsafe schools are defined and how collaborative partnership programmes directed at school safety are identified) and school violence (understanding the role of stakeholders and resources necessary to combat school violence). Collectively, these present a picture of what the research question aimed to address.

In Chapter Five, the findings are analysed and presented according to the thematic areas contained in the conceptual framework. The intention of this chapter is to make meaning of research participants' lived experiences (findings) by considering the context of each school. Specific reference is made to the impact of urbanisation, infrastructure and facilities, and resources (human and financial) on school safety. The next section in the chapter shows how principals and structures (SGB, SMT, etc.) work together to mitigate these challenges and the extent to which school safety is integrated into the daily leading and management of schools. The reader is then introduced to initiatives/strategies which schools are implementing such as the curriculum and community knowledge to help position the school as social change agent

of the broader society. The chapter goes on to identify the partnerships necessary to support the school such as parents, police, non-governmental organisations and the education departments in ensuring smooth policy and programme implementation and evaluation. The chapter concludes with a summary of the key findings.

Chapter Six is the final chapter and it draws together the entire research process, culminating in conclusions and lessons learnt. The researcher starts with a reflection on the purpose of the study and systematically details insights that emerged during the analysis of the findings. These are then discussed in the context of leading and managing safe teaching and learning environments going forward.

In direct response to the research question the study found that where principals were able to extend their role breadth, they were able to influence the internal and external environments (context) of the school resulting in schools that are relatively safe. The chapter lists a few general conclusions and narrows it down to specific conclusions found relevant to the study under the thematic areas/headings in the conceptual framework. In conclusion the reader is presented with how the study contributed to the body of knowledge as well as areas in need of further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This chapter builds on the prevalence and impact of school violence as it pertains to a principal's ability to lead and manage a safe school as discussed in Chapter One. Chapter One therefore provided the context within which to review and critically discuss the literature that identifies and clarifies the linkages between school violence and school leadership as they relate to the creation of a "conducive teaching and learning environment." More specifically, in order to help answer the research question, the literature was used to provide a deeper understanding of school violence locally and globally, and to explore and identify strategies (including leadership development models) that may be able to assist school principals to create safe teaching and learning environments. The theoretical framework is presented and discussed in order to explain the expanded definition of a safe school and how this is helpful for principals, as a reference, for restoring a culture of teaching and learning. The chapter concludes with an explanation of how the conceptual framework was developed and applied in guiding the research process.

Chapter One introduced the fact that many schools are experiencing high levels of violence and that in spite of various interventions and strategies directed at dealing with the problem, school violence persists. In pursuance of answers to the problem, a substantial part of the literature review focuses on school violence in order to provide a better understanding of its key drivers. The main focus of the research, however, is on strategies that enable principals and / or SMTs to better manage school violence on a school by school basis. In essence, the objective is to identify the strategies that can assist them to create safe teaching and learning environments and provide an explanation as to why they might work.

2.1   Understanding school violence

It is clear that violence has reached unacceptable levels in schools, yet there appears to be no clear understanding of why school violence persists or what fuels it. Population-based prevalence studies show that South Africa lacks systematic research on the extent and variety of types of violence experienced by children. We do know the most common types of incidents reported by children are physical, emotional and sexual violence experienced in the home and the community, often perpetrated by people known to the child (Department of Social Development, Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities & UNICEF, 2012). A second factor contributing to the lack of a proper understanding of school violence is that it

is under-reported - not all types of violence occurring in schools are reported and even if it is reported, it fails to measure experiences of a sensitive nature and tends to under-report sexual violence and physical violence in the home or intimate relationships (Burton, 2006; Department of Social Development et al., 2012).

This is an important gap in the literature because youth victimization influences how young people get caught up in the spiral of being a victim and perpetrator of violence. It shows up in their ability to forge healthy interpersonal relationships, in their school performance and victimization in later life (Burton, 2006). This link between violence and risk factors is well established in literature but in understanding school violence, it is important to note it's more than violent acts, school violence also breeds vulnerability (McCloskey, Figueredo & Koss, 1995). To understand school violence in South Africa it is necessary to mention that it happens within the broader context of high levels of crime and violence in the country. The national crime statistics confirm the physically violent nature of South African society and, according to Altbeker (2007), "what makes South Africa's problem unique is not so much the volume of crime as its extraordinary violence, with interpersonal violence and the exponential growth in robbery the principal manifestation of this" (p. 33).

The literature shows that violence in South Africa is rampant (Department of Social Development et al., 2012; Burton, 2008a) but according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002) it is not unique to South Africa. Violence is a global problem and in South Africa, research and media reports draws attention to the high levels of violence (sexual abuse, physical abuse, vandalism, robbery and bullying) committed by and against youth. These acts are committed in and around schools and while it's more prominent in poor urban areas such as townships it affects all schools regardless of the socio-economic status of the school (Department of Social Development et al., 2012; Gevers & Flisher, 2012).

Many South African schools especially in townships, present as rather gloomy and scary places which is a far cry from the safe havens we would like them to be. However, much hope and inspiration can be drawn from Nelson Mandela who wrote in his foreword in the WHO's 2002 World Report on Violence and Health (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002):

> Many who live with violence day in and day out assume it is an intrinsic part of human interaction. But this is not so. Violence can be prevented. We owe our children… a life free from violence and fear…We must address the roots of violence. (p. ix).

Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations (2006) followed suit and is of the same opinion as Mandela. He holds the view that all children, whether rich or poor, are vulnerable to abuse and unless children are safe in school, universal primary education will not be achieved. He goes further to say that violence against children is never justifiable, nor is it inevitable – if the underlying causes are identified and addressed, violence against children is entirely preventable. The role of principals, due to their strategic positioning and duty is crucial, according to the researcher, for the prevention of school violence, addressing the underlying causes of violence and the restoration of a culture of teaching and learning.

2.1.1 Defining school violence

Based on the understanding that a "problem well defined is a problem half solved", it would be useful to comprehensively define school violence, given its complexity as reflected in the literature. General violence has been identified as a global problem, which is difficult to describe as it is complex and quite dispersed, and often rooted in cultural, economic and social practices. The WHO (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002) stated that defining violence is not an exact science but more a case of judgment of what is acceptable or unacceptable behaviour based on values and cultural norms. In order to reach global consensus, the WHO (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002) defined general violence as:

> The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation. (p. 5).

Popular discourse around school violence includes all manner of intentional harm or discomfort inflicted on learners, including incidents such as school-ground fights, bullying and drug abuse. To assume a uniform understanding of school violence based on the popular view would mean ignoring less overt forms of violence i.e. violence against girls and women. Girls and boys are at different risk for different forms of violence across different settings therefore this angle is important if a holistic response to and prevention of violence is to be achieved (Pinheiro, 2006).

Touré (2007) points out that within a West African context, school violence does not mean the usual school fights and bullying, but rather, it is a reflection of the wider culture of violence as

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expressed in armed conflict, family violence and street violence. That means "school violence" could be understood as a blanket term devoid of scientific rigour and that it risks being diluted or over-complicated by the broader context of violence and therefore that it warrants further investigation.

Elliott, Hamburg and Williams (1998) defined school violence as "… the threat or use of physical force with the intention of causing physical injury, damage, or intimidation of another person" (p. 13).

In response to this definition, Henry (2000) asserted that a more expansive definition had to be found, in order to fully capture what school violence is – he found the Elliot et al. definition limiting because it ignored, for example, the emotional and psychological pain, as well as harm, caused by institutions or agencies against individuals, among others. He suggested school violence be defined as:

> *…..* the exercise of power over others in school-related settings by some individual,
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> agency, or social process, that denies those subject to it their humanity to make a
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> difference, either by reducing them from what they are or by limiting them from what
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> they might be. (p. 17).

Various ways of defining violence do exist and these definitions depend largely on who is doing the defining and what their purpose is. As a result, definitions tend to become so broad that they lose their meaning (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002). According to Moser and Shrader (1999), there is also the risk of "violence" definitions being too narrow and with the lack of an integrative framework, narrow definitions stifle understanding and knowledge of the work, which limits policy formulation and programme design. A balance would therefore be necessary to ensure that "school violence" is properly defined and understood by practitioners (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002).

Building on the general definition of violence developed by the WHO, and cited by Prothrow-Stith (2007), a category dealing specifically with youth violence was eventually developed, which according to Mercy, Butchart, Farrington and Cerda (2002) can be defined as follows:

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, exerted by or against children, adolescents or young adults, ages 10–29, which results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation (p. 25 – 56).

The children, adolescents or young adults mentioned in the above definition can be a victim, perpetrator, or both resulting from acts such as bullying, gang violence, school violence, dating violence, homicide and suicide.

Finally, according to the researcher, the destructive nature of school violence can be observed from all these definitions with two key factors coming to the fore: One, violence is heterogeneous (it presents differently in type and degree in each school) and two, it is fluid, since school dynamics influence the form and severity of incidents (Benbenishty, & Astor, 2005). This scenario emphasises the importance of a definition that provides a common understanding of school violence as a basis for collective (policy) and several (at school level) action. Principals must be able to define the nature of the violence their school is facing (context) so that they can apply the necessary leadership and management skills to build safe teaching and learning spaces. The heterogeneous nature of violence precludes a management by the book response.

2.2   Theories of school violence.

The process of further investigation into defining school violence can be assisted by understanding what the drivers for school violence are. According to Burton (2007), a wide range of theories linked to the high levels of violence among young people globally can be found in public and academic literature. Some of these theories, according to Burton (2007), include:

- Exposure to violence in the media (news, television programmes, radio and computer games) is said to entrench violent behaviour.
- The migrant labour system under apartheid produced a generation of future parents who themselves were products of an abnormal society, thus not having crucial parenting skills necessary to raise healthy children.
- The apartheid regime led to an alienated generation (also known as the lost generation) for whom violence was the only legitimate means for achieving change.

- The availability of drugs and alcohol, especially *Tik* (Methamphetamine), is blamed for youth and gang violence that is rife in the Western Cape and Gauteng provinces.

Burton found that for South Africa, the media, historical context, family and community relations/structures and drug abuse rank among the main drivers of school violence while Xaba (2006 & 2012) found that physical environments such as school buildings also have an impact on safe schools and learner outcomes.

Burton (2007) maintains that while arguments can be made for the negative effects that these factors have on young people, individually they fall short of explaining the trend adequately. He is of the view that, for example, the effect of violent media on children has been debated for decades and during the 1980s and early 1990s, the rise in the levels of youth violence in the US was directly correlated to the rise in levels of violence in both cinema and television. However, during the mid-1990s, while levels of violence in popular media continued to increase, there was a dramatic drop in violent incidents involving young people. In contrast, precisely because South Africa is already such a violent country, Stadler (2012) states that according to cultivation theory, there is clear evidence that long-term exposure to violent screen media is associated with aggressive behaviour. Simpson (2001) further asserts that violence in the media influences many South African youths to join gangs that ultimately infiltrate vulnerable communities and schools and turn them into markets for drugs, alcohol and other illegal activities. Out of 14.5 million households, 10.7 million homes have a television set with 12.8 million homes owning a cell phone (StatsSA, 2012). With handset prices falling, more young people across sub-Saharan Africa (including South Africa) now own cell phones regardless of whether they are poor or living in an urban or rural area (Porter, 2016). Viewing of violent content on television in the home is left to the supervision of an adult or parent which is not always easy and parents have even less control over the content their children are able to access via their cell phones. These conditions create fertile ground for learners to be negatively influenced by screen violence and act out anti-social behaviour in class which makes it difficult for teachers and principals to lead and manage safe schools. Stadler (2012) conceded that video games are still an expanding phenomenon, but indications are that video games emphasize the enhancement of fighting skills as opposed to violence.

Maeroff (2001) found that school violence and the media are so intertwined that it is difficult to think of it as being separate. In the United States, for example, by the time a child reaches the age of 18, he/she would have been exposed to 200 000 graphic violent acts on television. This constant exposure to violence desensitises young people to the extent that the true effects of

a violent death are diminished and can become a norm (Richardson & Scott, 2002). Similarly, this "normalisation" of violence is often spawned by violence encountered in the home, schools and broader environments as well as dominant beliefs and social norms that allow for the use of violence (Swartz, 2009; Swartz & Scott, 2014).

The problem of violence in South Africa is further compounded by the low arrest and conviction rates of offenders by the criminal justice system. By way of illustration, only 21.2% of men who rape are arrested and of those, only half will be jailed (Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell, & Dunkle, 2011; Vetten et al., 2008). This is confirmed by a study conducted in Diepsloot, a high-density township on the outskirts of Johannesburg with 350 000 inhabitants, which found that a total of 741 sexual offences were recorded between April 2011 and March 2016 with only one case resolved (McBride et al., 2017).

While much of the blame for school violence can be apportioned to the impact of apartheid, Burton (2007) says it can be argued that much of the violence sweeping the country takes place among those relatively untouched by the violence of apartheid, especially when considering middle and upper class white South Africans. Naylor (2002) disagrees with Burton since she is of the opinion that violence plaguing South Africans can be attributed directly to apartheid. According to her, the political, social and economic conditions have all been shaped by the apartheid system. Bloch (2009) concurs with Naylor that the deep scars of open conflict and inequality caused by apartheid, were carried into the new democracy and it should come as no surprise that remnants from the past persist and reproduce and mutate as "legacy effects" (Bloch, 2009; Ward, Dawes & Matzopoulos, 2012). These are the issues that lie at the heart of the three major challenges currently facing the country i.e. poverty, unemployment and inequality. The impact on school safety would, of course, be significant because the legacy effects further manifest in poor academic achievement as well as the inability of children to function socially both within and outside the school environment especially when having experienced violence at an early age (Dawes & Farr, 2003; Fang et al., 2016; Parker, Smit, 2007).

According to a study conducted by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) (1998) supported by Mathews, Griggs and Caine (1999), legacy effects such as broken homes and dysfunctional families count as two of the most common factors associated with juvenile delinquency and school violence in South Africa. In addition, children who grow up in poor families with fragile family ties and where work opportunities are few, are at high risk of engaging in school violence (Booysens, 2003; Swartz, 2009). This is so because

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circumstances of continuous struggle and failure tend to isolate individuals resulting not only in losing the connection with those around them but also the value and belief in others thus becoming social isolates. (Bester, 2001). As a result, learners can become disengaged from the school, causing them to feel out of place and resulting in them gravitating towards delinquency and becoming prone to adopting serious violent behaviours (Blum, 2005; Gevers & Flisher, 2012). Such conditions can result in learners having to deal with experiences of family stress and trauma (among others) before they can start thinking of learning resulting in them coming across as ill-disciplined or challenging authority (Bloch, 2009; Mohapi, 2014; Perry, Kusel & Perry, 1988).

The impact of the legacy effects of apartheid on youth violence is given prominence in the literature, with poor academic performance, serious violent behaviour, delinquency and becoming social isolates ranking among the main outcomes. These problems are quite complex, and moreover because of their roots in apartheid, quite unique to schools in South Africa (Bush, 2007). Inequality between rich and poor schools is another problem principals in township schools have to contend with. When compared to other Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ)[7] countries, inequality between rich and poor schools in South Africa is exceedingly high, making it difficult for poor schools to systematically overcome socio-economic disadvantage (Van der Berg, 2008). This despite a big slice of the county's national budget going into education. Previously white-only schools are able to perform at the international mean level while formerly black schools achieve less than half that level (Reddy, 2006). According to Matshiqi (2007), "in short, the failure to provide decent education, especially to the disadvantaged is one of the most spectacular failures of the past 13 years." (p.14).

Creating life-chances is therefore dependent on the kind of school (rich or poor) a learner is able to attend and therefore one can conclude that poor schools play a big part in predisposing learners to further hardship both immediately and in later life. Such learners struggle to excel academically, find it hard to align subject choices with valued career paths and are at high risk of dropping out of school (Spaull, 2015). The literature on school leadership and management provides very little for principals to draw on when it comes to addressing these kinds of problems because such challenges have, up to now, remained unprecedented.

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[7] SACMEQ is the Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality consisting of fifteen Ministries of Education whose stated purpose is improving the quality of education.

According to the researcher, the impact on school safety and restoring a teaching and learning culture will be profound because poor learners in poor schools continue to receive inferior education, which becomes a poverty trap (Spaull, 2015) – the kind of school you attend does matter. To remedy the situation will require multi-pronged approaches, including further in-depth research, if sustained impact is to be felt.

Ill-discipline and challenging authority are often associated with the availability and usage of drugs and alcohol at school. Access to drugs and alcohol might have some merit as a cause of ill-discipline since it cuts across class and colour but there is little evidence to indicate that drugs and alcohol are the driving force behind the levels of violence in schools (Burton, 2007). While the link between drugs, alcohol and violence at school may be unclear at this stage, researchers at the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) found that 50% of high school seniors partake in illicit drug use at some stage in their lives (McEntire, 2007). Further studies show that there is an increase in the amount of hard drugs circulating in local communities and that in such circumstances, children are at greater risk of being lured into the drug trade as sellers and merchants who then torment their communities (Simpson, 2001; Bloch, 2009). A study among high school students in Cape Town found that *Tik* (Methamphetamine) was associated with an increased risk for aggression, sexual-risk behaviour, mental health problems and school drop-out rates (Plüddemann, & Parry. 2012). The theory put forward by Bloch (2009) and Plüddemann & Parry (2012) presupposes that drug-use leads to gang and youth violence, but what is interesting to note here is that a potential reciprocal relationship exists between drug abuse and violence. A study conducted on the socio-economic burden of violence on children in South Africa found that children who experienced violent discipline in childhood are likely to become alcohol-dependent by the time they reach age twenty-three while those who experienced emotional neglect are predisposed to drug abuse (Fang, et al., 2016). The researcher therefore holds that youth violence and neglect can predispose learners to drug and alcohol abuse in later life but it may be too early to draw broad generalisations at this stage.

Illegal drugs have infiltrated and engulfed even the most secure and remote areas of the country over the last ten to fifteen years. Communities, especially in townships, had out of desperation made several public appeals to former President Jacob Zuma since 2013 to intervene and assist them to get rid of Lolly Lounges[8] in areas such as Eldorado Park (among

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[8] Lolly Lounges are homes in the community where liquor and drugs are sold illegally. It is generally understood that in most cases these lounges are under the control of drug syndicates.

others), where drugs, gang violence, drug dependency and deaths are rife among the youth (Brand South Africa, 2013; Dube, 2015). Zuma's intervention amounted to little more than a political public relations exercise with the status quo remaining. The drug trade is said to flourish because of widespread police corruption – allegations and charges have been brought against several police officials with only some cases making it to the courts. Of note is the conviction of the South African Police Service Commissioner and at the time President of Interpol, Jackie Selebi, who was convicted and sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment in 2011 for taking bribes in exchange for turning a blind eye to drug trafficking (Smith, 2010). Apart from the embarrassment suffered by the public and government due to Selebi's conduct, the implication of police corruption and complicity in drug-related crime is far reaching because principals stand very little chance of winning the fight against drugs in schools without the necessary support of key stakeholders such as the South African Police Service (SAPS).

The literature confirms that learners are exposed to and are engaging with drugs on quite a big scale – as users and dealers (Maphalala, & Mabunda, 2014). Since most of these learners come from poor families, they cannot afford the cost of drug rehabilitation programmes given that government-funded programmes are few and not well-resourced. Drug abuse in South Africa is reported at twice the world norm with 15% of the population said to be suffering from a drug problem (Tshitangano, & Tosin, 2016). According to Burton (2008a) this scenario represents the "big blow" handed to the aspirations of the youth in realising their dreams in the new South Africa. This scourge cannot be handled by principals alone and while some schools have access to rehabilitation services, reports on any success seems varied – it requires joint support from the school and parents and this is often lacking. As a result, principals and teachers are finding it difficult to manage such learners in class and in extreme cases district offices do not support the expulsion of such learners from the system. The biggest fear expressed by teachers and principals is the unpredictable behaviour of learners who have taken drugs – some of them become passive and completely disconnected while others become strikingly violent and disrespectful and as a result pose one of the biggest threats to restoring a safe teaching and learning culture.

Whilst substance abuse is a key driver of violent behaviour in communities and schools, one cannot ignore the equally detrimental effect of corporal punishment. Schools have been identified as places where violence against children is perpetuated mainly in the form of corporal punishment, despite it being against the law (Burton 2008a). After working for more than ten years on creating environments conducive to teaching and learning, the Independent Projects Trust (IPT) (2001) wrote:

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Our many years of work in Kwa-Zulu Natal have shown that the most humble school, in the most disadvantaged area, with limited access to resources, can still function effectively if the school principal shows commitment and dedication to the task and is able to gather a critical mass of like-minded people around him/her. Conversely, problems experienced within many dysfunctional schools can often be directly traced to negative and incompetent school management structures. Clear evidence of poor management skills is the continued use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary tool: this despite the fact it is illegal. (p. 1).

Burton (2008a) found that teachers commonly use corporal punishment to discipline learners maintaining that there is no other effective method to control learner behaviour. The abolition of corporal punishment is seen as an aggravating factor since some teachers are of the view that they were not empowered to implement rules and regulations designed to instil discipline and promote a culture conducive to teaching and learning (Netshitangani, 2011). These views are not limited to teachers only but are commonly shared and expressed by parents who feel government's policies and laws against corporal punishment inhibit their ability to discipline their children. A national survey carried out on attitudes of parents towards corporal punishment in 2005 found that 57% of parents were in favour of corporal punishment (smacking their children) with 60% of this group confirming having beaten their child with a belt, stick or other object (Richter & Dawes, 2008).

Corporal punishment was found to be tolerated in certain religions and cultures to the extent that implementing alternatives to corporal punishment in schools is not easy. A study conducted in 2010 found that corporal punishment is more prevalent in township and rural schools than in former white schools (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010) and there is also the belief that for some learners, corporal punishment remains the only option for instilling discipline (Makhasane & Chikoko, 2016). Across the country 70.1% of primary school learners and about 50% of secondary school learners reported having experienced corporal punishment, administered by either the principal or a teacher (Burton, 2008a). The combined figure for primary and secondary schools stood at 47.5% (Burton, 2008a) and by 2012, this figure increased to 49.8% (Leoschut, 2013). In Gauteng schools, there has been a decline in reported cases of corporal punishment – from 16.7% in 2011 to 3.3% in 2014 (StatsSA, 2015c). In a press statement the chief operating officer of the SACE, Tshedi Dipholo, revealed

that in the six months preceding April 2016 there had been a spike in corporal punishment cases with 40 new cases against teachers reported to the Council for investigation and prosecution where applicable (Mabena, 2016).

According to Burton (2008a), there is a strong correlation between the levels of corporal punishment and learner violence in the same school. Research evidence show that apart from injury and death that may arise from corporal punishment (Mathews, Abrahams, Jewkes, Martin & Lombard. 2012), in the long term, adults who were subjected to maltreatment in childhood were at significantly higher risk of social, physical and mental health problems (Burton, 2008a; Fang, et al., 2016; Felitti, et al., 1998). This includes increased substance abuse, aggression, the likelihood of acts of violence (Gershof, 2013), and difficulties with interpersonal relationships (Mathews, Jewkes & Abrahams, 2011).

According to the researcher, corporal punishment administered by teachers violates children's rights to safety and protection and predisposes children to mental health problems and the acting out of more serious forms of physical assault in later life. The fact that violence is tolerated and cultivated in some schools is extremely worrying and it confirms that policy and the threat of prosecution is not a deterrent. Government must make sure teachers and principals are familiar with alternatives to corporal punishment if we are to make any headway in transforming schools into places where interaction is based on mutual respect rather than fear.

Lastly, the safety and integrity of buildings and facilities surfaced in the literature as an important factor in providing safe spaces and achieving learner outcomes, which according to the DOE (2008c):

> If well maintained and managed, they [school buildings] provide conducive
>
> environments that translate into quality education. If well maintained and utilised,
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> they can realise substantial efficiency gains. It can also deepen national and sector
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> values of school community relationships and community ownership of schools.
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> (p. 43).

Township schools are quite vulnerable to unsafe conditions and threats of violence, in most part due to their location around informal settlements where there are limited resources, few basic services and poor infrastructure. It is argued that the first step towards ensuring school

safety and security is taking care of the basic safety features of the school's physical environment. This in turn will reduce or prevent safety threats or risks in the school thus allowing the school to focus on and address the school's psycho-social safety needs like bullying on the playgrounds (Xaba, 2006 & 2012). The physical environment includes all campus buildings such as stairways, balconies, walkways/passages, outbuildings, and the school grounds, which include fencing and gates, trees and grass, drainage, and emergency vehicle access. (Xaba, 2006).

Schools in townships are generally housed in old buildings in need of large scale renovations when compared to schools in the suburbs. In addition, township schools also have fewer general workers, to take care of school buildings and facilities, than their suburban counterparts (Xaba, 2012). As such, principals and SGBs in township schools are at a disadvantage when compared to schools in the suburbs. There is a growing body of literature, according to Uline and Tschannen Moran (2008), which provides evidence of a relationship between school building adequacy and learner achievement. While facilities' management is not well explored in South Africa yet, its significance to school functionality is recognised worldwide to the extent that some of the authorities have dedicated units to take charge of looking after and maintaining these facilities. (Akram, et al., 2004; Alberta Learning Facilities Branch, 2004; Florida Department of Education, 2004; Victoria State Government Department of Education and Training, 2006). Clean and well-maintained buildings are regarded as an indicator of an effective school because they form part of, and contribute to, a well-disciplined, secure and wholesome learning environment (Astor, Benbenishty & Estrada, 2009; Young, Green, Roehrich-Patrick, Joseph & Gibson. 2003).

One conclusion that can be drawn from the literature on school violence thus far is that school violence is context specific and therefore one cannot adopt a one-size-fits-all approach to address this phenomenon. In order to respond meaningfully to this contextual situation, one is reliant on gathering credible data or information to understand, plan and execute strategies to arrest school-based violence. Regrettably, while incidents of violence are reported at various levels (school, police, community structures etc.) there is no coherent system for recording and processing such cases. This paucity of accurate data on school violence is not confined to South Africa alone and was identified as a global problem (Debarbieux, 2007) at an Experts' Meeting hosted by the United Nations Education and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in June 2007. It was found that this lack of data on school violence exists between countries in the North and the South and that it was only around 2006 that mechanisms were

established to commence with recording and tracking empirical data on levels of school violence at a global level.

In support of the claim that there is a lack of credible data on school violence, Griggs (2004) found little to no consistency in how violent incidents in South Africa (Limpopo and Eastern Cape provinces) were recorded and in some schools such records were non-existent. As a result, the safety records of most schools appeared strikingly good. However, when corroborating information given by principals with that of teachers and learners, Griggs found that serious incidents such as murder, rape and assault were not reported by principals during their interviews. This led to what Griggs calls "a culture of silence" where cases are swept under the carpet because the principal fears being shown up as a bad manager (Department of Social Development et al., 2012). As a counterpoint, the absence of clear recording and reporting guidelines from the DBE was raised by principals as the main reason for poor recording and reporting.

Finally, it has been established that in cases where principals are complicit in violating the rights of learners they tend to minimise the incident or choose to ignore it. Two learners had this to say about their principals (Mafora, 2013):

.... boys always harass us about our attire, our looks and say nasty things to us or touch our breasts and bums and so forth. Sometimes a person would insist that you love him by force and threatens you. When you report it to the principal he just laughs and ask what is wrong to be loved.... (p. 9).

Our principal is not a bad person. His problem is to protect bad teachers. For instance, he is aware that some teachers still use corporal punishment and call us funny names……. some learners are repeatedly proposed [propositioned] by teachers and victimized if they refuse, but the principal says he cannot do anything without evidence…… (p. 9).

According to the researcher, if poor recording and low levels of reporting continue we can be certain that school violence will continue unabated because it will be difficult to develop interventions that are effective both as a response and /or as a means of prevention – reliable

data is critical for understanding the full extent of the problem. In addition, due to the prevalence of violence, principals are likely to lose control over their management functions at school thereby exposing their school to the risk of becoming dysfunctional. Lamprecht (2004), a renowned child protection activist, is of the view that while schools are happy to report cases of abuse that occur outside the school "when it happens inside the schools it's a whole other story - there's a big cover-up" (p. 1). The role of school leadership in making schools safe therefore needs to be placed under closer scrutiny.

2.3   Leading and managing safe schools

School violence is recognised as a major contributor to the "lack of a culture of teaching and learning" (Christie, 1998; DOE, and Department of Safety & Security, 2002) or put differently, school violence prevents learners from enjoying their constitutional right to education. This situation has the potential to create a nation that is capability- deprived and in need of change.

Change is closely associated with good leadership (Cuban, 1988), and schools rely on principals to lead the change necessary to ensure schools become safe teaching and learning sites. Despite the recognition of the importance of school leadership and management in schools, a systematic review of the literature on school management found very few sources on the topic and none that provides a thorough view based on empirical work (Bush, et al., 2005). Since 2007 there has been some growth in empirical evidence being generated in South Africa, but it remains inadequate to draw firm conclusions about many aspects of school leadership and management. Areas identified needing further research, include, *inter alia*, managing physical and financial resources and managing teaching and learning but, in particular, substantial evidence is required to show why most South African schools continue to under-perform (Bush, & Glover, 2016). Likewise, there is very little research in South Africa in the area of safe schools (Burton, 2008a).

Hoadley (2007) and Moloi (2007) support Bush's finding but go further to say that despite this problem, of school management and leadership, there is increasing awareness of its importance for local schools. To add to this, Sullivan (2010) is of the opinion that since very little evaluation is undertaken to correlate success in leadership courses for principals with success in schools, we have to rely mainly on anecdotal evidence. In a study conducted on the relationship between school culture and violence in the Eastern Cape, principals highlighted the importance of developing clear policies, securing teacher support for learners in difficulty, and involving learners in violence management (Barnes et al., 2012). Singh and Surujlal (2010), discussing the role of educators and administrators in managing risk,

concluded that educators and administrators are not fully aware of or do not fully understand the implications of their legal responsibility relative to certain activities.

Bloch (2009) acknowledges all these compounding challenges but feels the situation should not be used as a reason for complacency but rather, to serve as motivation and encouragement to get all role players to build a body of knowledge and set up systems to address the shortcomings in education. Fortunately, the relationship between safe schools and educational leadership and management has long been established by various authors (Griggs 2004; IPT, 2001; Sisson 1995). The IPT (2001) stated that "a school that is poorly managed not only fails its learners in terms of academic achievement, but also contributes to the spiral of violence" (p. 4).

Notwithstanding the challenges highlighted above, the overlap between management and leadership has generated great contemporary interest in most countries in the developed world. In South Africa, various initiatives reflect this notion and can be found, for example, in the establishment of the Mathew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGSLG) (Bush, 2007) whose mission it is to "…provide the highest quality training programmes for school governors, principals, teachers and parents…" (MGSLG, 2017). In addition, tertiary institutions such as the Universities of the Witwatersrand and Johannesburg also offer supporting programmes to assist in building a new, and strengthening the existing cadre of school managers and leaders. Blum (2005) sums it up as "in any organisation, there is no substitute for capable, motivational leadership. Schools are no exception." (p. 8).

2.3.1 New management and governance model

The school management model prior to 1994 was a hierarchical model driven from national, provincial and district education departments. Principals in black schools had very little or no autonomy and were subjected to the control of school inspectors who conducted regular, often unannounced, visits to schools. However, principals were not expected to account to a structure like a SGB, and in most cases principals ran their schools with little or no parent-teacher participation. For the most part, parents, teachers and students played a supportive role to the principal and were hardly involved in policy formulation and decision making in the school (Looyen, 2000).

This archaic model of management and governance was ineffective in responding to the demands of the new South Africa and enjoyed very little favour among the majority black community (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2002). Eradicating disparities and inequalities in the

education system, which resulted from apartheid, required a different structure of school organisation and system of governance, which would be both workable and transformative (*SASA 1996*). As such, a more inclusive and democratic approach to school governance, in line with government's overall objectives to institutionalise democracy throughout the country, was outlined in the *SASA 1996,* and described by the DOE (1997) as follows: "just like the country has a government, the school that your child and other children in the community attend needs a 'government' to serve the school and the community" (p. 2).

The direct implication of this governance model for principals is that while they are fully accountable for what happens at the school, they no longer have free reign in deciding what and how things have to be done at school – the responsibility for managing teaching and learning has to be shared with SMTs, HODs and teachers (Buchel & Hoberg, 2009). Teachers manage curriculum implementation in class, HODs must make sure teaching and learning happens across various learning areas while SMTs, with the principal, have a whole-school role. Mc Lennan and Thurlow (2003) regard this as "an emerging paradigm - a growing emphasis on building relationships in education" (p. 6).

This participative model, applicable to all public schools, gave more prominence to SMTs and provided for the establishment of SGBs (Bush, 2007) whose primary obligation is to shape and influence what is offered to learners and to ensure that each learner is able to achieve his/her full potential in the education system (Walters & Richardson, 1997). Considering the position of trust held by the SGB to effect proper learning (Nkosana, 2003; Xaba, 2004) one would expect it is important for its members to possess the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their duties effectively (Radoni, 2010).

It is generally accepted that SGBs in most poor schools lack capacity and are unclear about their roles. As a result, principals often find themselves in a position where they have to guide or train SGB members in their roles and responsibilities and it is not uncommon for SGBs to refer authority back to the principal, thus preserving the status quo (Van Wyk, & Lemmer, 2002). Given that most principals have not been trained in this new model of governance there are situations of disharmony among principals, parents and SGBs (Heystek, 2004; Van Wyk, & Lemmer, 2002). To compound matters further, there is also contestation between SGBs and SMTs – SGBs accuse SMTs of poor communication and failure to implement SGB decisions while SMTs accuse SGBs of being unclear of their role in relation to SMTs and the school's spending priorities (Ministerial Review Committee on Education, 2004).

It is clear from this scenario that principals find themselves in an untenable situation and yet they remain essential internal change agents considering the social, cultural and economic contexts within which the school operates (Huber, 2004). Since principals carry the aspirations of many stakeholders, it is not uncommon for school principals to be bombarded with advice from politicians, officials, academics and consultants about how to lead and manage their schools. Unfortunately, most of this advice is not based on a proper theoretical foundation at all (Bloch, 2009; Bush, 1999; Bush, 2003.). Recognising that a well-trained cadre of school principals is absolutely necessary if management responsibilities and school functionality are to be realised (Bloch, 2009), the DBE, in partnership with various institutions, developed leadership and management programmes. These include programmes such as the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) and the Wits Executive Management Course, among others. Since the start of the ACE programme there has been increased awareness that the functions of leadership should be practiced by a broader range of people in schools and in their review of the ACE programme, Bush, Kiggundu & Moorosi, (2011) found the following:

> The flexibility and initiative required to lead and manage schools in periods of rapid change suggest that preparation should go beyond training principals to implement the requirements of the hierarchy to developing rounded and confident leaders who are able to engage all school stakeholders in the process of school improvement for the benefit of learners and their communities. (p. 39).

Apart from the above courses, various leadership and management models exist in education with many assuming that "transformational" leadership is the appropriate model for leadership development in South Africa (Mokgolo, Mokgolo & Modiba, 2012). According to Bush and Glover (2009), in post-apartheid South Africa there has been extensive use of transformational language in the policy discourse to transform the education system, deal with male domination at management levels and to enhance opportunities for empowerment (Singh & Lokotsch, 2005). There is however limited evidence of the impact of transformational leadership in South African schools (Bush & Glover, 2016).

Internationally however, the model most closely associated with achieving student outcomes is the instructional leadership approach, which according to Hoadley (2007), South African principals have little experience of. Bush and Heystek (2006) found that principals are mainly concerned with policy issues, human resource management and financial management as opposed to getting involved with teaching and learning.

Ten leadership and six management models were identified by Bush (2011) with three of these models i.e. instructional, transformational and distributed leadership, having a special meaning in the South African literature. These models are discussed in the section below.

2.4   Instructional, transformational and distributed leadership

Instructional leadership became an important focus point in the 1980s and while its importance with regard to running an effective school is acknowledged, it is seldom prioritised. Instructional leaders involve themselves with setting clear goals, getting involved with instruction, managing the curriculum, and monitoring and evaluating teachers. More recently, the definition was expanded to include deeper involvement in the core business of schooling, which refers to managing teaching and learning (Jenkins, 2009).

This leadership model is recognised as possibly one of the most important activities of principals and other school leaders. According to Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu and Van Rooyen (2010), international research shows the two main factors influencing the quality of education are leadership and classroom practice, because according to Robinson (2007a) "the closer leaders are to the core business of teaching and learning, the more likely they are to make a difference to students" (p. 21).

Hoadley (2007) confirms that in South Africa "there is consensus around the importance of leadership to improve student outcomes" (p. 1) and that instructional leadership makes a significant difference to learning outcomes.

Managing teaching and learning (MTL) is a core function of a principal according to the South African Standard for School Leadership (2004) and has now been incorporated as a core module in the national ACE School Leadership programme to enhance principals' leadership skills. This qualification, as mandated by the Council of Education Ministers in 2011, must be obtained by all new principals within three years of being appointed (Bush, 2013) and is likely to have an impact on how principals execute their leadership and management roles nationally. The NDP also supports the implementation of minimum qualifications for principals as a strategy to realise its vision for 2030 (NPC, 2011). Indications, based on a study by Bush and Heystek (2006), are that despite the emphasis on managing teaching and learning, principals did not conceptualise their role as "instructional leaders" nor did they have an in-depth understanding of what "instructional leadership" means (Phillips, 2014).

To complicate matters further there is no single clear global definition of what instructional leadership is and how it relates to what a principal is supposed to do (Geleta, 2015). As a result, principals feel ill-equipped and retreat to their offices to carry out administrative work and leave managing teaching and learning to HODs. HODs tend to do classroom observation (managing teaching and learning) on an ad-hoc basis often citing time constraints or the persistent belief that classroom observation is discouraged by teacher unions (Bush et al., 2010). Many principals in South Africa were found to lack "will and skill" to lead instruction (Hallinger, 2003) and as a result direct involvement in instructional matters was very limited (Kruger, 2003b). Compared to other leadership development models, and after surveying different leadership approaches, instructional leadership seems to have had a notably more positive effect on student outcomes than transformational leadership. For this reason, notwithstanding the criticisms directed at instructional leadership, the study drew on the theory of instructional leadership development to guide the research. This model is discussed in more detail under the theory section in this chapter.

While instructional leadership is well known and practiced in South Africa, transformational leadership has become more fashionable (Robinson, 2007b). Transformational leadership gained momentum in the 1990s and aims to build and sustain an organizational culture that focuses on ongoing improvement of educational programmes, teachers' capacities and skills, and student outcomes (Alger, 2010). Transformational leadership, according to Telford (1996), "… incorporates members of an organisation pursuing shared beliefs through combined efforts" (p. 12).

Transformation has been, and continues to be, a buzzword in South Africa and this extends to education as well. The new school governance model endowed SGBs with substantial decision-making powers, thus replacing centralised decision making authorities in a variety of spheres. The national DOE (1998) felt that school leaders, such as the principal, teachers, parents or governing body, needed to transform the previously top-down, autocratic decision-making hierarchy to facilitate a more horizontal, participatory style of leadership. The principle of such an approach is the democratic participation of all stakeholders engaging in collective decision making. According to Jovanovic and Ciric (2016) the transformational leadership model helps with principal acceptance by teachers, it creates a positive school climate, promotes job satisfaction, and enhances quality teaching and school performance.

In this model, the leader makes a vital power shift from power vested in a position to power vested in people – power is spread between people in the organisation so that collective

ownership can be felt (Whittaker, 1993). This, in turn, allocates responsibilities to staff, parents and learners, which makes them feel valued. The approach is known as moving from power to empowerment. Moving to empowerment does not mean handing power over to anyone who wants it – sharing of power comes with being fully accountable and taking responsibility otherwise direction will be lost if power is relinquished (Singh & Lokotsch, 2005). The role of the principal therefore, according to Telford (1996), becomes one of being a "facilitator, inspirational motivator, communicator, team builder, problem solver, information sharer, ideas promoter, conflict negotiator and resource finder" (p. 128). Singh & Lokotsch (2005) found that through selective transfer of power to stakeholders, leaders can create an illusion of equal democratic participation towards transformational leadership. In this way, rather than becoming a facilitator of power, power and influence remain in the hands of those traditionally entrusted with it. As mentioned earlier, evidence of the impact of transformational leadership in South Africa is limited and can be best summed up as follows (Singh & Lokotsch, 2005):

> The education system of past years has made it very difficult to change because of the comfort zone of bureaucratic structures. Principals, deputies, heads of departments and even teachers find it difficult to move from this comfort zone, even if it means improving education for the learners. (p. 286).

The distributed leadership model followed in 2000 and the term is often used interchangeably with "shared leadership," "team leadership," and "democratic leadership." This approach has garnered considerable international attention and suggests that school leadership involves multiple leaders (Spillane, 2005) while others use it to define a way of thinking about the practice of school leadership (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, Halverson and Diamond, 2001 & 2004).

Distributed leadership is not about leaders' roles or functions. It is about leadership practice – leadership practice is regarded as the product resulting from the interactions between different leaders (and followers) and their situation. For example, leadership practice used in monitoring and evaluating teaching may involve the principal, and deputy principal, who agree on and develop a comprehensive routine for monitoring and evaluating teaching practice. The deputy principal conducts regular formative evaluations and provides feedback to teachers while the principal does his/her share during biannual classroom visits. By bringing together both sets of information gathered independently, the two leaders are able to get an understanding of teachers' practices, which amounts to defining collective practice for monitoring and evaluating teaching (Spillane, 2005).

Despite shared leadership, team leadership and democratic leadership being used interchangeably with distributed leadership, they are not synonymous with distributed leadership. Depending on the situation, a distributed perspective allows for shared leadership. Team leadership involves team members who share leadership roles in order to meet certain objectives as well as building the team's capacity and resources. It does not necessarily support a distributed perspective where the emphasis is on leadership practice that emerges from the interaction between leaders, followers and situation. Likewise, a distributed perspective allows for leadership that can be democratic or autocratic (Spillane, 2005).

Distributed leadership has been regarded by many teachers as a "magic fix" for schools – this is not true because it is a conceptual tool for thinking about leadership and not a blueprint for effective leadership or how it should be practiced. Due to a lack of empirical evidence it is unclear whether distributed leadership promotes instructional improvement and improves student achievement. However, this is not crucial because what is necessary for instructional improvement and learner achievement is not that leadership *is* distributed but rather *how* it is distributed (Spillane, 2005).

Regardless of the ongoing debate on the utility of distributed leadership, it has gained prominence in the literature because, according to Hatcher (2005), distributed leadership engages a wider group of staff, which collectively offers more diverse sets of skills and experience necessary to drive change in a world that has become quite complex. It opens up leadership opportunities to all those who have relevant expertise and because the model is more inclusive, the collective wisdom is regarded as making it more effective. However, Lumby (2013a) cautions that there are implications for including more people in leadership, especially in relation to power. Those who hold power can make this model look like leadership is being distributed because of the numbers but this can be misleading. The educational leadership literature does not delve into who holds power and why in great detail. It is generally accepted that school leaders do not intentionally set out to marginalise or favour certain individuals over others and yet there are examples of women and black and ethnic minorities being excluded from leadership positions (Lumby, 2013a). This is something to guard against because if issues of race, gender and other characteristics are not raised, inclusion in leadership may be prevented and inequality perpetuated (Martin & Collinson, 2002).

Williams (2011) and Mafora (2013) are of the view that it is not easy to implement distributed leadership in traditional hierarchical settings and further point to the unintended and

dysfunctional consequences of the transformational agenda. With regard to the South African context Williams (2011) had this to say:

> The majority of South African schools, function in contexts which are generally not conducive to distributed leadership. The transformation of the South African education system since 1994 has resulted in what one school principal referred to as "policy overload." In an effort to deal with the transformational initiative, educators have generally become strained and spent, and increasingly unmotivated and frustrated. (p. 190).

Globally (including in South Africa) there is a shift towards adopting standards for school leadership and a greater appreciation of the importance of contextual and other factors for leadership effectiveness and school organisational capacity. To boost school effectiveness, the Education Minister, Angie Motshekga proposed assessing principals in poor performing schools (schools with a matric pass rate of 40% or below) and if poor performance could be attributed to principals' poor managerial skills, they could be demoted (Mdletshe & Memela, 2012).

Minister Motshekga confirmed that the DBE was adamant and would go ahead with competency tests for aspirant principals because according to the Deputy Minister of Education, Enver Surty (Govender, 2017), "there is empirical evidence that schools that are functional and effective are usually headed by principals who are very competent and skilled" (p. 2). There is no indication as to how and from where the DBE would source appropriate skills to fill vacant posts should principals be demoted, and it is likely that the situation at schools could become worse. It appears that like principals, the DBE is equally ambiguous about what it will take to make schools effective. Based on evidence gathered from schools that were found to be effective we've learned that these schools demonstrate the following characteristics by (Christie, Butler & Potterton, 2007):

- Focusing on their central tasks of teaching and learning with a sense of purpose, responsibility and commitment.
- Having strong organisational capacity, including leadership (in various forms) and management and professionalism is valued.

- Carrying out tasks with confidence and competence – a good work-ethic and aspiring to achieve and to be successful.
- Having strong internal accountability systems to support the demands of external accountability especially in relation to matric results (p. 104).

These findings are encouraging and provide us with a major head start in restoring schools to the safe havens they ought to and can be. The challenge that remains is whether there is a single leadership model that would be able to respond meaningfully to the different circumstances prevailing in schools, but it is hoped that the individual and collective efforts of researchers, managers, students and teachers could yield some answers (Christie, 2010a) in restoring a teaching and learning culture and making sure learners and teachers are safe.

2.5 Theory towards a conceptual framework

The literature shows that violence is complex and context-specific, which means that there is no single solution and that violence presents differently in different settings. In South Africa, violence is identified as "rampant" and while this is not unique to South Africa, it is the intensity of the violence that accompanies the crime that sets the country apart from others (Altbeker, 2007). A number of arguments and counter-arguments are presented in the literature as to why South Africa has become such a violent society with no clear solution being offered. Some of these arguments are built on theories that suggest exposure to violence breeds violence, inequality as a result of apartheid has created a generation of angry people for whom violence seems to work and failure by the criminal justice system to effectively deal with crime and violence gives rise to lawlessness and free reign to criminals. Schools were found to mirror the situation in their communities, but programmes aimed at addressing school violence often neglected to take into account a social justice approach in dealing with factors beyond the school fence.

There is no shortage of good policies and legislation to curb violence and promote good quality education - in fact South Africa is well-known for having some of the best policies in the world but also for falling short at the level of implementation. This can be demonstrated by looking at the abolition of corporal punishment in schools in terms of the *SASA 1996*. Even though it was outlawed, this practice continues unabated and to the extent that, apart from the physical and emotional scars, some learners are reported in the media to have been injured, paralysed or died as a result (Mashaba, 2017). The consequence of ignoring or being unable to enforce policies have severe implications for school safety such as being complicit in fuelling a violent culture instead of being a social change agent of society.

The literature also shows that government has a constitutional obligation to ensure teaching and learning happens in a safe and secure environment but has thus far been finding it difficult to do so. Government charged principals with the responsibility, as instructional leaders, to create schools that function in an environment conducive to teaching and learning so that education outcomes can be achieved. It is evident from the literature that principals enjoy very little support from the education department nor do they (principals) have the knowledge or skills to function as expected. The ability of government to deliver on its constitutional mandate therefore, is compromised and amounts to grave social injustice, which in many ways contributes to a society that is capability deprived.

While initiatives exist for government departments such as Education, Police and Community Safety to work collaboratively to address school safety, the linkages are quite weak and misaligned. This leads to a lack of credible data to inform and evaluate joint and independent initiatives aimed at strengthening the resolve to provide teaching and learning in safe and secure environments. School safety is therefore often treated as an add-on and is not recognised as a barrier to achieving and sustaining a culture of teaching and learning. Principals must take note that school safety is a prerequisite for achieving education outcomes and not the other way round.

The international literature can be considered rich relative to leadership development and school safety but thus far it was not considered to combine these under the umbrella of a safe school to achieve education outcomes. The literature on school violence doesn't cover or extend far enough into looking at strategies to counter school violence in schools and likewise, the literature on leadership and management development does not go beyond the technical aspects of school safety such as fire hazards and the structural integrity of buildings among others.

Locally there has been an emergence of literature on leadership development and school safety (Chikoko, et al, 2014) but it follows a similar trend to that of international literature. School safety is regarded as an operational/technical issue instead of a social justice issue, which not only broadens the lens on the issues but also provides principals with a different sense of purpose (civil duty as opposed to professional duty) when dealing with school safety. Therefore, according to the researcher, the idea of a "safe school" that is premised on what the literature presents under school violence and leadership development is not robust enough

because the literature falls short of taking into account the complexity associated with schools in South Africa.

Unlike other parts of the world, the legacy effects of apartheid, which still linger in the country, pose a particular challenge for school leadership in dealing with school safety. Poverty-effects present themselves in classrooms through learners who are hungry and hardly in a state of mind to focus on their schooling (Bloch, 2009; Spaull, 2015). In addition to this, patriarchy, cultural, and social practices are some of the factors that expose girl learners to further abuse by male teachers who demand sexual favours in return for good grades (SACE, 2016). The vulnerability of learners in South African schools is fuelled by much more than what may be the case elsewhere in the world – schools have to contend with the legacy of unequal education, persistent conditions of poverty, social inequality, violence, drug abuse, malnutrition and poor health (Witten, 2017). Hence, the situation in South Africa can be regarded as being more severe than in other parts of the world.

The next section will outline and discuss the three components of the theoretical framework followed by the conceptual framework.

2.5.1   Effective/Instructional Leadership

This component of the theoretical framework is based on instructional/effective leadership development theory discussed earlier in the chapter. Principals are regarded as a key ingredient to school effectiveness since it is the head of the school who is expected to use "tools of culture" to build an ethos of collective responsibility for the achievement of school objectives (Bipath and Moyo, 2016; Busher and Saran, 1995; Duignan and McPherson, 1992). In the broader scope of school leadership development, the literature talks about instructional leadership as being best suited to creating effective schools (Brookover and Lezotte, 1982; Mestry, Moonsammy-Koopasammy and Schmidt, 2013) but there is very little information on how principals can deal with school violence, which we know can lead to deprivation of a good education.

A key challenge for school leadership in our context is to create the conditions for teaching and learning in order to support development. The development needs in South Africa, according to the NDP (NPC, 2011), are huge and the legacy of apartheid still thwarts efforts to move the country forward, especially in the field of education. Much of the available leadership theory does not address these kinds of issues (legacy of apartheid) because school management and leadership development theory in South Africa comes primarily from

countries such as England, the USA, Canada and Australia (Christie, 2010c). These are developed countries that can be regarded as stable democracies, which contextually, as far as education is concerned, are very different to South Africa. Bush et al. (2005) found during a review of available research on school management and leadership development that most of the research was not conceptually rich and that the theory was not applicable to the local context. As a result, there is very little information on leading schools in post-conflict democracies such as South Africa (Hoadley & Ward, 2008) where the context, even after more than twenty-three years of democracy, is still shaped by high levels of inequality and poverty. Unless local conditions are taken into account there is a risk of complicating matters for principals rather than making their lives easier (Christie, 2010c) and as such, leading and managing safe schools in our context needs to be approached differently.

Schools are central to and not insulated from the political, economic and social tremors in the community or the country (Witten, 2017). That means schools are complex organisations and therefore, leading and managing public schools in our context is not an easy task. Due to legacy effects of apartheid children show up in class hungry, under-nourished and traumatised by violence and the effects of drugs (Witten, 2017). This reality is often ignored and not emphasised enough and it's therefore important to consider what it is that the literature does not address. The traditional understanding of leading and managing schools, and even that of instructional leadership, is not enough to be able to understand what leading and managing safe schools in our context entails. In the majority of cases, principals fail to integrate a holistic approach (social justice approach) into their leadership style and as a result tend to overlook the broader issues related to school safety. Consequently, attaining education outcomes and establishing a culture of teaching and learning becomes very difficult. This gap creates an opportunity for us to bring in a social justice perspective in order to augment, expand and contextualise how we understand leading and managing safe schools in our particular context.

Given the rapid changes that are occurring in education, there is a need to empower and strengthen the management practice of school principals – especially in disadvantaged schools (Msila, 2011). These educational change initiatives place significant emphasis on effective leadership and management of schools since a well-managed, orderly school environment lays the foundation for improved student outcomes (Hopkins, 2003). In South Africa, if schools are to provide the best possible education, schools will need effective leaders and managers (Bush, 2007). In essence, this translates to what Sisson (1995), and other leading authors in the field have identified as the management and leadership functions at schools having a direct relationship with creating a safe school environment which, in turn

contributes to whole school development. While there are many schools that strive for effectiveness, a number of them are struggling and fall short of attaining the envisaged outcomes (Msila, 2011). The tendency is for principals to delegate the role of instructional leader to HODs (Chikoko et al., 2015) in exchange for playing a more managerial and administrative role (Bush & Heystek, 2006). Among the many tasks performed by principals only one-tenth of their time is dedicated to providing instructional leadership (Stronge, 1988). Principals usually cite "lots of paperwork" and not having enough available time as reasons for not taking on the role of instructional leader (Flath, 1989; Fullan, 1991; Mestry, Moonsammy-Koopasammy et al., 2013).

Instructional leadership is meant to improve student performance, but according to MacNeill, Cavanagh and Silcox (2005), instructional leadership does not correlate with students' learning output. This is because the word "instructional" is associated with power, which can negatively affect a student's understanding, learning and democratic decision making. It is seen as a power-based transaction where instructional leadership is regarded as the sole domain of principals. The emphasis should be on *learning* and not *instruction* because the underlying interest to consider is how learners learn best. Furthermore, instructional leadership is seen as portraying the principal as the centre of expertise, power and authority (Hallinger, 2003) while most school management models, like in South Africa, are calling for shared leadership and power (*SASA, 1996*). It is not surprising that in North America, during the 1990s, practitioners called for terms such as shared leadership, teacher leadership, distributed leadership and transformational leadership instead of instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2003).

One of the main reasons given for failing schools is that principals are not appropriately skilled and trained in school management and leadership (Flath, 1989; Fullan, 1991; Mathibe, 2007). Principals, according to Mestry and Singh (2007), are appointed based on their teaching record rather than their leadership ability and many of them work in climates that are far from conducive to learning and teaching.

Principals who were found to be effective leaders were those who had not stopped learning because, as Fullan (1997) asserts, effective principals are perpetual learners and "when it comes to learning, effective leaders are greedy" (p. 39). Principals who continued to learn beyond Teacher College were more effective than those who stopped learning. Because leadership is shared, apart from making sure their own development needs are met, principals must also ensure that the development needs of staff are met to keep up with the rapid speed

of change in education. (Chikoko et al., 2015; Lumby, 2003). This is not only important for keeping up with change in education but also, according to Lumby (2003), "staff must show the importance of lifelong learning by their own involvement in ongoing self-development" (p. 139 & 140). Recognising the need to learn perpetually is the first step towards reaching the goals of effective school management and it is common cause that failing schools and organisations usually have stagnant managers who are not visionaries and lifelong learners (Msila, 2011).

One of the cornerstones of effective leadership combines values and purpose with intra and interpersonal knowledge (Leithwood et al., 1999). This is what drives the understanding of leaders to consult and collaborate broadly in order to effectively manage dilemmas (created by competing interests) both internal and external to their work environments (Tampoe, 1998; Teacher Training Agency. 1998). Therefore, successful leaders not only build relationships with the school community, give direction, organise and monitor but they also emulate values and practices in line with those of the school (Sergiovanni, 1995) so that "purposes which may have initially seemed to be separate, become fused" (p. 119). In conclusion Fullan (1997) offers the following advice for principals:

> The advice for principals, in a nutshell, is to get into the habit of and situations for
>
> constant learning. Skill and know-how are as important as attitude. This means
>
> access to new ideas and situations, active experimentation, examination of
>
> analogous and dissimilar organisations, reflective practice, collegial learning,
>
> coaching in relation to practice and more. (p. 46).

2.5.2   Freedom from fear and need (personal safety)

Given the size and scope of the school violence phenomenon throughout the country, the personal safety of learners, teachers and principals cannot be guaranteed notwithstanding government's legal duty to do so. The safety threats stem mainly from two sources – school premises (school buildings, equipment and facilities) and the environment (in the school and surrounding community) where violence or threats of violence exist.

A lack of freedom for a person to make choices that can lead to a better life has a direct bearing on what a person is actually able to achieve. According to Sen (2003), central to the ability of a person to live a better life are core concepts of *functionings* and *capabilities* which

work together. *Functionings* are recognized as a state of "being and doing" like being well-nourished and having shelter while *capabilities* are recognised as a set of *functionings* a person has access to, like a good education. Translating Sen's theory into an action for safe schools, *functionings* are the component that create safe learning spaces (classrooms) while *capabilities* provide for the access to and delivery of a good education. Providing for physical safety is important (providing freedom from fear) but it would serve very little purpose if learners, due to the effects of poverty, were expected to be taught on an empty stomach. Poverty, according to Sen is one of the "unfreedoms" that leads to deprivation. For this reason, it is incumbent on principals to ensure indigent learners have access to a feeding scheme (freedom from need) and/or are able to apply for exemption from paying school fees. Government therefore has a responsibility to provide schools that are safe and caring, equipped with mechanisms that will promote the rights and wellbeing of all children, and to provide quality education in a safe and healthy environment through well-trained teachers supported by strong leadership and management capabilities (DOE, & UNICEF, 2008).

It was hoped by many ordinary South Africans that education, as an engine of progress, would drive the aspiration of "a better life for all" that is embedded in the *Constitution 1996* but generally, schools have not improved the life chances of the socio-economically disadvantaged in significant ways (Chisholm, 2004). Considering the high levels of violence in schools it can be additionally concluded that fear for their personal safety, among learners and teachers alike, is an inhibiting factor to teaching and learning. What complicates matters further is that the existing theory on school safety is mostly related to structural/physical conditions for learning and it does not adequately address the importance of setting the conditions to mitigate against fear and need. Unfortunately, the majority of schools in the system focus on the physical aspects of school safety, which prejudices many learners and contributes to a future scenario that is the antithesis of that envisaged by policy and the NDP.

There is sufficient evidence to confirm that effective teaching and learning can only take place in a safe and secure learning environment. In the case of South Africa, where education is a constitutional right, this implies that a safe learning environment is compulsory (Masitsa, 2011; Prinsloo, 2005; Trump, 2008; Xaba, 2006). Thro (2006) goes further to say that unless a learner is able to execute his/her right to education in a safe and secure environment, pursuing a quality education becomes meaningless.

In recognising that a safe school is a prerequisite for delivering an admirable quality education, in 2005, the DOE, in partnership with UNICEF, launched Child Friendly Schools (CFS) in 585

schools across the country. These schools are rights-based and inclusive in their management and governance approaches. They are community-centred and work in partnership with all relevant stakeholders to achieve a safe and protective school environment. These schools advocate healthy lifestyles and promote the values of gender sensitivity, equality and dignity for all (DOE & UNICEF, 2008). An evaluation in a sample of twenty-five schools, carried out using the implementation guidelines issued by the DOE (DOE & UNICEF, 2008), found that while most schools showed improvement overall, school safety was still an issue (UNICEF, 2010). In particular, 42% of students still felt unsafe on the route to and from school with only one in ten schools being able to provide physically and emotionally safe environments. Schools are therefore not addressing risks adequately so that learners can experience learning being free from fear and need.

2.5.3 Right to safe teaching and learning environments (social justice)

Social Justice theory is quite broad and according to the Center for Economic and Social Justice (CESJ, 2018) it includes economic justice. Social justice is the virtue which guides us to set up social institutions which when justly organised, provide us with what is good for the person, both individually and in our associations with others. It further places a personal responsibility on each of us to collaborate with others in the interest of the "common good" (CESJ, 2018). Furman and Shields (2005) regard *social justice* as a deliberate intervention that contests fundamental inequities that arise when one group uses power inappropriately over another. Goldfarb and Grinberg (2002) say social justice is the exercise of changing organisational arrangements by actively being involved in reclaiming, appropriating, sustaining and advancing inherent human rights of equity, equality and fairness in social, economic, educational and personal dimensions. Democratic societies are generally viewed as just where social justice forms an integral part of democratic life where equity, social justice and solidarity are pursued (Hytten, 2006).

The changes brought about by the democratic order in South Africa demanded that educational reforms be introduced and implemented so that the legacy effects of apartheid could be eradicated. For many communities however, due to prevailing conditions of poverty, high unemployment and inequality, education in the new dispensation has made very little difference to their lives (Witten, 2017). This notwithstanding that education is a constitutional right. The DBE acknowledged this shortcoming by stating that given the need to redress inequalities created by apartheid, failure by government to carry out this constitutional obligation would mean failing the nation (DOE, and Department of Safety and Security 2002). It is this failure that infringes on the rights of learners to be taught in safe learning

environments, which in turn amounts to an act of social injustice. What is needed is an approach that delivers education in a way that anchors education within a human rights framework to ensure government is compliant with the provisions set out in the *Constitution 1996.* Social justice theory therefore provides the lens through which the principal can see his/her role in educating communities about their rights, being accountable and restoring safe teaching and learning environments. A social justice approach therefore allows principals, as instructional leaders, to provide a stabilising or a corrective effect in the education system. In practice, this means managing and mitigating against those factors that threaten the delivery of a good quality education. Therefore, according to Cowan, Vaillancourt, Rossen, & Pollitt (2013), any effort to strengthen school safety should balance physical safety with psychological safety because by focusing more on physical safety (installing metal detectors and increasing armed response) one does not objectively improve school safety. In fact, students could feel less safe and more fearful in such high security environments, which undermines the goal of achieving safe teaching and learning environments. A social justice approach is therefore, according to the researcher, appropriate because it allows for combining reasonable physical security measures with efforts that enhance a positive school climate, which ultimately results in a safe school.

While the government has made some progress towards social and economic transformation, progress has been slow (NPC, 2011) and the enduring legacy effects of apartheid, such as poverty, violence, unemployment and inequality, still weigh heavily on schools, especially on township schools. This gives a different meaning to "school safety" in the South African context because violence is so rife and omnipresent that learners and teachers are exposed to constant risk. Many schools have therefore become places where learners genuinely live in fear. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, for them to acquire skills and knowledge and the effects of this state of affairs can be felt throughout the education system.

Failure by government to deliver basic services also impacts on the right to a safe teaching and learning environment. Poor service delivery has resulted in large-scale violent demonstrations in communities nationally, which result not only in violence but also prolonged disruptions in schools (IDASA, 2010). Basic services such as running water, sanitation and electricity are regarded as essential to a good quality of life and essential to promoting human well-being and dignity, which many communities unfortunately cannot lay claim to (StatsSA, 2017). Community protestors feel government is failing to pay attention to the needs of the poor and disadvantaged sectors of society and for as long as officials abuse their power (top-down) in this way, protests will continue (IDASA, 2010). This scenario does not bode well for

restoring safe teaching and learning environments and it is this abuse of power which, according to Furman and Shields (2005), amounts to an act of social injustice on the part of government. If schools and government are to make real this right to education, principals and teachers need to "activate" that right by making sure learners feel cared for enough and in ways that will free them from both the threats of violence and the effects of poverty.

To speed up transformation in education and the eradication of the apartheid legacy effects, the NDP was developed to ensure that by 2030, the legacy effects of apartheid no longer exist. Trevor Manuel, the chairperson of the NPC (NPC, 2011) summed up the spirit of the NDP as follows:

> We want our children and young people to have better life chances than we have. At the core of this plan is a focus on capabilities; the capabilities of people and of our country and of creating the opportunities for both. The capabilities that each person needs to live the life that they desire differs, but must include education and skills, decent accommodation, nutrition, safe communities, social security, transport and job opportunities. (Foreword).

Manuel's quote shows that the NDP draws extensively on the notion of capabilities which, alongside hard work and effort, enable people to live the lives they aspire to - a better life for all. Sen (2003) argues though that the most important thing when considering a person's quality of life is what he/she is actually able to achieve or do. Failure to restore safe teaching and learning environments will undermine the vision of the NDP in that learners' life chances will remain dire as they continue to seek relief from the poverty trap. Sen cites an example of a bicycle providing a means of mobility for most people but, a bicycle cannot do that for a person without legs irrespective of how much that person finds the bicycle delightful. He or she is still without transport and not able to move. Years of apartheid rule left very little, if anything, for black people to aspire to because the entire apartheid machinery was set on making sure black people remain capability-deprived. The NDP therefore wants to ensure that the current government does not make the same mistake.

While Sen's capability approach is regarded as relevant and appropriate for shaping the conceptual framework, and to make the argument for a social justice approach to school safety, his approach is by no means regarded as flawless. According to Wells (2016), Sen's

capability approach has come under fire by various scholars for being excessively individualistic because of its emphasis on individual effective freedom. Some critics see Sen's work as lacking interest in, and even at times openly hostile to communal values and ways of life because of a strict focus on individuals. They go further to say that his capability approach also lacks taking into account the impact one individual's freedom may have on others. In response, Sen says effective freedom has to do with people's ability to live a life that they have reason to value, which incorporates an ethical evaluation of the content of their options. It is not concerned only with increasing people's freedom as power.

Capability theorists and critics are also of the view that Sen's capability approach is under-theorised in terms of its content and structure and as such, makes it unsuitable as a theory of justice. According to them, Sen does not specify which capabilities are important or how they are to be distributed, but Sen argues that those are political decisions best left to society to decide. Some of the critics say it's hard to identify a goal that a just society should be aiming towards or to assess how well a society is doing without an objectively justified list of valuable capabilities related to the life "we have reason to want." Sen concedes that his capability approach is not a theory of justice but rather an approach to the evaluation of effective freedom (Wells, 2016).

Finally, it is widely acknowledged, as cited by Wells (2016), that Sen and Ul Haq's Human Development Index (HDI) (1990) is the most influential capability metric currently being used, but there are information gaps. The HDI falls short in that it only measures three dimensions namely, longevity, literacy (mean years of schooling) and Gross National Income per capita, which are weighted equally. The capability approach is supposed to be concerned with assessing how people fare on many dimensions of life (and not just three) including some that are difficult to find data on such as people's real choice sets or the ability to appear in public without shame. Sen agrees with these shortcomings but argues that because there is already such a lot of information available on basic capabilities (even in poor countries), such as health, there is no need to limit assessments to economic metrics. The HDI approach has successfully demonstrated that capability-related information can be used systematically as a credible supplement to economic metrics. Sen went on to say that if researchers wish to make the capability space a new priority for evaluation it will produce the development of new data gathering priorities and methods producing more information on how people fare in relation to the missing dimensions of the lives we have reason to value. For Sen, his capability approach is not concerned with information collection for its own sake but rather with the proper use of

information for assessment. A perfect information collection tool is therefore not necessary (Wells, 2016).

Considering the shortcomings in Sen's capability approach it was deemed necessary to draw on local knowledge such as *ubuntu[9]*, to facilitate an engagement between Anglo-American and African intellectual traditions (Hoffmann & Metz, 2017). It is hoped that the capabilities' approach would benefit from a particular African tradition that has the potential to enrich capability theory more broadly. According to Sen (1999), an individual's freedom relies on his/her *capabilities* to achieve valuable *functionings* irrespective of the conditions of others – emphasising independence from others. The *ubuntu* ethic differs with Sen because *ubuntu* regards freedom of an individual (at least in part) in terms of the individual's ability to care for others – emphasising interdependence with others. *Ubuntu* therefore suggests that relations play a much stronger role in the capabilities' approach than what is often assumed. Where the standard capabilities' approach regards poverty to be an individual's inability to achieve goals that we have reason to value, the *ubuntu* approach conceptualises poverty as a disruption of relationship in the following three respects (Hoffmann & Metz, 2017):

- Capabilities' deprivation can inhibit an individual's ability to care for others.

- Capabilities' deprivation may be an outcome of a lack of care by social role players such as the state.

- An individual who acquires capability through the deprivation of others does not have this capability in full since it is tarnished by the abuse of others (p. 162).

Of course, there are many different intellectual traditions on the continent and therefore*, ubuntu* should not be taken as representative of all ethical thought on the continent nor should it be regarded as an unchanging, ahistorical tradition. Most of these intellectual traditions are categorised under black nationalism, black liberalism, black left-wing radicalism and black conservatism (Gordon, 2009). Flowing from these intellectual traditions is one of the more common African proverbs, which captures the understanding of the majority of South Africans as (Hoffmann & Metz, 2017) "I am because we are or, a person is a person through other persons" (p. 157). This implies we are vulnerable and that we cannot survive on our own.

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[9] Ubuntu is a southern African Nguni word for *humanness*

It also amplifies the importance and need for relations with others in the capabilities' approach (Hoffmann & Metz, 2017). Through *ubuntu,* several behaviours and attitudes are exhibited towards others such as thinking of oneself as "we" instead of "I", thus individuals feel a sense of togetherness, take care not to isolate themselves from others, judge others to have dignity, cooperate with others and, imagine what it is like to be in another's shoes (Metz, 2016). How widely and deeply these beliefs are upheld within different societies is up for debate (Hoffmann & Metz, 2017:157) and is a fair critique (weakness) of the *ubuntu* approach.

Since the *ubuntu* ethic is well known and proudly bandied about in South Africa (including government departments), it provides an interesting lens through which to view government's response or lack thereof, to its constitutional mandate. It is believed that, in terms of *ubuntu,* relationships are at the heart of morality and justice such that wrongdoing is essentially seen as a failure to relate (Hoffmann & Metz, 2017). This raises a question as to how well government or the individuals in government are able to relate and respond to their constituencies and the promises they make come election time.

Taking into account the critiques levelled at Sen's capability approach, the importance thereof is nonetheless recognised. However, the researcher sees relevance for Sen's capability approach because the study is not concerned with measuring specific human capabilities but rather the implication of government's failure to act. In addition, by incorporating the *ubuntu* ethic the local context is given prominence and makes up for what Sen is lacking.

Education systems can play a key role in redressing factors contributing to social injustice albeit slowly and not in dramatic ways. Inherent to education is a contradiction that knowledge and learning can drive change and freedom - it conveys the values and concerns of a community but simultaneously holds the possibility to transcend beyond the present into the new (Bloch, 2009). There is an abundance of research evidence that indicates that students' home circumstances, rather than that of the school, have an overwhelming impact on their life-chances. While the school can make a difference in improving students' life chances it must be noted that the context and composition of a school are major factors when it comes to the quality of teaching and learning that it ultimately provides (Bloch, 2009; Christie, 2010a; Christie, 2010b).

In summary, the literature reviewed has covered the two main disciplines on which the research study rests namely that of safe schools/school violence and school leadership. It shows that high levels of violence are pervasive in both communities and schools.

It also shows that what makes the South African situation peculiar is the fact that much of the current violence and the leadership challenges in South African schools, are due to the legacy of apartheid. Unfortunately, the available research does not offer much respite because the bulk of the literature comes from developed countries that have a very different context to ours. We have also learned that principals do not have the skills to run their schools effectively and nor do they really understand what is expected of them as instructional leaders. This leads to situations where principals choose to retreat to their offices to do administrative work, which leaves very little room for change at the level of achieving safe teaching and learning environments.

Instead of schools alleviating the effects of apartheid as they should, the literature reveals that some schools have become places where violence is perpetrated and education outcomes are not achieved. Such environments can induce fear, which can lead to both teachers and learners under-performing, and/or cause learners to drop out of school prematurely. This in turn can lead to what Sen (1999) refers to as capability deprivation, meaning that learners will struggle to develop the capabilities necessary to lead a better life. However, schools can play a critical role in changing this scenario by becoming safe and refusing to succumb to negative pressures in their environments. Safe schools can be found in violent communities and vice versa, but there's unfortunately little research from any country that examines the prevalence of schools that deviate from local violence rates and norms (Astor, et al., 2009). A study carried out on atypical low-violence schools by Astor, et al. (2009), found that inspiring principal leadership stood out as a major factor (among others), in achieving lower levels of school violence. Such principals are strong leaders who are able to mobilise staff, parents and students to support philosophies around education that connect school safety directly to the organisation and mission of their school. Every principal held the belief that the school could change the lives of students and society (Astor, et al., 2009).

The literature reviewed shows that redressing the effects of apartheid has been slow (NPC, 2011) and according to the researcher, amounts to an act of social injustice. Learners and teachers have a right to safe teaching and learning environments and ways have to be found to make real this right, especially since the *ubuntu* ethic is based on care and concern for others.

The researcher is therefore putting forward an idea of a safe school (Figure 1) that includes, over and above the technical aspects of safety, ideas drawn from social justice theories such

as the need to feel safe in your learning environment, and the right to a safe teaching and learning environment in order to develop the capability of living a better quality of life.

Figure 1: Theoretical framework
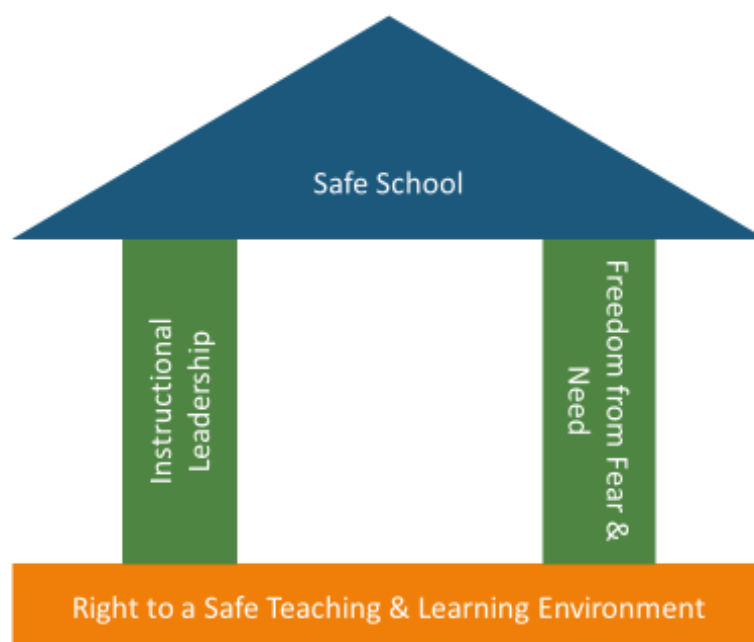
The theoretical framework presented here was developed taking into account the context of the high levels of violence and where large numbers of people in the population are still socially deprived. This is important because at the very least schools should be safe havens where children and teachers can engage without fear.

The right to a safe teaching and learning environment represents the foundation on which a safe school is built and provides a social justice lens through which principals can find purpose for their schools. Instructional leadership provides for the role of the principal as leader to execute the DBE's constitutional mandate (in conjunction with other structures such as the SGB, LRC and SMT) based on the understanding that effective leadership by head teachers is not only significant but is "key to the success of any school" (Smith & Bell, 2014).

Freedom from fear and need is based on the premise that when personal safety is under threat it forms a barrier to education that can lead to capability deprivation. The elements of the theoretical framework will now be discussed in more detail, followed by a presentation of the conceptual framework and its application.

2.6 The integrated school safety conceptual framework

In an attempt to create schools where learners and teachers feel safe and cared for, the conceptual framework for the study was developed to test whether this expanded idea of a safe school does help us understand what school principals are doing and what leadership and management strategies exist or are required to deal with school violence effectively. This implies making sure aspects of a "safe school" (protection of learners against psychological harm and violence) and that of "school safety" (maintenance and upkeep of physical infrastructure) are kept in focus.

The study tested both the empirical and conceptual aspects of a safe school with a focus on:

- How governance structures understood and executed their role in building safe schools.

- The extent to which SMTs use the curriculum and programmes to make pupils and the school resilient against school violence.

- How the school community is engaged in mitigating disruptive factors both inside and outside the school.

- The approach that principals use in dealing with both technical and social aspects of school safety.

- How policies are being implemented to support the leading and management of safe schools.

- The support principals might need to create and sustain a culture of teaching and learning.

- Skills and partnerships necessary to help schools deal with the complexity of school violence as well as leadership practice.

- Identifying and building home-grown leadership strategies to curb school violence.

- Strengthening and evaluating programmes that contribute to the reduction of school violence.

The closest pre-existing conceptual framework the researcher could find is one developed by Twigg (2011) known as the *Staying Safe Conceptual Framework* which is presented in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Staying Safe: A conceptual framework for school safety.
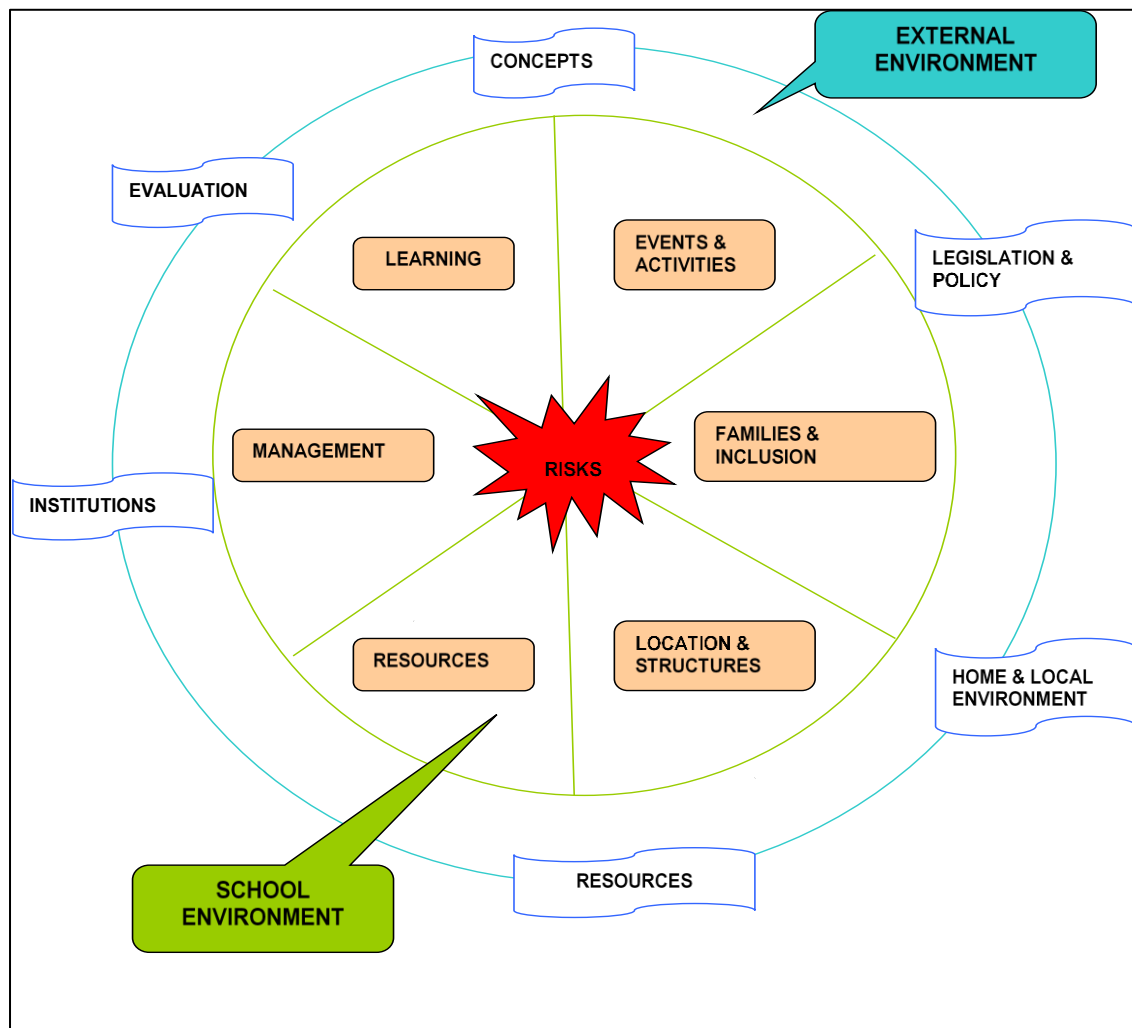
Twigg's framework was developed for schools in the United Kingdom (UK) for schools under the UK Government's "Every Child Matters" programme and because our context is so different, some adjustments had to be made to the framework. According to the researcher this framework presupposes that relationships exist between schools and disaster management services (municipalities) and that school managers have the necessary skills to do safety-threat audits and analyses to produce well-informed school safety plans. The literature confirmed that locally this is not the case, hence an adjustment had to me made.

A further adjustment was necessary to ensure that the conceptual framework takes into account that local schools are not as well-resourced as schools in the U.K. Therefore, questionnaires to guide the interviews were adjusted accordingly and this is discussed in detail under the methodology section in the next chapter. Lastly, because crime and violence are so omnipresent in every-day life in South Africa, the researcher found it necessary to soften the graphic illustration by removing and replacing risks at the centre with that of a safe school – to make it more appealing for principals, learners and teachers to work with.

Building on what has been presented in the preceding section in terms of the gaps in the literature as it relates to school violence and leadership development, the conceptual framework as shown in Figure 3 was developed.

Figure 3: Integrated school safety conceptual framework - adapted from Twigg (2011)
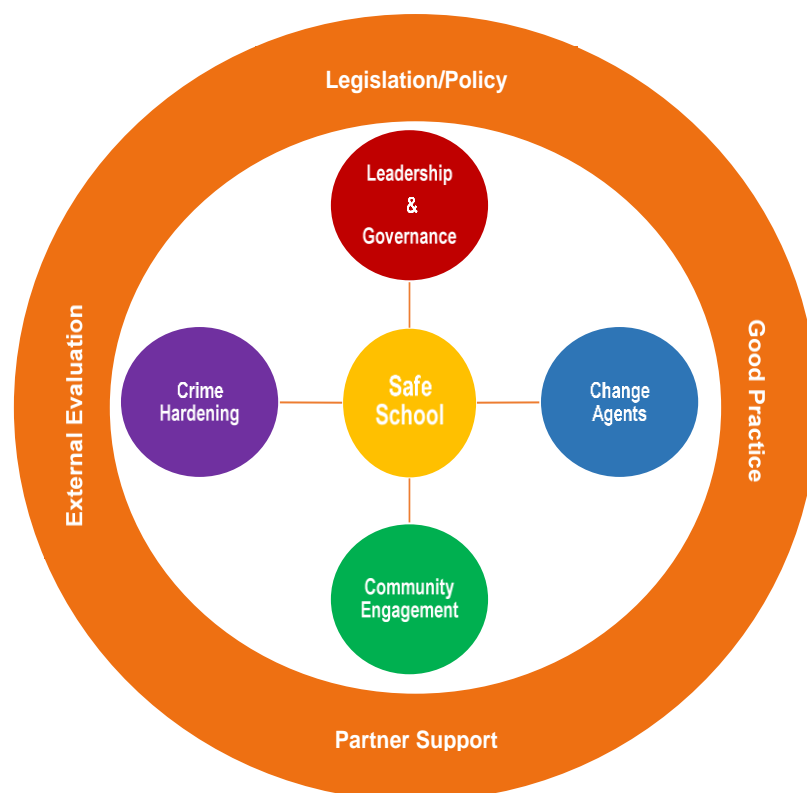
The purpose of the conceptual framework was to ensure that the research process remains true to answering the research question, which is **"**what are the leadership and management

strategies that promote or inhibit the creation of safe teaching and learning environments and why?"

Most of the components in Twigg's conceptual framework were used, but it was necessary to condense these into fewer components so that it could correspond with the local model for school governance and complement programmes that are already in place, such as the Hlayiseka Early Warning System (HEWS) (CJCP & DOE, 2006), the Safety in Education Partnership Protocol between the DBE and SAPS (DBE, 2011) and the NSSF (DBE, 2015a).

The different components of the conceptual framework will now be discussed, using a social justice lens, to demonstrate how they connect and interact with each other to provide a means to investigate how to lead and manage safe teaching and learning environments.

2.6.1 Components of the framework

INNER CIRCLE: The inner-circle represents the school and includes all buildings, classrooms and playgrounds. The school management system is also included here and encapsulates the safety threats that may impact on a safe teaching and learning environment – in sum the inner circle represents the internal context of the school.

Safe school: At the centre of the diagram is a *safe school*, which represents what should be central and uppermost in the minds of all principals, teachers and learners. A school built on the understanding that a safe school is a prerequisite for attaining education outcomes and recognises the school as government's proxy, has a constitutional duty to deliver a good quality education. This model of a safe school not only embraces the vision of the NDP 2030 but aspires to make real this vision to create a society free from violence, poverty, inequality and unemployment. The four components, or spokes of the wheel, supporting a safe school will now be discussed in detail.

Leadership and governance: It is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that his/her school is safe and able to deliver a good quality education. The literature shows that the lack of safety in schools contributes to the collapse of a teaching and learning culture, which ultimately results in the deprivation of a good quality education (Mestry & Singh, 2007; Msila, 2011; Sisson, 1995). This component expects the principal and SMT to have a school safety plan in place that addresses all the risks (or at the very least, major risks) in the school. All management and governance structures in the school share the responsibility of implementing

the safety plan, which includes the responsibility for decision making, making sure policies (health, safety and emergencies) are in place and risk management measures are implemented. Under this component, ideally, the SSC should take the lead and work with the SMT and SGB to get the school "safety-ready".

Lead by the principal, the team/s (SGBs, SMTs, SSCs and LRCs) will collectively consider the resources that will yield the capacity to deal effectively with safety such as, knowledge, financial and material resources. While some interventions may require a budget, the majority of issues do not require funding in order to be resolved. Will is what is required. Tools that can assist the SSC to complete a safety audit and develop a safety plan include the HEWS (CJCP & DOE, 2006) and the NSSF (DBE, 2015a).

Change agents: Schools have been cited in the literature as one of the important socialising agents for young people, and this component encourages the school to use the curriculum to reinforce awareness and education on appropriate social behaviour and school safety. Schools should be change agents (Pinheiro, 2006; Somech and Oplatka, 2009) since much of the writings on schools of the future highlights the notion that (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1998) "schools are one of our last hopes for rebuilding a sense of community" (p. 42).

Instead of being constantly punitive and managing incidents by the book (policy and legislation), schools should seek out opportunities where, for example, a matter (positive or negative) reported at school or in the media could be used to bring across a particular point that would result in positive behaviour change. For instance, when dealing with gender violence cases, these can be addressed (in addition to formal disciplinary processes) by engaging with topics on patriarchy, human dignity, self-respect, culture etc. in Life Sciences classes. The SMT must lead in this area and will require input from teachers and learners (LRC) as well as specialist advisors from outside the school. Learnings that emerge from this process can be used to inform how future interventions should be structured to maintain and improve on school safety.

At this level, learning can be divided into direct and indirect learning (Twigg, 2011). Direct learning happens when teaching and learning centres around hazards, risks and emergencies relating to the school community, for example, child abduction, bullying and school safety. Indirect learning occurs when subject matter is used, for example, in a history lesson on disasters in the gold mines such as rock falls or using media reports on the devastating wild fires in Knysna and Plettenberg Bay that occurred during August 2017.

Community engagement and partnerships: Schools are part of the community and this component intends to draw parents and families in to work closely with the school to help learners build school connectedness in order to achieve their full potential. Poor parental involvement in the schooling of their children is seen by an overwhelming number of teachers and principals as a contributor to school violence, ill-discipline and poor performance. (Modisaotsile, 2012). This component provides an opportunity for parents to engage constructively with the school (including decision making) and to create a home environment that supports education. The literature shows that the home is a critical factor in shaping a child's life chances, hence it is important that the child is well supported (Christie, 2010a). One of the ways of supporting the child can be achieved by engaging with parents and the community to share their time and skill with the school (Chikoko, et al., 2015). This practice has the potential of bringing the classroom and the home closer together.

Parents often do not know how to support their children academically, so this component uses a different entry point to do just that. Harmful practices in the community, such as dealing in drugs, could be something parents can play a part in by monitoring and working with the school to observe trends and respond timeously. The route to and from school, which is well known to be unsafe, could be monitored by residents in conjunction with police and community patrollers. School trips or local school events provide another opportunity for parents in the community to play a part by helping teachers with supervising and looking after the safety of learners. In this way, parents and the school can build the social connectedness that learners need so desperately in order to identify with the ethos of the school to build and pursue higher ambitions.

Crime hardening: The popular term that relates to safety and security features is target hardening. Locally however, the term crime hardening is used more often when referring to safety and security measures and for that reason instead of using the term target hardening, the term crime hardening will be used. The link between adequately safe buildings and achieving learner outcomes is recognised as the first step toward building a safe school (Xaba, 2006 & 2012). This component is concerned with the physical aspects of the school and its immediate environment with regards to security against break-ins, access control, the resilience of buildings and hazardous contents, evacuation routes and easy access for emergency vehicles. Cutting down overgrown grass and beautification of school grounds and dilapidated buildings is highly encouraged to create an atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning.

Crime hardening on its own is not always enough and requires a level of monitoring and a response in the event something does happen. Security guards or alarm systems supported by response units do work well together in keeping buildings safe and secure. We also know from the literature that toilets are places where learners feel unsafe, so having a sturdy toilet is not enough, additional monitoring is required. This component creates an opportunity for the SSC to once again take the lead in making sure schools remain safe, vigilant and a step ahead.

OUTER CIRCLE: The outer circle represents the external environment of the school consisting of direct partners such as the education department and civil society organisations that the school works with. Second comes boundary partners with whom the school shares a common interest (school safety) with but does not have a direct relationship. For example, the school does not work directly with StatsSA but both have a common interest in crime and violence rates in the school.

Legislation and policy: Under the Leadership and Governance component it was stated that principals must make sure the school has all the necessary policies in place and that everyone has read and understands them. This component is less concerned with whether the policies are in place, but rather its focus is on how laws and policies are used as drivers of change in achieving safe teaching and learning environments. It looks at and assesses the factors that promote or inhibit successful implementation of laws and policies. For example, the school has a policy on having fire extinguishers at key points throughout the school but having insufficient funds to service the fire extinguishers could be an inhibiting factor. Knowledge of where policies are kept or how to access them is another example of how implementation could be hampered. Often, new teachers join a school and the closest they will come to school policies is to be pointed in the direction of where the file is kept. Learners or parents on the other hand may not know where and how to get hold of a code of conduct and it is this management practice that this component aims to strengthen. It will, in some instances, require collaboration between the school, district and provincial arms of education. The district and provincial offices are the ideal structures to lead on this component but must work closely with the SMT and SSC.

Good practice: The connection between good leadership and school safety, while recognised, still needs further investigation (Bush, 2007) and this component allows for the documentation and sharing of what schools have found to be effective in leading and

managing safe teaching and learning environments. It will look more specifically at identifying programmes, policies or practices that consistently produces good results. Good practice can be defined as follows (FAO, 2014):

> A good practice is not only a practice that is good, but a practice that has been proven to work well and produce good results, and is therefore recommended as a model. It is a successful experience, which has been tested and validated, in the broad sense, which has been repeated and deserves to be shared so that a greater number of people can adopt it. (p. 1).

This component deals with conceptual developments in learning and school governance insofar as they relate to safety and risk management. It also includes identifying resources, which may be required to develop and sustain good practice models such as human, financial, equipment/facilities and information. Schools must have a proper system in place for recording and documenting incidents and highlight strategies that were employed to deal with the incident and whether it worked. External programmes that the school may have used such as SANCA should also be documented here. The district office is the ideal structure to lead on this component but must work collaboratively with the SSC.

External partner engagement and support: Teachers and principals regularly complain about being overburdened with work and therefore cannot attend to matters outside of the curriculum. The literature shows that principals are also not given the freedom to run their schools the way they should due to interference by unions and, at times, politicians. Equally, schools are inundated with service providers offering programmes that are not necessarily suited to the needs of the school. Schools are sometimes attracted to programmes that are offered free of charge. This component is designed so that the school, in relation to safety threats and/or education outcomes, strategically selects experts or partners to advise or assist them directly with services. These service providers could be NGOs, security experts, management consultants etc. Ideally, the school should compile and have on hand a list of partners they can draw on at any given time. The provincial education office is best suited to lead on this component, working collaboratively with the district office and the SMT.

External evaluation: The literature confirms a shortage of empirical data on what works to make schools safe and effective (Sullivan, 2010; Bloch, 2009). This component of the conceptual framework is aimed at addressing this shortcoming by aligning with existing

systems concerned with school safety such as a local authority. The literature shows that school violence is under-reported and the lack of trust in the policing system, as well as selective reporting by principals, has much to do with this. The DBE has relationships in place with the Department of Community Safety (Patroller Programme) and the South African Police (Partnership Protocol) and it is recommended that the Department of Community Safety includes schools as separate entities in its assessments. The DBE and the Department of Community Safety must play a role in evaluating what is happening in schools, what works and how good practice examples could be shared nationally – bearing in mind the uniqueness of each school. The provincial education office must lead on this component.

2.7   Conclusion

Various theories were presented in the literature to shed some light on why school violence prevails notwithstanding various efforts to eradicate it. We now know that leadership development knowledge takes a narrow view of school violence while school violence theory remains separate from leadership development – yet principals have to deal with violence on a daily basis. The legacy effects of apartheid stand out as a critical factor and this is what makes the challenge for local principals unique because there is very little information available in international literature that could be of use in the local scenario. A body of knowledge is necessary to address this problem in South Africa. Based on the literature review and theory on school violence and leadership development I am combining these to support my idea of a safe school as presented in the conceptual framework and to use this to guide the research process and answer the research question going forward. The conceptual framework is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three to demonstrate how it was used to design the questionnaires in order to ensure that the research remained focused.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The previous chapters explained why the research study is necessary and important. This chapter will build on this content by providing a description and discussion of how the research process was designed and carried out to investigate leadership and management strategies to build safe schools. The research methodology, in conjunction with the conceptual framework, will be used to help answer the research question directed at finding out: "What leadership and management strategies promote and/or inhibit the creation of safe teaching and learning environments and why?"

The research methodology will be unpacked to make clear that the research process complied with the general and specific research requirements thus guaranteeing any factors that may unduly influence and/or contaminate the process to yield relevant data are minimised.

The chapter starts with a discussion of how the research process was conceptualised, which leads into justifying why a qualitative research design was selected for the study. The researcher then describes:

- The measures that were taken to ensure the study met the necessary ethical and related matters.

- How the guiding questions were developed, in line with the conceptual framework.

- The process that was followed to collect the data.

- How and why the research sites were selected.

- How the data was analysed.

3.1 Conceptualising the research process

Before embarking on the research process, it was necessary to consider the big picture that the research aimed to address and to conceptualise how the process was going to unfold to ensure that it met the rigorous requirements for academic research. The researcher decided to develop a framework that would hold the broad research questions together and to come up with a process that would guide the flow and identify the resources necessary to answer these questions. This is summarised in Table 5.

Starting with the theoretical framework, the researcher began by looking at the problem the study wanted to address. More specifically (under research area), the researcher identifies what the literature shows as potential causes contributing to the research question and what problems exist in existing responses to root out school violence. For example, the lack of a common understanding of school violence. The next column identifies why it would be useful to know more about school violence (purpose), and what the broad questions and concerns are that the study needed to address. In the literature review column, the researcher identified the bodies of knowledge in the literature that would be drawn upon to inform the study. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks are presented with the last column detailing the research method best suited for this kind of investigation

Table 5: Conceptualising the research process

Research Area	Some of the factors that may be responsible for the unacceptable levels of school violence include, failure by government to create safe teaching and learning environments, a lack of a common understanding of safe schools and school violence and the absence of clear definitions. Furthermore, school safety programmes or initiatives are treated as "add-ons" and are not regarded as central to the management functions. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the body of knowledge by understanding the relationship between safe schools and school leadership in order to generate workable strategies to reduce school violence		
Purpose	Create a better understanding of school violence and the importance of integrating school safety into the daily leadership and management functions of the school	Demonstrate the inter-connectedness between safe schools, school safety and the role of principals in making schools safer	Determine the status-quo, what is needed, what worked/did not work, and why?
Research Questions	How do schools and education departments define or understand school violence and what strategies exist to create and sustain safe teaching and learning environments?	What are the roles of principals in creating safe schools and how are they prepared for this role?	What are the leadership and management challenges in making safe school programmes effective and what are possible solutions?
Literature Review	Examine and compare WHO definitions on violence and Departmental school safety strategies. Deliberate on the different theories underlying school violence and leadership development.	Review the different management and leadership models and how these impact on safe schools.	Review policies and programmes locally and abroad that were found to be successful in improving safety and as a result, achieved improved education outcomes.
Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks	The Theoretical Framework to be informed by theories of effective/instructional leadership, freedom from fear and need and the right to a safe teaching and learning environment	Develop a School Safety Conceptual Framework (CFW) with a focus on leadership and governance. Use Twigg's Staying Safe CFW as a reference.	Ensure CFW is built on a social justice approach to allow for broader contextual issues to surface
Research Method	Qualitative research using the phenomenological approach. To obtain data use one-on-one semi-structured interviews as well as focus group interviews. Where necessary include snowball sampling. Conduct documentation reviews to confirm safety strategies and policies. Conduct observation to get a sense of the context and school dynamics.		

3.2   Research methodology

The phenomenological approach, which is an interactive qualitative research methodology, was selected to guide the research study. Qualitative research is as much a perspective as it is a method (Ratcliff, 1995). The approach has both strengths and weaknesses, which the researcher had to consider to safeguard the study against any shortcomings. One of the considerations that was taken into account was the fact that qualitative research, in most cases, is quite time consuming. However, because the process provided flexibility to modify the research as circumstances dictated, it outweighed the issue of time. Given that locally very little is known about school violence and safe schools it was important to afford research participants the opportunity to share their experiences and events as they occur in their natural settings and from their own perspectives (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001) – the qualitative research approach allowed for all of this.

According to Badenhorst (2008a), when you research the different realities that are "out there", it is important for the researcher to do so in its context with all its complexities and a good way of doing this is for the researcher to form an integral part of the research context. The phenomenological approach was ideal for immersing the researcher into the context so that he could gain a clear and deep understanding of 1) the different realities of school violence experienced by research participants, which are subject to meaning and interpretation and 2) to take into account the context with all its intricacies as it relates to leading and managing safe schools (Badenhorst 2008a). Through this approach, research participants were able to describe the meanings of their lived experiences and to sketch an accurate picture of violence (given its complexity) in schools as it occurs in their natural settings and contexts (Fouche and Delport 2002; McMillan and Schumacher 2001).

One of the main criticisms of qualitative research centres on the trustworthiness of results (Badenhorst, 2008b). Trustworthiness of the data was considered particularly important given that no investigation has yet been done locally into the nexus between school violence and leadership. This is discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

An interview schedule was drawn up for the different target groups and a pilot study was scheduled (Strydom & Delport, 2002) with the following in mind:

- To establish the amount of time each interview was likely to take.
- To determine the clarity of the guiding questions in terms of their interpretation and to ensure that they were not "leading" research participants in a particular direction.

- To assess the relevance of the questions in terms of yielding data that would answer the research questions.
- To identify any gaps in terms of answering the research question – relevance of the conceptual framework.

Following this process, the guiding questions were amended where necessary and applied to the process with greater confidence to ensure that the lived experience of research participants was transformed in the text into a reflective appropriation of something meaningful (Van Manen, 1990). Overall, the process yielded rich and deep insights into the understanding of school violence and how it is managed. To strengthen the credibility of the data even further, the researcher remained true to the requirements of the phenomenological approach, which demands the researcher suspend all prejudgments and collect data in a way that does not lead or influence research participants' responses.

3.2.1 Ethical considerations

In anticipation of interviewing learners who may be under-aged, the researcher was obliged to apply for ethical clearance (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001) from the University of the Witwatersrand's (Wits) Ethics Committee. A *Participant Information Sheet* was developed explaining, in detail, the purpose of the research and the rights each participant had in this regard. A copy of the questionnaire was handed in as part of the application so that the Ethics Committee was satisfied it did not violate the rules in any way. Ethical clearance was granted unconditionally (Ref H120405) and the GDE also granted written approval for the research to proceed. Principals were asked individually for permission to gain access to schools selected for the study. The ethical clearance and research approval certificates are attached as Appendix 1 and 2 respectively

3.2.2 Trustworthiness

Bias, which is inevitable, affects the trustworthiness of findings and demands special attention (Mehra, 2002) especially since in this case, the researcher has worked in the crime and violence field for at least ten years. In quantitative research studies, the trustworthiness is usually referred to as validity and reliability while in qualitative studies trustworthiness is about establishing the findings as credible, transferable, conformable and dependable (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017).

Credibility is about being certain that the findings are a true reflection of the research participants'' views. The researcher made special effort to check the findings for accuracy by engaging with the different research participants as well as by using triangulation during the data collection process (Nowell et al., 2017)

Transferability refers to how a qualitative researcher demonstrates that the research findings are applicable to other contexts. To make this clear to the audience the researcher provided thick descriptions of the contexts so that those who wish to transfer the findings can do so without any difficulty (Nowell et al., 2017).

Conformability deals with the level of neutrality of the researcher. In other words, are the interpretations derived directly from the data or have they been influenced by the researcher's bias or personal interests. The researcher took particular care by being constantly aware of maintaining a neutral stance in relation to having a personal interest in the research topic, being in control of the interviewing processes and questioning, and being central to the research design and process. Collectively, all these precautionary measures produced data that was found, during the pilot study and analysis, to be valid and reliable beyond doubt (Nowell et al., 2017).

Dependability relates to the extent to which other researchers can use the information and repeat the study and reach the same conclusions (Nowell et al., 2017). This was done to some extent by asking the supervisor and (members of the PhD Forum) to review the research process and the data analysis process and to give their opinions.

3.2.3 Data gathering

The following data gathering techniques were selected to support the qualitative research process (McMillan and Schumacher 2001):

- Participant observation.
- Field observation.
- In-depth interviews.
- Personal and official documents.

3.2.3.1 Data gathering schedule

The GDE approved the commencement of the research for 24 July 2012 and stipulated a very strict time period within which the research interviews had to be conducted and completed. This period was stipulated as 24 July to 30 September 2012. This was necessary to ensure that school time was not interrupted during the final term, when Grade Twelve learners sat for their final exams. Learners were therefore interviewed first since other groups such as teachers and parents could be interviewed outside of the normal school day. The schedule is captured in Table 6 reflecting the dates on which each school was visited and interviews held.

Table 6: Data gathering schedule

	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
School						
Principal	11/09/12	06/09/12	26/09/12	17/10/12	03/09/12	10/09/12
Educator Focus Group	11/09/12	05/09/12	25/09/12	20/09/12	03/09/12	19/09/12
SGB Focus Group	17/10/12	18/10/12	20/11/12	17/10/12	16/10/12	01/10/12
Learner and Rep Council Focus Group	11/09/12	05/09/12	25/09/12	20/09/12	03/09/12	10/09/12
Gov. Security Guards	17/10/12	N/A	N/A	N/A	16/10/12	N/A
District and Provincial Education Departments						
District School Safety Coordinator	25/01/13					
Provincial Official	25/01/13					
Law Enforcement						
Police	07/01/13	07/01/13	20/11/12	07/01/13	07/01/13	07/01/13

At the time of making the application to the GDE, the researcher could only identify the education district and the number of schools he intended to bring into the study. The researcher compiled a list of eighteen schools from which the sample of six was finally selected. The process of engaging with schools was a tedious one because telephone numbers were either incorrect or telephone numbers no longer existed. Some principals were rather sceptical about the research and not very eager to hear out the complete request.

Once telephonic communication was established, written requests consisting of letters from the university, sample questionnaires, ethics clearance and approval by the GDE were faxed to each prospective school. Selection of the schools was made on a "first come, first served" basis – the researcher preferred to work with schools where the principal saw the value of and welcomed the research.

All the learner interviews were completed within the timeframe stipulated, but unfortunately interviews with some SGBs and one principal had to be postponed to October. On average, three full days were spent in each school to complete the data gathering, therefore a total of eighteen days was spent on data gathering alone.

3.2.3.2 Orientation and preparation

Before embarking on the interviewing process, the researcher met with the respective groups to explain why the research was being conducted and the process that was going to be followed. Participants were informed about the confidentiality of the research process, their right to withdraw from the process at any time and the option of declining to answer any question they felt uncomfortable answering. In the case of learners, a more detailed list of questions was prepared both to provide more clarity and to allow for the collection of quantitative data, which had to be disaggregated later. The process was led by the researcher, making sure all learners had a shared and accurate understanding of the questions.

South Africa has eleven official languages and while the interview process was conducted in English, research participants were encouraged to answer or have questions explained in the language of their choice if, in their view, it would help them to be more articulate and comfortable. A process for translation, where necessary, was put in place before the interview process commenced.

At the end of each orientation session, research participants were invited to voluntarily sign a consent form as a commitment to participating in the study. This included permission to record the interviews on audio in addition to taking notes. In the case of learners who were under-aged (minors), provision was made for parents/guardians to provide consent on their behalf. Provision was made for participants to contact the researcher, his supervisor and or a national toll-free helpline should they need any support for issues that may have surfaced during the interviewing process.

3.2.3.3 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used, guided by a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with additional questions emerging from the dialogue between the researcher and research participants (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree. 2006). The reason for choosing the semi-structured interview approach was because it provides reliable data (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006) and even though there were predetermined questions guiding the process, it allowed the conversation to delve deeper and explore other related issues (Longhurst, 2003).

Research participants were either interviewed individually or in a focus group. Individual interviews were helpful in that they provided a safe environment for individuals to share their experiences, whereas focus groups provided a powerful means of exposing reality and generating a large amount of information in a relatively short period of time (Greeff, 2002). Principals, police officers and GDE officials were interviewed individually, while teachers, learners, SGB members and security guards were interviewed in focus groups. The interviewing process was conducted with utmost sensitivity to stigmatisation, for example of learners from poor backgrounds or those found to be constantly in trouble. They were protected by ensuring questions were appropriate and that any occurrence that may portray or promote stigmatisation was neutralised and kept to a minimum. Research participants could also opt out of a focus group in order to be interviewed individually if they felt uncomfortable in a group. This occurred in one school. Towards the end of each interview process the researcher asked participants to name anybody else who they thought should be interviewed to ensure the data was as informative as possible.

All audio recordings of all the interviews were transcribed using the format of the conceptual framework, which made the analysis and presentation of data much more manageable. Below follows a demonstration of how the conceptual framework was applied to guide the design of the questionnaires, which were based on school violence, social justice and leadership development theory – this is much broader than just looking at the technical aspects of a safe school such as the safety of buildings or crime hardening efforts.

Safe school: The main aim was to establish how research participants understood school safety and their perceptions of a safe/unsafe school. Participants were asked to free up their minds (letting go of any negative thoughts) and think about what they thought a safe school looks like/should look like. They could draw it if they wanted to, write it down or simply describe it to the researcher. Likewise, research participants were also asked to describe what an unsafe school looks like. In addition, research participants were asked to define a safe school

and an unsafe school and to think about their role in creating a safe school, how safe they felt at school and why.

Leadership and governance: The purpose was to identify the role of leadership and governance structures in creating safe teaching and learning environments. Research participants were asked to indicate whether they thought their school is run according to democratic principles, whether all the necessary structures are in place and functioning adequately, and the quality of human relationships. A specific question was asked about the existence of a code of conduct and school safety plans and the extent to which school safety featured as an agenda item of SMT, SGB and LRC meetings. The role and capacity of the principal, teachers, district and provincial office in leading successful efforts in restoring a safe teaching and learning culture was also explored and documented.

Change agents: This component investigated the extent to which the curriculum is being used/can be used to promote school safety. It further explored how research participants viewed their role and the role of the school in relation to the problems faced by the community and the country at large. In essence, it looked at whether the school can change the scenario, how and why.

Community engagement: The broad aim here (without promoting a particular leadership model) was to establish how leadership power is shared in order to empower parents and other stakeholders, thus bringing the home closer to the classroom. Research participants were asked whether their school engages with the community and why. The questions looked at the extent to which parents are involved in the school and asked specifically about school safety programmes that may have been run in the school in the preceding five years. The socio-economic conditions of the learners/community were also taken into account here.

Crime hardening: The aim was to establish what measures the school had in place to make the school safe and resilient against attack or robbery. Here the researcher made notes on what he could observe, but research participants were also asked to share what had been done to make the school safe and whether it had been effective in terms of protecting buildings and creating a sense of safety. The role of security guards and police was brought in here to see how it augmented physical measures.

Legislation and policy: The focus here was on identifying obstacles to implementation of laws and policies. Under this component, principals and teachers were asked about what

policies they had in place, how accessible these were and whether they felt these policies were useful in terms of making schools safe.

Good practice: The objective was to capture what we were learning, or what we had learned in terms of what works best in leading and managing safe schools. All research participants were asked to share which programmes or practices were found to promote a culture of teaching and learning and safe schools, whether in their schools or elsewhere.

Partner support: Schools don't possess all the knowledge and often lack the support to put policy into practice or translate a good idea into action. Participants were asked whether they thought their school was valued by the surrounding community and the level of support the school enjoyed or could expect. This included support from local businesses, organisations, education departments and sponsors.

External evaluation: This component aims to show what the return on investment is and what works in creating safe teaching and learning spaces. The researcher asked participants whether any of the programmes that may have worked had been evaluated and whether participants knew of any processes that may be in place to evaluate school safety.

3.2.3.4 Observation

Observation involves describing the behavioural patterns of participants, objects and occurrences without necessarily questioning or communicating with them. It helps to provide or develop a better understanding and deeper insight into the phenomenon being observed (Maree, 2007).

Observation time was woven into the days reserved for conducting interviews. The researcher would typically choose specific times (outside of scheduled interviews) to conduct observations, for example, early in the morning before school started, to get a sense of what time learners and teachers got to school, how they got to school, the atmosphere in the school and how the school eventually settled down into the business of the day. While classes were in session, the researcher walked around the school to scan the premises for hazards or novel crime hardening ideas. In two of the schools the researcher was presumed by some teachers to be an official from the education department, which created very interesting responses, both positive and negative. After-school observation was useful in that it gave a sense of the urgency, or lack thereof, with which learners and teachers left the school. It was particularly interesting to experience how learners (some not included in the research process) would use

this time to approach the researcher for some friendly, casual conversation. This happened in all six schools.

By observing the external and internal environments of schools the researcher was able to sketch a context of the realities impacting teaching and learning. In addition, observation also helped the researcher to spot potential safety risks. By observing human interaction at various levels (classroom, staff room, administration office, playground) he was able to get a sense of the school culture. Particular care was taken not to make it obvious to participants that they were being observed in order to ensure that the observations were spontaneous.

3.2.3.5 Document review

To establish a sound background and context of school violence and leadership, the researcher consulted documents as a source of supplementary data (Bowen, 2009). Where available, documentation such as minutes of meetings, incident reports, policy documents, legislation, circulars, job descriptions, action plans and correspondence were looked at. Statistical crime reports were also considered (Patton, 1990).

3.2.3.6 Rationale for integrating data gathering instruments.

By integrating interviews, observation and document review it was possible for the researcher to validate the data. An added advantage was that the tools complemented each other thereby ensuring that the data was of the highest possible standard. According to Yin, (2009) multiple sources of evidence allow for a converging line of enquiry resulting in a finding likely to be more convincing and accurate.

3.3 Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to select the sites because the schools in these sites, according to the researcher, were considered to be information-rich, knowledgeable and had all key informants. This type of sampling is based entirely on the judgment of the researcher. It was important to ensure that schools in the sample contained the most characteristics and were representative of typical attributes of the population (Singleton, Straits, Straits, & McAllister 1988).

In addition to purposive sampling, snowball sampling was used to select additional teachers/staff/learners. The researcher asked participants at the end of each interview to name additional people that they thought could provide information relevant to the study

(Baker, 1988). This technique is especially well suited to cases where the phenomenon being investigated is relatively unknown because thus far combining leadership development and school violence, under the umbrella of a safe school to achieve education outcomes, had not been considered.

3.3.1 Selection of research sites and research participants

South Africa consists of nine provinces and it was decided to locate the study in the Gauteng province because, according to Burton (2008a), Gauteng ranks among the leading provinces for overall violent victimization. Secondly, Gauteng is the financial hub of the country and one of the most densely populated provinces as a result of people from other provinces and neighbouring countries flocking to Johannesburg in search of jobs and a better life. By 2011, despite being the smallest province, Gauteng was the most populous province with 12.3 million people or 24% of the country's total population (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2016). Furthermore, as the researcher resides in Gauteng, it was convenient and cost-effective for the researcher to conduct the research in Gauteng.

The Gauteng province is divided into 15 Education Districts as shown in the map in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Gauteng education districts

Map supplied by the GDE Facilities Management Directorate

The education district that was selected for the study was selected based on ease of access and transport costs. The reason for selecting one education district was because the study was not concerned with making comparisons on school safety between different districts. The other advantage was, it was possible to get a sense of the context and how resources from one district were invested across its service area.

In terms of demographic spread, the schools selected are distributed across low, middle and higher income areas while the gender balance among principals was three males and three females. There are on average 1200 learners in each school with about 48 teaching staff and the percentage of male to female learners is generally 55% girls to 45% boys. One of the schools in the sample (School A) was part of government's national Ministerial School Safety Programme, where the HEWS programme amongst others, was implemented during 2007 and beyond (CJCP & DOE, 2006).

All six schools in the sample are located within the same education district in the Gauteng province and were selected from a list of eighteen schools representing typologies of what promotes or inhibits a safe school. The schools, as shown in Table 7, were categorised alphabetically from A to F to protect their identities and the table also shows the number of participants per school, and their different designations. Each of the six schools is attended by learners from low to middle income families. The schools have no major financial challenges and have all the necessary structures in place – they can therefore be regarded as functional.

Research participants included a district education official, provincial education official, police officers, school security guards, principals, parents, educators and learners. In cases where the principal was not available, the deputy principal was interviewed. This occurred in two schools (D and E) because PD had to attend to an emergency while PE was newly appointed with only six months in the post. He felt he did not hold enough of the history of the school and delegated his deputy to represent him. Particular care was taken to maintain a gender balance, as far as possible, in the selection of participants and to make sure groups were representative of the school community and not necessarily of a particular vulnerable or dominant group.

Table 7: Research participant categories

	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
School						
Principal	1	1	1			1
Deputy Principal				1	1	
Educator Focus Group	3	4	4	3	4	3
SGB Focus Group	2	3	2	2	2	2
Learner and Rep Council Focus Group	4	4	6	4	4	3
Government paid Security Guards	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	N/A
District Education Office						
School Safety Coordinator	1	1	1	1	1	1
Provincial Education Office						
School Safety Official	1	1	1	1	1	1
Law Enforcement						
Police Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1
SAMPLE SIZE	**15**	**15**	**16**	**13**	**16**	**12**

While the literature shows that school violence is prevalent at both primary and secondary schools, secondary schools were selected since international research shows that most violent crimes are committed by the fifteen to nineteen-year age group (Gottfredson, 1996a) In South Africa, approximately 50% of reported crimes are committed by the 14 to 18-year age group (De Wet, 2003). Lastly, secondary schools have been found to be thirteen times more likely to be violent than primary schools (Masitsa, 2011).

3.4   Data analysis

All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed thereafter. Additional information, stemming from observations and document reviews, was noted and then transcribed. Each school's responses were kept separate labelling each school in alphabetical order A to F and research participants/focus groups were individually coded using the school code as a suffix to the code as shown in Table 8. This was done to ensure anonymity.

Table 8: Coding of research participants

Research Participant	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
School						
Principal	PA	PB	PC			PF
Deputy Principal				DPD	DPE	
Educator Focus Group	EA 1 – 3	EB 1- 4	EC 1 – 4	ED 1 – 3	EE 1 – 4	EF 1 - 3
SGB Focus Group	SGBA 1 – 2	SGBB 1 – 3	SGBC 1 – 2	SGBD 1 – 2	SGBE 1 – 2	SGBF 1 -2
LRC and Learner Focus Group	LA 1 – 4	LB 1 – 4	LC 1 – 6	LD 1 – 4	LE 1 – 4	LF 1 - 3
Government funded Security Guards	SGA 1 – 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	SGE 1 - 2	N/A
District Education Office						
School Safety Coordinator	DO	DO	DO	DO	DO	DO
Provincial Education Office						
Provincial School Safety Official	PO	PO	PO	PO	PO	PO
Law Enforcement						
Police Officers	SAPA&E	SAPB	SAPC	SAPD	SAPA&E	SAPF
TOTALS	15	15	16	13	16	12

For example, SGBA represents a SGB member at school A. Research participants were also identified individually in a group for e.g. SGBA1 or SGBA2 etc. The process of transcribing all the interviews was quite time consuming and I realised the need for hiring a professional to do the work.

The data was subsequently organized and analysed in accordance with the components in the *Integrated School Safety Conceptual Framework*, which broadly covers the inner circle under the headings Leadership and Governance, Curriculum and Change Agents, Community Engagement and Crime Hardening. External to the school it covers Legislation, Good Practice examples, Partner Support and Independent External Evaluation.

One of the challenges that emerged as a result of the density of the data was how best to present the data. Originally, the data was presented horizontally meaning all six schools were grouped together and analysed under each theme. This format made it difficult for the reader to track and note any distinctions between the schools. Consequently, it was decided to opt for another format.

Two chapters had to be rewritten in their entirety and after much debate and experimentation it was decided to write up each school individually instead of grouping them all together. This proved to be the correct approach. Finally, the analysis showed a very strong correlation between the findings and the theoretical framework, which is outlined in Table 9.

Table 9: Thematic areas in relation to the theoretical framework

Right to safe learning environments (Social Justice)	Effective Leadership (Instructional Leadership)	Freedom from Fear and Need (Personal Safety)
Slow pace of educational transformation; Failure by government to fulfil its constitutional obligations; Under-performing schools; Lack of policy implementation.	Unsupported principals; Corporal punishment and teacher violence; Poor parental involvement; Lack of collaborative partnerships; Sense of powerlessness.	Vandalised schools and poor facilities management; Premature learner drop-outs; Lack of collaborative partnerships; Lack of proper understanding of school safety; Lack of resources.

It shows how the different action areas are related to the conceptual/theoretical framework and what principals should consider.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter confirms the intricacies associated with selecting the correct research methodology and ensuring alignment with the conceptual framework so that the research remains focused. The expanded view of a safe school, as depicted in the conceptual framework, enabled the research to go deeper and yield data that goes beyond just the technical aspects of school safety. I therefore argue that the methodology and conceptual framework proved to be ideal and robust in ensuring the research remained focused and yielded data both relevant and reliable in answering the research question

The next chapter provides the findings that emerged from the data gathering process and it highlights how the findings contribute to answering the research question of why principals are finding it difficult to create safe teaching and learning environments.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter provides the findings that emerged from the research process by taking the reader into each of the six schools selected for the research, to gain deeper insights into the roles and daily lived experiences of principals, teachers, learners, police officers and education officials. This chapter focuses mainly on the inner-circle of the conceptual framework and will highlight how each school is contributing to leading and managing safe schools with reference to leadership and governance, facilitating behaviour change, involving the school community to bring the school and the home closer together and noting physical measures to make schools more secure. Using the original research question to investigate "what leadership and management strategies promote and/or inhibit the creation of safe teaching and learning environments and why?" as a reference, the chapter looks at and highlights specifically how each school is addressing "why is it so difficult to create safe teaching and learning environments and what is it that schools do or do not do in this regard?"

The lack of a safe school definition was identified as a barrier to having a common understanding of a safe school and therefore exploring the definition in this chapter forms part of answering the research question.

This chapter is the product of what emerged from observations, interviews and document review processes and the data is written up and presented on each school individually using the following headings: Location and Context; Leadership and Governance; Roles and Strategies; Safe/Unsafe Schools and, Definitions of a Safe and an Unsafe School.

Each school is introduced with an introductory summary to highlight some of the broad strategies that schools are using, and challenges which are relevant to leading and managing safe schools as envisioned in the conceptual framework. Each section concludes with points highlighting the challenges that schools are faced with in relation to answering the research question. This is followed by a discussion on how the GDE officials and police officers engaged with and supported principals in these six schools to lead and manage safe schools. The results are presented in two layers – with data described in this chapter and the analysis presented in Chapter Five.

4.1 School A

The school buildings were in good shape and the school yard and classrooms were kept clean, which contributed to creating a pleasant environment for teaching and learning. The perimeter and buildings were well secured with palisade fencing and burglar bars and, in order to control access and illegal substances, there were two full-time security guards who assisted, apart from their regular duties, with processing learners who arrived at school late. Only vendors who had been vetted by the school were allowed to sell goods to learners during break times. However, school safety, although taken seriously by the principal, was not prioritised as it should be – "the curriculum always comes first". All structures such as SGB, SMT and LRC were in place and met regularly to ensure that the curriculum is delivered (document review, September 11, 2012). The principal was working in partnership with the police as well as service providers concerned with drug rehabilitation and youth empowerment to mitigate threats in the community such as drug abuse, HIV/AIDS and crime (PA, interview, September 11, 2012). In this school, parents' meetings were well attended and this was attributed to having meaningful agenda items and making sure learners served notices of the meetings to their parents (EA 1-4, interview, September 11, 2012). All learners had an adult at home when they returned from school to help with supervision and care. With the exception of the LRC, members of the SGB and SMT were clear about their roles and were happy with their contribution to leading and managing safe schools (focus group interviews, September 11 & October 17, 2012).

Location and context

School A is situated in a densely populated township flanked on one side by a public park and on the other side, a primary school. The park was well maintained by the local municipality and the area surrounding the school was clean and made up of formal municipal-type houses (some very neatly renovated) and small formal and informal businesses. The roads surrounding the school did not carry much traffic apart from that of residents and those commuting to and from the school (observation, September 11, 2012). The inhabitants were mainly state pensioners living with their grandchildren and the area, according to research participants, was deemed to be relatively safe. However, drugs and alcohol abuse were rife and youth unemployment remained high in the area (EA 1 – 4, interviews, September 11, 2012).

Based on observation (September 11, & October 17, 2012), the school grounds and buildings were clean and in a reasonably good state and while no graffiti was evident on the walls, desks were not spared and a rebellious remark was written boldly across the dusty rear windscreen

of an educator's car. The perimeter and grounds of the school were well secured with a palisade fence and buildings appeared to be structurally sound and to have all the basic security features such as burglar doors and bars. There were no obvious safety hazards visible at the time of the interviews, and for any would-be burglar, breaking into any part of the school building would require much effort.

The school yard was quite big and, at the time of the observation, a section of the school yard was barricaded for learners to spend their time during breaks. This arrangement prevented learners from having direct contact with the school next door as well as with undesirable elements in the community such as gangs and drugs. The school had vetted and approved certain informal traders to sell goods to learners through the secondary fence (SGA 1 & 2, interview, October 17, 2012). There was no sports equipment or sports facilities on the school grounds and a layer of paint could certainly have helped to brighten up the school building. The SGB reported that the community was concerned about the deteriorating appearance of the school and that there were hopes that the principal would do something about it (SGBA 1, interview October 17, 2012).

A healthy noise reverberated throughout the school grounds and the administration block was quite busy with teachers and learners doing last-minute checks before the start of the school day at 08h00. A general assistant hastily cleaned the reception area, which apart from a few plastic chairs was rather bare and uninviting, while another worker used a fire hose to dispose of dirt and leaves in the storm-water channels. Fire hoses are not supposed to be used for purposes other than the extinguishing of fires (West Rand District Municipality, 2008). A bell announced the start of the school day and the school swung into action (observation, September 11, 2012).

The school was classified as a *no-fee paying* school and comprised forty-five teachers, seven general assistants and 1204 learners. Security was provided on a 24-hour basis by three security guards (three per 12-hour shift) paid for by the GDE under the CPF Patroller Programme[10]. Security guards are managed by the principal and their main duties include access control, keeping the school safe and preventing burglaries. The principal reported that since the appointment of the security guards earlier in the year, burglaries had reduced

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[10] The CPF Patroller programme used to fall under the Department of Community Safety who trained community volunteers to patrol their areas to keep their communities safe. These volunteers have now been absorbed by the GDE to work as security guards in schools and are paid a stipend.

remarkably. The guards were kept very busy every morning rounding up and processing learners who arrived late for school – late coming was reported by all research participants as a chronic problem that takes up a lot of the principal's time to process daily. The SGB, reported that many learners come late because they have to do household chores before leaving for school (SGBA 1 & 2, interview, October 17, 2012). The majority of learners (58%) walked to school, 1% were dropped off by car (parents) while 41% used public transport (train or taxi) to get to school (LA 1 - 4, interview, September 12, 2012). The majority of those who walked to school lived within a 2km radius of the school but some learners living in outlying informal settlements had to walk longer distances - on average one hour each way. LRC members said that at times late coming was beyond their control but in the majority of cases it was a defiance of authority by learners who were not interested in furthering their schooling. All learners in the sample lived in formal brick-built houses owned either by their parents or grandparents with 75% of household income coming from wages and the remaining 25% from child support grants. All learners reported that they had an adult at home when they returned from school (LA 1 - 4, interview, September 12, 2012). The school provides a cooked meal to indigent learners every school day, funded by the GDE's School Nutrition Programme and the school also received donations for school uniforms from local sponsors.

The school is entirely dependent on funds from the provincial government and it was reported that teachers sometimes struggle to facilitate extra-mural activities. While school safety is considered to be an important issue in the school, there were no available funds to dedicate to school safety training or programmes and it was therefore not prioritised. The curriculum, according to the principal, always wins the fight when resources are limited (PA, interview September 11, 2012).   Information such as policies and procedures were stored in the principal's office and there was a *disconnect* and tension between the administration office and that of the principal. As a result, cooperation between the two offices was strained. There was no clear system of channelling and processing learners and visitors and accessing information from the administrative office was reported to be difficult and complicated at times (observation, September 11, 2012).

The school had a first-aid kit that was well stocked but the school did not always have the means to immediately replace items that had reached their expiry dates (PA, interview September 11, 2012).   Fire hoses had been attached at strategic points, but no fire extinguishers were visible throughout the school. Teachers did not have dedicated classrooms and rotated between periods, unlike other schools in the study where learners rotated between periods. What was striking was that there were no cupboards or desks provided for teachers

in the classrooms. Visual aids on the walls, such as educational posters, were sparse making the classrooms appear rather dull and uninspiring (observation, October 17, 2012).

Leadership and governance

All structures such as the SGB, SMT, and LRC were in place and reported to be functional, each having been established following transparent and democratic processes. The principal confirmed that she ran the school in a democratic way and that learners had a voice and played a big role in nominating and voting for their desired LRC candidates. She described herself as a hands-on person, which enables her to do things on her own. This, she said, was often misunderstood as being unwilling to engage other people (teachers and the SGB) but she claimed she made every effort to involve people in as far as they wanted to be involved because according to her (PA, interview, September 11, 2012) "If you do not want to be part of the party, I move on."

With the exception of learners, teachers and the SGB did not agree that the principal runs the school in a democratic way. Educators saw the management of the school as fragmented and if any improvement was to be made at whatever level, management within the school would have to unite to lead and manage the school in a coordinated manner. Teachers all felt that there was a direct relationship between the quality of leadership and the nature and scale of problems experienced in the school (EA 1 - 3, interview, September 11, 2012).

All research participants felt that there was room for improvement as far as the level of functionality of governance structures (SGB, SMT and LRC) was concerned and the SSC, and the DC in particular, were singled out by teachers and the SGB as being dysfunctional if not non-existent (EA 1 – 4, interview, September 11, 2012; SGBA 1 - 2, interview, October 17, 2012). One of the teachers felt her role in the SMT was under-utilised when it came to disciplinary matters. There were no disciplinary hearings being held at the time of the interviews, and all cases were being referred to the principal who decided unilaterally what course of action should be taken. Teachers believed this to be a reflection of the principal's hard-handed approach, which not only undermined their authority as teachers, but also did nothing to restore discipline in the school. Ideally, teachers said, the process for reporting and managing incidents at school should start off with, for example in the case of a fight, stopping the fight. The incident should then be reported to the learners' class teacher/s who would assess and either deal with the matter or refer the matter to the principal where a decision would be made jointly on the appropriate course of action. This could include involving the police, calling parents, or imposing a sanction like cleaning the school grounds depending on

the nature and severity of the transgression. One of the SGB members stated that (SGBA1, interview, October 17, 2012):

> Appointing the principal was a mistake but because she did a good job while acting in the post, the SGB thought she would continue along those lines but as soon as she got the job she changed. Teachers are waiting for her to fall down and what teachers are doing is to refer all problems (including simple problems) to her causing an overload and pressure. As the SGB we would like to sit the principal down and talk to her about these problems.

The LRC at the school had been established but had not met for the entire year (2012) because they were not recognised by the SGB – the SGB claimed that the LRC proceeded with elections without "their blessing" hence they were not legitimate and would not be allowed to operate.

The principal had been in her post for two years, with the first year having been in an acting capacity. In addition to managing the school, the principal had the additional responsibility of teaching certain subjects. She was of the strong opinion that principals are not adequately prepared and supported by the GDE to fulfil the requirements of the job. She had undergone no formal training for the post, but as part of her academic training, several years previously, she completed modules on leadership and management at post graduate level. However, once she had been appointed principal, she had to make a special effort to become familiar with the *Public Finance Management Act 1999* (*PFMA 1999*) and to gain extra skills in financial management as her induction had been rather superficial, especially around drafting school policies. She had to learn by trial and error and found support from the district office to be inadequate and she would have valued a system whereby she was supported by more experienced principals (PA, interview, September 11, 2012).

Roles and strategies

Educators were quite clear about the role of the SMT (and related structures), as were SGB members about their role. Teachers felt the SGB focused far too much on the finances of the school at the expense of other important matters related to education. The LRC presented mixed responses, with one of four learners saying she did not understand the role of the LRC as it was never explained to her, while the others described it as a structure to assist learners

to do well in their schoolwork and help teachers to maintain discipline. Interestingly, all learners interviewed said they didn't think LRC members fully understood their role and that they were therefore ineffective in carrying out its mandate. They believed only some learners might have an idea of the role of the LRC (LA1 - 4, interview, September 11, 2012).

SGB members regarded the SGB as the mandated structure to deal with discipline in the school but acknowledged that they had not been trained in issues of school safety and discipline. The only training that the SGB had received included running meetings and managing school finances. Members reported learning from each other and from what other schools were doing. SGB members also felt that the district office did not support them in critical issues e.g. the SGB wanted to transfer a learner to another school for dealing in dagga at school but was told by the district that they had no right to do so and that they should take the learner back. They did not believe that this response, by the district, was supportive of school efforts towards behaviour change (SGBA 1 - 2, interview, October 17, 2012).

The security guards reported that they did not feel confident in carrying out their duties because they had not received any training in how to conduct their work at schools nor did they have any equipment to protect themselves should gangs decide to attack the school. They had no two-way radios to stay in contact with each other and had to make use of their personal cell phones (at night) to raise the alarm with the police. Guards would also have liked to have a uniform and protective clothing to wear while on duty (SGA 1 – 2, interview, October 17, 2012).

Teachers acknowledged that managing their classes was at times challenging (they don't always know what to do) and that they spend a considerable amount of what could be used for contact time, on issues related to ill-discipline (EA 1 – 2, interview, September 11, 2012). Learners agreed that some teachers at this school didn't know how to manage and maintain discipline in class and that some of the measures employed by teachers in this school to maintain discipline included corporal punishment, embarrassing transgressors by making jokes about them and even "the odd smack" (LA 1 - 4, interview, September 11, 2012).

Relationships among and between staff and learners were identified as ranging from cordial and harmonious to unhealthy and strained. According to the principal (PA, interview September 11, 2012) her role is key to making sure that there's harmony in the school because if "the leader is uptight you tend to push people away and this can lead to divisions and unhappiness among staff and learners." Disharmony causes structures to become less effective. While the principal may have held the view that relations at the school were good,

the SGB members were quite vocal about tensions within the SGB, and between the principal and staff, which they said had become worse over the past three years. They believed the SGB chairperson was "in the pocket" of the principal and that this compromised the authority of the SGB. For example, teachers were not in favour of having SGB members at school during the day and some teachers encouraged learners to bring cell phones to school despite the SGB approving a rule against it (SGBA 1 & 2, interview, October 17, 2012). As one SGB member put it (SGBA1, interview, October 17, 2012), "it is precisely this kind of thing that causes problems and divisions in the SGB but we will be working on drawing the new SGB members closer to us in order to build a better team." Teachers reported that they generally get along with each other.

Whilst the school had a code of conduct for learners, which was developed with input from the LRC and the SGB, teachers were uncertain about the existence of a safety policy because according to them, school safety at the school was quite fragmented. A copy of the code of conduct (Dress Code for Learners, undated) was handed to the researcher upon request (document review, September 11, 2012) and the School Safety Policy turned out to be the LRC Policy on Learner Conduct prohibiting weapons, drugs and alcohol on school premises and calling for the strict control of visitors. In effect, there was no school safety policy. Teachers pointed out that policies were not reviewed as often as they should be - according to them, their current code of conduct still belonged to the apartheid era and was not aligned to the spirit of the new South Africa (EA, 1 - 4, interview, September 11, 2012).

Teachers reported that not every learner had a copy of the code of conduct as these were only handed out when learners were admitted to the school in Grade Eight. However, parents are regularly reminded about the school rules at parents' meetings so according to the teachers, learners should know what is required in terms of their conduct. Regarding whether learners had copies of the Code of Conduct, two out of four learners confirmed that they had read it and had a copy while the remaining two did not have a copy and had not read the Code of Conduct (LA 1 – 4, interview, September 11, 2012). On the question of whether learners adhered to the Code of Conduct, learners responded that most learners do while, others don't. Some learners chose not to attend school regularly, disrespected teachers, brought drugs to school and refused to wear school uniform. Learners were unanimous that teachers did not always know how to handle problematic learners and did not consistently enforce the school rules. Rules and the Code of Conduct were only emphasised when an incident happened at the school (LA 1 – 4, interview, September 11, 2012).

All research participants reported that schools should become more proactive in dealing with school violence and as such, regarded the school as a change agent that could assist in shaping and empowering the community to deal with problems currently facing them. As one educator and the principal put it: "If schools cannot transform society it doesn't do its job and serves no purpose at all" (EA1, interview, September 11, 2012); "Schools should lead in addressing the social ills in society and contribute to developing future leaders" (PA, 11 September 2012). According to teacher EA2 (interview, September 11, 2012), this was easier said than done because "learners will tell you township culture shows, people who have not gone far in school have everything - even more than teachers who spent a lot of time studying."

Safe/unsafe schools

There had been no school safety programmes in the school over the past five years that teachers and the principal were aware of, and which could potentially help with behaviour change at school and in the community (EA 1 - 4, interview, September 11, 2012; PA, interview, September 11, 2012). The last time teachers had attended a school safety workshop had been three years previously (EA 1 - 4, interview, September 11, 2012). However, the school was working with the SAPS who carried out regular patrols in the area and conducted random searches for drugs and weapons at the school. The school also partnered with the South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA), LoveLife and Masakhani to address learners on the dangers of substance abuse, assist with drug rehabilitation and to promote responsible behaviour and awareness of crime prevention strategies. Local pastors were also invited to deliver religious sermons at general assembly (SGBA 1 – 2, interview, October 17, 2012). Learners found all of these programmes to be effective because according to them, learners stopped bringing weapons to school, started keeping the school clean, stopped smoking, and drinking alcohol at school and started showing respect for each other. The LRC said that they played no role in initiating any of these programmes and that unlike the SGB, police and their parents, the LRC played no role in promoting school safety at school (LA 1 – 4, interview, September 11, 2012).

Teachers have a major role to play in curbing school violence, but due to the complex nature of school violence highlighted in the literature (Bloch, 2009; Burton 2008a) they cannot do it alone because the causes of school violence are multi-faceted and require multi-dimensional actions involving all role players (Burton & Leoschut, 2013). The researcher is therefore of the opinion that it is incumbent on schools, if they wish to remedy the problem of school violence, to work in partnership with other stakeholders in the community.

Apart from learners, the next biggest partner in terms of significance in the school, is the parents. There is a general feeling among teachers that the school should firstly recognise and make parents feel important and valued. Teachers said that the school should develop an activity plan to involve parents constructively in certain aspects of the school and not just call parents when there were problems with their children (EA 1 - 4, interview, September 11, 2012). While it is generally known and accepted that parental involvement in schools is poor (Lemmer, 2007; Singh, Mbokodi and Msila, 2004), at this school, teachers said parents' meetings were well attended and their success was ascribed to having meaningful agenda items and making sure that learners do hand over the invitations to their parents or caregivers. It also emerged from learners, whose parents attend meetings and respond to school requests, that such learners have good relations with their parents, family members and teachers (EA 1 – 4, interview, September 11, 2012).

Attending parents' meetings, according to teachers, did not necessarily translate into better parental involvement in the child's education, especially when the child was not performing well or funds were needed to undertake educational trips outside of the school. Teachers were of the view that the no-fee school policy had made parents resistant to providing any financial support to the school, even if they were able. Finally, overloading learners with chores before and after school, drug dealing and unsafe routes to and from school rated very high as community safety threats to the school (EA 1 – 4, interview, September 11, 2012; SGBA 1 – 2, interview, October 17, 2012).

Unlike the view held by teachers that the school needs to do more to strengthen relations with parents and the community, the principal said relations between the school and the community were very good and they enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship. For example, she said the community benefitted from using the school (classrooms) for church gatherings (which they paid for), adult skills development projects, community meetings and parking of cars during funerals. The surrounding community was said to "keep an eye on" the school and would call the principal should they notice anything suspicious, for example people dumping refuse illegally near the school (PA, interview, September 11, 2012).

Teachers identified high unemployment rates and learners living on their own or with caregivers as a result of losing parents to HIV/AIDS, as risk factors in the community that had an impact on the school.

Even though school safety threats and incidents had been identified in this school, the principal, learners and teachers said that based on their experiences over the previous five

years, their school was generally safe (PA, interview, September 11, 2012; LA 1 – 4, interview, September 11, 2012; EA 1 – 4, interview, September 11, 2012). On a safe/unsafe continuum they rated the school in the middle, oscillating between being unsafe and safe. Teachers were unanimous that the safety situation in this school was worse before, that it had improved with the support of the SGB, but that that the school seemed to be losing its grip on safety under the leadership of the new principal (SGBA 1 – 2, interview, October 17, 2012).

Specific incidents reported by learners included bullying, class disruptions, theft, fighting, weapons, drugs, lack of discipline and swearing, while the SGB added satanic practices as a fast emerging and serious problem (LA, interview, September 11, 2012). The principal shared an incident where a learner (believed to be possessed by an evil spirit) physically attacked her in full view of learners and teachers. The learner accused her of calling him a demon. She sustained minor injuries and bruises but was so traumatised by the incident that she feared coming back to school because "the school was turned into a circus and it took a while for normality to return" (PA, interview, September 11, 2012).

Teachers cited bunking classes, lack of respect, lack of parental involvement and gambling as problems, with the SGB and security guards confirming that dagga smoking among both girls and boys (in equal ratios) was common. The guards also had to remain vigilant and guard against vendors selling drugs to learners through the school fence (EA 1 – 4, interview, September 11, 2012; SGA 1 - 2, interview, October 17, 2012).

Three out of four learners interviewed said they felt safe at school, while one learner said she felt unsafe in the toilets. The principal felt partly-safe as there were incidents, such as tampering with teachers' cars, which she was not sure were pure mischief or somebody (either teachers or learners) bearing grudges. While all teachers said they felt safe at school, a lack of learner discipline in school remained a major problem i.e. learners behaving badly because they want to impress their peers, and not because they are necessarily "bad". That means this school could not be regarded as being completely safe especially since learner toilets were not safe. Toilets are well known as areas for learner victimization (Burton, 2008a). Security guards said that while they kept the school safe, they felt unsafe because of poor training and a lack of support from management. They said the principal had failed to communicate their role (monitoring, searching vehicles and bags, denying access to learners without school uniform) to teachers and students and, as a result, they found themselves in heated arguments resulting in insults with no back-up or protection from the principal (SGA1&2, interview, October 17, 2012).

Learners said that efforts by the SGB, and the introduction of security guards, had much to do with them feeling safe at school. They also added that crime levels in the township had dropped rapidly since 2010, when policing was stepped up during the Soccer World Cup. The principal said the success of moving closer to being a safe school was because "together we (principal and staff) use force (corporal punishment) to move the school towards becoming a safe school" (PA, 11 September 2012).

Because there is currently no clear definition of what constitutes a safe school it is difficult for principals to decide on what they should do or have in place in order to call their schools "safe" or "unsafe". In an effort to help find an acceptable definition for school safety in secondary schools a summary of research participants' definitions is listed in Table 10 and Table 11 respectively.

Table 10: School A: Definition of a safe school

Safe School	
Principal	A school where everybody looks forward to going to school, feeling loved and cared for
Educators	An environment where people feel protected against physical and psychological harm
Learners	Where there are no harmful weapons and corruption. Where there's discipline, learners and teachers helping each other, and everyone is happy and smiling. Teachers don't hit learners, we have a feeding scheme and we are kept safe by a strong fence and a gate that remains locked until the school day ends.
Security Staff	A school where all structures in the school and the community work together to keep everyone in the school safe.
SGB	Class sizes are manageable, a strong fence around the school, no victimization, uniformed male and female security guards to monitor the school, a sick bay supported by a nurse and social worker. Teachers should have dedicated classrooms with desks and chairs and the classrooms must have posters and pictures on the walls to promote teaching and learning

It's important to note that four out of the five research participant groups defined a safe school using a social justice lens highlighting, in addition to a strong fence and weapons, a place where people feel loved and cared for.

Table 11: School A: Definition of an unsafe school

Unsafe School	
Principal	A school where learners fear being bullied, where learners smoke dagga, use drugs and participate in satanic practices (cults).
Educators	Where there is no discipline and learners are abusive towards teachers and each other
Learners	There are harmful weapons (knives and guns), corruption and no discipline. Everybody is angry and unhappy, learners take drugs and engage in fights and teachers do not act in the right way. Where teachers do not teach and where they abuse learners. There's no food to eat and the school has no security.
Security Staff	It's a school where there are no systems in place to keep everyone safe
SGB	A school with no discipline, no communication, where teachers do not respect the principal and learners follow suit and where everybody does as they please

In trying to understand why it was so hard to create safe teaching and learning environments, this school revealed the following:

- The school relies on provincial government for all its funding and because the school could hardly cover the cost of delivering the curriculum, there were no funds to support any initiative directed at school safety.

- The no-fee policy, according to teachers, had led to a situation where parents refused to support the school in any way and this was found to be to the detriment of restoring a culture of teaching and learning.

- Chronic late coming by learners, and attending to disciplinary hearings, demands a considerable amount of time from security guards, teachers and the principal and it appears their time is actually wasted because the problem persists.

- Flouting municipal by-laws is sometimes not recognised as such because in this school, general workers were allowed to use the fire hose to wash pedestrian walkways and water channels – school safety includes observing the law.

- While the school building was generally in good shape, classrooms were bare and quite uninspiring and 25% of learners said they felt unsafe in the toilets.

- All governance structures were in place, but poor relationships between the different members lead to structures not functioning optimally and this in turn undermines democratic management processes leading to certain processes being sabotaged – the principal was intentionally being overloaded. As a result, some structures such as the LRC and DC had been established but did not function.

- Access to, and distribution of, the code of conduct to learners and parents was problematic and there appeared to be no system in place to ensure that this could be better managed.

- Relationships among structures were not good and the principal found it difficult to integrate the functions of the security guards with that of other structures such as the SMT and SGB – this resulted in conflict among members and school safety initiatives being fragmented.

- The principal felt "partly safe", teachers felt totally safe although on their guard (due to the "satanic worshipping that they claimed was on the increase) for unruly students, while security guards felt unsafe due to poor training, lack of equipment and lack of support by school management.

4.2 School B

In School B, the principal made sure that school buildings, gardens and the large sports fields were well maintained and kept secure by a sturdy palisade fence and gates. The school radiated an atmosphere ideal for teaching and learning. LRC members assisted with scholar patrol and gate duty, while learners who were late were processed by administrative staff instead of the principal. One of the general workers played the additional role of security guard, supported by a private security company who, in conjunction with the SAPS, undertook regular patrols to keep the school safe. Access to the administration block was strictly controlled and classrooms could only be accessed through the administration block. Sporting facilities were ample and 75% of learners had an adult at home when they returned from school. School safety was taken seriously by the school and while funds were not always available, the school made an effort to raise funds (with the SGB) to ensure that the safety of teachers and learners was not compromised. The principal had "school safety" as a regular staff meeting agenda item and all structures were in place, functioned well and reported relationships between and among members as being sound. The principal also had good relations with the district office, which he said came in handy when in crisis. Roles between structures were clear and the SGB said that they only dealt with serious cases that could not be resolved at the level of the SMT. This allowed them to focus on their governance role. The school was run according to democratic principles with the principal alternating his responsibility with each of the SMT members – he used two HODs to attend to queries from parents. Classroom management was recognised as key to maintaining discipline and keeping learners constructively busy was a key strategy. Having a safety coordinator in each block also provided an additional layer of safety for teachers. The code of conduct was pasted into every learner's diary and was reviewed annually. Some life skills programmes had been found to be beneficial to learners and positive relationships between parents and their children stood out as a factor for better parental involvement in the school. Learners were directed to a safe space (which is cordoned off) during breaks to minimise contact with the outside world and toilets were monitored and only accessible during breaks.

Location and context

School B is located in a suburb to the south of Johannesburg surrounded by well- established residential homes and small to medium-sized formal businesses. This area was historically classified "white" and still displays signs of an upper-class community but increasing decay is beginning to show in places. Overgrown grass on pavements is common and some of the houses appear dilapidated. According to the principal and the police officer, an ageing community (still mainly white and dependent on government pensions), coupled with high

levels of unemployed youth is responsible for the decay and emergence of socio economic problems such as drug abuse and domestic violence. Crime in the area, according to police officials, was moderate but theft, drug dealing and robberies were common and on the rise (PB, interview, September 6, 2012; SAPB, interview, January 13, 2013).

The school buildings and their surroundings were very neat, the perimeter was secured by a sturdy palisade fence complemented by a well-maintained garden and large sports fields, proudly flaunting rugby and soccer goal posts. The administration block and classrooms were well secured with burglar bars and doors and access to the classrooms was only possible from the reception area. The school had one general assistant, who lived on the property, to perform basic on-site security services and he was supported by a private security company that patrolled the area on a 24-hour basis and carried out spot checks from time to time (observation, September 5, 6 & 18, 2012). The school paid for the security service from its coffers and the principal had very limited information about the GDEs CPF Patroller programme. He recalled the GDE deploying two security guards to the school for a few days but they were withdrawn without a proper explanation and he had to revert back to the private security company. There were forty-five teachers and ten general assistants employed at the school (document review, September 5 & 6, 2012). Sporting facilities were ample and the school did not have a learner feeding scheme since this school is regarded as catering for learners who can afford to provide their own meals (PB, interview, September 6, 2012).

The main gate to the school is off a very busy main road, which serves as an artery to one of the major highways and as a result, pedestrian safety is a big issue in the mornings and afternoons. Members of the LRC helped teachers with playground and gate duty in the mornings.

Once inside the school yard you would encounter the reception office where a buzzer had to be activated before gaining access. On the inside, the waiting area was fitted out with comfortable chairs, some reading material neatly stacked on a coffee table and complemented by an impressive trophy cabinet showing off the school's achievements. Learners passed through the reception area in droves as they headed out towards the main buildings where the classrooms are situated. There was a strong sense of pride, discipline and order in this school (observation, September 5 & 6, 2012).

School starts at 07h45 and general assembly is held once a week to inform learners and teachers of important developments in the school. The school serves a large feeder area made up of learners from Eldorado Park, Lenasia and Soweto and there were 1143 learners in the

school. The majority of learners, according to the principal, were from low to middle income families and commuted mainly by public transport to and from school on a daily basis. School fees amounted to R6650.00 per annum (document review, September 5 & 6, 2012). Late coming by learners was identified as a huge problem for the school as it has an impact on teaching and learning contact time. Efforts to eradicate this problem had yielded little success due to a number of factors i.e. parents, taxi drivers, traffic congestion and the political climate. Late comers are brought to the administration staff for processing where an official voucher (different colour for each day) is issued to the learner in order for them to be allowed into class. Habitual latecomers are directed to the Grade Head who attends to the matter by engaging the parents and deciding on an appropriate sanction or plan of action. If the problem persists, the deputy principal is called in to take appropriate action (PB, interview, September 6, 2012).

Household income of learners' families was either self-generated from small businesses (25%) or wages (75%) with all learners in the sample living in their own formal brick-built houses. Most learners (75%) had somebody (helper or family member) at home when they returned from school (LB 1 – 4, interview, September 5, 2012). The school community could be described as falling between the middle to lower-income groups and both the principal and SGB confirmed that the school experienced difficulty when it came to collecting school fees. However, according to the principal, the lack of learner motivation, discipline problems and gang activity far outweighed the financial problems that the school had to contend with. For teachers, the implication of insufficient funds in the school coffers was that most learners do not have the resources to do their assignments properly and although the school has a library, it is not always up to date with the latest literature (EB 1 – 4, interview, September 5, 2012).

School violence was recognised as a barrier to education and therefore, every effort was made to ensure that teaching and learning happens in safe and secure learning environments. The principal said that he placed huge emphasis on prevention, and learners were encouraged to report anything suspicious or dangerous on the school grounds. Similarly, the principal paid particular attention to safety issues while on his daily routine patrols. The school was able to deal with minor emergencies on site and the management reported doing its best to raise funds to ensure the basics were in place to deal with emergencies (EB 1 – 4, interview, September 5, 2012; PB, interview, September 6, 2012).

Leadership and governance

The SMT, LRC and SGB were in place, met regularly and were regarded as functioning well. The school and all related structures were reported to operate in a democratic manner and

the SGB commended the principal for always promoting a culture of tolerance and equality in both the SGB and in the school (SGBB 1&2, interview, October 18, 2012). The principal reported that he had good relations with staff and learners, which extended all the way to the district office. He recognised the importance of having healthy relationships, which for him were not much of a problem but he noted that increasingly the effects of poverty impacted on how well the school ultimately functions. For example, he found it difficult to get all SGB members fully and consistently involved in matters of the school because some of them were unemployed and found it financially difficult to attend all SGB meetings and functions (PB, interview, September 6, 2012). The SGB said its relationship with the school (principal and staff) was very good and communication channels were open and sound. Staff reported that they worked well together and while they didn't always agree with each other, relationships were cordial and the preferred way of reaching decisions was by consensus.

Roles and strategies

Teachers were well versed with the roles of the different structures and the SGB was also clear about what was expected of them. The SGB did, however, confirm that even though they were required to deal with issues of learner misconduct, most of these cases were dealt with by the SMT and they only got involved in extreme cases, which according to them, were rare. In such cases, relationships between the SGB and parents became "bitter-sweet" because parents tended to ignore or interpret school rules to suit themselves thus creating a big problem for teachers and the SGB (SGBB 1 - 2, interview, October 18, 2012). They also shared the view that this school was by far one of the best in the area and while most parents did value and support the school, there were those parents who took advantage by not paying school fees – due to the school being far too lenient with defaulters. In addition, much to the frustration of teachers and the SGB, parents were not attending meetings as regularly as they should, so in most cases it was a case of "preaching to the converted". As far as school safety was concerned, the SGB was not actively engaged in suggesting or implementing any school safety programmes but usually responded to financial requests by the principal and teachers to fund capacity building such as first aid training.

LRC members defined their role as having to be exemplary, an inspiration to learners and to support teachers in enforcing discipline and respect in the school. The LRC members said that the principal consults with them on matters of concern and that they agreed that he pays attention to what they are saying. As a result, they (LRC) felt that they mattered and that the principal encouraged them to make their own decisions, which they collectively assessed with the principal before implementation. Learners held the view that only 75% of learners in the

school fully understood the role of the LRC and this shortcoming in communication resulted in some learners challenging or even disrespecting LRC members. Despite this, the general sense among learner research participants was that the LRC is effective because it is able to assist teachers, to a large extent, to maintain discipline in the school (LB 1 – 4, interview, September 5, 2012). The main agenda items that the LRC discussed at their meetings included dress code (school uniform), discipline in class and the school, school events and sport - minutes of all meetings were recorded and filed (document review, September 5, 2012). The LRC reported that they played no major part in promoting school safety programmes but that they played an active role in trying to stamp out bullying and creating a culture of teaching and learning in the school.

The principal shared his management responsibility with the SMT – each SMT member rotated as principal on a daily basis. He also made use of two HODs to attend to parents and only became involved when it was warranted. He kept the deputy-principal well informed of what was happening in the school, which he highlighted as a great back-up in cases where he got stuck. He qualified his approach by saying "it takes a collective effort to keep the wheels of the school turning" and he made it very clear that, while the management responsibilities are shared, he remains fully accountable (PB, interview, September 6, 2012).

The principal provided the researcher with copies of the school safety policy (Safety and Security Policy, 2011) and code of conduct (2010) both of which were produced from consultative processes involving both learners and educators. These documents were readily available upon request from the administration office or the deputy principal. The code of conduct was pasted into each learner's diary and was reviewed annually unless otherwise required. All of the learner research participants confirmed that they had read and had a copy of the school rules/code of conduct. On the question of whether learners abide by the school rules, learners said some do while some don't and the reason why some don't was because teachers did not always enforce the school rules. The rules were only brought up when an incident had occurred. (LB 1 - 4, interview, September 5, 2012). The SGB felt that the GDE was not supporting the school enough in matters of discipline and that the GDE shied away from respecting its own policies by placing the responsibility for discipline back on the school (SGBB 1 – 2, interview, October 18, 2012).

One of the teacher research participants charged with drafting the school safety policy found that the term, "safety" was very broad and that a distinction between "safety" and "security" must be made. He cited an example that an overloaded shelf that falls over and injures a

learner is very different to a swarm of bees attacking a learner, which is different to an intruder coming onto the property and breaking into cars (EB 2, interview, September 5, 2012).

The principal had been in his post for fourteen years at the time of the interview and was of the opinion that principals are not adequately prepared to deal with issues of school safety, which requires striking a balance between keeping the school safe while also attending to education outcomes. He said that "the community, police, teachers and security staff form important elements in this equation and should also be involved and nobody coming into this post knows this and you basically learn by trial and error." (PB, interview, September 6, 2012). He reported that he was not prepared for the job either but was fortunate to have taken modules in leadership and education management during his studies. He learned about identifying and engaging with partners both inside and outside the school and while the principal must take the lead in moving the school forward, he/she cannot do it alone – consultation and delegation is key. In his view, the principal has a critical role to play in ensuring school safety and one of the things principals can do, is to make school safety a regular agenda item in staff meetings and when there is a problem, highlight this in circulars to all staff.

All educators interviewed saw a direct relationship between classroom management and discipline. They said if the classroom is managed properly most of the problems won't exist and one of the things teachers need to do is to always keep learners constructively busy (EB 2, interview, September 5, 2012). Teachers admitted that while a lack of discipline was not a major problem in this school, at times it could be difficult to control disruptive learners but they have learnt over time how to maintain control in the classroom by, for example, asking the learner to leave the classroom for the remainder of the period.

Safe/unsafe schools

The principal and teachers confirmed that most of the incidents at school happened between learners and incidents between teachers and learners were minimal. While it is ideal to be proactive and consciously plan for school safety, the principal said it was not always possible to know what can go wrong. However, when something did go wrong unexpectedly his team responded immediately to deal with such issues decisively. The system and process to deal with incidents, while by no means perfect, had been found to be effective thus far. The LRC said that teachers and the principal knew how to deal with school safety but that at times teachers appeared to be powerless. They don't know how to manage learners who at times

become unruly and this causes a lot of strain on the class (LB 1 – 4, interview, September 5, 2012).

The principal was very concerned about crime trends throughout the country and was of the view that schools are not spared. The role of the school is to shape and uplift the community and while law enforcement agencies have the responsibility to make communities safer he believed that the school has a vital role to play in effecting behaviour-change both in the school and the home. One of the things he constantly reminded learners of was "to be and act responsibly and not to wave around sharp objects like scissors, tamper with electricity but most importantly to report anything that may appear suspicious or to be a threat." He said that, on the other hand, learners could help to make the school safer by understanding how their own conduct, such as engaging in arguments on social media or engaging with strangers on social networking sites, impacts on school safety (PB, interview, September 6, 2012).

Educators could not recall any specific programmes on school safety in their school over the previous five years (EB 1 – 4, interview, September 5, 2012), but learners mentioned the Columba Youth Leadership Programme that dealt with positive behaviour change, and campaigns on drugs by the SAPS and SANCA. According to learners, the drug awareness campaigns were found to be ineffective because learners did not stop smoking at school and carried on as before. However, the Columba Youth Leadership Programme was seen as effective because it caused learners to adopt better values (LB 1 – 4, interview, September 5, 2012). The school also regularly engaged with various church groups and the local SAPS.

To sustain community upliftment interventions, the principal said resources and stronger partnerships were necessary to tackle problems both at school and in the home. The school could perform much better if, for example it could deal with the problem of overcrowding in classes, which had a direct bearing on education outcomes and school safety. Through better parental involvement, the school and the community could collectively address the social ills in the community. However, support from the GDE is necessary to bring pressure to bear on parents. The district office had been found to be elusive, especially at critical times, and this situation doesn't give much hope for schools to reach and teach communities (PB, interview, September 6, 2012).

One of the SGB members commented that her interest to serve on the SGB was driven by a strong bond that existed between her and her daughter. Both of them had developed a strong attachment to the school and her daughter, an aspiring teacher, wanted to come back to teach at this school. By contrast, the SGB and teachers reported that many learners came from

homes where there were high levels of domestic violence and no positive role models, resulting in children causing disruptions or being unable to concentrate in class (SGB 1 – 2, interview, October 18, 2012).

Common crime incidents that were occurring in research participants' communities included robbery, theft, fights, drug dealing, alcohol abuse and shootings. Learners said that while some of them learnt to cope with the situation in the community, others were affected by being lured into the drug trade or started consuming alcohol (LB 1 – 4, interviews, September 5, 2012). The most common incidents occurring in the school were fighting among learners, theft, swearing, bullying, graffiti and drug use and these occurred mainly on the school grounds and in the classroom when the teacher was not present or when learners moved between periods. Weapons were not common in the school and the toilets were said to be well controlled and remained locked between breaks and would only be unlocked in an emergency. During breaks, learners were kept in a very specific area on the school grounds which was cordoned off and supervised by teachers assigned to do playground duty (observation, September 5 & 6, 2012). Should an altercation occur, the first step would be to separate the learners and get them to calm down. The matter would then be referred to the HOD who would decide whether to deal with it or to refer it to the principal or deputy principal for further action. The parties would be asked to provide written statements of what happened as well as to give names of any eye witnesses. After due process had been followed, an appropriate sanction would be handed down and this could include a warning, or a suspension from school for a few days (LB 1 – 4, interview, September 5, 2012; EB 1 – 4, interview, September 5, 2012).

Taking into account the threats enumerated above, research participants were asked whether they felt safe at school – the principal and teachers all felt safe. Three of the four learners interviewed always feel safe at the school while the fourth learner felt unsafe on the way to and from school (LB 1 – 4, interview, September 5, 2012). The external environment, over which the principal has little influence or control, is a problem for this school in terms of school safety. The school, according to the principal, used to have a very weak fence and access control was difficult to manage. This problem was solved and the only way to get into the school now is via the main gate that leads directly to administration block. The principal said that these crime hardening measures, coupled with efforts to ensure safety threats were identified and removed, made the school quite safe for everyone. Educators said that because of the way the school was built there is only one way of getting to the classrooms, which is through the administration block and that made them feel safe at school. Teachers conceded that at times, especially when the reception area was quite busy, the odd parent did slip

through and come directly to the classroom and that meant there was room for improvement because the situation could be exploited. The fact that each classroom block had a safety coordinator also provided teachers with an additional level of comfort and sense of security. The playground was also cordoned off to prevent direct contact with the external environment. The principal was very concerned that they had not thought through a proper escape route from the secure playground area in the event of a fire or any other emergency and said he would be attending to this with his team as a matter of urgency (EB 1 -4, interview, September 5, 2012; PB, interview, September 6, 2012).

In contrast to the SGB, the principal and educators reported that the safety situation in the school had been better previously but was getting worse. According to the principal this was so because learners were becoming complacent about their personal safety and as a result some of them become targets when they left the school grounds at the end of the day to walk to the taxi and bus ranks (PB, interview, September 6, 2012). Teachers found that learners had become more ill-disciplined and adopted a different set of values compared to a few years previously. One teacher made sure to point out that although the situation at this school was not regarded as volatile, as in other schools, the situation was nevertheless unpredictable as a fight between learners could occur at anytime, anywhere so teachers were always alert and ready to intervene as quickly as possible (EB 3, interview, September 5, 2012). With the SAPS patrolling regularly (in addition to crime hardening measures) and at times popping-in to the school, the principal was convinced that the school was as safe as it could be.

Research participants were asked to define a safe and unsafe school and there was a mixture of narrow (technical aspects) and broad definitions (social justice) all summarised in Table 12 and Table 13 respectively. With the exception of the learner group who identified "freedom from fear" as an element of a safe school, the rest of the research participants (75%) highlighted the technical aspects of school safety quite strongly.

Table 12: School B: Definition of a safe school

Safe School	
Principal	A safe school should have all the equipment associated with being safe i.e. fire extinguishers, burglar bars, solid gates and fence; access control and a functional system of reporting cases to SAPS. Regular searches by SAPS.
Educators	The physicality of the child must be protected – fights must be eliminated; the perimeter of the school must be secure and the needs of both learners and educators must feature in the definition. Everyone feels safe.
LRC/Learners	A school with no violence, no weapons and where learners and teachers respect each other. A place where learners do not fear coming to school
SGB	A school with a proper teacher/learner ratio; A school that is supported by the department in implementing policy decisions; A school where learners, teachers and parents are united.

Table 13: School B: Definition of an unsafe school

Unsafe School	
Principal	Opposite of a safe school
Educators	Where the principal is not in touch with what is going on in the school; There's no discipline.
LRC/Learners	Where no rules are followed, and bullying, fighting and bunking is rife. Learners stabbing each other and bringing weapons to school. Learners smoking and stealing.
SGB	A school that lacks discipline and control and where policies are not implemented.

Some of the issues that emerged in this school are:

- Learners arriving late has a negative impact on learner contact time.

- The rising unemployment levels in the country, coupled with parents who refuse to pay school fees, causes the school to struggle with delivering the curriculum and taking better care of teacher and learner safety.

- Drug rehabilitation programmes are not effective, and the impact of poverty also presents in class in learners who struggle to focus.

- The SGB felt that the district office did not support them with the implementation of its own (GDE) policies, which the principal described as the district office being "elusive" at times. He felt the GDE needs to support principals and SGBs more to bring pressure to bear on parents to share the responsibility.

- While teachers reported that they were able to manage their classrooms well, there were times when they simply did not know how to deal with certain unruly learners.

- The principal was of the view that overcrowding was hampering the school's ability to deliver a good quality education and while the school had done well to be as safe as it could be, they were struggling to make the route to and from school safe.

- Principals do not have much control over the external environment and this is an area where the SGB, through community partnerships, could play a much bigger school safety role.

4.3. School C

This school had the physical characteristics of a typical township school with a pathway leading to the office block and a soccer field in the distance that was nothing more than a bare patch of land. In relation to contributing towards leading and managing safe schools, the implication of school safety factors was well understood by the school community, purely because of its physical location. The principal took school safety seriously and while he did not have a budget for it, he constantly planned for it because that was what kept him "on the front foot" he said. Two general workers doubled up as security guards and were supported by a private security company that conducted 24-hour patrols. Only approved vendors were allowed to sell goods to learners from within the school fence – the school had a separate safe area where learners assembled during breaks, thus limiting their ability to make contact with the outside environment.

The principal demonstrated a strong commitment towards eradicating inequality in his school – all learners are expected to wear full school uniform every day and teachers are expected to join learners when food is served to indigent learners daily. Seventy five percent of learners had an adult at home to take care of them when they returned from school. The school was run in a democratic manner and all structures were in place - each one was clear on their respective roles. In the absence of school safety programmes, some teachers had started to use the curriculum to deal with anti-social behaviour. Teachers had also started to engage parents to do the bare minimum to support their children with homework, such as switching off the television for a period of time and not overloading the child with chores. Positive parent-child relations proved to be a powerful strategy for fighting adversity and building resilience at this school. The principal found that graffiti often had a message and found in some cases that it alerted him to what was brewing underneath the surface.

Location and context

School C is situated in an over-populated township surrounded by neatly built municipal homes nestled between low-cost high-rise flats, sub-economic houses and backyard shacks. The surrounding area within view was kept relatively clean by the municipality and there were no signs of illegal dumping around the school (observation, September 25 & 26, 2012). The community can be defined as a middle to lower-income community with 75% of learners living in brick-built houses while 25% live in corrugated iron structures (shacks). One learner reported that his household income consisted of wages and a child support grant, another depended on an old age pension while the remaining two's families lived off wages. Unemployment and drug abuse in the area, according to the principal, teachers and learners

was very high and gang activity was quite common. One learner had nobody at home while the remaining three had an adult at home when they returned from school (LC 1 -4, interview, 2012; PC, interview, September 26, 2012).

The majority (75%) of learners (based on learner interviews) lived in the area and walked to school in the early morning, while others were ferried in by mini-bus taxis or buses from surrounding townships. Apart from the odd vehicle passing the school, early morning traffic and noise levels around the school appeared quite low. Inside, the pedestrian pathway lead from the main gate to the administration block, which was well secured with burglar bars and burglar doors. Vehicles were parked under neatly built carports and inside, the reception office and a waiting area were neat, but rather small and congested. There was a trophy cabinet exhibiting various awards and above it towered a soccer jersey marking a victory in one of the local soccer tournaments. Very few of the school buildings (classrooms) were visible from the reception area and a sign on the opposite side of the foyer read "no parents beyond this point", which seemed to indicate a need for strict access control. The school buildings were well maintained and secured throughout. Sporting facilities were limited to a soccer field that was in need of urgent maintenance and upgrading (observation, September 25, 2012).

There were forty-five teachers, twelve general assistants and approximately 1336 learners at the school, which is classified as a no-fee paying school. Learners are expected to wear full school uniform every day and should a learner fall short (e.g. on a rainy day) the office would supply the learner with whatever he/she needed, free of charge. The school had a fully stocked clothing bank. In addition, the principal negotiated a deal with a local supplier where a complete school uniform could be purchased for close to cost price. The school had a school feeding scheme and teachers were encouraged to eat of this food so that indigent children were not stigmatised by the programme, but rather felt a sense of belonging and care. According to the principal (PC, interview, September 26, 2012) "jy kan jou broek lap maar nie jou maag nie" (you can patch your pants but not your stomach).

The school remains in constant need of funds and while school safety was recognised as a serious matter the school could not reserve funds for this purpose. The principal said it was difficult to ask parents for financial support because many parents had adopted an attitude of entitlement and refused to support the school even if they could. Policy documents were kept under lock and key in the principal's office but could be accessed via the deputy principal and / or the secretary – the administration system seemed to be working very well. General assembly was held on a seven-day cycle (PC, interview, September 26, 2012).

The school used two general assistants during the day to assist with basic security duties in addition to a private security company doing patrols on a 24-hour basis and paid by the GDE. At the time of the interview, the school had suffered severely from burglaries over the previous three years; to the extent that it could not function. Gangs in the area were accused of breaking into the school to support their drug habits and even though the situation had normalised, the threat remained. The principal knew nothing about the CPF Patroller Programme other than having heard from a colleague that the programme was being introduced in Soweto schools. Approved vendors were allowed to trade from inside the school fence during breaks and the classroom area was barricaded to restrict movement of learners and limit contact with the external environment (PC, interview, September 26, 2012).

School starts promptly at 07h45 and teachers had to make sure learners were lined up either at their respective classroom blocks or at the assembly point depending on which day of the week it was. Lining up learners in their classroom blocks took about ten minutes and this was where teachers sometimes encountered arguments with and resistance from learners with bad attitudes (observation, September 25, 2012). Learner late-coming was described as chronic, but particularly bad on Mondays – the principal said that from about ten latecomers on any given day this number soared to at least sixty on a Monday, which is roughly about 4.5% of the school population. The principal dealt with late comers and said that this took up a lot of his time daily. He also had to deal with parents who came to see him without making an appointment – this was said to be quite common in township schools, unlike in schools in the suburbs where parents would make appointments. If the matter was not urgent, the principal would schedule an appointment for parents to come and see him at another time (PC, interview, September 26, 2012).

Leadership and governance

The school had all the relevant structures in place and they were said to function well, but according to the principal, some structures were functioning better than others. He was of the opinion that their structures should work more collaboratively so that overall efficiency and impact could be felt across the school, and especially in areas such as school safety, which often lagged behind. One of the teacher research participants felt that while these structures did function well, their efficacy could be further enhanced. She felt, for example, that the SMT could do a lot better by including senior teachers because "at other schools in the district the model of including senior teachers in the SMT is used effectively but at our school it seems unlikely to happen." (EC1, interview, September 25, 2012).

At the time of the interviews, the school had just emerged from a six-month process where a new SGB had to be formed following a period of turmoil – the new SGB was in the process of consolidation. The SSC, according to the principal, mainly existed in name only because the issue of identifying emergency exit points in the secure playground area had been on the table for several months without any resolution. Furthermore, apart from the fire extinguishers in the laboratory, all the other fire extinguishers in the school had expired and were piled up in the storeroom following several fines by the local authorities for contravening the occupational safety regulations. In trying to resolve the problem the principal said "I have to requisition those services from the department and no matter who you speak to you are given the run around, so we remain non-compliant and exposed to danger" (PC, interview, September 26, 2012).

The principal had four years' experience as a principal, the last three years being at School C. Apart from his regular duties, he also taught and often had to fill in where a teacher was absent. He consulted with staff and learners on whatever concerned them and prided himself in running the school in a democratic way. Learners said the principal made them feel respected and "listened to" and that "he can be trusted because he is a man of his word" (LC 1 - 4, interview, September 25, 2012). The SGB and SMT research participants all agreed that the principal showed good leadership and did his utmost to consult and include everyone in matters affecting the school (EC 1 – 4, interview, September 25, 2012).

Roles and strategies

All research participants were clear about the roles that the principal, SGB, LRC and SMT should play to make sure that teaching and learning happened in a safe and secure environment. The principal acknowledged that he knew what was expected of him to build a culture of teaching and learning but admitted that his training did not prepare him for what he ultimately had to face as a principal, especially when it came to school safety. This included not only dealing with technical aspects of school safety but also understanding the importance of the social and psychological wellbeing of learners. Having said that, the principal was quick to point out that since he was the accounting officer, ignorance could not be a defence for non-compliance. As such, he had had to plan for school safety in the same way he planned for everything else. Much of how he was doing his work was learnt through trial and error and developing policies was particularly challenging. He found the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) course for principals invaluable as it gave him confidence and a foundation on which to build.

There was a sense among learners that in general the role of the LRC was not uniformly understood among learners in the school and that included some of the LRC members themselves. As a result, 75% of learners felt the LRC was not effective and it was described as "just being there" while 25% of learners felt the LRC was doing a good job in maintaining discipline in the school (LC 1 – 4, interview, September 25, 2012). The LRC was meeting once a month and minutes of all decisions and discussions were recorded (document review, September 25, 2012).

The security guards said their main role was to monitor the school grounds and to make sure no undesired elements such as intruders, drugs and weapons found their way into the school yard.

Relationships between and among research participant groups were reported to be good and the principal made every effort to make his time and that of staff and learners as enjoyable as possible. He, however, pointed out that at times comments in staff meetings carried subtle racist undertones, such as commenting on social or cultural practices (weddings and funerals) of certain race groups. This worried the principal because in his experience that was how tension starts to build and inevitably relationships crumble. While the relationship with the GDE was not described as hostile, the principal and the SGB found it difficult to work with the GDE because GDE officials were not always responsive and offered no or very little support (PC, interview, September 26, 2012).

The school had a safety policy (Health, Safety and Security Policy) and code of conduct (Code of Conduct for Learners, 2006), which had been drawn up in consultation with all the relevant stakeholders – copies were handed to the researcher (document review, September 26, 2012). One of the teachers who had joined the school about two years previously was unsure what policies were in place but she was yet to experience a situation where an issue at the school could not be resolved. Teachers claimed that all learners were issued with copies of the code of conduct upon enrolment, but learners disputed this. One of the four learners said he didn't have a copy of the code of conduct but that his class teacher had read it out to the class. The remaining three said that they did not have a copy nor had they read the code of conduct. The principal spared no time to point out that in his experience he found that teachers and principals often do not read or care to understand what a particular policy is meant to achieve. For example, the policy states "keep the gate locked at all times." This could easily be treated as a mechanical action (tick the box) rather than a crime prevention intervention that could have profound consequences if it is not done. Equally, finding a weapon on a learner cannot be treated lightly even if it is an isolated incident, because it can lead to much

more serious outcomes. As the principal put it: "planning helps with prevention because while you plan you are able to see how fixing one problem may create or solve another problem and that keeps you on the front foot." (PC, interview, September 26, 2012).

In trying to establish whether the code of conduct had any impact on learner behaviour, learner research participants were unanimous that learners did not always adhere to the code of conduct. Learners sometimes copied what learners did at other schools (not wearing uniform, wearing trendy hairstyles) and if there was any relaxation of the rules, learners tended to take advantage.

Learners were of the view that most teachers did not know how to manage unruly learners in the classroom and it was those teachers whom unruly learners would target. Teachers agreed that the rules were not always enforced and that learners picked up on this and exploited the situation to the fullest. This also applied when a teacher was not adequately prepared to deliver a lesson, thus resulting in losing control over the teaching and learning process. (EC 1 - 4, interview, September 25, 2012). Dealing with discipline causes much frustration for teachers because they believe their hands are tied as a result of rights that children enjoy and parents failing in their duty to instil discipline in the home. Teachers felt that the GDE failed to offer them an effective alternative to corporal punishment and a call was made by teacher research participants for the reinstatement of corporal punishment, provided it was regulated by a framework so that it was not abused. One of the teachers (EC1, interview, September 25, 2012) reported that she maintained discipline and compliance in class by administering corporal punishment whenever she thought it was warranted. She was fully aware that corporal punishment is illegal and against the wishes of the principal, but to date corporal punishment was the only method that had worked for her. She summed this up as, "ek is van die ou skool en ek slaan want dit is al wat werk." (I am from the old school and I hit because it is the only thing that works). The principal was quoted by teachers as regularly reminding them about the risks and consequences of administering corporal punishment and that creative ways needed to be sought to maintain discipline (EC 1 – 4, interview, September 25, 2012).

To change society, the school needs to have programmes in place. Based on teacher interviews there had not been any specific school safety programmes in the school over the previous five years (September 25, 2012). About a year previously, in 2011, a workshop had been held over a weekend for staff and parents on fire safety and this training proved very useful given that many students came from informal settlements where fires are all too common. Safe school programmes, which learners were aware of, included talks by the

Department of Correctional Services on crime prevention and talks on substance abuse by SANCA. Learners said that SANCA's programme was ineffective because learners are still falling into the trap of substance abuse. One teacher also expressed her displeasure with SANCA's programme as it appeared to her that SANCA was not going the extra mile to ensure children were rehabilitated and supported. The LRC reported that they were not involved in any safety programmes in the school but that the school did engage with the police and local church ministers on issues related to crime and drugs. One teacher felt that in the absence of formal programmes teachers could use the curriculum creatively to drive behaviour change. She cited a case where a boy was reported to have touched a girl inappropriately and she used this incident very discreetly in her lesson to highlight issues of self-respect, power, humiliation and shame - she felt it was much more constructive as a prevention measure than relying just on the disciplinary process. To augment what the school aims to do, parents have a critical role to play in institutionalising good practices in the home. Teachers acknowledged that most parents are illiterate and therefore unable to help children with homework, but the least parents could do is create a conducive environment for the child to study. A teacher explained that parents must become more involved with the school and their children's education by "switching off the television set for a while, not overloading the child with household chores and to regularly enquire from the child how he/she is doing at school." (EC4, interview, September 25, 2012).

Safe/unsafe schools

According to teachers the levels of violence and poverty in the community are high and in response to the question as to whether the school could do something about it, the principal answered as follows (PC, interview, September 26, 2012):

> The school has to be a change agent because all that is needed is for one child in a
>
> family to succeed to break the cycle of poverty and other siblings will follow. The school
>
> must help build learners' self-esteem so that learners can believe they can rise above
>
> their circumstances.

Adding to this, a teacher responded by saying "if the school functions as it should, we will see fewer children on the streets – it is heart-breaking to see how many children drop out of school." (EC 2, interview, September 25, 2012) One of the SGB research participants said it is possible for the school to change society because her son had been involved with drugs but with the support of the principal and staff he got through these problems, completed his

schooling and graduated as a medical doctor. The family's life had since changed and she believes because she had a good relationship with her son she was able to stay the course with him and work with the school to overcome his problem (SGBC1, interview, November 20, 2012).

According to the principal, problems in the school could become quite complex and required a collaborative approach with the community, which is not always easy. Dealing with drug problems was just one example that required long-term involvement and support by the school, drug rehabilitation experts and the family. The one big ill that had to be eradicated in the community, according to the principal, is Lolly Lounges where learners could buy drugs and alcohol and as a result, learners came to school intoxicated and at times had to be removed from these places by teachers with the assistance of the police.

The principal should also be "street-wise" and pay attention to things like graffiti in order to understand the underlying messages, which often provided powerful leads on trends that may be brewing under the radar in the school or the community (PC, interview, September 26, 2012).

The school had existing relationships with the Department of Correctional Services, Department for Social Development and SAPS. Other partners that the school engaged with included the local CPF, Johannesburg Social Welfare and ABSA Bank. For these programmes to have greater impact they should be better coordinated because at the time these programmes were run on an ad-hoc basis.

Research participants identified the most common incidents that happened in the community as drug and substance abuse, rape, car theft, house breaking and gang fights. Common problems in the school were identified as cigarette smoking, fighting, bullying, theft, gambling and drugs. Teachers were unanimous that under no circumstances should bags or valuables be left in the classroom unattended. The general approach for dealing with an incident was to report it to the nearest teacher and then, depending on the severity of the incident, the teacher would escalate the case to the principal who would decide on what additional steps to take. All incidents were recorded and the SGB supported the school to deal with the cases. However, the SGB members said that they could strengthen the school's resolve to improve safety and discipline by having a dedicated office at the school and undergoing training in school safety so that there could be consistency in how they dealt with different issues.

The school was regarded as being generally safe by most of the research participants, which means the school is safe most of the time but everyone must remain vigilant. Teachers said that they felt safe at school but were particularly worried about the combination of drugs being smuggled onto the premises and weapons that may go undetected. When school had adjourned, female teachers in particular reported feeling unsafe and would avoid staying on the premises too late as some classes are quite isolated and not in view of the security guards. This sense of feeling unsafe is closely aligned to the general feeling about high crime levels in the country and was shared among all the teachers in the group (EC 1 – 4, interview, September 25, 2012). The majority of learners (75%) said that they felt most unsafe on the way to and from school and to a lesser extent, in the toilets and classroom – especially when the teacher was not in class or was absent. Learners felt that safety in the school could be improved by conducting regular searches for weapons at the gate and incorporating CCTV cameras on the premises. These threats notwithstanding, learners felt safe at school most of the time because of the control exercised by the teachers and the principal (LC, 25 September 2012).

Principal PC said that the safety situation at the school five years previously had been particularly bad because there was a spike in gang and drug related wars in the community, which had since abated, causing the surroundings and the school to become a much safer place (Interview, September 26, 2012). This decline was due to some gangsters being in prison while some of the most notorious gang leaders had died. Teachers recalled a shooting incident that had occurred in the community a year prior to the interviews that had involved one of their learners and resulted in a death that traumatised many teachers and students alike. (EC 1 – 4, interview, September 25, 2012). One teacher said, "I was so traumatised by the incident that I dreaded coming to school for several months and felt like resigning from my post" (EC3, interview, September 25, 2012). However, joint efforts (led by the principal and supported by teachers) involving SAPS, the CPF and parents helped to reduce violence in the school significantly. Ex-pupils (who now have children in the school) are drawn in from time to time to address and motivate learners not to "do crime" and to take education seriously.

Research participants defined a safe and an unsafe school as summarised in Table 14 and Table 15 respectively. Teachers were much more articulate about their ideas, which included a social justice approach. However, corporal punishment remains a cause for concern.

Table 14: School C: Definition of a safe school

Safe School	
Principal	A caring school
Educators	A safe school is about both the internal and external environment. Perimeter should be secure with a firm system for managing access; engage partners (parents) in providing support i.e. playground supervision/learner conduct; Be aware of practices in the community i.e. devil worshipping because it prevents the school from becoming safe. A school that enjoys the backing of the Department; Where teachers and parents work together to provide the child with love for learning and hope for the future; Reinstate corporal punishment which is regulated by a framework so that it is not abused; Where there is no threat of violence or verbal abuse;
LRC/Learners	Where there are no weapons or harmful objects; the perimeter is secure and the school is well-disciplined and teachers are respected. Where we help each other as a family
SGB	Where the school has a budget for safety programmes; Have security guards; Where the surrounding community watches over the school.

Table 15: School C: Definition of an unsafe school

Unsafe School	
Principal	A school with no vision for why it exists
Educators	Opposite of above
LRC/Learners	A school with no policies and code of conduct and where teachers do not take note of learners. Where there is chaos, fights and weapons on the school premises. There's no respect
SGB	No fence, no security and no discipline; No communication with parents

The findings revealed that some of the things that made it hard for Principal C to lead and manage a safe school included:

- An attitude of entitlement driven by the no-fee policy causing parents to withhold any support (financial or otherwise) from the school, which the principal said makes it hard to lead and manage safe schools.

- The district office providing very little support, if any, to his school and he was rather surprised to learn about the CPF Patroller programme, which he said demonstrates how poor communication between schools and the GDE has become.

- Learner late-coming was described as chronic and the principal spends a lot of his time dealing with this problem without much success.

- While all structures were in place, they did not all function at the same level – some existed only in name, such as the SSC which has a crucial role to play in terms of school safety.

- The role of the LRC was singled out as a structure whose role is not clear to all in the school – they played a limited role in school safety.

- Distribution and accessibility of the code of conduct to learners is problematic and the principal said that getting teachers to read policy documents is sometimes difficult.

- Learners reported that teachers do not always know how to deal with unruly learners and that learners target these teachers.

- Teachers also pointed out that if a teacher is not properly prepared for his/her lesson, learners pick up on this and exploit the situation.

- Only some programmes were found to be effective – drug rehabilitation programmes were found to be least effective.

- While teachers felt safe at school they were worried about drugs or weapons that may be carried onto the school property by students and this speaks to the external environment which is difficult for the principal to manage.

- The majority of learners named the route to and from school as being where they feel most unsafe while 25% said they feel unsafe when a teacher is absent or when they go to the toilet.

- In addition to the SGB, there is a role for adults who are at home to play in monitoring the routes to and from school while supervising or monitoring toilet areas could make toilets safe.

4.4 School D

This school stood out from its surroundings and exuded everything an institution of learning should be. School buildings were well maintained and equipped with more than adequate safety features while the large sports fields appeared lush with green grass. Two general workers (also responsible for building maintenance) were supported by a private security company to take care of security matters at the school. Administrative staff dealt with learners who were late for school and habitual late comers were referred to the deputy principal's office. The school was fortunate to have a teacher who is also a qualified paramedic – she was part of the SSC and managed an impressive first aid programme in the school. Individual members of the SSC were responsible for fire, physical safety, wellness, chemicals and first aid. School safety was taken seriously by management, but did not quite get the attention it deserved, especially when it came to the budget. The school saw financial resources as a critical means to delivering the curriculum and prided itself in its system to get parents to understand this and to honour their part of the bargain to pay up. Seventy five percent of learners in this school had an adult at home when they returned from school.

All structures were in place, and inter-personal relationships were good and collaboration between the different structures was well established. Everyone in these structures was clear about their roles, but LRC members said that their role was not well communicated to the rest of the school. The school was run in accordance with democratic principles and the principal was lauded for her people-skills, open door policy and good leadership – the principal's more than twenty-five years' experience in the post was given the credit. Consequences for breaking school rules applied equally to staff and teachers and management ensured that the rules were enforced fairly and consistently. Learners said that because school rules were applied and communicated consistently by all structures, learners knew there were consequences for breaking school rules. Each learner had to sign the code of conduct at the start of each school year and a signed copy was pasted in the learner's diary while the original was kept on file.

Enforcing discipline was not identified as a particularly difficult matter, but given factors such as poverty, single-parent homes, peer pressure (among others) that impact learners, teachers were expected to pay more attention to managing their classrooms properly. Teachers and the principal felt safe at school while 75% of learners felt safe at school.

Location and context

School D is built on a hill and towers majestically over a suburb with homes that are set in a tranquil and picture-perfect environment. This suburb can be described as upmarket and is

said to be quite safe. The school grounds cover a very large area and the buildings appeared solid and very well maintained. The buildings and access points were well secured by burglar bars and burglar doors while the entire perimeter was marked out by a combination of a brick wall and palisade fencing. Fire extinguishers were positioned at strategic points throughout the school and access to chemicals or hazardous materials in the science laboratories was strictly controlled and managed.

The well-kept gardens and lawns added to the ambiance of a school providing the ideal setting for teaching and learning to take place. Historically, this school served this community exclusively but as transformation set in under the new government, local children (mainly white) moved to other schools and there were hardly any learners from the area attending school here. The relationship with the surrounding community diminished over time and while there was no animosity, there was no real connection between the school and the neighbouring community. The overwhelming majority of learners in the school was black, lived in brick built homes and came from middle to upper income families relying on income from salaries and wages. The vast majority (close to 100%) of learners commuted to school either by public transport or were dropped off by parents on a daily basis.

The road adjacent to the school, which is usually very quiet, was extremely busy and crowded as learners alighted from cars, minibus taxis and busses making their way into the school yard. Learners were able to access the school under the watchful eyes of two security guards via the pedestrian gate or the gate leading to the car park. The security guards were also responsible for general maintenance work on the property, were employed and paid by the school and rotated on a 12-hour shift basis. The police station is situated further down the road and they provided regular patrols around the school during the course of the school day. The school benefitted further from the visibility of private security guards who were contracted by residents to patrol the area.

There was a hive of activity in the foyer as teachers and learners scuttled to deal with last-minute arrangements and preparations. Space in the reception area was modest and there were a few chairs lined up next to each other where visitors could sit while waiting. Apart from an impressive display cabinet in one corner showing off learner/school achievements, the school had also been showered with accolades in recognition of being an outstanding feeder school for one of the leading universities in Johannesburg. These letters covered the wall almost in its entirety and it's this reputation that made this school so sought after. The sports fields were in great shape and the school had a very proud rugby heritage and provided facilities for both indoor and outdoor sports (observation and document review, October 17,

2012). The school had general assembly once a week and the deputy principal described the school as "a noisy and vibrant environment where teaching and learning takes place in pursuance of success in an atmosphere of love and care." (DPD, interview, October 17, 2012

Gates were locked as soon as school started and access to the school is then only possible through the pedestrian gate controlled electronically from the administration office. During the normal course of the day there were no security guards posted at the gates but they could be seen patrolling the school grounds keeping an eye out for anything that appeared suspicious or dangerous. This is a fee-paying school with annual fees amounting to R13 800.00 p.a. It had sixty-nine teachers, sixteen general assistants and about 1650 learners - the school was originally built for 800 learners (DPD, interview, October 17, 2012). One of the teachers reported that at this school the day could be rather long because teachers were also involved in extra-mural activities and if there were urgent matters to attend to, it was not uncommon for staff to leave the school only by 20h00 (ED 1, interview, September 20, 2012).

School starts promptly at 07h45 and learners who arrived late had to pass through the reception office where they were processed by the administrative staff before being allowed to proceed to class. A notice is posted in the learner's diary to notify the parents that the learner was late and habitual latecomers are referred to the deputy principal and / or the principal where an appropriate sanction is meted out. Late-coming is a problem, which according to the deputy principal is mainly caused by an unreliable public transport system and the school was doing its best to work with parents to root out this problem so that contact time with learners could be maximised (Observation and document review, September 20, 2012; DPD, interview, October 17, 2012)

The school had a comprehensive first-aid programme in place (well stocked first aid kits throughout the school) and safety is taken particularly seriously in the science laboratories, where chemicals are handled and stored. A teacher, who is also a qualified paramedic, was managing the first-aid programme and provided in-house training to teachers who were part of the SSC. School safety issues were divided up and shared among members of the SSC i.e. fire, physical safety, chemicals, wellness etc. While the principal worked hard and had been able to raise funds, it was not seen to be near enough to provide for what the school needed in terms of safety, sport and other extra-mural activities (ED 1 – 4, 20 September 2012). Because the number of learners from low income families had been increasing, the school could not expect them to pay anything over and above their annual school fees, and as such, the school had developed a very efficient way of collecting school fees so that it was able deliver a good quality education. The accounts office opens by 06h30 daily and the accounts

person who knows every parent personally was well-known for her friendly but firm approach to collecting school fees. According to the deputy principal, revenue collection was often treated very lightly but if the school was to deliver on its promise, it had to remain firm in holding parents to their contractual obligation. The same applied to parents who did not pull their weight in terms of being involved in the child's education – teachers worked with the principal to get parents to be more involved in their children's development and growth (DPD, 17 October 2012).

Leadership and governance

The school had all structures in place and SGB members said that they were well supported by the school, which enabled them to carry out their governance duties. Collaboration between the various structures was well established and management (principal and SMT) did its best to ensure staff was consulted on everything that concerned them and/or the learners. The deputy principal stated that the staff worked well together and that they supported each other and even though they may not always have agreed with each other, "we aspire to be professional in whatever we do and we run the school according to democratic principles." (DPD, 17 October 2012)

School policies were in place and each learner was issued with a copy of the code of conduct after being taken through it to make sure they understood what was expected of them. Each learner signed the code of conduct - a copy was pasted into their diaries every year. Learners participated in the drafting and reviewing of the code of conduct, however, one learner confessed that even though he had a copy of the code of conduct, he had not read it (LD1, interview, September 20, 2012). The school policy file is enormous (more than what they can cope with) and whenever a new member joined the staff or the SGB, he/she had to acquaint him/herself with all the policies as a matter of course (document review, October 17, 2012).

At the time of the interview (October 17, 2012), the principal had been running the school for more than twenty-five years and the deputy principal (who stood in as research participant for the principal) had been teaching at this school for twenty-one years, the last seven of which had been in the post of deputy principal. She was one of two deputy principals and on the question of how well principals are equipped to deal with school safety, the deputy principal was of the view that they were not at all prepared for it in any way. While the principal planned for school safety as a matter of course, the deputy principal felt it still did not get the attention it deserved and it sometimes took a tragic event (i.e. a child was crushed by a bus at a nearby school) to remind schools of how important school safety is. The local police worked with the

school by doing regular patrols and conducting random drug raids, but she felt the school could and should do more to keep teachers and learners safe since the responsibility rests with the principal. In her words "it's a case of sink or swim but fortunately in most cases principals and deputy principals would come into this post with several years of teaching experience but that's not enough – some sort of training is necessary." Training in legislation would have been most useful for her because after being in the deputy principal's post for just three months she was confronted with a huge issue and she had no clue what the legal requirements were, saying "soon I had to go on blood pressure medication and my life has not been the same since" (DPD, interview, October 17, 2012).

Leadership, according to the deputy principal, is vital to how well a school functions and as a leader you have to be open and listen to what people are saying and by drawing in people (skills) around you, the school functions much better. She added, "If you don't have effective leadership no matter how good everybody else is, it falls apart." In her view, their principal was an exceptional leader (from whom she learned much) and together they made a formidable team. Although the deputy principal regarded herself as a leader, she leaned more toward being a manager than a leader because as she put it (DPD, interview, October 17, 2012) "I often find myself going around putting out fires and never get a chance to step back and reflect to see the big picture and do long term planning." She went on to say that in countries like Australia and New Zealand they have what is called "Teacher's Day" dedicated to celebrating teachers and taking them to capacity building workshops – she said if teachers could have this experience once per term it could help build a cadre of strong leaders (DPD, interview, October 17, 2012).

Roles and strategies

The LRC, SGB and SMT members were all clear about their roles and recognised that there was much more they could do to make their school safer. The SGB and SMT met every six weeks and the school prided itself on being organised. Relationships among staff and learners were described as good (DPD, interview, October 17, 2012; Review of minutes, October 17, 2012).

Learners prided themselves in the results the school achieved and said it was a sign of good learner behaviour and discipline. LRC meetings were scheduled for once a quarter and the agenda items included school uniform, litter, learner behaviour, code of conduct and school building maintenance. Apart from assisting teachers with monitoring the gates in the mornings and afternoons, the LRC played no further part in any school safety related activities. Learners

agreed that the role of the LRC had not been well communicated or understood throughout the school and stated that this was the reason why there was division among learners as to whether the LRC was effective or not – one research participant commented that in his view the LRC model was more of a status symbol, and not as effective in maintaining discipline as the prefect model (LD 1 - 4, interview, September 20, 2012).

When asked whether learners follow school rules, three of the four learners interviewed said yes. They attributed this compliance to being constantly reminded of the school rules by Grade Heads and learners also understood that there were consequences for breaking school rules. Notwithstanding these efforts the LRC still had to deal with a minority of boys wearing earrings and smoking cigarettes in the toilets. Occasionally, a learner would challenge a teacher, but such behaviour was not tolerated and Grade Heads were called upon to intervene in cases where teachers were faced with disruptive or abusive learners. Likewise, a learner reported a teacher who had been quite aggressive towards her and the teacher was warned by management not to pressurise the learner, so the school did its best to maintain that balance (DPD, interview, October 17, 2012).

To change the situation, teachers agreed that schools were undoubtedly the place where society could and should be shaped. In the words of the deputy principal (DPD, interview, October 17, 2012):

> The school can make up for what the child lacks at home and our principal is God's angel on earth because she goes out of her way to make this school a caring school. Often it is found that by the time the child gets to school the damage is done and unless schools become social change agents the country is in trouble.

As such, the school should take the lead in shaping the attitudes and morals of learners but parents and society should assist with enforcing and / or entrenching these in the home. This is precisely what this school hoped to achieve (DPD, interview, October 17, 2012).

Safe/unsafe schools

Teachers recognised that the safety situation in schools in general has changed over time and that the school environment had become more challenging. For example, learner numbers in schools had almost doubled leading to overcrowding and socio-economic factors in the community also had an impact in the classroom (ED 1 – 4, interview, September 20, 2012).

The classroom environment had therefore become very difficult to manage at times and in the words of one of the teachers (ED1, interview, September 20, 2012) "it's important that the teacher keeps a level head - the more aggressive the teacher becomes the more aggressive the learners become."

It can be deduced from the above that both learners and teachers are affected by challenges in the school environment. Therefore, it is in everyone's interest to work together in rooting out school violence. According to the SGB, the safety situation in the school worsened once feeder-school boundaries were opened up, but the situation at the time of the interviews was better than it had been before because under the leadership of the principal, the SGB and the teachers had stood firm in dealing with these problems i.e. drugs in the school. The SGB said that the school was safe and that some responsibility for safety rested with the learners. Disrespectful behaviour and violence was not tolerated by the SGB and decisive action was taken against transgressors. According to the deputy principal, in some cases where female teachers were challenged by boys, they found that these boys did not take well to female authority and that these situations were a manifestation of what was practiced in the home or the community. However, they were not giving up on dealing with this issue because "there are now functional governance structures in place to implement policies and support the school. The key to this success is good leadership to drive the action" (DPD, interview, October 17, 2012).

The process for dealing with incidents at this school was as follows: The matter is reported to the nearest teacher who records the matter and then refers the matter to the principal's office. Depending on the nature and severity of the case, the parties may be suspended and a date is set for the hearing. The Grade Head will be asked to issue a letter informing the parent/s and within two days the school meets with the parent/s to resolve the problem. If the case is serious the SGB might be called in to assist.

Learners said that common crime types in their communities included car hijacking, robbery at gunpoint, stabbings, housebreaking (occupied and unoccupied), drugs and muggings. Three of the four learners interviewed had somebody (a relative or helper) at home when they returned from school. At school, common incidents that were reported included occasional physical fights, bullying, cyber-bullying, drugs, bunking, late coming and learners being mugged on the way to school. On the rare occasion where learners had heard of a crime committed close to the school they did get concerned but not to the extent that it affected their total sense of safety at the school.

Teachers said that they felt completely safe at school and learners defined their school as safe, which they said had to do with teachers and the principal knowing how to deal with issues of school safety and learner discipline. The fact that intruders could not gain access to the school easily also helped them to feel totally safe, but the route to and from school remained a concern for 25% of learners.

Apart from the fire evacuation programme, learners were not aware of any other programmes on safety taking place in the school over the previous five years (LD 1 – 4, interview, September 20, 2012). The deputy principal reported that an NGO called Boundaries for Life offered programmes for learners on making responsible life choices (i.e. drug and alcohol abuse) but that it needed to be better coordinated for it to be more effective.

At the time of the interviews, the school had a relationship with the local police station who would conduct random drug and weapon searches while the Johannesburg Metro Police Department occasionally delivered talks on crime prevention. The school was aware that it would have to expand its partnership base so that it could draw on a wider pool of expertise. The school would need to work in partnership with the community if it were to make any headway in reducing crime and violence (Tampoe, 1998; Touré, 2007; Masitsa, 2005).

Research participants defined a safe and an unsafe school as outlined in Table 16 and Table 17 respectively and all the responses encapsulate a social justice approach to defining a safe school.

Table 16: School D: Definition of a safe school

Safe School	
Deputy Principal	Where you are not under threat or attack and feel free from verbal and physical bullying. Your whole mental and physical state is safe
Educators	A school with good access control and a nutrition programme; Where children do not feel threatened or intimidated by their peers, teachers or anyone else in the school; Good access control and being proactive in preventing problems – work with experts i.e. bee removal from the building, fitting handrails on staircases making sure fire evacuation routes are smooth.

SGB	Proper access control and learners understand not to bring weapons and drugs to school. The school must have a strong SGB and parents making sure their children are safe on the route to and from school. No bullying and learners are affirmed. There's discipline and teaching and learning takes place. All policies are in place and implemented.
LRC/Learners	A place where learners bring manners and respect from home. Where learners do not bring weapons and illegal substances to school and learners know wrong from right. A place where there is a good security system, no bullying, toilets are in working order, well-maintained classrooms, buildings and playground. Where there is no violence and learners feel at ease surrounded by warm and caring people.

Table 17: School D: Definition of an unsafe school

Unsafe School	
Deputy Principal	Opposite of the above – where children and teachers bring weapons onto the school property.
Educators	A place where nobody cares about the children, there's loitering and a lack of discipline and rules. Where there are gangs in the school; Opposite of the above.
SGB	No discipline and bullying is rife. No fence and the immediate environment around the school is not conducive to learning and teaching
LRC/Learners	A place where learners do what they feel like and there's no access control. Where there are gangs and teachers fail to deal with issues of violence, weapons and illegal substances. Where the buildings are dilapidated, dangerous objects lying around on the playground.

The following issues emerged in this school.

- Overcrowding in this school was something the school was struggling with as they felt that it impacts on the wellbeing of both teachers and learners and does make restoring safe teaching and learning environments hard.

- Late-coming is a problem that the school would have liked to root out but because the public transport system is not very reliable they say there is very little they can do.

- A lack of proper training for principals (both administrative and school safety) surfaced as a problem for this school. While the LRC was quite involved in supporting efforts to maintain discipline it was not involved in any programmes concerning school safety.

- Classroom management had become an important factor in keeping the school safe because of the changing environment learners are exposed to.

- Social and cultural practices were highlighted as beginning to affect female teachers' authority at this school and the problem seems to be growing.

- The route to and from school was a problem for 25% of learners and the school was struggling to forge good partnerships with external service providers and the community.

4.5 School E

The school perimeter was well secured with a palisade fence, which the SGB said had given them much better control over who and what entered or left the school – they conducted daily inspections to ensure vandals did not strip and sell parts of the fence as scrap metal. There were two guards posted at the gate and their job included controlling access and processing learners who arrived late. The presence of the security guards had decreased the number of burglaries to almost 0% from roughly four burglaries or attempts per month, and the guards relied on their community patrol experience to keep learners and teachers safe. Seventy-five percent of learners had an adult at home when they returned from school.

Security measures throughout the school were well implemented. The school was managed in a democratic way and the deputy principal said that neither he, nor the principal, was adequately trained for their jobs – they had to learn on the job especially when it came to school safety and policy development. School safety was taken seriously here, but there were hardly any funds to run programmes or build capacity among staff – they did however discuss safety issues in staff meetings and relied on the principal to take unresolved matters to the SGB. The deputy principal and teachers generally felt safe at school but said that they had to remain vigilant because some learners' behaviour was unpredictable.

Location and context

School E is situated in a densely populated township surrounded by municipal houses, backyard shacks and small informal and formal businesses. The majority of residents, according to teachers, were elderly people relying on state pensions with which they support their grandchildren – most learners had lost parents due to HIV/AIDS. There were also a fair number of learners who lived in child-headed or single parent households. The data shows all households represented by the learner research participants relied on wages as the main source of income, with 75% of learners having an adult at home when they returned from school. All learners in the sample walked to school and they estimated most learners to live within a two-kilometre radius from the school – some learners (25%) walked alone while the majority walked to school with a friend or in a group (observation, September 3, 2012; EC 1 - 4, interview, September 3, 2012; LC 1 - 4, interview, September 3, 2012).

The school buildings and surrounds were well maintained and the perimeter was well secured with a palisade fence, which the SGB said required regular maintenance to ensure it remained intact. Spots of illegal dumping were visible outside the school. There was a healthy buzz around the school as learners and teachers (in cars) charged through the main gate, which

was the only means of accessing the school. There were two security guards (one male and one female) posted at the gate managing access to and from the school premises on a 24-hour basis. These guards (3 per 12-hour shift) were employed by the GDE under the CPF Patroller Programme. The administration block was well secured and in the reception area two wooden benches were squeezed into a cavity completely obscured from view where visitors and learners were expected to sit while waiting for service. There was just about enough space for four adults to sit and natural light was sparse making the area quite dark - it felt like being banished to solitary confinement.   The classrooms had good security features and were further fenced in to provide extra protection from intruders and to prevent learners from loitering in the toilets or bunking class. The gates remain locked while school was in session. The school had a feeding scheme, which learners said they appreciated and there were no sports facilities/equipment worth mentioning. The school had no school hall.

In the distance, a group of girls could be seen playing with a skipping rope while others congregated in small groups across the school grounds having conversations. None of this interaction remotely reflected the acute incidences of crime and violence for which this school had been known about a decade before - learners appeared happy and vibrant. (Observation, September 3, 2012). This school is one of the schools that was selected to be part of a national Ministerial Safe Schools Programme run by the DBE in 2007. In 2007 the HEWS (CJCP & DOE, 2006), among other programmes, was introduced in the school to help reduce school violence

This is a no-fee school which had 1095 students, seven general assistants and forty-two educators. School starts at 07h45, had general assembly once a week and here too, learner late-coming was cited as an ongoing problem. The security guards were charged with processing late comers and handing them over to the principal where a suitable sanction was handed down if the excuse was not valid. Punishment in most cases would involve cleaning up the school terrain under the supervision of the security guards – the guards despised this task and said that it was not part of their job nor was it a productive use of their time (observation, 3 September 2012; DPE, interview, September 3, 2012; SGE 1 – 2, interview, October 16, 2012).

The school struggled to survive financially and despite this handicap, teachers felt strongly that learners should not be asked for donations (as was then the case) because it made those learners who could not afford a donation feel embarrassed, which lead to social isolation, which is the first step towards dropping out of school (EE3, 3 September 2012). Investing money in school safety programmes was almost impossible because the SGB spent whatever

money it had on building maintenance and repairs that were often caused by vandals (SGBE 1-2, interview, October 16, 2012).

Leadership and governance

All structures were in place and their level of functionality was described as average by the deputy principal. The school had just emerged from a protracted internal battle that was described by the teachers and the principal as "a very tough time in the history of our school that can only be described as a time where dog eats dog." (DPE, interview, September 3, 2012; EE1 - 4, interview, September 3, 2012).

It was reported that it took a great effort to get all the structures up and running again after the turmoil and that there were still some questions about the processes that were followed in setting up some of these structures. The deputy principal, who represented the principal, had been teaching at this school for the past thirty years, with the last two years being as deputy principal (DPE, interview, September 3, 2012). He said the school and all its structures were run in accordance with democratic values and principles and even more so since the arrival of the new principal, nine months previously (DPE, interview, September 3, 2012). While the principal was fully responsible for school safety, this was a shared responsibility among all staff. Everybody had the responsibility to intervene should a safety threat (fights, fire etc.) arise despite them (teachers and management) not having been trained in how to deal with such situations. The only training that the deputy principal had received was on how to improve school results and he said that school safety was often confused with discipline, which was lacking because corporal punishment had been taken away. Teachers cited that managing their classrooms had become difficult since alternatives to corporal punishment had not been forthcoming and the children's rights framework was also not making it any easier for them (EE 1 - 4, interview, September 3, 2012).

The deputy principal felt that the bureaucracy in the GDE was problematic because officials took their time to make decisions and this had implications for programme implementation, including school safety. In the absence of school safety training, the deputy principal said such issues were raised and discussed in staff meetings and if a collective resolution could not be found, the principal was expected to take the matter to the SGB. This unfortunately didn't happen consistently because teachers said there's a culture of "it's not my business", which exposed the entire school to greater risk.

The SGB recognised that school violence made it difficult for them and the teachers to run the school properly, but because SGB members had not been properly trained in aspects of school safety they relied on the police and security guards to help them fight this scourge. Regrettably, none of the teacher research participants (EE 1 - 4, interview, September 3, 2012) remembered having been trained in the HEWS (CJCP & DOE, 2006) about ten years previously.

The SGB accused teachers of undermining their authority because teachers regarded the SGB as being uneducated. The SGB recognised the need to step up its level of functionality but pointed out that a lack of capacity remained a serious concern for them, and they found it difficult to recruit skilled people onto the SGB (SGBE 1 - 2, interview, October 16, 2012). Teachers pointed out that in their view, the SGB focused only on finances and was not visible elsewhere in the life of the school, which for them was an impediment to progress. Teachers also felt the SGB should be audited by the GDE to ensure that there is no corruption (EE1 - 4, interview, September 3, 2012).

Roles and strategies

The security guards said that they were doing a sterling job despite not being trained in school safety because they drew on the experience gained from their patrols in the community. They claimed to have reduced burglaries from four per month to zero but remained worried about their personal safety, especially when guarding the school at night. They would have liked to have two-way radios instead of cell phones, which sometimes didn't work as a result of network problems. The guards did not feel part of the school because they were excluded from interacting with the SGB, SSC and SMT on matters of school safety, which was an area of common interest. The guards' powers to search and seize were limited and they were not permitted to search anybody even when there was reasonable suspicion and they were not allowed to inspect the boots of cars belonging to teachers, but only those of visitors. According to the guards, this approach was counter-productive and did not work well for controlling what entered or left the premises. One of the guards went on to say that "because of this disconnect we just hand matters over to teachers without following through and at the end of the day we see no change – nothing." (SGE1, interview, October 16, 2012) The guards suggested that their role be further strengthened by joining forces with police reservists who worked as School Monitors in the area – the guards were unsure whether this programme still existed. School Monitors were expected to visit schools every morning and afternoon to make sure everything in the school is in order.

The LRC reported that they met at least once a quarter and agenda items included school safety, education, communication, late coming, school uniform and social programmes. Minutes of all meetings were kept. At least 25% of learners (LRC members and ordinary learners) were unsure of the role of the LRC and they (LRC) saw this lack of understanding as the reason why they were not as effective as they could be and went as far as accusing some LRC members of seeking status rather than serving the school (review of minutes, September 3, 2012; LE 1 - 4, interview, September 3, 2012).

Relationships among staff were reported as cordial and given the turbulence that engulfed the school in preceding years, the different structures worked together as best they could and relationships were said to be improving (EE1 - 4, interview, September 3, 2012). The security guards said that they had a good relationship with the principal, but the same could not be said about the rest of the school. The guards claimed that some teachers insulted them by labelling them as uneducated while unruly learners threatened them with violence should they meet them outside the school yard (SGE1&2, interview, October 16, 2012). Learners accused the principal of being a dictator and said that he favoured certain students, which negatively affected their relationship with him.

The school has a code of conduct with three of the four learners interviewed saying that they had read the code of conduct and had a copy, while one learner said he had never read or received a copy of the code of conduct (LE1 - 4, interview, September 3, 2012). Teachers and the deputy principal differed on whether there was a school safety policy in place - according to the deputy principal there was no safety policy and he doubted whether anyone in the school (including himself) knew how to draft one. Teachers, on the other hand, said there was a safety policy in place but that it was weak because the school was instructed by the GDE to draft a safety policy so they had to show they had one – a matter of ticking the box (DPE, interview, September 3, 2012; EE1 - 4, interview, September 3, 2012). The SGB's view was, regardless of whether there were policies in place or not, its members did not care to read them and ignored requests to do so (SGBE 1 - 2, interview, October 16, 2012). By the time the interview process had ended (duration of three days) the school could not produce a copy of the school safety policy or the code of conduct.

Learners reported that sometimes learners disregarded the code of conduct because they knew which teachers to take advantage of i.e. those teachers who did not know how to manage their classes were disrespected while those teachers who knew, were respected. Teachers also shared that (LE 1 - 4, interview, September 3, 2012):

While it is important to keep control in the classroom, learners must be allowed time

and space to play and the focus should not just be on producing results because

learners are socially disadvantaged in this way – there must be a balance.

One teacher reported that he kept a cane in class just to scare and keep learners in check but learners disagreed, saying the cane was used to mete out corporal punishment, which was widely practiced throughout the school.

Safe/unsafe schools

Teachers felt strongly that schools needed to work differently if society is meant to change because the child spends a considerable time in school and this could be the place where positive values are taught. Teachers must learn to engage with learners at their level without compromising the teacher-learner relationship and as one teacher put it (EE1, interview, September 3, 2012): "Learners will work with you provided they can trust you but most importantly, let learners respect you rather than fear you."

Teachers said that they were prepared to go the extra mile, but support from the education department and better parental involvement was crucial in the community transformation equation. At the time, parents only came to the school when there were "burning issues like their child failed a grade - parents have their values skewed because they claim they cannot afford school uniform, yet their children wear expensive name brands to school" (EE4, interview September 3, 2012). In the face of this and other problems teachers were hopeful that this school could lead the transformation process of its community. A major attribute of the school was that it used to rank among the best in the area and this reputation could be used to motivate parents to work with the school to address problems in the school and the community (EE1-4, interview, September 3, 2012).

The community was riddled with drugs and the effects of poverty while crimes such as theft, housebreaking, gang activity and fighting in the streets were common. However, on the whole, learners and teachers said that their community was safe and that there was not much violence (LE 1-4, interview, September 3, 2012; EE1 - 4, interview, September 3, 2012).

In the school, corporal punishment, bullying, train surfing[11], gambling, violent behaviour, smoking dagga and cigarettes, theft (school bags and cell phones) drinking alcohol, weapons, swearing, late coming and bad learner attitudes ranked among the most common drivers of conflict (LE 1 - 4, interview, September 3, 2012; EE1 - 4, interview, September 3, 2012). Satanic worshipping was quite new among learners and was reported to be fast gaining popularity in the school– a very worrying phenomenon for teachers and the deputy principal (DPE, interview, September 3, 2012).

Incidents at school were reported to either a teacher, block manager (teacher responsible for a particular block of classrooms) or the principal. If the class teacher (of the alleged transgressor) was not involved already, the matter was extended to the class teacher who would either deal with and resolve the matter or refer it back to the principal to decide on further steps to be taken, which could include involving the police. Cases were sometimes referred to the SGB, but less serious cases were resolved at the level of the principal's office. The LRC said that while they did report cases to the principal they felt less inclined to report incidents because the principal took time to attend to the matters and often took no action (DPE, interview, September 3, 2012).

Despite the combination of threats prevailing in the school, the deputy principal said he felt completely safe at school but remained vigilant because his sense of safety was dependent on what was happening outside the school. For him, the safety situation in school had worsened over time because of deteriorating learner attitudes which he said presented in ways that parents were not always prepared to accept (DPE, interview, September 3, 2012). Teachers believed learners mimicked what they saw on television and heard on radio and this antisocial behaviour was fast getting worse and more difficult to manage. Three of the four learner research participants said that even though they felt safe at school most of the time, the school was unsafe because of learners being physically and emotionally abused by teachers and fellow-learners. The fourth learner in the group said the school was safe because he saw no threat and the school felt like his second home (LE4, interview, September 3, 2012). Teachers all felt the school was unsafe because their sense of safety was related to how well they (teachers) were able to manage their relationships with learners, so they could not afford to drop their guard. While the SGB concurred that the situation at the school

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[11] Learners stand on the roof of a moving train, mimicking the stance and actions of a surfer, navigating overhead bridges and high-tension power lines. In the past year (2012) three learners from this school were electrocuted as a result of this practice.

had worsened as far as discipline was concerned, they pointed out that this school was still better off (safer) than other schools in the area (SGBE1 - 2, interview, October 16, 2012).

Apart from the police, the school did not have any formal external partnerships but had always seen the need to have such. Teachers felt the school must do more to strengthen its relations with parents first and could engage parents in joint ventures such as vegetable gardening to win them over and get their support. It would then make sense to engage external partners like NGOs and local business to help the school with programmes (EE1-4, 3 September 2012). The SGB and LRC reported that they were not involved in any school safety programmes and all research participants reported that apart from the Adopt-A-Cop programme, which is in the process of being phased out, no other school safety programmes had been run in the preceding five years (Interviews, LE 1 – 4, September 3, 2012; SGBE 1 – 2, October 16, 2012). The school had been working with external partners such as church groups who provided free counselling services in cases where there's death or trauma and SAPS provided regular patrols in the area (SGBE 1-2, interview, October 16, 2012; LE 1-4, interview, September 3, 2012).

In Table 18 and Table 19 respectively, there is a summary of how research participants defined a safe and an unsafe school. A combination of broad and narrow definitions is represented.

Table 18: School E: Definition of a safe school

Safe School	
Deputy Principal	A place where learners are free from risks and problems and where they can focus on their education. For teachers, to have the knowledge on how to work with learners who challenge teachers – teachers constantly feel under threat of attack.
Educators	A safe school is a place with functional systems and facilities (such as libraries. Sporting facilities and laboratories) operating in an environment conducive for teaching and learning. There is also order, pride and discipline among learners and the school community.

SGB	A safe school is a school where there's a code of conduct, where policies are implemented against an M&E framework, there's mutual respect, access control and mutual accountability. Schools in the townships should be run like schools in the suburbs – with order and control.
LRC/Learners	A place akin to your second home where you don't fear being robbed or bullied. Where teachers come to school and attend to their classes and where there is good security and a facility to take care of students when they fall ill.

Table 19: School E: Definition of an unsafe school

Unsafe School	
Deputy Principal	An unsafe school would be a school where learners come and go as they please and there is no school uniform and poor access control.
Educators	An unsafe school is where there is disorder, drug abuse, violence and lack of motivation.
SGB	No control and there is disorder
LRC/Learners	A school where there is corporal punishment and where learners are physically and emotionally abused by teachers and fellow-students. Where learners fight and teachers do not attend to their classes.

This school experienced difficulty with the following:

- Learner late-coming and made use of security guards and the principal to process latecomers on a daily basis.

- The allocated budget from the province barely covered delivery of the curriculum, hence extra-curricular activities were deprioritised all the time. Even though this problem had severe implications, educators were not in favour of asking parents for donations as it could alienate learners who could not afford to donate.

- All structures were in place, but their level of functionality was described as average.

- Adequate preparation for the principal's post was also a problem, especially in the area of policy development and school safety.

- The school did not have a school hall which was a big problem especially during matric exams or running parents' meetings.

- Educators felt the SGB focused too much on fund raising and should be audited to ensure that there is no corruption.

- The security guards felt that they were not adequately protected against gangs and felt too that the school was not doing enough to make them feel part of the school.

- All members serving in different structures were clear about their roles but the LRC said that neither their members nor ordinary learners knew what the LRC's role was.

- Distribution, accessibility and familiarity with the code of conduct was a problem and the school could not produce a safety policy or a code of conduct despite claiming that these existed.

- Teachers were quite prepared to do more for the school but said they could not do it without the support and involvement of parents. For this to happen teachers said the school had to make an effort to bring parents on board in a respectful way.

4.6 School F

This school appeared very neat and quite modern in terms of its architecture, which is a departure from the usual apartheid-style township school. The principal, a few teachers and members of the LRC were policing the main gate to usher students in but also to process those who did not make it in time. Only 50% of learners had an adult at home to supervise them when they got home from school. The school was well protected with a solid palisade fence and buildings had burglar bars covering all windows and doors. A general worker was assisting with daily security work and was supported by a private security company and the police.

The school was managed in a democratic way and both teachers and students praised the principal for always consulting and including them in decision making processes. All structures were in place, met regularly and relationships could be described as transitioning from tense to good and members were clear about their roles. The principal had to teach herself how to cope with the job of principal as she had no prior preparation or induction. Positive parent-child relationships had contributed much to strengthening school, family and community bonds. The principal made a concerted effort to affirm learners and restore their self-worth – teachers were expected to join and socialise with learners during the serving of a free meal for indigent learners. Whether the school was safe remained a contested matter – the principal and SGB believed that the school was safe after implementing all the crime hardening measures, while teachers and learners did not agree.

Location and context

School F is situated on the outskirts of a large township that can be classified as a middle to upper-income area, surrounded by well-constructed houses and informal businesses on one side and a vast stretch of open land on the other. The residents comprised both young and elderly families but none of them had children attending school here. This school was reportedly built to cater for the overflow of learners from surrounding informal settlements and it was hoped that over time local children would be drawn to the school. This had not yet happened. The school buildings were neat and solid with a beautiful garden in the front flanked by a cement patch to the right where teachers and visitors could park their cars. There wasn't much traffic around the school save for a convoy of mini-bus taxis dropping off learners amidst the sound of blaring rap music. The immediate surrounds were reported to be relatively safe, but in the broader community, unemployment was high with drug dealing and drug abuse being rife (observation, September 19, 2012; EF1 - 4, interview, September 19, 2012).

A security guard, who was also a general assistant paid by the school, provided support to a 24-hour security guard service and together they had reduced burglaries in the school significantly. The guard assisted two teachers at the main gate every morning to usher learners into the school yard and to round up those who arrived late for school. The principal shared gate duty with the teachers on a rotational basis. The walkway leads from the gate to the administration block, which like the classrooms and the perimeter, were well secured against burglaries and intruders (PF, interview, September 10, 2012).

School starts at 08h00 and while class was in session the only voices you heard were those of teachers getting on with their daily business. General assembly was held every Monday morning where learners were constantly reminded to do something about late coming and improve their academic performance. Upon reaching the principal's office, there was no dedicated waiting area for visitors and I was directed to a small office where I joined two administration clerks.

This is a fee-paying school and at the time of the interviews the annual amount learners were expected to pay was R1000.00 p.a. There were thirty-six teachers and six general assistants serving 1036 learners. A fair number of learners (approximately 40%) walked on average three to five kilometres to get to school while others who lived within a ten to twenty-kilometre radius from the school made use of dedicated transport, taxis and trains (LF1 - 4, interview, September 10, 2012). Late-coming was a major problem at the school and this took up a considerable amount of time for the security guard and the principal daily. Because the school had no relationship with its surrounding community it struggled to engage the community in fundraising efforts or social events. There were no sports facilities at the school, but an arrangement had been made for the school to use public sports facilities in the community – according to teachers this caused safety risks and a logistical nightmare at the best of times because these facilities were not near the school. There was a learner feeding scheme in place. Collecting school fees was a major problem for the principal and the SGB because parents said they were spending the little money they had on transport costs and could not afford to pay school fees – the school therefore remained in financial survival mode. Only about 30% - 40% of parents paid school fees and while there was provision to apply for school-fee exemption, many parents did not come forward to apply for school fee exemption. This baffled the principal because she had noticed that most of the children wore expensive shoes and clothes, which meant parents did have an income and simply did not want to pay school fees (PF, interview, September 10, 2012).

As a consequence, the school could not approach government for a higher subsidy nor could they budget properly to avoid shelving or abandoning plans altogether, which sadly had become common (PF, interview, September 10, 2012). Household income of 75% of learners was derived from wages while 25% relied on child support grants. When the school day ends, 50% of learners had an adult at home, while the remainder were on their own until the evening (LF1-4, interview, September 10, 2012).

Leadership and governance

All management and governance structures were in place and while functional, the common view held by teachers and the principal was, some of these structures were struggling and could function better if personal differences could be resolved. Teachers reported that the school had just emerged from a two-year period of turmoil because the school was without a principal, but had two deputy principals who alternated in the post of acting principal. (EF 1 – 4, interview, September 19, 2012). This arrangement divided the school into two camps and relationships deteriorated further when neither of the two deputy principals was appointed to the principal's post. The principal described her relationship with staff as initially very tense but said it had progressed to cordial and was improving (PF, interview, September 10, 2012). Relationships among and between teachers, structures and learners were considered to be good. The SGB members reported that while they got on well with the principal, relationships within the SGB were not good, either due to personal agendas or as a result of members aligning themselves with factions in the school. The SGB was also frustrated by some of its members (parents and teachers) who expected to get financial reward or some benefit for whatever they did for the school and this stifled progress in the school significantly (SGBF1, interview, October 1, 2012).

The principal had been teaching for fifteen years and at the time of the interview, she was in her first year as principal at this school (PF, September 10, 2012). According to the principal, the school was managed in a democratic manner and she shared the management responsibility with HODs and staff. The SGB, SMT and LRC all confirmed that they were always consulted by the principal and that they valued her approach of listening, sharing the responsibility and keeping lines of communication open. The principal said that her appointment as principal was questioned by some of the staff, as well as parents. Teachers wanted to know which teacher union she was affiliated to as well as the reason for appointing a female principal (PF, interview, September 10, 2012). More than half of teacher research participants felt that teacher union interference had a lot to do with the protracted tension in the school and the indecision to get a new principal appointed. Teachers all agreed that union

interference tends to impact negatively on the effective running of public schools in general and that this was a national problem (EF1-3, interview, September 19, 2012). The principal, however, felt that her authority was still being challenged and she had to make very unpopular decisions to improve communication between HODs and teachers and hold teachers accountable. As a result, some teachers rebelled against her decisions and resisted in various ways, to which the principal responded by saying "these teachers do not even attempt to resolve the simplest matter in class and this places huge pressure on me. However, in such cases I show leadership by doing it myself and teachers do eventually follow" (PF, interview, September 10, 2012).

Roles and strategies

All research participants were clear about their roles in promoting the curriculum and making their learning environment safer. The SMT and SGB held regular conversations around school safety (although not in depth) and the LRC shared that at their meetings school uniform, code of conduct, vandalism, study groups and events were regularly dealt with. Similar to other schools in the sample, learners said that the role of the LRC was not well communicated and understood in the school and that this resulted in learners having unrealistic expectations of them (LF1-4, interview, September 10, 2012). Teachers recognised that everyone had a role to play in making the school work despite them not always knowing what to do when confronted with matters of school safety. Teachers felt that given the tough time the school had gone through, a retreat was necessary for staff (administration, security, support staff, management, and teaching) to reflect and get back on board as a united force and bury the hatchet once and for all. One of the teacher research participants put it this way "a school is like a three-legged pot. Each leg has to carry the load in unity otherwise it collapses" (EF1, interview, September 19, 2012). In order to build this unity, teachers felt the school should revisit its mission and vision and make sure the words "school safety and caring for each other" were reflected in both (EF, 1-4, interview, September 19, 2012).

The SGB acknowledged that while some of their members were educated, they did not all possess the required skills, especially around issues concerning school safety. Often people were elected onto the SGB because they were dominant in meetings but had very little to offer the school once the work had to be done (SGBF1-2, 1 October 2012). The principal reported that she would have benefited from proper training for the principal's post - she was told the principal's job is about policy implementation but found out much to her disappointment that there were no policies and she was expected to draft these policies without having the necessary skills or support. She said that a framework and guidelines on how to draft policies

could prove beneficial for principals as it does impact on how effective principals are likely to be as a leader and manager. Fortunately, her years of experience and working her way up the teaching ranks helped her to find her feet relatively quickly (PF, 10 September 2012).

The principal reported that the school had a safety policy and code of conduct in place but they struggled with implementation, which according to the SGB was as a result of personal issues between and among staff and SGB members. Teachers and learners knew about the code of conduct but teachers were unsure whether all learners had copies of the code of conduct as teachers had to constantly remind learners about the code of conduct and their inappropriate behaviour. Of the four learners interviewed, two reported that they had read and had a copy of the code of conduct while the remaining two learners reported they had read it but did not have a copy. Neither the code of conduct nor the school safety policy could be found on file even weeks after the research was concluded (Observation and document review, 1 October 2012).

According to learners, maintaining discipline in class was a problem for some teachers to the extent that some teachers had given up and sometimes allowed the disruptions to run their course and this caused huge anger and frustration for other learners. Not wearing school uniform, smoking in the toilets and bringing cell phones to school were regarded as a direct defiance of authority by some of the learners and not being consistent in dealing with such problems made life in the LRC and class difficult (LF1-4, interview, September 10, 2012). Teachers said they felt despondent dealing with learner problems at times and were not always sure what to do (EF1-4, interview, September 19, 2012). Despite putting in extra effort to change behaviour, teachers felt it remained an uphill battle because "learners do not care about education and it feels like hitting a ball against a wall. You hit the ball it is round the ball comes right back at you and it's still round – no change" (EF3, interview, September 19, 2012).

The SGB suggested that inviting parents to the school should be encouraged in order to improve learner interest but that this could only work if teachers refrained from seeing parents as spies for the principal or the GDE (SGBF1-2, interview, October 1, 2012). Likewise, students who had graduated from the school should be invited back to motivate learners and provide them with tips on how to excel in their studies and personal lives. Learners felt school rules had be enforced consistently and not just during times of crisis. Teachers suggested that all learners and parents must be given copies of the code conduct as it may help in addressing problems in the school. Policies should also be reviewed regularly with the help of all stakeholders in order to build a solid knowledge base (EF1- 4, interview, September 19, 2012).

All research participants were in agreement that the school is the ideal structure to change and uplift society. However, some teachers felt that teaching had become far too academic and room had to be created for other approaches to strengthen teaching as a whole because "the school is supposed to mould, build and transform the child whatever his/her background or circumstances." (EF2, 19 September 2012). A parent on the SGB shared how his son, who attended this school, was shaping family values and practice in the home through what he learned in class. His family is now much more aware of responsible waste management, recycling and global warming, which is something that is not common in informal settlements (SGBF1, interview, October 1, 2012). The principal acknowledged that sometimes the generation gap could cause problems between learners and teachers and therefore it could be a good approach to encourage learners to help find solutions to some of the problems both inside and outside the school.

Recognising that poverty plays a big part in learner drop-out rates, the principal emphasised that the school had to do its best to retain learners in school for as long as possible. The school nutrition programme was therefore run in a way that encouraged all students and teachers to share a common space where they could socialise over a meal. This helped to prevent social isolation of vulnerable children and actively promoted social connectedness, which is necessary to build resilience in young people, especially those who are poor and / or at risk (PF, interview, September 10, 2012).

Safe/unsafe schools

As mentioned before, this school had no relationship with the community around it but the principal managed to forge a relationship with a local business who provided sponsorship for bursaries to schools in the area. The principal had undertaken to expand the school's partnership base (with government, business and NGOs) so that the school could live out its mission.

Apart from the Adopt-A-Cop programme, there were no other school safety programmes in place (PF, 10 September 2012). Common incidents that occurred in the communities (where learners live) included gambling (dice), housebreaking, domestic violence, rape, child abuse and gang activity. Learners said that they often suffered from flashbacks of traumatic events, which resulted in loss of sleep and subsequent lack of concentration in class. This was particularly problematic during exam times.

Some of the common incidents reported at the school included bullying, swearing, dagga smoking, gambling, theft and fighting. The toilets and playground areas were pointed out as the areas where these incidents commonly occurred. The system for reporting and processing incidents involved reporting the incident to any teacher or the office where it was recorded in an incident book and the facts were established. Depending on the severity of the matter, corporal punishment (which is common at the school and confirmed by teachers and learners) may be administered or alternatively, parents may be summoned to come to the school and if the transgression is very serious may involve the district office and or the police (LF1-4, 10 September 2012; EF1-4, 19 September 2012).

Asked whether the school is safe, the SGB responded by saying that despite the tensions that were still prevailing in the school, conditions and school safety had improved since the arrival of the new principal, which had everything to do with her leadership. She had gone out of her way to repair the school fence and to bring the two factions in the school together. She had also stepped up the relationship with the police, she was patient, focused on the learners and not afraid to get her hands dirty. (SGBF1-2, 1 October 2012). The principal could not comment on the status of the school for the preceding five years but shared her view that safety is a must for every school and principals should consciously plan for it as principals remain ultimately accountable. School violence or a lack of safety forms a barrier to education hence principals must make sure learners do not only feel safe but also develop a strong sense of belonging and enjoy meaningful relationships with others such as peers and teachers (PF, 10 September 2012).

Despite the challenges in the school, the principal always felt safe, especially since the palisade fence had been properly reinforced and the patrols by the police had been stepped up. SGB members said that while they thought the school was leaning more towards being safe, there was stillroom for improvement.

Teachers differed with the principal and SGB because they did not regard the school to be safe since parents were sent directly from the reception office to the classrooms without verifying the reason why the parent would like to see a teacher. There were also feelings of mistrust and a belief that some teachers instigate parents against other teachers.

Learners said that they only felt safe sometimes at school and did not regard their school as being safe – 25% of learners felt safe while 75% said they felt unsafe at school. Learners who smoke dagga made the school environment unsafe because these learners sometimes became violent and their behaviour was unpredictable. Learners reported feeling most

vulnerable on the way to and from school as their routes pass through gang territories. They often worried about this and as a result at times lacked concentration in class or stayed absent from school. Police patrols made learners feel somewhat safer but they knew of several cases where learners could not cope with safety threats and changed schools in the middle of the year (LF1-3, 10 September, 2012). The SGB felt that building a network of teachers (whom learners trust) to support learners academically and emotionally would make a big difference in achieving safety, discipline and education outcomes.

When asked to define a safe school (Table 20) all research participants held a social justice perspective, flagging the importance of the social well-being of both teachers and learners. Definitions of an unsafe school are recorded in Table 21.

Table 20: School F: Definition of a safe school

Safe School	
Principal	A school that is not only concerned with physical safety but also the social well-being of both teachers and learners
Educators	Safety is broad but starts with teachers – they should all have the same vision and treat learners with respect in order to feel safe. Parents should also play a role in coming to the school not only to observe but also protect learners. No loitering around the school and regular searches by SAPS for drugs and alcohol is carried out
SGB	A school with teamwork where your team consists of teachers and different supporting professionals i.e. mental health, physical health and security. Proper access control. No weapons on the premises. Tuck shop in the school grounds.
LRC/Learners	A school with a feeding scheme and where children's physical, health and emotional needs are catered for. Where there is effective access control supported by CCTV cameras. No corporal punishment and where there is a system for dealing with fights and the promotion of tolerance and respect. No sex on school premises.

Table 21: School F: Definition of an unsafe school

Unsafe School	
Principal	A school that has a narrow view of school safety and neglects to have learner interests at heart.
Educators	A school with poor teacher-learner relationships and where teachers "use" learners to achieve their own personal goals
SGB	A school where there is chaos – learners and teachers are drunk and come and go as they please. Where the principal is not always available (absent).
LRC/Learners	No discipline and no access control. No searches for weapons and illegal substances. No security guards and teachers assaulting learners. A school that is vandalized and where learners bunk classes. Teachers gang up with learners who deal in drugs

The principal of this school had to contend with the following:

- This school was struggling to get the two factions of teachers to work together with the result being that she was unable to delegate certain duties to some of the staff and levels of trust among staff were at an all-time low. This situation undermined democratic processes and resulted in work-overload for the principal.

- The school had no dedicated reception area for visitors or parents, which not only made the school uninviting, but also compromised security measures to control access.

- Late-coming by learners was big problem for this school and in addition, it had to make use of community sporting facilities since there were none at the school.

- The school didn't have enough funds to spend on school safety because it struggled to collect school fees from parents – the principal and teachers believed parents were exploiting the situation.

- Teacher union interference with appointments was cited as a major cause for the prevailing tension in the school and it is suspected that this could be a national problem.

- While other structures were all clear about their roles, the LRC said its role was not clearly communicated to the rest of the school and that this made their job difficult.

- The lack of capacity in the SGB was an issue and so were the deteriorating relationships in the SGB.

- School rules were not enforced consistently, and this caused some teachers to lose control in their classes, much to the frustration of other learners.

- Seventy five percent of learners did not feel safe at school, while the principal and the SGB felt quite safe. The route to and from school was problematic for many learners as they had to pass through gang infested territories.

- Some learners suffered from flashbacks of traumatic events, which they said got worse during exam time - the school is not aware of this.

- Corporal punishment was still being administered in this school.

This section marks the end of the findings that describe the context within which each of the six schools operates, and also demonstrates how each school community contributed towards answering the research question. The findings show that among others, across the six schools, principals find it hard to lead and manage safe schools because of socio-economic challenges and a lack of funding to support school safety programmes. However, we have also seen how some teachers have embraced the idea of the school being a driver for change by extending their role to effect positive behaviour change. Such strategies are regarded as being useful in assisting principals to create safe schools.

More will be said about the findings in the next chapter but in order to complete the full picture on the context of school safety, we will transition into the next section to present and discuss how the two GDE officials and five police officers, engaged with and supported principals in leading and managing safe schools

4.7 Provincial and district directorates for school safety

Leadership and governance

The DSS relies on structures such as SSCs, LRCs and SMTs to implement its policies and according to both the district and provincial officials all schools have these structures in place but not all of them operate at the same level - implementation of school safety policies is therefore inconsistent. Tension between SGBs, teachers and principals is often cited as a reason for structures not working well together, which the district official feels can contribute to creating an unsafe or unstable learning environment. The SSC is the structure that interacts with the directorate directly. Serious cases that cannot be resolved at school level are referred to the district and include school burglaries, child abuse, substance abuse, rape, stabbings, and teenage pregnancies, among others (DO, interview, January 25, 2013).

The overwhelming majority (90%) of schools in the district have codes of conduct (DO, interview, January 25, 2013) but the provincial official commented that the one policy that most schools do not have is a School Safety policy and if a school has such a policy, it will most likely not be aligned to national and provincial laws. He went on to say (PO, interview, January 25, 2013) "we have found, much to our disgust, that policies do not all comply with supporting legislation such as the *SASA 1996* and the *Constitution 1996* hence there is inconsistency."

What this means is that principals do not have the necessary insight into what school safety entails and the GDE should have given more guidance to make it easier for principals. The implication is that without such a policy, schools will not be able to do much as far as prevention measures are concerned and may even be in breach of certain school safety by-laws. The provincial office therefore decided to match the supportive legislative framework with school safety policies and distributed these from the end of 2012 to schools for use as a template (PO, interview, January 25, 2013). Institutional Development and Support Officials (IDSOs) were to be offered training on school safety so that when they visit schools they are able to question, support and advise principals on school safety plans (PO, interview, January 25, 2013).

Both the district and provincial officials were of the view that central to a safe school is good leadership and that principals must be clear about their role and mandate. Often principals and SGBs will complain about a lack of resources but as one official put it (PO, interview, January 25, 2013):

The province can pump everything into a school but if the principal is not a good leader it makes the Department's task difficult. There are ample examples of government departments that are unable to spend their budgets so it is not always about money. An effective leader equals effective teaching which equals effective learning – the one leads to the other and if we can achieve this, we will have safe schools.

In addition to the provincial official, the district official had this to say about principals who demonstrate good leadership (DO, interview, January 25, 2013):

In my experience I have found where school leadership is creative, structures function well and are able to carry out their mandates. Leadership is key to the functionality of the school because the leader decides what is priority and how to delegate these tasks and to whom. There are numerous examples in the district where, for example, there are 5 schools in close proximity to each other operating under similar conditions and those schools with strong and skilled leaders, are the schools that thrive.

Roles and strategies

Both officials believed that most principals lack confidence when it comes to school safety and that it is in the principal's own interest, as the accounting officer, to ensure their schools are safe. Principals cannot cite ignorance as a defence in the event something goes wrong and that is why the GDE regularly posts information concerning school safety on its website. Regrettably not all principals make use of this resource. While principals do manage their schools in accordance with democratic principles and processes the lines between management and governance often get blurred and SGBs seem to struggle to make this distinction and that is where tension between the SGB, teachers and the principal often sets in. According to one official (PO, interview, January 25, 2013):

There are cases where SGBs bullied principals into submission because the principal did not know the policy provisions and such situations can potentially create instability in the school. The principal should guide the SGB and instil confidence in his/her leadership so that he/she can be trusted and respected. If not, the SGB will exploit the situation.

Dealing with cases effectively at school level requires an understanding of school violence as these cases can be quite complex and principals lack this understanding (PO, interview, January 25, 2013) because, "take bullying, for example, it is regularly reported at schools but most principals do not associate it with school violence – they see it as part of a learner growing up and the result is, solutions may be misdirected and ineffective." The root of the problem, the provincial official said, is therefore not addressed and the impact of school violence is often underestimated and apart from the obvious physical and/or emotional harm, principals don't always recognise school-based crime and violence as a barrier to education. One such barrier that the GDE has started to address since 2012 involves the problem of learners being attacked on the way to and from school. Ordinarily the department provides scholar transport (GDE, 2011) for learners who walk five kilometres or more one-way, but according to PO (interview, January 25, 2013), the GDE was planning to undertake a survey on extending scholar transport later in 2013. The proposed survey would look at how the GDE could assist learners who walk less than five kilometres but have to walk through dangerous or deserted areas.

In about 80% of schools the lack of discipline among learners ranked as the number one problem and that is why the district official was working with schools towards finding solutions to this problem through certain behaviour change programmes and campaigns (DO, interview, January 25, 2013).

The extent to which the district is able to offer more programmes to improve school safety is limited both in terms of budget and human resources. The district coordinator said he is over-stretched and this hampers him from doing more and one major problem he faces is the duplication of services. Often the same or similar programmes are offered by different service providers. Better planning and communication is necessary between his office and service providers to ensure resources are not wasted and that schools get the maximum benefit. (DO, interview, January 25, 2013).

Despite these difficulties, the safety situation in most schools is improving and this could be due to the collaboration between the SAPS, GDE and the Department of Community Safety. The Patroller Programme is one such programme that has made a big impact at school level (DO, 25 January 2013). Going forward, the district will continue with efforts to formally link schools with local police stations i.e. to have a police officer participating in the SSC and not just conducting patrols and searches. Other partners the coordinator works with include a Stakeholder or Collaboration Committee in the district where all stakeholders such as SAPS, Metro Police, Department of Health, Religious Leaders, Business etc. come together to address various concerns in the district.

According to the provincial official, the solution to reducing violence in schools lies in the school and the community working in partnership. Schools should take the lead because the school is the ideal agent for change but the two are currently not working together. The catalyst for this collaboration is the principal and to make this work the officials had this to say:

> Principals must realise the community regards the school to be the principal – if the
>
> principal is hostile towards the community the community is likely to be hostile
>
> towards the school. Where principals are able to work with multiple partners we find
>
> fewer problems related to school safety and performance and this proves the point
>
> that partnerships can produce a great measure of genius (PO, interview, January 25,
>
> 2013).

> Communities must feel they own the school and should be involved in matters
>
> concerning the school. I know stakeholder engagement presents with challenges at
>
> times because of competing priorities that pull us in different directions and it
>
> becomes difficult to meet or coordinate our efforts. Hence, we have to be committed
>
> to making these partnerships work (DO, interview, January 25, 2013).

While recognising that partnerships are crucial for the eradication of school crime and violence, the officials place the responsibility solely on the principal, without taking responsibility for making the partnership work. On the other hand, principals are saying their employer (GDE) has no idea of the challenges they face in their work (Msila, 2011) hence they do not get the support they deserve. This "blame game" has become a common tendency that

contributes to an "us and them" syndrome, which is not helpful in the collective fight against school violence. Nevertheless, the provincial directorate has started to engage with various agencies (religious, youth practitioners, business, and other government departments) to run special programmes in schools. The CPF Patroller Programme is one example of how government and the community can work together to make high risk schools safe. By the end of 2012 a total of 6 000 patrollers were deployed in 1300 at-risk schools which cost the GDE approximately R100 million (PO, interview, January 25, 2013).

Safety and violence

Principals need to be sensitized to school violence so that important factors that are inherent to the problem are not overlooked, thus exposing the school to greater risk (PO, interview, January 25, 2013). Apart from having the skill to draft a good school safety policy, principals must have a good understanding of school safety, which according to the district official is not always the case. That is why school safety remains an add-on and is not fully integrated into what the principal does routinely. Principals need to understand that there is a direct link between school safety and education outcomes – learners cannot learn and teachers cannot teach if a school is unsafe (DO, interview, January 25, 2013).

The official said a good safety plan should take into account all safety threats (internal and external) facing the school and that many schools are struggling with drafting good safety plans. He found in his experience that most schools find it difficult to instil discipline simply because most teachers do not understand alternative forms of discipline nor do they see the consequence of not dealing with the problem. Teachers want an instant solution and don't see discipline as a process, but rather as an action, so a mind shift is needed and that is why the province, in collaboration with the districts, is rolling out programmes on classroom management, conflict management, disaster management and behavioural change management. Further emphasis will be placed on SGBs (parents) to help them understand how to develop and implement a code of conduct because:

> There are inconsistencies in how SGBs deal with disciplinary hearings and as a
>
> result schools lose cases in court because they do not follow the correct procedures.
>
> The Department is then accused of not supporting the SGB but SGBs have to
>
> respect policy, so this will be another area of training for principals, SMT, LRC and
>
> the SGB (PO, interview, January 25, 2013).

While the directorate could not claim that schools were safe, there had been a steady improvement over the past five years and it is important to make sure that this trend continues going forward. The provincial official acknowledged that while every care is taken by his office to respond to cases immediately, there are times when they first get to hear about a case in the media and this was something he was worried about. A concerted effort would be made by the directorate to fine-tune the reporting system to ensure that cases were escalated from the district to his office without delay. In order to drastically reduce safety threats more work needs to be done around awareness-raising of especially sexual violence and physical abuse of learners by teachers (PO, interview, January 25, 2013). In a follow-up interview with PO (interview, 5 February, 2018) it was revealed that in fact the safety situation in schools may have become worse since 2013 due to drug trafficking, vandalism and gangsterism.

The two officials were also asked to articulate how they defined a safe and an unsafe school. Their responses are captured in Table 22 and Table 23 respectively. The district official's definition of a safe school is quite vague because it doesn't go far enough in explaining what those common interests are and on the other hand, it leans very much towards emphasising the technical aspects of safety and lacks a social justice approach. The provincial official's definition is even narrower and focuses mainly on leadership and coordinating stakeholder efforts.

Table 22: Education officials: Definition of a safe school

Safe School	
District Official	The community and school work together to serve their common interests. A school where there is access control and learners and teachers feel safe and where vandalism is rooted out and learners are behaving in a disciplined manner.
Provincial Official	There is effective leadership coordinating the efforts of all stakeholders

Table 23: Education officials: Definition of an unsafe school

Unsafe School	
District Official	Vulnerable to crime and works in isolation from the community and other stakeholders thus there is no discipline in the school.
Provincial Official	The leader is not passionate about school safety and human relations are at a low.

4.8 Law enforcement – South African Police Service

The six schools in the study are spread across the jurisdictions of five different police stations. Police station AE covers school A and E and has a total of 67 schools within its precinct. Station B covers school B and has twenty schools. Station C covers school C and has twenty-seven schools within its precinct. Station D covers school D and has twelve schools in its precinct while station F covers school F and has twenty-seven schools under its jurisdiction.

The research participants were all trained police officers who had school safety as their main area of work. With the exception of police station C, the officers were employed on a full-time basis as Social Crime Prevention Coordinators attached to the Social Crime Prevention Unit (SCPU) within the South African Police Service. Officers at station C, were police reservists dedicated to schools as School Monitors and worked on a voluntary basis without remuneration. Officers at station C did not form part of the national Adopt-A-Cop programme and all officers worked on a 24-hour stand-by basis.

Leadership and governance

The data shows that there is a need to formalise the relationship between the SAPS and the GDE, which could mean better policing, accountability and programming (SAPC1, 20 November 2012). The relationship is currently rooted in historical programmes such as Adopt-A-Cop, which by all accounts has long run out of steam and is in the process of being phased out.

All the police officers expressed the view that principals were working under very trying conditions and should be commended for keeping the wheels of education turning. The officers commented that in their view they did not think principals were trained in aspects of school safety but that it was something they learned about "as they go along". One officer

warned that while most principals were trying their best to make their schools safe, some principals were quite removed from reality. He said (SAPC1, interview, November 20, 2012):

> We were called out to a school to investigate the theft of the school fence. When I questioned the principal as to when the theft could have occurred he was unsure and could not give an account of when he last saw the fence intact.

Most schools, therefore, are in reactionary mode and do not realise that the police can advise them on developing safety plans and assist them to think more strategically about threats to education outcomes such as transport, physical safety, health, security, mental health and absenteeism. The officer emphasised that "principals must be more aware of both their internal and external environments so that they can manage and deal with any eventuality. This is a golden opportunity for principals and the police to learn from each other" (SAPF, interview, January 7, 2013). The police can also run workshops for principals on criminal procedure so that they do not open themselves up to serious legal problems.

Because principals and teachers do not understand the role of the police, two of the five officers felt their time was often wasted by having to attend to cases that should be resolved at school level. For example, learners refusing to do homework does not constitute a case for the police to solve and sometimes police were called out to attend to learners who were unable to pay school fees or needed assistance with food parcels or social grants. Such cases must be directed to the Department of Social Development (SAPA&E and SAPF, 7 January 2013). Conversely, officer SAPD reported that principals sometimes neglected to report to his station that their school would be hosting an event (school dance, sports day etc.) so that they could step up their patrols. When things go wrong it is too late to expect the police to solve the problem.

Officers all agreed that their precincts were made up of both safe and unsafe schools. What the police found was that "it doesn't matter whether a school is rich or poor but rather, where leadership is strong schools are safer" (SAPD, interview, January 7, 2013).

According to another officer, principals struggle to re-instil learner discipline at schools because their hands are tied as a result of the rights children now enjoy. He said corporal punishment must be brought back as a means to instil discipline because in his day "n pakslae het gehelp" (a hiding worked). Principals should show leadership and be less apologetic about

what they would really like to do. He says, "It seems like principals are scared to step on toes especially when it comes to issues of culture and religion" (SAPB, interview, January 7, 2013).

Roles and strategies

School safety factors are a big concern for all the officers and that is why regular visits to schools are so important. Unruly learner behaviour, according to officer SAPF (interview, January 7, 2013), is quite common and officers often encounter disrespectful and defying learners especially when they remove learners from shebeens[12] or extended weekend parties (SAPC, interview, November 20, 2012; SAPF, interview, January 7, 2013).

Understanding school violence is important but the job also requires passion because not all police officials make school safety a priority, said one officer. For example, police visibility must be improved in all schools but there is a need for further upskilling of more police officers in this area of work (SAPD, 7 January 2013). What has changed of late though is dangerous weapons like knives and guns being used in schools because (SAPF, interview, January 7, 2013):

> Society has acclimatized to violence which is a reality faced on a daily basis. It
>
> occurs that learners report spotting dead bodies on their way to school. It's like a tree
>
> of which the fruits are growing bigger and needs to be addressed before we lose total
>
> control. While the nature of incidents has not changed over time, the intensity due to
>
> weapons and drugs has increased which is due to the moral decay in communities.

Drug dealing and smoking of dagga are common at schools (A & E) and random searches by the police, as a prevention measure, are crucial. Of concern to the officer was the siding of some teachers with learners. Teachers will for example warn learners that the police are on their way to conduct searches and render the whole operation futile. The officer found this mind-boggling and counter-productive as they would never get to the bottom of the problem (SAPA&E, interview, January 7, 2013).

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[12] A shebeen is a place in the community/township where liquor is sold. Some operate legally while others operate illegally.

At times, the police bring difficult learners to the station where a stern talking to is carried out to try to get the learner/s back on track. He says he is "tough on crime irrespective of whether it is committed at school or elsewhere because crime knows no boundaries" (SAPA&E, interview, January 7, 2013). The officer recalled that while school A and E currently have similar school safety profiles, School E had, until about two years previously, had a very bad school safety record, to the extent that the school became completely ungovernable (Interview, January 7, 2013). He remembered that relationships were so bad that it resulted in court cases being filed between the then principal and staff. Fortunately, this was not the case anymore, but it required hard work by all stakeholders.

The route to and from school is a well-known and major threat – irrespective of whether the learner walks from his/her home or from a transport hub - and that is why police officers always try to patrol these routes daily in the mornings and afternoons. Officer SAPF pointed out that officers should not only escort learners but should also randomly search them as a deterrent to carrying drugs or dangerous weapons. He caught several learners with dagga in this way and was told, "I'm selling this so that I can have taxi fare to come to school. At home, there is no food and I don't have money for school uniform" (SAPF, interview, January 7, 2013).

Learners confessed to police that they were paid between R5.00 and R15.00 a day to sell drugs. Two officers (SAPF & SAPA&E) believed that drugs were couriered by learners in and out of communities on a daily basis - either to make money for survival or for recreation purposes. Wealthy learners from townships who attend school in the suburbs buy drugs and bring them back into the township where they share and introduce their friends to using drugs (SAPA&E, interview, January 7, 2013).

All the officers felt that they could do better in dealing with and preventing crime and violence if the community worked with them by providing information on criminal activity but also to support them in certain initiatives. According to one officer, partnerships between schools, parents, SAPS and other stakeholders were necessary if these communities and schools were to be transformed. Neither the police, nor the schools, can do it alone (SAPF, interview, January 7, 2013). This task becomes a bit more complicated when there are schools whose learners (67%) commute in and out on a daily basis – social upliftment and crime prevention programmes and campaigns have no effect and the police struggle to build cohesion between the school and the community (SAPB & SAPD, interview January 7, 2013). However, officer SAPA&E reported that he works through various fora to address problems in the community

and schools such as the liquor trader's forum, principal's forum, church forum and youth forum, among others.

He had also introduced an annual soccer tournament in 2003, which was run during the December holidays to keep youngsters off the streets and out of trouble. In order to help parents fight the scourge of Skhotanes[13] officer SAPF planned to develop a theatrical play to warn learners around the country about the dangers associated with chasing the high and fast life. He believed lots of young people were caught up in a consumer culture that they or their parents could not afford, which often resulted in them committing a crime to get the money to pay for these expensive clothes. This practice was at its peak during the time of the research (2012) but fortunately it did not last too long. Media reports showed that this practice has since died out because (Inngs and Kemp, 2016) "when the media began to film kids burning their cash and clothes, the subculture imploded in on itself" (p. 1).

Officers said there are limitations to what the police can reasonably do. Policing boundaries can at times be a limitation for the police especially when running certain programmes and campaigns. There is also a view among all the officers that parents have abdicated their responsibility for raising their children properly and often look to teachers and the police to intervene and take over their parenting role. In cases where learners are arrested, police invariably discover that parents have already given up on their children, especially when it comes to substance abuse (SAPF, interview, January 7, 2013). If society is going to change, the police must become an integral part of school safety programmes and there have to be stronger bonds and cooperation between Social Crime Prevention Coordinators (police) and principals (SAPB, interview, January 7, 2013).

Police officers interviewed said they were fully committed to normalising the safety situation in schools but that a big limitation was the fact that not every police officer understood school violence and / or school safety. Officers all agreed that school safety is a specialised area of work and that their police training did not adequately prepare them for the job. One officer said he had received special training (including understanding the Child Care Act) to prepare him for working in schools and he found that "in order to know what is going on and how to support learners you need to have a relationship with them and win their trust" (SAPB, 7 January 2013). At officer SAPA&E's station only about 10% of officers would know how to

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[13] Skhotane refers to a practice whereby young people congregate in public to celebrate the burning of expensive clothes (name brands) and sometimes even money.

support schools and that placed him under severe pressure (SAPA&E, interview, January 7, 2013). Some police officials would do patrols just to get through the day and wouldn't bother to question a learner found wandering around a hot-spot area when he/she should be in class. "Officers should get out of their police vehicles and go inside the school and build a relationship with teachers and students and build trust" (SAPC2, interview, November 20, 2012).

A further problem, raised by officer SAPB, which may affect all other officers, was a lack of new or different ideas to keep school safety programmes fresh and interesting because learners remain in school for several years. He added, programmes are "presented on a hit and run basis meaning we do not build strong enough relations with schools and learners in particular" (SAPB1, interview, January 7, 2013).

The Adopt-A-Cop programme, he said, proved that once you win the trust of learners they will work with you. Police need to spend more time (at least a week) in a school to make these meaningful connections. All officers felt that the SCPU should be better resourced (more personnel and training) so that they could provide better services and support to schools and the community as a whole.

Finally, police officers offered some recommendations to the GDE.

- Officers felt strongly that the GDE should bring back religious education into the curriculum as it would help to rebuild the moral fibre of society.

- General assembly should be held on a daily basis to help with enforcing school rules and discipline because "in SAPS we report to parade every morning where we commit to carrying out our work with diligence" (SAPF, interview, January 7, 2013).

- Corporal punishment should be legalised as it is the only tool teachers can use to regain control of their classrooms "because it is the only language a bully understands" (SAPF, interview, January 7, 2013).

- There's a need to document all school safety programmes running in schools around the country and to share the learning on what worked.

- The Adopt-A-Cop programme is being replaced by a programme using Sector Managers instead to "adopt" all the schools in his/her policing sector. This is a more effective way of working with schools.

- Finally, the officers appealed to their seniors to bring back the specialized investigative units, which they said would strengthen their arm in the fight against drugs and human trafficking.

Safety and violence

This section describes how police officials view and experience school violence and will highlight the types of cases reported to the police and how police officers assist schools in dealing with violence both as a response and prevention. Police officers reported that crime and violence levels varied from low to high between the different communities and that common community crime types included armed robbery, car hijacking, burglary, rape, drug dealing, murder and domestic violence. Cases reported by schools to the police included learners being robbed on their way to and from school of their cell phones, school bags and money. Cases that originated in school included petty theft, bad teacher attitudes, sexual harassment, fighting, bullying, gambling (playing dice), smoking dagga, and teachers embarrassing learners. Cases which involved the community included learners loitering in the community during school hours, community members walking through school grounds (short cut or trespassing), availability of dangerous weapons, learners behaving disrespectfully, teachers socializing (drinking alcohol) with learners over weekends (SAPC1, interview, November 20, 2012; SAPF1, interview, January 7, 2013).

Officer SAPF1 reported that within a year (interview, January 7, 2012) he had received seven cases where learners were charged with the assault of teachers, while officer SAPC2 said cell phones had become a big menace in secondary schools - theft of cell phones, learners using cell phones in class, learners bringing cell phones to school while knowing it is not allowed.

Officers SAPC1&2 (interview, November 20, 2012) reported that the use of drugs created a degree of volatility at school because these learners "become like lions when they are high causing learners and teachers to feel unsafe having to put up with class disruptions which results in loss of valuable lesson time."

Schools in this area were regularly vandalised by members of the community and the police spent endless hours investigating and prosecuting these cases. Schools struggled to keep afloat and had to redirect funds to replenish stolen items often on an ongoing basis because the community created a market for stolen goods. The officers reported that School C had

great difficulty with burglaries to the point where the school could not function as a technical school any longer (SAPC1, interview, November 20, 2012).

With the exception of one officer, the majority of officers (80%) shared the view that schools in the district were leaning more towards being unsafe. To conclude this section on safety and violence in schools, two quotes are presented to capture how school violence or school safety in our schools is understood and experienced by police officers:

> The situation in our schools is not as bad as people make them out to be because we do not get many complaints from our schools. However, the situation seems to be getting worse with learners challenging authority because of the rights they now have. Drugs also play a part and the worrying factor is, it is regarded as being cool to use drugs. On the whole, I would say schools are fairly safe and well managed but there is room for improvement (SAPB, interview, January 7, 2013).

> The situation in South Africa is much worse than in other parts of the world because violence in our schools is not just about finger pointing it's about real violence where weapons and firearms are involved often resulting in deaths (SAPF, interview, January 7, 2013).

Definition of a safe/unsafe school

Table 24 and Table 25 capture how police officers defined a safe and an unsafe school respectively. Two out of the five officers (SAPA&E, interview, January 7, 2012; SAPC, interview, November 20, 2012) focused on the technical aspects of school safety while the remainder took a broader social justice view.

Table 24: Police officers: Definition of a safe school

Safe School	
Officer SAPA& E:	A safe school is one where there is order and all structures work together for the betterment of all children. A place where everyone feels safe.

Officer SAPB:	A safe school has good access control and conducts regular searches. A safe school is centred on making learners and teachers safe instead of the school. There is a difference says the officer – "thinking of the learners' and teachers' safety requires a caring approach like that of a parent" (SAPB, 7 January 2013).
Officer C:	A safe school is one where there is mutual respect and no abuse of learners and teachers
Officer D:	A safe school is largely dependent on how safe its surrounding areas are and a basic question to ask is can learners move freely without fear? A safe school is one where there is no bullying and no weapons. There is a feeding scheme and good access control, supported by CCTV cameras.
Officer SAPF:	A safe school is not necessarily crime or conflict free but is able to address/manage/deal with crime and conflicts. It's also a school where all parties and stakeholders (govt. departments i.e. Health, Social Dev, NGOs, Eskom) play their part and work together. Access control is a must and there needs to be a "cop learner" in every class who will liaise with the principal to give information to the police. A safe school is a community school where every structure is involved.

Table 25: Police officers: Definition of an unsafe school

Unsafe School	
Officer SAPA&E:	An unsafe school is one where there are no morals and learners and teachers do what they like. Learners bring weapons onto the premises, smoke dagga and abuse drugs. Chaos all over in the school
Officer SAPB:	An unsafe school is one where the principal doesn't care. The school buildings look neglected and have a low level of security.
Officer SAPC:	An unsafe school is one where there is no control.

Officer SAPD:	An unsafe school is one where learners are mugged on their way to and from school. Where learners are bullied and do not feel safe.
Officer SAPF:	An unsafe school is what is common in South Africa. There's no coordination of services that can contribute to the holistic development of the child.

4.9 Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented the findings from the research on the six schools separately and covered, in accordance with the conceptual framework, the context of each school in terms of physical and socio-economic influences, the existence and functioning of the different governance structures in promoting school safety, roles and strategies to support a safe school, and finding a definition for a safe and unsafe school.

I have also presented the role of education department officials and law enforcement officers in supporting school safety through policy and legislation,

To conclude the chapter, here are some of the key findings from across the six schools. These findings will be applied and analysed in more detail in the next chapter.

- Funding for school safety is a problem in all schools, but there are things schools can do (or are already doing) to make schools safe, such as using the curriculum to bring about positive behaviour change

- Legacy effects of apartheid are still plaguing township schools and this makes the task of the principal quite complicated when it comes to leading and managing safe schools

- Democratic governance is useful for building leadership capacity

- Because of the context, a social justice approach to school safety is necessary

- Teachers are feeling stressed citing school violence as one of the major contributory factors – they want to leave the profession. If schools are to change society, they cannot do it without teachers.

- Despite the high levels of crime and violence in the country, learners in three townships reported that their areas are quite safe

- In 50% of schools corporal punishment is still used as a tool to instil discipline. This practice is not only illegal and ineffective it also fuels the cycle of violence which undermines efforts to achieve a safe school.

- Harmful social and cultural practices are on the rise and are beginning to take root in schools. Female teachers in particular are disadvantaged.

- Good interpersonal relationships are important for the functioning of structures such as the SGB and SMT and fulfilling certain [governance] roles

- Stakeholders define safe schools very differently. This is problematic for developing uniform strategies in the fight against school violence

- Police officers play an important role in making schools safe but the lack of training in aspects of working with children is of great concern.

The findings provide valuable insights into the challenges schools face with regards to safe schools but they also provide ideas on what schools are doing to assist principals and teachers with restoring safe teaching and learning environments. The next chapter will analyse the findings and highlight the implications for safe schools.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of this chapter is to consolidate the research process and to show, by using the conceptual framework, how the findings have contributed towards answering the research question, which is: "Why is it so difficult to create safe teaching and learning environments and what is it that schools do or do not do in this regard?"

The analysis is presented starting with the context in each of the six schools and thereafter, the information is presented following the different components, as illustrated in the conceptual framework in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Integrated school safety conceptual framework
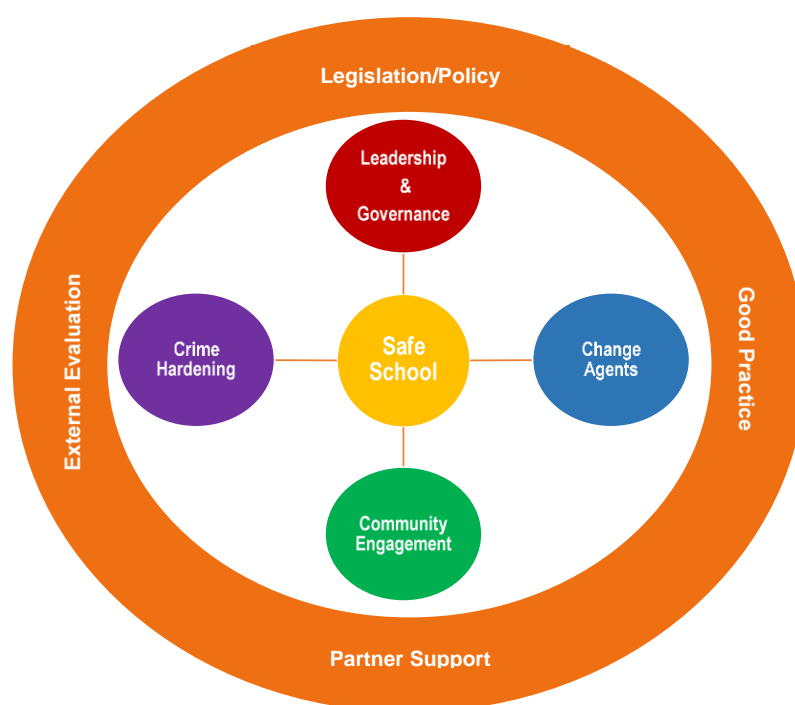
These components represent a framework for stakeholders to consider when thinking of a safe school using a social justice approach. After describing the context, I explain the inner circle of the framework and present an analysis of what was reported across the six schools, under the leadership and governance component, to establish what this means for structures dealing with school safety. I then proceed in a clockwise direction in the inner circle until I have covered the entire internal environment of the school, culminating with crime hardening.

The next section branches out into the outer circle, which represents the immediate and broader external environment of the school. I start with legislation and policy with an analysis of what the factors are that either promote or make it difficult for principals to implement policies. I follow the same process as above by moving in a clockwise direction ending with the component on external evaluation. The section concludes with an analysis of how research participants (schools, GDE and SAPS) defined a safe school – a lack of a safe school definition was identified as a key factor contributing to the formulation of the research question.

The analysis will show how the research findings are supportive of, or inconsistent with, the literature and how the findings are relevant to leading and managing safe schools based on a social justice approach. The findings are captured and presented to demonstrate both what we already know about the research topic, and what is new and potentially useful for strategies aimed at supporting schools in contexts where they experience high levels of violence.

5.1 Context in schools

All the schools in the sample are situated in an urban environment (townships and suburbs) surrounded by communities where there is a reasonable level of municipal service in terms of refuse removal, electricity and running water as well as satisfactory infrastructure, such as tarred roads. The majority of learners across all six schools come from poor to lower income families, which presents schools with the challenge of dealing with not only educational, but also socio-economic, challenges (observation and focus group interviews, 2012).

While township schools display a greater need for cosmetic and structural improvements compared to their suburban counterparts, the lack of sports and or recreational facilities and equipment is glaring – sports fields are bare and uninspiring. All schools have their perimeter secured by either brick or palisade fencing, with gates that are kept locked when school is in session in order to restrict the access of undesirable elements, such as gangs or intruders. The physical size of the school grounds of suburban schools is much larger (on conservative estimate, at least 50% larger) than those of schools in townships and this, according to the researcher, is due to the legacy of apartheid (observation, September, 2012). All schools have general assistants to clean and maintain school buildings and 24-hour security personnel who are either paid for by the school or the by GDE. It thus appears evident that teachers in township schools have to do more with less both in terms of addressing education outcomes and school safety. Whether a principal or teacher uses a technical lens or social justice lens as a school safety response will determine the particular action he/she is likely to take. This also means that no two responses, irrespective of whether a school is located in a township

or suburb, will be similar or the same. Leadership development theory could therefore benefit from consistently approaching education outcomes under the rubric of social justice.

The data shows that all schools had a system for recording daily teacher/pupil attendance and on average teachers and principals arrive about thirty minutes before school starts and remain at school until the school day ends. The length of the school day varies and depends on whether extra-mural activities or staff meetings have been scheduled for after the official ending of the school day. It was reported in one school (School D) that teachers sometimes leave the school as late as 20h00. Teachers are required to teach for 41 hours per week of which teachers in township schools dedicate 15.18 hours to teaching and the rest to sports, administration and other activities (Bloch, 2009; Chisholm & Hoadley et al., 2005;). Former President Zuma's repeated calls for teachers to be in class teaching attests to this (The Presidency, 2010) culture of time wasting. In former white schools, teachers spend 19.11 hours per week on teaching (Chisholm & Hoadley et al., 2005; Bloch, 2009) which is better than in township schools. While the study did not focus on observing actual teaching time, the researcher was able to establish, based on observation and interviews, that in the six schools, teachers were in class teaching the entire day. This finding is therefore inconsistent with public perception and the literature that teachers are not at school for a full school day.

The average teacher-pupil ratio ranged from 24:1 to 28:1 across the six schools (Interviews with principals, 2012), which is well within the target of 30:1 set by the DBE. Currently, the maximum recommended ratio is 40:1 for primary schools and 35:1 for secondary schools (Motshekga, 2012b).

All principals reported that they are accommodating more learners than what their schools were initially built for – schools are under constant pressure to take on more learners every year and often face court battles when turning learners away. The migration of learners from township schools to suburban schools and the migration to urban centres/townships by families from neighbouring states and provinces, searching for better prospects, is regarded as a key driver for this increasing demand. Based on what principals reported, their schools are carrying between 30% – 48% more learners than what their schools were designed for. The data, however, shows that although the student population is higher than what the school was designed for, the actual teacher-pupil ratio has not exceeded the prescribed limits. This finding is inconsistent with the general public's perception and what the literature shows in terms of overcrowding (Marais, 2016) but points to the direction of physical space being compromised and amenities such as toilets being insufficient while staff rooms and classroom space is quite cramped (observation, September,2012). Here, the implication for leading and

managing safe schools is that it is highly unlikely that classroom sizes will be reduced to what may have been the case twenty years ago. Overcrowding has been identified in the literature as a trigger for sparking conflicts and victimisation and while it may be possible to physically squeeze forty-five learners into one classroom, neglecting a social justice approach will result in denying learners in that class an equal opportunity to learn. Conflicts in the classroom are likely to remain or escalate thus demanding better classroom management strategies that will enable teaching and learning to take place (Marais, 2016). According to the researcher, it will be useful to incorporate conflict management training for teachers and students alike so that both parties have the skills to manage conflict better.

Urbanisation is another key driver for the high crime and violence rates in the Gauteng province (SAPS, 2015). Based on the interviews with learners and teachers, crime and violence used to be rife especially in the townships, but this trend has since changed and crime levels, as experienced by the research participants, are much lower. The year 2010 was singled out as the year when the three townships in the study became much safer and participants ascribe the reduction in crime and violence to efforts initiated by government in preparation for the Soccer World Cup tournament. In addition to this, principal PC reported that most of the gang leaders were either killed or sentenced to long term imprisonment, which has also contributed to a much safer community than before (interviews with learners, principals and teachers, (interviews September & October,2012).

More encouraging is the observation by the district official that crime and violent incidents are showing a decline in schools, which he accredits to the collaboration between SAPS, GDE and the Department of Community Safety. In schools where the CPF Patroller Programme had been implemented (only Soweto thus far) a significant reduction in burglaries was reported for 2012. The next phase is to direct the security guards at schools to make the toilets and the playgrounds safe – these are the places where learners say they feel most vulnerable (interview with district official, January, 2013). This demonstrates that collaboration between schools and an effective criminal justice system can make schools and communities safe. Having policies on weapon and gun-free zones is one component principals can rely on to make schools safe but that approach is limited. Leadership development theory would therefore benefit from incorporating how principals can develop skills to collaborate effectively with external partners like the police, community policing forums and others. Having a protocol in place is but one aspect of the equation – principals and police officials need skills to build long-term partnerships that work.

While care must be taken for one's safety after dark, in general terms the township areas in the study were deemed by research participants to be safe (Interview with learner focus groups in school A and E, 2012). These findings are inconsistent with what recent crime surveys show (StatsSA, 2015a) – families are feeling unsafe to walk in parks or allow their children to play in parks. One explanation, according to the researcher, is that violent crimes such as car hijacking and robbery occur mostly in the suburbs where neighbours rely mainly on security companies for protection as opposed to community-based networks such as street and block committees in the townships. "Familiarity" is also something that can serve as a crime deterrent – in townships, neighbours have much closer relationships with each other than in the suburbs and in many cases, are familiar with family lifestyle patterns and as a result "everyone knows everyone." This serves as a good deterrent against crime. Finally, there is also an unwritten code in townships that neighbours look out for each other, so the efforts linked to the 2010 World Cup, combined with networks such as community patrollers, are what gives the research participants a greater sense of safety. This does not mean that townships are crime free, but rather that it is a matter of personal safety being rated higher than it is in the suburbs (personal experience and observation of trends in various communities). How different communities are organised has a huge impact on how well a teacher or principal is able to adjust and manage their schools. Understanding the "unwritten codes" mostly only comes into play when something goes wrong and by then it is too late. Principals who understood community dynamics were better able to manage their schools and therefore, a broader approach to orientation is necessary before a teacher/principal is deployed to a school. This will help build leadership practice in South Africa in order to mitigate against those factors that make it difficult to lead and manage safe schools.

5.2 Leadership and governance

The readings on school leadership demonstrate that principals have an important role to play in restoring safe teaching and learning environments (Prinsloo, 2005; Xaba, 2006). The literature also shows that principals face unique challenges in managing their schools as there is very little or no experience elsewhere in the world where principals have had to deal with redressing legacy effects like those left behind by the apartheid system (Bush, 2007; Christie, 2010c). Many principals themselves are victims and products of the apartheid system.

All principals reported that they led and managed their schools in accordance with democratic principles and that decision making was shared with the relevant structures at their schools. The principals in question also fully understood their own accountability for whatever transpired in their schools. In three of the schools (A, E & F), teachers and learners did not

agree that their principal ran their school democratically. In schools where learners and teachers agreed that their principal ran the school democratically, words such as "fairness" and "trust" featured strongly to describe and justify their views.

An effective school relies on how well a principal applies democratic practices to carry out their primary responsibility of creating a safe, nurturing and supportive learning environment. (DBE, 2014b; Mthiyane, et al., 2014). As far as dealing with other aspects of the job, none of the principals reported that they felt adequately prepared when they were appointed. They reported that their formal training did not count for much, especially around policy formulation and understanding legislation. There was also little to no support from the district office or other principals – it was a case of "learning on the job" for most of them (Mthiyane, et al., 2014). School safety, in particular, had never featured in any of their training and as a result, their understanding of what constitutes school safety or a safe school varied and so did their approaches and attitudes towards dealing with the construct. In at least 50% of the schools, principals and teachers reported that they were not confident in their own abilities / knowledge to engage with efforts to restore a safe teaching and learning culture.

According to the researcher, the reported skills deficits, along with the lack of support from the education department have a direct impact on the challenges principals face in running their schools. In particular, in relation to sharing power, developing and implementing safety policies and making sure education targets are met. This point is strengthened by the district school safety coordinator who found that due to a lack of skills and understanding of school safety, school principals were unable to develop school safety policies. As such the district office joined forces with the provincial office to develop a template for all schools. The lack of skills amongst principals is a long-standing problem that is evidenced by the data and confirms what the literature shows (Mc Lennan & Thurlow, 2003). We know that the challenges (legacy effects of apartheid) that principals have to deal with are quite unique (Bush, et al., 2010) and will take a while to overcome. The lack of support for principals by the education department is consistent with the literature (Bush, 2007; Msila, 2011) and is one of the key areas that the education department is working on. Government has acknowledged this gap and has launched additional capacity-building programmes for principals in the future. The new standard for *principalship* makes provision for school safety as part of the principal's teaching and learning duties (*National Education Policy Act 1996*).and is one of the initiatives (Bush, 2013) that will benefit principals and schools in managing teaching and learning. Care should be taken that school safety is viewed through a social justice lens to avoid the focus being only on the technical aspects such as security gates and alarm systems. It is this narrow

approach (technical) to school safety that makes it difficult for principals to create safe teaching and learning environments.

Structures such as the SMT, SGB and LRC were in place in all six schools and while levels of functionality ranged from dysfunctional to good, the general view held by all principals was that these structures could still do better. While structures did meet regularly or as often as necessary, across the six schools, school safety was not a regular agenda item unless an incident had occurred or a requirement by the GDE had to be met. In two schools (C and E) it was found that the SSC existed in name only and in School A, the DC was totally dysfunctional. In schools where these structures performed poorly, poor relations, role confusion and historical conflicts (Schools A, E and F) were cited as causes by research participants.

The quality of relationships between the governance and leadership structures varied across schools but in most schools, research participants described their relationships as harmonious. Relationships between principals and SGBs, however, stood out as flashpoints. It was reported in two schools (A and F) that the SGB was unclear about its role, which in turn caused a lot of problems and tension in the school. SGBs in general felt that they did not get the necessary support from the district and provincial offices, which they said sometimes forced them to abandon certain actions, especially when proceeding to court – this further exacerbated already strained relationships. Teachers (EA 1–3) reported that their relationship with the principal was strained and as a result communication often broke down, while the SGB (SGBA1-2) confirmed their relationship with the principal was poor because the principal had the SGB chairperson "in her pocket". As a result, the SGB felt that they were being undermined by the principal and teachers because SGB members were considered as uneducated and therefore unable to think for themselves. At school C teachers and the SGB were in conflict because teachers regarded the SGB as "spies" and as a result, there was no trust in the relationship.

According to Xaba (2011) the lack of SGB role clarification, and capacity to carry out its mandate, has been cited as a common problem causing SGBs to overstep their role or to submit to the authority of the principal. According to the researcher, this is highly problematic and detrimental to the optimal functioning of the structures. In the three schools where structures worked well together, good relations and role clarity were cited as reasons for their efficacy. Good leadership by the principal was seen as key to nurturing and harmonising relationships (Interviews school B, C and D). The lack of role clarity is a finding that is consistent with the literature and is a serious threat to creating safe teaching and learning

environments. SGBs must understand that their role extends beyond dealing only with enforcing discipline and generating funds. However, they should also be given the necessary skills to understand what is required of them in respect of how to execute their duties. More emphasis must be placed on training SGBs on their role and developing interpersonal skills among all structures to assist with establishing and maintaining healthy working relationships (Xaba, 2011) and, by extension, safer teaching and learning environments.

Codes of conduct were found in all schools, but school safety policies or school safety plans were found in only 50% of the schools - schools B, C and D. These were also the schools where research participants (and the researcher) found leadership to be strong and therefore there was a correlation between the availability, understanding and application of policies and good leadership.   In more than half of the schools (67%) it was found that the code of conduct was not adequately communicated and shared with learners and parents. Furthermore, access to the code of conduct or any other policy was either restricted or it was unclear where to find a copy. The systematic review of policies existed in only half of the schools, despite principals across all six schools acknowledging the importance of regular reviews and assessment.

The purpose of a code of conduct or a school safety policy is to assist all role players to understand why it is important to address a particular problem and more importantly to know the role each has to play in order to achieve the desired outcome. In the absence of such policies, role players have very little or no idea of what to do and will most likely become defensive when questioned or found to have neglected their duty. Such situations, which appear to be quite common in our schools, make it hard for principals to lead and manage their schools in ways that will promote a safe teaching and learning environment. Such cases where there are no policies coupled with school leaders' inability or unwillingness to execute policies amounts to social injustice by omission – children are denied two basic human rights: education and safety. Codes of conduct on their own proved meaningless and in schools where a culture of teaching and learning thrived, it was due to all the structures (SMT, SGB and LRC) being aligned in implementing the code of conduct (and other policies) collaboratively under the leadership of the principal.

Inputs obtained from police officers tended to support the contention that functional leadership and governance are the key determinants when it comes to safe schools: "It doesn't matter whether a school is rich or poor but rather, where leadership is strong schools are safer" (SAPD, 7 January 2013).

It is therefore important, according to the researcher, that the principal creates the synergy between the governance and administrative arms of the school so that tensions among the various structures are minimised. The data shows that in 50% of schools (schools, A, E and F) relations between the principal and structures were fragmented and the literature shows that conflicts can cause school decline to set in (Mthiyane, et al., 2014). It therefore seems clear that dysfunctional leadership and governance structures, and their fraught dynamics, are serious obstacles when it comes to building safe teaching and learning environments. Leadership development theory could benefit from locating communication skills in the context of collaboration, partnerships and systems thinking instead of treating it in isolation.

5.2.1 School safety contextual factors

Because the principal is ultimately responsible for what happens at school, dealing with safety threats forms part of his/her daily responsibilities. It was therefore decided, in terms of legislation (Masitsa, 2005) and the conceptual framework, that school and community safety factors should be placed under the leadership and governance function. The majority of schools are experiencing high levels of violence regardless of whether a school is situated in a poor or wealthy community (Burton & Leoschut 2013; Astor et al., 2009). School violence has been specifically identified as a barrier to education and, according to the researcher, since a safe school is a prerequisite for an effective school, school violence must be minimised if schools are going to achieve any reasonable measure of effectiveness (Hill & Hill, 1994). The research confirms this.

Learner contact time is compromised significantly by lateness and all teachers expressed their frustration in this regard; they have to process late comers and also try to make up for lost teaching time (EA1-3 & SGBE1-2). A study conducted by Equal Education (2016) found that 20% of contact time is lost due to learner lateness, which is also quite disruptive and taxing on management staff. In a surprise visit to schools, the MEC for education in KwaZulu-Natal was stunned to find that at one school 56% of learners arrived about fifteen minutes late for school (KwaZulu-Natal Education Department, 2013). Principals spend a considerable amount of their time dealing with lateness on a daily basis, which they say interferes with other duties such as teaching and planning. The problem of learner lateness in suburban schools does exist, but it is not as rife as in township schools. In the two suburban schools (B and D), the administrative staff was tasked with processing late comers and it was only the habitual offenders who were referred to the deputy principal – this freed up teachers and the principal, who needed to get on with business of the day.

Lateness of learners featured prominently in all six schools but was worse in township schools – despite the majority of learners in township schools living within walking distance of the school. A poor public transport system, occasional political protest action and taxi violence were singled out by principals as causes of this problem. However, principals and SGB members in township schools felt that most learners had developed a culture of being late, while some parents tended to burden children with household chores before they were permitted to leave for school. Teachers would like to see parents reduce burdening their children with chores, especially before school starts. Bloch (2009) confirms that some children are burdened with chores before school, which not only impacts on their lateness but also on their state of mind by the time they get to school. Late coming is the first step towards more ill-disciplined and unruly behaviour which goes against everything a good education is meant to achieve and is one of the things that makes it difficult for principals to lead and manage a safe school.

Principal (PA) reported in the interview that ill-disciplined learners counted for the majority of cases referred to her office and that this chronic lateness was a manifestation of this ill-disciplined behaviour. The implications of coming late included reduced lesson time, increased administrative burden on teachers and principals (Equal Education, 2016). In some schools, the gates are locked once the school is in session thus denying learners access to the school. Learners have no choice but to go home and this practice exposes learners to danger while going home or hiding in the community.

The data generated in this study confirms that the classroom environment is both dynamic and challenging when it comes to issues of safety. Satanic rituals and harmful social and cultural practices are becoming increasingly commonplace in schools and were reported in four of the six schools (A, C, D & E). Interestingly, the Minister of Education held a meeting with religious leaders to address this problem and to eradicate it from schools (DBE, 2015b). This confirms the findings and suggests, according to the researcher, that the problem is more widespread than originally thought. The data shows that satanic worshiping was responsible for at least one attack on a principal (PA) by a learner who was said to be "devil possessed". Patriarchal beliefs, on the other hand, were seen as the driver for young boys increasingly challenging the authority of female teachers in class (DPD). For illustration purposes, a practice that was named as a promoter of patriarchy referred to teenage boys (mainly from the Xhosa tribe) who elect to undergo circumcision as part of an initiation process into manhood. It was reported that some of these boys return to school refusing to wear school uniform, feeling entitled to consume alcohol, demanding favours from younger boys and demanding "respect" from girls. It is unclear at this stage what impact male rites of passage

practices have on school safety but judging from the 90 000 boys who participated in this practice in 2014 (Nicolson, 2015), it can be considered as significant and deserving of further investigation. These problems relate to the complexity of the context which is consistent with the literature (Bloch 2009; Bush, 2007) that shows that principals have much more to contend with in leading and managing their schools than their counterparts elsewhere in the world. Community norms and practices have an impact on education, and harmful practices have the potential to expose teachers and learners to further safety threats. Principals will have to engage with community and cultural leaders to address some of the problems because these structures have the potential to turn the tide on school and gender-based violence which is a national problem.

Teacher burnout is one of the unexpected findings raised by one of the deputy principals (DPD). While burnout wasn't specifically mentioned by other teacher research participants, the majority did say they were feeling stressed, hopeless, tired and frustrated and wanted to get out of the teaching profession. Burnout among teachers, according to Jackson (2004), is rife and growing and it is not uncommon for even the most talented teachers to leave the profession as a result. Jackson (2004) says criticism, overcrowded classrooms and disruptive learners are some of the factors that, if not dealt with, lead to depression, disillusionment and ultimately burn-out. This finding is consistent with the literature and with what is generally known in the profession – teachers and principals are one of the biggest assets in the education system and if the teaching environment cannot guarantee their wellbeing they will be lost to the profession (SACE, 2011). Because teachers suffering burnout will be obliged to take time off work, principals will not have the human resources necessary to support their efforts to lead and manage safe schools. An interesting observation here is that teachers raised burnout in the context of safe schools, which proves that the scope of the conceptual framework was ideal for this kind of study because it surfaced issues beyond the technical aspects of school safety.

Corporal punishment was raised as an issue by learners in schools A, C, E & F. This was followed by humiliation and emotional abuse because, in the learners' opinions, teachers did not know how to manage their classrooms and school safety. According to learners, rules were not applied consistently and as a result, teachers lost control and resorted to drastic measures to regain control. The prevalence of corporal punishment is a worrying finding in the sense that it is illegal and has been raised in various studies such as Bloch (2009), Burton (2008a & 2012), and SACE (2016) among others. This finding further confirms a lack of understanding of how violence breeds violence and the enormous implications this holds for us as a country (Fang et al., 2016). It also demonstrates that sanctions for dealing with

teachers who transgress are either not enforced or are not stringent enough. This finding, according to the researcher, will definitely make the restoration of safe teaching and learning environments difficult, if not impossible. Leadership development theory could respond by providing practical tools to enforce discipline in schools grounded in a social justice approach taking into account the historical context of a post-conflict country.

Physical fights, petty theft, carrying of weapons, use of drugs, screen violence and pornography, and gang activity are prevalent to different degrees across the six schools. Equally so is the lack of support by the district office in helping schools with school safety policy implementation. The two threats that stood out above all of these included bullying (physical and cyber bullying) and drugs. Bullying is rooted in human and social relations and has been identified as a social phenomenon (Denny et al. 2014) experienced by many learners in schools (Hymel and Swearer, 2015). It occurs mainly on the playground, the journey to and from school and in the community and was found to be a malicious abuse of power for the bullies' own amusement (Hlophe, Morojele and Motsa, 2017). Bullying and use of drugs (Burton, 2008a) are well documented in the literature and the findings confirm what we already know about the effects such as violent behaviour, depression and suicide. Overcrowding is an additional factor that fuels bullying (Marais, 2016) and with the availability of drugs, the researcher believes violent incidents and drop-out rates stand to prevail if not escalate. These factors form a serious threat to creating safe teaching and learning environments. While all schools in the sample had teacher-pupil ratios that were within the targets set by the DBE, all of the schools reported that they had to accommodate more learners than what their schools were designed for. In this case physical space is lacking, which increases physical contact between learners, which increases the potential for conflict. Furthermore, ablution facilities, for example, might not necessarily be increased, which also serves as a driver for conflict in toilets. These factors create an ideal breeding ground for bullying to flourish and make it difficult for principals to lead and manage safe schools. This finding consistent with the literature.

5.2.2 Community safety contextual factors

The external environment plays an important part in shaping the school culture and context – this is important because it not only influences the environment (safety) or atmosphere within which education is delivered but it also dictates the leadership style the principal is likely to adopt (Tampoe, 1998). The analysis that follows shows the relationship between the external and internal environments and how this contributes to leading and managing safe schools.

Poverty, gangs, drugs and unemployment in the communities were cited in all six schools as major problems, which present in the classroom as learners who come to school hungry, learners who cannot afford to pay for school fees or for scholar transport and learners who display violent and disruptive behaviour.

Government has put in place some measures to ensure access to education including the no-fee policy and feeding schemes for learners considered most poor (DBE, 2015c; *SASA, 1996*;). The data (derived from teacher interviews) shows that the no-fee policy is fuelling lethargy among parents as far as making any contributions (financial or in-kind) to the school to help with their children's education. This lethargy limits the schools' ability to run extra-curricular or sporting programmes for which government doesn't pay (EA1-3, EC1-2 PF, & EF1). Principals (A, C, E and F) all agreed that these parents were able to buy their children very expensive shoes and clothing and that this demonstrated that it was not a matter of affordability but rather one of exploiting the system. Even though no-fee schools cannot ask parents for money, teachers said parents must be educated about how their children lose out on extra-mural activities because of the lack of money. Parents may just change their attitude towards investing in their children's education because it is not always about a lack of money (EA 1 – 4). Minister Motshekga (2013) agrees with this view because she finds it strange that parents are able to buy their children cell phones yet plead poverty and refuse to make donations to the school. She went on to say, "if they can't sometimes help the school with money, they can help their school with their time, with their hands" (p. 1).

The lack of financial resources was cited as a problem in all schools, but the collection of school fees in the two suburban schools seemed to be less problematic – despite learners also coming from poor families. The three no-fee schools relied entirely on the allocations by government and found that it barely covered delivery of the curriculum, let alone extra-mural activities and issues such as school safety. In fee-paying schools, the problem was further compounded by parents who refused to apply for school fee exemption, which entitles the school to ask for a higher subsidy from government – this, principals say, is indicative of parents who can afford to pay but who choose to exploit the system. There was, according to principals and SGBs, little interest from the GDE to clamp down on these defaulters thus rendering principals and schools powerless. The two suburban schools (B and D) had a more inflexible system and approach for collecting school fees and it seemed to be working – school fees were treated as core to the business of the school and while the process was not callous, parents were singled out and reminded that unless they paid up, the school could not deliver what it had promised and the child would have to be moved to another school where education is offered for free. Principals also claimed that hiring staff who understood the importance of

credit control made all the difference and emphasised that principals should insist on employing the best suited candidates. Both of these schools had a long waiting list of learners wanting to join the school.

The no-fee policy, according to teachers (EA1 -3; EE 1-2), results in the low level of parental involvement in their children's education as experienced in four of the six schools. Teachers believed that parents do not value education, which leads to learners becoming demotivated, the souring of family relations and learners ultimately giving up on school. Given that finding a job in South Africa is quite difficult, learners become demotivated and disillusioned and give up hope on living a better life (Swartz, 2009; Chutel, 2016). The lack of funding in schools is consistent with the literature in that the model for school funding is problematic (Motshekga, 2013) and in need of change. Funds are important if schools are to make headway in making schools safe. From a social justice perspective, it is unacceptable for parents to exploit the system by refusing to pay school fees as it places an unfair burden on the education system. An ineffective funding model is equally unfair since it will perpetuate inequality and continue to make it difficult for principals to create safe teaching and learning environments.

Drugs and gangs are interrelated and present a menace that teachers and principals feel they cannot do much about. The data shows that in some schools, learners were lured into joining gangs while others either used or dealt in drugs. Gangs are part of the problem making routes to and from school unsafe and the data shows that learners even drop out of school or take a transfer to another school as a result. Security guards at School A reported that they were constantly threatened by gangs who brazenly told them "we are coming for those computers it's just a matter of time" – so the guards could not afford to drop their guard as their lives were also on the line. The use of drugs induces fear among learners and teachers because the learners' behaviour becomes unpredictable (SAPC 1-2; ED1-3). One police officer (SAPC) described this as "learners becoming like lions." Drug dealers have also identified learners as a convenient and "innocent" conduit to ferry drugs (SAPA&E and SAPF). That is why some of the officers felt strongly that while random drug searches may seem extreme, they should be a necessary element of routine patrols. Poverty plays a big part in why some learners sell drugs but the name-brand consumer culture is seen as a bigger driver for luring young boys and girls into the drug world – learners see it as making easy money to buy expensive clothes (SAPA&E; SAPF). When learners become desperate for cash, some will go as far as to rob other learners or steal from their parents according to the police. Related to this are reports by security guards (SGA 1-2; SGE1-2) who suspect food vendors of selling drugs to learners through the fence. It is for this reason that schools started to vet vendors, but according the security guards they have to remain vigilant.

This finding of the impact of the legacy effects of apartheid (drug abuse, parental apathy, gangs, violence etc.) on communities is consistent with the literature and confirms that the issues at hand are quite complex. No-fee schools are struggling to deliver a good standard of education and the reluctance of parents to invest in their children's education is a major problem. These findings are listed here because these are issues that originate in the community and become a threat to the school. A more collaborative approach by government is necessary to firstly provide support to drug users but simultaneously deal with corruption in the criminal justice system which protects drug syndicates from prosecution and or long- term imprisonment. Both findings have corruption at its core which is detrimental to the consolidation of democracy and the eradication of the legacy effects of apartheid. Unless those who violate the law are brought to book by the authorities, principals will continue to struggle with building safe teaching and learning environments

5.3 Change Agents

As a result of the high levels of violence in schools, schools have been described in the literature as gloomy and scary places with some singled out as "being the most dangerous in the world" (Blaser, 2008), as "blackboard jungles" (Jansen, 2017) and as "disaster zones" (Bloch, 2009). However, schools have also been identified as, second to the family, being the most important socialising agent for young people. This section shows the extent to which different roles and strategies have contributed towards transforming schools into safe teaching and learning environments.

The literature shows that while schools are sometimes complicit in promoting violence (corporal punishment, bullying, sexual harassment etc.), they are also the ideal institutions to effect behaviour change and to make real the right to the safe teaching and learning environments that are concomitant with the notion of a "good education". Tension between communities and schools is gaining prominence in different parts of the country as parents and political leaders disrupt schooling to draw attention to problems in the school. Such situations, according to the district and provincial officials (DO & PO), creates instability in the school, which inevitably draws more violence into the school making it unsafe. When one of the teacher focus groups was asked whether they think schools can turn their situation around, one educator (EB, 5 September 2012) was adamant that schools have an important role to play in reducing or eradicating violence in schools and the community, both in terms of reporting and behaviour change. It also emerged from the data that this role of "change agent" should be regarded as being much bigger than solving crime and violence problems in

isolation and should take a systemic approach to shaping society as a whole. According to one teacher and two principals: "If schools cannot transform society it doesn't do its job and serves no purpose at all" (EA1, September 11, 2012); "Schools should lead in addressing the social ills in society and contribute to developing future leaders" (PA, September 11, 2012); "The school must instil the belief in the child that I can rise above my circumstances which is the first step towards breaking free from poverty" (PC, September 12,2012).

These sentiments confirm that schools have a responsibility in shaping society and, as such, can play an important role as change agents in the fight against violence.

The expertise of teachers and principals, who know how to use various tools such as the curriculum to both transfer knowledge and influence behaviour change, is central to the change agent mandate. Currently, only some teachers are using the curriculum to impact on behaviour change so a more coordinated effort is required for it to be effective. The data shows that 66% of teachers had given up on trying to instil positive behavioural patterns among learners. They said that they felt helpless because, according to them, parents had abdicated their parental responsibility.

Poverty has a multi-faceted impact on learners and the school (Spaull, 2013; Spaull, 2015) and according to teachers (EC 1&2): "There is a lagging factor when it comes to teaching learners affected by poverty and it requires extreme patience and effort to get them to a level where they can produce quality work" (EC2, interview, September 12, 2012). "In addition to exercising patience we need extra help from parents to avoid slow learners from dropping out of school" (EC1, interview, September 12, 2012).

This challenge, and the consequence of not dealing with the problem, is well understood by teachers, SGBs and principals and despite all the negative issues prevailing in schools there is the realisation that schools are our only hope to bring about change. According to one of the research participants "the school should and can make up for what the child lacks in the home – just by doing a little bit more" (DPD interview, October 12, 2012).

The lack of skills and funding for the development and implementation of school safety programmes was found to be common across all six schools. However, the most important resource recognised in all schools to effect change was the teachers. The research shows that teachers are content-experts, which means that they are able to use their skills in creative ways to ensure violence no longer stifles the classroom from being a place where teaching and learning happens uninterrupted. This approach provides room for lived experiences to be

incorporated into the curriculum so that it becomes relevant to the context of the school and has a bigger impact on reducing school violence in the school and beyond.

Fighting crime and violence is considered the responsibility of the police and courts but, according to the researcher, they cannot do this alone. The Adopt-A-Cop programme is being replaced and the role of the police currently is one where they mainly provide services to schools by way of patrols, delivering talks on crime trends and conducting searches for drugs and weapons. The literature shows that those most prone to committing crime are in high school (Gottfredson, 1996a; Masitsa, 2011) but the school features nowhere as a partner in the crime prevention strategy of the police. The protocol that was signed between the SAPS and the DBE in 2011 aims to strengthen this partnership so that police officers actually serve on the SSC instead of being on the periphery. Thus far this process is taking off rather slowly and none of the six schools in the study had a relationship with the police based on this protocol. A follow-up interview (PO, February 5, 2018) revealed that the Adopt-A-Cop programme is still running in most schools despite the critiques levelled against it. This is another example that shows the difficulty experienced by the two departments (GDE and SAPS) when it comes to both working together and continuing with programmes that have become ineffective.

Strong appeals were made, by research participants, to the GDE to provide teachers and principals with more training in the area of school safety but one teacher (EC2 interviewed, September 25, 2012) felt strongly that teachers could and should take the initiative. According to her, with a bit more creativity, teachers could do much to shift the status quo and this fed into what teacher EF3 ((interviewed September 19, 2012) had to say: "Teaching has become far too academic and room must be created for other approaches to strengthen teaching as a whole."

Teacher EC2 gave an example of how this could be done using an example of bullying. Instead of relying exclusively on the disciplinary process to deal with the bully, she discreetly incorporated elements into her lesson on self-respect, power, humiliation and shame. In her view, this approach, in tandem with the disciplinary process, was far more effective as a prevention measure and it empowered the victim while holding the perpetrator accountable. This approach is also known as restorative justice[14] which is one of the ways, as opposed to

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[14] Restorative Justice is a theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused by criminal behaviour. It engages all stakeholders and can lead to transformation of people and relationships (Centre for Justice and Reconciliation, 2018).

corporal punishment, to instil and maintain discipline both in the classroom and the school. The teacher was also of the view that teachers could support each other with different ideas and, because teachers are not trained social workers, the school could invite external people or organisations to deliver talks on a regular basis. This finding is consistent with the literature (Somech & Oplatka, 2009), which shows that where teachers are able to expand their role-breadth the lives of children can be changed in a positive way. Unfortunately, this opportunity is not visible to all teachers and principals – at least not to 50% of schools in the sample.

Another example of positive change that can be effected despite the funds/skills deficit, was picked up in School F. A learner had influenced his family and ultimately his neighbours (living in an informal settlement) to dispose of waste responsibly and to recycle waste (SGBF1, interviewed, October 1, 2012). This is one way that the classroom can be used to change society and it also proves that anyone who is prepared to go the extra mile for the greater good, can be a change agent. Parents in School C always complained to teachers that they could not help their children with their homework because they were illiterate. The school managed to get around this problem by asking parents not to be too concerned about helping with homework but rather to ensure the home environment is conducive to learning. What this means is that parents can contribute to meaningful change by simply asking the child about what his/her day was like at school, regulating time for television viewing and not overloading the child with household chores. Parents in School C were reported to be more forthcoming and involved in their children's education and the number of involved parents was increasing slowly. These are all examples of creative change agent strategies that work in spite of complex and challenging teaching and learning environments.

When fostering support partnerships with external organisations, principals have recognised that the school should take the lead to guide and set the objectives of the partnership as opposed to becoming a dumping ground for irrelevant or unwanted programmes. School safety and a climate conducive to teaching and learning is not achieved by singular actions like purchasing a particular programme but rather by effective collaborative efforts and the ongoing commitment of all stakeholders (Cowan et al., 2013). Numerous examples were cited where 66% of sampled schools worked well with NGOs and other structures such as LoveLife and the Columba Youth Leadership Programme (among others) to create and sustain behaviour change. This finding is consistent with the announcement made by the minister of education to use the Life Orientation curriculum to help learners engage with their issues and attitudes. Likewise, through the NSSF (DBE, 2015a) learners should be taught life skills to build their self-esteem, which is essential for creating a safe learning environment. The data

shows that in about half of the schools in the sample teachers were already doing this, but it was fragmented and left to the individual teacher to implement.

The lack of responsiveness and support by the district office, especially when dealing with complicated cases, was raised as a concern by both principals and SGB members (interview with school A, B & C). Principal PC, who heads a no-fee school, reported that he was unable to pay for the servicing of fire extinguishers and therefore remained in breach of the *OHSA 1993* despite numerous fines being imposed by the local authority. His requests to the GDE, since 2010, to remedy the situation yielded no response and instead he was given "the run-around." This lack of support or responsiveness is not confined to issues related to procurement only but extends into processes where principals require much needed support upon their appointment to their posts.

Security guards (SGA1-2 and SGE 1-2) said their schools' safety was compromised because they had limited search and seizure powers and they needed better back up from the police, especially when facing gang threats. The guards also raised the concern that for as long as they were not fully integrated into the structures of the school, their efforts to make schools safe would be futile (SGA & SGE). They (SGA & SGE) also lacked equipment, such as two-way radios, which were regarded as being more reliable and cost effective than cell phones, and protective uniforms. Guards (SGA & SGE) said that they experienced verbal abuse from both learners and teachers and felt that they were not supported by the principal – i.e. they were not recognised as part of the school. The role of the principal is to ensure all services are integrated so that duplication of services is avoided and a more sustained and comprehensive school improvement strategy is achieved (Cowan et al., 2013). This finding has far reaching implications for school safety because unless the efforts of the guards are fully integrated into the school safety strategy, these schools will remain vulnerable and unsafe (Roper, 2002). By asking for search and seizure powers, security guards are actually asking for powers that will infringe on the human rights of others and this is an opportunity for the police to enlighten all concerned with school safety about the law. Section 14 of the *Constitution 1996* provides for the general right to an individual's privacy as well as specific rights not to have one's person, home or property searched nor one's possessions seized. According to Price (2015), "inspections or searches of one's home, person, vehicle…. have grave potential to limit both locational and informational privacy by way of intrusion. Such invasions of rights must be authorised by law" (p. 247). Such powers are only granted to police and even then, police officers have to apply them with caution.

LRC members played a very limited role (if any) in matters related to school safety and the majority (67%) said that their role in maintaining discipline at school was made difficult because it was not fully understood by some of the LRC members or the broader student population.

The implication of these findings for safe schools is that for as long as guards and the LRC are not integrated (Roper, 2002) into the safety strategy or plan of the schools, systems will remain weak and fragmented.

This section highlighted and confirmed why the school is the ideal change agent. Where leaders recognise student and adult behaviour will not be effectively controlled by rules but rather by building positive relationships through dialogue and mutual respect (Stanwood and Doolittle, 2004). By developing an inside-out development approach and working in partnership to solving much of the problems mentioned above, schools will become less reliant on external help to effect the change that needs to happen. In this way schools become (Chikoko, et al., 2015) "masters of their own destiny" (p. 452) moving away from notions of victimhood and deficit thinking to a notion of change maker.

5.4 Community engagement and partnerships

Violence has been identified as complex, context specific and cited as a world-wide problem. That means principals cannot deal with this problem alone and must engage other agencies if any meaningful impact is to be made. The research shows that principals who succeeded in creating safe schools were those who were able to identify and engage with multiple stakeholders. In our context, the community and community structures such as religious, cultural and social groups are a resource not commonly involved in matters of the school. These structures are places where learners interact and parents congregate and they can provide useful platforms for improving parental engagement in schools beyond that of the SGB. Parents can be apprised of issues in the school and can play a supportive role in their children's education by making their home an extension of the classroom. Knowledge can be exchanged, and good practices institutionalised in both the home and the classroom.

The partnership model in schools is usually presented by principals as a three-way partnership made up of the school, the child and his/her parent/s or caregivers. The underlying interest of this model is to ensure parents and teachers work together so that the child reaches his/her full potential. The question that arises is how this can be achieved given that the power relations in the model are skewed in favour of the school (Child Trends 2013). As shown

earlier, relationships between and among these structures are quite fragmented and even hostile in some cases. According to the researcher, most parents whose children attend township schools are not highly literate and these parents look to the school to take the lead in shaping the future of their children (Child Trends 2013). This task is not always straightforward, because the living conditions and life experiences of the majority of learners are shaped by high levels of crime, violence, unemployment, inequality and poverty. So what the learner brings into the classroom may not always go with the grain and can disrupt the balance required to keep the partnership going (Bloch, 2009; Mohapi, 2014). This disruption in the relationship is consistent with the literature and makes it hard for principals to manage and lead safe schools.

Across all six schools, parental involvement, or the lack thereof, came up strongly because parents are regarded as a key partner in realising the dreams of their children. Parental participation in their children's education ranged from poor, average to good. Where parental participation was considered good, teachers and principals felt parental participation could still be better. The data shows that schools do not always know how to engage parents beyond issues related to school fees, performance and behavioural problems. According to the researcher, by recognising parents as a resource rather than a liability to the school, an opportunity can be opened up to change the nature of the relationship positively and lift the self-esteem of parents and the community. It is the responsibility of school leaders to mobilise staff, students, parents and the community around the mission and shared values of the school including school improvement goals and setting high expectations (Cowan et al., 2013)

It emerged in schools B, C, D and F that parents who actively took part in the business of the school had strong bonds with their children and these children in turn had healthy relationships with their teachers and the school (Blum, 2005; Child Trends 2013). Consequently, strong and healthy family relationships are important for building allegiance and connectedness to the school. The implication for schools is that unless parents are drawn closer and inspired to become more involved in their children's education, schools will struggle to be the change agents they are expected to be.

The learner is a crucial link in the communication channel between the school and the home and the study shows that learners do not always relay messages to their parents or caregivers. This means that some parents are not always abreast of what is happening at school, or with their children, and this may influence the level of parental involvement. All schools reported that they work hard to get most parents to meetings (and sometimes succeed) but the data shows that this doesn't always translate into action and the SGBs felt it was a case of

preaching to the converted. This makes the relationship between SGBs and parents "bitter-sweet", which SGBs said the GDE is responsible for because the GDE tends to renege on implementing its own policies. At least four schools felt the department must help schools by bringing pressure to bear on parents to be more accountable and make the education of their children their number one priority. In two of the six schools (B and D) the communication with parents happened daily by means of a diary that the parent had to sign daily to prove that they had received any notices. Important notices such as parents' meetings and disciplinary hearings were reinforced by sending text messages directly to the parents' cell phones. According to deputy principal DPD, it is important that the learners are aware that they themselves are not the only channel of communication between the school and their home. This also had an impact on how the learner behaved in class because they were aware of the direct line of communication with the parents. Teachers in township schools felt they could benefit from such systems since even the poorest parent in the most rural part of the country owns a cell phone. This finding can assist all schools to strengthen how they communicate with parents/caregivers and should be documented as one of the good practices in building good relations between the school and parents.

The research shows that township schools are supportive of partnering with the community and are often called upon to provide school halls or classrooms for funerals, church services, and skills development programmes – often at a fee. Suburban schools do not have this kind of demand since their communities are very different – in fact there is no relationship with the surrounding community. Teachers (EA1-3; EE1-4) felt that what their schools were offering the community was not enough and that the school had to work harder at strengthening the relationship with parents. For example, the way parents were treated at school E needed urgent attention because when parents were called to come to the school they were kept waiting at the gate instead of at the reception office – which is also not visitor-friendly. Schools should be sanctuaries where parents, teachers and learners feel welcome and safe rather than feeling rejected. According to Stanwood and Doolittle (2004) "schools should model respect for individuals. We're always supposed to respect teachers and vice principals….But they don't respect us" (p 169). If such situations are allowed to continue, the rift between the school and community can only grow bigger thus retarding efforts by principals to build safe schools.

Reverting back to the partnership model, power will always vest in the school given the inequality that exists in the majority of communities. To have power is not necessarily a bad thing because if this power is used wisely, it can be used to the advantage of achieving the best possible outcome for every learner. The means of communication between the home and

the school must be taken more seriously as this is a vital link in connecting the home with the school. Community structures (including parents) have enormous influence and by partnering with these structures, the school can give guidance on how they can collectively support youth development as a whole. In this way development becomes complementary and the classroom and the home are brought together without much difficulty making it easier for principals to lead and manage safe schools.

5.5 Crime hardening

School buildings and facilities have been identified in the literature as a key aspect to consider when promoting both safety and learner achievement (Xaba, 2012). Crime hardening (also known as target hardening), according to the researcher, refers to those measures schools can take to make their schools safer by way of preventing or making it harder for criminals to target them and loot their schools. This may include, but is not limited to, making sure the school fence is secure, gates are locked, doors and windows have additional security bars attached to their frames, alarm systems are installed, dark areas are illuminated at night, metal detectors are installed and security guards are employed.

All schools in the sample were found to have basic security features such as burglar bars, burglar doors and palisade fences with lockable gates in place. Some schools (50%) had alarm systems connected to armed response guards in addition to burglar bars, while others had guards patrolling the school grounds on a 24-hour basis. The research shows that graffiti is a problem (to varying degrees) in all schools (Xaba, 2012) and can be found on desks, classroom walls, toilets and in one of the schools (School A), a remark even found its way onto the rear windscreen of a teacher's car. While graffiti doesn't have the same effect as a burglary, for example, it does create an appearance that detracts from the institutional values, vision and mission of the school. Facilities management is expensive (Xaba, 2012) and removing graffiti can be a costly exercise and as such, according to the researcher, can be seen as having a similar impact as a burglary. Principal PC (interview, September 26, 2012) remarked that: "Instead of just removing the graffiti, I pay particular attention to the underlying messages in the graffiti as it represents a message of something likely to happen in school or the community."

This quote suggests that principals should look deeper than just observing the physical act because of the complex context in schools. Erasing graffiti from the walls won't necessarily erase the problem, which makes leading and managing safe schools more complicated for principals. Graffiti is sometimes viewed as vandalism but is gaining more prominence globally

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as a form of art and is encouraged by allocating dedicated spaces for this purpose in public spaces and schools (Museum of the City, 2017). Stanwood and Doolittle (2004) cite Bloom as saying at a meeting that leaders should move away from traditional thinking when solving problems and contends that "schools are a terrific place to create community. Kids experience compensatory mechanisms for all things that go on at home and in the community….Our society systems do not function very well. How do we make it work better?" (p170). It is clear that a technical response alone won't work to make the community system work better and by ignoring or failing to see the underlying issues, one could produce a response that promotes social injustice. The research suggests that at least in one school, the socio-economic context finds expression through the use of graffiti and by dealing with graffiti appropriately, it should not be difficult for principals to lead and manage safe schools

Principal PA considered installing closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras throughout the school, including classrooms, to monitor activity but the idea was rejected by teachers as they felt that their right to privacy in terms of the *Constitution 1996* would be infringed.

In School C, secure holding areas for learners during break time were developed without realising that there are no emergency escape routes and that it would be very difficult for emergency vehicles to access that area. The school had commenced with remedial action in 2013. This demonstrates that principals should work with security experts, as well as looking at what policies say, when undertaking such developments. Crime hardening efforts must not be reactionary, but well thought out and implemented. Leadership development theory should recognise that outside of achieving education outcomes, principals as instructional leaders need to consult with experts on technical aspects of school safety because failure to do so may expose learners to unintended harm.

The literature shows that township schools are far more susceptible to robberies, vandalism and burglaries than suburban schools and that SGBs are finding it hard to maintain school buildings and facilities (Xaba, 2006; Xaba 2011). The research is consistent with the literature and confirms that burglaries and vandalism of township schools were alarmingly high in preceding years. School C, a township school, was vandalised and damaged by gangs to the extent that it was no longer able to function properly. All schools, however, reported that the threat of vandalism remains and that the palisade fence and copper fittings, such as taps and water pipes were vandalised regularly and sold as scrap metal. Regular inspection of the fence and toilets was necessary to ensure school safety was not compromised.

The introduction of private security guards (three years prior to the research) and CPF patrollers (one year prior to the research) precipitated a significant drop in burglaries across all six schools – in township schools, principals reported that burglaries had dropped to zero percent (PA, PC, PE & PF). When research participants were asked whether they felt safe at school their responses varied in accordance with their individual experiences and perceptions of safety threats in the schools. For example, it was found that learners felt unsafe while teachers in the same school felt totally safe. In situations where learners felt safe, factors such as the ability of teachers and principals to deal with ill-disciplined learners decisively, teachers managing their classrooms properly, and knowing intruders could not easily access the school were regarded as important. Having security guards on the premises and knowing visitors were properly screened at reception provided teachers with a greater sense of safety during the school day. In two of the six schools, (B and D) teachers pointed out that the way in which their schools were constructed made them feel safe against the threat of intruders – access to classrooms was only possible through the administration block. However, the general sense is that schools are regarded as unsafe and that there is much room for improvement taking into account both hard and soft issues related to school safety.

In conclusion, crime hardening is an essential part of making schools safe and generating a stronger sense of personal safety. If teachers and learners feel safe they can focus on what has to be done in class as opposed to feeling exposed and vulnerable. Resources such as books in libraries, chemicals in laboratories, computers in classrooms and general equipment are kept safe meaning that teaching and learning can continue uninterrupted. All of these play an important role in making sure the school is not only safe but also remains functional.

We have now concluded with the internal environment of the school and will proceed on to the next section that deals with the external environment of the school

5.6 Legislation and policies

This component considers all the legislation and policies at national and provincial level, relevant to the concept of leading and managing safe schools. Legislation and policies guide principals with the running of their schools and policy implementation forms a big part of the principal's job. Once again, the literature (Mc Lennan & Thurlow, 2003; Bush, 2007) and data shows that principals are not adequately skilled and/or prepared for their positions, and as a result principals struggle with policy development and implementation. Most principals acquire these skills as they go along and for some it has been a difficult learning curve (PA; PB; PC; DPD; PE & PF). To provide principals with some level of support it is necessary to shift the

focus from insisting on policy implementation to understanding what the factors are that make policy implementation difficult. Is it, for example, a lack of understanding, a lack of political will or are budgetary constraints making implementation difficult?

The literature shows that in South Africa there is no shortage of legislation and policies on leadership development and school safety but rather, apart from gaps in the legislation, implementation of these policies presents a far bigger challenge. This is not limited to education only but is a general trend within and among both provincial and national government departments. For example, corporal punishment is illegal (*SASA, 1996*), yet it is well documented to be practiced in many schools (Burton, 2008a). Both the district and provincial officials reported that the prevalence of corporal punishment confirms that government has failed to hold teachers accountable despite having the legal framework in place (PO & DO, 25 January 2013). According to them, government should do more to create a mind shift away from corporal punishment, but at the same time, pressurise the SACE to prosecute teachers and principals found guilty of administering corporal punishment. The data shows that access to policies, and actually reading policies, is a problem in at least 50% of the schools (school A, E & F). It is also well recognised that the principals struggle with policy development and implementation and that they need support from the district office to ensure that their efforts to make their schools safe succeed.

Working in schools is a specialized area of work within the policing services – officers assigned to schools must be familiar with relevant pieces of legislation like the Child Care Act among many others (SAPB; SAPD; SAPF). Officers interviewed estimated that on average only about 10% of the officers at their stations understand school safety and have the skills and passion to work in schools. This is far from ideal and is further problematic because the protocol between SAPS and the DBE requires police officers to be more directly involved with schools through the SSC. Lack of training often leads to problems when it comes to how cases reported by schools are processed and investigated. Equally, officers say principals do not understand laws like the Criminal Procedures Act and this shortcoming could expose principals to serious legal problems. Police officers felt they could play an important role to help principals become more familiar with certain pieces of legislation and to guide them to think more strategically when developing school safety plans (SAPA&E; SAPB).

5.7 Good practice

Good practice relates to programmes and/or strategies that were found to have a positive impact and therefore are worthy of being adopted as a practice that may have a similar or

better impact elsewhere. Such programmes are usually documented (budgeted for if necessary) and "adopted" as a "good practice" approach of doing something. In this case it is envisaged or hoped for that useful strategies emanating from this study would be institutionalised in the GDE to address the problem of school violence. The data confirms that school safety, while recognised as a barrier to education, is not part of the daily planning of the school (PA; PE; DPD). In part, this has to do with how school safety is understood and defined, as well as the principal's role in making sure school safety is not treated as an add-on. Much has been done to curb school violence, but we have also learned that levels of violence are still unacceptably high, and this is because much of what has been done was not informed by empirical research (Bush et al., 2005). Another reason is that schools are only too eager to try out any school safety programme that may be on offer (especially when it is offered free of charge) without checking whether it has been evaluated and/or has the potential for positive impact. Finally, a more worrying factor that has come out of the data is how good programmes can disappear if they are not properly institutionalised within the education departments – the HEWS (CJCP & DOE, 2006) is a good example of this. By further illustration, with the drug problem becoming bigger, police officers were of the view that the closure of specialised investigative units within the police was a bad idea and we are now paying the price (SAPB; SAPA&E). They said that bringing back these units would help in stamping out drug dealing and trafficking. It is therefore necessary to build a repository of local knowledge, both in terms of what worked and what did not work, in order to deal with the shortage of school safety and leadership development information in South Africa. Technology (Smartphone App) can play an important role in facilitating access for principals to all relevant guidelines, tips, good practice, vetted service providers and programmes. This component of the conceptual framework intends to build a repository of initiatives, efforts and projects that are proven to work in schools insofar as what principals do in running their schools and dealing with school safety.

Under the social justice approach, school safety has been defined quite broadly and one of the major threats to school safety is poverty, which manifests in schools through learners who are hungry and unable to concentrate in class. To this end the GDE has introduced a school nutrition programme in schools to ensure indigent learners receive at least one cooked meal every school day. School nutrition fills a critical gap in terms of Sen's (1998) capability approach but the programme is still not in all schools where it is needed – especially in all secondary schools. The Gauteng province is therefore working on a plan to accelerate the implementation of the school nutrition programme in all needy secondary schools. By way of illustration the school nutrition programme is one example of a good practice programme that has been properly institutionalised in the GDE and rolled out throughout the province.

High on the priority list of the GDE is the commitment to root out attacks levelled at learners on their way to and from school. It emerged from the interviews that the policy on scholar transport currently provides only for learners who walk five kilometres or more (one way) to school but it neglects to take into account the majority of learners who walk less than five kilometres but are exposed to dangers like muggings and attacks. The GDE planned to conduct a survey on providing scholar transport to learners who have to walk through dangerous areas in 2013, but this unfortunately did not materialise (PO, interview, February 5, 2018). This is most unfortunate because these attacks are often very serious and learner testimonies obtained during interviews confirm that as a result, some learners either drop out of school or where possible leave to attend a school elsewhere. Principals have very little control over the external environment and the scholar transport intervention is another example of a good practice school safety programme that could assist principals in making the leading and managing of safe schools much easier.

The DBE cannot claim that it has found the blueprint for school safety but they are encouraged by the impact that the CPF Patroller Programme has had since its implementation in 2012. Principals were reporting to the DBE that burglaries were almost down to zero and that access control was also firmly under control (DO, interview, January 25, 2013). However, while the CPF Patroller Programme seems to be working well, there was no clarity among principals as to what the criteria was to become part of the programme and/or what the rollout strategy was. The district official indicated that the most vulnerable schools were targeted first, but this doesn't explain why the concentration is in Soweto because many vulnerable schools also exist in other areas. Principals in the four remaining schools expressed their dismay at the GDE for not communicating with all schools on this issue. The conclusion by the district official was that the programme would be rolled out to other areas in due course, but it remains vague and creates the impression that there is no clear roll-out strategy.

Lastly, police officers said that schools could learn something from the police. General assembly was not used as effectively as it could be. In the police service, officers attend parade every morning and that is where police are reminded of why they are there and what is expected of them. According to officer SAPF (interview, January 7, 2013), "learners should be made to swear allegiance to their schools and this can best be achieved by holding general assembly daily – let learners become proud of their school and themselves."

A call was made by some officers for the GDE to bring back religious education to restore family and community values.

5.8 Partner support

The complexity of school violence has been widely emphasised in the literature, which means the problem is layered and requires multiple responses (Pinheiro, 2006; Touré, 2007). Coupled to this is the knowledge that principals do not know how to deal with the problem of school violence (Bush, 2007) and as such, the chances of a principal coming up with a collaborative response to creating safe teaching and learning environments is quite remote. According to the researcher, school effectiveness and school safety can best be achieved by schools working in partnership with other organisations and or experts. The conceptual framework was therefore informed by this gap shown in the literature and the purpose of this component is to inspire partnerships in schools on a broader scale than what is currently the practice.

The data in Chapter Four shows that principals, teachers and SGBs often feel unsupported by the district and provincial offices, especially when facing difficult situations – this is consistent with what the literature shows (Msila, 2011). This includes, but is not limited to, support needed with policy development and implementation, capacity building and resource mobilisation. The district and provincial officials, however, denied this charge and pointed out that not reading and/or understanding policies was what caused SGBs and principals to run into trouble - these accusations, according to the officials, caused further undue tension in the relationship (PO, & DO, January 25, 2013).

Police officers pointed out that principals, sometimes out of ignorance or desperation, called officers out to attend to matters that were clearly not a policing matter and that this wasted the officers' time. Officers also found it annoying when principals failed to inform them of school functions and events - so there appeared to be confusion or uncertainty of the role of the police (SAPB; SAPD; SAPF). This is a gap that the police see as one where they can assist principals in thinking more strategically about school safety and developing safety plans that are all encompassing and effective.

Education officials recognised the need for capacity building and as such, principals will be offered ongoing training in school safety and the DBE will provide templates to assist principals to draft more comprehensive codes of conduct, school safety policies and plans, which should hopefully result in more, if not all, schools being compliant. In doing so the department will make sure IDSOs are better trained in school safety so that they can give principals the correct support and advice on developing school safety plans (PO, interview, January 25, 2013).

The model for partnership support is "needs driven" and may vary from time to time. This may for example, include external professional services to treat drug dependency off-site but it could also include a session on substance abuse presented in school. It is common practice to call on established NGOs to render such services, but it is also possible to call on smaller community structures such the religious sector when support is needed following a traumatic event at the school. In order for this component to work well, the district office must drive this piece of work because the work must be well coordinated and rolled out to each school in the district.

The literature shows that because school safety is a shared mandate, the DBE launched the Safety in Education Partnership Protocol with SAPS (DBE, 2011). This protocol lays out the framework for the close inter-departmental coordination required to create safe, caring and child-friendly schools in which quality learning and teaching can take place. Some of the aims of the protocol include linking all schools to a police station, setting up functional SSCs in each school, and dealing with crime and violence decisively with a specific focus on prevention. A major concern that emerges from the data is that none of the schools in the study had a relationship with police stations based on the protocol. In one precinct (SAPC), the relationship between the school and the SAPS was based purely on a personal level i.e. with individual police officers.

Relationships between police officers and principals/schools are generally good and officers know most of the principals on a first-name basis. However, only about 10% of police officers designated to work in schools are trained in aspects of school safety and the Child Care Act and this is highly problematic because police officers are now expected to play a more active role in schools by serving on SSCs. Untrained police officers could cause more harm than good and is a systemic problem both the SAPS and the GDE should address.

The fact that 67% of learners do not live in the area where they attend school makes it difficult for police officers to set up structures such as Youth Desks to work with CPFs and draw the community together in the fight against crime and social problems. The police have several programmes, over and above the usual Adopt-A-Cop example, which they can implement but they found that keeping it interesting and fresh is a problem. Learners spend at least five years in high school therefore the police need programmes targeting specific grades in order to avoid repeating the same programme every year. The police need partnerships that could help them strengthen and refresh their social crime prevention programmes.

The Stakeholder Forum set up by SAPS to address issues in the communities was referred to extensively by the district coordinator as a structure he regularly engaged with to assist him with problems in schools. The forum consists of SAPS, Metro Police, Business, and NGOs etc. However, this structure appears to have little to no effect given the range of safety threats prevailing in schools such as drugs and gangs. In addition, the protocol signed between SAPS and the DBE (DBE, 2011) to formally link each school to a police station has been found by the research to be quite weak and fragmented. For example Lolly Lounges, where liquor is sold to under-age patrons in the community, have been raised as a serious threat to school safety. This problem should have been addressed through this structure but it appears they are not able to deal with problems effectively. These findings present serious challenges for the implementation of the NSSF due to be implemented in all schools.

The relationship between the district office and its partners was defined as good but according to the district official the difficulty in coordinating the various services and functions lies in the competing job demands and priorities each partner has. Campaigns that had similar objectives were often not coordinated between different departments so that impact could be maximised and it was also evident that meetings were often postponed at the last minute and it remained a challenge to get everyone around the same table (DO, interview, January 25, 2013). The misalignment of education and policing boundaries remained a cause for concern and required creative ways to make it work and avoid duplication (PO, interview, January 25, 2013; SAPB, interview, January 7, 2013).

This section has demonstrated that partner support is crucial for the achievement of safe teaching and learning environments because schools do not have all the necessary expertise on hand.

5.9 External evaluation

The lack of credible data to inform what schools need in terms of school safety, was surfaced by both the data and the literature (Debarbieux, 2007; Griggs, 2004). At the level of school safety, it was found that there is no coordination between the various agencies (schools, police and courts) and that school violence, for a variety of reasons, is under-reported (Interviews with principals and police officers). The researcher is of the opinion that it is necessary to evaluate all school safety programmes so that impact can be measured.

External evaluation is presented here as a "learning by doing tool" for building safe schools as opposed to the conventional understanding of using evaluation sporadically to measure

success. This approach is in line with the National Evaluation Plan (DPME, 2012) developed to help government by using evaluation, improve its policy or programme performance, promote a stronger culture of accountability, improve decision-making and generate knowledge about what works and what doesn't. The literature shows that school violence has become more severe over time (Leoschut, 2008) and it is not because of a lack of trying – numerous efforts have been made and huge sums of money have been spent to deal with this problem and yet it remains.

In accordance with the conceptual framework, this component proposes that an external agency (SAPS, Department of Community Safety, Statistics South Africa, Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention etc.) assesses, at regular intervals, (for example every three years) where we are with school safety and further provides recommendations on how to improve. As a starting point, the Citizen Based Monitoring (CBM) approach developed by the Department for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) could be used because it targets ordinary citizens and aims to get a 360° perspective from stakeholders receiving a particular government service (DPME, 2013). The results of the evaluation can contribute to what gets documented as a good practice model to be filed with the district, provincial and national offices.

The data shows that none of the programmes running in the six schools was evaluated. This does not mean that some of the programmes did not have an impact, but unless evaluation is incorporated into the offering of programmes, the situation in schools will show no sign of improving. Evaluation helps with knowing what is working or not working and why. For example, the route to and from school has long being identified as a serious problem for learners. Evaluation would be very useful not just to evaluate whether learners arrive at school safely but also to look at lateness and the impact on school safety. It is well known and documented that physical fights and bullying commonly occur on the school bus so evaluation can tell us the extent to which prevention strategies are working.

5.10 Defining safe schools

It was confirmed in the data by the district and provincial education officials that at the time of the research there was no uniform definition for school safety in South Africa (DO, & PO, January 25, 2013). It later transpired that through the development of the NSSF (DBE, 2015a) a definition for school violence was developed as well as minimum standards for a safe school. The minimum standards relate to policies and procedures, safety plans and audits, working in partnership with the community and having reporting systems in place. At the time of

concluding the report the researcher was not aware of a safe school definition that had yet been developed.

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That being the case, it has implications for understanding school violence as well as for developing and budgeting for sustainable school safety programmes. All the research participants were asked to define both safe and unsafe schools and because the focus of the study is on leading and managing safe schools, the discussion will be limited to definitions related to safe schools only. In terms of the conceptual framework, because the South African context is complex, a safe school is viewed in its broadest sense incorporating a social justice approach, which allows for the physical aspects (buildings and equipment etc.) as well as the psycho-socio-economic aspects (human well-being and progress) of school safety.

5.10.1 Schools

Overall, 65% of the research participants in schools defined safe schools by incorporating a social justice approach with 35% percent of research participants using a narrower view and focusing mainly on the technical aspects of school safety such as having police patrols and employing security guards. The individual group responses will now be discussed in more detail.

Starting with principals, 83% defined a safe school in its broadest sense (social justice approach) using words like "feeling loved and cared for", a "caring school", "where your mental and physical state is safe" and "physical and social wellbeing". One out of the six principals focused mainly on equipment, burglar bars, fire extinguishers, patrols and a system for reporting cases to the police.

From the educator focus groups, 72% defined school safety using a social justice lens by using words like "protected against physical and psychological harm", "it's about the internal and external environment", "being aware of practices in the community i.e. devil worshipping", "access control and a nutrition programme", and "provide the child with love for learning". The remaining 28% of educators defined safe schools quite narrowly using words like the physicality of the child must be protected; perimeter should be secure with a firm system for managing access; a school that enjoys the backing of the Department; reinstate corporal punishment, which is regulated by a framework; no loitering around the school and regular searches by SAPS for drugs and alcohol are carried out.

After analysing data from the learner focus groups, 72% of learners identified with the broader scope of school safety and their definitions included words like, "where we help each other as a family", "a place where learners bring manners and respect from home", "learners feel at ease surrounded by warm and caring people", "good security and a facility to take care of students when they fall ill" and "where children's physical, health and emotional needs are catered for". The remaining 28% of learners presented the narrow definition by using words like, a school with no violence and no weapons; there is a good security system; no bullying and toilets are in working order; well-maintained classrooms, buildings and playground.

The SGB group yielded a very different result to other groups because only 30% of members saw school safety as being more than physical safety. Their definitions included words like, "there's discipline and teaching and learning takes place", "all policies are in place and implemented", "the team consists of teachers and different supporting professionals i.e. mental health, physical health and security" and "there's no bullying and learners are affirmed." The rest of the group members (70%) saw safe schools as having "proper access control where learners understand not to bring weapons and drugs to school", "the school must have a strong SGB and parents making sure their children are safe on the route to and from school", "have security guards" and "where the surrounding community watches over the school."

The fact that 65% of all research participants defined a safe school with a focus broader than just the physical aspects is an encouraging finding because it confirms that there is some understanding of the context that makes leading and managing safe schools difficult. This means that principals should not have too much of a struggle to shift the current mind-set. Principals, by virtue of their position, made the wellbeing of learners and staff a key consideration while educators emphasised the importance of the interplay between the external and internal environments such as poverty and harmful social practices. This demonstrates that teachers are at the rock-face when it comes to being exposed to school violence in the course of their work.

The responses from learners reflect their lived experiences in terms of what they lack or yearn for. The majority of learners saw a safe school as one where there is support akin to that of a family but also recognised the values that should be instilled in the home (Learner focus group interviews). Similar to teachers, the interplay between the internal and external environment is recognised by learners and they tend to see the school as one environment made up of two halves. This leads the researcher to conclude that teachers and learners are far more exposed to school violence than any of the other groups such as the principal, general workers and support staff.

Finally, the majority (70%) of SGB members were more concerned with physical safety features of the school which speaks to the common role SGBs play in dealing with compliance issues. This finding is quite important as it highlights how a shared mandate of school safety between the SGB and SMT (led by the principal) can be weakened if the vision and understanding is not aligned. It provides at least one reason for why principals and SGBs are often at loggerheads and why leading and managing safe schools is challenging.

5.10.2 Education department

The provincial official defined a safe school as one where there is effective leadership coordinating the efforts of all stakeholders. The district official saw a safe school as a school where the community and school work together to serve their common interests - a school where there is access control and learners and teachers feel safe and where vandalism is rooted out and learners are behaving in a disciplined manner.

Both these definitions lean towards the narrow understanding of a safe school, which is somewhat surprising given the responsibility these officials carry to lead the school safety agenda in the province. In part, the definitions point to operational requirements necessary to make a safe school work, which is likely to be a reflection of the extent to which the officials' job responsibilities influence their understanding of a safe school. This, to some extent, creates an "us" and "them" situation which, as in the case of SGBs, can cause misalignment of collaborative efforts when trying to improve leading and managing safe schools.

5.10.3 Law enforcement

Two (40%) out of the five police officers (SAPB & SAPF) defined safe schools using a social justice perspective. In addition to technical aspects such as access control and conducting searches for weapons, they used words like, "thinking about learner and teacher safety like that of a caring parent", and "a school where departments of Health, Social Development, Eskom, the community and NGOs work together." The rest of the officers focused mainly on the technical aspects using words like, "a place where everyone feels safe", "where there is mutual respect and no abuse of teachers and learners" and "good access control supported by CCTV cameras."

Despite the majority of police officials defining a safe school more in terms of crime hardening measures, all of them expressed a deep concern for the overall wellbeing of children during

their interviews. A common sentiment shared by all officers that resonated throughout was "I am a tough police officer, but I am also a caring parent" (interviews, January 7, 2013).

This balance is quite important given that their constituency is mainly children and it sets a benchmark for the kind of police officers that should be assigned to schools. To have an even greater impact on school safety, there is a need for more police officers to be sensitised around social justice issues as this would provide a useful approach to build and strengthen the hands of principals in making schools safe, secure and caring.

5.11 Conclusion

This chapter brings together the entire research study and provides findings confirming what we know about safe schools but also what is new and interesting, and that which has not been written about before. The following findings summarise a selection of what was established overall and serve to demonstrate how the study contributed to answering the research question, "why is it so difficult to create safe teaching and learning environments and what is it that schools do or do not do in this regard?"

Firstly, in Chapters One and Two I've argued that a social justice approach is necessary to guide the research and as such used this approach to develop the conceptual framework. The research has proven that a comprehensive social justice approach is required in post-conflict and highly unequal contexts, otherwise schools will never really be safe places for teaching and learning. The conceptual framework allowed participants the space to bring in, in an unsolicited way, aspects of social justice to augment their vision of their ideal safe school, which is broader than focusing just on technical aspects of school safety. A useful example surfaced in School C where graffiti is a big problem: the principal had learned to take graffiti seriously because it is, at times, an expression of an underlying issue brewing either in the school or the community. This awareness helped him to be alert, prepared and proactive and as a metaphor for this study: by removing the graffiti you only deal with the technical issues of school safety and miss the deeper underlying issue/s necessary to create and sustain safe schools. This finding has implications at the level of school safety practice.

Secondly, SGB members, teachers and principals defined a safe school differently. SGB members defined a safe school quite narrowly, focusing mainly on technical aspects (safe buildings and equipment) while the majority of principals and teachers held a broader view which allowed for both technical and psychological aspects of school safety. SGBs usually deal with school safety at the level of making sure buildings are safe while the principal not

only deals with the safety of buildings but is also exposed to the realities that learners bring into the school such as the effects of poverty and violence. The consequence of this misunderstanding is unnecessary tension between the SGB and principal and as a result, efforts to deal with school safety are misaligned and won't address the real issues to make leading and managing safe schools easier for principals. This finding has relevance for school safety theory and practice and requires principals to orientate SGBs to adopt a social justice approach to their work.

School violence, for a variety of reasons, persists in varying degrees in all six schools, and teachers and learners are most exposed to experiencing school violence. A lack of skills among principals in developing school safety policies came up in most schools and overall, schools had difficulty implementing policies or getting staff to familiarise themselves with policies. One of the principals referred to this as the era of "policy overload" (Williams, 2011).

At least half the schools did not have school safety plans and one of the most common policies that is being ignored in some schools is the one concerning corporal punishment. A lack of skills, combined with an aversion to reading and difficulty with implementing policies, stands out as one of the reasons why it is difficult for principals to create safe teaching and learning environments and this has implications for policy, theory and practice.

A lack of school safety programmes, as well as a lack of funding for school safety programmes, emerged in all schools. The research shows that while all principals were very concerned about safety in their schools, principals in two of the schools (B and D) demonstrated exceptional leadership as far as running their schools democratically is concerned. These leaders were able to align the SGB and school community to work together in ways that radiate order and a state of readiness throughout the school. Both principals shared and entrusted their HODs fully with management and leadership responsibilities and both principals were lauded by their staff and learners alike for building a good academic track record over time, which made their school sought-after and prestigious. Given that all principals were not properly prepared for their jobs, research participants identified building success over time as a key strategy. Principal B was in his post for fourteen years while principal C was in her post for twenty-five years, which enabled them to understand and internalise the context of their schools in ways that made their schools reflect their individual characters. This finding shows why principals without a proper understanding of their schools' context and a long track record of success, struggle to create safe teaching and learning environments, which has implications for both policy and practice.

Finally, the study revealed that there are things that schools do not do which they ought to. For example, schools are constantly looking for opportunities to partner with organisations but seldom assess their credentials or whether the partnership had any impact. All schools in the study raised the need for more training and programmes on school safety but none of them were able to show the extent to which any particular programme in the past had impacted on school safety in their school. At least two of the schools continue to work with partners whose work is showing no impact. This finding shows that schools do not evaluate programmes that come into their school nor are they able to invite programmes based on a proper needs assessment. Schools must be more strategic when engaging in partnerships and impact assessments are critical. Furthermore, because there is a shortage of good practice examples, principals are struggling and will most likely continue to struggle to build safe and secure teaching and learning environments. This finding has implications for policy and practice

These findings will be taken into the next chapter where they will be merged with other findings so that a comprehensive set of conclusions can be drawn on what the findings mean for school safety and the extent to which these findings contribute to answering the research question on how to lead and manage safe schools.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNT

Gangsterism, poor attendance, demotivated teachers, substance abuse, violence, high drop-out rates, crumbling infrastructure, and poor leadership and academic results make the restoration of a culture of teaching and learning a critical issue in South Africa. Recently, South Africa was ranked the lowest for literacy and numeracy in a study of fifty countries, which suggests that 78% of Grade Four learners cannot read for meaning in any language (Howie, et al., 2017).

SMTs and SGBs are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that schools run smoothly in a safe and secure teaching and learning environment. As a result of the factors mentioned above, they are finding it increasingly difficult to do so. The principal's role is critical in this context, but there is very little (if any) evidence in policy, theory and practice of what a "safe school" entails as a condition for teaching and learning, including how it enables the right to learn and what school leaders are doing about it.

This chapter draws together the research process and focuses on what we can conclude from the findings and what this means for leading and managing safe secondary schools in South Africa. The research was primarily motivated by a need to understand why school violence persists, despite the numerous efforts to curb it, and to look at the role principals can or should play to make schools safe as part of restoring a culture of learning and teaching. Specifically, the study explored w*hat leadership and management strategies promote and/or inhibit the creation of safe teaching and learning environments and why?* School violence forms a barrier to teaching and learning and well-led schools not only function better, but they tend to produce better results and are much better prepared when it comes to responding to, and managing, violent incidents (IPT, 2001).

This research started with the premise that the South African government has a constitutional obligation to deliver good quality education in safe and secure teaching and learning environments. Failure to do so, will result in capability deprivation and an act of social injustice in a nation that has already suffered a similar fate under apartheid. This problem is acute in South Africa, where school violence, drugs, sexual abuse and corporal punishment comprise a consistent challenge.

In addition, the legacy effects of apartheid continue to plague the education system and this makes South Africa's case unique. Furthermore, we lack the necessary research and literature in leadership development (Bush, 2007) and school violence (Burton, 2008a); what research does exist shows that principals are ill-equipped both in terms of skills and experience when it comes to restoring a culture of teaching and learning (Chikoko, et.al, 2014; Mc Lennan & Thurlow, 2003;). In the face of a lack of consistent support by the GDE, some principals do take the initiative to improve the safety of their schools and build a learning culture. These principals are not waiting for help from outside – they act on a situation and change it (Witten, 2017).

One of the gaps addressed in this research, is the tendency to see "school safety" as a technical management issue, separate from instructional leadership and creating the conditions for a safe school. I make the argument, in Chapter Two, that theories of school violence and leadership development models are not always relevant to our school contexts, given apartheid legacies and entrenched racial and socio-economic inequality.

The introduction of a social justice approach provided a broader base to explore the leadership and management strategies that would build safe schools. Based on a social justice approach, I presented the theoretical and conceptual frameworks to support this idea of a "safe school" as a socially-just space and to guide the research process. The research proved that in our context, as a post-conflict country, a broader understanding (social justice) of safe schools is necessary, as opposed to the conventional technical understanding. It is this significant gap in the literature that not only informs a key conclusion of the study but also provides an important contribution to knowledge.

In realising the uniqueness of the South African problem, I presented the context of education and school violence, which compares the local education system with other developing countries. Because of huge racial inequalities in spending in the past, many schools in townships remain poorly constructed, still without running water and electricity but more importantly, coupled with violence, this has contributed to the erosion of the culture of teaching and learning (Collins, 2015; Harber & Muthukrishna, 2000).

Principals, as instructional leaders, are expected to restore and maintain a teaching and learning culture, but the study shows that principals lack the understanding of school safety as part of creating suitable conditions for teaching and learning and, that the regulatory framework is not helpful in fostering this understanding. This misalignment is a significant finding in that it confirms why principals struggle to restore a teaching and learning culture,

which leads to the conclusion that alignment between policy and practice is necessary. This is a key contribution to school violence theory and the body of knowledge.

Finally, in Chapter Five, I presented the findings across all six schools and through the analysis, giving due consideration to the literature, drew conclusions to show how the study answered the research question. The study produced several useful findings, which I will list in this chapter, one of which includes what principals are doing or not doing to make their schools safe. This is followed by a definition of a safe school, which did not exist before and detail to demonstrate how poor relationships can undermine democratic processes and the functionality of structures.

What is worth detailing further here is the conceptual framework, which proved to be a suitable container for the research, as well as a practical application/model for building a safe school. This is an innovation in itself. The conceptual framework was developed taking into account local conditions and challenges in each of the six schools and was simplified so that it can be easily adapted to fit the context of most public secondary schools. The conceptual framework is therefore a significant contribution to theory and, as a conclusion, a tool that will assist principals in their efforts to restore a safe teaching and learning culture.

At the heart of the study lies the question of why, despite all the efforts to reduce school violence, principals are struggling to normalise the situation. It was ascertained that the role of the principal has been broadened and that many principals have not received sufficient training to meet the challenges of the job (Chikoko, et al., 2014). In addition, principals do not always get the necessary support from the education department (Chikoko, et al., 2015) nor do the legislative provisions grant principals a level of authority that matches their responsibility. This responsibility includes (but is not limited to) delivering a good quality education and making sure learners are protected and kept safe (*Constitution, 1996)*. This scenario places principals in an untenable situation but provides useful insights into the complexity and unpredictability of the overall situation in schools. (Mestry and Singh, 2007).

The study and the literature reviewed in Chapter Two demonstrate that after twenty-three years of democracy, school violence remains a key contributor to the volatility in schools and is likely to remain if nothing is done about it. Drawing on what we have learned from principals who demonstrated the ability to lead and manage safe teaching and learning environments, the study revealed that, *where principals know how to share their leadership and management powers, schools are not at the mercy of their environments. These principals are able to inform and shape not only the environment in the school, but also the environments in the homes of*

learners and in the community. This is because these principals understand the context of their schools and are able to broaden their roles. They further understand that management is about maintaining the status quo, while leadership is about effecting change.

This finding brings together the different elements that are necessary to fully support the principal in executing his/her role in restoring the culture of teaching and learning. Principals will now have a clearer understanding of the different elements they need to draw on to manage their schools, taking cognisance of the context within which they operate. For example, to make the route to and from school safer, the principal can mandate the SSC, which through its protocol with the SAPS, can develop a strategy to make the route or transport hubs safer. This strategy will engage the LRC, district safety coordinator, community structures, such as community patrollers or neighbourhood watches, and the SGB to work collaboratively on this problem to keep learners safe and alleviate learners' fear, thus enabling them to learn and focus in class. This finding has impact at the policy (governance) and practice levels (functions of stakeholders) and is a further contribution to the body of knowledge.

The context within which school violence occurs is quite important (Pinheiro, 2006). The study found that research participants (teachers, SGBs and principals) had very different understandings of school safety and part of this confusion could be attributed to the conflation of the terms "safe schools" and "school safety", which are quite distinct. "School safety" has to do with the physical aspects of safety (buildings and equipment) while "safe schools" refers to the psychological aspects (violence) of safety (Prinsloo, 2005). The latter includes making learners feel safe and by extension, improves their ability to learn. One of the gaps that was identified by the study is the absence of a definition to bring the two understandings together, because they are inter-related. The study produced a definition of a safe school, based on a social justice approach, which states that a safe school is *a school where safety is recognised as a prerequisite for an environment conducive to teaching and learning, and where all governance structures are in place and work cooperatively to promote, in a loving and caring manner, safe spaces for learners, parents, teachers and workers in pursuance of the best possible education outcomes.*

This definition combines the narrow and broad understandings of a safe school and makes clear the critical connection between school safety and the achievement of education outcomes. This approach has not been used before, and given the uniqueness of the South African context, is quite significant. The definition of school safety will promote a uniform

understanding of school safety, which is necessary for the systematic eradication of school violence in schools and has relevance in school violence theory.

Staying with the theme of school violence, two national initiatives put forward by the DBE to curb school violence are, the Protocol between SAPS and the DBE (DBE, 2011) and the NSSF (DBE, 2015a). The protocol is meant to strengthen SSCs in schools and link each school to a police station, while the safety framework is aimed at creating safe, violence and threat-free, supportive learning environments for all stakeholders. The study found that although all six schools in the study had a relationship with their local police station, this relationship was historical and was not formalised in terms of the protocol. The NSSF was introduced after the interviews for this research were conducted, and therefore does not fall within the ambit of this research. However, the NSSF is complemented by this study because both build on the HEWS (CJCP & DOE, 2006) to identify threats, both recognise school violence as a barrier to education and both use a multi-stakeholder approach to dealing with school safety.

Not one of the police officers interviewed referred to the Protocol, nor were they aware of it and this is of concern because this protocol has been in place since 2011 and has not been implemented in all schools yet (PO, interview, February 5, 2018). Police officers serving School C were desperately calling for the formalisation of their relationship with the school, because it has an impact on how they prioritise and support school safety. They felt that, overall, a formal relationship would improve accountability for both the police and principals that would see a drastic reduction in school crime and violence. This finding is of considerable concern, because it speaks to what is commonly known as "government's inability to implement policy and programmes". With weak SSCs and dysfunctional DCs, coupled with a "disconnect" between school safety initiatives driven by schools and the police, the situation in schools will have very little prospect of improving. This finding has implications at a policy and practice level.

The disconnect between how principals and SGBs understand school violence was identified in Chapter Five as a key impediment to enabling the SGBs and principals to work together to create a safe teaching and learning environment. In terms of the *SASA 1996,* the SGB is charged with dealing with discipline and school safety (through its Disciplinary and Safety Committees), but this is a responsibility that is "shared" with the principal – the principal, while being accountable does not work on his/her own. In practice, the SGB is mainly concerned with dealing with the safety of infrastructure and equipment, while the principal deals with safety threats as they relate to education. This place the principal in a very awkward position and emerges in the literature as tension that surfaces either due to lack of role clarification or

a lack of skills (Xaba, 2011). However, this study has added a third possibility, that is, the misunderstanding of "school safety". The lack of a uniform or common understanding of school safety produces tension between the principal and school safety structures, thereby undermining collaborative efforts (policy, planning, budgeting and implementation) directed at making schools safe. Such situations produce conflict and divisions in the school, making it difficult for principals to create safe teaching and learning spaces. This finding has impact at the level of school safety theory and practice.

An unanticipated finding that emerged as a threat to school safety involves social and cultural practices in the community, which was reported in four of the six schools (A, C, D & E). Satanic rituals/worshipping was cited as a practice that is gaining prominence in township schools. In addition, practices that promote patriarchy are highly problematic for female teachers because they encourage some boys to resist female authority. The literature on leadership development and school violence does not address these kinds of issues, which proves again that the context is critical and that this gap in the literature is an important one when it comes to understanding and addressing school violence. Tackling this gap is important, because it helps to identify the root causes of violence and it highlights the gender dynamic of violence, which often lies obscured or is simply overlooked. All of these elements are critical for the management, prevention and eradication of violence in schools.

All principals were found to manage their schools in accordance with the new democratic governance model. This includes sharing leadership and management power with structures such as the SGB, SMT and SSC and includes processes of consultation and inclusion (Principal interviews, 2012). All principals had a very good grasp of what was expected of them in terms of this model, but in four of the six schools, consultation with the LRC was found to be inconsistent and at times non-existent. In one school, the SGB refused to recognise the LRCs existence and in schools where the LRC was recognised and respected, principals did not extend their role fully into the school safety programme space. Their role was limited to maintaining discipline, supervising the scholar patrol and enforcing school rules. Principals may perceive this role as sufficient but considering that internationally most violent crimes are committed by fifteen to nineteen-year olds (Gottfredson, 1996a), while locally, 50% of crimes are committed by the fourteen to eighteen-year old group (De Wet, 2003) it is far from sufficient. The LRC is therefore a key source of information both in terms of being a victim and offender, and this is a critical gap in the collaborative onslaught on school violence. In the majority of schools it was also found that LRC members and the broader school community were not clear about the role and function of the LRC. Learners are key informants (knowledgeable) on the subject and if any lasting solutions to school violence are to be found,

learners must be involved meaningfully in all processes and structures concerned with school safety. The inefficient use of the LRC and by implication the need to strengthen their involvement in matters of school safety must be addressed urgently. As a conclusion this is one of the reasons why principals are finding it hard to create safe teaching and learning environments.

6.1 General conclusions

The broad general conclusions related to the study are mapped in this section. Socio-economic conditions in the Gauteng province remain dire as families struggle to cope with rising unemployment, widening of the inequality gap and violent crime (Bloch, 2009; Witten, 2017). The impact of these factors manifests in the classroom in different ways, to the extent that some teachers have grown despondent and are considering leaving the profession, while other teachers feel that giving up will amount to an abdication of duty (EE 1-3, interview, September 3, 2012; EC 2, interview, September 25, 2012).

Teachers are one of the most valuable resources in the education system and for a variety of reasons, studies show teacher burnout is common and that many teachers present with depression, which eventually affects their work if not treated. There is also little support for teachers in the system to take better care of their overall wellbeing (Jackson, 2004). Burnout was raised by deputy principal DPD as a serious problem, not only at her school but throughout the profession. At least 60% of teachers in the study said they were stressed and often thought of leaving the profession.

The GDE is seen by teachers as being unsympathetic and/or unaware of the extent of this problem. These findings are consistent with public perception and the research conducted by Jackson (2004) and they require much closer scrutiny. It is interesting that principals raised burnout in the context of school safety and not as a human resource issue, which demonstrates yet again that a social justice approach is necessary for our context.

Prevailing socio-economic conditions continue to impact negatively on the education system and have the potential to erode the teacher-base, which is an essential resource for leading and managing safe schools. Principals cannot do it without teachers. Teacher burnout is widespread and is detrimental to restoring a teaching and learning culture because teachers can lose their passion for teaching and become complacent or, resign from their jobs meaning much needed skills and experience are lost to the education system. Such a situation will fuel the development of capability-deprived communities and by implication render efforts to

eradicate the legacy of apartheid meaningless. To avoid this, the GDE must introduce programmes on teacher wellbeing as part of their conditions of employment, because a healthy cadre of teachers is necessary to assist the principal in the leading and managing safe schools. This finding has relevance at a policy and human resource management level.

Allegations are levelled against parents, by both teachers and the police, accusing them of not fulfilling their role as parents and thus contributing to the ill-discipline of children who are disruptive in class. As a result, some principals and teachers are still resorting to archaic methods of discipline such as corporal punishment and this presents principals with a serious problem. The majority of schools in the study (67%) were guilty of this practice, despite this practice being outlawed many years ago – the school had taken on the role of being both a victim and perpetrator of violence. Mohapi (2014) found that causes of ill-discipline are not always the fault of the child or due to poor parenting but that schools are also sometimes to blame for producing deviant behaviour. Teachers and principals should care enough to ask the question, "What drives this behaviour?" before assuming a learner is challenging their authority (Mohapi, 2014).

Drastic measures, such as prosecution of teachers found guilty of administering corporal punishment, were called for by the provincial official (PO, 25 January 2013) in the hope that it would help break the cycle of violence. Failure to recognise this intersect between violence and corporal punishment will render efforts by schools to transform society meaningless.

Moreover, schools need to be more strategic in involving parents in the business of the school – their role is critical in making the home an extension of the classroom, thus contributing to restoring a culture of teaching and learning. There is an abundance of research evidence that indicates that students' home circumstances, rather than those of the school, have an impact on their life-chances (Christie, 2010b). Schools must begin to recognise their role in building cohesion between learners and the school (Blum, 2005) and must halt all practices that fuel violence. Corporal punishment is destructive and feeds the cycle of violence. Schools must promote school connectedness and strong family bonds because these are important for building a unified approach to rooting out school violence and achieving the best possible education outcomes. This finding has relevance for policy (positive discipline) and classroom practice.

The majority of principals in the study were found to be running their schools in a democratic manner and all structures were in place to ensure management and leadership functions were shared. In all six schools, it was evident that principals had no problem in spreading their

leadership and management responsibilities across the relevant structures, even though this appeared to be more difficult where relationships were strained. Overall, therefore, principals, demonstrated a good understanding of the democratic model and made every effort to comply. This finding is therefore inconsistent with Buchel and Hoberg's (2009) finding that principals are struggling to embrace, due to skills deficit, the new way of governing schools. Of note here is School B, where the principal rotated his position as principal on a daily basis with each member of the SMT. The principal still remains accountable, but the SMT member is fully responsible for ensuring the smooth running of the school for the entire day. This practice, or model of leadership, feeds into the Good Practice pillar of the conceptual framework because it builds capacity within the management team which strengthens the resource base to lead and manage safe schools. Democratic governance therefore contributes to school effectiveness by ensuring that management and leadership powers are shared. This then creates the space for collective policy and programme implementation.

Finally, restoring a culture of teaching and learning, and creating safe schools, requires effective leadership, which some principals in the study were able to demonstrate and this is encouraging. It is encouraging because principals can lead the change necessary to create a more caring and supportive environment for teachers, functional governance structures, formalised partnerships and schools that are safe.

The next section deals with specific conclusions relative to the various components of the conceptual framework.

6.2 Specific conclusions

The following conclusions are presented under the headings of a safe school as envisioned in the conceptual framework in order to demonstrate its application and how the conclusions support the creation of safe teaching and learning environments. The same structure shall be followed, as in Chapter Five, starting with leadership and governance in the inner circle moving in a clockwise direction ending with crime hardening. I will then cover the outer circle starting with legislation and policy ending with evaluation.

6.2.1 Leadership and governance

The *SASA 1996* requires that principals lead and manage their schools in accordance with democratic principles. They are further required to set up and manage the governance structures that are necessary to ensure that their schools are safe and deliver on the

curriculum. School violence negatively affects how schools function and principals attested to this during their interviews – learners are scarred both physically and emotionally and teachers find it difficult to manage their classes while principals struggle to meet education outcomes (Burton 2008a). In terms of how a "safe school" is conceptualised in the study, those charged with governance functions (principal, SMT and SGB) should hold the view of a safe school as proposed in the conceptual framework and should consider what it would take to achieve having a safe school. A safe school like a safe community cannot be established by aggressive action or threats instead, it is grown by a leader who is patient and visionary. In other words, principals must know what the threats are that will inhibit or promote the achievement of the best possible education outcomes, safety and wellbeing of teachers, parents, workers and learners.

Political, and teacher union interference, in how principals manage their schools is not uncommon and often leads to disharmony and disruption (Bloch, 2009; Msila, 2011). In two of the six schools the appointment of principals contributed to widespread problems and divisions in the school. In School A, the deputy principal was appointed acting principal upon the retirement of her predecessor and she held the post for approximately two years. She (PA) was eventually appointed principal, but hardly six months into her tenure the SGB wanted her out and the staff was divided into two groups – those who supported her appointment and those who did not.

In School F there were two deputy principals alternating as acting principals on a monthly basis after the departure of the principal. During that time (about eighteen months) divisions among the staff began to emerge, which became firmly entrenched once the GDE decided to give the post to an outsider. The newly appointed principal was interrogated by staff about her union affiliation and how she, as a woman, managed to get the post. After eight months in the post she was still trying to unify the staff and found herself working in isolation. The tension, suspicion and division in both these schools was obvious as soon you entered the school, and such situations contribute to the difficulties that principals face to lead and manage safe schools. The finding is consistent with the literature on union interference in schools (Chikoko, et al., 2015). Appointing acting principals over prolonged periods of time breeds tension and division within the school, which is detrimental for building safe and functional schools. This finding has implications at policy (regulating minimum periods) and practice levels (recruitment or post promotions) and provides a contribution to existing knowledge.

The district and provincial school safety directorates rely exclusively on structures such as the SGB, SMT and SSC to implement its school safety policies and programmes. Across all six

schools in the study, the level of functionality of these structures ranged from poor to good. Apart from a lack of role clarity, which is well documented in the literature (Xaba, 2011), the quality of relationships surfaced as a key component influencing how well these structures functioned and collaborated (SGBA; SGBC; SGBF). Generally, relationships were found to be influenced by historical conflicts, teacher union affiliation or interference, leadership style of the principal and the lack of teacher accountability. In two schools, the SSCs were dysfunctional, while in one school the DC was dysfunctional. In two schools (A and F), there was a complete communication breakdown between the principal and the administration office. While tensions were noted at the level of both learners and teachers, the structure that featured most prominently as having tension with the principal was the SGB.

These findings are all consistent with the literature, confirming the lack of skills and capacity (especially in township schools) of SGBs and the confusion of roles (Heystek, 2004; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2002). The SGB is the key structure driving governance in the school and such tensions can spell disaster for a school if they remain unresolved. Breakdown in communication was surfaced as a consequence of the tension which led to divisions in the school – those who support and those who do not support the principal. According to the researcher, no school can function optimally under such circumstances. Apart from tension, poor relationships lead to "principal overload"[15] and the undermining of democratic processes, which affects the functionality and collaborative efforts of structures directed to lead and manage safe schools.

The legacy effects of apartheid led to huge disparities in schools, which principals are struggling to cope with (Bush, 2007). The literature further shows that principals and teachers do not know how to restore the culture of teaching and learning (Mc Lennan & Thurlow, 2003; Chikoko, et al., 2015). The study shows that all principals, at the time of their appointment, were not adequately prepared/skilled for the job, especially in relation to policy implementation and school safety. Principals had to acquire these skills while on the job and with little to no support from the district education office (Chikoko, et al., 2015). In two of the six schools, (B, and D) principals expressed that after many years' experience they feel fairly confident in dealing with school safety (including policy development) while the remainder of principals felt rather uncertain.

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[15] "Principal overload" refers to a strategy by staff to refer even the most trivial matter to the principal. The intention is to wear the principal down by overloading him/her with work.

Principals in school B and D showed noticeable confidence in leading and managing safe schools and it felt as if the character of the principal was reflected by the school. School D in particular deserves further mention as it stands out both in terms of the planning for, and response to, school safety. Teachers ascribed this to the vision of the school principal, who had been in the post for more than twenty-five years. This school had a proud academic record with a long waiting list of learners hoping to get in – this is what Chikoko et al. (2015) call the product of "long successful service" (p. 464). Allowing principals to serve in their posts for as long as possible at the same school, prepares principals to lead and manage their schools in exemplary ways. This finding calls for policy changes to support the revised Standard for "Principalship" so that it compels principals to serve a certain term before becoming eligible to move to another school. The emphasis must be on "long successful service" and not just long service without any impact to show for it. This finding is a contribution to knowledge.

All six schools had codes of conduct and about 50% had school safety policies, which is much higher than the 10% prediction made by the provincial school safety official. This displays a commitment on the part of principals who are attempting, by trial and error, to work towards making their schools safe (Witten, 2017). Principals who enrolled on the ACE programme testified that the course helped them with their leadership and management duties and also gave them lots of confidence. To help principals narrow the skills gap further, the GDE responded with a template in 2012 to help principals with the drafting of school safety policies and plans. In a follow-up interview (PO, February 5, 2018) it was determined that some schools were struggling to use this tool as most schools found it to be impractical. District support is to be intensified to help principals with the template so that schools are able to meet the school safety compliance requirements of the GDE. From this information it can be concluded that the situation around school safety plans and policies has improved but that a significant number of schools still need help with developing safety plans and policies. The concept of a "safe school" presented here provides an opportunity for the GDE to engage with schools through the Partner Support component in order to ensure that each school's individual needs are met. Principals' lack of skills and understanding of school safety exposes schools to greater risk and should not be underestimated. More effort has to be made to orientate prospective principals regarding school safety training and to source help from their partners.

Learner tardiness leads to 20% of learner contact time being lost. This trend also leads to disruptions in class and places a burden on school management in terms of the time that is taken to attend to this problem (Equal Education, 2016). According to teachers, SGBs and

principals, learners in townships have developed a culture of being late – the code of conduct doesn't seem to have an impact. Interestingly, teachers said that when these learners attend school in the suburbs they hardly get to school late, despite having to travel further to get to school. Learner late coming does occur in suburban schools but is not as rife – most of the time it would be related to taxi strikes, buses being late or service delivery protests. In the four township schools studied, the principal was burdened with processing late comers, whereas in the suburban schools, this task was left to the administration office and only repeat offenders were referred to the deputy principal. In schools where the administrative staff dealt with late comers, principals had more time to devote to their core functions – they only dealt with late coming in extreme cases. Arriving on time has everything to do with the school culture, set by the principal. Denying learners who are late access to the school exposes them to further danger and must be avoided.

Adversity affects most children and has implications for both present and future developmental outcomes (Fray et al., 2016). Behaviours demonstrated as a result of the adversities present in different forms in the classroom, such as ill-discipline, and can be ameliorated through good classroom management (Mohapi, 2014). The research shows that classroom management is becoming increasingly more difficult as a result of ill-disciplined learners. The research also shows that poor lesson planning and failure by teachers to manage their classrooms and engage learners constructively, gives rise to disruptive behaviour and the erosion of a teaching and learning culture. Lack of parental supervision in the home, satanic worshipping and use of drugs are cited as the main reasons for this – learner behaviour in class was regarded as unpredictable across the six schools (EE 1-3, interview, September 3, 2012; PA, interview September 11, 2012; DPD, interview, October 17, 2012). As a result of ill-disciplined learners 67% of teachers surveyed have given up hope on changing learner behaviour.

In all the six schools, security guards were not integrated into the school safety programme. Departmental security guards (CPF Patrollers) had contributed significantly towards the reduction of burglaries in schools, but they felt they could do more, especially in relation to the theft of school property and stamping out undesirable practices by learners. What they need is to be treated as an integral part of the school and to feel supported by the principals. Private security companies are also not integrated into the school safety plan and operate mostly in isolation. Safe and successful learning environments are created through collaboration of all stakeholders and has the advantage of maximising resources and reducing duplication of efforts (Cowan et al., 2013). Lack of role clarification leads to duplication, confusion and strained relationships, which leads to apathy and under-performance of structures. This impacts negatively on the school's ability to plan (and budget) for school safety and will

continue to make it difficult for principals to lead and manage safe schools. This finding has an impact at a policy and practice level.

Education receives a significant share of the national budget (20%) and those responsible for leadership and governance have to make sure they manage their budgets responsibly. Despite this generous budget allocation the school funding model is inadequate (Motshekga, 2013). The lack of funding to deliver a good quality education and plan for school safety surfaced in all six schools. All schools cater for learners who are either from poor or middle-income families. Principals made no secret in their interviews as to what wins the battle when competing for funding – school safety always comes off second best. In no-fee schools the situation seems a little more glaring as teachers said they had no chance of soliciting any funds from parents to help with improving their child's education. This, they said, was a mind-set – parents could afford to give but they wouldn't because they had been blinded by the no-fee policy.

The GDE was accused by teachers and SGBs of turning a blind eye when called upon to support them in holding parents accountable and even to prosecute those who exploited the system by misrepresenting their financial status. Two of the three fee-paying schools (B and D) are situated in the suburbs while the third (School F) is in a township. Collecting school fees in School F proved to be much more challenging than in school B and D. The approach in school B and D was built on the principle of "honour your part of the deal so that we can honour ours." Put differently, defaulting parents were told that unless they paid their fees, the school wouldn't be able to deliver the quality education it promised. Parents were given the option to pay up or to move their children to no-fee schools in the area. Revenue generation was taken as seriously as delivering the curriculum in both schools and that is why only experienced credit controllers are appointed. Their role was regarded as equal to that of teachers.

In terms of building a safe school, aligning revenue generation directly with delivering the curriculum is another good practice approach that could be shared with schools. Principal F believed that she was the victim of township parents who simply refused to pay fees because they knew there would be no consequences. Funding is critical to restoring a culture of teaching and learning and while not all safety measures require funding, without it there is very little prospect of attaining safe schools or a culture conducive to teaching and learning. School safety and a culture of teaching and learning are not separate – if the issues are treated as symbiotic, principals will find it easier to lead and manage safe schools, as was

demonstrated by some of the principals in the study. This finding impact at a practice level and is a contribution to knowledge.

6.2.2 Change agents

The literature confirms that schools are ideally placed to serve as change agents for young people and the broader community (Witten, 2017). The study confirmed that principals and teachers see it this way too. While principals and teachers may not be skilled in matters of school safety (Bush et al., 2010), they are regarded as content experts and as such, represent a vital resource. This component of the conceptual framework is aimed at strengthening collaboration between teachers and learners by using tools such as the curriculum and learners' and teachers' personal experiences to make their school safer. It is one way of ensuring that the school builds resilience from the inside out and is therefore not dependent on the GDE for school safety capacity building (Chikoko, et al., 2015).

Schools are complicit in promoting violence through corporal punishment but there was recognition by the majority of teachers and principals in the study that such practices are unwelcome and unlawful (focus group interviews, 2012; UNICEF, 2010). Corporal punishment has been proven to have adverse effects on the healthy development of learners and this situation needs to change (Leoschut, 2013). What is required is that teachers must use lessons to convey messages and develop skills that will result in positive learner behaviour. Some teachers were sceptical about whether this was possible, but fortunately there were teachers who felt there was much the school could and should do to instil appropriate social behaviour among learners. As deputy principal DPD (interview, October 17, 2012) put it: "By just doing a little more, the school can make up for what the child lacks in the home."

Some teachers were already doing this by tweaking their lessons to convey a particular message, but to be effective, a more coordinated approach is necessary throughout the school (EC 2, interview, September 25, 2012; ED 2, interview, September 20, 2012). This approach includes what has been labelled "character education" which has shown to enhance the sense of purpose in the lives of youth who are marginalised or deprived (Arthur, et al., 2017). Learners who developed a "sense of purpose" reported that family and friends, and especially teachers and people in the community, had a more positive influence on their sense of living a "good life." Character education therefore is more than just a subject it is a "whole school approach" to assisting learners to make wise decisions and to act on them.

The SMT in particular can be quite influential here and with the support of the SGB, SSC and LRC incidents in the school and those reported in the local media or in the community can be used to contextualise the existing life-skills programme. School violence is complex and the best way to deal with it is to use a multi-pronged approach (curriculum, disciplinary processes, and training) to address school violence within the context in which it happens. This should make it easier for principals to lead and manage safe schools.

6.2.3 Community engagement

This component aims to strengthen the partnership between the school and parents. Child-friendly schools are rights-based and inclusive in their management and governance approaches. They are community-centred and work in partnership with all relevant stakeholders to achieve a safe and protective school environment (DOE, & UNICEF, 2008). Such schools help communities to build social capital and self-reliance to generate sustainable solutions to the problems confronting them (Gesthuizen, Van der Meer, & Scheepers, 2009). These attributes place parents central to the behaviour-reform agenda and because parental involvement in schools has been identified by both the literature and the data to be weak, schools struggle with learner behaviour change (Lemmer, 2007; Focus group interviews, 2012). The majority of parents are not highly literate due to apartheid but their lived experience and authority in the home is what stands to benefit their children, school and the community (Child Trends, 2013). Through the SGB, class teacher and/or the principal, parents, families and community structures can be strategically invited to engage with the school. This engagement can serve as an opportunity for knowledge exchange and in that way, bring the classroom and the home closer together.

Parental engagement, or the lack thereof, was an issue that surfaced across all six schools – in township schools the problem was more pervasive than in suburban schools. Parental engagement ranged from poor to good when measured against attendance of parents' meetings and responses to individual requests. According to the researcher, skewed power relations inherent in the partnership model, low literacy rates and the impact of poverty all inhibit parents' ability and willingness to freely participate in matters of the school (Msila, 2011; Child Trends, 2013). Schools are doing their best to draw parents closer, but they don't always get the desired response. At two of the township schools (A and E), teachers felt the school should have a far more welcoming approach when engaging parents – the reception areas were not visitor-friendly and it is considered disrespectful to keep parents waiting at the gate until it was time for their appointment. The data also shows that in cases where parents were more responsive to the school, these parents (schools B, C and D) had strong bonds with their

children and these children in turn enjoyed healthy relations with their teachers. Schools should invest in offering in collaboration with its partners programmes that promote stronger social and family bonds.

Finally, communication with parents has been cited in the study as being problematic. In the suburban schools they used multiple ways of communicating with parents/caregivers – a daily diary and direct contact with the parent via cell phones. Parents need to be engaged more strategically in matters of the school and in ways that strengthen family bonds. In that way partnerships will be strengthened to produce better academic learner achievement, self-esteem, school attendance and appropriate social behaviour.

6.2.4 Crime hardening

This aspect of school safety deals with the technical issues related to school safety as opposed to a social justice outlook. Crime hardening measures, based on observation across the six schools were found to be well implemented. This was appreciated by both learners and teachers who said it contributes to their sense of safety. Schools can do more to make their schools safer but do not always have the funds and in some cases funding is not forthcoming from the GDE either (DPE, interview, September 3, 2012; PC, interview, September 26, 2012). In such cases schools remain in contravention of municipal by-laws, which exposes schools to increased risk. The GDE has a legal obligation in terms of the *OHSA 1993* as well as the *Constitution 1996* to ensure whoever comes onto school property is safe and that assets such as computers and photocopy machines are adequately protected against theft and or vandalism. Principals are usually more comfortable and familiar with dealing with the technical aspects of school safety, which is only one part of what makes up a safe school.

Palisade fencing makes for good revenue when sold to unscrupulous scrap metal dealers – schools therefore had to inspect the perimeter daily. Because these schools had incorporated effective crime hardening measures they were much more difficult to break into, which exposed security guards to the wrath of gangs who openly threatened them with violence. Their lives were sometimes in danger hence the guards would have liked to have had a closer partnership with police in their area and better communication and protective equipment. Crime hardening measures, used in conjunction with armed response units such as security guards and the police, are much more effective as opposed to keeping them separate. It makes schools safe and contributes to a better sense of safety of learners and teachers. This finding has impact at the practice level and is a contribution to theory.

This paragraph concludes the discussion on the inner circle of the conceptual framework and we will now proceed with a discussion on the outer circle

6.2.5 Legislation/Policy

The GDE relies to a large extent on legislation and policies to help principals transform, run and maintain safe teaching and learning environments. The literature shows that there is no shortage of policies and legislation (Bush, & Glover, 2016) to support schools to work towards improving both safety and education outcomes. The complexity created by legacy effects of apartheid makes it difficult for principals to run their schools effectively (Bush, 2007) and policy development and implementation is one area where principals lack skills (Principal interviews, 2012). Based on responses from interviews, and by inspecting school records, the researcher was able to establish that all schools had an abundance of policies in place. What also became clear in the process was that in some cases files may not have been up to date with the latest policies, but the actual problem was with the implementation of the policies and not their availability. Public opinion has it that this problem is not confined to schools or education only but extends to other government departments as well.

One principal is quoted in the literature as referring to the transformation of the education system as one of "policy overload", which means because principals are also expected to implement the transformation agenda, they are struggling to cope with all the demands the education system is placing on them. As a result, teachers are worn out and demotivated (Williams, 2011) and this was confirmed by the data as well – they felt they could not keep up. One principal (PC) reported that he knew of other principals and staff who did not really understand some of the policies while others simply did not care to read them. This leads to endless unnecessary conflicts and the reinvention of polices that already exist (Mthiyane, et al., 2014). Other principals were a bit more guarded in their responses, but the bottom line is, implementing and communicating these policies to staff remains a huge problem. However, there were three principals (PB, September 06, 2012; PC, September 26, 2012 and DPD, October 17, 2012) who felt very strongly that as laborious as the task might be, it was important to read and understand what the policy was aiming to address and the best way to get staff to engage with a policy file was during their induction.

All principals reported that when they were appointed to their posts their understanding was that a portion of their time would involve policy implementation and that they had gained some experience in this regard in their roles as teachers or deputy principals. Some principals were surprised when they discovered quite a large portion of their work included developing policies

for which they had no training and no support. One deputy principal said training in legislation would have helped her enormously because she found herself in the middle of a legal battle without a clue of what to do and soon her health was affected, which was a life-changing experience (DPD, interview, October 17, 2012). Another principal (PA, interview, September 11, 2012) had great difficulty in understanding the *PFMA 1999* and found very little support from the district and even principals in her proximity – she had to eventually arrange to attend a course at her own expense. A lack of policy implementation and not being familiar with policies exposes schools to greater risk of non-compliance both in terms of safety as well as achieving education targets. More training and mentoring is necessary to help principals with this important task.

6.2.6 Good practice

Schools, and the GDE, have been hard at work over several years trying to restore safe teaching and learning environments and, in the view of the researcher, because the majority of responses were uncoordinated and not informed by empirical evidence the impact on school safety was limited. This is due to the dearth of research in the area of school safety which is an ongoing problem and it is hoped that through this component we will be able to generate much needed knowledge. (Bloch 2007; Sullivan, 2010).

The interviews show that in most of the six schools, programmes on school safety were implemented for teachers and learners and while some programmes had impact, none of them were actually documented or institutionalised in any way. It is worth mentioning as an example that School E was selected to be part of a multi-million Rand national Ministerial School Safety Programme that was rolled out in 2006. When teachers were asked about past programmes in their school, and specifically about the HEWS (CJCP & DOE, 2006), it did not spark even a distant memory of the work that was done during that time. One of the research participants, the deputy principal, has been at School E for more than thirty years.

As such, we were left with a few examples of programmes, provided by schools, which they found to be effective. Schools could not vouch for whether any of these programmes were evaluated, but found that they worked in terms of school safety:

- LoveLife Responsible Living Programme.

- CPF Patroller Programme.

- National School Nutrition Programme.

- Columba Youth Leadership Programme.

- Pillar to Post Prison Visit Programme.

- Talks by SAPS and regular patrols.

- Boundaries for Life - Life Choices Programme.

- Johannesburg Fire Department – First aid and storage of hazardous chemicals in the home.

- Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) Programme.

- Managing classroom blocks through Grade Heads.

- Keeping gang leaders behind bars for as long as possible.

- Coordinated efforts of the Criminal Justice System – like under the 2010 Soccer World Cup.

Unless programmes are run, evaluated and institutionalised appropriately, progress towards making schools safe will be retarded and we will remain with a knowledge deficit. Therefore, it will remain hard for principals to lead and manage safe schools. This finding has impact at a policy and practice level.

6.2.7 Partnership support

This component can *inter alia* assist principals with the development and implementation of a school safety plan. The provincial and district education officials were of the view that based on their experience, good leadership is closely associated with how well a principal can work with multiple partners (PO, January 25, 2013). Based on the social justice approach of a safe school, principals are expected to identify threats to the school, resources necessary to neutralise those threats and accordingly select who they target as a partner to assist them. One of the findings that came out of the interviews with SGBs and principals suggests that the first level of support should come from the district and or provincial offices. This is often found wanting because principals are of the opinion that their employer (GDE) does not understand the context within which schools operate (Msila, 2011).

The police are another partner who can assist principals with safety plans and it can be made possible through the enforcement of the protocol signed by the police and the DBE (2011).

There is also scope for the police to learn from schools - schools can help the police to refresh their programmes. The context within which schools work is dynamic and complex and requires multi-stakeholder engagement, and principals cannot do it without the support and leadership of the GDE. Unless this happens, principals will continue to struggle to make their schools safe. This finding has an impact at the practice level.

6.2.8 External evaluation

This component allows for addressing the knowledge gap and is the first step towards building a body of knowledge on how to build safe schools in South Africa. If we are to invest considerable time and effort to restore a safe teaching and learning culture it is important to know whether there is progress and why or why not. The literature shows that there is sufficient research in these areas, but it unfortunately doesn't relate directly to the South African context (Christie, 2010c). Sullivan (2010) also reminds us that for example, very little evaluation is undertaken to correlate success in leadership courses with success in schools and that we have to rely mainly on anecdotal evidence.

Based on the lack of programme evaluations that came up in the interviews, the GDE needs to be more resolute in its approach to have school safety programmes evaluated as well as having a barometer on the safety situation in schools throughout the country. It is suggested that independent evaluations are conducted periodically and that the Department of Community Safety or Statistics South Africa be engaged to perform this task. It is suggested that the Citizen Based Monitoring (CBM) approach developed by the DPME (2013) be considered for this evaluation. Evaluation is important to show and measure the return on investment and the achievement of leading and managing safe schools. This finding has impact at a policy level and has the potential to make a contribution to both knowledge and theory.

6.3 Contribution to the body of knowledge

In Chapters One and Two I identified the purpose of the study as multi-pronged, meaning that apart from answering the research question, the study also had to show the extent to which it has contributed to the body of knowledge related to leadership development and school violence. This is presented and discussed below.

6.3.1 Leadership development theory

Research on instructional leadership directed at creating safe teaching and learning environments is limited, especially in post-conflict contexts like South Africa where high levels of violence are still being experienced.   The study's contribution to knowledge stems from the finding that shows principals have very little to draw on to enhance their skills to lead and manage schools in our contexts. Furthermore, the literature on leadership development remains separate from school violence theory and as a result, leadership and management strategies that principals are currently applying to make schools safe, are not effective. This gap in theory therefore limits principals' arsenal of leadership and management strategies to create safe schools and restore learning cultures. Principals are relying on their personal experience to guide them and as a result, efforts to create and sustain safe teaching and learning environments are disparate and limited in impact.

Insofar as the conceptual framework is concerned, certain components had to be incorporated to make the framework relevant. The policy on standards for school principals (*National Education Policy Act 1996*) has been broadened, but the scope of school safety remains narrow and focuses mainly on the technical aspects of safety. The conceptual framework therefore brought together threats to safety and threats to education outcomes and placed this responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the principal – threats to safety and education outcomes are no longer treated separately but interdependently. It brings together leadership development and school safety under the umbrella of a "safe school" as a prerequisite for the achievement of education outcomes – this has never been done before.

A further contribution to knowledge, in the conceptual framework, extends to the role of the SMT and the use of the curriculum, in conjunction with disciplinary processes, to support behaviour-change. This role of the SMT has been made more explicit and is placed in the context of the school being a change agent as well as a distributor of knowledge. This approach brings about a change in mind-set – the purpose of the school is to shape society and not to keep it occupied.   This role of change agent includes working with community partners whereby parents and other relevant structures can be engaged strategically to ensure mutual learning and shaping of the school context both internally and externally. This makes the conceptual framework relevant as a research container, as well as a model, to guide principals on making their schools safe which is an innovation in itself.

6.3.2 School violence theory

The legacy effects of apartheid are a critical driving force of the violence that is currently sweeping through communities and schools and this is what makes the challenge for principals unique. Locally, there is very little research available on school violence and we also know that leadership development knowledge takes a narrow view of school violence while school violence theory remains separate from leadership development – yet principals have to deal with school violence on a daily basis.

A social justice approach is therefore important and useful in contexts like ours because it provides a better way of understanding school violence. More specifically, the study made a contribution to knowledge at the following two levels:

- The majority of SGB members defined and understood school violence quite narrowly while the majority of principals defined school violence quite broadly. This is as a result of their traditional roles i.e. SGB deals with technical aspects of safety while the principal is exposed to a much broader range of issues affecting the school. In addition, until now, there has been no definition of a "safe school". This misalignment in understanding school safety between the SGB and principal has serious implications for how programmes are designed, budgeted for, implemented and evaluated.

- Satanic worshipping, coupled with social and cultural practices such as male initiation ceremonies, poses further safety threats in schools in particular for female teachers. Of the studies that have been conducted on school violence locally, these issues have not come up as a separate category and as such this is a significant finding that opens up a whole new area for further exploration.

6.3.3 Leadership and management strategies

After analysing what principals in the six schools shared during the research process, the following strategies were identified as useful in assisting principals with leading and managing safe teaching and learning environments.

A useful strategy at a conceptual level is to look at school safety through a social justice lens because the complexity of the South African situation is a key factor in the school violence theory equation. This allows for combining both narrow and broad interpretations of school safety and enables the identification of deeper issues necessary to sustain safe teaching and learning environments.

Superficial sharing of leadership and management power is not useful. Principals who entrusted their SMT members with full responsibility and authority were better able to work collaboratively to integrate school safety into the daily operations of the school and as such were able to achieve much better education results.

Principals who demonstrated the ability to run programmes that promote school cohesion and strong family bonds had fewer problems related to ill-discipline and had much better cooperation from parents, learners and caregivers.

Relying only on the learner as a conduit for communication between the school and the home is not good practice because it can be very easily manipulated by the learner. A useful communication strategy includes a combination of the following. A diary (with the code of conduct affixed) can be used as a primary communication tool whereby parents and teachers can acknowledge and communicate on a daily basis. To step up communication from the diary, a combination of SMS, WhatsApp, email and telephone calls can be used. This is particularly important when parents' meetings are called.

To have meaningful impact on school safety the LRC must be included at all levels of school safety programmes. The study showed that across the six schools, the LRC was not engaged in school safety programmes and this is one reason why school safety initiatives have limited impact. Learners are key informants who are both victims and perpetrators of violence, and international good practice has shown that including learners and teachers in all aspects of school safety produced lasting solutions.

Principals who empower their administrative staff to deal with learner lateness had much more time available to execute their role as instructional leaders, which included doing regular site inspection of the school. Such principals only deal with chronic cases of late coming and always feel in control of their schools.

The best time to ensure new staff and SGB members acquaint themselves with policies should be as soon as they have accepted the job offer – time must be set aside for this. At the very latest on their first day at school.

6.3.4 Policy development

The GDE relies extensively on legislation and policy to execute its mandate in schools especially when it comes to school safety. The literature reviewed in Chapter Two proved that there is no shortage of school safety policies, but a lack of implementation is certainly a problem. The following strategies, which have implications for existing and future policies, were found by principals to be helpful in leading and managing safe schools.

Principals of fee-paying schools who employ experienced and qualified credit controllers have fewer difficulties in collecting school fees. Principals regard the appointment of experienced credit controllers as equal in importance to the appointment of good teachers and say the same amount of care should be taken when making such appointments. The GDE was called upon by all principals to review the means test and to work with SGBs to prosecute parents who exploit the fee-exemption policy.

Because education is decentralised, principals are burdened with a huge responsibility to deliver education to the masses without there being the necessary legislation to grant principals a level of authority that matches their responsibility. This is a major gap in the system and given the context within which principals work it doesn't bode well for building safe teaching and learning environments.

Good leadership is closely associated with good schools and in order for this equation to ring true, principals should be allowed enough time at one school to understand the context and build up a record of long successful service. Policy is necessary to ensure that principals serve out a minimum period building up a track record of success before allowing them to take a transfer to another school. Job-hopping has become a South African pathology, and this is detrimental to building a cadre of good, experienced leaders.

Learner lateness is endemic in most township schools and a common practice is to lock the gate at a certain time, denying access to learners who arrive after the gate has been locked. Some principals in the study found that denying these learners access is not a deterrent to late coming and that the problem of late coming needs to be addressed separately by other means. The learner must be allowed into the school because turning the learner away may expose him/her to greater danger. The question principals should think about is – who is responsible in the event something happens to the learner?

Crime hardening in all six schools was found to be more than adequate. However, in schools where significant impact on discipline and burglaries were made, efforts of security guards, police, private security companies and the SSC were integrated into the school safety strategy.

6.3.5 What we should be concerned about

Corporal punishment is still practiced in most schools, which proves that the programme on alternatives to corporal punishment is not working. Unless corporal punishment and other harmful practices are removed from schools, efforts to make schools safe will have limited impact.

The protocol on the partnership between SAPS and the DBE is not in place at all the schools and this is a major gap in the collaborative strategy to root out school violence. Unless the protocol is put in place SSCs will remain under-capacitated and the NSSF will struggle to deliver on its objectives.

The Adopt-A-Cop programme according to the police was supposed to be phased out by 2010 but recent reports by the GDE in 2018 show the programme is still active in many schools while the remainder of schools are working on the sector policing model. This is highly problematic because there is no uniformity in how the police practically engages and support schools in becoming safe and secure.

The plan for the GDE to investigate extending scholar transport to learners who walk through dangerous areas or routes should be put to action. Scholar transport is one way of dealing with this problem, but it should be further investigated how the community can monitor and report incidents that occur on school routes. The study shows that 75% of learners have an adult caregiver at home and this is a valuable resource to assist learners and the police in the fight to make the routes to school safer.

6.4 Areas for further research

This study found that school violence exists, with varying degrees of incidence and intensity across all the six schools sampled, and that this violence is a barrier to delivering education. The role that principals have to play to restore a safe teaching and learning environment was confirmed, but there are additional areas that were identified as needing further investigation.

Principals and teachers are an invaluable resource because without them there is very little chance that the promise of the new South Africa will come true for many South Africans. Teacher burnout, stress and depression surfaced among all the teacher research participants, many of them contemplating leaving the profession. Research into how teacher wellbeing can be integrated into the system as part of their conditions of employment would be very useful. In other words, wellbeing would be part of every teacher's key developmental and performance areas.

Satanic worshipping and some social/cultural practices were reported as a threat to school safety. The scale and impact of these phenomena is not known and because school safety is such an important issue to get control over, it would be useful for research to be conducted in this area.

Further research into what role school safety plays as a condition for teaching and learning in post-conflict countries.

Human interaction is complex, and a big part of it has to do with interpersonal relations with others. The classroom is a space where teachers and learners interact in a very personal and direct way therefore a second area worth exploring is the introduction of conflict management skills training and school safety as part of the teacher development curriculum.

School funding is a major problem, and with soaring unemployment figures and the bigger demands that government has to meet, it is unlikely to change soon. The current system for school funding is not working and government acknowledges that there is no clear plan on how to rectify this problem. Research into the best-suited funding model for South African schools is therefore recommended.

6.5 Conclusion

This research process was driven by a deep desire to understand school violence and to find leadership and management strategies to assist principals, teachers and learners in the daily running of their schools. In pursuit of these answers we garnered proof that school violence is more talked about and so are its effects on individuals and communities. School violence exists and cuts across boundaries of class, culture, education and economics and it is hoped that this report gave voice to the many victims of violence calling out to stop the hurt – not only the physical but also the "hurt inside".

By principals and teachers recognising that schools are the ideal if not the only change agent to address violence, it provides much needed inspiration because it shows schools are not only listening but is prepared to meet the challenge. The study produced some of the tools principals can use to restore a teaching and learning culture and to ensure that everyone is safe.

Education is a right protected by the constitution, both in terms of quality and safety, hence there can be no compromise in fighting the scourge of school violence. To ensure the aspirations and voices of victims of violence do not fall on deaf ears, this report calls on government, practitioners, civil society organisations and the donor community to increase investment in efforts directed at protecting and preventing violence against children and youth in our schools and communities. The central message of this report is for principals to focus on strategies directed at the prevention of school violence.

I conclude this report with much gratitude and confidence that with the findings and conclusions presented here, schools under the leadership of principals supported by all stakeholders will be restored to the safe havens they ought to be, always remembering that: "Safety and security don't just happen, they are the result of collective consensus and public investment. We owe our children, the most vulnerable citizens in our society, a life free from violence and fear" (Nelson Mandela).

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Research Office

<u>HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON MEDICAL)</u>
H120405   Morris

<u>CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE</u>	<u>PROTOCOL NUMBER H120405</u>
<u>PROJECT TITLE</u>	Leading and Managing Safe Schools
<u>INVESTIGATOR(S)</u>	Mr R Morris
<u>SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT</u>	Graduate School of Public and Development Management
<u>DATE CONSIDERED</u>	20 April 2012
<u>DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE</u>	Approved Unconditionally

<u>EXPIRY DATE</u>   30 April 2014

<u>DATE</u>   27 June 2012   CHAIRPERSON
                                     (Professor R Thornton)

cc: Prof. A Mclennan

<u>DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)</u>

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10005, 10th Floor, Senate House, University.

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.**

_____   28 , 06 , 2012
Signature   Date

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

education

Department: Education
GAUTENG PROVINCE

For administrative use:
Reference no. D2013/129

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	24 July 2012
Validity of Research Approval:	24 July 2012 to 30 September 2012
Name of Researcher:	Morris R.
Address of Researcher:	320 Minnaar Street West
	Davidsonville Ext. 2
	Roodepoort
	1724
Telephone Number:	011 726 8313 / 082 882 9775
Fax Number:	011 726 5546
Email address:	morris@synergos.org
Research Topic:	Leading and Managing Safe Secondary Schools in Gauteng
Number and type of schools:	SIX Secondary Schools and ONE other institution
District/s/HO	Johannesburg Central

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

1.   *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
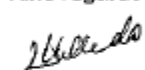
Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research
9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0506
Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.

3. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.

4. A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.

5. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.

6. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.

7. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year.

8. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.

9. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.

10. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.

11. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.

12. On completion of the study the researcher must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.

13. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.

14. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

Dr David Makhado

Director: Knowledge Management and Research

DATE: 2012 / 07 / 25