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AN EXPLORATION OF INSTRUMENTS TO MOBILISE
BUREAUCRATIC AND PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY
IN POOR-PERFORMING PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
THE GAUTENG PROVINCE: A CASE STUDY OF 3 SCHOOLS

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A research report submitted to the Wits School of Education, Faculty of Humanities,
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Abstract

This study looked at the way poor-performing public secondary schools in Gauteng Province understand school accountability; their current internal accountability instruments; the way professional development is conducted; and their engagement with the Integrated Quality Management System, the external school accountability system. The intention of the study was to identify possible instruments to mobilise bureaucratic and professional accountability in poor-performing secondary schools. The study was a case study of three poor-performing secondary schools and relied on teachers and principals at these schools to learn their understanding and reactions to the notion of accountability.

The study revealed that such schools use bureaucratic instruments (such as attendance registers) to realise accountability and to create structure and routine in their schools. However, where leadership is weak, even these bureaucratic tools such as attendance registers are ineffective. These schools do not take action against non-conformance by teachers and principals. In the schools investigated, accountability was seen as 'doing your work as you were trained to do during your pre-service training and reporting on learner performance'.

The study revealed that, to move towards greater professional accountability in the school sector, a long-term approach is needed that is underscored by ongoing professional development complemented with pressure or performance management. Equally important is the need to build collective power through improving knowledge and skills and motivation for improvement amongst both teachers and school managers.

Declaration

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

Shamima Vawda

15th August 2011

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List of Abbreviations

DAS:	Developmental Appraisal System
DoE:	Department of Education
DSG:	Development Support Group
ELRC:	Education Labour Relations Council
FET:	Further Education and Training
GDE:	Gauteng Department of Education
HoD:	Head of Department
IQMS:	Integrated Quality Management System
LRC:	Learner Representative Council
LTSM:	Learning and Teaching Support Material
NCS:	National Curriculum Statement
NEEDU:	National Education Evaluation and Development Unit
NSC:	National Senior Certificate
NSNP:	National School Nutrition Programme
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SDT:	School Development Team
SBST:	School Based Support Team
SGB:	School Governing Body
USA:	United States of America
WSE:	Whole School Evaluation

1 Introduction

This introductory chapter offers a brief background to the study, a description of the aim of the study and the related specific objectives, and is followed by the rationale for the study. The study is influenced by the evolution of education policies negotiated and implemented in South Africa since 1994 to enhance the quality of learning and teaching in public schools. The use of accountability systems for public schools emerged as policy instruments intended to enable professional development of teachers and principals and consequently improve their overall performance and the quality and equity in the sector. However, policy implementation research in the school sector over the last three decades have shed light on the difficulties in ensuring that policies are carried out as intended at the coal face. Similarly, employing accountability systems as an instrument to enhance professionalism in most schools remains a challenge.

1.1 Background

The current South African education policies directed at improving equality, quality, and equity in public schools have been less successful in practice in transforming poor-performing public secondary schools into sites of quality learning and teaching (Crouch and Mabogoane, 1998; Taylor et al, 2008; Van der Berg, 2008). There is evidence in the literature that policy implementation is difficult and requires various conducive conditions such as greater commitment, capacity and resources.

The aim of this study is to explore policy instruments that can be leveraged to mobilise both bureaucratic and professional accountability in poor-performing public secondary schools in the Gauteng province. Poor-performing secondary schools in this study are schools that achieved less

than 30% pass rate in the 2009 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations. Bureaucratic accountability refers to schools' adherence to both internal and external rules and procedures, while professional accountability means teachers and principals sharing and reflecting together on their specialised knowledge, skills and practices to improve their performance and ensure that learners experience high quality learning and teaching as well as to uphold professional norms.

In reviewing education change in South Africa between 1994 and 2008, Taylor, Fleisch and Schindler reported that 79% of the country's high schools fall into the poorly performing category and noted furthermore that the "overwhelming majority of children attending these schools are poor and African" (Taylor *et al*, 2008, p46). In another paper, Taylor draws the following conclusion: "instead of ameliorating the inequalities in South African society by providing poor children with the knowledge and skills needed to escape poverty and contribute to national development, the majority of schools, at best, have no equalising effect; at worst they may even be further disadvantaging their pupils" (Taylor, 2006, p24).

While the international literature shows that learners' socio-economic status has a significant impact on their performance (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2009); locally Crouch and Mabogoane (1998), in their analysis of the NSC or matric results, confirm that learners from poor homes perform 20 points lower. Another interesting finding is that learners in township schools or in ex-department of education and training (ex-DET) schools have a pass rate that is lower by 20 to 30 points. Van der Berg (2008) using the SACMEQ II¹ dataset shows that socio-economic differential significantly influences learner achievement at primary school level and that the school system is unable to overcome this. A surprising finding of Van der Berg's analysis is that the

¹ SACMEQ refers to the Southern African Consortium on Monitoring Education Quality. The second study was conducted in 2000.

socioeconomic status of learners had a small impact on test scores in the sample of schools that excluded the richest 10% of schools (schools in quintile 5). Both Crouch and Mabogoane (1998) and Van der Berg's (2008) studies conclude that the majority of South African schools are unable to convert resources into learner performance.

Government's response to change this situation has been multi-fold and includes systems to improve and increase accountability in the schooling sector. The transformation of the South African school sector since 1994 is founded on teacher professionalism. The initial Curriculum 2005 and the now revised National Curriculum Statement (NCS), governance and management policies for schools, and teacher professional development policies demand teachers and school managers who understand their subject content and subject pedagogic knowledge and societal knowledge. It requires teachers to be able to reflect on their practices, and understand their learners and the communities their schools are located with the intention to strive constantly to improve learning and teaching in their respective classrooms and schools. However, all these policies and additional resources directed at policy implementation have been unsuccessful in improving learning and teaching in the majority of public classrooms and schools (Crouch and Mabogoane, 1998; Taylor, 2006; Taylor et al, 2008; Van der Berg, 2008). Parker (2002) acknowledges that due to this deadlock, the Department of Education (DoE) decided to enter directly into agreements with teacher unions through the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) that provided regulations and procedures for professional development and disciplinary processes.

In 1998, the Development Appraisal System (DAS) was agreed upon at the ELRC. In 2003, the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) (Resolution 8 of 2003) was introduced to improve the accountability system by combining with the development appraisal. It was the result of agreements signed at the ELRC to foster deeper professionalism in the

school sector. The purpose of this agreement is to integrate development, support, and accountability, i.e. to ensure that the individual and school evaluation and support systems strengthen each other and contribute to whole school development and better quality schooling. Thus, the IQMS merges professional development, individual performance, and whole school evaluation.

However, the tensions between development and performance have marred the implementation of the IQMS, as was noted by a formal evaluation of the implementation of IQMS by Class Act in 2007. The report revealed that the policy was not uniformly implemented across public schools, citing numerous reasons for this failure, including the lack of capacity in the system and a poor understanding of the policy purpose. Jansen (2004) cautioned that the legacy of the apartheid inspection policy has a great influence on the way schools respond to new policies directed at improving accountability. Nonetheless, accountability is increasingly the current buzzword in government policy development, sometimes being considered as the panacea to poor quality services by the public sector, including education.

1.2 Aim of the Study

This study is interested to explore instruments which mobilise bureaucratic and professional accountability in poor-performing secondary schools in the Gauteng province. The specific objectives for the research are to examine the following questions:

1. How do poor-performing public secondary schools understand school accountability?
2. What are the existing current accountability systems and instruments in poor-performing secondary schools?

3. How is professional development conducted in poor-performing public secondary schools? and
4. How do poor-performing public secondary schools engage with an external accountability system, such as the IQMS?

These specific objectives are linked to the current quality assurance system (the 2003 IQMS) that aims to integrate development, support and accountability. The specific objectives allow the exploration of the current status quo of accountability in a sample of poor-performing secondary schools, that is how teachers and school managers perceive the notion of accountability and the way they translate it into their respective schools' management systems. The specific objectives also allow a deeper understanding of the attitudes of 'street-level bureaucrats' towards accountability systems and the capacity of poor-performing secondary schools to engage with external accountability systems, such as the IQMS. Finally, through these specific objectives, and speaking directly to teachers and school managers, the study will be able to collect rich primary data that will facilitate identifying and evaluating possible more appropriate instruments to mobilize bureaucratic and professional accountability.

1.3 Rationale for the Study

Schools matter, particularly public schools, and this is the main reason for conducting the study. While there are criticisms of the Coleman Report (Jansen, 1995), it brought to attention that schools contribute significantly to the achievement of disadvantaged children (Coleman et al, 1966). They found that: "it is for the most disadvantaged children that improvements in school quality will make the most difference in achievement" (Coleman et al, 1966, p21).

In the South African case where the majority of children are disadvantaged, the public school system is one of the most important means to enable individual wellbeing and inter-generational mobility (OECD, 2009; Hanushek, 2003). However, the South African public schools are not offering this 'equality of education opportunity' (Taylor, 2006; Van der Berg, 2008). There is a need for collective effort to understand the reasons for this impasse and to mobilise resources to change this status quo and this has not often been the subject of research in the case of South African schools.

The second reason for doing the study is the acknowledgement that quality teachers contribute significantly towards learners' achievement (Coleman et al, 1966; Darling-Hammond, 1999; Hanushek, 2003; OECD, McKinsey, 2007; 2009). The dominant view in current education policy is the use of incentives to improve the quality of teaching through the implementation of performance management accountability systems (Hanushek, 2003). However, many performance-based accountability, and in South Africa, the IQMS accountability system are not functioning as planned in the majority of public schools (O' Day, 2002; Mintrop and Tujillo, 2005; Class Act, 2007) and there is a need to research this aspect.

The third reason is because South African policy makers and implementing agencies are beginning to reflect on the challenges facing policy implementation in South Africa. There is evidence in the literature that policies get changed or adapted at the coal face of implementation and the changes are largely influenced by the context of implementation (Weatherly and Lipsky, 1977; Elmore, 1979; Sabatier, 1986; McLaughlin, 1998). Research in Western Europe and the United States of America (USA) has revealed that teachers' and schools' capacity to engage with policy is a critical success factor to policy implementation (Hopkins and Harrison, 1997; O' Day, 2002). This wealth of research on policy implementation is limited to Western Europe and the USA. There is a need

to grow the policy implementation research in South Africa, given the unique challenges of overcoming the social, economic, and psychological barriers from apartheid. Abelman and Elmore succinctly capture the rationale for the study; “new educational accountability systems will succeed or fail to the degree that they are designed with knowledge of how schools vary in their own conceptions of accountability” (1999, p.3).

2 Review of Literature

The thrust of this study is to explore policy implementation and more specifically policies and instruments which attempt to mobilise bureaucratic and professional accountability in poor-performing secondary schools. This chapter reviews the debates around educational accountability with specific reference to poor-performing secondary schools. In the process, it offers a historical account of the evolution of the IQMS in South Africa to further enrich the debate on policy implementation in South Africa and draws attention to the significance of professional development of teachers and the role of school clusters and School-Based Support Teams (SBST) in fostering collegiality and caring in the South African public school sector. Finally, it summarises the current work in the field of education policy implementation.

2.2 Historical Background to Accountability Policies in South African Education

Sabatier (1986) drawing on his work in environmental policy formulation and management strongly contends that a long-term perspective must be taken, because as the policy implementation process begins, it is also the beginning of the policy learning process. As such public policy in a particular sector evolves over a period of ten to fifteen years. This process is clearly seen in respect to the evolution of the accountability policy in South African school sector.

The National Education Policy Act, 1996 gives legislative authority to the Minister of Education to set education policies that will enable transformation of the education sector in accordance with the aspirations of the democratic Constitution adopted in 1996. Furthermore the Act mandates the minister to set standards for education provision and to

monitor that the standards are aligned to the Bill of Rights in the Constitution. The South African Schools Act, 1996 legislated the standards for organisation, governance and funding of schools. In 1997 Curriculum 2005 was adopted as the official school curriculum. Curriculum 2005 is underpinned on an outcomes-based education model for teaching, learning, and assessing which focuses on exit level competencies (what learners are able to do) instead of content. This new curriculum is more open than the replaced apartheid curriculum in that it allows teachers to exert their professionalism and take greater control of learning and teaching in their classrooms (Chisholm, 2003).

Three years into implementation of Curriculum 2005, the then Minister of Education set up a review committee (Department of Education (DoE), 2000) to investigate its implementation, structure, and the understanding of outcomes-based education amongst others. The committee reported that, while there was support for Curriculum 2005, implementation was confounded by: “a skewed curriculum structure and design; lack of alignment between curriculum and assessment policy; inadequate orientation, training and development of teachers; learning support materials that are variable in quality, often unavailable and not sufficiently used in classrooms; policy overload and limited transfer of learning into classrooms; shortages of personnel and resources to implement and support C2005 [Curriculum 2005]; inadequate recognition of curriculum as the core business of education departments” (DoE, 2000). Curriculum 2005 was revised based on the recommendations made by the review committee resulting in the NCS. The NCS envisions teachers “who are qualified, competent, dedicated and caring and who will be able to fulfill the various roles outlined in the Norms and Standards for Educators of 2000” (DoE, 2002:9).

The *Employment of Educators Act*, 1998 gives the South African Council for Educators (SACE) the function and power to register, discipline, and

develop educators. In this regard, the council has published the *Code of Professional Ethics* (also known as the Code of Conduct for Educators). In 2000, the *Norms and Standards for Educators* (DoE, 2000) and the criteria for the Recognition and Evaluation of Qualifications for Employment in Education (DoE, 2000) were published in an effort to promote teacher professionalism.

The 2000 *Norms and Standards for Educators* describes the roles of an educator, their set of applied competences and qualifications. The seven roles of an educator, namely, learning mediator; leader, administrator and manager; scholar, researcher and lifelong learner; community, citizenship and pastoral care; assessor; and learning area/subject/discipline/phase specialist are 'exit level outcomes' for an educator qualification and hence articulates with what it means to be a "competent educator". The Criteria for the Recognition and Evaluation of Qualifications for Employment in Education (2000) stipulates the kinds of qualifications that the DoE will consider for employment purposes.

However, Sayed (2004: 262) argues that these policies are substantive and reveal decisiveness of the state to change the landscape of teacher education. Nonetheless, he draws caution about their effectiveness because "a state [is] constrained by its commitment to co-operative governance, which has generated a Byzantine web of structures and procedures". Similarly, Parker (2002) acknowledges that, due to the multiple service providers responsible for the professional development of educators and the number of statutory bodies tasked with overseeing the quality of qualifications, very little meaningful change has resulted in this area. Parker (2002:20) argues that this impasse has lead the DoE to work in the 'bi-polar forums' to attain the kinds of regulations and procedures that will give definition to 'being an educator' and create the kinds of professional development and disciplinary procedures needed to steer transformation. Harley et al (2000), in a study which compared teacher

practices with policy expectations, also found in this regard that teachers have their own value systems, local cultures, and that the context in which they work influence their competences in the various roles.

Numerous ELRC collective agreements were entered into with teacher unions to give definition to being an educator. These are briefly described below. The *Developmental Appraisal System* (DAS) was agreed to in the 1998 ELRC. It was driven by some teacher unions and presented as an integral part of teachers' conditions of service. DAS provides a means for ongoing professional development of educators that will contribute to improving teaching and school management. The agreement stresses that the criteria used for the appraisal are aligned to the work of educators in the school. In November of 1998 Resolution 8: *Duties and Responsibilities of Educators* (School and Office Based) and Resolution 7: *Workload of Educators* (School Based) were agreed to, and articulate with the core duties of educators and their workload. The DAS process requires educators to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses in various areas, work with a peer or colleague in prioritizing their professional development needs which will result in a professional growth plan, implement the plan and work with the panel to reflect on their professional growth. Each DAS cycle is six months and the school development teams (SDTs) are responsible for implementing the process in their respective schools. School-based educators are required to work for 1800 hours per year and to spend a maximum of 80 hours per year on professional development programmes (Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC), Resolution 7, 1998). However, the agreement acknowledges that the primary responsibility of professional development lies with the educator; all educators must be trained in the process and its spirit; and that the success of the DA depends on the school's culture, namely democratic organizational climate, learning culture at institutions, commitment of educators to development, and openness and trust (ELRC, 1998).

Barasa and Mattson (1998) reviewed critically various government legislation and policy documents, such as the *Committee on Teacher Education Policy* and the *Norms and Standards for Educators*, 2000, the Code of Conduct, the *Developmental Appraisal System* and the *Duties and Responsibilities of Educators*. They conclude that these policies offer a uniform vision of both education and the teaching profession and that the strengths of these documents include the promotion of democratic education practices and of teaching as a profession, attempting to create a balance between professional accountability and professional autonomy. The documents are internally coherent and uphold the principles of the constitution while providing a degree of flexibility to contextual diversity.

However, the weaknesses identified by these authors are that the *Developmental Appraisal System* and the *Duties and Responsibilities of Educators* fail to incorporate a human rights dimension. The values promoted are sometimes assumed to be universal and uncontested and there is a tension between the regulatory and developmental functions of the policies, i.e. the competences listed in the Norms and Standards for Educators are broad and educators may need to develop these before they can be appraised using the Developmental Appraisal. While Barasa and Mattson (1998:71) are positive about these policies promoting professionalism in teachers' work, they caution that:

Problems anticipated at implementation arise out of the perceived tension between the symbolic and developmental functions and the regulatory and procedural functions of the policies, and raise questions about their relevance and applicability to the diversity of contexts in which they will operate.

While these collective agreements are between individual educators and their employer (provincial departments of education), there are instruments used to foster development of a school as a collective unit and monitor the standards of education provision of schools, through the *National Policy for Whole-School Evaluation* (WSE) (DoE, 2001) and the *Assessment Policy in the General Education and Training Band*, Grades R to 9 and

ABET (DoE, 1998). Like the DAS, these policies are aimed at supporting schools in raising the quality of learning and teaching and ultimately learner performance. WSE has the additional goal to “increase the level of accountability within the education system” (DoE, 2001:7). The areas of evaluation include: basic functionality of the school; leadership, management and communication; governance and relationships; quality of teaching and learning, and educator development; curriculum provision and resources; learner achievement; school safety, security and discipline; school infrastructure; and parents and community. According to the policy, indicators used for evaluation include indicators for “inputs, process and outputs” (DoE, 2001:11). The Ministerial committee report on the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) is critical of the relevance of these areas and argues that the areas are “not explicitly related to the school’s core functions of teaching and learning” (DoE, 2009:19).

The process for WSE includes pre-evaluation surveys/visits, school self-evaluation, detailed on-site evaluation, post-evaluation reporting and post-evaluation support. The post evaluation support must be offered by the respective districts in which the school is located. A five point scale will be used to rate schools, namely, outstanding (5), good (4), acceptable (3), needs improvement (2), needs urgent support (1). In addition, the policy makes allowance for rating a school zero (0) on an indicator. However the policy is unclear on the frequency of WSE. Two instruments were designed, one for the latter nine areas and another for evaluating teaching and learning. In 2003 the ELRC (Resolution 3 of 2003) produced a protocol and instrument when observing educators in practice for WSE and DAS. However the agreement does not include educators employed at post level 13 and above and those on senior management system. In the same year an agreement between the DoE and the trade unions was reached on the process and performance standards for measuring performance of educators, referred to as the performance management

system (ELRC, 2003). The performance management system provides the tool to make decisions about “salary and grade progression, incentives and rewards, incapacity, and confirmation of permanency” (ELRC, 2003:2). The performance management cycle is twelve months, and the process includes a meeting with the supervisor to start the process, self-evaluation by the educator, quarterly evaluations and discussions between the supervisor and educator, culminating in a summative report moderated by the School Management Team. Systemic evaluation as described in the Assessment Policy in the General Education and Training Band, Grades R to 9 and ABET (DoE, 1998) concentrates on the education system through learner tests at grades 3, 6 and 9.

In 2003, the IQMS (Resolution 8 of 2003) was finalized at the ELRC. The purpose of the IQMS is to integrate all these development and evaluation systems into a single quality management system that will facilitate coherency and avoid “duplication, repetition and an unnecessary increase in workload” (ELRC, 2003:2). As such, the agreement sees the IQMS as a means to ensure that the individual evaluation and support systems strengthen each other and contribute to whole school development. Thus, a single instrument is used to assess individuals’ development needs and their performance. The process of implementation requires no additional structures and evaluation and support of educators must occur annually, while WSE will occur in a three or five-year cycle (2005 IQMS training manual) and performance management annually. A single instrument that encompasses previous instruments was developed that has twelve performance standards and numerous indicators per performance standards. Each of the indicators has a rating scale of four instead of five (excellent, good, acceptable, and unacceptable). The twelve performance standards are:

1. Creation of a positive learning environment;
2. Knowledge of curriculum and learning programmes;

3. Lesson planning, preparation, and presentation;
4. Learner assessment;
5. Professional development in field of work/career and participation in professional Bodies;
6. Human relations and contribution to school development;
7. Extra-Curricular and co-curricular Participation;
8. Administration of resources and records;
9. Personnel;
10. Decision making and accountability;
11. Leadership, communication and servicing the School Governing Body; and
12. Strategic planning, financial planning, and EMD.

Schools have to establish a SDT that is responsible for the overall implementation of the IQMS, while individual educators select members for the Development Support Group (DSG) that is responsible to assist and mentor educators in achieving their set development goals as per their personal growth plans. The milestones for the IQMS cycle (twelve months) include a baseline that occurs in the first term, first development cycle in the second term and second developmental cycle in the third term and finally a summative evaluation in the last school term. After the first year of IQMS implementation, the summative evaluation of the previous year serves as the baseline for the current year. The IQMS allows for only one evaluation per annum after the first year of implementation, however advises that the DSG / SDT conduct quarterly evaluations “to inquire whether the educator is being provided with support / mentoring. This would enable the DSG and SDT to rectify some of the shortcomings before the summative evaluation” (ELRC, undated: 14). The data from the professional growth plan are used by the SDTs and the school management teams to formulate the annual school improvement plans which are forwarded to the district. While educators and schools are responsible for their own growths and development, the IQMS requires

that the district play a critical role in assisting individual educators and schools with the necessary support to achieve their growth and development plans. The IQMS agreement emphasises that the success of the agreement depends on capacity (knowledge and understanding) and a culture of transparency in the system.

The Class Act Education report (2007) reviewed the implementation of the IQMS for the DoE. It visited eighteen schools, six districts offices and six provincial offices across six provinces i.e. three schools and one district office per province. A limitation of the study is that it did not enquire about the WSE aspect of the IQMS. Their findings from this study show that there was no common understanding of the purpose of the IQMS; the IQMS was advocated as a performance management system. No professional development and support was offered based on school improvement plans and the instrument used do not adequately address the diverse contexts of schools in South Africa. The language used is ambiguous, the instruments are incomplete, especially with respect to translating professional growth plans to school improvement plans or the way feedback is structured, or the evaluation of the success of professional development, etc. Inadequate advocacy and poor training was provided on the IQMS; there was a conflict between the four point rating scale of the IQMS and the five point rating scale for public servants. There was also weak capacity at all levels of the system to implement the IQMS; the quality of the data from the IQMS, especially validity, reliability and moderation was poor and the IQMS was poorly institutionalised.

In 2007, the *Education Laws Amendment Act*, No. 31 of 2007 was promulgated to amend the South African Schools Act, 1996 to ensure greater accountability by schools with regard to learner performance. The amendment spells out the functions and responsibilities of the principal of a public school. This legislation requires that the principal must, amongst others, prepare and submit to the Head of Department an annual report in

respect of the academic performance of that school in relation to minimum outcomes and standards and procedures for assessment; the effective use of available resources; must annually, at the beginning of the year, prepare a plan setting out how academic performance at the school will be improved; and prepare a report by 30 June on progress made in achieving the plan.

Subsequently, the *National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development* (2007) was passed to deal with recruitment, retention and professional development of school-based teachers. The framework is underpinned by the notion of teachers as professionals and as such sees ongoing professional development of teachers as their own responsibility. However, the framework recognises that the employer (both national and provincial departments of education) has the responsibility of creating an enabling environment for teacher development. In this regard the framework states that “the effectiveness of the continuing professional teacher development (CPTD) system depends substantially on strong leadership and good management in schools and in the support systems in district, provincial and national offices” (DoE, 2007:3.).

This puts the IQMS process at the centre of the continuous professional development of teachers. Drawing on international practices of professional development in various fields, the framework posits a professional development point system that requires teachers to earn a target number of professional development points² in each successive three-year cycle. While the professional development system stresses that teachers should drive their professional development needs, it encourages that all such activities should be directed at improving the quality of teaching, particularly improving teachers content, conceptual, and pedagogical knowledge of learning areas/subjects that they teach, their

² The professional development point system will use the 80 hours of professional development time as required by the ELRC Resolution 1 of 2000.

understanding of inclusive education, HIV and AIDS support, diversity, and issues related to overall classroom management. These emphases are in recognition of the historical legacy of apartheid education on teacher development (namely weak initial professional teacher development and role of teachers in promoting the objectives of the state), and the demands of the post apartheid curriculum that promotes social justice and requires a new way of delivering curriculum.

The incentive for teachers to continue their professional development places them “in a more competitive position for performance recognition and promotion than those who do not” (DoE, 2007:20). SACE will manage and quality assure the professional development system with the necessary support and resources from the DoE, while monitoring of the system will be the responsibility of the DoE through NEEDU.

To date, the *National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development* (2007) has not been translated into a practical strategy or plan of action. A Teacher Development Summit hosted by the ELRC between 29th June and 2nd July 2009 brought together stakeholders in the field of teacher education and development with the intention to formulate principles that will inform the development of such a plan. The declaration of the summit resolved that a strengthened, integrated national plan for teacher development be formulated that is practical (roles and responsibilities, relationships, structures, etc.) and well-resourced. In addition the declaration requires the plan to address teacher appraisal and evaluation: “teacher appraisal for purposes of development will be delinked from appraisal for purposes of remuneration and salary progression” (ELRC, Teacher Development Summit, 2009:3).

In summary, the post-1994 policies to offer quality learning and teaching across all public school classrooms, were initially dominated by promoting teacher professionalism through an open curriculum, teacher

development, and the establishment of SACE. These policies recognised that during apartheid, schools were undemocratic spaces where teachers were manipulated and controlled to be functionaries of the apartheid state, as such minimum resources were available for professional development of teachers or to encourage their professionalism. The inspectorate system was used to monitor teacher compliance with the apartheid agenda and reward those who performed their functions accordingly. Whereas the post-1994 policies see teachers as professionals who are firstly, able to make informed decisions in their work contexts; secondly, are able to work with their colleagues to enhance the performance of learners in their schools, and, thirdly, are able to reflect on their competences with the intention to engage in personal development programmes that will result in the improvement of learning and teaching in their classrooms and schools.

However, as Sayed (2004) and Parker (2002) noted that the multiple structures and systems required for implementing teacher development rendered these policies ineffective and maintained the status quo of offering poor quality learning and teaching in the majority of public schools. The state's response to ineffective teacher development and poor performing public schools was to negotiate accountability systems at school level that would foster professional development amongst teachers and compel teachers and school managers to improve their learner performance. This inherent tension between development and performance remains contentious. De Clercq (1997) is more sceptical about the post-1994 education policies. She argues that these policies "do not directly question and engage with existing educational and teaching and learning problems and practices ... these policy reforms do not assist in mobilizing and building the capacity of educators and disadvantaged communities to challenge and redress the power relations in their favour" (de Clercq, 1997:138).

2.3 Defining Accountability

The Oxford Dictionary defines accountability as: “the fact or condition of being accountable; responsibility”³, and the Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary explains accountable as: “someone who is accountable is completely responsible for what they do and must be able to give a satisfactory reason for it”⁴. At its simplest level, accountability is associated with ‘giving an account’.

The literature on education change and management lacks an encompassing definition of accountability. Generally accountability in the public service administration is seen as “answerability and enforceability”, i.e. being able to explain what they are doing and also to be able to impose sanctions if there is violation (Schedler, 1999; Ranson, 2003; Koppell, 2005). While acknowledging that accountability is evaluative in nature, Ranson (2003) argues that the criteria and judgments can serve to instill excellence and development, through mutual accountability and reflective practice. Koppell (2005) resists offering a definition but lists five dimensions of accountability, namely, transparency, liability, controllability, responsibility, and responsiveness. Transparency refers to openness to performance, i.e. being able to explain all actions. Liability is the element that addresses consequences resulting from weak or excellent performance. Controllability is about whether an individual or organisation fulfils its required duties / mandate. Responsibility is the element that constrains actions according to laws, rules, and norms. Finally, responsiveness explains how accountability can engage with the demands and needs of the people being served.

In the school sector, Anderson (2005) distinguishes three types of accountability, namely; compliance with regulations, results-driven, and

³ http://oxforddictionaries.com/view/entry/m_en_gb0976160#m_en_gb0976160

⁴ <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/accountable>

adherence to professional norms. While the former two types are referred to as bureaucratic accountability the third type is considered professional accountability. Darling-Hammond et al (1983, p 302) identifies four purposes of teacher evaluation or accountability. These are summarised in Table 1. However, they caution that these purposes are not mutually exclusive and a focus on one purpose may undermine another as well as that there may be inconsistencies between the process of one goal and other goals.

Table 1: Four Purposes of Teacher Evaluation

PURPOSE LEVEL	INDIVIDUAL	ORGANISATIONAL
Improvement (Formative)	Individual staff development	School improvement information
Accountability (Summative)	Individual personnel (job status) decisions	School status (e.g. certification) decisions

Moreover, there are numerous ways to evaluate teachers and measure teacher and teaching effectiveness. Darling-Hammond et al (1983) argue that teacher evaluations either measure teacher competence, performance or effectiveness. Hence, teacher accountability or evaluation may be bureaucratic or professional in nature, depending on how teachers' work is seen. If teachers' work is viewed as routine and easily captured into a series of processes, teacher evaluations will take the form of bureaucratic accountability. However, if teachers' work is seen as complex and that teachers are making informed decisions, using their specialised knowledge on pedagogy, subject content, and their learners then teacher evaluations will emphasise professional accountability. Darling-Hammond (1986:533) eloquently differentiates between these two forms of evaluation;

Meaningful evaluation would provide an assessment of teaching that reveals not only whether or not a teacher does specific things at certain times (e.g., whether or not a teacher has lesson plans, behavioural objectives, and an orderly classroom during the two

periods a year when the evaluator appear) but whether a teacher has sufficient knowledge, skill, and judgement to make sound teaching decisions over a sustained period of time on behalf of many students with diverse needs. The former is required of a teaching bureaucrat. The latter is what is required of a teaching professional.

In the South African case, while teachers are considered as professionals by various policies and agreements, the accountability system negotiated through the ELRC agreements is more bureaucratic in nature, as they are directed to insure minimum standards of teaching.

2.4 Accountability in the South African Schooling Sector

Accountability in the schooling sector is fundamentally about enhancing quality of learning and teaching (O'Day, 2002) and can take different forms. Bureaucratic accountability requires that schools adhere to rules and procedures while professional accountability requires individuals to have the necessary knowledge and skills to facilitate learning and teaching in their schools and being able to address the diverse needs of individual learners. O'Day (2002) contends that bureaucratic accountability on its own cannot foster sustainable school development and improvement as it fails to address the quality of teaching and learning. Professional accountability takes the form of peer review, collaboration, sharing and reflecting on their professional practices and standards, which contain elements of professional development (O'Day, 2002). This form of accountability has its limitations in countries and education districts where teacher professionalism is low, where teachers do not work collaboratively or in cases where teachers are not fully secure in the content and pedagogic knowledge of their teaching subjects.

Current policies on teacher accountability /evaluation push performance-based accountability which is based on instruments that measure

effectiveness or are results-driven, in other words measuring learners' achievements. This is mainly done through national tests or district tests. The major criticism of this form of teacher evaluation is the reliability of learners test scores as a measure of quality teaching. In addition, this accountability form compels teachers to teach towards tests and not deliver the curriculum in a meaningful or authentic way to learners (Darling-Hammond et al, 1983; O' Day, 2002). Furthermore, results-driven evaluation often adversely affects learners in poor-performing schools which will be discussed in more detail below.

Thus, there are numerous tools that have been included in teacher evaluation such as teacher interviews, teacher competency tests, classroom observations, peer review, and self evaluations. Today, most evaluation systems use a combination of accountability forms and tools (Darling-Hammond et al, 1983). As such, O'Day (2002) recommends that a combination of bureaucratic and professional accountability mechanisms should be used to foster quality learning and teaching.

In South Africa, the post-1994 education system has been introduced for redress as a critical goal in achieving Constitutional aims, and bureaucratic accountability is necessary for standardization of education delivery and ensuring schools have form and routine. The IQMS in South Africa is one of the policy instruments which use a combination of bureaucratic and professional accountability tools for teacher evaluation and support. Generally, teacher evaluation has two purposes: developmental and accountability (Darling-Hammond et al, 1983; Stiggins and Bridgeford, 1985). These two forms of evaluation are referred to as formative and summative evaluations, where formative teacher evaluation focuses on the developmental needs of an educator such as the Developmental Appraisal System, and summative evaluation centres on teacher performance or accountability.

Recognising that teachers' work is complex, scholars have shown that it is extremely difficult to formulate an ideal teacher evaluation model (Darling-Hammond et al, 1983; O'Day, 2002; de Clercq, 2008). Darling-Hammond et al (2003:303) offer the following guideline:

..teacher evaluation processes most suited to accountability purposes must be capable of yielding fairly objective, standardised, and externally defensible information about teacher performance. Evaluation processes useful for improvement objectives must yield rich, descriptive information that illuminates sources of difficulty as well as viable courses for change.

Anderson (2005) argues that a workable and defensible accountability system in the school sector should meet at least four criteria: the system defines educators' responsibility for all learners, regardless of the advantages or disadvantages they bring to school; the system must be built upon aligned components—objectives, assessments, instruction, resources, and rewards or sanctions; the technical aspects of the system must meet high standards; and the system must provide the vehicle for positive change. However, de Clercq (2008) argues that it is inherently problematic to have a single instrument for both developmental and accountability purposes as in the current IQMS and she recommend two separate evaluation systems.

In 2009, the OECD published the results of the first Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) which investigates schools' learning environments with the intention to help "countries to review and develop policies that foster the conditions for effective schooling" (OECD, 2009:18). The survey found that teachers ranked "relationship between teachers and students, knowledge and understanding of instructional practices, classroom management, and knowledge and understanding of teachers' main instructional fields" (OECD, 2009:151) as most important in teacher evaluation. The most significant findings from the study in relation to teacher evaluation and appraisal are that teachers who "received appraisal

and feedback had a positive view of the process and its connection to their work and their careers.

Overall, teachers in the OECD study considered the appraisal and feedback they received to be a fair assessment of their work and to have a positive impact upon their job satisfaction and, to a lesser degree, job security, and positively impacted on their job, namely in improving student test scores, classroom management practices, understanding of instructional practices and knowledge and development of training plans” (OECD, 2009:158). However the authors caution that those teachers’ perceptions of the fairness of the appraisal and evaluation system is dependent on whether they consider that system is aligned to their work. Similarly, de Clercq (2008:16) contends that, in the South African case, “a teacher appraisal system should be based on valid/realistic assumptions about the specific teaching realities and the available professional appraisal and support capacity in the system”. Darling-Hammond et al (1983) suggests four basic conditions for the success of a teacher evaluation system:

1. All actors in the system have a shared understanding of the criteria and processes for teacher evaluation;
2. All actors understand how these criteria and processes relate to the dominant symbols of the organization, that is, there is a shared sense that they capture the most important aspects of teaching, that the evaluation system is consonant with educational goals and conceptions of teaching work;
3. Teachers perceive that the evaluation procedure enables and motivates them to improve their performance; and principals perceive that the procedure enables them to provide instructional leadership;
4. All actors in the system perceive that the evaluation procedure allows them to strike a balance" between adaptation and

adaptability, between stability to handle present demands and flexibility to handle unanticipated demands" (Weick, 1982:674); that is, that the procedure achieves a balance between control and autonomy for the various actors in the system.

While these conditions allow for a fair and 'defensible' teacher evaluation system, it also requires a level of professionalism amongst the teaching fraternity.

Discussing teacher professionalism in South Africa, SACE lists four features of professionalism: autonomy, accountability, knowledge, and professional ethics (SACE, 2005). During the apartheid era, autonomy of teachers was limited and the racialisation of education and philosophy of fundamental pedagogy seriously undermined teachers' knowledge and professional ethics. Black teachers were forced to deliver a curriculum that helped to maintain racial oppression, while their more advantaged White counterparts had limited authority on curriculum design (SACE, 2005). Nonetheless, during this period, significant numbers of Black teachers resisted against the regime and its policies of racial supremacy and offered an alternative curriculum based on 'peoples education for peoples power'. In the post-apartheid era, as shown earlier, education policies are directed to improving teacher professionalism through, for example, the NCS, Norms and Standards for Educators, the establishment of SACE, the DAS and IQMS. However, the legacy from apartheid of un/under-qualified teachers, distrust of accountability systems, corrupt pedagogy, and weak school infrastructure amongst others remains a serious challenge to improving teacher professionalism among all teachers.

According to the Ministerial committee on National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) (DoE, 2009), school evaluation can mobilize school partners to reflect on their practices with the intention of improving their performance, however the preferred model would be a

combination of external and internal evaluators on the panel to facilitate learning and skills transfer as well as objectivity. Reviewing existing policies on teacher and school development and accountability, the Ministerial committee on NEEDU found that (DoE, 2009:30):

- The importance of evaluating or appraising the appropriate functions of organizations (department and schools) and staff work responsibilities that relate directly to the core function of teaching and learning;
- The need to appoint quality evaluators/appraisers with a high level of professionalism and autonomy (from the departments and schools), and who themselves are subject to the monitoring and assessment of their performance;
- The assurance that school and departmental leadership can act with greater authority in their accountability work and with more effective strategies in their supporting work, and be supported in these roles;
- The importance of separating organizationally the function of performance appraisal or management of organizations (schools, districts ..) and staff (officials, school-based personnel), from the function of development evaluation or appraisal, these two tasks should be conducted by different agencies;
- The value that comes from evaluating the underlying causes behind the poor school and teacher performance by linking results to their context and to the departmental structures responsible for enabling schools and teachers. In that sense, what should be evaluated are the various levels of the education systems (national, provincial and district/circuit) and the way they mediate policies and delivery to schools;
- The significance of monitoring the appropriateness of support for schools and teachers with the view of improving it;

- The requirement of aligning all quality assurance bodies, structures and processes to ensure their coherence and effectiveness at the level of schools and teachers; and
- The necessity of developing an effective data management system to ensure that the different levels of (and actors in) the education system can access such information for school improvement purposes.

This is why the ministerial committee recommends that NEEDU functions as an independent statutory body operating at arms' length from the Ministry of Education with the authority to enter schools and classrooms for purposes of monitoring and evaluation of schools and the education departments. The scope of NEEDU includes whole school evaluation and will have authority to recommend changes to the IQMS.

In summary, the post-1994 South African accountability system had to address urgently the professional development needs of teachers (especially those who are un/under qualified); offer a trustworthy reliable process to reward excellence, and assist schools in their improvement plans. However, it was ambitious to believe that a single accountability and support system such as the IQMS could reliably achieve these multiple outcomes.

2.5 Accountability and Capacity in Poor Performing Schools

There is little in the literature on the positive influence of accountability systems in poor-performing public schools, particularly linking learner performance to teacher and school evaluation. Poor-performing schools are those schools that achieve low results in standardised tests (Corallo and McDonald, 2001). A review of literature by Corallo and McDonald (2001) on poor-performing schools reveals that these schools are located

in poor communities where learners come less prepared for school. This places the school under stress resulting in low expectations of learners, teacher absenteeism, and high teacher turnover. However, they note that there are schools in poor communities that excel because of strong focuses on planning for learner achievement, coherence in teaching and learning, and collaborative work. Similarly, Abelman and Elmore (1999:43), in their study on how schools construct their conception of accountability, conclude that

..a strong normative environment inside the school, based on a belief in the capacity and efficacy of teachers and principals to influence student learning, coupled with the knowledge and skill necessary to act on those beliefs are prior conditions necessary to the success of strong external accountability systems.

In the South African case, Christie (2001) recognized that some schools in poor communities are functioning against all odds and the following characteristics are present in these 'resilient' schools: teaching and learning as the schools' central purpose; strong democratic leadership; safe and organized environments; authority and discipline; culture of concern; sense of responsibility; and a working relationship with parents, the department of education. She concludes that agency and responsibility are key characteristics of schools being active and not reactive to their socio-political environment.

O'Day (2002), in a review of the Chicago school-based accountability system, found that the accountability system did not improve the performance in poor-performing schools. O'Day (2002) reasons that poor-performing schools do not have the necessary skills to engage in reflective practices but instead tend to engage in practices that focus on short-term gains in test scores rather than long term strategies that aid in the general improvement of learning and teaching. Diamond and Spillane (2002), comparing the impact of an external accountability system in Chicago education district in poor-performing elementary schools and high-performing elementary schools, confirmed that, while the policy goal of

such a system is to ensure equity, in reality the implementation was context dependent. The poor-performing elementary schools in the study implemented the accountability system superficially and target learners who were performing within the district average resulting in further marginalisation of the low achieving learners. Furthermore, their programmes were not targeted at improving the quality of learning and teaching. High performing schools in the study used the results to encourage teachers to reflect on their teaching and learning as well as acknowledge their achievements with the intention to foster ongoing improvements in learning and teaching.

Figlio and Getzler (2002) found that schools in Florida responded to external accountability by reclassifying low performing learners and learners from low socio economic background into disability categories exempted from being tested. Similarly, Fleisch (2003) found that the Education Action Zones – a bureaucratic pressure and support programme for poor-performing secondary schools in the Gauteng province, showed an increase in matric pass rate at the expense of high dropout rates between 2000 and 2003. On the up-side, this intervention showed that getting schools to focus on bureaucratic accountability and refocus on their core business, namely managerial authority as well as teaching and learning had contributed to the significant improvements in matric results.

Mintrop and Tujillo (2005) explored school improvement programmes directed at poor-performing schools in the USA and distilled the following lessons: sanctions and increasing pressures are not the fallback solution; no single strategy has been universally successful; intensive capacity building is necessary; a comprehensive bundle of strategies is key; relationship-building needs to complement powerful programs; competence reduces conflict; and strong state commitment is needed to create system capacity (2005:7). Similarly, Hopkins and Harris (1997)

argue that school's capacity for development holds the key to sustainable school improvement and high levels of learner achievement.

Thus for poor-performing schools to genuinely engage with external accountability systems and benefit from external accountability systems, organisational capacity should under-score or be a major pre-condition for effective accountability systems. Furthermore, external accountability on its own cannot enhance learning and teaching (Darling-Hammond, 1993; Newmann et al, 1997, Hopkins and Harris, 1997, Abelman and Elmore, 1999; Elmore, 2003; Fullan, 2004; Mintrop and Tujillo, 2005). While recognising that pressure/accountability is important in setting the goals and expectations as well as legitimacy and authority, these scholars identify schools' organisational capacity as most significant in making schools more ready to account. Organisational capacity comprise: "teachers' professional knowledge and skills, effective leadership, availability of technical and financial resources, and organisational autonomy to act according to demands of the local context" (Newmann et al, 1997:47).

Fullan (2004) offers the following distinction between accountability and support: "accountability involves targets, inspections, or other forms of monitoring along with action consequences. Capacity building consists of developments that increase the collective power in the school in terms of new knowledge and competencies, increased motivation to engage in improvement actions, and additional resources (time, money, and access to expertise)" (2004:174).

Elmore (2001) emphasises that accountability is inherently a reciprocal process, i.e. the performance demanded by an accountability system should be matched by the necessary support to achieve the required performance, and conversely the investment in capacity and support must correspond to learner performance. He argues that professional

development that addresses school-based development issues, particularly pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, discipline-specific pedagogical knowledge, and working collaboratively will enable large scale improvement. Furthermore, he stresses that professional development should draw on current theories on adult on-site learning.

Thus teacher accountability should be a reciprocal system, i.e., the ability to capture and be aligned to the complex work of teachers and principals and the need for the system to assist building the internal capacity of schools.

2.6 Teacher Professional Development

Darling-Hammond (1996:6) describes the importance of professional development of teachers in such a way: “students’ right to learn is directly tied to their teachers’ opportunities to learn what they need to know to teach well”. Hargreaves (2002:191) considers teacher professional development as core to sustainability of school development, “sustainable improvement requires investment in building long term capacity for improvement, such as the development of teachers’ skills, which will stay with them forever, long after the project money has gone”.

Fishman et al. (2003:645) offers a succinct definition of professional teacher development; “professional development should fundamentally be about teacher learning: changes in the knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes of teachers that lead to the acquisition of new skills, new concepts, and new processes related to the work of teaching”. Similarly, Goertz et al. (1995) highlight that teachers’ knowledge, skills, disposition, and views of the self are critical to ensuring that teachers have the capacity for meeting the challenges of educational transformation. They argue that teachers need to feel confident in their knowledge of the subject matter, knowledge of

curriculum, knowledge about students and knowledge about general and subject-specific pedagogy. In terms of skills, it is about their “ability to teach in desired ways” and includes learning and assessment strategies. Teachers’ attitude towards learners and the subject matter also influences their teaching. If they believe in their learners or enjoy the subject matter, teachers are more likely to offer their learners high quality learning experiences.

Recognising that, in any classroom, the learner population is diverse in terms of learning styles, race, gender, class, ethnicity, religion, culture, and language, it is important that teachers must be able to use differentiated teaching strategies to insure that high quality learning is offered to all learners – a fundamental requirement of equity in the classroom. This requires teachers to understand their learners’ social, cultural, economic, and religious backgrounds. Floden et al. (1995:20) see capacity-building of teachers as “encouraging them to alter the goals they hold for their students and to change the way they see themselves”. Nieto (2000) takes this definition a step further by arguing that, in plural societies, teacher education should prepare teachers to understand critically the notion of social justice and diversity which challenges the deficit concept of capabilities of students from diverse backgrounds. She stresses that teacher education is a lifelong journey during which teachers learn to understand their own identities and those of their learners. Darling-Hammond (1996) adds that teachers must also know a great deal about educational change to be active agents in educational transformation.

The strategies required to assist in building teachers’ capacity cannot be achieved through traditional means such as workshops. Garet et al. (2001), in a study of professional development programmes, surveyed 1027 mathematics and science teachers to determine the kind of professional development programmes that had the most influence in changing teaching practices in the classroom. They conclude on the

essential characteristics of effective professional development programmes. They must:

- Focus on content knowledge, and the way learners learn these subjects;
- Provide opportunities for active learning; and
- Be coherent with other learning activities that teachers are engaged in.

In addition, Garet et al.'s (2001) study revealed that the duration of professional development programmes is important, as longer programmes are more effective. Another finding is the importance of having more teachers from the same school, grade, and subject area being developed together, as it assists in creating a shared professional culture in their schools.

There is also support in the literature for teacher clusters, networks or learning communities as successful instruments which facilitate ongoing professional development of teachers, because these recognise contextual factors that teachers face, they engage with teachers' real problems and allow for genuine communication and collaboration amongst them (Lieberman, 2000; McKinsey, 2007; Jita and Ndlalane, 2009). Jita and Ndlalane (2009:63) studied the efficacy of cluster meetings in changing science teachers' subject content and pedagogical content knowledge in Mpumalanga, and found that clusters contribute to improving subject content knowledge by "breaking down the barriers to sharing among teachers ... allowing them to overcome their fear of confronting the inadequacies in the content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge".

Similarly, the McKinsey (2007:31) report, reviewing education change literature, testifies that:

..teachers generally work alone, denying them natural opportunities to learn from each other. Several school systems employ strategies aimed to change this by creating schools in which teachers regularly observe each others' practice, thereby producing an environment which stimulates the sharing of knowledge on what works and what does not, encourages teachers to give each other feedback, and helps shape a common aspiration and motivation for improving the quality of instruction. These systems are some of the best in the world.

The report also highlights the importance of in-class support through mentoring and coaching. In addition, the use of assessments, evaluations and feedback are also considered critical in assisting teachers to build their capacity to offer learners high quality learning experiences. There is a saying that the way one assesses determines the way one teaches. Hence, knowledge of assessment is essential in understanding the subject matter and learning.

In reviewing the success of using professional development as an instrument of school development in District #2 in New York City, Elmore (1997:2) draws attention to the characteristics of this successful professional development:

..it focuses on concrete classroom applications of general ideas; it exposes teachers to actual practice rather than to descriptions of practice; it involves opportunities for observation, critique, and reflection; it involves opportunities for group support and collaboration; and it involves deliberate evaluation and feedback by skilled practitioners with expertise about good teaching. But while we know a good deal about the characteristics of good professional development, we know a good deal less about how to organize successful professional development so as to influence practice in large numbers of schools and classrooms.

In her research on professional development in six schools, Little (1982) found two necessary conditions that would enable successful school-based staff development. Firstly, there was a need for a norm of collegiality where teachers believe that they can learn from each other; and secondly, a need for a norm or commitment for continuous

improvement where teachers see improvement in knowledge and practice as never ending with a genuine commitment to evaluation, experimentation, and analysis. Lieberman (1995:71) summarizes these conditions as “they become a part of the expectation for the teacher’s role and an integral part of the culture of the school”. According to Parker quoted in Lieberman (2000), effective teacher clusters or networks which facilitate teacher improvements have the following characteristics: a strong sense of commitment to an idea, a sense of shared purpose, a mixture of information sharing and psychological support, a facilitator who ensured voluntary participation and equal treatment, and an egalitarian ethos.

However, Putnam and Borko (2000), in analyzing teacher learning, argue that, while situated learning (in the classroom – school site) is critical, it may be a constraining environment and prevent teachers from thinking in new ways. In reviewing teacher education models, they contend that a combination of long courses away from schools coupled with in-class support is effective in assisting teachers translate the learning into practice.

In South Africa, where the norm is under-qualified teachers, it is especially important to focus on long courses on subject knowledge as well as pedagogical knowledge, and complement these with in-class on-site support. To enable collaborative teaching and planning, it is advisable that professional development interventions select groups of teachers from the same schools and ensure that outside experts or senior teachers facilitate and provide active learning opportunities for these teachers.

2.7 School-Based Support Teams in South Africa

School-Based Support Teams (SBST) is a new school structure which is the outcome of Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education:

Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (DoE, 1999). District-based support teams are the foundation to implement Education White Paper 6 and to guarantee an inclusive education and training system. These SBST are tasked to offer support to learners and educators and draw on the expertise from the local communities. In addition, the Education White Paper 6 requires district-based support teams to offer support to institutional-level support team, or to SBST in schools. It also stresses that: “for the inclusive model to work, designated posts should be created in all schools for the development and co-ordination of school-based support for all educators” (DoE, 2001:55).

Schools as sites for social services, especially in poor communities, are advocated for two reasons. Firstly, public schools have access to children and, secondly, effective learning and teaching cannot be achieved without addressing learners’ social needs. Williams (2010) is critical of this view and argues that adding activities to school may detract them from their main function of teaching and learning. In schools that are already struggling with delivering on their mandate, they may be unable to provide or implement such support. In her study of SBST in two weakly performing schools in Gauteng, Williams (2010: 29) found that SBST were *ad hoc* in nature and unable to “handle a full caseload”. She recommends that the SBST’s success in such schools depends on external support in the form of formally structured relationships with social services and through training of teachers. She concludes about the value in using SBST as a means to creating caring supportive schools.

2.8 Debates on Policy and Policy Implementation in the School Sector

In the 1960’s, the USA implemented large-scale changes to the school sector with the intention of improving learning and teaching. A review of

these interventions in the late 1960's and early 1970's revealed limited changes at school level, partly because of the challenges facing policy implementation (McLaughlin, 1998). These initial findings sparked off policy implementation research. Three decades of related research reveal that policy implementation is always challenging for bureaucrats at the coal face. These bureaucrats, referred to as "street-level bureaucrats" (Weatherly and Lipsky, 1977) have tremendous influence on the way policy is eventually adopted and implemented at ground level. Furthermore, policy implementation research shows that capacity of the site or system to engage with new policy is critical to its successful adoption at the respective site or system.

Policy implementation research started in the 1970's in the USA, and then spread to England and Western Europe. In this literature on policy implementation, there is consensus that a combination of pressure and support should be used (Fullan, 2000), and that policies should be carefully legislated, supported, and monitored. However, there is divergence on the policy formulation and implementation process.

The first bureaucratic top down model of policy development and implementation is seen as a cycle comprising seven steps namely generation in the form of political manifestos/research investigations; formulation in the form of white papers; adoption including the promulgation of necessary legislation; implementation /deployment of resources; impact; evaluation; and reformulation (Nieuwenhuis, 1992). While this process is used by the South African government, the National Education Policy Act, 1996 requires a consultative process to policy formulation. In reality, policy formulation in South Africa is a negotiated process influenced by dominant interests groups within the country such as labour, religious organizations, and capital amongst others as well as global influences and policy borrowing (Chisholm, 1999; De Clercq, 1997; Dale, 1999). McDonnell and Elmore (1987) see policy as "bringing the

resources of government namely; money, rules, and authority into the service of political objectives; and by using these resources to influence the actions of individuals and institutions” (1987:133). While policy implementation, as defined in a rational manner by Berman, is: “the carrying out of an authoritative decision, i.e., a policy choice” (1978:4). Policy implementation research using Berman’s definition does not consider the policy development process and policy choices, rather the conditions necessary for successfully achieving the policy outcomes, and whether the causal theory underlying the policy is valid.

Yet, a second generation of policy implementation research showed that the policy implementation outcomes are largely controlled by agents at the coal face of implementation, referred to as ‘street-level bureaucrats’ and their willingness to genuinely implement policy is dependent on their will, capacity, and context of implementation (Weatherly and Lipsky, 1977; Elmore, 1979; Oden, 1991, Darling-Hammond, 1993; McLaughlin, 1998). The seminal study by Weatherly and Lipsky (1977) that explored the implementation of Chapter 766; a USA federal policy on inclusive education that required teachers to change their behaviour to accommodate children with barriers to learning revealed that street-level bureaucrats in this case teachers, used their own discretion to manage the demands of the legislation and their resource constraints. It is worthwhile quoting Weatherly and Lipsky’s (1977:172) description of the nature of street-level bureaucrats’ work in detail:

These ‘street-level bureaucrats’, as we have called them, interact directly with citizens in the course of their jobs and have substantial discretion in the execution of their work. For such public workers, personal and organizational resources are chronically and severely limited in relation to the tasks that they are asked to perform. The demand for their services will always be as great as their ability to supply these services. To accomplish their required tasks, street-level bureaucrats must find ways to accommodate the demands placed upon them and confront the reality of resource limitations. They typically do this by routinising procedures, modifying goals, rationing services, asserting priorities, and limiting or controlling clientele. In other words, they

develop practices that permit them in some way to process the work they are required to do. The work of street-level bureaucrats is inherently discretionary.

Another influential study of this period that focused specifically on education change through policy directives was the Rand Change Agent study also in the USA that looked at the implementation of four nationally funded programmes. McLaughlin (1998:71) summarizes the findings as: “the net return to the general investment was the adoption of many innovations, the successful implementation of few, and the long-run continuation of still fewer”. These initial studies on implementation concluded that it is difficult to change practice using policies as change levers, i.e. ‘policy can’t mandate what matters’.

Later research showed that policy implementation is adapted to local contexts and hence policy makers need to tighten the process through legislation and regulation and work closely with local implementing agencies. Advocates of this bottom-up approach recognise that the bureaucracy is heterogeneous and its individual agents influenced by their personal beliefs and their work contexts. Thus, implementing agencies may differ in their overall goals in relation to a policy.

A third generation implementation research focused on systemic change, building the capacity of local implementing agents. This research drew on managing education change research that concluded change can be achieved using pressure and support (Fullan, 2000). In addition, scholars investigating systemic change distilled that sustainable change in schools requires a coherent focus on learning and teaching, building capacity amongst teachers and principals so that they can offer high quality learning opportunities to all their learners; creating a culture of collaboration and collegiality in schools, and democratic leadership (Fullan, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 1993). While Spillane et al (2002), drawing on cognitive psychology, argue that local agents construction of

policy is affected by their prior knowledge, beliefs, and experiences; the situation in which they make sense, the influence of their social and work identity; and the policy signals that they receive. Using these factors they conclude that substantive change is difficult to achieve as it requires learning new knowledge and reflecting on existing values, they suggest that policies should be communicated in ways that illuminate the fundamentals of change and not superficial examples of practices; that learning opportunities must be made available to help with interpretation of policy implications for their own work; and finally there is a need to show that the current practices are problematic without alienating the implementing agents.

Thus, there were two distinct approaches to the policy implementation process which emerge, namely the top-down and bottom-up approaches (Berman, 1978; Elmore, 1979; McDonnell and Elmore, 1987; Sabatier 1986; Matland, 1995; de Clercq, 1997). The top-down approach is based on the view that the bureaucracy is homogenous and works purposefully to achieve political directives often referred to as 'command and control' (Sabatier, 1986). It also assumes that the state and its structures are rational and tightly controlled to work purposefully in achieving the policy directives set by political heads. Thus the top-down approach begins with a set of policy goals, followed by specific steps for achieving the goals, and finally a set of outcomes against which success or failure can be measured. The leading proponent of this approach, Sabatier (1986) identified six conditions for successful policy implementation using the top-down approach, namely: clear policy objectives; adequate causal theory; implementation process legally structured; commitment of skillful implementing officials; support of interest groups; and changes in socio-economic conditions which do not substantially undermine political support or causal theory.

The advocates of the bottom-up process of policy implementation are critical of the top-down approach, citing three main reasons. Firstly, the state is more loosely coupled and thus actors in the subsystem may not work in unison to achieve directives from the top; secondly, the top-down approach ignore street-level bureaucrats who constantly use their discretion in providing services to the public, and thirdly the approach does not consider the actions taken during the policy making process.

Berman (1978) and Elmore (1979) attempted to find a practical means of addressing this schism to policy implementation. Berman introduced the terms *macro implementation and micro implementation*. Macro implementation refers to the implementation process at national level while micro implementation refers to the implementation process at local levels, i.e., schools, clinics, etc. Elmore (1979) offers another distinction of the *forward-mapping versus backward-mapping* implementation approach. Forward-mapping refers to setting the specific outcome that a policy intends to achieve at the lowest level before formulating objectives. Backward-mapping looks at the intended behaviours expected from the targets of the policy and then at the ability and resources required by the lowest level of the system to achieve these behaviours and then move up the education system asking the same questions to effect the necessary change at the higher levels. The use of backward-mapping forces the education bureaucracy to understand the resources required and the ways to overcome impeding factors to policy implementation and enables policy makers to understand the contexts of implementation to formulate better goals and identify the resources required for successful implementation. Elmore (1979: 604) describes backward mapping:

..it begins not at the top of the implementation process but at the last possible stage, the point at which administrative actions intersect private choices. It begins not with a statement of intent, but with a statement of the specific behaviour at the lowest level of the implementation process that generates the need for a policy. Only after that behaviour is described does the analysis presume

to state and objective; the objective is first stated as a set of organizational operations and then as a set of effects, or outcomes, that will result from these operations. Having established a relatively precise target at the lowest level of the system, the analysis backs up through the structure of implementing agencies, asking at each level two questions: What is the ability of this unit to affect the behaviour that is the target of the policy? And what resources does this unit require in order to have that effect? In the final stage of analysis the analyst or policymaker describes a policy that directs resources at the organizational units likely to have the greatest effect.

In developing countries, such as South Africa, with limited resources, policy implementation requires greater levels of efficiency and effectiveness. De Clercq (1997) noted that initial post apartheid education policy implementation in South Africa was top-down as there was little analytical data on the state of education at the time. Dyer (1999), in her study of Operation Blackboard which aimed to improve the quality of primary education in India, and Walker and Gilson (2004), in their study on nurses' response to free health care policy in South Africa, showed that backward mapping to policy implementation can help policy makers understand the contextual difficulties that local agents experience. This process would have insured that the necessary resources were directed towards facilitating genuine implementation at local level.

While the bottom-up or backward mapping or micro implementation is useful in understanding the diverse context of policy implementation, it is short of offering advice and furthermore it contradicts constitutional democracy that makes elected officials accountable for policy (Matland, 1995). Researchers in the field have attempted to offer solutions to the tension. Sabatier (1986) presents a synthesized model that argues that policy implementation takes place over a period of 10 to 15 years during which policy learning and evolution occur. The synthesized model posited is to use the bottom-up process in understanding the challenges facing each level of the subsystem and the resources required as well as an opportunity to share policy instruments with the various implementing

agents. Using the top-down approach, formulate a casual theory and the necessary legislative framework.

Matland (1995:153), instead of synthesizing the two approaches into a single model for policy implementation, argues for: “a model that explains when the two approaches are most appropriate” which is also referred to as the *ambiguity/conflict model*. This model is based on the policy making process that recognizes that the process is fraught with conflict, bargaining and negotiations instead of assuming that everyone agree to the goals of ensuring better social welfare and justice. Furthermore, it recognizes that in reality goals are often written less clearly or ambiguously to reach consensus. He proposes that, where there is low ambiguity and low conflict and low ambiguity and high conflict, a top down policy implementation approach is feasible. Where there is high ambiguity and low conflict and high ambiguity and high conflict, then the bottom up approach is more appropriate to policy implementation.

At another level, McDonnell and Elmore (1987) posit four policy instruments that can be used to change behaviour, namely: mandates which are rules that would ensure uniformity of behaviour; inducements which is the transfer money to encourage behaviour change; capacity-building is the investment in physical and human resources; and system-changing is altering the system through changing the authority structure of the system.

However, South Africa is a special case, the apartheid legacy of state control and manipulation, as well as inequality and underdevelopment of the education system present additional constraints to policy implementation. Political legitimacy and trust in the state (and hence its policies) amongst teachers and principals are considered additional facilitating factors for education policy implementation (Jansen, 2004; Fleisch, 2008).

The literature on policy implementation illuminates the discretionary powers of street-level bureaucrats and that substantive policies directed at improving equity and quality cannot be left to their discretion. Nonetheless, scholars have shown that policy implementation must be sensitive to the context of implementation – where ‘administrative actions intersect private choices’. Thus highlighting that policy implementation requires a synthesis of top-down and bottom-up approaches, and techniques such as backward-mapping / micro implementation to understand resource constraints as well as behaviour.

2.9 Conclusion

Accountability systems aim to improve the quality of learning and teaching. There are many different forms and instruments of accountability in education, while increasingly accountability and support are combined. The current accountability system in post apartheid South Africa, namely the IQMS, is an outcome of policy evolution processes, targeted to monitoring teachers and schools as well as improving quality of learning and teaching. However, the process from the formulation and implementation of the teacher development and accountability system has been the preserve of the ELRC employer-employee relationship and is therefore not necessarily educationally appropriate.

Recent literature (Ablemann and Elmore, 1999; Elmore and Furhmann, 2001; Elmore, 2003) points to accountability being best when it is a reciprocal process; that is high performance should be linked to strong support and accountability. This is especially the case with poor-performing schools which require strong assistance to enable them to build their capacity and use the accountability system to enhance their performance. While the IQMS is a labour relations resolution, it is a tool to

enhance learning and teaching, teacher professionalism and professional growth, whole school improvement, as well as foster teacher career-pathing. The literature (Hopkins and Harris, 1997; Corallo and McDonald, 2001; Mintrop and Tujillo, 2005) reviewed shows that it is extremely difficult to achieve all these purposes or goals, especially when using a single system with a standardized instrument. It is particularly difficult in poor-performing secondary schools because the department support is often not forthcoming and they do not have access to social capital to build their organizational capacity.

3 Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents the theoretical framework that informs the research study and methodology, including the analysis of primary data gathered during fieldwork, and the conclusions. The theoretical framework draws on the review of literature related to policy implementation and accountability policies in the school sector.

3.1 Claims from the Accountability Literature

The IQMS is an integrated system aimed at both accountability and development to enhance learning and teaching and ultimately learners' achievement. Fullan (2004:174) aptly captures the distinction between accountability and development,

..accountability involves targets, inspections, or other forms of monitoring along with action consequences. Capacity building consists of developments that increase the collective power in the school in terms of new knowledge and competencies, increased motivation to engage in improvement actions, and additional resources (time, money, and access to expertise).

The literature reviewed on school-based accountability systems reveal that an external accountability system on its own cannot enhance teaching and learning (Newmann et al, 1977; Mintrop and Tujillo, 2005) and that schools will only be able to engage effectively with an external accountability system if they have acquired some internal accountability system and/or organisational capacity. (Darling-Hammond, 1993; Hopkins and Harris, 1997; Corallo and McDonald, 2001; Elmore, 2003; Fullan, 2004). While recognising that pressure/accountability is important in setting the goals and expectations, these scholars identify schools' organisational capacity as the most significant condition for making schools improve and become more accountable. According to Newmann et al (1997:47), organisational capacity comprises: "teachers' professional knowledge and skills, effective

leadership, availability of technical and financial resources, and organisational autonomy to act according to demands of the local context". They also state that these resources should work collectively or in unison. In other words, for schools to adhere to external accountability, by producing improved matric results for South African secondary schools, schools must have acquired or developed a degree of internal organisation and accountability.

Internal accountability means shared values, a common understanding of quality teaching, and agreed upon standards for assessing learners (Elmore and Fuhmann, 2001; Corallo and McDonald, 2001). In the absence of organisational capacity and internal accountability, which are often the case for poor-performing schools, these schools are likely to respond poorly to external accountability by complying with it perfunctory at the expense of genuine improvement in the quality of learning and teaching.

A review of literature by Corallo and McDonald (2001) on low/poor-performing schools i.e., those which achieve low results in standardised tests, reveal that these schools, located in poor communities where learners come less prepared for school, are known for their high stress, low expectations of learners, teacher absenteeism, and high teacher turnover. However, they note that there are schools in poor communities that manage to excel because of their strong focus on planning for learner achievement, coherence in teaching and learning, and collaborative work. With regard to coherence in teaching and learning, they report that there must be alignment between the school curricula and that of the external assessment.

However, Ablemann and Elmore (1999) also show that accountability systems should be reciprocal in that teachers and principals must be offered genuine professional development and support in the performance

areas under evaluation and conversely teachers and principals must be able to demonstrate their improved performance through better learners' achievement.

Elmore (1997) argues that education districts play a critical role in mobilising resources to support improvement of teaching through long-term investment in professional development of teachers and principals. He demonstrates that education districts are advantageously situated for this task as they can achieve economies of scale as well as acquire the services of consultants, generate incentives for principals and teachers to focus on learning and teaching, and create opportunities for teachers to interact with each other.

Thus, an accountability and development system, such as the IQMS, requires teachers and principals to reflect genuinely on their performance and trust that the department will provide the kind of professional development and support they need to improve learner performance.

3.2 Claims from the Policy Implementation Literature

The literature on policy implementation draws attention to the authority that street-level bureaucrats exert in realizing policy goals and to the use of their discretion in implementing policy directives, which inevitably involve policy adaptation and policy evolution. Policy adaptation at the implementation level is the result of capacity and resource constraints (Weatherly and Lipsky, 1977) as well as the way implementing agents make sense of and mediate the policy in their context (McLaughlin, 1998; Spillane et al, 2002).

The literature reviewed has evidence that substantive policies may be superficially implemented at schools as teachers and principals use their

discretion in translating the policies in their work without genuinely understanding the underlying reasons for the policy and reflecting on their own practices. While recognizing that substantive improvement is difficult in education, Spillane (2002) and Elmore (1979) argue that it is achievable but its success depends on understanding the 'discretion' and 'beliefs' of teachers and principals and then on the support offered to them which allows for such intended changes in practice. Thus it is important to examine the way teachers and principals understand the notion of accountability and the way they engage with internal and external accountability systems. Furthermore, they argue, both policy makers and implementing agencies should take account of the diverse contexts of implementation as well as privilege the role of 'street-level' bureaucrats who are the closest to the targets of the policy to pay attention to the ways in which they engage with and interpret policy. The methodology of this study is inspired by gaining a deeper understanding of the way teachers and principals view accountability as a starting point to exploring what policy instruments can mobilize bureaucratic and professional accountability.

In summary, the outcome of three decades of education policy implementation research favours the pressure and authority of policies, while acknowledging that serious capacity building is a critical success factor.

This study selected teachers and managers of three poor-performing secondary schools who are responsible for policy implementation to explore the way they interpret the notion of accountability, how it is translated in the schools internal accountability system and teacher development opportunities, and the way these schools relate to the external accountability system, namely the IQMS. These analytical categories or specific objectives are considered appropriate in gathering data from the coal face of implementation, to explore instruments to

mobilise bureaucratic and professional accountability as they align to the lessons gained from three decades of policy implementation research and the literature on accountability reviewed for this study.

4 Methodology

This chapter presents the research methodology adopted for the study and why it is the appropriate one. The exploratory nature of the study necessitated a qualitative approach. Hence a summary of qualitative research methodology is offered with specific focus on the case study approach. This is followed by a discussion of the sampling, data gathering techniques, and how reliability and validity of the study design was ensured. In addition, a brief description of the limitations of the study as a result of the challenges faced during the fieldwork is outlined.

4.1 Qualitative Research Methodology

Historically, qualitative and quantitative methodology evolved from differences in the way researchers view social phenomena (Shulman, 1981; Bryman, 1984; Firestone, 1987). Researchers who consider themselves quantitative practitioners drew on the methods of the natural sciences that investigate natural occurrences through correlation and experimentation studies. As such, quantitative research looks at people as inert (Bryman, 1984) and draws on techniques - such as surveys- used in traditional experimentation that allowed for patterns and correlations. Researchers who consider social phenomena as complex and who believe that people are actively creating their own realities and meanings emphasise qualitative methodology. They use techniques that attempt to explore and understand people's experiences and/or behaviour. These techniques, such as participant observations and in-depth interviews, provide rich and complex data in comparison with data from surveys. Nonetheless, Bryman (1984) cautions against using research techniques, such as surveys versus in-depth interviews, as a means of characterising research methodology. He questions whether a survey is inherently a quantitative tool or that participant observation is inherently a qualitative.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) distinguish qualitative methodology from quantitative methodology in that the former is sensitive to the context; the researcher is involved in data collection, the data is about rich descriptions, data analysis tends to be inductive and not deductive as with quantitative methodology in that it does not aim to prove a hypothesis; in addition the voices of participants are dominant in the analysis.

Therefore, the use of qualitative research methodology is appropriate in understanding policy implementation research. Here the voices of teachers and principals will be explored to gain a deeper understanding of the beliefs and capacity needs and constraints at the lowest implementation level in this case in poor-performing secondary school. Part of understanding an organisation's capacity is to examine the way members of the organisation engage and interpret or make sense of policy. The data-gathering techniques such as in-depth interviews and focus group discussions from qualitative research methodology will allow for probing in the way poor-performing schools construct the notion of accountability and the way they engage with internal and external accountability systems. In addition, the bounded nature of this study, namely poor-performing public secondary schools requires that a case study research strategy be used.

The case study strategy was considered appropriate for an exploratory study of possible instruments to mobilise bureaucratic and professional accountability in poor-performing public secondary schools. The categories of analysis were drawn from the literature, namely understanding the notion of accountability, internal accountability systems and tools, professional development opportunities, and engagement with an external accountability system, namely the IQMS.

4.2 Case Study

A case study is a specific form of qualitative research in that it is a bounded system (Merriam, 2001), with the system being phenomena, an instance, a programme, an event, an individual, or a community. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:344) describe bounded as “being unique according to place, time and participant characteristics”. According to Merriam (2001:41), case studies in education are generally used to identify and explain specific problems, because it allows for “investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon”. Thus, the findings from case studies can be useful to policy makers. On the downside, case study research takes a long time, the descriptive report may not be suitable to policy makers, and readers may interpret the findings as representative of the ‘whole’. Linked to the latter is the issue of reliability, validity, and generalisability.

In this study, a descriptive exploratory case study of three schools, using qualitative data gathering techniques, is used to understand the different ways poor-performing schools construct their notion of accountability, as it will offer rich description of street-level bureaucrats (teachers and school managers) beliefs about accountability and the status of poor-performing schools’ internal accountability capacity.

4.3 Sampling

Initially, the study planned to conduct research in five schools bounded by the phenomenon of poor-performing secondary schools in the Gauteng province. This study defines poor-performing secondary schools as those that had a pass rate of less than 30% in the 2009 NSC examinations, as posited in the aims of the study section. Analysis of the 2009 NSC

examinations revealed that there were poor-performing secondary schools across the five school quintiles (See Appendix 1).

This is why it was decided to have maximum variation with purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling refers to selecting “information-rich cases” (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010), using a set of criteria for selection instead of probability or random sampling. Maximum variation sampling allows for divergent voices, and in this case schools from different quintiles. Hoepfl (1997:51) supports maximum sampling as it “can yield detailed descriptions of each case, in addition to identifying shared patterns that cut across cases”.

To ensure information-rich cases, the study initially selected five schools from one education district in the Gauteng province that has a pass rate in the NCS examinations in 2009 close to the provincial average. The selection of this average performing education district is to remove the capacity of the district as a variable in poor-performing schools construction of accountability. In addition, each of the five schools was drawn from a different quintile. However due to the timing of the fieldwork which is discussed below under the subsection Limitations, only three schools could be visited. The schools were drawn from three different quintiles (2, 3, and 4), thus maintaining purposeful sampling.

At each school, the study intended to conduct an in-depth interview with the principal, a focus group discussion with three (3) members of the school management team, and a focus group discussion with six (6) teachers. This selection of respondents was to ensure that the voices of all levels of educators within a school were captured by the study. Furthermore this planned set of respondents enables analysis between levels of educators within each case as well as across cases. However, this did not materialise due to the timing of the fieldwork which is discussed in the following subsection. The fieldwork was conducted

between the 12th October and 1st November 2010. The final list of respondents is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: School Sample Profile

NAME OF SCHOOL	2009 MATRIC PASS RATE	IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS	FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS
School A	19.62	Principal Deputy Principal Two Teachers	
School C	25.68	Principal	Five Educators
School B	29.22	Principal Head of Department: Tourism Maths Teacher Deputy Principal	

4.4 Data Gathering Techniques

Based on the literature review and the study's theoretical framework, it was decided to focus on data collection around four broad analytical categories which assess how these schools' teachers and managers respond to issues of accountability and professional development, namely: teachers' understanding of accountability, internal school accountability mechanisms, professional development opportunities, and the implementation of the IQMS. These analytical categories seem appropriate to focus on two aspects of education management and change, policy implementation research and teacher and school accountability and professional development systems research.

To elaborate, the study posits that the way teachers and school managers understand accountability is translated into their internal accountability instruments / systems, and the capacity of this internal accountability system forms the basis for constructive engagement with an external accountability system (Darling-Hammond, 1993; Newmann et al, 1977; Hopkins and Harris, 1997; Corallo and McDonald, 2001; Elmore, 2003;

Fullan, 2004; Mintrop and Tujillo, 2005). Drawing on Abelman and Elmore (1999), who argue that a fair accountability system must inherently be reciprocal, i.e. professional development and support should be an integral part of performance management.

Three data gathering techniques were used in the study, namely open-ended in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. According to Bogdan and Bilken (1982), open-ended in-depth interviews allow “for the informants to answer from their own frame of reference rather than being confined by the structure of pre-arranged questions. Informants express their thoughts more freely” (1982:2). Focus group discussions are considered an efficient way of data collection (Morgan, 1996). Another advantage of using focus groups is that it allows exploring the knowledge and ideas that develop in a particular context, especially individual and group identities and beliefs which have an enormous impact on policy understanding and implementation (Kitzinger, 1994). Furthermore, the combination of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions allows for “greater depth of the former and greater breadth of the latter ... and to expand the study populations included in the research” (Morgan, 1996:134). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) posit that focus group discussions should be constructed as a homogeneous group of respondents to facilitate deep discussion on the related issues.

The limitation of both these techniques is that it relies on perceptual self-reporting data and requires a highly skilled facilitator to understand and probe responses. Hence, the collection of formal documents related to accountability, including those required for bureaucratic and professional accountability was included as a data source. The documents identified for data collection included school improvement plans, professional development plans, personal growth plans, registers, and reports on the IQMS, etc.. The documents assisted with corroborating the responses from the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions and gaining a

deeper understanding on how the sample of poor-performing schools account internally and externally.

4.5 Reliability and Validity

Reliability refers to the consistency of measurement, that is the study (and data-gathering instruments) has to collect data in a consistent manner, which means that it should gather data that is similar if collected under comparable conditions. Validity is about whether the data instruments test what the study means to test and whether the conclusions drawn are faithful to what has been collected.

This research study is reliable for two reasons. Firstly, a single criterion was used for sampling and secondly traditional data gathering techniques were employed, which can be easily replicated. Furthermore, the use of interviews, focus group discussions and detailed notes assisted in reducing subjectivity as it prevented the researcher from being selective of the data.

In terms of validity, multiple respondents were employed for the sake of triangulation of data and more than one school site was researched. The data collection was strengthened by interviewing three levels of educators within their school context: the principal, middle level school managers, and level 1 educators.

4.6 Data Analysis

An inductive and iterative process was used in analysing the data. Thomas (2003:2) notes

..the primary purpose of the inductive approach is to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies.

Hence, in this study which was exploratory in nature, the inductive approach allowed for authentic categories or themes to emerge from the data, while the iterative process enabled further refinement of the categories through combining themes or removing themes. The inductive approach also permitted the combination of finding derived from both the study objectives and findings coming out of the raw data (Thomas, 2003).

Initially, all the focus-group discussions and in-depth interviews were captured according to the study's main research questions. Codes were developed for the responses within each of these questions derived from the theoretical framework. The data was then grouped according to these initial codes. Categories or themes were formulated as the codes were grouped.

This was followed by within-case analysis and then cross-case analysis. Within-case analysis looked for similarities or difference between different levels of educators' responses to a particular theme in a specific case. While cross-case analysis searched for similarities and differences between cases under a specific theme. These two techniques enabled a valid conclusion to be drawn.

4.7 Limitations

The study faced three main challenges; namely incongruous timing of the interviews, angry teachers, and respondents being parsimonious with their time. Timing for the fieldwork was inappropriate, teachers were returning from a three-week public sector strike; schools were preparing for the fourth term examinations; and their grade 12 learners were getting ready for the NSC examinations. Teachers were angry about the perceived 'lack of respect' of their employer during the strike. Principals, school managers,

and teachers were resistant to offer their valuable time to participate in the study.

To overcome these challenges, the fieldwork was drawn over three weeks. Three days were spent at each school. Each day was spent in the school staffroom hoping that the principal, school managers, and teachers would avail themselves. This process was enriching as it highlighted the dedication and patience required in conducting primary research. Furthermore, it helped to diminish potential respondents' resistance to participating in the study. However, respondents who participated in the study were easily distracted by their work pressures and it was difficult to maintain their threads of thought.

In addition, the focus of the study, i.e. exploring accountability, did not augur well with teachers in their current state of anger towards their employee, whom they perceived as being the one which was unaccountable. This anger coupled with the schools' historical poor-performance made respondents 'aggressively defensive'. Thus, while the research was designed to gather rich and nuanced data on the way teachers and principals in various poor-performing secondary schools construct the notion of accountability and to explore the way their schools implemented internal accountability systems and its intersection with an external accountability system such as the IQMS, the result was weaker than anticipated.

Basic information on the school profile, such as learner enrolment numbers, quintile classification is not readily available to the administration staff or post level 1 educators and is under the responsibility of the principal. The unavailability of the principals during the fieldwork resulted in no supporting documentary evidence being obtained for the study.

Lastly, it was difficult to get five schools to participate in the study (as only three schools eventually participated) and within a school it was difficult to ensure the participation of respondents planned in the sample frame.

4.8 Ethics

Before carrying out this study, approval was sought and obtained from the University of the Witwatersrand's ethics committee (see appendix 2). Such report was circulated to all participants. The invitation to schools to participate in the study fully disclosed the nature and purpose of the study and offered schools to volunteer.

The study ensured confidentiality and anonymity of the participants and all information was presented to reflect this. Furthermore, individual respondents volunteered to offer their experiences and insights to the researcher and were briefed in detail on the nature of the questions and the benefits of such a study to the existing knowledge base on accountability systems in the Gauteng province. Finally, during the analysis of primary data, all responses were treated with the utmost confidentiality.

5 Research Data Presentation

This chapter summarizes the data collected by presenting briefly the school profiles as well as the data from the three sampled schools under the selected themes which are related to the four main research questions:

1. How do poor-performing public secondary schools understand school accountability?
2. What are the existing current accountability systems and instruments in poor-performing secondary schools?
3. How is professional development conducted in poor-performing public secondary schools? and
4. How do poor-performing public secondary schools engage with an external accountability system, such as the IQMS?

5.1 School A

5.1.1 Profile

School A is a large secondary school located in Jabulani, Soweto, near the celebrated Jabulani Shopping Mall. The school is classified in quintile 4⁵; as such learners are required to pay school fees of R150.00 per annum and are not beneficiaries of the feeding scheme offered by the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP)⁶. Learners come from communities surrounding the school as well as from further areas like Bram Fisherville and Slovoville. Thus the school managers interviewed argued that *School A* should be reclassified into quintile 3 as many of their learners come from disadvantaged homes and communities.

⁵ The National Norms and Standards for School Funding requires that provinces rank schools into five quintiles, from poorest (quintile 1) to least poor (quintile 5).

⁶ The NSNP is limited to schools in quintiles 1 to 2.

School A offers its learners a technical curriculum which requires that all learners are registered for mathematics and physical science during their further education and training years. Hence, the school is part of the Dinaledi Schools Programme⁷. Its Dinaledi school status has ensured that the school has two dedicated mathematics and science teachers who receive ongoing professional development support in their respective teaching subjects. Both these teachers are Zimbabwean nationals due to a shortage of mathematics and science teachers in South Africa. However, according to the principal and deputy principal, the feeder community's perception including those of the feeder primary schools is that the school is a vocational training institution, resulting in learners with apparent 'low academic aptitude' being encouraged to register at the school. The school aims to change this perception through an advocacy campaign describing its curriculum offering which is inherently academic.

The physical infrastructure of the school is average (strong brick buildings which are supplied with water and electricity, good fence surrounding the school premises). However, the maintenance of the school requires urgent attention; there are broken water pipes, the grounds require better care, and some of the classrooms including the science laboratory need repair. The principal blames lack of sufficient financial resources directed towards general school maintenance as a major barrier to ongoing school maintenance. The school has both a library and a computer centre. The library is currently inoperative due to the vacant post for a librarian. According to the deputy principal this position is unlikely to be filled in the near future as the district has not allocated the necessary funds for a school librarian.

The administration building and staffroom are neat and welcoming; there is a sense of pride and care. Both the principal and deputy principal's offices

⁷ A Department of Education Programme aimed at increasing the number and improving the quality of learners with passes in mathematics and science in grade 12.

were neat and organised. There appears to be structure and routine in the way the school functions. While learners and teachers appear to be in class, all respondents complained that learners do not attend all their classes in a day. The principal and deputy principal were apprehensive about their teachers' commitment towards accountability and reported that it is a struggle to get all their teachers to comply with the requirements of their employment. Both respondents genuinely believe that teachers in their school and generally in the public sector do not show much consideration for managerial authority.

The learner population has remained steady over the last four years; however the performance of the school in the NSC is on a steady decline. The dramatic drop in performance in the NSC between 2007 and 2008 is explained due to the change in the minimum criteria for passing. In 2007 learners' aggregate was used to determine their performance, while in 2008 it was changed. Learners now must pass all the subjects in order to receive the NSC. Table 3 presents a summary of key school statistics.

Table 3: School A's Number of Learners, Educators, and NSC Pass Rate⁸

YEAR/ STATISTICS	NUMBER OF LEARNERS	NUMBER OF EDUCATORS	NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE PASS RATE
2007	1,314	47	71.6%
2008	1,375	46	32.2%
2009	1,319	49	19.62%
2010	1,202	50	

⁸ Data Source: Education Management Information System School Addresses (downloaded from <http://www.education.gov.za/emis/getmis/addresses.htm> on the 4th November 2010) and interviews with school staff.

5.1.2 Understanding Accountability

The teachers and school managers interviewed at *School A* see accountability as taking responsibility for their duties and functions. They consider accountability as being able to report to all stakeholders on all aspects of their duties and functions.

"I understand accountability as a form of reporting and taking responsibility." (Principal)

Teachers reported that they are accountable for their learners' progress both academically and socially. In addition, they are responsible for record keeping, managing their classroom resources, including furniture, equipment, and learning and teaching support material (LTSM), and participating in school subcommittees and in extra mural activities. The school managers see their responsibilities as oversight of the operations of the school. The principal appears to be focused on the efficient management of school resources and the deputy principal on effective delivery of the school curriculum, through working closely with the heads of departments (HoD). The school-based support team (SBST), which the deputy principal chairs, is the main vehicle that addresses learner performance. Low performing learners are identified and offered additional support. However, teachers believe that they are not accountable to learners' progress in some instances such as: learner pregnancy resulting in long absenteeism, learners who are experiencing difficulties in their home as they have no authority to remove learners from their home, learners addicted to drugs, and learners who are always coming late.

The school managers interviewed at *School A* see teachers as accountable for creating a conducive learning and teaching environment in their classrooms, delivering the curriculum, assessing their learners, record keeping, report writing, and classroom resources. In addition they

expect their teachers to behave 'professionally', be punctual and respectful.

All respondents at *School A* also reported that they are accountable to the DoE through the district office. Only one respondent, a life orientation teacher, stated that he is also accountable to learners and their parents for their learners' progress.

There was consensus that teachers at the school have a similar perception of their duties and responsibilities. However, respondents were wary about the varying degrees of commitment by individuals to fulfilling their responsibilities. They blamed this uneven commitment by staff members on laziness and the legacy of the anti-apartheid struggle which undermined managerial authority. Furthermore, school managers argued that teachers exploit their union membership to undermine authority in the school.

"I think the background of our teachers, where they come from, the apartheid regime, they feel they are accountable for themselves and don't feel that they have to account when you speak to him. It is embedded and they use unions." (Deputy Principal)

Teachers and school managers see learners as responsible for their own learning, through punctuality, regular attendance to school, regular attendance to classes, and actively participating in school activities including class work and homework. While parents are held accountable for ensuring that learners attend school regularly and punctually, learner discipline, school fees, and their children are dressed in the appropriate school uniform.

None of the respondents from *School A* related accountability to adherence to professional norms or working collectively to contribute to enhancing learning and teaching or reflecting on their own practices, which

are cornerstones to professional accountability. Similarly respondents were elusive about their responsibility to meet bureaucratic requirements of the school and centered their responses on their job functions without unpacking.

5.1.3 Internal Accountability Mechanisms

The school management uses traditional bureaucratic means to ensure that the school functions in a meaningful way for learners; it has in place and uses teaching and learning timetables, registers, assessment records, assessment reports, subcommittees, and formal planned meetings. The school timetable as well as the substitution timetable is used to guarantee learners are in class and spending time on the task of learning. Daily attendance registers for learners and teachers to ensure attendance, as well as class registers for learners to make certain that learners attend all their classes in a day. School subcommittees are used to enable the school to deliver on its mandate as well as to facilitate accountability. These subcommittees range from sports committees to SBST. There are regular planned meetings related to subjects and subcommittees that are used to monitor curriculum delivery progress and address challenges that may arise. These committees are limited to sharing progress and challenges, and thus are inherently bureaucratic, showing limited capacity to engage in ongoing school improvement and professional development. The disciplinary committee and the SBST are examples of committees used to enhance learning and teaching in School A. However, the disciplinary committee is limited to learner discipline and the district is responsible for instituting formal disciplinary actions for teachers.

In the case of negligent teachers, the school attempts to address this informally through meetings with the offender and attempts to draw on his or her conscience. When formal disciplinary measures were used by the

school, that is reporting the offender to the district office and asking them to institute formal disciplinary measures, they were extremely disappointed by their districts non-performance on this request. The principal reported that her authority was further undermined by the district's lack of performance and sent a wrong signal to teachers at her school. Hence, the deputy principal reported that the school now prefers using the informal accountability measures described.

"We focus on the conscious of the teacher and bargaining with him [teacher]. More fruitful is the informal disciplinary process. Yes, we had to use it for a teacher who has always handed things in late. I locked the gate to ensure that the marks were handed in." (Deputy Principal)

Similarly, meetings are the key instrument used to hold learners and parents accountable. The learner representative council (LRC) is used to resolve disputes and to foster a culture of learning. The school disciplinary committee is the main vehicle to address learners' contravention of the School Code of Conduct. The SBST is used to engage learners' on their academic performance. Learners are required to write letters providing reasons for their weak performance and then offered the necessary support. However, parents' meetings are not well attended; this is exacerbated by learners living with extended families who are not committed to the learners' schooling according to the school managers interviewed. Teenage pregnancy and drug abuse appear to be areas that teachers find difficult to address and appear to abdicate their responsibilities for learner progress.

Professional accountability tools used by the school only include the School Code of Conduct with learners and the SACE Code of Conduct / Professional Ethics with teachers to encourage professional behaviour and ethics. The SACE Code of Conduct / Professional Ethics is a form of external professional accountability tool. Learners and teachers receive

these at the beginning of the school year and are reminded of them regularly.

School A's senior management, the principal and the deputy principal, are committed to improving learning and teaching, and they have put in place bureaucratic accountability systems, of which registers, learner performance reports, and participation in the school subcommittees are dominant. This insures that their teachers and learners fulfill minimum requirements of their responsibilities and creates a routine. However, the school is finding it difficult to deliver its technical curriculum meaningfully to its learner. The school blames the learners and the feeder primary schools for encouraging learners with 'low academic aptitude' to register at the school. *School A* urgently requires support to build internal capacity that will assist its teachers to reflect on the way they deliver the school's curriculum; as such it needs to move towards greater collaboration and ongoing professional development.

In summary the current accountability tools mostly used by *School A* are bureaucratic and ineffective in helping the school to deliver its curriculum.

5.1.4 Professional Teacher Development

School A has identified areas in which their teachers require professional development support. These areas were distilled from the professional growth plans submitted by teachers which are linked to the IQMS. Classroom visits by the HoD and deputy principal are also used to support teachers. According to one teacher, teachers are unhappy about this practice and do not see the necessity for these classroom visits. Further probing on this was difficult as teachers interviewed were resistant to explain why.

However, the school cannot afford contracting external service providers and therefore have limited its internal professional development to workshops on areas where the school has internal competence. Currently, professional development from the outside is restricted to workshops offered by the district office, bursaries offered by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) for further studies, school sponsors from the private sector (Joy Mining is currently supporting *School A*), and government agencies such as Services Sector Educational and Authority, South African Advancement of Science and Technology Agency, and SciBono. South African Advancement of Science and Technology Agency, and SciBono are aimed at improving learner performance in mathematics and physical science.

Cluster meetings held by the district office in the respective learning areas / subjects are the only form of ongoing professional development for teachers at *School A*. The cluster meetings offered by Dinaledi are also considered useful in helping teachers' professional development according to the science teacher interviewed.

Individual effort in the form of continuing education through tertiary institutions is the dominant form of professional development in *School A*, both the principal and the deputy principal are currently studying for an Advance Certificate in Education and a doctorate degree respectively. The school takes full opportunity of adhoc courses offered by government agencies and non-governmental organisations and encourages staff to attend their training workshops. However, systematic professional development that focuses on delivering the curriculum, teaching and learning, and meeting teachers' classroom challenges appear to be non-existent in *School A*.

5.1.5 Integrated Quality Management System

All respondents at *School A* shared the same view of the IQMS, namely to support professional development of teachers, to improve the quality of learning and teaching in the school and to reward excellence. None of the respondents talked about using the IQMS to ensure compliance or to penalise non-conformance.

“The purpose of IQMS is to evaluate a teacher’s performance by the teacher, articulate your strengths and weaknesses and indicate the help you need, and also to reward performance.” (Science Teacher)

According to the principal, teachers were initially reluctant to participate in the IQMS. However after a workshop organised by the GDE on the IQMS, they were more willing. However, the major challenge facing successful implementation of the IQMS at *School A* was the tension between the developmental nature of the IQMS and the 1% performance bonus and pay progression. School managers believe that teachers are not completely honest in their evaluations.

The IQMS is used in the school to formulate the school improvement plan through distilling teachers’ professional development needs, and the school does not have a separate professional development plan. Teachers reported that the IQMS enables them to reflect on their performance, reconsider their teaching practices and take personal initiative to improving their practices. The principal feels that the district uses it as a checklist and is not sufficiently sensitive to the contextual factors of her school.

5.1.6 Summary of Findings from *School A*

A major challenge facing *School A* is to deliver meaningfully its technical curriculum. Currently, the school blames learners ‘low academic aptitude’ for their low performance in the NSC. Senior managers are currently

focused on achieving routine in their school and to ensure that teachers and learners fulfill minimum requirements of their roles and responsibilities. As such, *School A*'s internal accountability system is mainly bureaucratic. The bureaucratic tools in place appear to help with securing time on teaching and learning but do not allow for sanctions against non-compliance or adequately assist with asserting managerial authority.

School A has some internal organizational capacity in the form of a principal and deputy who are committed to improving teaching and learning, as well as some form of effective bureaucratic system and instruments. They seem ready for external intervention that will move it towards greater professional accountability, which will enable the school to genuinely address its curriculum delivery challenges.

The SBST and the SDT appear to be structures that can foster professional accountability; however, in their current form, these structures do not fully promote collaborative effort and reflective practice to enhance professionalism at *School A*. The SBST limits its work to helping individual learners improve their performance and the SDT offers professional development through once off workshops in areas where the school has internal skills. The dominant form of professional development is individual effort, followed by ad-hoc workshops offered to the school by external agencies. Cluster meetings offered by the district are the only vehicle for ongoing professional development. The IQMS is genuinely used by the school to identify staff development needs but serves no performance management or improving learning and teaching or school improvement purposes.

5.2 School B

5.2.1 Profile

School B is located in Mofolo North, which is on the periphery of Soweto. The school is adjacent to the railway line and the Ikwezi Railway Station is about fifty meters from the school. The school is classified in quintile 3, which makes it a no-fee school. *School B* receives R855.00 per learner per annum subsidy from the GDE (DoE, 2009). The school is not yet a beneficiary to the NSNP as the programme is being rolled out in phases in secondary schools. This year was the first phase of rolling out the NSNP to secondary schools and was limited to schools in quintile 1. Currently, teachers volunteer food parcels for the neediest learners in the school.

The physical infrastructure of the *School B* is average (strong brick building which is serviced with water and electricity and a good fence surrounding the school). *School B* has a functional library and computer centre sponsored by Gauteng online. Both these facilities have dedicated staff. However, the school appears dreary and unkempt. The administration block including the staffroom was dusty, untidy, and unwelcoming. A cold and uncaring atmosphere prevailed in the building and throughout the school.

After spending three days in the staffroom of *School B*, I gained a glimpse of the culture of the school. The principal has absolute authority in the school, and entrusts very little power to his two deputy principals. This total control over decision-making, coupled with his late coming and unavailability, makes the school appear chaotic and uncontrollable. Both deputy principals were apprehensive to be interviewed without the principal's consent or to offer consent for the study, while the teachers' responses to my three day visit were on a spectrum of nonchalant to aggressive defensiveness. Punctuality and attendance of all classes by learners and teachers do not appear to be priorities at School B. Teachers appear to spend a lot of time loitering in the staffroom or in cliques in the parking lot. It is difficult to draw conclusions from such a short visit; the first

impression is the school lacks cohesion. Individualism prevails over collegiality and a common vision for the school.

Basic information on the school such as learner pass rate, number of learners and teachers, etc. is not readily available; both the administrators and teachers either do not have the information or are resistant to share this information without the consent of the principal. Thus the data for Table 4 is incomplete.

Table 4: School B's Number of Learners, Educators, and NSC Pass Rate⁹

YEAR/ STATISTICS	NUMBER OF LEARNERS	NUMBER OF EDUCATORS	NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE PASS RATE
2007	1,008	32	Not available
2008	1,099	33	62.59%
2009	1,036	32	29.22%
2010	720	32	

5.2.2 Understanding Accountability

The majority of interviewees at *School B* see accountability in terms of responsibility, trust, and being part of a collective. In addition, interviewees associate accountability with being liable for failure. The principal strongly supported this view. While acknowledging that accountability enables better planning, he maintained that it has negative connotations and that he is constantly under pressure.

"Accountability would always be negative and therefore it becomes oppressive in nature of your tasks though it encourages you to put plans in place." (Principal)

⁹ Data Source: Education Management Information System School Addresses (downloaded from <http://www.education.gov.za/emis/getmis/addresses.htm> on the 4th November 2010) and interviews with school staff.

On this issue, the head of department mentioned that:

“It [accountability] has to do with trust, sound relationship with people you are working with. It also has something to do with team work.” (Head of Department)

Teachers and the HoD understand that they are accountable for learners' progress and hence see themselves mainly responsible for learning and teaching, followed by the management of school resources, including financial and extra curricula activities. They see themselves as accountable mainly to learners and then their employer. However, they believe that they should not be held accountable for learner performances in the case of pregnant learners and when there is a lack of learning and teaching resources.

While acknowledging that their core responsibility is the success of learning and teaching at the school, both the principal and the deputy principal blame each other for non-performance in this area. The principal blames the deputy principal for curriculum for not fulfilling his functions in overseeing the successful delivery of the curriculum. The deputy principal for curriculum charged the principal with undermining his authority. He accused the principal of removing accountability measures he put in place to guarantee teachers at the school spend time on teaching and learning. He argued that the principal has created a divisive school atmosphere. The school staff is divided into those supporting the principal and those wanting some kind of change and greater say in the daily operations of the school according to the deputy principal for curriculum delivery. The HoD interviewed concurred that the school's atmosphere is conflict-ridden and not conducive to collegiality, however he recognised personal agency in that “you can influence the classes you're involved in¹⁰”.

¹⁰ Interview with HoD on the 19th October 2010

“For teaching, for dishing out knowledge to learners, like guiding the learners, facilitating the process of learning. To help learner develop into responsible citizens in the country.” (Teacher)

The respondents of *School B* agree that everyone at their school knows what is expected from them because of the nature of their pre-service training, in the words of a teacher “our profession demands us to do that”¹¹.

5.2.3 Internal Accountability Mechanisms

The main accountability mechanisms employed at *School B* are the bureaucratic devices required by the system or district; these include learner timetable, learner assessment statistics and related reports to the district office on learner performance, and regular meetings for learning areas / subjects and staff meetings. Other bureaucratic tools such as attendance registers and substitution timetables do not appear to be in force. Teachers did not complete the teacher attendance register on the mornings that I visited and many were late including the principal.

The deputy principal and HoD interviewed use classroom visits to enhance accountability and improve learning and teaching. However, this is not fully supported by the principal. The HoD interviewed appears to value collegiality and has instituted a social gathering one Friday afternoon in every month. He uses the social gathering as a means to encourage team work. However, this commitment to fostering social cohesion in the school is limited to this HoD’s personal dedication. The deputy principal for curriculum appears to have given up on enforcing his authority and related functions within the school. He blames his abandonment of his duty on the principals’ ‘authoritarian management’ and his ‘weak relationship with the principal’.

¹¹ Interview with teacher on the 19th October 2010

The School Code of Conduct and the LRC are the main tools used to facilitate learner cooperation. The principal complained about the removal of corporal punishment in enforcing discipline, and believed that existing disciplinary measures used by the school is ineffective in facilitating learner accountability and adherence to the requirements of the school.

Similarly in the case of parents, the School Governing Body (SGB) seems to be the only forum for parental participation. Parents appear to stay away from school activities. However, one of the teacher's interviewed reported that at the end of 2009, a parent came to their school with a gift to thank him for his contribution to their child's success in the 2009 NCS examinations. Teenage pregnancy and drug abuse appear to be areas that teachers find difficult to address and appear to abdicate their responsibilities for learner progress, in other words they reported that they do not feel accountable for pregnant learners' learning.

There appears to be no enforcement or monitoring of any form of accountability system in *School B*. The atmosphere in *School B* conflict-ridden; and individual agency overrides collective effort. Individual teachers and senior managers continue to strive in their classrooms and departments to make a difference. However, the absence of a culture of unity of purpose in their school weakens the efforts of individual agency, there is no multiplier effect. *School B* urgently requires external intervention around leadership and the implementation and monitoring of basic bureaucratic accountability systems.

5.2.4 Professional Teacher Development

There is no staff professional development programme at *School B*. The principal reported that professional development of teachers is the duty of

the HoDs who should offer, through their classroom visits, coaching and mentoring to teachers. Currently, the school relies on the cluster meetings offered by the GDE for ongoing professional development. According to the principal, the district office's response to its school needs is mainly through these cluster meetings. However, he argues that it is insufficient as many of their teachers require ongoing support in delivering the NCS.

Individual teachers use bursaries offered by the provincial department to continue their formal education. The teacher interviewed sees professional development as an individual's responsibility and is part of one's professional efficacy:

"Myself as a teacher, I am supposed to be self-driven, yearning to learn."
(Teacher)

The teacher interviewed is part of a mathematics programme offered by the University of Witwatersrand - Faculty of Education. He relishes the workshops offered by this programme and he deeply appreciates the subject content knowledge he gained from these meetings.

School B appears not to value the role of ongoing professional development as a means of institutional capacity building (Hopkins and Harris, 1997) and the current conflict-ridden culture in the school further encourages individual responsibility for professional development versus creating a school culture that nurtures learning, experimentation, and collaboration (Little, 1982).

5.2.5 Integrated Quality Management System

All interviewees at *School B* understand the purpose of the IQMS, i.e. to facilitate professional development as well as career progression and to

reward excellence. However, the status of IQMS at the school is ambiguous. In one teacher's words, "sometimes it is said to be here and sometimes it is said not to be here". The IQMS is seen as an administrative task and is completed in that mode. All the interviewees reported that their focus in implementing the IQMS is to ensure that the 'paperwork' is done.

"Currently teachers are focused on paperwork. I would do it better if I was a clerk than a teacher." (Principal)

Furthermore, the majority of interviewees agreed that it is extremely difficult to implement the IQMS as intended as it deals with progress and monetary incentives. Teachers are shying away from being honest in their appraisal of their colleagues. Hence, the focus is on completing the paperwork, which is inadvertently endorsed by the district because they never check learners' work only the submissions by teachers.

"I don't find it easy because working with human beings is more challenging, as it is difficult to manage objectivity." (Teacher)

5.2.6 Summary of Findings from *School B*

A major challenge facing *School B* is achieving unity of purpose. *School B* appears to lack social cohesion and the atmosphere is tense and conflict-ridden. Punctuality and class attendance by both teachers and learners appear to be poor. While teachers and senior management interviewed see accountability as a responsibility and a way to be liable for non-performance. This notion of being liable has not been translated into an internal accountability system that addresses improvement or excellence as well as weak or non-performance. Similarly the principal looks at the current form of accountability as negative pressure on him, while acknowledging that it can lead to better planning.

At this stage *School B* has no internal capacity in the form of effective leadership, adherence to authority, basic bureaucratic requirement and ongoing professional development.

The IQMS is treated as an administrative task and everyone in the school completes the necessary paperwork for the IQMS. As such the school has no professional development plan and little in terms of teachers' ongoing professional development at School B which is left to personal initiative, or done through mandatory cluster meetings presented by the district, or part of an external programme.

Individual agency plays an important role in professionalism and champions for transformation, but, in the absence of critical mass, this agency is drowned. The individual work of one HoD to foster collegiality in his department appears to have limited impact on the school's overall divisive culture. Similarly while teachers acknowledge that they understand the requirement of their profession, it appears to be undermined by undemocratic leadership practices.

5.3 School C

5.3.1 Profile

School C is located in the heart of old Soweto, near the Orlando Stadium and on the Rea Vaya (bus rapid transit system) route. Orlando Township was built in the 1920s; it is the oldest township in Soweto with a proud anti-apartheid history. The school is classified in quintile 2; hence it is a no-fee school and is beneficiary of the NSNP. The school receives R855.00 per learner per annum.

School C was categorised as a Further Education and Training (FET) college at the turn of the century. Hence, it only offers grades ten, eleven

and twelve. According to teachers and principal interviewed, this is a big challenge for the school, as it is unable to adequately prepare their FET earners as traditional secondary schools do with their grades eight and nine. This is exacerbated as learner intake is not limited to Orlando Township but includes learners from schools outside Soweto as well as from outside the province. The school has no resources to check the validity of learners' previous year's academic report. Furthermore, teachers complained that the school admits learners any time during the academic year in order to fulfil the number quota so as to maintain the teacher- learner ratio and the number of posts in the school.

The infrastructure of the school is good (strong brick buildings with water and electricity, and a good fence surrounding the school premise). The administration building and other specialised classrooms are secured with strong burglar bars. This may be due to the robbery of the computers in the laboratory early in September 2010. The school has a library and dedicated librarian; however, the library is inadequately stocked and has no information technology resources. According to the principal, the science laboratory is poorly resourced.

There appears to be acknowledgement of the principal's authority by both teachers and the deputy principal, but the principal complained that he found it difficult to harness collective effort by teachers. He grumbled about the dominance of individualism versus collective culture in his school.

School C is neat and the administration block is welcoming. The staffroom was tidy and bright, a place to work and share ideas. The two days spent at the school revealed structure and order at the school. Table 5 presents basic information on the school.

Table 5: School C's Number of Learners, Educators, and NSC Pass Rate¹²

YEAR/ STATISTICS	NUMBER OF LEARNERS	NUMBER OF EDUCATORS	NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE PASS RATE
2007	823	24	51%
2008	819	19	59%
2009	860	26	25%
2010	795	29	

5.3.2 Understanding Accountability

Generally, accountability is understood in terms of responsibility. The principal sees it as “whatever we do in search of quality education”. As such, he feels accountable for both curriculum delivery and the management of resources, particularly human resources and their performance. However, teachers struggled to deconstruct the term. All respondents agreed that there is no common perception of what teachers are held accountable for at *School C*. Plans and decisions are collectively agreed upon, implementation is never followed through or monitored. Teachers blamed this failure on lack of collegiality which is driven by “ego” and “jealousy”. Nonetheless, teachers acknowledge that they “know what our job responsibilities are”. The principal accused teachers of lacking respect for authority and mentioned that teacher unions encourage this behaviour.

Teachers explained that they are not exclusively responsible to the learners for their progress. A few teachers feel demoralised by their learners' lack of enthusiasm for learning. They feel trapped in a vicious cycle. They believe that “if society is abnormal, the school will be

¹² Data Source: Education Management Information System School Addresses (downloaded from <http://www.education.gov.za/emis/getmis/addresses.htm> on the 4th November 2010) and interviews with school staff.

dysfunctional and abnormal” and that ultimately learners are responsible for their learning as “they write the exams”. They also believe that the matric pass rate in their school will improve if they have fewer learners sitting for the exams. Furthermore, teachers reported that they are not accountable for learners’ progress in the following circumstances, learner pregnancy, lack of parental involvement in their children’s education, learners who are absent for long durations, and those who have barriers to learning and require special programmes.

Teachers also felt that their employer is stubborn and unaccountable. They feel humiliated about being forced to use their right to strike to vent their frustrations. They argued that, as professionals, they are underpaid as many of their colleagues cannot afford to purchase a house or buy a car. They believe this is a contributing factor for the lack of respect they receive from their learners.

“These learners are laughing at you for being a teacher. They see you are poor.” (Teacher)

Teachers and principal interviewed expect parents to be accountable to the school by ensuring that their children attend school regularly and punctually and that they understand discipline. Similarly, learners are held accountable for attendance, punctuality, discipline, and participating in school requirements such as homework. Like the previous two schools, teachers struggle when faced with teenage pregnancy and absenteeism and thus seem to relinquish their duty in this regard.

5.3.3 Internal Accountability Mechanisms

The principal believes that accountability at *School C* is enforced through planned meetings, memos, circulars and classroom visits. He also

reported that the IQMS is another mechanism that is employed to enhance accountability at the school. Teachers see as a means to facilitating accountability formal structures, such as the SGB and the disciplinary committee. However, according to teachers, the subcommittees are not “very active” in the school. There appears to be no internal accountability system in place.

The SBST appears to be an effective means to support learners, especially vulnerable learners whose home environment is extremely disadvantaged. This year, the school implemented an award system to recognise learners who have excelled. Teachers are hoping that this system will motivate their learners to perform at the best.

“The SBST will address each learner to find out what the problem is and gives support like those vulnerable learners.” (Teacher)

The school’s Code of Conduct is used to enforce accountability with learners and parents. However, interviewees complained that parental involvement in their children’s learning is minimal, as they are “dumping” their children at the school and are too “happy that their children are attending school”. Parents’ attendance to meetings is generally low. Many learners are living with extended families or their grannies or on their own (those from other provinces) or far from the school, which is also considered an impending factor to full parental participation in school events. Teachers reported that some learners’ parents are not literate and are in need of help.

School C’s accountability system is basically bureaucratic; the subcommittees that are the basis for collaboration and development are not functioning optimally and serve to meet minimum bureaucratic requirements. The principal’s management style is also bureaucratic, preferring memos and directives as a means of enforcing accountability

and not interested in taking a hands-on approach to the management of the school. The teachers are struggling with offering the FET curriculum to their learners and blame the diversity of their school's learner population for the poor-performance of the school in the NSC. *School C* requires urgent attention on delivering an FET curriculum; as such both the management and teachers require ongoing support on the technical and specialised skills on FET. Furthermore the school needs to partner with an established FET college to learn about the differences between an FET school and a traditional secondary school.

5.3.4 Professional Teacher Development

Teachers interviewed at this school were extremely angry about the public workers' strike and talked at length about the lack of respect their employer has shown towards them during their strike. This resulted in extremely weak data on, and experience of, professional development at *School C*. It appears that *School C* offers no internal professional development to its teachers but relies on the few support programmes from the district and the GDE. Teachers attend workshops organised by the district or use the bursaries offered by the GDE to continue their learning.

Teachers' complained that they need motivation from their management to continue their professional growth. At the moment they feel "demoralised" as the computers in their laboratory were stolen and it was supposed to be another opportunity to ongoing professional development through Gauteng online. The principal was in a rush and did not answer any of the questions related to professional development at *School C*.

5.3.5 Integrated Quality Management System

The principal understands the IQMS as a programme to assess educators in terms of their needs as well as their performance. Teachers were extremely antagonistic towards the IQMS and reported that the system is unnecessary because “no one cares to develop us”. Another teacher complained that she “did everything, but no one came from external evaluation”.

The developmental appraisal of the IQMS appears rather secondary at *School C*. According to the principal, teachers only complete the forms to comply and gain the 1% salary bonus. The developmental purpose is ignored by the district office; hence the principal feels that the IQMS is not suitable for school development. It appears as though the IQMS is only implemented as another administrative task in *School C* and not as an opportunity to strengthen professional development.

5.3.6 Summary of Findings from *School C*

The major challenge facing *School C* is meeting the needs of its diverse learners. Teachers and principal appear unable to make the shift from traditional secondary school to FET status of the school. The current bureaucratic accountability system in place does not appear to build professional capacity, cohesion, and collaboration in the school. There is therefore little internal organisational capacity or accountability in the school. The morale of teachers appears to be rather low compared to the other two schools studied. Teachers were angry about the perceived lack of respect they receive from both their employer and their learners.

The developmental aspect of the IQMS is ignored at *School C*, teachers complete all the paperwork related to the IQMS with the hope of getting the 1% bonus. Ongoing professional development does not appear on *School C*'s agenda.

5.4 Conclusion

There are more similarities between the three sampled schools than differences. The similarities include: a dominant culture of individualism as none of the stakeholders appear to be working collegially or collaboratively; school managers struggling to assert their authority, no system of sanctions against teachers for non-performance and an IQMS implementation which is seen as an administrative task involving compliance. The schools that offer a more technical secondary school curriculum (FET) do not take responsibility for the schools' low performance in the NSC and prefer to blame their learners as they struggle to deliver their respective curriculum in a meaningful way.

These schools use mainly bureaucratic tools, such as class registers, attendance registers and reports, to ensure that learners and teachers attend school and spend time on task. They generally do not promote greater teacher professionalism and do not offer teachers with a professional development programme.

The differences between the three poor-performing schools in the sample are their organisational capacities as far as their internal accountability system is concerned (that is, school leadership and tools to ensure teaching and learning, opportunities for professional development, and opportunities to work collaboratively and collectively). *School A* has greater internal capacity than the other two schools, mainly because of a committed school leadership, commitment to professional development, and recruitment of teachers with specialised skills being a Dinaledi school. *School B* has the weakest internal capacity, as there is no effective leadership and the culture of individualism has paralysed the school's basic functions.

While bureaucratic accountability is dominant in the sampled schools, the ongoing cluster meetings organised by the district office and the SBST are nascent structures to foster professional accountability. Furthermore, teachers appear to rely on their pre-service training for meeting the demands of their daily work.

6 Analysis of Data

This chapter analyzes and interprets the research data under the four themes related to the research questions, namely understanding accountability, internal accountability mechanisms, professional development, and the IQMS implementation. The analysis attempts to interpret trends and diversions across schools and between schools in the sample as well as between respondents in terms of the literature review and the conceptual/theoretical framework and by comparing the findings to previous work and research in this area of accountability in poor-performing schools and policy implementation.

6.1 Understanding Accountability

Professional accountability is about using specialised knowledge to make informed decisions about diverse learners' teaching and learning needs (Darling-Hammond, 1986; Newman et al, 1997; Abelman and Elmore, 1999). In the three poor-performing secondary schools researched in the study, accountability is mainly perceived in terms of 'responsibility', 'answerability', and 'liability', and to a much lesser extent in terms of professional norms, especially meeting diverse learners' teaching and learning needs.

Teachers and school managers across all three schools have a basic understanding of bureaucratic accountability which they reduce to fulfilling their duties and functions i.e. mainly complying with bureaucratic accountability. There was no contention around their interpretation of their duties and functions. They reported that they have a clear understanding of their duties and functions from their pre-service training. However, none made direct reference to the *Norms and Standards for Educators* (DoE, 2000) or the numerous labour agreements entered with the DoE to

professionalise teaching with the intention to enhance the quality of learning and teaching. The respondents made no reference to Resolutions 7 and 8 (ELRC, 1998) which details the workload and the duties and responsibilities of teachers respectively; they believe that their initial pre-service training is sufficient. Only one principal talked about the SACE Code of Conduct/Professional Ethics as a means to enhance professional behaviour in her school.

While both teachers and principals interviewed focused significantly on the liability aspect of accountability (which explains deviation from norms and expectations), none of the teachers and few of the senior management talked about the need to take disciplinary action against non-compliance or unethical behaviour. Principals and senior managers interviewed across the three schools complained often about the non-compliance and non-performance of their teachers; however, none of the schools had functional internal accountability systems or system of rewards and sanctions in place to address the consequences of non-compliance. *School A* attempted to address non-compliance through informal meetings and 'nudging'. They do not seem to value internal goal-setting by their schools and undertaking collective action towards meeting the goals. Yet, the literature emphasise that, without internal accountability, poor-performing schools cannot engage constructively with external accountability systems or interventions (Newmann et al, 1997; Abelman and Elmore, 1999; Christie, 2001; Corallo and McDonald, 2001).

Furthermore, none of the respondents made any reference to professional norms particularly their specialised knowledge, collaboration between teachers within the school and between schools, sharing resources within schools, participating reflective practices, or ongoing professional development in unpacking their notion of accountability. Only one HoD from *School B* through his personal agency has tried to improve collegiality in his department. *School B* has the most divisive school culture amongst

the schools in the study, and this HoD has attempted to make a difference within his department.

There was consensus amongst respondents that they are accountable for learners' performance, and that they should submit quarterly reports on their learner performance. However, the information from learner performance reports is not used to reflect on teachers' performance or in any form of collective planning. Yet, meaningful professional accountability does use learners' performance to guide and make sound decisions over a period of time on behalf of diverse learners (Darling-Hammond, 1983). Two schools in the sample blamed their learners for their schools' low performance. The SBST is the only school structure that attempts to directly address weak performance amongst learners especially vulnerable learners (learners from child-headed households, and from indigent families).

Professional accountability in the literature is about upholding professional standards and practices; as such it depends on collaboration, collegiality, and ongoing professional development amongst members of the profession (Darling-Hammond, 1986; O' Day 2002; SACE, 2005). This notion of accountability is non-existent in the poor-performing schools in the study. Their concept of accountability is limited to bureaucratic accountability. All three schools are struggling to put in place a simple internal accountability system that will at least ensure bureaucratic accountability, which in the least will allow for time on teaching and sanctions against teachers who do not comply. Furthermore, the concept of responsibility for all learners is compromised in these schools as teachers appear to ignore the learning needs of at risk learners such as those who are pregnant, etc. (Anderson, 2005) and continue to blame learners for poor performance in the NSC.

It is clear that meaningful professional development does not feature nor is related to these schools' notion of accountability (Abelmann and Elmore, 1999). Generally, respondents' believed that their pre-service training is sufficient in giving them the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the demands of the profession. Moreover, all the teachers interviewed were frustrated with their respective district's lack of commitment to professional development and support. It appears that the schools in the study are faced with more pressure than support from their districts, which, according to Fullan (2000), does not assist with genuine policy implementation and does not result in real behaviour or practice change. Hence, the concept of reciprocity (Ablemann and Elmore, 1999) and collegiality and collaboration (Darling-Hammond, 1986), fundamental to professional and bureaucratic accountability, does not seem to influence respondents' view of accountability.

Thus, poor-performing schools in the study have a very limited understanding of professional and bureaucratic accountability; at this stage they see accountability mainly in terms of individual action in their classrooms, i.e., doing their job as they were trained to do. They see their work as routine which does not require complex decision-making, collaboration, and ongoing learning on their part (Lieberman, 1995).

Therefore, what these schools and their districts need is a form of reciprocal professional accountability system that aims to address quality of learning and teaching for all learners by promoting, as Abelman and Emore (1999) mention, professionalism through ongoing professional development, the encouragement of teacher collaboration within schools and between schools which can play the role of professional accountability.

6.2 Internal Accountability Mechanisms

The literature reviewed on external accountability systems and poor-performing schools is clear: in the absence of strong internal accountability systems and internal capacity to grow, poor-performing schools will only superficially engage with external accountability systems which will result in further disadvantaging poor-performing learners (Hopkins and Harris, 1997; Carallo and McDonald, 2001; O' Day, 2002; Mintrop and Tujillo, 2005);.

All three poor-performing schools in the study lack strong internal accountability systems, as defined by Fullan (2004), namely they do not set up school targets, monitor, and take action against non-performance or recognized their pockets of excellence. Bureaucratic accountability system is dominant in *School A* and *School C* and allows these two schools to create a certain routine and ensure that minimum requirements from both teachers and learners are met. However, effective functioning of structures and systems, such as the sub-committees and taking action against non-performance by teachers, remain a struggle in these two schools. As such, the current accountability systems in these schools are not fully functional and can be said to be weak. The achievement of the minimum requirements from teachers is the effort of the principal and deputy principals at these schools who are committed to improving learning and teaching in their respective schools. However, both these schools are experiencing great difficulty in delivering their curriculum meaningfully to their learners, namely technical and FET curricula respectively. Teachers and senior management blame their learners for their schools' poor-performance in the NSC examinations.

The literature on internal capacity of schools reveal that high expectations of learners, strong belief in the efficacy of teachers to influence learning, collective planning, and coherence of teaching and learning are critical

conditions for schools' capacity to grow (Newmann et al, 1997; Abelman and Elmore, 1999; Christie, 2001; Corallo and McDonald, 2001). However, teachers and principals at both these schools appear to lose faith in their own knowledge and skills to make a difference in addressing the learning and teaching needs of their diverse learners. Specialised knowledge and using their skills to make informed decisions about teaching and learning is fundamental to the teaching profession (Darling-Hammond, 1986; Anderson 2005). Thus moving *School A* and *School C* towards professional accountability system will be a long and arduous process that will require a new mindset and the need for the department and the school to provide teachers with ongoing professional development that will give them their confidence in teaching diverse learners.

School B appears to have little in terms of accountability system in place and the school functions mainly through individual agency. Teachers do their work as they were taught during their pre-service training. There is no collective action or leadership effort in *School B* to create a culture of collegiality in the school. In the case of *School B*, where there is no evidence of any attempt to create and implement an internal accountability system, intensive capacity building is required (Mintrop and Tujillo, 2005).

While the three schools in study have differences, they have two similarities. Firstly, senior management consider teachers in their schools as "only accountable to themselves"¹³ and they find it extremely difficult to hold them accountable. However, none of the managers interviewed suggested disciplinary procedures that could be put in place which are aligned to resolutions at the ELRC. They appear to blame teachers and the anti-apartheid legacy for this weak sense of accountability. Their argument is that the consequence of the struggle against apartheid in the education sector is the lack of respect for authority. They also accuse

¹³ In-depth interview with Deputy Principal from School A

trade unions of protecting teachers unconditionally. Similarly, teachers across the three schools recognise that not all their colleagues are fulfilling their duties and responsibilities. It appears that these schools are trapped in a blame cycle.

Secondly none of the schools use their quarterly learner performance reports to reflect on curriculum delivery, learning and teaching practices, assessment practices, support for learners, etc.. These reports are seen as additional administrative responsibilities and not viewed as a professional decision-making tool.

These two features are manifestation of two things: one, principals possess little authority and according to Fullan (2005), their leadership is critical to the success of turning around poor-performing secondary schools; and two, teachers view their work as workers who follow technical processes and who do not see the need to engage in reflective practices (Darling-Hammond, 1986, Darling-Hammond et al, 1983; SACE, 2005). While, teacher unions played a significant role in the 1980s to remove bureaucratic control over teachers' work and allow teachers greater professional freedom, the leadership and their members currently do not respect the professional authority of school managers or the autonomy of professionalism. Yet, effective leadership and professionalism is core to meeting the demands of local contexts, in this case learning and teaching of diverse learners (Fullan, 2005; Anderson, 2005).

The current policy approach to school improvement is dominated by the idea of pressure and support (Fullan, 2000; O'Day 2002; McLaughlin, 1998). In the three poor-performing schools, little supportive intervention exists and external intervention with greater emphasis on support is urgently required. What is needed is the urgent building of school and teachers' competence in the areas of curriculum knowledge and skills, as well as a stronger instructional leadership and management. It is only

then that these schools will manage to develop and build some internal capacity. Thus, a trust in the professional authority of school management and teachers' competence will reduce conflict in schools and will form the basis for a genuine reciprocal accountability system. In the case of *School B* where there are no internal accountability mechanism then at least bureaucratic pressure is required (O' Day, 2002; Fleisch, 2003).

6.3 Professional Development

Ongoing professional development is the key to building individual capacity and school capacity for sustainable development. The literature on professional development is extensive and rich and points to the need for long term investment for such activity to bear sweet fruits (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Newmann et al, 1997; Hopkins and Harris, 1997; Elmore, 2001).

Furthermore, successful professional development at schools requires at least that teachers see continuous learning and growing as part of their role, or that ongoing learning is part of the school culture (Little, 1995). In only one poor-performing school (*School A*), did the school have a professional development plan. However, this plan was limited to identifying individual teachers' professional development needs and where possible to offer short workshops on these areas using internal staff as the school could not afford employment of external consultants.

None of the poor-performing schools in the study made ongoing professional development as part of their school's culture to strive for improving learner performance. *School A* and *School C* are struggling to effectively deliver their respective curricula which are different from the standard offerings of secondary schools and currently blame their learners for low performance in the NSC. The literature emphasises that

professional development is about changes in teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes towards their learners that will lead to real changing in teaching and classroom management (Goertz et al, 1995; Flodden et al, 2003). However, none of the respondents interviewed in these two schools considered the role of ongoing professional development in helping them to improve their curriculum delivery. All three poor-performing schools in the study relied on their district office, followed by individual effort, and courses offered by government agencies and non-governmental organisations for professional development.

More importantly, there is consensus amongst interviewees of the three schools that the cluster meetings offered by their district office are valuable as they address their contextual issues and deal with their teaching subject matter, such as the workshop meetings offered by Dinaledi. While peer learning is encouraged in the literature to help teachers overcome real classroom problems and facilitate genuine collaboration between teachers (Lieberman, 2000, McKinsey, 2001; Jita and Ndlalane, 2009), this positive culture of the cluster meetings have not filtered into schools. Similarly, the *ad hoc* courses offered by government agencies and non-governmental organisations do not appear to influence the schools' overall development. Garet et al (2001) found that longer professional development programmes, and programmes that have more teachers from the same school, grade, and subject area are more effective.

Thus the current status of professional development in the poor-performing schools in the study is weak, and any form of reciprocal accountability necessitates ongoing professional development as it has to be inherently a two-way process (Elmore, 2001).

6.4 Integrated Quality Management System

Accountability systems, especially the performance management aspect, are the dominant policy tools to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency in the public sector in South Africa. The literature on policy implementation research (Spillane et al, 2002; Elmore, 1979; McLaughlin, 1998) emphasises that policies are interpreted by local agents, using their own beliefs, prior knowledge, experiences, context of implementation, and policy signal that they receive and then adapted to fit into their structures and local contexts. Furthermore, there is evidence in the literature (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Anderson, 2005; de Clercq, 2008; OECD, 2009) that a teacher evaluation system, be it formative or summative, must be directly related to teachers' work, offer rich data on teachers' performance, and be genuinely followed by support and ongoing monitoring and feedback. In summary it has to be inherently reciprocal.

Presently, the IQMS is implemented in an administrative manner in the three poor-performing schools of the study. All the staff complete the administrative paper work related to the IQMS. While it is understood by all the interviewees that the IQMS is a professional development as well as a performance management tool to enhance professional development and personal growth and to make effective judgement of staff remunerations according to performance, they appear to resist translating it into everyday practice. In fact, the IQMS is an event and not part of their everyday routine. All three schools in the study have not made the IQMS an integral part of the systems and structures to manage resources and deliver the curriculum more effectively. This behaviour confirms the literature on the engagement of poor-performing schools and external accountability systems (Abelmann and Elmore, 1999; Figlio and Getzler, 2002; Fleisch, 2003; Mintrop and Tujillo, 2005), which argues that poor-performing schools have low internal capacity, and that these schools generally have difficulty in engaging constructively with external accountability systems.

While, the professional growth plan, which is part of the developmental aspect of the IQMS appear to be implemented as planned, the schools in the study do not offer ongoing professional development, which compromises the objectives and effective implementation of an accountability system for development, such as the IQMS (Elmore, 2001).

In these poor-performing schools that have low capacity, it is difficult to put in place an integrated evaluation system such as the IQMS. The formative and summative evaluations must be separated so that teachers and school management can genuinely identify their professional growth needs. Furthermore, summative evaluation systems that draw on inputs from colleagues cannot be successfully implemented in conflict-ridden environments.

The literature on policy implementation (Weatherley and Lipsky, 1977; Sabatier, 1986) suggests that successful policy implementation necessitates capacity building and sensitivity to local contexts as well as that the context of policy implementation must be understood and taken into account (Berman, 1978; Elmore, 1979). This study attempts to provide useful insights into the way teachers and school managers understand and work with the notion of accountability. Whilst the literature offers characteristics of poor-performing schools (Christie, 2001), the use of backward mapping revealed that teachers and principals in poor-performing schools have a very narrow perspective on accountability, which is limited to "doing your job and reporting on it".

The IQMS, which integrates developmental appraisal and performance management to enhance professionalism in the sector, can be perceived and used as an opportunity of promoting professional accountability and autonomy, in the way Abelmann and Elmore (1999) argue. However, the schools in the study only see their work and the IQMS procedures as

bureaucratic routine, as their conception of accountability is mainly bureaucratic.

Furthermore, the literature reviewed on policy implementation (Spillane et al, 2002) highlights that the kinds of prior knowledge, experiences (and school culture in this case) as well as the type of policy signal received influences the way policy is implemented at the coal face. This may offer further explanations for the way the summative evaluation or performance management part of the IQMS is not being genuinely implemented in these schools. The district office, external and internal evaluators do not look seriously at teachers' work, probably because of the legacy of the apartheid inspectorate system which, according to Jansen (2004) still impacts negatively on any attempt, such as the IQMS, to introduce accountability or appraisal for development with a system of reward or sanction attached to it. Indeed, these poor-performing schools have no experience of genuine appraisal, ongoing professional development and/or collegial work from within their schools or from the district office. In that sense, their experience of tight bureaucratic accountability and promises of professional development remains rather poor.

7 Conclusion

Accountability is the current buzzword in the South African public sector and appraisal for development is increasingly perceived as a means to improve the quality and efficiency of service delivery. In the case of the school sector, accountability for development and performance management, in the form of the IQMS policy, evolved over a period of fifteen years from various policy interventions, starting with the 1998 DAS, to improve the quality of learning and teaching in all public schools and all classrooms.

While there is no established definition or better system for accountability, particularly in the school sector, there is agreement that accountability should be fundamentally designed to improve the quality of learning and teaching through a fair and defensible system of pressure and support. This is what the IQMS purports to be. However, in implementing such a system in poor-performing schools, the international literature (Figlio and Getzler, 2002; Mintrop and Tujillo, 2005) emphasises that success depends on whether the internal accountability systems of these schools can be first developed and in particular their capacity for engaging with and benefiting from development interventions. Thus, initial effort should be placed on building this internal capacity, usually with high quality support in order to build a system of reciprocal accountability. And this is not what the IQMS does.

In addition, the literature reviewed stresses the influence of sense-making by policy implementing agents should be considered and engaged with for successful implementation. As such, backward-mapping as a methodological approach is important as it promotes research to understand the way teachers and school managers perceive accountability and their subsequent engagements with internal and external accountability systems.

This study has shown that, in the sample of poor-performing secondary schools, teachers and principals have not seriously engaged with the notion of accountability or professionalism which is at the basis of teacher evaluation and other teacher-related policy in South Africa. Their understanding of accountability is about bureaucratic accountability and being able to offer rational reasons for deviations from high performance. More importantly, respondents from these schools do not see any relationship between professional norms or collective effort, accountability and learner performance.

Thus all three poor-performing schools of this study end up experiencing and using bureaucratic tools to facilitate some form of bureaucratic accountability. But these minimum bureaucratic accountability instruments are ineffective, especially where school leadership is weak, such as the case of *School B*. Furthermore, managers and teachers across the three schools are reluctant to address non-compliance with work requirements and expectations; hence there is no tool to build a form of internal accountability system to address weak performance by staff.

At the moment, the IQMS is not part of, nor does it promote, these schools' internal accountability and organisational capacity systems as it is only seen as an additional bureaucratic administration task. Teachers believe their pre-service training assist to understand their duties and responsibilities and appear to value the professional growth plan to identify their professional development needs without expecting much to come out of it. Thus, the IQMS serves little purpose in supporting or facilitating individual and school development in the sampled schools.

The internal capacity of these schools must be build first, by, for example, increasing the collective agency of both teachers and school managers in terms of professional knowledge and competences, increased motivation

to engage in improvement actions, and additional resources to facilitate these, such as time and access to expertise (Fullan, 2005).

This study shows that poor-performing schools have limited internal capacity which does not allow them to engage constructively with external accountability systems. Adding professional accountability instruments would be meaningless at this point in time, hence this study advocates the use of certain policy instruments and initiatives to mobilise reciprocal accountability for development between schools and districts.

It is clear from this study that these schools do not try to develop or look for ongoing meaningful professional development programmes in place. There are no important structures in these schools that foster professionalism and encourage collaboration, improvement of learning and teaching skills and content knowledge and reflective practices. The only places or structures assisting mildly in this respect are the School Based Support Teams (SBST) and cluster meeting, organised by the district offices. Thus, the SBST and cluster meetings should be a good way forward. Pre-service training should be underpinned by the aim of promoting on-going teacher professionalism, i.e. upholding professional norms and making teachers share and be accountable to the profession and to each other. In addition, the IQMS developmental aspect should be separated from its performance.

Finally exploring street-level bureaucrats' views should be considered for gaining a realistic picture of the diverse contexts of policy implementation and what poor-performing schools and their teachers need to build their internal organisational capacity and accountability. In the South African context with both geographic and socio-economic diversity, exploratory research should be part of a basic toolkit for understanding the context of policy implementation and the support required by street-level bureaucrats, in this case teachers and school managers.

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Appendix 1

Analysis of the 2009 NSC results is disappointing; only 5% of schools participating in the NSC had achieved 100% learner pass rate. More alarming is that 48 schools in the quintiles¹⁴ 4 and 5 had pass rates of below twenty percent and 18 schools had a 0 learner pass rate. Performance of learners in mathematics and physical science was extremely low, only a third (29.39%) of the learners had passed at 40% and above in mathematics and one in five (20.58%) learners had passed at 40% and above in physical science. Only one in five learners (20%) who sat for the examinations had passes that allowed them entrance to read a bachelors degree at a university (See Appendix 1 for a summary of the 2009 NSC examination results and the quality of the 2008 and 2009 NSC examination results).

Table 6: The Percentage of Learners per School Who Passed the NSC in 2009 by Quintile¹⁵

PERCENTAGE OF LEARNERS WHO PASSED THE NSC IN 2009/QUINTILE OF SCHOOL	QUINTILE 1	QUINTILE 2	QUINTILE 3	QUINTILE 4	QUINTILE 5	TOTAL	%
Below 20%	197	102	90	28	22	439	7%
20-49%	677	441	498	228	122	1966	34%
50-79%	596	465	597	307	181	2146	37%
80-99%	174	140	203	185	335	1037	18%
100%	22	10	40	38	158	268	5%
TOTAL	1666	1158	1428	786	818	5856	100 %

Table 7: The Number Learners Performance in Terms of University Admission¹⁶

YEAR	WROTE	QUALIFIED	QUALIFIED	QUALIFIED	TOTAL
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¹⁴ The National Norms and Standards for School Funding requires that provinces rank schools into five quintiles, from poorest (quintile 1) to least poor (quintile 5).

¹⁵ Source: Department of Basic Education. (2010). *Report on the National Senior Certificate Examination Results Part 2 2009*, Pretoria

¹⁶ Source: Department of Basic Education. (2010). *Report on the National Senior Certificate Examination Results Part 2 2009*, Pretoria

		FOR HIGHER CERTIFICATE FOR ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION	FOR DIPLOMA FOR ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION	FOR BACHELORS FOR ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION	ACHIEVED
2008	533,561	102,032	124,258	107,274	333,744
2009	552,073	93,356	131,035	109,697	334,718

Appendix 2

Wits School of Education



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Student number: 8545042
Protocol number: 2010ECE130C
10 August 2010

Ms. Shamima Vawda
72 Nottingham Road
KENSINGTON
2094

Dear Ms. Vawda

Application for Ethics Clearance: Master of Education

I have a pleasure in advising you that the Ethics Committee in Education of the Faculty of Humanities, acting on behalf of the Senate has agreed to approve your application for ethics clearance submitted for your proposal entitled:

An exploration of instruments to mobilise bureaucratic and professional accountability in poor-performing public secondary schools in Gauteng province: The use of a backward mapping approach

The Protocol Number above should be submitted to the Graduate Studies in Education Committee upon submission of your final research report.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M Mabeta".

Matsie Mabeta
Wits School of Education

Cc Supervisor: Ms F de Clercq (via email)