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THE POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

A Survey Of Five Schools On The East Rand

(Gauteng, S.A:1996)

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Degree of Master of Education by coursework and research:

'A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Education, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.'

Johannesburg, 1998

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Education in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

.....D. Sch.....

(Signature of candidate)

.....25..... day of OCTOBER 1998.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the nature and extent of past, present and future parental involvement in certain State [Model C] schools. It researched the opinions and perceptions of parents, principals, teachers, and pupils of five East Rand English medium Secondary Schools in this regard and explored how socio-economic issues, issues around the professional status of teachers and practical and logistical considerations enhanced or hindered parental involvement in these schools. It further addressed the implications of increased or diminished parental involvement for school life in general, and pupil's academic achievements.

The study found that the degree of parental involvement is contingent on the nature of the involvement, the parents' relationship with the professionals in a particular school, and various practical and logistical constraints that circumscribe the degree of parental involvement. It also found that parents are unlikely to interfere in the day-to-day organization of teaching and learning, and that if codes of conduct lay down guidelines for this participation, teachers need not fear that their professional status will be undermined by a greater degree of parental involvement.

The study makes recommendations with regard to parental involvement, especially in the case of Black parents in Model C schools.

Keywords:

Governing Bodies, Parental involvement, Parent Teacher Associations, Participation, Professional status, Stakeholders.

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T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

Page

DECLARATION

ABSTRACT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background To The Study i

1.2 The Aim Of The Study iv

1.3 Rationale vi

1.4 Outline Of Chapters xii

CHAPTER 1 LITERATURE REVIEW 1

1.1 Introduction 1

1.2 The Move To Involve Parent To A Greater Degree In Education 2

1.2.1 Factors which played a role in increasing parental involvement, internationally 2

1.2.2 Factors which played a role in increasing parental involvement in South Africa 5

1.3 The Degree And Nature Of Parental Involvement In Education 7

1.3.1 Internationally 7

1.3.2 South Africa 10

1.3.3 Parental involvement in an Advisory or Collaborative Role 11

Page

1.3.4 Parental involvement in a Decision-making or Participative Role 13

1.4 Potential Conflict Between The Concept Of Increased Parental Involvement In The School Process And The Concept Of A Profession 18

CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGY 25

The Research Instruments 26

Administration Of The Questionnaire 29

Sample 31

Pilot Study 36

Interviews 37

Data Analysis 38

Conclusion 42

CHAPTER 3 ENGLISH-MEDIUM MODEL C SECONDARY SCHOOLS ON THE EAST RAND: Contextual Issues 45

3.1 The East Rand 45

3.2 Model C Schools 47

3.3 The People Involved In The Study - Parents, Pupils, Principals And Teachers 49

3.4 The School Structures In Which Parents Have Been Involved In The Past 51

Conclusion 52

Page

CHAPTER 4 THE PROPOSED NEW POLICY
FOR INCREASED PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT
IN EDUCATION AND THE POSSIBILITIES
FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION 55

4.1 The New Policy Concerning Parental
Involvement In Education 55

4.2 The Possibilities Of Implementation In
The Light Of Previous Parental Involvement
In PTAs And GBs 56

4.2.1 Parental involvement in PTAs in the past 56

4.2.2 Parental involvement in Governing Bodies in
the past 58

4.2.3 The degree of communication between parents
and teachers 59

Conclusion 62

CHAPTER 5 VIEWS OF STAKEHOLDERS
ON PARENTAL IN''OLVEMENT 64

The Degree And Nature Of Parental Involvement
In The School Process As Perceived By The
Different Stakeholders 65

School Policy 65

Enrolment Policy 66

Recruitment and appointment of teachers 68

Length of the school day 70

The time of year when exams are written 70

Frequency of testing 71

The quantity and form of homework given 70

Page

Projects set 72

Discipline and school rules 72

Teachers' dress 74

Teachers' conduct 76

Promotion of pupils 77

Determination of school fees 78

Fund raising 79

School budget 81

Collection of fees 82

Expenditure of fees 84

Maintenance 85

The Issuing of textbooks 87

Extra-murals 86

Extra tuition 89

Other activities 90

The Role Of The Principal And Teacher As Opposed To That Of The Parent 90

The Role Of Pupils 93

The Perceived Relationship That Exists Between Parents And Teachers 93

The Capacity Of Parents To Increase Their Involvement In The School Process 98

The Perceived Advantages And Disadvantages Of Increasing Parental Involvement In The School Process 100

The Perceived Effect Of An Increase In Parental Involvement On The Status Of The Teacher 104

Page

Conclusion 107

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 110

Conclusions 110

Recommendations 113

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Responses of stakeholders at Model C English-medium Secondary Schools to the closed questions in the questionnaire I

Appendix B - Abbreviations XXX

Appendix C - Letter granting permission for, and giving the conditions under which, research may be conducted XXXI

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I N T R O D U C T I O N

1.1 Background To The Study

Education can be organized very broadly, at the systemic and institutional level, in two ways: along centralized or decentralized lines.

In highly centralized systems, control and direction are exercised by central government, and the central education ministry is responsible for all aspects of education: those intrinsic to education, eg. curricula and syllabi; and those extrinsic to education, eg. compulsory school attendance. In strongly decentralized systems, on the other hand, the direction and control of education are placed in the hands of local authorities (Behr 1971:5). In reality most systems are a mixture of centralization and decentralization. The NEPI report on 'Governance and Administration' says the key issue in determining the character of the system is how power is distributed at different levels of the system (1992:3).

Although, in the years preceding transformation in South Africa (S.A), education administration was decentralized (NEPI, 1992:6), a high level of central control was maintained by government who "retain[ed] the right to make final decisions and to appoint members of school committees" (NEPI, 1992:14). The Minister of Education was responsible for co-ordination, finance, compulsory school attendance, curricula, syllabi, teaching methods, and examinations. The policy-making style was "closed and top-down" (NEPI, 1992:10). This was necessary to keep power in the hands of a

select few, i.e. those who supported the policies of the ruling party (NEPI, 1992:6). Parental involvement in education, at both national and local level, was very limited. Parents had very little access to the educational policy process (EDUPOL, 1993:30). A number of White parent bodies were consulted on specific issues by various education departments, but this was done on an ad hoc basis, and these parent bodies did not have a statutory right to make submissions on policy matters, as a matter of course.

At the institutional level, parents were permitted to form Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs). The role of these associations was to raise funds for peripheral activities of the schools, eg. to supply sports equipment. Each school (in the then Transvaal), for example, also had a Governing Body (GB) of five to seven members which had a limited role in school governance that involved (Behr,1971:53):

a) interviewing teacher applicants and making recommendations concerning the appointment of teachers;
b) bringing to the attention of the School Board any matter affecting the welfare and efficiency of the school; and
c) taking steps to ensure that the building, furniture and equipment were kept in good order.

As can be seen, only (a) and (b) could be considered to be activities of 'governance' in the strict sense of the word and even there the GB's role was merely an advisory one. The clause, "... shall not interfere with the professional work of a teacher in the performance of his (sic) official duties" was included in most education departments' regulations in order to limit parental influence and involvement (EDUPOL,1993:38).

In the early nineties, the Nationalist Government introduced a system of school "models" that significantly changed the status quo. The model referred to as 'Model C'(DNE,1992:42) offered parents a much greater influence in the governance of schools, and in particular in the control of school funding. The greater percentage of White schools chose to adopt this model, but few, if any, Black schools chose to become Model C schools. Schools that did not choose to become Model C schools remained fully funded by the government. Parents in such schools had no say in the running of these schools. This factor contributed to the pattern of parental involvement that characterized SA schools at the time, viz: White parents were traditionally more involved in school governance than Black parents. Other factors also contributed to this state of affairs: White parents had relatively more time, logistical capacity and skills. Their exposure to similar set-ups at local and central government levels made school governance structures seem more accessible and less intimidating than they would have appeared to Black parents who were often illiterate, unemployed (Mkwanazi,1993:4), and lacked the time, transport (Unlaw 1993), and the confidence to become involved in their children's education.

The NEPI report says that Model C school system offered "limited decentralization of control" (1992:14) as access to the policy process was not widened enough to include the "primary interest groups" in education in a meaningful way. Therefore the African National Congress (ANC) government introduced a national education system which, while retaining elements of a centralized system, made significant shifts towards devolving power to the local community level. Referring to this new structure of school organization, the Education White Paper 2 states that

> 'The new structure ..... should embody a partnership between the provincial education authorities and a local community.' (1996:10)

Parents are no longer only to offer advice but are to have a say in the organization and governance of schools, and in the formulation of policies re'ating to education. Such a partnership means parents and the state share control and risks attendant on providing education.

Against this background, I seek to explore the possible consequences of giving White East Rand parents an even greater degree of influence over school affairs. The change has been at systematic as well as institutional level. Previously, at the institutional level, a highly centralized system existed where most of the decision-makinc was the prerogative of the principal and the head teachers. Now this partially decentralized system devolves the power from this elite team of principal and head teachers to a partnership of stakeholders, namely the parents, the professional and non-professional staff, and the students. One of the concerns of educationalists is that events are being set in motion that will give too much power to parents, to the detriment of the status of the teaching profession.

1.2 The Aim Of The Study

This is an exploratory and illuminative study. Its main purpose is to show the possibilities and limitations of parental involvement in the school process. The aim of this study is to give insight into the degree to which parents are willing to become involved in a partnership with educationalists. The study attempts to establish what contribution parents

in previously English-medium Model C Secondary schools on the East Rand are willing to make in order to improve education in the schools now that the White Paper (DNE:1996) has opened the way for greater parental participation. It further attempts to explore the impact of increased parental involvement in schools, including governance of schools, as proposed by the 'Education White Paper 2 - "The Organization, Governance and Funding of Schools" (DNE:1996) - on the professional status of teachers.

These are some of the specific themes explored in this study:

i) The nature, possibilities and limitations of parental involvement in the school process, especially recently empowered Black parents;

ii) The willingness/capacity of parents to become involved in a partnership with educationalists;

iii) Reasons for greater parental involvement in the school process;

iv) Areas of conflict that may occur; and

v) The professional status of teachers vis-a-vis increased parental involvement.

These issues will be explored with reference to the point of view of

- parents
- teachers
- principals
- pupils

1.3 Rationale

Attempts at decentralization, especially in developing countries, have been, according to Weiler (1990:1), "conspicuous for their frequency but not necessarily for their success". Bamberger (1986) identifies practical problems in wider participation and warns of the danger of raised expectations not being met by delivery of decentralized control, and of local conflicts that paralyze action and effective school governance.

The move from a centralized system towards a decentralized education system in South Africa is a major sea-change in a country whose citizens are traditionally accustomed to a set-up where central government retains power (NEPI, 1992:14). Now these same citizens are expected to be involved in real decision-making at a grass-roots level (Education White Paper 2, 1996).

Conyers (1983) and Winkler (1989) say that decentralization initiated by the central authority is unlikely to succeed unless pressure for decentralisation emanates from below. The emergence in South Africa in the 1980's amongst the Black majority of the concept of 'People's Education for People's Power', i.e. that "parent-teacher-student organizations should take control of education in the schools" (Mashamba, 1989:40), indicates that the drive for decentralization has indeed emanated "from below", and is linked to demands for a greater democratization of the country as a whole. Decentralization could, however, result in the various interest groups in the local community vying for control of the system to the detriment of education.

International studies show that it is very difficult to restructure an education system without the support of key interest groups (Buckland & Hofmeyr, 1993:59). Hurst (1981) warns that decentralization initiatives must be supported by teachers and civil servants, while Cummings (1991) insists that the support of students is what is required. Buckland and Hofmeyr come to the conclusion that manipulation by political elites traditionally has dominated efforts at decentralization, and that "internal initiation" (Buckland & Hofmeyr, 1993:60) by education professionals within the system "is largely conspicuous by its absence" (Buckland & Hofmeyr, 1993:60). They warn that if there are too many conflicting interest groups, "they can cancel one another out and paralyse the government" (1993:21). It is therefore important to establish who the interest groups are and what their interests are. Archer (1979,1985) distinguishes between three broad interest groups: political elites, professional interest groups (i.e. the teachers) and external interest groups (i.e. parents, pupils and members of the community). Two of the 'interest groups' set to contest and negotiate changes in the education system in this country are the Black majority government and the White community.

The question now arises as to whether Whites on the East Rand are prepared to accept change, or whether the parents of most East Rand schools chose to adopt the Model C option to try and maintain the status quo: The Model C option provided GB's with the opportunity to formulate admission policies and set fees at levels which enabled them to exclude children from schools on the grounds of race and class (NEPI, 1992:23) . Statistics bear out the fact that Whites have been unenthusiastic about education for Africans. In 1983 the per capita spending on White pupils was about eight times the spending on Black pupils (NEPI, 1993:15). By the early 90's the white-

black per pupil spending ratio had improved to 3:1 (NEPI, 1993:15). The NEPI report concludes that "Education in South Africa is marked by severely discriminatory inequalities of provision" (1993:13). Clearly historically the White South African population has generally focused its attention on providing quality education for members of its own community to the detriment of other members of the broader community.

The NEPI report (1992:15) points out that when there is a change in a states' educational system, there is inevitably a struggle for control of the system. It says that no single group has the capacity to take control of the system, and that the interest groups must therefore "negotiate" with each other. It goes on to say "The negotiating strengths of social forces, interest groups, and organizations in education are influenced by their degrees of control over key resources of power, wealth, and expertise as well as by their interests, organizational capacity,and ideology" (NEPI, 1992:15). The shift of power has been towards Black communities since 1976 (NEPI, 1992:15), but the key resources of wealth and expertise, and, some may argue, organizational capacity (particularly at school level) have to a large extent remained with Whites. The NEPI report says that important lessons have emerged from the literature and case studies of the resilience of existing structures in the face of efforts to transform them (1992:32).

It also warns that decentralization does not always entail democratization and does not always devolve power to the people, but instead shifts the power base from a power elite at central level to an equally powerful elite at local level. (1992:33) Chisholm says "Once the formal barriers to discrimination are removed, there still remain the racial values and practices of many communities " (1995:7). The Model C option allowed

conservative parents, with their resources and relative wealth and expertise, the opportunity to keep the racial and class composition of the schools more or less as it was, and provided them with a means of legitimizing the policies they formulated as GB members. The NEPI report comments on the fact that decentralization can be used to "safeguard privilege" and the "values and interests of the dominant class" (1992:20). White parents may claim that they are committing themselves to a greater level of involvement in order to help maintain or even improve standards, but, in reality, they may have a more sinister motive in mind: to maintain the exclusivity of the previously White schools.

A third 'interest group' which will become involved in negotiating and contesting changes to the education system is professional educators. Possible differences in priorities, between parents (on the East Rand and elsewhere) and educationalists, will, it is expected, result in different perceptions as regards the role of education in the life of the local community and, the degree and nature of parent involvement.

Also of relevance in negotiations between professional educators and parents with regards to a role for parents in the changing education system, is the impact their increased parent involvement will have on the professional status of teachers. It appears that the status of the teaching profession is under threat, worldwide (Beresford,1992). A committee of the House of Commons in Britain noted that there is "a widespread belief within the profession that teachers are misjudged [by parents] and undervalued" (Macmillan International Year Book, 1991:148). Depending on how the concept of 'People's Education' (Mashamba, 1989) is translated into practice, the threat to the professional status of teachers

may become a real one in the South African context. Many parents on the East Rand already hold teachers in low esteem because of their relatively poor economic standing in society (see pages 104 & 105). Many teachers, who are used to a centralized system and a high degree of authoritarianism, could well perceive the change to a more decentralized system as potentially undermining their status even further. Any such perception could have serious consequences for education as a whole: If the change to a decentralized system results in an increased lack of esteem on the part of parents for teachers, it will be reflected in the decline in self-image and motivation of teachers, and a diminishing potential to attract "quality" recruits to the profession.

The executive summary of the EDUPOL report, on parental involvement in education (EDUPOL, 1993:i), makes it clear that, although most stakeholders in education are advocating greater parental involvement, there is a dearth of systematic research on the subject. It is unhealthy to leave teachers to make assumptions about what will happen to their future status: such uncertainty is potentially demotivating. To form a successful partnership, teachers and parents need to understand where each group stands on the issue of parental involvement. If teachers are aware of what contribution parents expect to make, they may feel less threatened by new developments in this regard.

Parents, too, need to understand the parameters within which teachers wish them to become involved. As non-professionals in the education set-up, they need to be made aware of the areas in which their involvement would be welcome. Both teachers and parents will have to make adjustments in perceptions and attitudes in order to reach consensus as regards what

constitutes appropriate parental involvement. Informed parents will be able to play a much more meaningful and less threatening role in the school process. In Sweden the success of recent reforms is partly attributed to the regular publication of a handbook which outlines the rights and responsibilities of all players (NEPI, 1992:34) and how these are evolving over time.

If teachers are to improve their status in the community, they need to understand the concerns of parents, who will be involved in education to an increasing degree. Instead of reacting negatively to increased parental involvement, teachers need to become aware of the potential advantages presented by the greater involvement of parents.

One of the purposes of this study is to inform teachers as to the increased role parents see for themselves in the school process.

Thus, this study is expected to:- *

a) establish awareness of issues and provide information to parents and teachers;
b) suggest to schools that up to this time have had limited parental involvement, ways in which parents can become involved in the school process;
c) provoke debate on the degree of parental involvement; and
d) make suggestions as to how parents' attitudes towards the teaching profession, and teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement, can be fine-tuned and nuanced by engagement with each other in the new participatory governance structures.

* Once the study has been approved, a summary will be provided to the schools that indicated a desire to receive feedback. A copy of the thesis will also be forwarded to the Gauteng Education Department, as requested.

1.4 Outline Of Chapters

Chapter One is a review of the available literature on parental involvement in education, both in schools inside and outside South Africa's borders, viz. Britain, the United States of America, Germany, France, Denmark, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, Kenya, and Tanzania. Reasons are explored for the trend towards increased parental involvement. A summary follows of what the literature has to say on the degree and nature of parental involvement in education in a number of different countries. A brief look is taken at what constitutes a profession, and the debate around whether increased parental involvement in education conflicts with the concept of a profession.

In Chapter Two a detailed account of the research design is given. There is an explanation of how both quantitative and qualitative data was gathered for the purpose of determining stakeholders' views on the subject of increased parental involvement in the school process. An explanation of how questionnaire was administered, and how the sample was drawn is also included. The chapter concludes with a detailed explanation of how the data was recorded and analyzed.

Chapter Three involves an examination of the circumstances relevant to the

environment in which the research was conducted. The chapter begins with a brief history of the development of the East Rand. A profile of the different categories of stakeholders follows. Chapter Three concludes with a brief outline of the role parents have already played in PTAs and the GBs of Model C schools.

In Chapter Four the new policy on parental involvement in education is outlined. It includes an examination of the guidelines given and how this new policy is intended to transform education. The possibilities for increased parental involvement in the school process in the light of historical patterns of parental involvement in PTAs and GBs is weighed-up. This leads on to a consideration of the possibilities for the implementation of the policy. It is suggested that historical evidence does not provide evidence for the smooth introduction of the policy. A warning is also given that the policy could be "hijacked" by certain groupings of White parents, for their own ends.

Chapter Five involves an examination of the degree to which parents are likely to become involved in the school process, and in which activities the various stakeholders see possibilities for increased parental involvement. The chapter begins by highlighting the confusion that exists over the areas in which increased parental involvement is expected, and the day-to-day organization of teaching and learning. The possibility that misconceptions held by parents and teachers concerning each other are likely to have a negative effect on increased parental involvement, is discussed.

The bulk of the Chapter Five revolves around a discussion of the different

activities in which parents could possibly become involved, the degree to which the different stakeholders agree on the involvement of parents in these different activities, and the perceived relationship which exists between parents and teachers. It is argued that, in a modern society with more and more working mothers and single parents, parental involvement is curtailed by time constraints. Other factors which could limit parental involvement are also outlined.

In Chapter Six the main arguments of the study with regard to the possibilities and limitations for increased parental involvement in the school process are summarized. Some recommendations are made as to what teacher unions, professional bodies, and teachers themselves can do to encourage greater parental involvement, while at the same time retaining the initiative in professional matters.

CHAPTER 1
LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Introduction

The Education White Paper 2 (1996) reveals a shift away from a highly centralized system of education in South Africa, where decision-making at the institutional level is the prerogative of the principal and head teachers, towards a decentralized system, where parents, pupils, and teachers will share accountability for education.

Change does not occur in a vacuum; something precipitates change. This chapter first looks at what precipitated a move towards involving parents to a greater degree in education, both internationally and locally. Knowledge of what precipitated a change is important as it gives insight into how policy, emanating from the change, is intended to take effect.

The chapter then moves on to examine arguments around the degree and nature of increased parental involvement in education.

The chapter ends with a brief look at what constitutes a profession; whether increasing parental involvement does not conflict with the concept of a profession; and how to deal with accountability for education if parental involvement is to be restricted (because it conflicts with the concept of a profession).

1.2 The Move To Involve Parents To A Greater Degree In Education

The EDUPOL report on 'Parental Involvement in Education' (EDUPOL, 1993:iii) indicates that there is a "growing trend towards greater involvement of parents in schooling in both industrialized and developing countries". The form of parental involvement, however, differs markedly depending on differing educational priorities.

In examining parental involvement in education, the EDUPOL report states that, in industrialized countries, the focus is on providing skilled individuals for the labour market (EDUPOL, 1993:4). With this end in mind parental involvement revolves around improving the performance of pupils. Parents are involved in instructional issues, such as the development of curricula at school level and participation in the classroom as teacher aides. Educational governance, however, tends towards centralization (EDUPOL, 1993:4).

In developing countries, the focus is on the correcting of imbalances (*i.e.* parental involvement has political relevance) and the provision of education (Hallak, 1990). In these countries, parental involvement is sought in the governance and financial resourcing of schools.

1.2.1 Factors which play a role in increasing parental involvement: The international picture

In Britain, the move towards increasing parental involvement in education began during the 60's and 70's. Beresford (1992:46 - 52) claims that the move was a political strategy of the New Right. Schools were accused of

not producing pupils with the necessary skills and qualifications to drive the economy. Beresford (1992:46) says "Education became both a scapegoat for and a remedy for economic problems".

At the time, teachers were implementing new progressive teaching methods. These methods differed from those previously used and also from those to which parents had been accustomed during their schooling. In the centralized system of education which operated in Britain at the time, teachers did not see the need to enlighten parents about their new approach. Using the information at their disposal, parents came to the conclusion that the new teaching methods, introduced by teachers, were the cause of the failure of schools to meet the needs of the economic system. The New Right, according to Apple (Beresford, 1992:46), had "the knack of winning adherents by capitalizing on [this] popular sentiment".

According to Quicke (Beresford, 1992:46) the solution to this lack of parental trust in the ability of teachers, was to "give more power to the parents by giving them the right to choose the education which they feel is most suitable for their children". The choice facing the British government was this one: either maintain a centralized system and accept responsibility at the polls for the failure of the country's education system, or, to decentralize and shift responsibility to others.

Likewise, a move toward greater parental involvement occurred at approximately the same time in the United States of America, but for a slightly different reason (Keith et al, 1991:257). Keith and Girling in 'Education Management and Participation - New Directions in Educational Administration' (1991), claim that the increased involvement of parents was

brought about as a result of the "perception by parents that decisions were being made against the interests of children" (Keith et al 1991:257). The centralized system in operation at that point meant that parents in the U.S.A, as in Britain, were excluded from the decision-making process at school level. Parents felt alienated, and turned against teachers. Parents expressed the opinion that if they became more involved in the school process, they could ensure that decisions being made were in the interests of their children.

Literature available made no suggestions that the move towards greater parental involvement in the United States was politically inspired. The possibility does exist, however, that decentralization of the education system was in the government's best interests. Weiler (1991) argues that a redistribution of power allows for "sources of conflict to be dispersed and for the compensatory legitimation of the state". Similarly the NEPI report says that the education system in South Africa was fragmented so as to serve to "dissipate challenges from below by directing these at local officials who frequently lack the authority to respond" (1992:11) When decentralizing the administration of education to either local officials or the grassroots community, a government turns the focus of conflict and contestation away from itself. When things go wrong with the implementation of government formulated policy, or the electorate are disappointed with the outcomes, the central government deflects criticism away from itself and onto those to whom it has decentralized control. Furthermore should the central government then step in to rectify problems in the country's education system, it's standing with the electorate is enhanced.

1.2.2 Factors which played a role in increasing parental involvement in South Africa

The move towards greater parental involvement in education in South Africa evolved from the unique situation created by the apartheid system. In 1976 reaction to instruction in Afrikaans in Black schools in South Africa gave rise to political protests that resulted in the virtual collapse of education in many Black schools. Thus, on a wide front and for various reasons, parental involvement became an issue in education. In the early 90's, the political scenario began to change in South Africa and the Nationalist government began to develop a new concept of parental involvement in education. The EDUPOL study (1993:v) claims that greater parental involvement in South Africa started through calls, at this time, by 'political elites' (those within the government and those within the groups aspiring to political power) for parents to play a role in the reconstruction of education.

The concept of parental involvement was used, however, for different purposes by these different interest groups and power blocks (Mkwanazi, 1993). The Nationalist government used the concept of increased parental involvement to protect the interests of the communities which constituted its power-base (EDUPOL, 1993:v). By decentralizing, the Nationalist government devolved financial responsibility for education and concomitant rights of governance to the parents (Mkwanazi:1993). The parents who were given decision-making rights were those with a 'legal' status (Mkwanazi:1993). This entrenched the power to determine school policies with White parents and, more particularly, with those who could afford to send their children to Model C schools. Black parents identified these parent bodies as legitimizing structures of the apartheid school policies

and opposed the move (Mkwanazi,1993:10).

After the collapse of education in Black schools in the mid- and late-70's, the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) started to contest state policies by forming alternate structures that involved parents, teachers, and pupils. The MDM used the concept of increased parental involvement as part of its demands for democratisation. Mhlongo (1995:17) says that the MDM used parental involvement "as part of a counter-hegemony to the state or a form of contestation of official policies." The educational model being advocated was referred to as "People's Education". It seems that just as the Nationalist government used the policy of increased parental involvement in education for political motives, so did the MDM.

One of the 'key conclusions' the EDUPOL study (1993:23) drew from the literature on increased parental involvement in a decentralized system, was that it allowed the "state to shift accountability for the system onto other groups", such as parents. It seems likely that the Nationalist government's decision to decentralize was partly precipitated by the knowledge that maintenance of a centralized education system by government would expose it to criticism for the system's (possible) failure. A resonance with the situation in the U.S.A and more particularly the UK (see above) is evident here.

A further reason for a shift towards greater parental involvement in education in South Africa is provided by Shaeffer(1991). He argues that parents and communities are often drawn into partnerships in education because there is not enough government money to implement innovations and reforms at local level. Parents are then expected to find ways to

supplement what has been provided by central government.

1.3 The Degree And Nature Of Parental Involvement In Education

Parental involvement can take two forms (Fullan, 1991). The first form involves 'collaboration' between parents and teachers, with parents giving advice to teachers. The second form involves greater parental 'participation' in the form of decision-making. The first leaves teachers with the balance of power and tends to maintain a centralized system; the second shifts the balance of power towards the parents and requires a further degree of decentralization of the education system. This is what 'People's Education' demands (see below).

1.3.1 Internationally

The majority of teachers in Britain felt threatened by the prospect of increased participatory rights for parents (Beresford,1992:49). "The Parents Charter" gives parents the right to information, the right to choice of available schools and the right to a hearing if they are not satisfied with the kind of education being provided (EDUPOL, 1993:8). Presently under discussion in Britain, is policy which will give parents the right to assess, and advise on, both instructional and non-instructional education issues such as the curriculum, evaluation, teaching methods, conditions of service etc. (EDUPOL, 1993:8).

The annual Gallop poll (1969) conducted on attitudes to education in the U.S.A found that 90% of all teachers in the U.S.A, unlike teachers in

Britain, favour involving parents in education (Keith & Girling, 1991:266). Nardine & Morris (1991) state that there is neither legislation nor written guidelines directly related to parental involvement in 21 of the U.S.A's 50 states. The EDUPOL report (1993:8) records, however, that there is a strong tradition of local control of education in U.S.A schools. These schools rely heavily on local funding which effectively gives the local community a "powerful tool to ensure accountability". Weiss (EDUPOL, 1993:9) reports that parental involvement is mainly confined to the instructional sphere, on an informal or formal basis, with little emphasis being placed on policy-making and administration.

The fact that teachers in the U.S.A are more amenable to greater parental involvement than their counterparts in Britain, may suggest that teachers feel less threatened by greater parental involvement when it occurs on a voluntary basis, than when legislation dictates the form and degree of this co-operation. Barton (EDUPOL, 1993:6) refers to the former type of parental involvement as "Informal" involvement and to the latter as "Constitutional" involvement. An "informal" relationship between parents and teachers limits the degree of accountability of teachers to parents. Where there is legislated accountability to parents, as is the case in Britain, teachers have more to be accountable for and consequently concerned about, because they are caught in the crossfire of a political contract between the educational authorities and the electorate. The professional educator is no longer the central agent in decisions relating to education.

In Germany and France there is collaboration between the educational authorities and parents. Parent groups have the legal right to offer

advice and to be consulted on policy. (EDUPOL, 1993:7)

In Denmark, where a participative community system of education is in place, school boards consist of parents, teachers and pupils all with voting rights (Ace, 1991).

Parental involvement in Japan is more collaborative than participative. PTAs function to affirm and assist school policies but rarely contradict them (EDUPOL, 1993:9). Schools in fact, according to the EDUPOL report (1993), delimit the proper roles of parents in education and even child rearing.

Parental involvement in Asian and African countries is mainly of a collaborative nature (EDUPOL, 1993:11-13). Because of a shortage of government funds, the burden of financing schools falls, to a large extent, on the local communities. All stakeholders in education in Thailand and Indonesia are encouraged to work closely together to assess and overcome their own problems in an attempt to deliver a better education system. In some African countries parents who are unable to assist financially, offer other skills (eg. labour). Ota (EDUPOL, 1993:12) records that community participation in the building and expansion of schools accounted for 70% of the construction of secondary schools in Zimbabwe.

However, the case of the 'Harambee' schools in Kenya can be regarded as a "cautionary tale" with regard to the degree and nature of parental involvement. What became evident in this case is that strict control and monitoring of the effectiveness of parental involvement is necessary. The EDUPOL report(1993:12) states:

> " Kenya provides an example of intensive community involvement in the management and provision of a large sector of the country's education system which has failed both economically and pedagogically. It has not led to the improvement or even the maintenance of educational standards and it has had the unintended consequence of impoverishing communities."

The report quotes Graham-Brown (EDUPOL 1993:13) as saying that evidence from both Kenya and Tanzania suggests that if there is a strong dependence on parental contributions to help improve schools, social and regional inequalities often increase.

1.3.2 South Africa

The nature of participation by parents is influenced by different conceptions of democracy. Abraham Lincoln's definition of democracy is "rule of the people, by the people, for the people" (Mashamba,1992: 16). This 'rule' can be direct or representative. The problem throughout human history has been one of identifying who the 'people' are. The concept of democracy in 'People's Education' involves the "mass participation of all the people in the organs of people's power on the education front". (Mashamba, 1992:22) In an article quoted by Mashamba, from Isizwe, (Mashamba,1992: 21) is the following statement: "When we demand that the people shall govern, we mean at <u>all levels</u> and in <u>all spheres</u> and we demand that this be <u>real, effective control on a daily basis</u>". [My emphasis] The education departments are not to tell the teachers what to teach, and the teachers are not to tell the pupils what to learn, but teachers, parents and pupils are to "work together to understand their communities and their needs" (Mashamba, 1992:40). This implies that parents should be involved directly and not simply through representation.

In the Education White Paper 1 it is stated that "the decision-making

authority of schools in the public sector would be shared among parents, teachers, the community (government and civil society) and the learners, in ways that would support the core values of democracy" (1996:16). The Paper says that "all stakeholder groups" are to be involved in "active and responsible roles" and that decision-making is to be "collective" (1996:16).

It cannot be denied that teachers' perceptions are a very important factor to consider if the policy of increasing parental involvement in education is to be successfully implemented. School boards and committees have lost legitimacy before, in South Africa, because teachers felt that the boards did not treat them as professionals and exercised undue power over them (Hyslop,1987:200 & 209). To "introduce new programmes in ways which ignore [these] factors ....." (Fullan,1989:183) would not bode well for the successful implementation of a new policy.

The EDUPOL report (1993:v) claims that calls for greater parental participation in South Africa are concerned more with parental participation in governance than with their participation in instructional activities. Parents are to be involved mainly in the areas of policy formulation: the adoption, implementation, and monitoring thereof.

1.3.3 Parental involvement in an Advisory or Collaborative Role

Several issues emerge here: On one hand, some stakeholders question the capacity of parents to play an advisory or collaborative role. To quote from the EDUPOL report:

> "Parents and communities often lack the necessary skills to participate or even collaborate with schools in an effective manner." (EDUPOL, 1993:18)

Shaeffer (1994:14) argues that "overworked (teachers and) parents" often do not see it as worth the effort to participate in "labour-intensive, collaborative activities". (My parenthesis)

On the other hand, stakeholders advocating a model whereby parents play only an advisory or collaborative role are likely to be those stakeholders who see a need to limit parental 'control' of education for various reasons. Beresford's (1992:50-51) argument for limiting parental involvement in the school process, is that parents tend to focus on their own children and not on the whole education system, and that they do not have the necessary experience to make the correct decisions about education. This may be true, but by ignoring the aspirations of parents for their own children, teachers open themselves to the type of criticisms mentioned earlier in the chapter. Only by getting involved, will parents be able to see the "bigger picture" and confidence will grow in the teachers' capacities to make the correct decisions concerning education and what is best for the majority of pupils.

Furthermore, the EDUPOL report (1993:14 - 15) claims remarkable consistency in research work showing that parental involvement in a collaborative role directly impacts on pupil development and achievement. Keith and Girling's (1991:256) findings showing that parental involvement in education does lead to an overall improvement in education. They, together with others argue, however, that decision-making at institutional level should remain centralized, i.e. in the hands of the principal and teachers, and that the role of parents is only to assist and support.

Thus the debate has moved beyond that of whether parents should be involved

or not, to debate about the nature of such involvement.

1.3.4 Parental involvement in a Decision-making or Participative Role

The second model for parental involvement involves parents in a decision-making, i.e. participative role.

Stakeholders who concur with Wolfendale (1993:3), will argue that parents have the 'fundamental right' as primary stakeholders to be involved in decision-making about educational matters. Historically, this view is strongly entrenched in White communities in S.A and was one of the basic tenets of Christian National Education: Parents represent God on earth, and therefore as the primary educators, determine the norms and values for their children (EDUPOL, 1993:30). During the years of Nationalist rule, White parents were willing to allow state-run schools to do this, on their behalf and were content with very little direct involvement or real decision-making. However, these same parents, faced with a different educational paradigm, could become much more vociferous in demands for the 'right' to be involved in decision-making to ensure that their particular norms and values are entrenched in the schools.

The question that arises is whether this right should be limited to decisions regarding their own children or whether it extends the right to make decisions which will influence the lives of others, i.e. other parents and other children. The question must also be asked whether parents' rights will impact on the ability of the teacher to exercise his/her professional role. Central to the MDM's model of "People's Education" is the concept of "collective input and active participation by all" (EDUPOL, 1993:41). The Education White Paper 1 (1995:21) states that parents'

rights include the right to choose the type of education best for their children and the language, cultural, and religious basis of their child's education. These rights, according to the Paper (1995:21) are, however, to be exercised with due regard for the rights of others.

Some of those arguing for parents to be involved in decision-making will argue that parents and professionals "bring different but equivalent experience and expertise" (Wolfendale, 1993:3) to the dialogue that will take place between the 'partners'. However, it can be argued that without the professional training and classroom experience that teachers have, it is doubtful whether parents have the 'equivalent experience and expertise' with regard to professional matters. This is not to say parents do not have a significant role to play in non-professional matters.

Many of those with concerns about increased parental involvement in decision-making may fear that parents and teachers will be given equal status in all matters pertaining to education. It is possible that Education White Papers 1 and 2 have given substance to these fears. The following quotes illustrate the point:

In the Educational White Paper 1 (1995:70) it is stated that:

> "Parents have most at stake in the education of their children, and this should be reflected in the composition of the governing body..."

The Review Committee (Educational White Paper 2,1996:18) proposed

> " that parents and guardians have the strongest numerical representation on governing bodies" ,

and the Ministry (Educational White Paper 2,1996:18) concluded

> "Having carefully weighed the advice it has received, ..., because of the legal and financial decisions for which governing bodies would be responsible, elected representatives of parents and guardians

should be in the majority..."

The South African Schools Act(SASA) (1996:18) states that the composition of a governing body should be as follows:

i) parents or guardians of learners currently enrolled at school;
ii) teachers;
iii) learners (in secondary schools only);
iv) non-teaching staff;
v) the principal (ex officio);
vi) members of the community, elected by the governing body.

Fears for the status of teachers in a partnership with parents arise from the fact that the number of non-educator members of a GB (and therefore the number of votes held by these non-educators) outweighs the number of educators of a GB. Those fearing decentralization of the education system at institutional level, are concerned that teachers may end up playing a secondary role in the partnership. This sidelining of teachers, away from one of a primary role-player in decision-making on educational matters, has unsettled many, and could be the reason a good number of experienced professionals have opted to take the severance packages offered by the government.

As to the nature of parental involvement in education, the Education White Paper 2 (1996:16) gives the following guidelines. It states that governing bodies are to be involved in 'policy determination'. This means that GBs are to be "entrusted with the responsibility and authority to formulate and adopt policy" (Education White Paper 2, 1996:17) for their school. The Act (1996:50) says that "the governance of every public school is vested in its governing body". The teacher and the school principal are to be responsible for "the day-to-day organisation of teaching and learning" (White Paper 2, 1996:16). This can be interpreted as meaning that teachers

are to implement the policy determined by parents.

The 'Proposed menu of responsibilities of public school GBs' (Education White Paper 2, 1996:19) hinted at parents being allowed to determine the behaviour codes of staff and learners. Many teachers see the involvement of parents in this area as further proof that their professional status is under attack, especially in the light of what happens in other professions: Lawyers and doctors do not allow the public to determine their codes of behaviour; these codes are drawn up by councils constituted of respected and experienced members of the medical and legal professions. The Education Act (1996:14), however, may have laid fears on this matter to rest because although it insists that the GB adopt a code of conduct for learners at a school, it is silent on the GB's role in the formulation of a code of conduct for teachers.

Parents may very well have "the most at stake in the education of <u>their</u> children" (Education White Paper 1, 1995:70) [My emphasis]. Those who fear too much empowerment of parents might argue that professional teachers are less likely (than parents) to be subjective in decision-making, and that professional educators are better equipped to see that the education system is transformed to meet the needs of <u>all</u> children, and of the country as a whole. If their argument is accepted, then teachers deserve to be seen as the initiators and controlling influence in any partnership with parents.

As has already been stated, the move from a centralized system to a decentralized system involves a shift in accountability for education from the state to the parents. However, a number of problems emerge if parents

are to be given a relatively greater say (only) on the strength of their numerical superiority.

Firstly, it seems logical to assume that those members in a partnership, whose opinions are given more weight, would be expected to shoulder a greater degree of accountability for the success of education.

Secondly, but in conflict with the first statement, it seems logical to assume that professionally-trained educators could naturally be expected to be more accountable than non-professionals for the success of education.

Thirdly, although the White Paper 2 (1996:17) clearly expects parents to be directly involved in decisions on educational matters, Beresford (1992:54) found that "parents in general do not want control and are often overawed by their responsibility..."

Fourthly, the Paper admits that different groups of parents will have varying capacities to be involved, and therefore the degree to which different groups of parents are held accountable, will vary accordingly.

If one considers these points, it seems reasonable to assume that teachers who have been professionally-trained, should be held chiefly accountable for the success of education, and teachers should be accorded a status commensurate with this responsibility.

However, empowering parents to some degree is important. It gives parents the opportunity to become familiar with the organization of schools, to learn how to work within the education system and to gain the confidence to

"challenge existing structures and traditions" (Wolfendale, 1993:3). For the transformation of the education system in South Africa to be successful, the existing structures and traditions need to be challenged at all levels. Whether parents, and White parents in particular, will issue these challenges with the right motives, namely, with a view to improving the system for the benefit of the country as a whole, remains to be seen.

1.4 Potential Conflict Between The Concept Of Increased Parental Involvement In The School Process And The Concept Of A Profession

The concept of "People's Education", which has had a major influence on the current changes being implemented, assumes that authority is "people given". (EDUPOL, 1993:41). According to this ideology, the right of the teaching profession to decide on matters pertaining to education is contested, and parents are encouraged to become involved in the decision making process, as part of a general strategy to empower civil society. This has certain implications for professionalism.

Different authors in the book Governments and Professional Education, edited by Becher (1994), concentrate on the history of the development of professions and the certification of professionals in different countries.

One of the authors, Siegerist, gives the following outline of an ideal profession:

> " A profession is a particular sort of full-time occupation, the practice of which presupposes a specialised (and possibly scientific) educational background. Specialized education allows the professional to secure practical and theoretical expertise

> relevant to his or her field as well as to acquire general knowledge and a sense of ethical values. Knowledge that is utilized 'selflessly' for the common welfare regardless of person is guaranteed through examination and licence. Therefore only experts are, properly speaking, in the position of fulfilling certain functions and providing particular services. The professions demand, therefore, exclusive control over certain areas of operation and service as well as freedom from external supervision. Organized professional groups possess autonomous control over admissions and licensing policies. With reference to competence, ethical standards and the importance of efficiency for society and the common good, professions lay claim to special rewards and a higher social and economic status."
> (Siegerist,1994:4)

Using Siegerist's definition as the basis for what constitutes a profession, it is clear that by increasing parental involvement in education, "exclusive control" and "freedom from external supervision" are surrendered, and the status of the profession is likely to be at risk.

Professionals, according to Siegerist (1994:4), use their knowledge "selflessly for the common welfare". A professional's training provides him/her with a set of ethical values related to the profession. Parents do not have this moral commitment and training. If teaching is to remain a profession, guided by its own particular set of norms and values, then the involvement of parents will have to be severely limited, or at least closely monitored.

There is a counter-argument however: Involving parents to a greater degree in education may give teachers the status they deserve in the community: as parents, through their greater involvement, become more appreciative of the task of teachers in the classroom and the contribution they are making to preparing pupils for a role in society, they (parents) may gain greater respect for teachers and their status will improve!

Thus it could be argued that teachers should be the central actors in any form of change in education. Changes in the scope and scale of parental involvement should come about at the instigation of those with professional training in education, who have the long-term interests of education at heart, and not at the instigation of political groups with their own agendas, who might use the concept of parental involvement for the maintenance or attainment of power. Keith and Girling (1991:19) say this: "Professionals do not leave key decisions that affect the content and organization of work to others; they have latitude and discretion in the diagnosis of problems, design of solutions, and evaluation of effectiveness." It can be argued that if there is too great a degree of parental involvement, the professional component of the teacher's role will be compromised, and efficacy in the classroom will be adversely affected.

Ultimately and ideally, accountability for the education system should remain in the hands of the professional teaching body. However, the new act precludes this. Accountability for education will thus have to be negotiated at the interface of the parent body and teaching profession. Two possible ways in which this might be done, at a reactive level, emerge from a very broad reading of the literature:

In the first place, structures similar to the Dental and Medical Council should be set up to which parents can bring accusations of misconduct and incompetence concerning any individual teacher. Professional teachers would then investigate the claims against a teacher and be empowered to withdraw a teacher's licence to teach, if the claims were found to be true and if the teacher's actions were in violation of the code of conduct that the profession had drawn up for itself.

Another way this could be done at school level, would be to have principals appointed in the same capacity as the Chief Executive Officer of a business in which members of the community are the principal stakeholders (shareholders). The principal could then be held accountable for the effectiveness of his/her staff within the given policy laid down by the education department. To satisfy the stakeholders, principals would have to attract the best staff, ensure a good learning environment and ensure that the education received at their school met the requirements of all stakeholders in the community. If the stakeholders were not satisfied with the performance of the principal they would refer the matter to the educational authorities who after investigation could, if necessary, remove the principal from his post and appoint a new principal in consultation with the community.

In addressing the issue of greater parental involvement in the school process this review has highlighted the following issues:-

1. The decision to increase parental involvement in Britain, the U.S.A and South Africa was precipitated by political motives, of one type or another.

   South Africa has just experienced a major political change. One result of this is that the African National Congress (ANC) will make changes to state and civil institutions to ensure that these reflect their particular ideology. The ANC's Policy Framework for Education and Training (ANC 1994) states that "Education and training must be governed by the principle of democracy, ensuring the active participation of

various interest groups, in particular teachers, parents ...". To this end a policy designed to bring about greater decentralization is contained in the Education White Paper 2 (1996) and the South African Schools Act, but there are questions, however, as to whether decentralization will necessarily lead to greater democracy.

2. Just as the change from a centralized to a relatively more decentralized system of education was politically motivated in Britain (Beresford, 1992:46-52) and had little to do with education per se, so too, resistance to changes in education may also very often be politically inspired.

3. There is very often a degree of lack of communication between parents and teachers. This can hinder the successful implementation of policy, and cause friction between the parent body and the teaching profession. Therefore it was important therefore when conducting this study, to look at what relationship exists between the teachers and parents on the East Rand and how this affects communication on educational matters.

4. There is a correlation between parental involvement in the past and the nature of the activities parents can be expected to become involved in, in the future. It is from this concern that much of the study originated.

5. Different parents have different capacities which will affect the quality of the contribution they can make. A critical aspect of this study was to see if newly-enfranchised Black parents would have the capacity to fulfil their new role. Punty (1984) makes the point that

governments can develop what he calls "Substantive Policies" (eg. the new policy to increase parental involvement in education), but that they often fail to develop "Procedural Policies", which deal with how a policy is to be implemented. This study set out to determine just how the policy of increasing parental involvement was likely to be implemented on the East Rand.

6. Some may argue that although the debate between teachers and parents seems to be about the form of democratic involvement of parents, i.e. whether parents should be involved in an advisory or participatory role, in fact the real issue revolves around the degree to which central government is prepared to redistribute its power, and at which level the results of this devolution or decentralization are real. The degree to which parents are prepared to become involved may not only depend on whether they are to have an advisory or participative role, but rather on the degree to which they consider that they have been given real and sufficient power in order to play this role.

7. Beresford (1992:44), writing in the context of the British education system, makes an interesting observation. She writes that

> "Much has been written about the relationship between parents and teachers, home and school - by politicians (of all persuasions), academics and a vociferous, if exclusive, minority of parents themselves. Less has been heard from practising teachers, who have nevertheless had to carry all the burden of criticism and advice from other quarters."

The literature therefore revealed a need to determine not just what parents had to say about the proposed increase in their involvement, but also what <u>teachers</u> saw as possibilities and limitations of increased parental involvement.

8. A study of some definitions of a profession in the book Governments and Professional Education (Becher, 1994) suggested that there may be a conflict between a policy that advocates increased parental involvement and the concept of a profession. This study set out to determine whether teachers felt that their professional standing was being threatened by increased parental involvement or whether there were new, hitherto unexplored, possibilities for enhancing teachers' status through involvement in participative governance structures.

9. The survey of the literature revealed, as Mhlongo (1995:13) discovered, that there is a substantial amount of literature, both local and international, on the need for parental involvement, school governance and the involvement of parents in decision-making, but very little on the details of involvement of parents in the school process and problems that may be encountered in implementing the change. This revelation highlighted the need for a study of this nature.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in English medium Model C secondary schools on the East Rand (the target population). By surveying the views of the parents, principals, pupils and teachers in five schools with a very similar make-up, it was possible to come to some meaningful general observations and conclusions relating to parental involvement in the school process.

Whether English Model C schools remain as an option or not, many are, in terms of social composition, representative of what suburban schools in South Africa will be like in the future, i.e. schools where the parents of pupils are from different racial, language and cultural backgrounds. 'Township' schools at present have a predominantly, if not exclusively, Black parent and pupil body, and Afrikaans-medium schools have a predominantly White parent and pupil body. The parent and pupil bodies of all of the English-medium Model C schools involved in this study, have a relatively significant Black parent/child component. English-medium Model C schools therefore offer possibilities for the full spectrum of parental involvement (both Black and White) in educational matters and were therefore considered the most appropriate schools within which to conduct this study.

To ensure a wide range of views were canvassed, it was decided to include English-medium secondary schools in each of the East Rand towns:- Benoni, Boksburg, Brakpan, Springs and Kempton Park.

The Research Instruments

Any data collection procedure will have advantages and limitations. In the matter of whether questionnaires or interviews should be used Nisbet (1970:44) states that "The questionnaire may be regarded as a form of interview on paper.", and Borg (1983:415) writes that "With careful planning and sound methodology, the questionnaire can be a very valuable research tool in education." In the light of the above, and for the reasons elucidated at different points throughout this chapter, the use of questionnaires was considered an appropriate means of gathering the required information for this study, with telephonic interviews being used to provide necessary checks and balances in the research.

Because of the impersonal nature of the questionnaire, and because no interviewer was present to explain ambiguities or to check misunderstandings, great care was taken in the construction of the questionnaire. Nisbet (1970:53) claims that by taking great care in designing the questions - checking wording meticulously, using pilot studies and identifying non-respondents - the inherent defects of a questionnaire can be minimized. Care was taken to frame the questions in such a way that no hint was given as to what answer was preferred. The fact that questionnaires are answered in an impersonal way, i.e. not in the presence of the interviewer, was considered an advantage as it ensured that any bias resulting from emotions, embarrassment, suspicion, eagerness to please the interviewer, or the tendency of the interviewer to seek out answers that support his preconceived notions during an interview was avoided.

The questionnaire was designed to gather both quantitative and qualitative

information. A standardized questionnaire was drawn up for each separate group of participants, viz. parents, principals, pupils, and teachers. The questions were slightly modified for each group of participants in order to illicit relevant responses from each particular group. Nisbet (1970:33) says that interviews should be used in preference to questionnaires when the topic being dealt with is complex and where different kinds of information are sought from different kinds of people. With such inquiries, he says, one cannot tell in advance which questions will be applicable to which group. However, a pilot study supported the assumption of the researcher that the topic of this study was not too complex to gain the necessary data by means of a questionnaire. As a standardized questionnaire was used, the kind of information sought from the various stakeholders was the same and not of the "different kinds" which Nisbet deems would be better gathered through interviews. Furthermore, the decision to use questionnaires rather than interviews as the main research instrument of this study, seems justified in the light of what Borg (1983:437) says regarding two studies which showed that respondents were fairly consistent when their interview and questionnaire responses to fact or yes/no questions were compared. The use of a standardized questionnaire made it easier to collate and analyze the data, and made it possible to compare the responses of each group.

The questionnaire started with simple factual questions which ensured that the participants were not intimidated by the task ahead. The more complex issues were dealt with towards the end, as recommended by researchers (Nisbet, 1970:47). At the end of the questionnaire there was an open-ended general question which allowed the respondents themselves to respond to issues which they thought important, but which had not been covered by the

questionnaire.

Most of the questions in the questionnaire were divided into two parts. Nisbet (1970:47) stresses that "Simplicity and brevity are cardinal virtues" in drawing up questions for a questionnaire. The first part of each required a simple "yes" or "no", or a number, or one to two words, as an answer. Answers to these questions often gave the researcher the first indications of the issues on which there would be general agreement amongst the participants, and also indicated points at which the opinions of various stakeholders might diverge. The closed questions in the questionnaire were used to gather quantitative data such as, the size of the school, the percentage Black enrolment at the school, the number and form of parent bodies operating at the school, the estimated percentage of parents involved, the number of participants who agreed with a particular view etc.

The second part of each question was open-ended, requiring the participants to elaborate on their answers to the closed question. The intention here was to allow individuals the freedom to develop their own reasoned arguments, as they might do during an interview. It was hoped, that qualitative data could be obtained in this way. Borg (1983:436) claims that one advantage of interviews is that they permit much greater depth than questionnaires. The open-ended questions aimed at evoking this kind of extensive response and were designed to encourage participants to reveal their opinions and concerns about increased parental involvement. The open-ended questions were not too general that they could not be classified, nor were they too complicated that they discouraged a response. Borg says (1983:419) that evidence is available which suggests that the two

types of question produce very similar information. The open-ended questions could therefore be used to validate the answers given to the closed questions, and vice versa.

Each questionnaire gathered data on the following:-

1. Background information on the participants.
2. Parent-Teacher/Parent Association (PTAs/PAs) membership and the perceived role of PTAs/PAs.
3. Governing Body (GB) membership and its role.
4. Communication between the teachers and the parent body, i.e. the parents of all the pupils enrolled at the school.
5. The relationships between the different categories of stakeholders.
6. The perceived current status of teachers as compared to other professionals.
7. The nature and degree of involvement of the various stakeholders in the school process.
8. The possibilities and limitations of increasing parental involvement.
9. The capacity of the different stakeholders to make objective and sound decisions concerning education.
10. The possibility that parents could undermine the transformation of education.
11. The perceived reasons for a move towards greater parental involvement in education.

Administration Of The Questionnaire

Permission to conduct research was first sought from the four different District Superintendents responsible for the schools in which the surveys were conducted. A copy of the research proposal, as well as of the questionnaires to be used, was forwarded to the Gauteng Department of Education(GDE) and permission to conduct the research was granted, subject to certain conditions (See Appendix C).

Once permission was granted, the principals were telephonically contacted to establish whether they were willing to assist in the study. At the same time the principals were given a brief summary of the aims and objectives of the research.

Attached to the questionnaires was a letter:- a) briefly explaining the purpose of the research, b) giving brief instructions as regards the completion of the questionnaire, and c) giving an opportunity to indicate whether feedback would be desired on completion of the research project. Nisbet (1970:50) and Borg (1983:427) suggest that respondents are more likely to cooperate if they feel the information they provide is important and will provide some usefulness.

The principal of each school was asked to complete a copy of the questionnaire and to have one member of their teaching staff (preferably not a member of the school's executive), two parents active in the school (one preferably a member of the Governing Body), and a pupil, complete the questionnaires. The intention here was to ensure that the conditions of administration were as similar as possible for each group of participants

in the sample. (Further reasons for asking the principal to select the participants at his/her school are given on page 32.) It was emphasized that no attempt was being made to compare schools, but that the research was being conducted to determine the views of the different groups of participants involved. Principals were further assured that no specific reference would be made to any particular participant or school.

The questionnaire was sent out at the beginning of the third term, i.e. at a stage of the year when it was estimated that the participants had the time to deal with the questionnaire and were not too busy marking exams, coaching sport etc. It was requested that the answered questionnaires be ready for collection by the first week of the fourth term, giving respondents adequate time to complete the questionnaires thoroughly.

Sample

The following is a report on the composition of the sample. This will explain to readers to what degree the sample was representative of the target population. The researcher is confident, within a reasonable limit, that, were he to draw a different sample of the same size and using the same procedures, he would obtain approximately the same result from the study.

The opinions and views were sought of the members of each group of stakeholders within the target population, i.e. parents, principals, pupils, and teachers, likely to be affected by increased parental involvement. Pupils were included as it was deemed important to determine the views of those who are ultimately supposed to benefit from increased

parental involvement. By including each of the above groups, it was hoped an adequate picture of the concerns of each group would be forthcoming, and an holistic understanding of the issues would be possible.

Random sampling is one of the techniques employed to ensure that a sample of participants is representative. Borg (1983:244) defines a random sample as "one in which each individual in the defined population has an *equal* chance of being included." He says "it is rarely possible to study a simple random sample that is perfect" (Borg, 1983:248). When subjects selected randomly fail to cooperate (i.e. refuse to participate, or are lost through attrition), "the remaining subjects no longer constitute a random sample because persons who agree to participate are likely to be different to those who do not" (Borg, 1983:251). Using a volunteer sample can, for the same reason, be a problem.

The researcher is aware that there is the possibility of bias by working through the principal, but he also thought that certain problems encountered with a sample could, to a large extent, be overcome by working through the principals. Firstly, it was assumed that if principals selected the participants, a greater response rate would be achieved than could be reached if the researcher himself appealed to parents, teachers and pupils on the basis of random selection. Secondly, it was assumed that principals (who all seemed, when contacted by telephone, very keen and willing to participate - an important point in reducing attrition according to Borg (1983:258)) would want to be of as much help as possible and would therefore select participants with an interest in the subject and who they felt could be relied upon to complete the questionnaire. Borg says (1983:416) "The most obvious consideration involved in selection of

subjects for a questionnaire study is to get people who will be able to supply the information you want." If the participants had been selected at random by the researcher (as opposed to the principal) there is the distinct possibility that he might have given the questionnaire to individuals who did not have the required information or motivation, and who would have furnished inadequate answers. Also, the probability of the types of persons selected by the different principals being similar is greater than if these participants had been selected randomly. This would have reduced sample bias. The correctness of the two assumptions is borne out by the fact that a questionnaire was returned by all participants, and moreover, all participants had made an effort to answer the greater majority of questions, i.e. both the open-ended and closed questions. It should be noted that the method used for selecting schools for the study ensured that the principals were randomly chosen (see page 34).

Nisbet (1970:52) says "A response rate of less than 70% generally implies that the findings lack validity for general application." He says that in practice it is generally difficult to get a 70% response from people such as principals or managers in industry, as they are too busy. Participation of the principals in this study was ensured by first contacting them telephonically and discussing their participation. If a principal had declined, the principal of the other English medium secondary school in the town would have been contacted. By allowing the principal to select the parents who were to participate, the likelihood of an overcommitted parent being selected was also greatly reduced.

A form of what Borg calls 'stratified sampling' was employed, i.e. sampling which ensures "that certain subgroups in the population are represented in

the sample in proportion to their numbers in the population itself" (Borg, 1983:248). Thus, as explained on page 30, the sample was composed of two parents, one teacher, one pupil, and one principal from each of the five Model C schools chosen. The total number of participants, including those involved in the pilot study, was twenty-seven. The study was never meant to be empirical, with accurate statistical analysis to prove a hypothesis, but is rather an exploratory and illuminative study. It was realized at the outset that the data gathered would not be truly representative of all stakeholders involved in education, but only of a specific section of the local community, namely stakeholders associated with English-medium Model C secondary schools on the East Rand. That only twenty-seven participants were involved in the sample is therefore not a concern. There is, however, no reason to believe that the views and opinions expressed by these participants do not reflect (at least to a certain extent) those of stakeholders in other sectors of the community and in other areas of the country.

The decision to conduct the study in only English medium Model C secondary schools on the East Rand narrowed down the number of schools that could possibly be involved. Nisbet (1970:46) warns that "information from large numbers can be used only so far as it can be classified. Accurate comparisons of response become impossible otherwise." He further says (1970:25) "..much of the effort is wasted in confirming results which would have come out clearly in a much smaller sample." Where there were two English medium Model C schools in a town, the school whose name began with a letter nearest the end of the alphabet was chosen.

Only five principals (as opposed to ten parents) could be questioned as

each school has only one principal. To prevent any notions of bias in the sample when comparing the views of principals with those of teachers, an equal number of teachers was selected, namely five, i.e. one from each school. In similar vein and in order to balance the number of educators with parents, ten parents were selected, i.e. two per school.

By allowing the principals to select participants, the types of person in each group of respondents, at each school, had a greater chance of being reasonably homogenous than if they had been chosen randomly. The type of parent who was chosen by the principal from each school, for example, is likely to be one who has regular contact with the principal due to his/her involvement in some way or other in the school process. The same can be said of the teachers who were approached by the principals to participate in the study. If the parents and the teachers had been chosen in a purely randomly way, there is a good chance many of them would have had little interest in the subject matter being studied. It was considered more important to survey the views of those interested in the issues around parental involvement.

It could be argued that the study was based on too narrow an accessible population to make any valid generalizations for the target population. However, it must be conceded that there is sufficient evidence that the accessible population was reasonably similar to the target population with a sufficient number of critical variables to ensure that the study's findings have some relevance.

Pilot Study

The researcher used the school at which he works for the pilot study for logistical reasons and because he thought it would be much easier to mobilize participants. The school, like those in which the study was to be conducted, is an East Rand English medium Model C secondary school. The staff, pupil, teacher and parent composition of the school (i.e. racial and class composition) is also very similar to that likely to be encountered in the schools chosen for the study.

The pilot study was conducted using a sample which was similar to the group from whom the questionnaire sample was to be selected. Those involved in the pilot study were two parents, a deputy principal, a pupil and a teacher.

The deputy principal, rather than the principal, was chosen for the pilot study (the principal being used later in the study itself). It was felt that the deputy principal would have the time and would be more willingly to discuss deficiencies in the questionnaire than would the principal.

The head girl was chosen as the pupil participant for two reasons. Firstly, there was a very good chance that the principals at the different schools would ask either their head boy or girl to participate, as they would be considered capable of giving a good account of themselves and their schools when answering the questionnaire. (As it turned out, all but one of the pupils chosen to participate were head prefects.) Secondly, the head girl in the pilot study had expressed interest in becoming a teacher and therefore had an interest in education issues.

The teacher chosen to participate in the pilot study was someone with a reputation for critical awareness, independent thought, and who was someone who had also shown an interest in the subject of increased parent involvement in the school process.

As discussed above (see page 35) the selection of individuals with an interest in the subject being studied is considered a more important criterion than ensuring that the participants are randomly selected.

A pilot study was conducted to ensure that the questionnaire would provide enough data to make it a feasible research instrument. It was also used to ensure that the questions were clear and meaningful. It was furthermore hoped that a pilot study would reveal whether there were any questions that were so controversial as to cause the participants to limit their participation. Respondents were briefly questioned when they returned their questionnaire to establish whether they felt any of the questions were ambiguous or threatening.

The pilot study revealed that there were very few ambiguities in the questions, only a few inappropriate questions, and only a few questions that the respondents would try avoid answering because they felt threatened by the question or felt unable to answer it. Where such problems were identified the wording of the question was changed or an additional explanation given. Of significant importance was the fact that the pilot study confirmed that the questionnaire was an effective research instrument.

Interviews

It has already been argued that questionnaires (as opposed to interviews), was deemed to be appropriate as the main source of information for this particular study.

After the initial analysis of the data, an attempt was to be made to interview telephonically certain participants to:

a) find out if there was a reason for their failure to answer certain questions
b) validate certain data (i.e. confirm that what the participant had written was what he/she meant)
c) explore further certain data

It was unfortunately not possible, for a number of logistical reasons, to contact many of the participants. (It is the policy of many schools not to divulge the telephone numbers of their parents to outsiders. Policy also dictates that pupils may not be interviewed without the consent of the parents.) However, as all participants seemed to cope well with answering the questionnaire, took the time to answer the open-ended questions in detail, and as telephone interviews were not meant to be the main source of information, not being able to telephonically interview some participants was not considered a major problem when analyzing the data.

Data Analysis

Insights gained from the literature review played an important role in assisting in the interpretation of the answers to the open-ended questions.

Subjective interpretation of the answers to open-ended questions is a real possibility. Every attempt has been made to present the views of all the stakeholders as accurately as possible. If a particular view was expressed by only one participant, then the wording of the sentence indicates that this is so. The quantitative data very often helps to indicate what the majority viewpoint was.

The use of 'yes/no' answers allowed for the answers to questions to be quantified, to a degree, and to be written up in numerical tables. The tables highlighted areas where there was a considerable degree of consensus, and areas where opinions differed. A summarized version of these tables is presented in Appendix A. However, it is important to make the point that the results presented in the tables must be seen as indications of trends of thought, rather than accurate statistical data.

As each questionnaire was received, the quantifiable data were entered into tables. Checks were made for incomplete, inaccurate, inconsistent or irrelevant data. As stated on page 38, telephonic interviews were used , where possible, to clarify certain answers.

The tables below give one example of how the data was recorded and compared.

Question:

"Who should be involved in making decisions about the dress of teachers ?"

A. RESPONSES BY NUMBER	RESPONSES OF								
	Parents		Principals		Pupils		Teachers		Total
	Yes	Replies	Yes	Replies	Yes	Replies	Yes	Replies	Replies
To involvement of:									
Parents	3	11	1	6		5	1	5	27
Principals	10	11	6	6	5	5	4	5	27
Pupils		11		6		5		5	27
Teachers	4	11	4	6	2	5	3	5	27

B. RESPONSES BY PERCENTAGE	RESPONSES OF Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents	42	26		31	18
Principals	24	26	26	21	92
Pupils					
Teachers	17	32	19	29	48

C. RESPONSES BY PERCENTAGE	RESPONSES OF Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents	60	40
Principals	50	50
Pupils		
Teachers	36	63

NB. i) Only whole numbers are shown in the tables.

ii) It was not possible to make comparisons on the basis of the number of positive responses to a question because the number of individuals of stakeholder groups who answered a question in each category varied: eleven parents and only five principals may have responded to a particular question.

iii) Because there was often a different number of respondents in the different categories, a system of weighting was employed to enable comparisons to be made.

For the purposes of comparison, the following figures were then calculated:

a) The percentage of participants who gave a positive response to a particular question, as per the categories of stakeholders. (See table B above.) These percentages help determine whether the views of a particular group were significantly different to the views of other groups.

b) The percentage of participants, regardless of the group to which they belong, who gave a positive response to a particular question.

(See the sixth column, "Total", of table B on the previous page.)

c) The percentage of parents, compared to teachers and principals, was calculated. This was deemed necessary because

i) questionnaires were given to two parents of each school, but to only one principal and one teacher of each school.

ii) although it was necessary to establish whether principals and teachers differed on a particular issue, it should also be apparent that the combined views of teachers and principals represent the viewpoint of the professional teaching body at a particular school, as opposed to that of the viewpoint of parents and pupils.

(See table C on the previous page.)

In instances where respondents answered 'yes' or 'no' to a question, the percentage of 'yes' and 'no' answers does not add up to 100%. This is because in some instances respondents answered both 'yes' and 'no' to a particular question.

In some instances, participants were asked to quantify their answers, eg.

Question:

a) With how many schools have you been involved ?

b) What is the total number of years' involvement with these schools ?

A. RESPONSES BY NUMBER	INVOLVEMENT OF Parents No.	Parents Replies	Principals No.	Principals Replies	Pupils No.	Pupils Replies	Teachers No.	Teachers Replies	Total Replies
a) Schools	32	11	23	6			10	5	22
b) Years	133	11	133	6			39	5	27

B. AVERAGE	INVOLVEMENT OF			
	Parents No.	Principals No.	Pupils No.	Teachers No.
a) Schools	2.9	3.8		2
b) Years	12	26		7.8

NB. i) The number (No.) in table A above is the accumulative total for all of a particular group of stakeholders.

ii) For the purposes of comparison, the average for each group of stakeholders was calculated. (See table B above.)

As each questionnaire was received, the answers to the open-ended questions were recorded and grouped according to

i) the particular question asked, and

ii) the particular category of respondent.

This was done to facilitate comparisons, i.e. to see if there were similarities in the answers of a particular group and whether a particular group's answers differed significantly from the answers of other groups.

The matching of the answers to the open-ended questions with the answers to the 'yes/no' questions allowed for the verification of the data, i.e. it allowed the researcher to confirm whether the interpretation of the yes/no answers was accurate. The use of telephonic interviews also assisted in this aspect. Asking questions of a similar nature about a particular issue also helped with the validation of answers.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the way in which both quantitative and qualitative data on parental involvement in the school process was gathered

using a questionnaire with closed and open questions, and a select number of telephone interviews. The use of a questionnaire was justifiable because a well prepared questionnaire has certain advantages over the use of interviews which can be subjective especially if the interviewer is inexperienced at interviewing. It was also argued that the pilot study had shown that the open-ended questions would yield the type of qualitative information desired.

The chapter explains why a system of random sampling was not employed. The ability of such randomly chosen participants to complete a questionnaire is often disappointing and attrition and insufficient cooperation can cause a sample bias. It was argued that these limitations could be overcome by asking the principals, who were randomly chosen, to select the participants at their school, within certain broad guidelines given to them.

The chapter started by describing the context in which the study was undertaken. It explained that English Model C schools had been chosen because they were the most indicative of the likely composition of school in the future. It was argued that the size of the sample was large enough, within reason, to reflect the views of the stakeholders within the target population. It was further suggested that there was no reason why the views expressed by the participants should not reflect (to some extent at least) those of stakeholders in other sectors of the community and other areas of the country.

The chapter concludes with an explanation of how the data was analyzed in order to lay the groundwork for attempts, in Chapter 5, to identify trends and highlight differences in the views of the different categories of

stakeholders, as regards parental involvement in the school process.

CHAPTER 3

ENGLISH-MEDIUM MODEL C SECONDARY SCHOOLS ON THE EAST RAND:

Contextual Issues

This chapter will examine the context - i.e. the circumstances relevant to environment - in which the research was conducted. This information is intended to contextualize the views expressed (in Chapter 5) by the different respondents as regards increasing the degree of parental involvement in the school process and the nature of this involvement.

3.1 The East Rand

The schools in which the research was done are all on the East Rand.

The towns and cities on the East Rand owe their existence to the discovery of gold. Industries gradually developed in these towns and cities to support the mining activities. As the relative importance of the mines declined, the surrounding industries became major employers. The number of so-called blue-collar workers (i.e. non-professional, non-office workers) steadily increased as industry grew. The labour force on the mines, consisted mainly of large numbers of migrant labourers housed in compounds on the mine property. Managerial and skilled positions were reserved mainly for Whites. As the importance of the mines diminished, the Black labour force moved out of the compounds and into the local Black townships. Competition for jobs in industry increased and many Blacks remained

unemployed.

As Blacks began to struggle for their freedom from apartheid and for equal opportunities, many Whites became alarmed and began to join conservative political parties and groups. The Town Councils of Boksburg, Brakpan and Springs had a Conservative Party majority in the latter years of the apartheid. When the ANC took over control of the country the worst fears of many of the Whites on the East Rand were realized. A number left the country. Many of those who stayed did so because they could not afford to leave. Many of those who stayed have, on the surface, shown a remarkable change in attitude. The possibility exists, however, that many of these inhabitants, parents of children in local Model C English schools, having lost political power, will try, given the opportunity, to retain the status quo in schools. Although the English-speaking community in SA is often perceived to have been politically more liberal than the Afrikaans-speaking community, English-speaking Whites living on the East Rand, where they are in the minority, very often came to adopt the conservative views of their Afrikaans neighbours.

There are no tertiary education institutions, like universities or technikons, on the East Rand, to develop a culture of learning, nor, in the majority of cases, do families have a long history of tertiary education. The socio-economic background of the inhabitants of the East Rand (see page 45) has not helped either. The community consequently accords status to individuals, not on the basis of their educational achievements, but on the basis of their material assets. The significance of this is that many parents hold teachers in low esteem, do not see the acquisition of a good education as a priority, and fail to see why they should give their time to

assist schools in the education of their children.

3.2 Model C Schools

In 1990, in the latter years of the Nationalist Party's control, an announcement was made about a series of new governance models for schools. The announcement was made at a time when the number of enrolments in White schools was declining threatening many schools with closure, and the Black community was calling for Black children to be enrolled at "White" schools (NEPI, 1992:22).

Parents had essentially four options. The first option, Model A, allowed for the conversion of a government school to a private school where parents would take full responsibility for the financing, governance, management etc. of the school. Option two, Model B, provided for a state funded school, but gave the GB the right to determine the admission policy. The third option was Model C. Model C provided for the conversion of the school into a state-aided school under the control of a GB elected by the parents. Finally parents could choose to maintain the *status quo*, i.e. Model D.

Initially very few White schools chose Model C; most schools chose Model B (NEPI, 1992:21). This left the government with the responsibility of funding the school, but gave the parents the opportunity to control who would be enrolled at the school. Many of these schools introduced 'Entrance Exams' which enabled the parents and teachers to screen the pupils they admitted to their schools. Essentially parents were able

refuse Black pupils admission to their schools.

In 1992 most White schools changed to Model C schools when it was announced by government that unless parents specifically voted against it, all Model D and Model B schools would be converted to Model C status. The announcement was made at a time when significant cuts in the education budget were being made, and there was a real possibility that 11 000 teachers would lose their posts (NEPI, 1992: 22). Parents of Model B and D schools had the option of either accepting a staff reduction, and the subsequent significant increase in pupil:teacher ratio, or the option of accepting Model C schools. By choosing Model C they accepted that the government would devote its entire budgetary allocation to staffing costs, thus saving teachers posts, and that the parent body would be responsible for the costs of textbooks and educational materials, maintenance and insurance of buildings, rates and services, and all capital costs (NEPI, 1992:21). Less than 100 schools opted to retain the status quo or Model B (NEPI, 1992:22).

The adoption of Model C gave elected GBs more responsibilities and decision making powers than the old management councils (NEPI, 1992:14), particularly in the areas of funding of schools and the use of these funds (DNE, 1992:42). It would have been difficult for the government not to give parents at Model C schools greater control over school expenditure when it was expected that the parents make a substantially greater financial contribution to the maintenance and running of the schools. It is probably true that parents who pay more than they had previously paid, expect more from a school and expect to have a greater say in how the school is run. The possibility exists that some of these parents, given a

greater say, will try their very best to use their new decision-making powers to maintain the status quo in the schools, as it was before the ANC came to power, i.e. a predominantly white student body. In reality, because of the decreasing numbers of white enrolments, certain schools, in particular English schools, were coerced into accepting limited numbers of Black pupils to ensure they could meet their financial commitments.

3.3 The People Involved In The Study - Parents, Pupils, Principals, And Teachers

There are a number of variables, as regards the participants, that could have influenced the way in which they answered the questions in the study. These are: their gender, their age, what qualifications they have, what experience of the school process they have, and whether their views are typical of other residents of the East Rand.

The participants in the study were more or less equally divided along gender lines: 48% of the respondents were male and 51% female; 63% of the principals and teachers were male, whereas 63% of the parents involved were female (see Table A1.1). This background information serves the purpose of establishing that there was no significant gender bias in the views expressed.

The pupils involved in the study were all teenagers. Participants who are young are often thought to be inexperienced and less knowledgable than older participants. This view was supported to a large degree by the answers given to the open-ended questions by pupils; many appeared to

idealize the role of the principal and/or teachers.

The majority of parents, principals and teachers fell into the 30 - 50 age group (see Table A1.2). Experience is gained by observation of, and practical experience of, events (Complete Wordfinder, 1992:519). The more years an individual has had to observe an event, or gain practical experience of the event, the greater one can assume their knowledge of that event. One can surely therefore presume that respondents falling into the age group 30 - 50 years have had the opportunity to acquire a fair degree of knowledge of how schools operate, what their inadequacies are and what degree and nature of parental involvement would be of benefit to schools, and could therefore make a valuable contribution to this study. One must, however, also take into consideration that participants falling into the 30 - 50 age group may be set in their ways, and may be blinded to opportunities that the new policy offers in providing for greater parental involvement. A younger age group of parents may have fresh ideas, but are unlikely to have children of secondary school age. It is therefore not surprising to find that very few of the respondents came from a younger age group.

It was further felt necessary to determine whether any one category of stakeholders had been afforded a greater opportunity to gain knowledge of the school process. The number of schools with which each individual had been involved was used as an indicator of how varied their experience was. The number of years an individual had been involved in schools was used as an indicator of how extensive their experience. The data indicated no significant differences between the different categories of stakeholders. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that one group of respondents had a more

thorough knowledge of the school process than another and that more attention should given to their answers to the questionnaire. Teachers one could fairly safely assume have better insight (than parents) of the effect (in certain areas) of greater parental involvement on the school process, as they are involved in the school process on a day-to-day basis.

As mentioned earlier, the expectations of what should be gained from education, will most likely differ in the case of a professionally-qualified person and a blue-collar worker. It is important, therefore, to be aware of the qualifications held by the different categories of stakeholders as this will have an influence on their views as to the possibilities and limitations of greater parental involvement. Fifty nine percent of all participants (excluding pupils) have a Bachelor degree or higher (see Table A1.3).

All but two of the parents work and live on the East Rand. The views of participants, it can therefore be assumed, reflect to a large degree those of other English-speaking East Rand residents. Participants spend the greater percentage of their lives at home and in their workplace. It is there that their views will be moulded.

3.4 The School Structures In Which Parents Have Been Involved In The Past.

To date, parents have mainly been involved in schools in two spheres, i.e. in Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs)/Parent Associations(PAs), and in Governing Bodies (GBs).

PTAs/PAs have mainly been concerned with organizing fund-raising activities to supplement school fees. Their members, in the majority of cases, served on a voluntary basis. Membership of the PTA/PA did not empower parents to become involved in the school process. They only served to support the school.

GB members were elected onto the Body by interested parents of the school. Members of governing bodies of Model C schools gained a fair degree of responsibility for the schools when the school became Model C schools in 1992. The buildings and stock, such as textbooks, sports equipment, laboratory apparatus etc., were handed over to the parents to use and maintain for the benefit of the local community. The GB, in consultation with the parents, had to determine school fees adequate enough to carry out this function. The governors also made recommendations to the education department with regard to the appointment of staff. Model C School governors therefore began to play a much more significant role in decision-making within the school than they had previously done. Many of the views expressed, by parents and teachers, must be seen to have been influenced by their perception of the realities of parental involvement since the schools became Model C.

Conclusion

The chapter has sketched the context and background to the degree and nature of increased parental involvement in the school process.

It has explained how it came about that a large number of the White parents on the East Rand are blue-collar workers, how competition for jobs between

black and white workers arose, and how the perceived threat of blacks demanding their freedom from apartheid and equal opportunities drove many of these White workers to join conservative political parties concerned with maintaining the status quo. It has been argued that many of these people may further use the opportunity provided for a greater role in decision-making in the school process, to try to maintain the status quo in schools.

It has been explained how parents were given the option of paying more for their children's education as well as gaining a greater role in decision-making as regards the funding and use of school funds, or having the number of teachers at state controlled schools reduced. If parents had not voted for Model C schools, they would not have had the decision-making powers that they now have, but would still have had to fund extra teachers if they had wanted to keep the pupil:teacher ratio down to a level acceptable to them. It was suggested that parents of Model C schools who pay more than previously for their children's education, can be expected to show a keen interest in what transpires at schools and will want to be more involved in the school process.

The chapter then went on to look at the people who participated in the study and how their different backgrounds might influence the views they have expressed concerning the degree and nature of parental involvement in education.

The chapter closes with a brief description of the opportunities that arose for parents of Model C schools to be involved in school life. It shows how governors of Model C schools, in addition to the duties they previously

had, have had to take on the responsibility for funding the maintenance of the facilities and the running of the schools.

CHAPTER 4

THE PROPOSED NEW POLICY FOR INCREASED PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION AND THE POSSIBILITIES FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION

The purpose of this chapter is, firstly, to look briefly at the new policy entails and then to examine the possibilities for its implementation with a focus on (a) previous parental involvement in PTAs and GBs, and (b) the degree of successful communication between parents and teachers.

4.1 The New Policy Concerning Parental Involvement In Education

The new policy's chief aim is to ensure that the education system in South Africa is rehabilitated in a way that advances the democratic transformation of the society as a whole (Education White Paper 2, 1995:5). The policy aims at getting all members of the community - parents, teachers, pupils, and other interested community members - to work together through governing bodies and in partnership with the provincial departments of education for the betterment of schools and for the improvement of the quality of education in South Africa as a whole (Education White Paper 2, 1995:5). It aims to uphold the rights of parents, teachers, and pupils and to promote their acceptance for the funding, governance and organisation of schools in partnership with the State.

It is clear from a review of policy documents that the intention of the government is to increase parental involvement in education. Parental involvement is to be exercised mainly through governance of schools and the adoption of a policy congruent with providing the best quality education for all pupils. Governors therefore carry a great responsibility for providing an environment conducive to learning. The governors will have to meet together regularly to fulfil their function, and will have to hold meetings with all stakeholders as often as possible to ensure that they have their support. They will have to do this without any reimbursement. They will have to find ways of encouraging parents to supply the funds necessary to provide the learning environment desired.

4.2 The Possibilities Of Implementation In The Light Of Previous Parental Involvement In PTAs And GBs.

4.2.1 Parental Involvement In PTAs In The Past

Of the five schools in which research was done, two had not had a PTA for at least a year and one had just decided to dissolve its PTA.

The average number of parents attending a PTA meeting was between thirteen (principal's estimate of numbers) and twenty one (parents' estimate of numbers) (see Table A10.3). Approximately one quarter of those who attended PTA meetings were teachers. Parental attendance at meetings was thus poor in the light of school enrolment (the average number of pupils enrolled at the five schools was 831). If the ratio of teachers to parents is taken into account the teaching staff appear more willing/able to be involved, than do the parents.

Ninety percent of participants in the study agreed that most parents attend PTA meetings at the beginning of the year (see Table A2.1) with a significant fall-off in attendance as the year progresses. Only a crisis at a school appears to motivate parents to attend a meeting.

Of the few parents who did attend PTA meetings at secondary schools, the greater majority are those of standard six pupils, followed by standard seven pupils (see Table A2.4). It appears that parents' interest in PTAs waned as their child moved up through the standards. Two arguments put forward to explain the drop in numbers as pupils progress through school were: "As the student gets older, the parents don't feel the same need to support their growing child" (Parent, Boksburg:1995), and "As students advance through the standards, so their parents' careers develop, resulting in parents having less time for school-related activities" (Principal, Brakpan:1995).

The data indicates that PTA meetings were almost exclusively attended by mothers (see Table A2.2), whereas GBs were the domain of fathers (see Table A3.1). PTAs were mainly involved with the raising of funds which involves a fair degree of "legwork" and is often very time-consuming. GBs concern themselves with decision-making and the exercise of power. The work of governors generally does not require as much time as that required of PTA members because GBs delegate to others the responsibility of implementing GB decisions. Mothers traditionally dominated PTAs because it appears they had the time to be involved. The decrease in support for PTAs over the years may be explained by the increase in the number of single and working mothers and the relatively less time they have to attend meetings. Fathers have been involved on the GBs in line with the traditional perceptions of

the male role, viz. the exercising of power and the making of decisions. Changing attitudes to the role of women in society may see an increase in the number of women serving on Governing Bodies.

Participants were asked to indicate which group of parents, Black or White (based on the percentage of pupils at the school) attended PTA meetings in the largest numbers. The data suggests that Whites supported PTAs in greater numbers (see Table 2.3). The White parents tend to live close to the schools whereas most Black parents live far away and experience transport problems, especially at night when the meetings were held. Black parents may not, as yet, feel confident enough to attend meetings, and the attitudes of some of the parents involved in the study make it doubtful whether any of the White parents went out of their way to involve the Black parents. Comments made, suggest that there is still an attitude of 'them and us' in some areas. Many conservative Whites still see Blacks who speak up, as being 'militant', and are unlikely to encourage their involvement. Black parents could, on the other hand, be intimidated by the overwhelming number of Whites at meetings and may feel that they have little or no role to play. Black parents may also be unaccustomed to participation in bodies, like PTAs and GBs which can influence the school process.

The declining involvement of parents in PTAs in the recent past does not auger well for the successful implementation of a new policy where the specific aim is increasing parental involvement in the school process.

4.2.2 Parental involvement in Governing Bodies in the past

It appears that parental involvement in schools in the form of GBs has been quite successful in Model C schools, in some respects. Eighty one percent

of all respondents thought that the governors of their schools have dealt reasonably well with the issues they consider important.

However, the reasons for which parents have become involved in GBs in the past do not appear to mirror the intentions of the new policy. A number of respondents, parents, principals, pupils, and teachers, expressed the view that some of the parents serving on GBs, are doing so not to contribute to the upliftment of the school and education in general, as is the intention of the policy, but for more selfish reasons. Some governors were accused of seeking to benefit their own children specifically (Parent,Boksburg: 1995, Principal,Brakpan:1995, Pupil,Kempton Park:1995, Teacher,Boksburg: 1995); of seeking to ensure that school policy is based on their <u>own</u> value system (Parent,Boksburg:1995, Parent,Kempton Park:1995, Teacher,Boksburg: 1995); or of seeking to gain power (Parent,Boksburg:1995) Principal,Benoni: 1995, Principal,Boksburg:1995)and 'self glorification' (Principal,Brakpan: 1995, Principal,Boksburg:1995).

Further doubt is therefore cast as regards the possibilities for successful implementation of this new policy.

4.2.3 The degree of communication between parents and teachers.

The policy of increasing parental involvement in the school process will have to be effectively communicated to parents if its implementation is to succeed. If it is not, the degree of parental involvement is unlikely to increase significantly.

Data gathered seems to suggest a breakdown in the channels of communication

between parents and teachers. This could well account for the wrong perceptions some parents have of teachers and visa versa.

Beresford (1992:46-52) claimed lack of understanding and poor communication between teachers and parents, in Britain, resulted in teachers being blamed for the economic ills in Britain.

To gauge the level of communication and understanding between parents and teachers in the schools involved in the study, parents were asked whether they were ever informed about the school's teaching methods and general approach to education.

These are the quantitative results.

RESPONSES BY PERCENTAGE	To parents being informed about school's teaching methods & general approach to education				
	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Yes	22	35	21	21	70
No	31		34	34	29

RESPONSES BY PERCENTAGE	To parents being informed about school's teaching methods & general approach to education	
	Parents	Principals & Teachers
Yes	43	56
No	46	33

It can be seen from the table that although 70% of all the respondents said teachers do communicate these issues to them, and all the principals were adamant that they do, there were four of the eleven parents who said "no". There were also pupils, and even two teachers, who said the matter is not discussed with parents. One parent was so disgusted by the school's inability to communicate with him that he went so far as to suggest that teachers should "receive 'proper training' in all aspects of

communication".

The study further revealed that the three most common forms of communication in all schools are parents' evenings, newsletters and interviews (see Table A4.1). None of these means of communication, it appears from the study, is good enough to provide adequate channels of communication necessary to establish a good working partnership between parents and teachers: parents' evenings, held only two to three times a year, are generally very poorly attended; newsletters, it appears, seldom get passed on to parents by their children; and interviews are not an appropriate means of communicating policy to all stakeholders. One parent (Boksburg:1995) bemoaned the fact that the Governing Body of his school does not hold regular 'briefing sessions' to keep parents informed of developments.

Schools have attempted to keep parents up to date with the new policy developments through regular newsletters. How aware parents are of the new policy is very dependent on whether they receive the newsletters from their children, and the attention they pay to media reports on the new policy.

Both parents and teachers expressed the need for parents to be encouraged to take the various communications, made by the schools, more seriously. The comments made by many of the respondents suggest that many parents do not take their responsibilities relating to their children's education seriously enough. A parent from Boksburg (1995) said: " [Parents are] totally disinterested in [their] children's school career". The study revealed that parents' evenings are not considered to be important events in parents' lives and that many do not take the time to read newsletters

and take cognisance of their contents. One parent (Springs:1995) said "Parents need to take note and realize the importance of the communications"

Conclusion

Firstly, what is apparent is that the majority of parents are unable or unwilling to become involved in matters pertaining to education. PTA meetings demand little of parents; they are held only once a month in the evenings (excluding the school holidays).

Secondly, GBs appear to have done a good enough job to satisfy most parents. In connection with the introduction of this new policy there are two ways of interpreting this finding:

a) In a positive way, ie. there is small number of dedicated parents capable of carrying out the minimum requirements of the policy, viz. the holding of meetings to formulate policy.
b) In a negative way, i.e. it may indicate apathy on the part of the larger majority of parents: the majority of parents are willing to let others get on with the job, in which they have neither the time nor interest to become involved.

Unless there is healthy competition for membership of the governing body, and an ample supply of willing and able parents to assist the governors, it will be difficult for them to implement the policy as intended, i.e. to work in a partnership with the parents, community, and provincial authorities to attain a better quality of education for all in South Africa. It has already been intimated in this report that blue-collar

workers from the East Rand may use the opportunity offered by the greater empowerment of parents to further their own political ends and to maintain the status quo in schools. Healthy competition for membership of governing bodies, and greater parental involvement, would go a long way to ensuring that the interests of a small section of the parent community (at a particular school) are not pursued to the detriment of the educational interests of the pupil body.

Finally, the chapter showed that it is going to be difficult to convey this new policy to all members of the parent community. This means that there will always be a sizeable portion of the parent community not involved in attempts to provide the best possible education for all pupils. They will remain marginalized and disenchanted, will be critical of most changes, and will remain uncooperative, thereby generally impoverishing the school community.

CHAPTER 5
VIEWS OF STAKEHOLDERS ON PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

This chapter aims to show that the possibility exists for a greater degree of parental involvement, but that the degree and nature of the involvement will depend on the nature of specific activities.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the new policy concerning parental involvement revolves mainly around governance, and the role of parents in the formulation and adoption of school policy. The White Paper (1996:16) states that teachers and principals are to be involved in the day-to-day organization of teaching and learning. Personal experience has shown that conflict between parents and teachers arises because of differences in perceptions of what constitutes 'formulation and adoption of policy' and what constitutes 'the day-to-day organization of teaching and learning'.

The implementation of a policy advocating increased parental involvement in the school process will only be a success if the barriers that prevent teachers and parents working together successfully are removed. One of the major barriers is the wrong perception each group of stakeholders has of the other. There is a perception that greater parental involvement in the school process will threaten the professional status of the teacher. Many teachers fear that parents will interfere in their carrying out of the professional duties. Parents see teachers as unwilling to implement change and welcome parents aboard. The EDUPOL report on 'Parental Involvement in education' (April,1993:45) gives this as one of the reasons parents have

not become involved in education. The report refers to the "Professional Territoriality" of teachers. If parents and teachers are given a better understanding of the nature and degree of involvement of parents in the school process, much of the tension that is perceived to exist between the two groups will be minimized. This in turn will improve the chances for the successful implementation of the new policy.

The chapter will examine:-

* The degree and nature of parent involvement in the school process as perceived by the different groups, i.e.
  a) Parents b) Principals and Teachers c) Pupils;
* The perceived relationship that exists between the parents and teachers;
* The capacity of parents to increase their involvement in the school process;
* The perceived advantages and disadvantages of increasing parental involvement in the school process; and
* The perceived effect of an increase in parental involvement on the status of the teacher.

For each activity, I first map out the findings of my research and then discuss the findings in relation to the context, the literature, and the possibilities and limitations for parental involvement in the school process.

By making available a summary of this study to the different schools involved in the research, it is hoped that the different stakeholders can be shown that there is consensus on many issues. This, it is hoped, will lay to rest many of the misgivings concerning the respective roles of

parents and teachers.

The Degree And Nature Of Parental Involvement In The School Process As Perceived By The Different Stakeholders.

School policy (see Table A7.1)

The data gathered indicates that principals, teachers and parents should all be involved in the drawing up of the school's policy, i.e. the principles and guidelines which will determine the school's approach to education. Parents felt that they should be involved in determining school policy as it would affect their children's lives at the school. Principals argued that the Student's Representative Council should also be involved.

Responses by Percentage	To involvement in drawing up of school policy by:			
	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers
By all respondents	66%	85%	44%	77%

School Policy was one of only two areas where a reasonable percentage of the respondents thought pupils should have a say.

The policy of a school, if carefully drawn up, will be the precursor to determining the nature and degree of involvement of parents in the school process. It is important that all stakeholders are involved in the drawing-up of the policy and there appears to be little disagreement about this. An overwhelming percentage of the parents interviewed thought that the parents should be involved. The problem lies with getting a representative group of parents involved at the outset. The arena of

school policy could be the point at which the potential success of the new policy is ensured, or not. If a small unrepresentative group of parents tries to "hijack" the school policy-making process, conflict between the professional staff and the parents is inevitable. The potential for such a conflict exists if the background relating to blue-collar workers on the East Rand and professional educators is taken into consideration. The positive response by each group of stakeholders to the other's involvement, however, gives hope for a successful partnership between the stakeholders.

Enrolment policy (see Table A7.2)

Some parents expressed the desire to be involved in determining the enrolment policy as they said they want to ensure that it is "equal and fair"(Parent,Brakpan:1995). Principals unanimously indicated the need for parents to become involved in drawing-up this policy, although the majority of parents did not seem as keen to be involved in this activity themselves, indicating instead that this activity should be chiefly the concern of the principal. There appears to be conflict over who should be made responsible for deciding which pupils are enrolled.

The South African Schools Act (SASA) (1996:6) stipulates that no pupil may be unfairly discriminated against in any way when deciding on the admission of a pupil to a public school. Parents who wish to ensure that the enrolment policy is "equal and fair" therefore have nothing to be concerned about. Knowledge of the government's relative inflexibility on this issue, and the possibility of recourse to the constitutional court, may account for few parents seeing the need for their involvement in this activity. Placing responsibility for drawing-up an enrolment policy in the hands of

the principal leaves conservative East Rand parents, sceptical of the process of transformation, free to criticise at a later stage. Principals, if left to formulate the enrolment policy, could very easily find themselves caught between conservative East Rand parents wanting to maintain the status quo, and politicians demanding transformation of education. It would therefore seem advisable to get as many parents as possible involved in the formulation of this policy to prevent a schism developing between the professional staff and parents over this issue. Everything possible needs to be done to prevent conflict situations, if greater parental involvement in the school process is to be encouraged.

Recruitment and appointment of teachers (see Tables A7.3 & A7.4)

a) Appointment of teachers

Parents said they want to be present at interviews of prospective teachers so that they can ensure that the applicant has the right credentials and will be "good for" the school and pupils (Parent,Brakpan:1995). The SASA (1996;16) gives GBs the right to recommend the appointment of a teacher to the 'Head of Department'. A principal (Brakpan:1995) expressed the view that parents should be involved in decisions about the selection of teaching staff as the ethos of a school is the responsibility of both parents and school staff.

One might question what conservative East Rand parents mean by the "right credentials". From the point of view of the principal and teachers this would mean that the applicant for a teaching post has the appropriate professional qualifications required for the post. From the point of view of a group of conservative East Rand parents, this might mean that the

applicant is White. It is very important that the professional staff go out of their way to encourage as many parents as possible to increase their involvement in the school process, to prevent one particular group, with possible hidden agendas, taking control.

b) Recruitment of teachers

A teacher (Boksburg:1995) said that by involving parents in the process of recruiting teachers, they (parents) will soon begin to appreciate the difficulty involved in finding a "good teacher".

Only fifty one percent of all the respondents, however, thought parents should be involved in any decision about the recruitment of teachers. If parents are really concerned about finding a suitable candidate they should be keen to be involved in the recruitment process. Fifty three percent of the professional staff interviewed thought it a good idea to have parents assist in recruiting teachers.

Ninety six percent of all the respondents saw the recruitment of teachers and decisions about their appointment as the responsibility of the principal. Only forty eight percent of respondents said parents should be involved in decisions about teacher appointments. It appears therefore that the respondents overwhelmingly accept that the principal is better qualified to make these decisions and that, although the SASA(1996) gives parents the right to recommend appointments, they will look to the principal for guidance and expect him/her to make the final decision.

Length of the school day (see Table A7.7)

An insignificant number of all the respondents, however, saw parents playing a role in decisions about the length of the school day. Respondents expressed confidence in principals (92% for) and teachers (62% for) to make correct decisions about the length of the school day. As small as it may be, this may be a sign of parents' confidence in teachers' professionalism, i.e. parents trust teachers to determine a length of day which will allow for completion of the curriculum and adequate evaluation thereof, and do not see a need to monitor the teacher in the carrying out of his/her professional duties.

Principals indicated that they would welcome the input of parents on the length of the school day. This shows the openness of most principals to suggestions from parents and augers well for greater co-operation between parents and professional staff.

The time of year when exams are written (see Table A7.8)

A parent (Boksburg:1995) felt that the timing of examinations was often not appropriate and therefore saw a need for parents to be consulted. Support for the involvement of parents came from a teacher (Brakpan:1993) who felt that their involvement would better enable parents to understand all that is involved in the setting of exam dates. The timing of exams was generally seen by respondents to be the responsibility of the principal (92% for) and teachers (74% for).

Although the decision concerning the time of the year when exams are to be written is clearly that of the professional teaching body, there is a need

for the school to convey to parents the reasons behind the choice of particular dates. It will obviously not be possible to satisfy all stakeholders, but by satisfying parents that everyone's interests, and not just that of teachers, are being considered, teachers are likely to gain the confidence of parents. It is not practical to involve too many people in the final decision.

Frequency of testing (see Table A7.9)

A teacher (Brakpan:1995) felt that if parents are involved in decisions about the frequency of testing they will be more aware of when testing occurred and will then be able to encourage their children to study. It was agreed by all respondents that principals (88%) and teachers (77%) should be responsible for decisions regarding the frequency of testing. Teachers, it would appear, do not need to fear parents encroaching on decisions about day-to-day activities. They will, however, gain greater support and understanding from parents if there are more opportunities for communication on these matters.

The quantity and form of homework given (see Tables A7.11 & 12)

A teacher (Kempton:1995) said that if parents are to be involved in decisions about homework they will become aware of how few pupils do their homework. Decisions about the form and quantity of homework given were seen to be chiefly the responsibility of teachers (92%). Fifty one percent of all respondents said principals should be involved in decisions relating to homework.

The quantity and form of homework given is clearly a 'day-to-day activity' in which parents have no desire to be involved. Greater communication between parents and teachers concerning the completion of homework by pupils, it seems, would help teachers perform their duties better, and would ultimately be to the benefit of pupils. An improvement in the working relationships between parents and teachers could possibly have advantageous side effects in so far as this is concerned.

Projects set (see Table A7.13)

Ninety two percent of all the respondents sensibly saw decisions relating to projects as the sole responsibility of teachers. A percentage of principals, obviously very aware of the new policy of involving parents to a greater extent, and possibly wishing to be seen as politically correct, thought that parents should have a say in the setting of projects. Few teachers, however, agreed. Principals are possibly more willing to involve parents in day-to-day activities, than teachers are, because the involvement of parents is less likely to interfere with the performance of principal's duties than it is with those of teachers.

Discipline and school rules (see Tables A7.14 & A7.15)

Parents said that in the interests of the pupils they should be able to "advise what type of discipline should take place" (Parent,Brakpan:1995) and advise and suggest what rules should apply at a school.

a) Discipline

There was agreement by respondents that principals (96%), teachers (74%)

and parents (62%) should all be involved in making decisions about the form of discipline exercised at a school. There appears to be consensus, however, that the principal and his/her staff have a major role to play in this regard.

A teacher (Brakpan:1995) expressed the hope that if parents are involved in decisions about discipline they will be encouraged to discipline their own children.

b) School rules

The SASA (1996:8) legislates that the GB of a school must adopt a code of conduct for learners after consultation with all stakeholders. The code is to contain "provisions of due process".

Fifty nine percent of all the respondents expressed the view that parents should be involved in decisions concerning a school's rules; eighty five percent and seventy percent respectively being in favour of principals' and teachers' involvement.

A significantly greater percentage of principals and teachers than parents thought that pupils should have a say in the drafting of school rules. Only forty four percent of all the respondents, however, thought that pupils should be involved.

Principals and teachers, to a greater extent than parents, see teachers as having a major role to play in decisions concerning school rules.

It appears that although most stakeholders look to the principal and staff to take the lead in proposing the code of conduct, there is reluctance on the part of stakeholders to leave the professional staff to deal with this issue on their own. The perception exists that many school rules are petty and that professional staff do not always deal fairly with pupils. This is partly due to the differing value systems held by various stakeholders, and partly, to the misinformation fed to parents by pupils who have been punished. A code of conduct for pupils drawn up by a GB (as representatives of the local community) will be based on a uniform set of values acceptable to the majority of stakeholders, and will, it is assumed, ensure that all transgressors are dealt with in a just and fair way.

The SASA gives the GB the right to suspend a pupil and/or apply for his/her expulsion from the school if it is deemed necessary (SASA, 1996:8). Professional staff who have been concerned that the greater involvement of parents will affect their professional status should welcome the desire of parents to become involved in these activities, via the provisions of the Act. Professional staff will now be able to look to the school parent body for support and assistance in an area where they previously carried a heavy load and received much criticism. If this part of the new policy is successfully implemented it should free staff to concentrate on the main purpose of their profession, namely educating the pupils.

Teachers' dress (see Table A7.16)

A parent (Boksburg:1995) argued that if there is a dress code for pupils there should also be one for teachers. He argued that people working in other occupations, eg. banking, who meet the public are expected to wear a

uniform, and he could therefore see no reason why teachers should object to doing the same. Parents said they would accept a Physical Education (PE) teacher wearing a tracksuit to school, but would not like to see other teachers doing the same. They objected to female staff wearing short skirts, short pants and jeans, and male staff not wearing ties, when the pupils are expected to do so.

A very small percentage of all the respondents thought that parents should be involved in decisions about teachers' dress. Ninety two percent of all the respondents thought that principals should make the decisions concerning the dress of teachers. Three of the eleven parents interviewed, however, felt very strongly that they should.

It could be argued that parents are correct when they say teachers must set an example as regards dress. Teachers concerned for the status of the profession need to take careful note of parents' concerns about their appearance and must ensure as individuals that their dress is becoming of their profession. On the other hand, Siegerist's (1994:4) definition of the elements of a profession made no reference to forms of dress as a defining criterion of a profession. Teachers and principals who were interviewed see it as the principals' duty to confront any staff member not suitably attired. Before confronting a staff member principals will have to satisfy themselves that they are not infringing on the teacher's autonomy from "external supervision" as a professional (Siegerist, 1994:4), and that the teacher's dress is interfering with his/her competence and efficiency in exercising his/her profession.

Parents arguing for a say in the dress of teachers are very likely to be

upset by the application of certain school rules relating to their child's dress. If all stakeholders can come to an agreement on the code of conduct for pupils, parents will not find it necessary to lash out in other directions.

Teacher's conduct (see Table A7.17)

Parents argued that they should be able to comment on the conduct of teachers and suggest what action should be taken against the offender. It was argued that the Education Department is too distant to exercise control of teachers' conduct, and that the principal is part of the professional staff and cannot therefore be objective.

As became apparent in the literature review, a profession does not allow external supervision and evaluation (Siegerist, 1994:4) (Keith & Girling, 1991:19). On what basis are parents on the East Rand, the majority of whom are blue-collar workers, going to judge the conduct of a member of the teaching profession? From what source are these parents to gather the information on which they make an evaluation of a teacher's conduct? The interviews suggested that certain parents were prepared to accept the judgement of their child as regards the conduct of the teachers. Teachers concerned for the status of the profession have grounds for objecting to the involvement of parents in this activity in the light of the aforementioned. Teachers are fully aware that their conduct has a major impact on pupils and parents, and as professionals, it is hoped, will always strive to conduct themselves in a manner becoming of their profession, and that the professions self-regulating mechanisms will be sufficient in this regard.

Certain parents were unreasonable in what they expect of teachers conduct; often expecting teachers to behave in a manner that they themselves would find hard to maintain. For example, a parent (Boksburg:1995) said that teachers should not be allowed to smoke, as this was a bad example to pupils.

Teachers concerned about parental involvement in deciding on appropriate teacher conduct will be heartened to learn that an insignificant number of all the respondents thought parents should have a say in these matters. Ninety two percent of the respondents saw principals being responsible for the conduct of their staff.

Promotion of pupils (see Table A7.18)

Quicke (Beresford,1992:46) said that parents must be given "the right to choose the education which they feel is most suitable for their children". However, once parents have been given this opportunity, the promotion of pupils must then surely be left to those best qualified to decide whether a pupil has attained sufficient knowledge to progress to the next level of education.

A teacher (Benoni:1995) said that the involvement of parents in promoting pupils would help ensure that the standards of the school are maintained at the level at which the parent body of the school deems desirable. The education department lays down the promotion requirements at present and therefore sets the standard. Involvement in promotion decisions would tend to be on an individual basis rather than as a representative body. Involvement at such a personal level has the potential of souring

relationships between the principal and parents as individuals niggle over a principal's decision to condone their child's marks, or not.

A principal (Boksburg:1995) felt that issues pertaining to curricula and teaching methodology should be entrusted to the professional staff and not parents. Teachers have a "specialized education" which gives them "practical and theoretical expertise" relevant to their field (Siegerist, 1994:4). Parents in general, and the blue-collar workers on the East Rand in particular, lack this expertise. Fortunately eighty eight percent of all the respondents recognized that decisions concerning the promotion of pupils are best left to those best qualified, namely principals and teachers.

Determination of school fees (see Table A7.19)

It was agreed by the majority of the respondents that principals (88%) and parents (77%) should be involved in the determination of school fees.

The SASA (1996:24) says that the school fees for a school are to be determined at a general meeting of the parents, at which a budget will be presented. Approval for the proposed school fees is to be obtained by a majority vote of the parents attending the meeting.

It would be totally illogical to suggest that a principal or the professional teaching staff should determine school fees, on their own. It is doubtful that they would get the support of parents in the form of payment of fees.

Parents who answered the questionnaire said that parents know best what other parents can afford to pay and parents should therefore play a major role in the determination of school fees. It appears logical to conclude that parents living within a community would be able to establish reasonable and appropriate school fees for a particular school. It is of interest, however, to note that, when asked in the questionnaire to state to which income group parents attending PTA meetings belong, many respondents stated that they are unable to tell.

Attendance of parents at meetings is generally poor. It is imperative that parents, who under normal circumstances do not have the capacity to attend meetings, are encouraged and assisted to attend the meeting at which the school fees are determined. Professional staff need to do all they can to encourage greater parental involvement in this area. If not, a minority of the total parent body may decide on a school fee structure that does not enjoy the support or compliance of the majority of parents. Minority groups on the East Rand could also use school fees as an avenue to maintain the status quo, setting fees at a level not affordable to members of the previously marginalized community.

Fund raising (see Table A7.20)

The majority of respondents (85%) saw this as the most important area in which parents could play a greater role.

Parents have many diverse ideas for fund raising and many have successfully helped raise funds elsewhere and therefore see themselves playing an important role in decisions about fund raising. By being involved in fund

raising, one parent (Springs:1995) said, they can ensure the school is maintained "at levels they were accustomed to". The majority of teachers are not qualified in financial matters, whereas on the East Rand many parents own their own businesses or work in the accounting departments of firms. It makes sense to entrust fund raising to those with the relevant expertise.

GBs need to consider making it possible for parents, not in the fortunate position of being able to pay the full school fees, to offer other skills to the school as an alternative to payment. This would send a clear message that the GB was attempting to play a positive role in transforming education. The qualitative data collected does not, however, suggest that this is remotely likely on the East Rand.

A teacher (Boksburg:1995) pointed out that if parents are involved in decisions about fund raising, they are likely to encourage other parents to assist them, which will mean a much larger body of fund raisers than would normally be the case. A number of teachers interviewed did not see it as the responsibility of professional teachers to raise funds to supplement the resources provided by the state.

Teachers and parents will, however, have to work together on fund raising projects. Parents will have to rely on teachers to relay information on different fund raising projects to the pupils and to motivate the pupils to become involved. Teachers must not remove themselves completely from discussions of ways to raise funds. They need to remain involved to inform parents as to the capacity of pupils and the professional teaching body to assist in fund raising projects without it interfering with the education

of the pupil.

School budget (see Table A7.21)

Parents said they wanted to be involved in the drawing-up of the school budget because it will provide them with an understanding of the school's needs, and will enable them to see what the school can afford. This, they argued, will prevent many parents complaining that the school is lacking certain facilities as they will understand that the school cannot afford them.

Unfortunately, for practical reasons, the drawing-up of the school budget is normally left with the GB. Parents in general, have little input into the drawing-up of the budget and, unless they attend the general meeting at which the budget is presented to the parent body, the majority will be poorly informed as to the general process involved and the subsequent budgetary constraints. As stated earlier, schools need to make a concerted effort to get parents to the general meeting at which the school fees and the budget are discussed. Details of the school fees and the budget should be sent to those parents who could not attend, if the school wishes to achieve maximum parental support.

A principal (Boksburg:1995) said parents should be consulted on the drawing up of the overall budget, but that the budget for education matters, specifically, should be decided upon by the teaching staff. If parents are to be given responsibility for the funding of improvements to the quality of education provided by a school, they must also be given the opportunity to 'decide' how these funds are to be spent. Teachers must obviously be

allowed to make requests for inclusion in the budget, and the governors would be well advised to consider carefully the requests of the professional staff within their overall planning for the school.

From a practical point of view, a teacher (Boksburg:1995) said involving parents will help parents realize the cost of running and maintaining a school. As already stated above, this ideal can only be achieved if as many parents as possible are kept informed.

The involvement of parents in the drawing-up of the budget was seen as the second most important area (81%) in which parents could play an important role. It is not surprising to see East Rand parents showing a desire to become involved in this area; it is an area within the school process in which many are suitably qualified to assist; professional staff must surely welcome their input. Eighty five percent of all respondents thought the principal has an important part to play in the drawing up of the school budget, probably as they perceive him/her to be the obvious point of liaison with the GB on these issues, and an ideal channel through which budgetary requests of the rest of the staff can be channelled and coordinated.

Collection of fees (see Table A7.22)

Fifty seven percent of all the respondents thought principals should be involved in decisions about the collection of school fees, whereas Fifty three percent thought parents should be involved. Parents themselves felt very strongly that the principal (61%) and his/her staff (47%), more than they themselves (40%), should be involved in decisions about the collection

of school fees.

It would appear that although parents are keen to be involved in budgeting and fund raising they are not as keen to accept the onerous task of becoming involved in the collection of school fees.

Up to now, the names of those parents who default in payment of their school fees has been a fairly well-kept secret, largely to avoid embarrassing the pupils, indirectly involved. Increased involvement of parents in the financing of schools will mean that individuals, not directly involved with the pupils, will become aware of the number of, and names of, defaulters. Parents who pay their school fees regularly, because they wish to provide a healthy educational environment for their children, are unlikely be very tolerant of those who refuse to keep up with their payments. Parents aggrieved by the failure of some parents to pay their fees must not expect teachers to devote a greater amount of their time to debt collecting in order to correct the situation. If the percentage of parents paying their fees is to improve, parents must accept the responsibility for devising means of collecting school fees, in turn freeing the teacher to attend to his/her professional duties. If parents accept the responsibility for the collection of school fees, many a defaulter who is able to pay, will settle accounts to avoid the embarrassment of letting others think that they are unable to pay. The old argument, of 'I won't pay my school fees because lots of others don't' will become a thing of the past.

The collection of school fees is clearly an area where greater parental involvement would be of benefit to all stakeholders, but also an area where

further discussion is required, as there is no clear-cut agreement as to whose responsibility the collection of school fees should be.

Expenditure of fees (see Table A7.23)

Eighty five of all the respondents thought that principals should be involved in decision making concerning the spending of school fees, seventy percent thought that parents should be involved, and fifty nine percent thought that teachers should be involved. These figures indicate that the majority of respondents have confidence in a principal's ability to make correct decisions as to how school fees should be spent. And, in fact, if principals had to continually refer to the other stakeholders before spending money, the smooth day-to-day running of a school would be seriously impeded.

A significantly greater percentage of parents (58%) than principals and teachers (41%) thought that parents should have a say in how school funds are spent.

On the one hand, the figures above indicate a clear wish by parents to have a degree of control over the spending of fees. Understandably, parents want to be consulted on the spending of school funds as it is perceived as "their money". On the other hand, the figures suggest that principals and teachers feel that once parents have approved a budget, the professional staff be left to spend the money accordingly with minor parental involvement. As parents and teachers begin to work together more and more within a partnership, parents are more likely to come to trust the judgement of teachers; in this case as far as the spending of school fees

is concerned.

Maintenance (see Table A7.24)

In this regard, parents have 'outside contacts', and many parents are artisans with skills that could be usefully employed in and around the school. Parents therefore saw themselves playing a significant role in this area. One parent (Benoni:1995) expressed the view that maintenance should be the primary responsibility of the GB.

Maintenance of school buildings and equipment does not form part of the training of the majority of teachers. Increased involvement of parents in this area can only be welcomed by teachers as it means that teachers can get on with their professional duties. For far too long teachers have been seen as 'jacks of all trades': they can fund raise, coach any sport, co-ordinate any cultural activity, maintain buildings and furniture etc.. (Pupil respondents commented on how teachers and principals are expected to do "everything" around a school.)

A number of other benefits are likely to accrue from increased parental involvement in the area of maintenance.

a) Pupil respondents said they often recognized areas in which improvements to school buildings and grounds could be made, but were reticent to voice their views, because they perceived teachers to be too busy, or too incompetent, to effect the necessary maintenance. They said that they would feel less inhibited to discuss their ideas for maintenance and improvements with their parents.

b) If all stakeholders are held responsible for maintenance and funding of

improvements, and it is not just seen as the responsibility of the state, parents and pupils are more likely to take greater care of buildings, grounds and equipment.

c) Through their contacts parents are more likely than teachers to get 'good prices' for materials and services needed for maintenance work.

d) The greater the number of parents involved in maintenance, the less likelihood of a 'jobs for friends' situation arising, as was reported to have occurred in some schools.

e) The greater the involvement of parents with the necessary skills (a large number of the blue-collar workers on the East Rand are likely to have the necessary skills.), the less money will be needed to be spent on maintenance, and the lower will be the school fees. This should be a great motivation for parents to become involved.

Eighty eight percent of all the respondents thought principals should be involved in decisions about the maintenance of a school and sixty six percent supported parental involvement in decisions concerning maintenance. The figures suggest that the principal, as manager of the school, is still ultimately seen to be responsible for the maintenance of the school buildings and grounds. Many parents are, however, quite keen to offer their expertise to assist him/her to make the correct decisions. It would be hoped that, as parents become more accustomed to their greater role in education, the principal and his staff will be left to the exercising of their professional responsibilities, and be less involved with non-professional issues, like maintenance.

The issuing of school textbooks (see Table A7.26)

The majority view is that it is the responsibility of principals (69%) and their staff (84%) to decide how textbooks are to be issued. Only two parents thought that parents might have a role to play.

The issuing of, collection of, and thorough follow-up of outstanding textbooks is a major task which takes up much of teachers' valuable teaching time. Parents at Model C schools pay towards the use of textbooks which are a major cost factor within the budget. The question needs to be asked: do parents realize how much money is lost to the school through lost and damaged textbooks? It does not appear so; parents have been keen to be involved in other areas involving financial matters, but not in this area. The professional staff need to enlighten parents, and in so doing may not only save parents money, but could free themselves of an onerous task that often interferes with teaching activities.

Extra-murals (see Table A7.28)

Extra-murals, a parent (Boksburg:1995) argued, are essentially part of education and therefore the responsibility of teachers. Only thirty six percent of parents interviewed thought parents should be involved in decisions concerning extra-murals, the majority of all respondents (81%) expressing the view that principals and teachers should make these decisions. Principals are, however, at odds with parents on this: issue, all but one principal stating that parents should be involved.

With South Africa's return to international sport there is, in many instances, a far greater demand for pupils to be coached 'properly' so that

they will one day be able to compete internationally. In most cases teachers are not competent to provide training and coaching at this level, nor should they be expected to do so. Professional coaches will need to be employed if parents expect higher standards of coaching. As 'right-sizing' in schools progresses, and the size of classes in Model C schools subsequently increases, greater pressure will be put on teachers to maintain the standards of education that parents have come to expect of these schools. Teachers will not be able to cope with a simultaneous demand for higher standards of sport coaching.

Principals with foresight realize that changes will need to be made to school sport. They realize that any major change to the way in which school sport is currently coached, funded and organized cannot be made without consulting all stakeholders. Parents willing to leave decisions to the professional staff have obviously not thought too carefully about the future of school sport, or are expecting too much of the professional staff. Unfortunately, the latter is very likely the case. Parents are unlikely to want to pay extra money for the coaching of their children when they have become accustomed to 'free' sports coaching at schools. If parents are reluctant to pay more for coaching, then those parents with the necessary skills will have to offer to assist. There is, therefore, tremendous scope for greater parental involvement in extra-murals. Teachers too need to think about the value of the educational role of sport, and to what degree they see themselves still playing a role in school sport as a component in a wider definition of their educational role.

Extra tuition (see Table A7.28)

Parents submitted that extra tuition should be undertaken on a voluntary basis by teachers. Most agreed that decisions taken concerning times and payment are the sole domain of the individuals concerned. A teacher hoped that if parents are involved, to a greater degree, in decisions about extra tuition, they will be more appreciative of the value of education, and the effort teachers put into their work.

Eighty one percent of respondents saw the principal playing a role in making decisions about extra tuition and seventy seven percent saw teachers playing a role. A small percentage of principals saw parents becoming involved, although they do not have the support of their staff on this issue.

Extra tuition is part and parcel of what a teacher is expected to do as part of his/her profession. If parents are not to interfere in the professional activities of teachers then teachers should be left to their own to make decisions with regard to all tuition, only consulting parents when it affects their rights. Parents should not object to paying extra for this tuition; other professionals charge for after-hours service. Parents are, however, unlikely to accept that they have to pay unless they can be convinced that the teacher has done his/her best in the classroom, and that the extra tuition is really necessary, and will provide tangible benefits for their children. Teachers will have to convince parents of their professional integrity. To maintain parents' confidence in the profession, teachers' associations and unions will have to deal harshly with any member who brings discredit to the profession in this regard.

Other activities

The greater majority of stakeholders did not advocate parental involvement in a number of activities listed in the questionnaire. These activities were the selection of prefects (0%)(see Table A7.29), the standard of exams set (3.7%)(see Table A7.30), the teaching methods used by teachers (18%)(see Table A7.31), the drawing up of the school timetable (3,7%)(see Table A7.6) and exam timetable (11%)(see Table A7.10), the choice of school textbooks (4.1%)(see Table A7.25) and the marking of pupils work (0%)(see Table A7.32).

The Role Of The Principal And Teacher As Opposed To That Of The Parent.

a) From the point of view of parents

One parent (Brakpan:1995) expressed the view that "teachers and headmasters must be left to do what they do best without having to consult those who don't know much about the workings of school life". Another parent (Kempton Park:1995) expressed a similar view when he said that, although principals should take cognisance of the values of parents, they and their professionally qualified staff should not be "tampered with". A third parent (Boksburg:1995) said that parents must "never be allowed to select teachers, dictate what will be taught and how it will be taught". He said that parents must be responsible for children's failure to produce work, bad marks and poor behaviour.

However, not all parents were as willing to leave matters to the professional staff. One parent (Benoni:1995) made it clear that the school

is part of the community and, as such, affects the community. This parent therefore thought it important that parents be involved in maintaining standards. He was not happy to leave decision-making to the "whims and wishes of a few" teachers and the principal. Parents said that they live in the area in which the school is located and very often have insights and information that teachers, who live outside the area, lack.

It becomes very obvious, from the data discussed earlier on in this chapter, that parents in general indicate a desire or willingness to become involved in the school process, yet still regard the principal as the person ultimately responsible for the success or failure of a school. It appears, therefore, that once a principal has been appointed and the school's policy formulated with the input of parents, the principal then becomes the most important person in making decisions about the majority of issues. Parents should confine themselves to exercising a watching brief to ensure that policies decided upon, are implemented; and to ensuring that there is adequate financing and necessary resources for the principal to implement the policy. Parents should also look to providing incentives (financial and o herwise) to encourage and motivate the professional staff. Parents should be responsible for marketing their school to the community and the outside world.

b) From the point of view of principals

Principals were happy to involve parents in decision-making on "non-teaching matters", but were decidedly against parental involvement in professional matters. Principals, in general were in full agreement with parents about the important role parents can play in fund raising, determining school fees, drawing-up of the budget, decisions on the

spending of school fees and maintenance. A principal (Boksburg:1995) said that issues like enrolment policy, length of the school day, discipline, school rules and school fees need the parents' acceptance and they therefore have to be involved in decisions about them. He pointed out that it is far easier to enforce school rules and payment of school fees if schools have the support of the parents on these issues. He defined the issues relating to professional matters as: teacher conduct, teaching methods, exam standards, quantity of homework, form of homework, projects set, test and exam marking, pupil promotion, textbook issuing, extra tuition and prefect selection. He also did not think parents should be involved in decisions concerning school policy, teacher recruitment, teacher appointments, class allocation, drawing-up of the timetable, the frequency of testing, the time of year exams are set and teacher's dress. Another principal (Benoni:1995) said that the more parents are allowed to "meddle" in professional matters, the greater the danger there is of the professional status of teachers' being undermined. She said; "After all, what does a banker or a plumber know about selecting the best principal for a school ?".

It appears that principals have clear-cut ideas as to the nature and degree of parental involvement. They are not unwilling to involve parents, but see a clear distinction between professional and non-professional matters. As long as principals, many of who have been accustomed to a highly centralized system, do not cling to traditional methods of governance in a way that obstructs the transformation of education, there seems no reason to believe that a successful partnership cannot be established between parents and principals.

The Role Of Pupils

Although this study is concerned with increasing the involvement of parents, and not pupils, in the school process, it is of interest to briefly take note of some of the remarks as regards pupils involvement, and what pupils had to say about parental involvement.

One parent (Brakpan:1995) felt that pupils should play only a minor role in decision-making; pupils preferably using their time for their studies. Pupils, it was felt, should only become involved in decision-making when issues affected them directly. A principal (Brakpan,1995) suggested that the discipline policy of the school and the code of conduct for teachers is an issue that needs to be decided on by the professional teaching staff and the Student's Representative Council (SRC) and not the parents. A pupil (Kempton Park:1995) felt that they should be included in decisions about the length of the school day, discipline, teaching methods, maintenance of buildings, the issue of textbooks and extra-tuition. She said that the more stakeholders are involved in decision-making the less the chances of "foolish decisions" being made. Many of the pupils, however said that most of the issues put forward in the questionnaire should be left to parents and the professional staff to decide on as they, and not pupils, have the expertise and experience.

The Perceived Relationship That Exists Between Parents And Teachers

The degree to which parents become involved in the above activities will be

influenced to a large extent by the relationship which exists between parents and teachers.

Forty seven percent of respondents rated the relationship between the principal and the parents as good(see Table A6.1), thirty three percent as fair and nine and a half percent as excellent and nine and a half percent as poor. Of the forty seven percent rating the relationship good, sixty eight percent were teachers and thirty one percent parents. Of the thirty three percent that rated the relationship as fair, sixty nine percent were parents and thirty percent teachers. One parent and one teacher rated the relationship as poor.

These figures indicate that teachers perceived the relationship between parents and the principal to be better than parents themselves perceived the relationship. The teachers' perception of the relationship is likely to be based on the interaction they see taking place between the principal and the few parents he meets. Parents, however, are aware of the broader community's feelings towards the principal.

Fifty nine percent of respondents rated the relationship between the teachers and the parents as fair(see Table A6.2), thirty three percent as good, three comma seven percent as poor, and three comma seven percent as excellent. Of the thirty three percent rating the relationship good, thirty three percent were principals and teachers, and sixty six percent parents. Of the fifty nine percent who rated the relationship as fair, thirty eight percent were parents and sixty one percent principals and teachers. Parents perceive themselves as having a better relationship with teachers than they do with the principal. A possible explanation for this

is that contact between the principal and parents often revolves around issues of discipline where conflict often results. Contact between most parents and teachers often occurs in more pleasant and less confrontational contexts like on the sport field or a parent's evening, where the teacher is seen in a more positive light, attempting to assist the pupil.

Eighty one percent of the parents said that progress is made as a result of meetings with the principal and teachers. This is in spite of the fact that only sixty percent of the parents think that the professional teaching body as a whole reacted well to suggestions from parents, and only sixty six percent of the parents think that principals act on suggestions made by parents.

If the views of principals and teachers are compared to those of parents, sixty seven percent of the professional teaching body as a whole think principals react well to suggestions by parents, compared to fifty five percent who think teachers react well. Ninety percent of the professional teaching body think principals act on parents' suggestions. Seventy three percent of the professional teaching body think teachers act on parents' suggestions. It would appear that the professional teaching body view themselves in a better light than parents do.

The figures quoted above indicate a working relationship presently exists between parents and professional staff, and this should facilitate the intended increased involvement of parents in the school process. The fact of the matter is that as parents, teachers and principals get to know one another better, through increased interaction, the relationship is likely to improve even more. Teachers need, however, to be aware of some of the

misgivings of parents if they wish to work at improving their relationship with parents, and encouraging greater parental involvement.

Certain parents expressed misgivings concerning teachers willingness to accept change. One parent (Boksburg:1995) said that teachers are not open to suggestions and only listen if the suggestion "fits in with the system". Parents generally agreed, however, that not all the requests and suggestions made by parents are reasonable and practical. Teachers were also accused of not being open to suggestions because they too often see them as a form of criticism. A parent (Boksburg:1995) saw the teachers' attitude often as that of "stay off our turf". Teachers need to be careful to create the correct impression. If parents are expected to change their historical position of limited involvement in schools to one of greater involvement they will need to perceive a concomitant change in the attitude of teachers to this parental involvement.

A number of parents were also concerned that teachers always thought they knew better. A parent (Brakpan:1995) said "Teachers wrongly think that, because they deal with pupils on a day-to-day basis, they know better than the parents." Others argued, however, that teachers and principals often do know better: they are professionals, have many years of experience, and have tried many of the parents' suggestions already. One parent (Boksburg:1995) was concerned that only the suggestions of parents "with status" within the school community were taken seriously.

Principals defended their staff by saying that although it is in the interests of teachers to listen to parents' suggestions, very often these suggestions infringe on the professional integrity of the teacher. They

commented that teachers are inclined to carefully analyze the circumstances surrounding the suggestion before acting upon a suggestion. If teachers think the suggestion favours the parents' child exclusively, or threatens their (teachers') own-position, they are unlikely to act upon the suggestion. If not, and the suggestion will be of benefit to a number of pupils, they will react positively to the suggestion.

Teachers defended themselves by saying that parents often have a "one-sided view of education" and do "not fully understand the responsibilities and demands on the teacher" (Teacher,Brakpan:1995). They said they will act on a parent's suggestion if they think the suggestion will benefit the child and it does not interfere with their normal teaching activities. They perceived parents' suggestions as generally being of a critical nature.

There is a clear need for better communication between parents and teachers to clear up the misconceptions concerning the attitudes of teachers and principals towards parents. Parents are unlikely to voluntarily increase their involvement in the school process if such misconceptions gain ground in the school community. If parents do take the opportunity provided by the SASA, to become more involved in the school process, there is likely to be a fair degree of tension, the possibility of conflict and very little in the way of progress, until the misconceptions that abound are laid to rest. Teachers and principals, as the professionals, need to work actively towards removing the stumbling blocks to greater parental involvement in the school process. This will involve interaction with and negotiation of specific issues. It is such processes that hold the potential for mutual refinement and enhancement of respective positions, and ultimately benefit the community as a whole.

The Capacity Of Parents To Increase Their Involvement In The School Process.

It is all very well to legislate that parents be given the opportunity for greater involvement in the school process, and it is all very well to define the nature and degree of that involvement, but if parents do not have the capacity to increase their involvement very little will change.

Teachers and parents expressed the view that without adequate knowledge of the school system, parents are left to make decisions based on their subjective desires for their own child. Ninety two percent (see Table A8.3) of all the respondents said that the decisions of parents are influenced by their personal wishes for their children. A respondent said that parents are often only concerned about the effect of decisions insofar as the decision will affect their own child. The capacity of parents to become fully involved, may be limited if they allow their emotions to influence their decisions. A teacher (Boksburg:1995) said that if parents increase their involvement in the school process significantly, they will have a far better understanding of the "ins and outs" of schools and their capacity for making a meaningful and less subjective contribution will increase.

As discussed in Chapter 4 (pp. 45-47), parental support for PTAs has diminished. One possibly reason is the increasing number of single parent families. Single parent families often outnumber two-parent families. The burden of supporting a family financially, emotionally and logistically is becoming more and more the responsibility of one parent. These single parents are often exhausted after a long day's work, and have little time

for extra-mural commitments. Almost every parent and principal stated that the main factor limiting greater parental involvement, was the time factor. Attendance at PTA meetings and involvement in different school activities is not a top priority in many busy parents' lives. One parent (Benoni: 1995) said that meetings are sometimes seen as a "waste of precious time". Even if they want to become involved, many single parents find it impossible to make the necessary child-care and transport arrangements. Many of the Black parents at Model C schools rely on taxis for transport. They therefore find it difficult to attend meetings which are held at night when taxis run less frequently. Some respondents also mentioned that safety issues affected attendance at evening meeting. Mothers are afraid to travel alone at night to meetings.

Lack of knowledge of the school process and feelings of inadequacy were also considered by many to be factors which had the potential of restricting increased parental involvement. The fact that all parents attended school in the past does not ensure that they understand the school process. For one reason or another, pupils often feel intimidated by teachers and these feelings and fears are carried over into adult life. White parents who have been closely associated with Model C schools for some time, where greater parental involvement has been encouraged, may not have the same feelings of inadequacy as Black parents who have only recently become part of the parent bodies of these schools.

Eighty four percent of all the respondents thought it a good idea that parents who wish to increase their involvement be given some form of training or introduction to the school process to increase their capacity for meaningful involvement (see Table A9.1). The SASA makes provision for

the "Enhancement of the capacity of governing bodies" (SASA, 1996:50). It is essential for teachers, as professionals, to keep abreast of developments in education. Parents, however, gain most of their knowledge from what they read in the 'popular press' and via the 'grapevine'. Much of this information is erroneous. Considering what has already been said about 'busy parents', it is doubtful, whether seminars held to discuss the schooling process would receive much support.

With regard to the specific issue of increasing and making possible, the real (not token) involvement of parents from communities previously marginalized and excluded from mainstream education, it is imperative that the spirit (and not just the letter) of the Act be honoured. Here principals must take the lead in finding compensatory, pro-active and creative ways of ensuring representative composition of GB and other governance structures - along the lines of colour. It is not sufficient for a principal to claim that the letter of the law has been followed as to the holding of GB elections exactly along the lines laid down by the Act. If such elections have not yielded a true reflection of the racial mix of his/her school community, he/she is in violation of the spirit of the Act and must make concerted efforts to address and correct the situation.

The Perceived Advantages And Disadvantages Of Increasing Parental Involvement In The School Process.

It is necessary, when investigating the degree and nature of parental involvement in the school process, to briefly discuss the perceived

advantages to be gained from involvement, and at the same time to take note of possible disadvantages. It is of worth to note that Fullan (1991) found, through case studies in North America, that although there is evidence that increased parental involvement in learning activities affects pupils learning in schools, the advantages of parental involvement in governance, as far as pupil learning is concerned, is not clear.

Advantages:

As already been intimated, the greater the degree of parental involvement in the school process, the better parents will understand the whole school system. The EDUPOL (1991:iv) report says that greater parental involvement "raise(s) the importance of education in the eyes of the pupils and the value of the school in the community".

Parents said greater insight will enable them to better assess what is required to maintain and improve the standards of education at the school. All stakeholders said that an increase in the degree of parental involvement will result in parents becoming more accountable for the education of their own children. Better insight into the whole school process and greater parent accountability, will result in less criticism being levelled at schools by parents. Most parents will then be more willing to support staff and to reinforce the work done by the professional staff. The impressions a parent has of the school process, at a particular school, are often formed through the accounts given by their children of events that occur at school. These accounts are often inaccurate: pupils very often do not know all the facts surrounding a incident, or they deliberately distort the facts to gain the support of their parents. Many parents said better insight will also result in parents becoming more

appreciative of the efforts of the professional staff. Instead of feeling as if they were 'outsiders', parents will come to accept schools as an essential part of their lives and not a necessary evil. On the East Rand greater parental involvement will go some way to initiating the building of a culture of learning in the community.

A number of parents said that because they are part of the local community, their involvement in school life will help ensure that the school meets the needs of, and reflects the ethos of, the community as a whole. This view could be viewed as a two-edged sword by those committed to transformation: it may reflect a desire by certain East Rand parents to maintain the status quo if allowed by law to do so.

There were parents who saw their greater involvement as helping the principal run the school more efficiently 'along business lines'. This view could be interpreted as a criticism of the present school process and its perceived economic inefficiency. As already stated, given better insight into the system, parents will be less critical and more aware, as many stakeholders pointed out, of the difficult task the principal and his/her staff have of doing their professional work, coping with the financial and logistical demands of day-to-day life and meeting political agendas imposed on them by a government committed to redressing past in equalities. The contributions parents qualified in these areas can make, are numerous and can only contribute to providing a better environment for effective teaching and learning, as well as free the teacher from non-professional activities. Weiler (EDUPOL, 1993:18), however w
is not clear that increased parental involvement in the ma
administration of education proves to be an economically effec

efficient model". Anyway, such involvement needs to be contextualized: specifically this will entail coming to terms with the fact that policies, strategies and financial plans that might work in commerce and industry, driven as it is in SA by markets and the profit motive, will prove to be impossible and, indeed, inappropriate in SA education, at present.

Disadvantages:

The main concerns expressed by the different stakeholders were the following:

One principal (Springs:1995) said that education is the only profession where every stakeholder "feels he/she has the necessary knowledge" to pass expert judgements. Unnecessary meddling by parents in the school process can result in a disruption of the smooth day-to-day running of the school, to the detriment of the children, and a breakdown of the all important relationships between parents and teachers intended by the new policy. It is hoped that dissemination of the contents of this study will give a better understanding of the degree and nature of parental involvement perceived by all stakeholders and will be conducive to building a healthy parent-teacher partnership. Undue meddling, a number of stakeholders said, will also have an effect on the discipline in a school. If pupils suspect a lack of respect for teachers on the part of their parents there will be a trickle-down effect and pupil behaviour will deteriorate accordingly.

Stakeholders across the board, expressed anxiety that allowing parents to increase their involvement in the school process, can result in a small group of powerful individuals, with the capacity for involvement, and desiring some form of self-glorification or power, to impose their will on

the school process. Personal desires and not educational issues can influence the way a school is run. This is a decided possibility on the East Rand where many parents would prefer to maintain the status quo. Blue-collared workers, who have been unable to improve their educational qualifications, may also seek some form self-fulfilment through their association with an educational institution such as a school. Which in itself is no bad thing, but could prove disruptive if they also have an unacceptable political agenda to serve. All agendas of all stakeholders have to be negotiated with all participants in the context of a particular community and the relevant issue, and in compliance with government policy which lays down exactly how education is to transform itself.

The Perceived Effect Of An Increase In Parental Involvement On The Status Of The Teacher.

The new policy on parental involvement "requires a flourishing partnership, based on mutual interest and mutual confidence, among the many constituencies which make up and support the school." (Education White Paper 2,1996:17).

Parents and principals agreed that the status of the teacher, especially male teachers, is very low compared to other professions. Principals said that teaching is recognized as a profession only 'on paper'. Almost every one of the parents said that the low salaries of teachers is the main factor contributing to their 'poor' status within the community. Teachers, they said, cannot afford to maintain the same standard of living as other members of their community. One parent (Benoni:1995) said teachers have a

low status in the community because they are state-employed and, the perception exists that as civil servants, it is their duty to serve the community: the implication is therefore that teachers are servants of the parents. Seventy five percent of all respondents said that they would not recommend the teaching profession as a career (see Table A5.1).

The low status of the teacher in the East Rand community, who 'confer' status purely on the basis of material and financial factors, makes it difficult to develop the 'mutual confidences' required for the needed partnership between parents and teachers. Similarly, although many teachers recognize the right of parents to give input, they are concerned that parents are not professionally qualified to do so. Certain teachers do not see why non-professionals should have a say in the school process when other professions do not allow client-participation in professional matters.

Respondents were divided on the issue of whether a greater degree of parental involvement further undermining the status of teachers. Fifty nine percent thought that it would not further undermine the status of teachers; forty eight percent thought it would. (A number of respondents answered 'yes' and 'no' to the question, and explained that their answer depended on the degree and nature of "greater parental involvement".)(see Table A9.2) Fifty five percent of respondents, however, said that teachers will perceive greater involvement of parents in education as a threat to their independence which in turn will serve to further de-motivate them.

Most stakeholders were of the opinion that if a clear-cut code of conduct is drawn-up to prevent parents interfering in the professional work of the

teacher, then teachers' confidence in parents' ability to play an effective role in a partnership, would receive a substantial boost. (This study should help those involved in drawing-up such a code of conduct to understand what the various stakeholders perceive as the appropriate role of the parent in the school process.) It may be argued, on one hand, that in the pursuit of their professional duties the more independent teachers became of interference by other stakeholders, the more they will be seen as professionals and experts in their field and this will enhance their status. Yet, on the other hand, the teachers' capacity to engage effectively in professional activities, will be enhanced by greater parental involvement: greater parental involvement will free teachers of non-professional, peripheral duties and tasks that so often be-devil and undermine effective teaching through the demands they make on teachers' energies and time.

If parents begin to work together with teachers the potential for an improved relationship with each other and a more effective school system, increases. Communication between parents and teachers will improve and both groups will be less critical of each other, and instead increase support for each other. Parents, it is hoped, will no longer see teachers as servants, but as partners with valuable specialized knowledge, training and expertise (Siegerist,1994:4). Greater respect for teachers as professionals will give parents the confidence to leave the teacher with exclusive control over certain areas of his/her operations. They will no longer see the need to exercise external supervision of the teacher. If the teaching profession can bring about this level of acceptance by the parent community, then in accordance with Siegerist's definition of a profession, it will be able to "lay claim to special rewards and a higher

social and economic status". Instead of the state being able to justify paying teachers relatively low salaries, the state will have to listen to the demands of teachers, supported by the community, for higher salaries, commensurate with their new status and legitimated and validated by the community they serve.

If parents begin to show a greater respect for teachers then they will encourage their children to do so too. This will improve standards of discipline which will in turn allow educators to improve their standard of teaching with a concomitant increase in the overall standard of education. Any improvement in standards will further reflect well on the profession and consequently their perceived status will improve.

A profession with a high status, attracts top-class practitioners. A better quality of applicant will be available for selection for teacher training. More men and women will be drawn to the profession. As this happens more, so competition for training places and subsequent positions in schools will increase, and only the very best will be chosen. Those who are employed will not have been chosen, as in the past, because of political persuasion, gender, colour, culture or language, but on the basis of what they have to offer education in the country. This will rid the profession of poor teachers. The status of the profession will spiral upwards driven by greater parental support resulting from the initial increase in parental involvement in education.

Conclusion

The Education White Paper 2(1996:9) states: "Policies are stated in general

terms and cannot provide for all situations." This chapter set out to establish what all the stakeholders on the East Rand perceive to be the particular degree and nature of parental involvement in their specific schools.

Firstly, the chapter looked at the degree and nature of parental involvement in the school process. There is significant consensus that parents should be involved in decisions concerning fund raising, the school budget, the determination of school fees, and the spending of school funds. A number of stakeholders also thought parents should be involved in decisions concerning school policy, maintenance of the school, discipline, school rules, the enrolment policy, school fee collection, and teacher recruitment. The majority of respondents did not think parents should be involved in decisions concerning school times, the timetable, extra-mural curricula and codes of behaviour for staff, even though the 'Proposed menu of responsibilities of public school governing bodies' (Education White Paper 2,1996:19) proposes parental involvement in these areas. There were, however, a small group of parents who felt strongly that they should be involved in decisions about teachers' dress and conduct.

Secondly, it was established that the relationship which exists between parents and professional staff is, on the whole, conducive to the successful implementation of a policy requiring greater parental involvement in the school process. There are, however, certain misconceptions which could discourage certain parents from becoming involved. A growing partnership between parents and teachers would, however, help remove many of the misconceptions.

Thirdly, it was established that fewer and fewer parents have the capacity to increase their degree of involvement. Lack of time, lack of knowledge of the school process and historically-derived feelings of inadequacy are the main problems encountered. It was suggested that a definite, pro-active commitment to the spirit of parental involvement as laid down in the Act, would be a necessary first step to overcoming these difficulties.

Fourthly, it was found that, by increasing the degree of parental involvement, parents will become more accountable for the education of their own children and that they will become less critical and more supportive of schools. A decided disadvantage of increased parental involvement is the possibility for greater interference in the day-to-day running of a school and inappropriate meddling in professional activities, if a strict code of conduct for parents is not drawn up.

Finally, it was shown that although the (marginally greater) majority of teachers would perceive the increase in the degree of parental involvement as a threat to their professional status, the greater majority of respondents, as a whole, did not think that this would be the case.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The study shows firstly that any concern that greater parental involvement in the school process will result in large scale parental interference in the day-to-day organization of teaching and learning, is largely unfounded.

On the contrary, there are strong indications that greater parental involvement in the school process will lead to greater parental support for the teaching staff, and that teachers will be freed from non-professional activities to get on with the day-to-day organization of teaching and learning. In this way, greater parental involvement has the potential to enhance teachers' professional status.

Involving parents in the school process will spread the responsibility and accountability for delivering effective education to a larger number of stakeholders.

The study has further shown, on the whole, that the existing relationship between parents, and the principal and teachers is of such a nature that the implementation of a new policy involving greater parental involvement in the school process is possible. However, the study indicates that one of the factors which will determine the degree to which parents become involved in the school process, is the extent to which wrong perceptions certain parents and teachers currently have of each other can be modified.

There is a need for parents and teachers to work actively towards building partnerships in education. This can only happen if parents become more involved in the school process. New partnerships will be initiated and existing partnerships enhanced - qualitatively and quantitatively - in the context of the school life where specific tasks have to be accomplished, and specific issues have to be addressed by joint efforts on the part of the parents and professionals working towards common goals. The interactions that occur during the course of these engagements will be the locus of both evolving perceptions of each other and a renegotiation of relative status and standing for each in the eyes of the other participants.

It was alarming to note, however, that there did not appear to be the potential for a significantly larger number of parents to increase their involvement in school life. The study revealed that this is partly due to the inability of schools and the education department to effectively communicate the new policy to all parents, and partly due to other factors which place severe time constraints on parents. These problems are compounded in the case of Black parents. Historically, they have been excluded from exposure to effective participation in societal structures and processes. This, together with certain logistical difficulties, means that the likelihood that school governance bodies will reflect the racial mix of the school population as a whole, are unlikely at present. Yet it is vital that they do so. Transformation in SA means every existing structure and every process in society needs to be made equitable and representative. Rehabilitation of school governance along these lines will necessitate bold, proactive measures.

Another alarming feature is the following: Results from the study indicate that only small groups of parents are likely to be involved and that parents become involved to further their own interests and those of their own children, rather than education as a whole. This increases the potential for conservative lobbies of parents to use provisions in the new policy to re-colonize schools.

The study showed a large degree of consensus between the various groups of stakeholders as to the activities in which parents should increase their participation. The study showed, for example, that there is potential for greater parental involvement in decision-making in the area of finance and maintenance. It is apparent, however, that the degree and nature of parental involvement in the school process is not dependent only on the nature of the activities in which parents are to become involved, but on other factors as indicated above.

Finally, although the majority of stakeholders canvassed, agreed that teachers have a very low status in the East Rand community, it became apparent that greater parental involvement by a large number of parents in the school process could play a significant role in rectifying this situation as parents become more appreciative. A code of conduct for parents drawn up in the initial stages of the partnership, would help to allay teachers' concerns as to parental interference in their professional duties.

Recommendations

Unions and professional teaching bodies, such as The South African Teachers' Union (SADTU) and The National Association of Professional Teachers of South Africa (NAPTOSA), need to work together to devise a strategy to raise the status of teaching as a profession. These organizations need firstly to allay any fears their members have with regard to greater parental involvement. They should organize workshops at which teachers from different backgrounds can discuss the benefits and limitations of greater parental involvement in education. Not only would such workshops go a long way to uniting the teaching profession on this issue, but this would give renewed confidence to teachers to work out a partnership with their parents. Parents would no longer see teachers as individuals who can be treated dismissively, or "joked" about, as one parent (Boksburg:1995) said, but rather see them as a profession proactively working towards raising the standard of education in this country. Instead of leaving the initiative in the hands of the state or parents, teachers should take control of their own destiny.

Teacher organizations need to do more in order to present a united front to the public at large. They need to challenge all negative impressions created by the media about the education system. Teachers need to be seen to be speaking for themselves and must no longer leave the politicians and bureaucrats to influence the public's image of the profession. Through the media, these organizations can play an active role in encouraging as many parents as possible to become involved in the school process. This will ensure that the full potential available within the parent community is made available to the schools and that minority groups with suspect agendas

do not 'high-jack' structures and processes. The unions and professional bodies must run workshops for parents where they can gain the necessary expertise for participation in school governance and where they can become more aware of the opportunities available for greater parental involvement in schools.

Teachers need to take the initiative at their schools to see that teacher-parent forums are set up to discuss the greater involvement of parents in education. Teachers must be seen to be willing to work with parents and not be seen as the reluctant partner in the relationship. This will require certain teachers and principals to change their attitudes and their styles of leadership. Principals need to show leadership in the matter of ensuring Black parent participation at a level commensurate with, and representative of, the number of Black pupils at a particular school. This will involve overcoming historical, psychological and logistical difficulties in novel and creative ways. For example, when elections for the GB are held contact should be made with parents who have a high profile in the relevant Black community, and these parents must be encouraged to canvas and build up a voting block of Black parents; technical adjustments to voting procedures must be made; logistical arrangements for elections must carefully and sensitively be put in place so that a maximum number of Black parents are able to vote and every effort must be made, subsequent to elections, to sustain and increase the level of participation by Black parents so that it extends to all areas of school life.

If something is not done by principals, teachers and the organizations they belong to, the few parents who are involved in the GBs at schools (with right or wrong motives) will take the initiative. Teachers will only have

themselves to blame if they see themselves losing any control they still have in the profession, and the control shifting to so-called non-professionals. Teachers must not allow themselves to lose any more ground than they already have. The possibility of increasing parental involvement in education, must be seized on by the professional teaching body as the opportunity they have been waiting for to actualize their full potential as vitally important members of the Community and the New South Africa.

A P P E N D I C E S

A. Responses of stakeholders at Model C English-medium Secondary Schools to the closed questions in the questionnaire.

B. Abbreviations

C. Letter granting permission for, and giving the conditions under which, research may be conducted.

APPENDIX A

RESPONSES OF STAKEHOLDERS AT 'MODEL C' SCHOOLS

* These are the quantitative results.
* The results are recorded as percentages.(Except where otherwise stated)
* The percentages have not been rounded off.
  (For explanation of how data was collected, recorded and analyzed see Chapter 2 Methodology)

1 INFORMATION ABOUT RESPONDENTS

Table A1.1
RESPONSE TO: Gender of Respondent

	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Male	17	32	19	29	48
Female	32	16	30	20	51

	Parents	Principals & Teachers
Male	36	63
Female	63	36

Table A1.2
RESPONSE TO: Age of Respondent

	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Teenager			100		18
20's				100	7
30's	19	36		43	22
40's	71	28			40
50's		62		37	11
60's					

	Parents	Principals & Teachers
Teenager		
20's		100
30's	33	66
40's	81	18
50's		100
60's		

Table A1.3
RESPONSE TO: Highest Qualification

	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
School	26		73		33
Diploma	40			59	18
Bachelors	16	46		36	25
Honours	100				3
Masters	14	53		32	14
Doctorate		100			3

	Parents	Principals & Teachers
School	100	
Diploma	60	40
Bachelors	28	71
Honours	100	
Masters	25	75
Doctorate		100

2 PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

Table A2.1
RESPONSE TO: When greatest number of parents are present at PTA meetings

	Parents	Principals	All Respondents
Begin. yr.	57	42	90
Crisis	18	36	18

Table A2.2
RESPONSE TO: Group with best attendance at PTA meeting

	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Mothers	33	33		33	100
Fathers					

Table A2.3
RESPONSE TO: Group with best attendance at PTA meetings.

	Parents	Principals	All Respondents
White	50	50	100
Black			

Table A2.4
RESPONSE TO: Standard whose parents attend PTA meetings in greatest numbers.

	Parents	Principals	All Respondents
6	51	48	70
7	68	31	60
8			
9	100		20
10			

Table A2.5
RESPONSE TO: Income group who attend PTA meetings in greatest numbers.

	Parents	Principals	All Respondents
Upper	57	42	30
Middle	52	47	80
Lower			

Table A2.6
RESPONSE TO: Reason for parents attending PTA meetings.

	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Improve educ. stds.	37	37	25		78
Imp. edc. of child			100		21
Raise funds	56		43		28
Help staff					
Hidden agenda	8	30		60	28
Seek power	22			77	14

	Parents	Principals & Teachers
Improve educ. stds.	66	33
Imp. edc. of child		
Raise funds	100	
Help staff		
Hidden agenda	16	84
Seek power	36	63

3 GOVERNING BODY

Table A3.1
RESPONSE TO: Group with best attendance at GB meeting

	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Mothers					
Fathers	33	33		33	100

Table A3.2
RESPONSE TO: The Governors reasonably well with the issues the respondents consider important

	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Yes	23	21	27	27	89
No	50	50			11

4 COMMUNICATION

Table A4.1
RESPONSE TO: Methods used by schools to communicate with parents

	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Letters	19	30	24	24	77
Tel. calls	18	29	23	29	81
Faxes	9	36	21	21	22
Newslett.	26	26	21	26	96
Par. even.	25	25	25	25	100
Interviews	24	26	21	26	92

	Parents	Principals & Teachers
Letters	41	58
Tel. calls	38	61
Faxes	40	60
Newslett.	50	50
Par. even.	50	50
Interviews	47	52

Table A4.2
RESPONSE TO: The frequency of communication with the parents.

	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Daily	26	73			18
Weekly	100				11
Monthly	37	34	13	13	40
Once a term	25	26	31	15	62
Problem occurs	32	13	23	31	66

	Parents	Principals & Teachers
Daily	40	60
Weekly	100	
Monthly	60	40
Once a term	53	46
Problem occurs	60	40

Table A4.3
RESPONSE TO: Schools hold sufficient parent's days/evenings to discuss matters with parents.

	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Yes	24	26	21	26	92
No	31		68		7

Table A4.4
RESPONSE TO: The issues dealt with in the different forms of communication.

	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Funds	29	20	24	24	62
Sport/Culture	30	25	18	24	85
Academics	23	25	25	25	96
Behaviour	20	28	22	28	85
Dress	32	14	35	17	29
Policy	22	35	16	25	59
Teach. methods	33	41	24		22
Changes	25	23	28	22	88

	Parents	Principals & Teachers
Funds	57	42
Sport/Culture	55	45
Academics	47	52
Behaviour	42	57
Dress	66	33
Policy	42	57
Teach methods	60	40
Changes	52	47

Table A4.5

RESPONSE TO: Misunderstandings about education as a whole and lack of support for schools and teachers is a result of schools failing to communicate adequately with parents.

	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Yes	20	22	42	14	41
No	30	25	10	32	62

	Parents	Principals & Teachers
Yes	52	47
No	52	47

Table A4.6

RESPONSE TO: Parents are informed of the school's teaching methods and approach to education.

	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Yes	22	35	21	21	70
No	31		34	34	29

	Parents	Principals & Teachers
Yes	43	56
No	66	33

Table A4.7

RESPONSE TO: Teachers should explain their teaching methods to parents.

	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Yes	35	16	19	29	55
No	14	34	30	20	44

	Parents	Principals & Teachers
Yes	61	38
No	33	66

Table A4.8

RESPONSE TO: Parents feel free to contact the principal/teachers at any time with school related problems.

	Parents
Yes	100
No	

Table A4.9
RESPONSE TO: Parents make contact with the principal/teachers at times other than at formal meetings.

	Parents
Yes	81
No	18

Table A4.10
RESPONSE TO: Progress is made as a result of meetings with the principal/teachers.

	Parents
Yes	81
No	18

Table A4.11
RESPONSE TO: Principals/teachers react well to suggestions from parents.

	Parents
Yes	60
No	40

Table A4.12
RESPONSE TO: Principals react well to suggestions from parents.

	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Yes	31	37	31	71
No	38	23	38	28

Table A4.13
RESPONSE TO: Teachers react well to suggestions from parents.

	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Yes	29	35	35	56
No	45	27	27	50

Table A4.14
RESPONSE TO: Principals/teachers act on suggestions made by parents.

	Parents
Yes	66
No	33

Table A4.15
RESPONSE TO: Principals act on suggestions made to them by parents.

	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Yes	29	35	35	93
No	45	54		13

Table A4.16
RESPONSE TO: Teachers act on suggestions made to them by parents.

	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Yes	40	29	29	63
No	38	30	30	43

5 STATUS OF THE TEACHER

Table A5.1
RESPONSE TO: Recommending the teaching profession to someone else.

	Parents	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Yes	35	16	50	40
No	36	36	27	75

6 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARENTS AND THE PRINCIPAL/TEACHERS

Table A 6.1
RESPONSE TO: Relationship between parents and the principal.

	Parents	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Excellent	100			9
Good	16	47	35	47
Fair	53	23	23	33
Poor	31		68	9

	Parents	Principals & Teachers
Excellent	100	
Good	31	68
Fair	69	30
Poor	31	68

Table A6.2
RESPONSE TO: Relationship between parents and teachers.

	Principals	Parents	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Excellent			100		4
Good	30	50		18	33
Fair	26	18	23	31	59
Poor		31	100		4

	Parents	Principals & Teachers
Excellent		
Good	66	33
Fair	38	61
Poor	31	68

7 ACTIVITIES IN WHICH PARENTS SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN DECISION-MAKING

Table A7.1
ACTIVITY: School policy

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents	32	26	16	24	66
Principals	20	28	22	28	85
Pupils	26	49	23		44
Teachers	19	30	18	30	77

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents	56	43
Principals	42	57
Pupils	50	50
Teachers	38	61

Table A7.2
ACTIVITY: Enrolment Policy

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents	23	42	9	25	59
Principals	20	23	28	28	85
Pupils	21	78			11
Teachers	21	23	27	27	51

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents	40	60
Principals	44	55
Pupils	33	66
Teachers	45	54

Table A7.3
ACTIVITY: Teacher Recruitment

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents	27	33	10	29	51
Principals	26	26	26	21	96
Pupils					
Teachers	17	63		19	25

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents	46	53
Principals	52	47
Pupils		
Teachers	28	71

Table A7.4
ACTIVITY: Teacher Appointments

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents	37	39	11	11	48
Principals	23	25	25	25	96
Pupils					
Teachers	15	84			14

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents	58	41
Principals	47	52
Pupils		
Teachers	25	75

Table A7.5
ACTIVITY: Allocation of classes to teachers

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents					
Principals	25	28	17	28	88
Pupils			100		4
Teachers	16	22	26	35	51

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents		
Principals	47	52
Pupils		
Teachers	36	63

Table A7.6
ACTIVITY: Drawing up of the school timetable.

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents	100				4
Principals	25	31	18	24	81
Pupils			100		4
Teachers	25	25	18	30	81

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents	100	
Principals	47	52
Pupils		
Teachers	47	52

Table A7.7
ACTIVITY: Length of the school day.

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents	20	46	22	11	44
Principals	24	26	21	26	92
Pupils	19	36	21	21	22
Teachers	25	19	15	39	62

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents	40	60
Principals	47	52
Pupils	40	60
Teachers	46	53

Table A7.8
ACTIVITY: The time of the year when exams are to be written.

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents	40			59	18
Principals	24	26	26	21	92
Pupils	13		28	57	14
Teachers	24	34	13	29	74

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents	60	40
Principals	50	50
Pupils	33	66
Teachers	44	55

Table A7.9
ACTIVITY: The frequency of testing and examining.

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents				100	4
Principals	25	28	22	22	88
Pupils					
Teachers	19	30	18	30	77

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents		100
Principals	50	50
Pupils		
Teachers	38	61

Table A7.10
ACTIVITY: The drawing up of the examination timetable.

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents	18			81	11
Principals	27	33	19	19	77
Pupils	76		23		29
Teachers	25	28	17	28	88

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents	33	66
Principals	50	50
Pupils	100	
Teachers	47	52

Table A7.11
ACTIVITY: Quantity of Homework given

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents					
Principals	28	51	10	10	51
Pupils			50	50	7
Teachers	23	25	25	25	96

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents		
Principals	46	53
Pupils		100
Teachers	47	52

Table A7.12
ACTIVITY: Form of Homework given.

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents					
Principals	26	38	23	11	44
Pupils	31		68		7
Teachers	24	26	21	26	92

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents		
Principals	50	50
Pupils	100	
Teachers	47	52

Table A7.13
ACTIVITY: Type of project set

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents			100		4
Principals	20	49	14	14	33
Pupils	100				4
Teachers	21	26	26	26	92

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents		
Principals	37	62
Pupils	100	
Teachers	45	55

Table A7.14
ACTIVITY: Forms of discipline to be exercised.

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents	21	39	23	15	62
Principals	26	26	21	26	96
Pupils	27	33	19	19	25
Teachers	24	28	13	33	74

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents	42	57
Principals	50	50
Pupils	50	50
Teachers	44	55

Table A7.15
ACTIVITY: School rules

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents	28	44	17	10	59
Principals	27	24	23	23	85
Pupils	20	46	22	11	44
Teachers	18	33	13	33	70

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents	50	50
Principals	52	47
Pupils	40	60
Teachers	35	64

Table A7.16
ACTIVITY: Teacher's Dress

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents	42	26		31	18
Principals	24	26	26	21	92
Pupils					
Teachers	17	32	19	29	48

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents	60	40
Principals	50	50
Pupils		
Teachers	36	63

Table A7.17
ACTIVITY: Teacher's Conduct

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents	27	33	19	19	25
Principals	24	26	26	21	92
Pupils			100		4
Teachers	22	40		36	40

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents	50	50
Principals	50	50
Pupils		
Teachers	36	63

Table A7.18
ACTIVITY: Promotion of pupils

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents				100	4
Principals	25	28	22	22	88
Pupils					
Teachers	22	27	22	27	88

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents		100
Principals	50	50
Pupils		
Teachers	45	55

Table A7.19
ACTIVITY: Determination of school fees

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents	23	31	12	31	77
Principals	28	19	28	23	88
Pupils					
Teachers	16	20	24	37	37

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents	42	57
Principals	57	42
Pupils		
Teachers	37	62

Table A7.20
ACTIVITY: Fund raising

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents	31	31	6	31	85
Principals	32	16	30	20	51
Pupils	18		40	40	22
Teachers	26	24	29	19	51

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents	50	50
Principals	63	36
Pupils	50	50
Teachers	54	45

Table A7.21
ACTIVITY: Determination of school budget

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents	25	31	18	24	81
Principals	23	29	23	23	85
Pupils	100				4
Teachers	27	33	19	19	51

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents	47	52
Principals	47	52
Pupils	100	
Teachers	50	50

Table A7.22
ACTIVITY: Collection of school fees

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents	25	39		35	53
Principals	28	14	35	22	57
Pupils	26			73	8
Teachers	12		53	33	15

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents	40	59
Principals	61	38
Pupils	47	52
Teachers	47	52

Table A 7.23
ACTIVITY: Determination of how school funds should be spent

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents	35	32	15	15	70
Principals	20	28	28	22	85
Pupils	100				4
Teachers	22	27	24	24	59

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents	58	41
Principals	44	55
Pupils	100	
Teachers	46	53

Table A7.24
ACTIVITY: Maintenance of school

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	Total
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents	24	37	15	22	66
Principals	25	28	28	17	88
Pupils	31		68		7
Teachers	24	34	27	13	37

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents	Principals & Teachers
	Yes	Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents	43	56
Principals	52	47
Pupils	100	
Teachers	50	50

Table A7.25
ACTIVITY: Choice of textbooks

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	Total
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents			100		4
Principals	21	44	20	13	66
Pupils					
Teachers	22	37	17	22	100

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents	Principals & Teachers
	Yes	Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents		
Principals	46	54
Pupils		
Teachers	44	55

Table A7.26
ACTIVITY: Issue of textbooks

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents	33	30	36		15
Principals	19	35	28	17	69
Pupils	31		68		8
Teachers	23	29	17	29	84

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents	64	35
Principals	40	59
Pupils	100	
Teachers	45	55

Table A7.27
ACTIVITY: Decisions about extra-murals

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents	18	50		30	48
Principals	25	25	24	24	81
Pupils	27	33		39	25
Teachers	21	30	18	30	81

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents	30	69
Principals	50	50
Pupils	42	57
Teachers	42	57

Table A7.28
ACTIVITY: Decisions about extra-tuition

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents	20	46	11	22	44
Principals	21	30	24	24	81
Pupils			50	50	7
Teachers	23	26	19	31	77

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents	36	63
Principals	44	55
Pupils		100
Teachers	44	55

Table A7.29
ACTIVITY: Prefect selection

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents					
Principals	24	26	21	26	92
Pupils	35	19	33	11	48
Teachers	24	26	21	26	92

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents	47	52
Principals	70	30
Pupils	47	52
Teachers		

Table A7.30
ACTIVITY: Standard of Exams

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents			100		4
Principals	27	30	24	18	85
Pupils	100				4
Teachers	19	30	18	30	77

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents		
Principals	52	47
Pupils	100	
Teachers	38	61

Table A7.31
ACTIVITY: Teaching Methods

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents	23		25	51	18
Principals	29	32	19	19	81
Pupils	31		68		7
Teachers	21	30	24	24	81

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents	50	50
Principals	52	47
Pupils	100	
Teachers	44	55

Table A7.32
ACTIVITY: Marking of work.

	RESPONSES OF				
	Parents Yes	Principals Yes	Pupils Yes	Teachers Yes	Total Yes
To involvement of:					
Parents					
Principals	25	46	13	13	37
Pupils					
Teachers	25	25	25	25	100

	RESPONSES OF	
	Parents Yes	Principals & Teachers Yes
To involvement of:		
Parents		
Principals	44	55
Pupils		
Teachers	50	50

8 DECISION-MAKING

Table A8.1
RESPONSE TO: Parents of individual children can make decisions about school life in general.

	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Yes	7	27	16	49	25
No	32	24	28	14	74

	Parents	Principals & Teachers
Yes	16	83
No	62	37

Table A8.2

RESPONSE TO: Parents consciously take long term implications into account when making decisions about education.

	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Yes	24	18	37	18	65
No	15	28		56	38

	Parents	Principals & Teachers
Yes	56	44
No	28	71

Table A8.3

RESPONSE TO: Parent's decisions are influenced by their personal wishes for their children..

	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Yes	24	26	21	26	92
No	31		68		7

	Parents	Principals & Teachers
Yes	47	52
No	100	

Table A8.4

RESPONSE TO: Teachers who do not have children of their own at a school, can be more objective than parents..

	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Yes	20	28	22	28	85
No	40		29	29	18

	Parents	Principals & Teachers
Yes	42	57
No	75	25

Table A8.5

RESPONSE TO: Teachers, because of their professional training and experience, are better able to make decisions about education and its long term effects.

	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Yes	26	26	21	26	96
No			100		7

	Parents	Principals & Teachers
Yes	50	50
No		

Table A8.6

RESPONSE TO: Teachers are better qualified than parents to decide what skills and knowledge pupils need to acquire.

	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Yes	25	25	25	25	100
No	31	38		29	23

	Parents	Principals & Teachers
Yes	50	50
No	47	52

9 GREATER PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Table A9.1

RESPONSE TO: Parents who intend to become more involved in education matters relating to the curriculum and education policy should first have to undergo some form of training in these areas.

	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Yes	23	29	17	29	84
No	31		68		15

	Parents	Principals & Teachers
Yes	45	55
No	100	

Table A9.2

RESPONSE TO: A greater involvement of parents in education will further undermine the professional status of teachers.

	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Yes	23	34	20	20	48
No	26	14	25	33	59

	Parents	Principals & Teachers
Yes	45	54
No	53	46

Table A9.3

RESPONSE TO: A greater involvement of parents in education will be perceived by teachers as a threat to their independence and will serve to de-motivate them.

	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Yes	30	40	10	19	55
No	18	9	41	31	44

	Parents	Principals & Teachers
Yes	50	50
No	50	50

Table A9.4

RESPONSE TO: A greater involvement of parents in education will be used by certain parents to undermine the transformation of education.

	Parents	Principals	Pupils	Teachers	All Respondents
Yes	21	29	21	26	68
No	27	11	27	34	36

	Parents	Principals & Teachers
Yes	42	57
No	57	42

NB.
THE RESULTS BELOW ARE NOT EXPRESSED AS A PERCENTAGE, BUT AS A NUMBER.

10 INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLS

Table A10.1
RESPONSE TO: Number of schools stakeholders have been involved in.

	Parents	Principals	Teachers	All Respondents
On Average	2.9	3.8	2	2.9

Table A10.2
RESPONSE TO: Number of years stakeholders have been involved with schools.

	Parents	Principals	Teachers	All Respondents
On Average	12	26	7.8	14

Table A10.3
RESPONSE TO: Numbers attending PTA meetings.

ATTENDANCE OF / RESPONSE OF	Parents	Principals	Teachers	All Respondents
Parents	26	13		21
Community				
Teachers	6.8	4.5	4	5.7
On Average	2.9	3.8	2	21

APPENDIX B

ABBREVIATIONS

African National Congress	ANC
Gauteng Department of Education	GDE
Governing Body	GB
Mass Democratic Movement	MDM
National Professional Association of Teachers of South Africa	NAPTOSA
Parent Association	PA
Parent Teacher Association	PTA
South Africa	SA
South African Democratic Teachers' Union	SADTU

APPENDIX C

LETTER FROM THE GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GRANTING PERMISSION FOR THE QUESTIONNAIRES TO BE COMPLETED BY PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS, PARENTS AND PUPILS OF THE FOLLOWING SELECTED SECONDARY STATE-AIDED SCHOOLS:

* Sunward Park High
* Sir Pierre van Ryneveld High
* Brakpan High
* Springs Boys High
* Willowmore High

PLEASE TURN OVER

GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Telephone : 011 333-0307
Fax : 011 333-5545

111 Commissioner Street
JOHANNESBURG
2001

P.O. Box 7710
JOHANNESBURG
2000

Reference : Dr A. Chandler

19 September 1996

Mr D.L. Schafer
10 Cradock Road
Freeway Park
BOKSBURG
1459

Dear Mr Schafer

RESEARCH PROJECT: THE POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION: CASE STUDY OF SIX SCHOOLS ON THE EAST RAND

Your research proposal, dated 1996-08-29, as well as your telephone conversation with staff of the Gauteng Department of Education on 1996-09-20 and 1996-09-27, has reference.

The Gauteng Department of Education has granted permission for questionnaires to be completed by principals, teachers, parents and students of the following selected secondary state aided schools:

- Sunward Park High (C6)(A)
- Sir Pierre van Ryneveld High (N6)(A)
- Brakpan High (S1)(A)
- Springs Boys High (S5)(A)
- Willowmore High (S1)(A)

St. Dominics Convent (C6) is a private school and you should therefore approach the principal directly.

C, N, S = Districts
A = State Aided School

Permission is subject to the following conditions:

- The District Directors are to be informed that you have received permission from the Gauteng Depatment of Education to conduct your research in the above secondary schools. Consult Annexure A for the names and addresses of the District Directors.

- Please show this letter to the school principal and the chairperson of the Governing Council, as proof that you have received the Department's consent to carry out the research as detailed above. The letter places no obligation on schools to participate in the research programme.

- A letter which sets out a brief summary of your research project should please be made available to the headmaster of each school concerned.

- Permission for the students to fill in the questionnaire should be obtained from the students' parents/guardians.

- Please obtain the goodwill and co-operation of the principal, chairperson of the Governing Council, teachers, parents and students involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive any special benefit from the Department, while those who prefer not to participate will not be penalised in any way.

- The normal school programme should be interrupted as little as possible and the principal should be consulted as to the hours required for research.

- The names of the school, teachers, parents and students may not appear or be mentioned in your dissertation, without their consent.

It should also be mentioned that the ex-HoA and ex-TED did major research in this field.

Kindly provide the Gauteng Department of Education with a bound copy of the report upon its completion.

We wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely

.....

ENVER MOTALA
DEPUTY HEAD: POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION

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