

# **The role of school management teams and parents in learner achievement**

**Masha Ben Maphoke**

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**The role of school management teams and parents  
in learner achievement**

by

**Masha Ben Maphoke**

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**MASTERS OF EDUCATION LEADERSHIP**

Department of Education Management, Law, and Policy Studies

Faculty of Education

University of Pretoria

**Supervisor:**

Dr Keshni Bipath

**PRETORIA**

April 2017

## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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I, Masha Ben Maphoke, student number 29559015 hereby declare that this dissertation, **“The role of school management teams and parents in learner achievement”** is submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Masters of Education Management at the University of Pretoria, is my own original work and has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher learning. All sources used in this research report are indicated and acknowledged with a comprehensive list of citations.

Signature..... date.....

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I would like to thank God the Almighty for assisting, guiding, and filling me with His passion and wisdom in compiling this research document.

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## ABSTRACT

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Research supports that many studies conducted across the country and internationally, acknowledge the positive effects of parental interest in learner academic achievement. The research findings reveals that no study about the role of SMTs and parents in enhancing learner academic achievement has been conducted in rural secondary schools of Sekhukhune Limpopo Province. Further inquiry discovered that studies conducted nationally and internationally focused only on parent participation in elementary schools to improve reading, composition, and cognitive powers of primary school children. Epstein (2011) posits that parental involvement diminishes as the child moves on to secondary school level. The intent of this study through qualitative case-study research explored and analysed the role SMTs and parents play in Sekhukhune District Limpopo Province in enhancing learners' academic achievement. Five parents of Grade 8-12 learners and 3 SMT members participated from each of the six public secondary schools of Sekhukhune Limpopo province in the inquiry procedure. Principals regards parental engagement in education as interfering with school programmes. This work explored and examined how SMTs and parents collaborate and interact to improve learner academic achievement in rural public secondary schools of the Sekhukhune Limpopo Province. Knowledge of the concept parent involvement; encouraging positive parenting skills; enhancing communication with families; increasing volunteerism at school encouraging learning at home; increasing the number of parents in leadership and decision-making roles; improving community collaboration; capacitating parents and teachers with legislation and laws and dealing with barriers prohibiting effective involvement were some of the themes that evolved from the findings of this study. The implications point to the urgent need for proper training of the school management team for the efficient involvement of parents of children in rural areas, as this will enhance learner achievement. This research highlights the importance of collaboration between all stakeholders to establish a shared vision in order to improve learner academic achievement.

**Keywords:** School Management Teams; parent involvement; learner achievement; community involvement; learning barriers.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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SASA	South African Schools Act, 84 of 1994
PAM	Personnel Administrative Measures
QLTC	Quality Teaching And Learning Campaign
EEA	Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SSDP	Soshanguve School Development Project
SDP	School Development Project
DPOs	Division of Private Occupational schools
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
HODs	Head of Department
SGB	School Governing Body
ANA	Annual National Assessment
OVC	Orphans and vulnerable children
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
C2005	Curriculum 2005
CAPS	Curriculum, Assessment Policy Statement
NSC	National Senior Certificate
PTO	Parent Teacher organisation
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
HIV	Human Immune Deficiency Virus

LRA	Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1995
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Virus
SES	SES- Socioeconomic Status
SFP	School Family Partnership
SMT	School Management Team
LAA	Learner Academic Achievement
PI	Parent involvement
SIAS	Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
NSSIAS	National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support
DBE	Department of Basic Education
SDP	School Development Project
DPOs	Division of Private Occupational schools
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
HODs	Head of Department
GFRLD	Guidelines For Responding to Learner Diversity In The Classroom
PGIE	Policy Guidelines on Inclusive in Education
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
C2005	Curriculum 2005
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
GFSI	Guidelines for full-service inclusion
PIQE	Parent Institute for Quality Education

## LIST OF WORDS USED

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Parent	Refers to, biological or adoptive or legal guardian of a learner. Parents in this study refer to an adult participant in the research process responsible for the care and upbringing of the child to ensure his/her wellbeing
Learner	In terms of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 “learner” means any person receiving education or obliged to receive education in an educational institution whether public, independent, or private
Secondary school	Refers to a school or educational institution from Grade 8-12 offering tuition to adolescent learners after completing primary/elementary School education
Limpopo Province	One of the nine provinces occupying most of the Northern part of South Africa
Sekhukhune District	One of the five districts that form Limpopo Province located in the Greater Sekhukhune Municipality and occupying the south-eastern most part of Limpopo Province
Progressed	Refers to the promotion of learner from one grade to another after repeating a grade for several times



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FREELANCE WRITER, PROOF READER AND EDITOR  
WEB RESEARCHER AND RESEARCH STRATEGIST  
ENGLISH SPECIALIST  
ESTABLISHED 1987

Tel. and Fax +27 11 465 4038  
Cell 072 287 9859  
Email [edit@iafrica.com](mailto:edit@iafrica.com)  
9 April 2017

P O Box 940  
LONEHILL 2062  
South Africa

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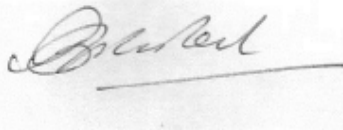
**MASHA BEN MAPHOKE**

**Department of Education Management Law and Policy Studies/University of Pretoria  
And DR. KESHNI BIPATH**

**Department of Education Management Law and Policy Studies/University of Pretoria**

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The role of school management teams and parents in learner achievement

**INVESTIGATORS**

Mr Ben Maphoke Masha

**DEPARTMENT**

Educational Studies Science, Mathematics and Technology Education

**APPROVAL TO COMMENCE STUDY**

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## CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

“Research indicates that when the number of parents and community members involve in the education of the children, learner academic achievement can be increased” (Gordon & Louis, 2009:3). When parents are systematically involved in most of the school activities related to learners’ work, learners pass rate will increase. SMTs, parents, and the community need to act together to enhance learner academic performance. Many studies conducted nationally and internationally support the view that engagement of parents in schools influences learner performance. “There is continued evidence to support the fact that when parents bridge the gap between home and school, children experience the benefits in their psychological functioning as well as achievement” (Brown & Iyengar, 2008:22). Parents are the first teachers and nurturers of the children’s learning at home. The skills they use at home, to teach children from childhood to learn some basics of life such as speaking and walking may be crucial even at school to boost learner academic achievement. Modisaotsile (2012:3) “perceives parents as being important in protecting and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the children in school, meanwhile many of them do not realise the importance of being involved in their children’s education to influence academic achievement.” She asserts that teachers should regard parents as the greatest resource in the classroom situation to be utilized to leverage academic performance. Parents should help and be interested in their children’s formal learning process to help out with activities such as: home-based tasks, projects, extra-curricular activities, outreach activities and relationships to increase performance of the children.

Parents should realise the fact that the role they are required to play at school as very important as the role they do play at home to teach their children some basic life skills. “The process of learning starts at home through interaction between school and family” (Rafiq, Fatima, Sohail, Saleem & Khan, 2013). “Irrespective of school phase, research suggests that if we want to improve the life chances of all children, then parents and schools must work in partnership and be involved at every stage of a child’s school experience” (Campbell, 2011:6). Research indicates that many parents are mainly engaged in learner education at primary school level rather at secondary school. “The more involved the parents are in the process of imparting education to their children, the more the children might excel in their academic careers and become the productive and responsible members of society” (Rafiq et al., 2013). “Parental

involvement in the learner academic achievement should not be a solution to many challenges facing school today, but as a way of enhancing learner achievement” (Epstein, 2011).

“School leaders and parents must form trusting relationships to support children in attending the school and behaving in an appropriate way that is conducive to learning; and enhancing opportunities for themselves and their peers” (Campbell, 2011:6). The SMT must mobilise teachers, parents and the community to work together. Gordon and Louis (2009:6) state, “When greater communication between teachers and parents are increased and fostered, it is necessary to create and sustain a democratic community as well as to support school improvement efforts.” The parental role in the education of the children does not only benefit the promotion of their own children’s achievements, but it also leads to more broad development in school improvement and democratization of school governance. The SMT is a key player in the development of home, school, and community partnerships. The commitment of staff members to home school and community partnership is very important. Kochanek, Wan, Wraight, Nylén, and Rodriguez (2011:3) posit, “Schools that develop meaningful partnerships with parents and give them voices in decision-making on school improvement have been linked to higher student achievement.”

## **1.2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

The interactions of parents with schools to increase learner academic achievement in the United State of America is documented in policies such as the elementary and secondary Education act and the NCLB Act of 2001 (Kochanek et al., 2011:1). Their study evaluated the extent of implementation of sections 1116 and 1118 of the NCLB Act about parental involvement in US schools. These sections of the act emphasise extended learning activities which are viewed as structured opportunities outside the regular schooling time. “The activities are often provided by community agencies, youth organisations, and faith-based organizations in addition to schools” (Kochanek et al., 2011:3). However, these activities are offered to children before school hours, after school hours, during the summer holidays, and during any extension of the school year. “The No Child Left Behind Act requires that states set standards and targets for schools in progressing toward 100 percent student proficiency in reading and math measured by standardised test scores” (Kochanek et al., 2011:2). Each school receives funds to facilitate programmes in parental involvement and schools are compelled to submit the parental involvement plan to the Education Department for approval. Kochanek et al., (2011) posits that: “schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years are required

to develop or revise school improvement plans aimed at boosting student achievement.” “In terms of NCLB sections 1116 and 1118, parent involvement activities in children’s education included a variety of behaviours and practices, such as parent aspirations for their child’s academic achievement, parent participation in school activities and parent communication with teachers about their child's progress” (Kochanek et al., 2011).

Findings from a study conducted by Azaiza, Schaedel, and Hertz-Lazarowitz (2007) in a rural Arab villages of Israel revealed that programmes such as School Family Partnership (SFP) were implemented, to empower the mothers to augment their children's literacy success at home. The (SFP) programme aimed to give all children the skills and tools to become competent readers and effective writers so that every child can succeed. Findings from this study unleashed that many parents who were involved in the programme were very happy and satisfied. Parents indicated their support in activities such as reading to the child, help with writing (grammar), assistance with dictations, and math exercises. The findings revealed that when schools and mothers intentionally link with each other to improve learning and developmental outcomes for children, the families and communities gain from the process. The mothers' interactions with the schools helped the schools to be better adapted to the children and parents' needs. It was established that the (SFP) programmes elevated the achievements of students.

In a study conducted by Rafiq et al., (2013:209) in Pakistan, it was established that “the frequency of parents’ consultation with teachers was considered to be a very important element in their children’s academic activities.” The findings of the study revealed that an overwhelming majority of 75.3% of parent’s respondents did consult with teachers about their children’s academic performance as compared to 24.7% of them who were consulted the schools inquiring about their children’s academic activities. This study also established that in the case of doing homework, the parents advised their children to complete their homework promptly. The majority of 86.7% of the parents used to advise their children to complete their assignments, whereas only 13.3% of them did not bother to instruct their children to do homework or assigned given by their teachers. A total of 78.7% of parents were found to be interested in the arrangement of tuition for their children, whereas 21.3% of them did not take any interest in arranging tuition for additional coaching of their children.

Rafiq et al., (2013:218) revealed that, “99.3% of parents monitored the regular attendance of the children in schools.” The findings of the study discovered that 62.7% parents remained in

contacts with teachers of their children for checking the attendance of their children, whereas 37.3% of them did not however contact teachers to inquire about the attendance of their children in class. Rafiq et al., (2013:218) argued that “when someone or especially parents encourage their children on their any good performance in any field or in excellent academic performance then it might helpful in achieving goals.” The assumption of the researchers in the study was that, the more the parent become engaged in learners’ academic activities, the higher the level of academic achievement of children.

In South Africa, laws such as South African Schools Act, act 84 of 1996 gives parents a new platform to take part and allow them to have legal rights to voice their opinions and be involved in making decisions at schools regarding the education of their children. Okeke (2014:2) cites, “although legislation appears to play both an empowering and a motivational role in parents’ involvement in their children’s schooling there still seems to be a lack of actual involvement of parents in many of the school activities of their children.” Gardiner (2008:12) contends that, “current governance policies do not take note of existing organisations in communities and therefore do not draw on their expertise.”

In terms of SASA (16), the principal is responsible for the professional management meanwhile the school governing body is responsible for governance. In terms of section 16A (c) of South Africa Schools Act, the principals must annually at the beginning of the year, have to prepare a plan to show how academic performance at the school will be improved. The plan is subject for discussion with the school governing body and needs be approved by the Head of Department (HOD). SASA asserts, “The principal must therefore, on 30 June report to the Head of Department about the progress made with regard to the improvement of the performance of the learners.” PAM posits that, “The principal must encourage learners to participate in community activities in connection with educational matters and community building.” PAM further argues that “the principal, deputy, and heads must meet with parents to discuss the conduct and progress of their children.”

South African policies do not provide explicit guidelines on how schools should involve parents in learners’ education to enhance academic achievement. Education legislation in “South Africa makes no provision for a committee or council at the local level to oversee the welfare and quality of education in an entire village or community, in which there is usually more than one school” (Gardiner, 2008:12). The rhetoric about parental involvement is on the governance and management of resources rather on curriculum related activities. South African

policies need to provide an environment in schools suitable for good quality education provisioning by encouraging parents to assist teachers in schools in improving learner academic performance. Parents according to the provisions of SASA section 16, White paper 2, White Paper 1 and the Guidelines for Full Service Inclusion (RSA) have “co-responsibility in the management of the schools.”

The implications of these policies state that schools and parents should work together for the socialization of the child to improve academic performance. The Guidelines for Full Service Inclusion (GFSI) contend, “Positive behaviour support procedure must be implemented for all learners.” The implication is that parents should be viewed as partners and active participants in the positive behaviour support procedure and development of the academic needs of the child. However, in most South African rural schools parents seems not to be aware of the significant role they have to play in influencing the education of their children. “Learning outcomes in the National Curriculum, prescribe what all learners should know and be able to do, and the assessment standards for each grade describe the level, depth, and breadth of what should be learned in each learning area.” “Children should be enabled to achieve the learning outcomes through engagement with what the educators and parents believe children ought to learn and explore at each grade level” (Gardiner, 2008: 17-18). Van Wyk (2007:132) revealed that, “Parents know very little of curriculum matters and were reluctant to become involved.”

“Research to date suggests that many parents feel free to be involved in majority in primary schools education of the children than in secondary schools. However parental support of learning in the home has been seen to have a significant effect on children of all ages from preschool to secondary school level” (Campbell, 2011:5). Rafiq et al., (2013:210) state, “There is little research available on the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement of secondary school students.” According to Rafiq et al., (2013:210) “the majority of the research in this area has been conducted solely with elementary school students.” The focus of the study is on how the SMTs involve parents in improving learners’ academic achievement in rural secondary schools of Sekhukhune Limpopo Province. The South African NSC examination school performance report of 2014 revealed that Grade 12 secondary school learners in Sekhukhune Limpopo fail final national examinations. Despite the good performance produced by some few schools, the majority of the secondary schools still performs below 60%.

Data obtained from the South African NSC school performance report of 2014, the national benchmark for school performance in 2014 was 75.8 % (SA News, 2014). In Limpopo, the school performance target for 2014 was 80 % (Nwedamutswu, 2014:11). Limpopo is made up of five districts. The districts in terms of the merits of the 2014 NSC examination results are: Vhembe with 81.1%; Mopani with 74.3%; Capricorn with 71.6%; Waterberg with 70.5%; and Sekhukhune with 63.9%. According to given statistics, the Sekhukhune District is the worst performer among the five districts of Limpopo Province. The Limpopo Province is still advocating for an 80% benchmark for the 2015 NSC examination results. The question is will Sekhukhune ever achieve this performance within the declining support from parents? Jensen (2009) cited “students raised in poverty are especially subject to stresses that undermines school behaviour and performance.”

Data obtained from the 2015 Grade 8 to 12 midyear examinations results for Ngwaabe Circuits Sekhukhune District, reveal that some schools are still falling within the range of 11, 1% and 48, 5% (Ngwaabe circuit, 2015). More funds poured into public rural secondary schools by the state to eliminate inequality, illiteracy and to ensure equity in education provisioning do not correlate with learner performance. According to the NSC examination, school performance reports, poor performance has become a recurring trend in some schools over a period of three years or more. It is based on this recurring trend of poor performance that this study is essential. This study needs to take an in-depth look on the following aspect; being ‘the role the school management teams plays in engaging parents in learner education and its influence on academic achievement.’ The literature search conducted on this study explores many aspects and factors that may have a profound influence on the level of parental involvement and academic achievement of children in secondary school.

### **1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

South African legislation allows parents to participate in the education of their children to influence academic achievement, but most parents are not interested in utilising such opportunity. Despite the professed intentions of policymakers to boost parental involvement, it is clear that not all parents are able or willing to be involved (Park & Holloway, 2013). School Management Teams in rural secondary schools do not involve parents in learner academic achievement. Msila (2012:304) asserts that, “School principals in South Africa are faced with a number of challenges and this is even more discouraging for rural school principals.” Van Roekel (2008:2) reveals that “some schools involve parents only when there is a problem with



their child's behaviour or performance." "Teachers, administrators, the public and even parents of school-age children view the lack of parental involvement, as the single biggest problem facing our nation's schools" (Gary & Witherspoon, 2011). According to Jensen (2009), "in many poor households, parental education is substandard, time is short, and warm emotions are at a premium, all factors that put the atonement process at risk." The improvement in learner academic achievement in this context depends largely on effective contact between parents, the SMT, and staff to support children in schools.

Many studies conducted on parental involvement and the enhancement of learner achievement, say little or nothing about the role SMTs must play in facilitating parental involvement in rural schools. It appears that in Sekhukhune school management team does not know or have proper structures to facilitate parental involvement. Preston (2013:419) state that rural schools also face challenges when promoting community involvement. Parental involvement in a rural context is associated with the governance of schools only. Msila (2012:308) stated that "most of the time parents believed that educators are better qualified to run the schools alone." The higher failure rate of secondary school learners in the Sekhukhune Limpopo Province impacts negatively on government budget spent on education and this signifies a loss of public funds. The failure rate of learners signifies the fact that schools in Sekhukhune experience challenges concerning the engagement of parents to influence academic achievement of the children's education. School management teams do not involve parents in learner education in Sekhukhune; this may be due to poor leadership practice or a lack of skills on how to promote parent involvement programmes. The crux of the study is on how the School Management Team enhances learner academic performance through parental involvement.

#### **1.4. RATIONALE**

This study emanated from my personal experiences as a teacher liaison officer in one of the secondary schools in Sekhukhune, Limpopo Province. I have observed that many parents do not want to take part in school activities related to their children's education to enhance their academic performance. Rural parents rarely go to schools to find out about; attendance, conduct, performance and reports of their children. Research reveals that parental involvement in learner academic achievement diminishes when the child reaches secondary education level. Findings from a study by Msila (2012:306) reveal that "some principal eager to involve parents reported difficulties encountered when they run schools without parents." Little or no research has ever been conducted on the role played by school management teams in promoting parental

involvement in the learner academic achievement of secondary school children. Rafiq et al., (2013:210) state that, “There is little research available on the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement of secondary school students.” “A majority of the research in this area has been conducted solely with elementary school students.” A similar study conducted in South Africa by Bojuwoye and Narain (2008) examining the relationship between parent involvement and learner academic achievement says nothing about how school management teams should involve parents in enhancing academic achievement. Research acknowledges that parental involvement should be consistent with learner development from primary to secondary school, but no study has been conducted on the role of SMTs in involving parents to enhance learner achievement in Sekhukhune, Limpopo. This study also seeks to address gaps in the literature by identifying the role played by SMTs in promoting collaboration and interaction with parents in the education of the children to enhance academic performance in rural Secondary Schools of Sekhukhune Limpopo Province.

### **1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Mbokodi and Singh (2011: 39) contend that “A partnership between parents and schools is an instrument to improve and develop the schools as parents involve themselves in the schools’ activities in order to benefit their children’s education.” South African policies encourage partnerships between parents and schools in the education of children. This implies that if parents are not meaningfully engaged in the education activities of the learners to enhance academic achievement, effective quality teaching and learning will not take place in schools. “Parental involvement in learner’s academic achievement may contribute in mitigating the mass level failure of students in examinations that may indirectly cause wastage of parents’ own resources as well as the public expenditures for imparting formal education in schools” (Rafiq et al., 2013). Rafiq et al., (2013:211) further emphasise that, “Parental involvement in academic activities of their children may save not only personal and public spending but also it would contribute to improving the quality of education of children at the individual and national level.”

The findings of this study will be beneficial to the Department of Education and SMTs as managers. Schools can utilise the results of the study to establish partnership programmes with parents and communities in relation to parental involvement activities, decisions, and homework. “These programmes can be used in bridging the gap between homes and schools while improving student’s academic achievement” (Rafiq et al., 2013:211). This study also

contributes to the existing body of literature and useful to policy. Information obtained by completing this study will be beneficial to parents, students, and educators in rural secondary schools to learn how they can collaborate to improve learner academic achievement. This study seeks to help to education managers and SMTs in schools to understand the significant influence of engaging parents in children's learning activities as a solution to enhance learner academic achievement.

## **1.6. RESEARCH AIM AND PURPOSE STATEMENT**

The aim of this study is to explore and examine the roles played by SMTs in involving parents in rural secondary schools of Sekhukhune in the activities of the learners to enhance academic achievement. "If parents are made aware of how their involvement in learning activities with their children affects their child's learning ability and future, they may be more actively participating in their child's education" (Rafiq et al., 2013:211). This study aims to close the gap in the literature since few studies seems to have been conducted on the role of the School Management Teams and parents in enhancing learner achievement in rural secondary schools. The researcher needs to explore and uncover the perceptions and attitudes of SMTs and parents in rural secondary schools in relation to partnerships between SMTs and parents in enhancing learner academic performance.

## **1.7. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study seeks to answer the research questions listed below.

### **1.7.1. Main research question**

- What is the role of the SMTs and parents in enhancing the academic achievement of rural secondary school children?

### **1.7.2. Subsidiary questions**

- How can the SMT improve parental involvement in enhancing learner achievement?
- What are the barriers encountered with parent involvement in learner academic achievement?

## 1.8. PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

“Parent involvement is one factor that has been consistently related to a child’s increased academic performance” (Topor, Keane, Shelton, & Calkins, 2010:186). “When schools, parents, families, and communities work together to support learning, students tend to earn higher grades, attend school more regularly, stay in school longer, and enrol in higher-level programmes” (Gary & Witherspoon, 2011:1). The implication is that, the more the SMTs engage parents in the education activities of the children, the more the children become disciplined. Rapp and Duncan (2011:2) claim, “Parental involvement is an important indicator of students' success in school.” Rapp and Duncan (2011:12) assert, “As the relationship between parents and school becomes more connected, student achievement increases.” Parent involvement refers to “the teacher’s perception of the positive attitude parents have toward their child’s education, teacher, and school” (Topor et al., 2010: 187).

Parents need to understand all aspects of involvement, which are available within their child’s school in order to become fully engaged. “Opportunities should be given to the parents for orientation or training sessions to acquaint them with the most effective strategies for ensuring home–school relations” (Okeke, 2014:7). Lau, Li and Rao (2011:97) contend that “Parental involvement is associated with a wide range of positive child outcomes in primary and high schools, such as academic skills, positive attitudes, and social competence.” Findings from Bull, Brooking and Campbell (2008:7) reveal that “many schools had strategies in place to help parents support their children’s learning at home.” These strategies as indicated by Bull, Brooking and Campbell (2008:7) included “Study hints in the school newsletter, the provision of specific questions for parents to ask children about their learning, interactive homework requiring input from the family, and sharing learning goals with families so they can reinforce their children’s out-of-school learning”

Many studies conducted nationally and internationally on parental involvement in learner academic achievement focus on primary school children rather than on secondary schools. There is little or no evidence of the role that the school management teams play in influencing parents to participate in their children’s education. According to Msila (2012:304), “There is usually a show of public dissatisfaction toward schools: that they are not delivering what they should be delivering.” “Many underperforming principals and other school managers frequently report work overload” (Msila, 2012:304). Van Velsor and Oroszco (2007:19) suggest that, “School Management Teams in promoting parental involvement must design a

programme and engage school personnel in home visits.” “Schools can help parents feel empowered and capable of supporting children’s learning by providing them with general knowledge about the learning process and specific skills and strategies they can use to promote children’s overall growth in learning” (Gary & Witherspoon, 2011).

Bull et al., (2008:2) established that, “Successful home-school partnerships display many of the following features: firstly, relationships in successful home-school partnerships are collaborative and mutually respectful. Secondly, successful partnerships are multi-dimensional and responsive to community needs. Thirdly, successful home-school partnerships are planned for and embedded within whole school development plans, well-resourced and regularly reviewed. Fourthly, successful partnerships are goal oriented and focused on learning; Effective parental engagement happens largely at home. Fifthly, there is timely two-way communication between school and parents in successful partnerships.” According to Bull et al., (2008:2), “Building successful home–school partnerships take time and commitment.” Bull et al., (2008:2) assert that, “Schools, teachers, parents, and sometimes children take it that the principal is a key player in the establishment of successful partnerships.” Bull et al., (2008:2) also revealed that, “Technologies such as mobile phones, the internet, and DVDs are being used creatively to strengthen links between school and home.”

Lau et al., (2011:95) established that, “Chinese parents had a higher level of home-based involvement than school-based involvement during the early years.” They state that “parent involvement is highly correlated with overall readiness for school. The views suggest that when parents help learners with school activities at schools and homes, learners will become more exposed to learning and motivated to learn. Lau et al., (2011:95) state, “Parent Instruction, Language and cognitive activities and homework involvement were the significant predictors of overall readiness for school, whereas home-based involvement predicted more variance of readiness for school than did school-based involvement.” Lau et al., (2011:95) established that, “Only language, cognitive activities, and home-school conferencing were associated with children’s Chinese literacy and cognitive readiness.” Lau et al., (2011:95) revealed that, “Chinese parents are less likely to be involved in the school than at home because both principals and teachers are very reluctant to get parents involved in the school management,” Their findings show that, “Chinese teachers do not believe that parents should be involved in the decision-making process, but they do wish to inform and consult parents about students’ learning in order for them to assist learning at home.”

Demographic factors also negatively influence parental involvement in rural areas. Wilder (2014:378) state, “The relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement is impacted by various factors.” According to Wilder (2014:378), “Some of the most prominent, and thus most frequently investigated factors, include ethnicity, prior achievement, and socioeconomic status.” Many children particularly female learners become a parent before time. Since they are still children, they cannot be responsible parents for their children. Sometimes they have to leave school early to raise their children and they will never want to go back to the same school to participate as parents. Burzichelli, Mackey and Bausmith (2011:4) report, “Students from some racial/ethnic groups and students from low-income households are at an increased risk of not completing high school.”

A study by Deletions and Meny-Gibert (2009:47) finds that, “in South Africa, most learners do not have access to good quality education and the primary reason for dropout in the post-compulsory phase of schooling is the poor quality of education received by learners.” They further argue that absolute poverty may prolong a child’s journey through school because of repetition. Children living in absolute poverty have the odds stacked against them and may be more vulnerable to failure”. “The progressive increase in the number of HIV infections and mortality rates ascribed to unemployment and poor socio-economic background contributed to child-headed families and reliance on the external support that bears negative effects on learner academic performance” (Pratt, 2012). Jensen (2009) cites that, “Socio-economic status correlates with good parenting, which research has found, improves academic achievement.” Stats SA (2011) revealed “an alarming rate of illiteracy at 92, 3% whereby poor households had a head that had not attained matric.”

Research acknowledges that the education level of parents has a direct impact on learner achievement. Parents with poor educational background will be less involved in school because they feel ashamed to interact with teachers whom they perceive as being educated. Jensen (2009) contends that, "Students raised in poverty are especially subject to stressors that undermine school behaviour and performance.” According to Jensen (2009), “In many poor households, parental education is substandard, time is short, and warm emotions are at premium-all factors that put the attunement process at risk.” When SMTs involve parents in learner academic achievement they should not be prejudiced against parents with the poor socio-economic background. “Evidence shows that many parents want to become involved but are not encouraged or do not have the open communication or support from the school to do so” (DePlanty et al., 2007:362). Schools, families and the communities have equal

responsibilities for the socialisation and development of the children in educational institutions. “These common goals for children are achieved most effectively when teachers and parents work together” (Lemmer, 2007:219).

What the literature review suggests is that parents should be motivated to participate in school activities irrespective of the SES. SMTs should play their role in involving parents in schools to leverage the quality of teaching and learning. Parents must be observed as partners in enhancing learner academic achievement. Without parents, schools cannot realise maximum learner achievement. “Adolescents tend to be affected positively when a relationship is sustained between their home and school environments. Involvement at home, especially parents discussing school activities and helping children plan their programmes, has the strongest impact on academic achievement” (DePlanty et al, 2007:361). SMTs must create an environment in which parents feel welcomed to take part in supporting schools to enhance learner academic achievement in schools. When parents are actively involved in schools, the percentages of learner dropout will decline. “Schools should provide opportunities for children’s positive interactions with significant adults and other adolescents to enhance their home experiences and to support their continued development and related learning” (DePlanty et al., 2007:361).

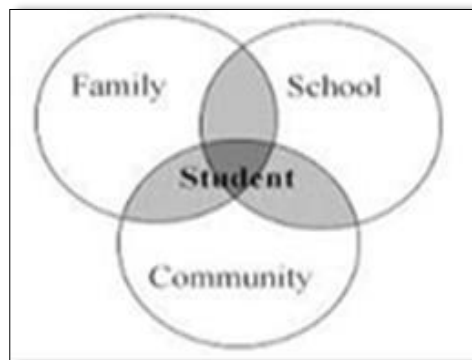
## **1.9. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **1.9.1. Epstein’s theory of overlapping spheres of influences**

This study will adopt Epstein’s (2011:48) model of school, family and community partnership called the overlapping sphere of influence. Epstein (2011: 48) postulates that “The theory of overlapping spheres and a framework of six types of involvement promote the view that school, family and community partnerships should operate as an organised programme of structures, processes, and collaborative activities to help students succeed in every school, not as a set of fragmented activities for parents.” Epstein (2011:48) states that “Partnerships can improve school programs and school climate provide family services and support, increase parent skills and leadership. The model consists of an **external** and **internal** structure.”

Epstein (2011) contends, “The **external model** recognizes three contexts in which students learn and grow the; family, the school, and the community.” “The model interprets that there are three practices that the school, family and community conduct separately and some that they conduct jointly to influence children’s learning and development.” According to Epstein (2011), the **internal model** interprets that, “interpersonal relations and patterns of influence

occur between individuals at home, at school, and in the community.” She emphasise that, “Social relationships occur at institutional level (e.g., when a school invites all families to an event or sends the same communications to all families) and at an individual level (e.g., when a parent and a teacher meet in conference or talk by phone).” According to Epstein (2011), “The model of school, family and community partnerships locate the student at the centre.” Epstein (2011) assumed that, “If children feel cared for and are encouraged to work hard in the role of student, they are more likely to do their best to learn to read, write, calculate, and learn other skills and talents and to remain in school.”



**Figure 1.1:** Epstein’s (2011: 32) Model of overlapping spheres of influences

### **1.9.2. How does Epstein’s theory of overlapping spheres of influences fit into my research project?**

This research project is about the role of the SMTs and parents in rural secondary schools of Sekhukhune Limpopo Province in increasing learner academic performance. Epstein’s (2011) model of the overlapping sphere of influences and the framework of six types of parental involvement is suitable to this study because it recognises three contexts in which learning should take place. Epstein’s model is relevant to the context in which the study took place because rural secondary schools of Sekhukhune district are identified as performing poorly in terms of grade 12 results. The community and the parents seems not to be interested in the education of the children whereby schools operates as isolated organisations. The lack of involvement of parents and the community in school and learner academic activities generate a feeling of lack of interest and commitment of learners to their studies. Epstein’s (2011) model integrate “three areas in which she assumes that if they work together they will contribute to the total upbringing of a child as complete human through the home, school and community education.” In order to increase the performance of the learners in Sekhukhune district, interaction between the school, community and parents is very important. Children will benefit



and schools will emerge as a learning organisations. Epstein (2011) assumes that, “Partners recognise their shared interests and responsibilities for children, and they work together to create better programmes and opportunities for students.”

According to Epstein (2011) “in a partnership, teachers and administrators create more family-like schools.” Epstein contends that, “A family-like school recognizes each child’s individuality and makes each child feel special and included in the learning process.” Epstein suggests that, “Family-like schools welcome all families, not just those that are easy to reach. In a partnership, parents create more school-like families.” She says that, “A school-like family recognizes that each child is unique and is also a student and deserves to learn.” Epstein (2011) contends, “Families reinforce the importance of school, homework, and activities that build student skills and feelings of success.” She asserts, “Communities, including groups of parents working together, create school-like opportunities, events, and programmes that reinforce, recognise, and reward students for good progress, creativity, contributions, and excellence.” “Communities also create family like settings, services, and events to enable families to better support their children.” Epstein (2011) states that, “Community minded families and students help their neighbourhoods and other families. She contend that, frequent interactions among schools, families, and communities, more students are more likely to receive common messages from various people about the importance of school, of working hard, of thinking creatively, of helping each other, and of staying in school.”

Epstein’s (2011) model of overlapping spheres of influences invokes memories that schools should be viewed as social organisations where diversity in the management, education, and development of the child between homes, schools, and community should collaborate. Schools are centres where the culture of the communities they serve can be revealed to build learners to conform to the cultural practices of those communities toward responsible adulthood. By integrating the three areas in this model and the six types of involvement, which SMTs should adopt through meaningful involvement of parents, schools can become productive. Epstein (2011) argue that, “Educators and schools that adhere to six types of the comprehensive partnership will understand families better.” The research findings found out that many parents in rural communities refrain from becoming involved in schools because of low SES status and poor educational background.

Through Epstein’s model of overlapping spheres of influences, SMTs in schools when working together with parents, will be able to understand the community and type of parents with whom

they interacts. Epstein's model of overlapping spheres will enable SMTs to create a climate in which parents feel welcomed and adapted. The basic assumption of the study is on the role of the school management teams and parents in improving learner academic performance in rural secondary schools of Sekhukhune Limpopo Province. Improved learner academic performance depends largely on the support received from parents and community members. Epstein (2011) state, "Partnerships can improve school programmes and school climate, provide family services and support, increase parents' skills and leadership, connect families with others in the school and in the community and help teachers with their work." "When parents are motivated and know what is expected of them to help their learners with school work at home, many learners will excel academically." The schools will reflect a high-level of interaction and communication with parents. Capacity building programmes started by SMTs as South Africa Schools Act has stated, will benefit parents by developing leadership skills, decision-making skills, confidence. Parents will learn good parenting skills and they will be able to interact with other parents.

### **1.9.3. Conclusion**

The assumption underlying Epstein's model of the overlapping sphere of influences is that, when SMTs, parents and communities work together the child becomes devoted to learning. Learners will view parents as similar to teachers. They will face encounter learning, they will remain at school, and they will be able to take told decisions about their lives. This suggests that schools with a higher parent and community interactions experience fewer challenges with problematic learner behaviour. The principals are the school's chief executives, therefore; they have to orchestrate and promoted parental involvement. South African education policies and acts are based on Epstein's model of overlapping spheres of influences. This encourages collaborative efforts and partnerships between school, community, and family to benefit the child. PAM requires SMTs to interact and collaborate with parents and communities about learner performance and progress and this makes Epstein's model fit snugly with my study of the role of the SMTs and parents in learner academic achievement. Epstein's assert that "Schools and communities talk about programmes and services that are family friendly."

## **1.10. RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN**

### **1.10.1. Research paradigm**

Interpretivism holds the view that reality is multi-perspectival and the way humans create meaning is by offering accounts of what they do, and this, in turn, is affected by context (Briggs, 2011:32). The reason for using this method, since the study is qualitative in nature, it allowed me as a researcher to interact with participants in the research process to assess and explore how participants construct meaning out of the context. The link between the topic under study and the paradigm is that participants may have different meaning or understanding of partnership in improving learner academic achievement.

### **1.10.2. Research method**

Methodology is the theory of the process by which researchers gain knowledge in a research context and why (Briggs, 2011:27). This study assumed qualitative research because it took place in a naturalistic approach to study the context in a real world setting and in general, whereby the research is carried out in real life situation (Maree, 2011: 78).” A case in this study was on the investigation of the SMTs and parents of rural public secondary schools of Sekhukhune Limpopo Province to establish how they interact to increase learner achievement. A case study research is a systematic inquiry into an event or set of related events, which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest” (Maree, 2011:75). “The strength of using case study research method is its use of multiple sources and technique in the data collection process” (Maree, 2011). The link with the topic is that qualitative case study research takes place in a natural world. In this study I used qualitative case study research method to enable myself to interact with participants through questions to uncover how they attach meaning and understanding of parent involvement in learner academic achievement. This afforded me with the opportunity to gain a deeper insight and understanding of the dynamics of the contexts, to see how participants create beneficial relationships through collaboration and interaction to increase learner achievement.

### **1.10.3. Sampling**

“Sampling refers to a process of selecting a portion of the population for study” (Maree, 2011:79). The sampling strategy in this study will assume the purposive sampling technique. The rationale for adopting purposive sampling approach is that, a specific group of participants will be targeted as the researcher assumes that these people are the key holder of the

information required to answer the research question. From a population of 342 (N) secondary schools in Sekhukhune district Limpopo, six (n) public secondary schools will be purposively sampled. The purposive sampling strategy of the six public secondary schools will be based on their history of performance for past six years in terms of the school performance reports. The rationale for the sampling of public secondary schools in this study is based on the assumption that in South African education system, learner performance is evaluated in terms of grade 12 results. SMT members including HODs, deputy principals, principals and parents of Grade 8-12 learners will also be purposively sampled. The rationale for purposive sampling of this group of SMT members is based on the assumption that SMTs (HODs, deputy principals and principals) are part of the management of the schools therefore they may possess information that may help in answering the research questions. Maree (2011) maintains that “Sampling decisions are made for the explicit purpose of obtaining the richest possible source of information to answer the research question.” The sampling choice of participants will assume identification of the following category of participants based on their demographics three (3n) SMT members and five (5n) parents of Grade 8-12 learners from each school. The link between purposive sampling method and the topic is that I wanted to obtain rich data regarding how the SMTs and parents in schools interact and collaborate to enhance learner academic achievement.

#### **1.10.4. Data collection strategies**

##### **1.10.4.1. Focus group interview**

“Focus group research is defined as a method of collecting data, in a safe environment, from more than one individual at a time, regarding a specified area of interrogation” (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2010:711). “With regard to focus groups, we identify types of data that can be collected in addition to the actual statements made by the participants” (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2010:711). The rationale for choosing focus group in this study is that, the focus group is based on the assumption that “group interactions will be productive in broadening the scope of responses by activating forgotten experiences, and realizing inhibitions that may discourage participants from disclosing information” (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2010:711). Secondly, “Focus groups produce data rich in detail that is difficult to achieve with other research methods” (Maree, 2011:90). Onwuegbuzie, Leech, and Collins (2010) cite that, “The importance of using focus group in qualitative research: focus groups are economical; using focus groups might increase the number of participants in the study; the interaction among participants can be identified through focus groups; focus groups have high face validity.” Parents will be

identified as a focus group in each participating school. This group will respond to questions posed by the researcher. “All responses will be recorded and noted to help the researcher during data analysis stage” (Onwuegbuzie, Leech & Collins, 2010).

#### **1.10.4.2. Interviews**

Maree (2011:87) defines interviews “as a two-way communication in which the interviewer asks the participants questions to collect data and to learn about the beliefs, views, opinions and behaviour of the participants.” Onwuegbuzie et al., (2010) contends that, “Nonverbal communication also can be important for attaining a deeper shared meaning, in which both the interviewer and interviewee increase their awareness of the contextual nature of the voice.” Onwuegbuzie et al., (2010) cite that, “Nonverbal communication and speech combined often interact in a way that increases *Verstehen*, with nonverbal communication (e.g., facial expression, hand gesture) clarifying the meaning of words spoken, and words clarifying the meaning of nonverbal communication.”

Onwuegbuzie et al., (2010) identify, “Four basic modes of nonverbal communication: (a) proxemics (i.e., use of interpersonal space to communicate attitudes); (b) chronemic (i.e., use of pacing of speech and length of silence in conversation); (c) kinesic (i.e., body movements or postures); and (d) paralinguistic (i.e., all variations in volume, pitch, and quality of voice).” The interview process will be concentrated on five (5n) parent’s members of Grade 8-12 learners and three (3n) SMT from each school. “The rationale behind using interviews was to help the researcher to see the world through the eyes of the participants” (Maree, 2011:87). The participants will make their own inputs and comments on the research question and any information that will shed more light and information to answer the research question. Pre-determined open-ended questions will be used. Questions that arise from the research process that has direct influence and related to the information required to answer the research question will be accommodated. Data will be recorded through note taking and tape recording.

#### **1.10.4.3. Document analysis and participant observation**

Creswell (2014:191-192) states that, “The advantage of using document analysis includes; enabling the research to obtain the language of the participants.” Documents such as school year plan; attendance registers; minutes of meetings about learner performance and progress; records for collection of learner reports by parents; school policy and action plan on parent involvement as well as result analysis will be observed. The researcher will also resort to participant observation. Creswell (2014:190) defines observation “as a process that occur when

the researcher takes field notes on the behaviour and activities of the individuals at the research site.” The researcher will also observe meetings between parents and SMTs in each participating schools and the strategies that each school uses to reach parents of the learners in improving learner academic achievement.

#### **1.10.5. Data analysis**

Frederick (2013:6) states that, “Data analysis stage is the period when power seems to return to the interviewer; here the interviewer recasts the story into a new historical and socio-cultural context.” Maree (2011:100) postulates that, “when analyzing qualitative data the aim is to summarize what you have seen, observe, or heard in terms of a common word, phrases, themes, or patterns that help your understanding and interpretation of that which is emerging.” This study will assume thematic data analysis. “Thematic analysis can be defined as “a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set” (Braun & Clarke. 2012:57). This method, then, is a way of identifying what is common to the way a topic is talked or written about and of making sense of those commonalities” (Braun et al., 2012:57).

The rationale for using thematic analysis is that it “is suited to a wide range of research interests and theoretical perspectives, and is useful as a ‘basic’ method because it works with a wide range of research questions, from those about people’s experiences or understandings to those about the representation and construction of particular phenomena in particular contexts. It can be used to analyse different types of data, from secondary sources such as media to transcripts of focus groups or interviews. It works with large or small data-sets; and d) it can be applied to produce data-driven or theory-driven analyses” (Braun et al., 2013:4). Data collected through audio and video recording will be transcribed and converted into text, which finally will be developed into codes or themes. Recurring data range will be classified under one theme and the process of analysing data will resume during the interview process. This also used will use content analysis to triangulate the data driven through interviews, focus group interviews and observations.

#### **1.11 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The generalizability of this research project will be limited by the following factors. Firstly, I have drawn a small portion of samples of six schools in Sekhukhune Limpopo Province, where the research should be conducted on a small group of participants. Due to the size of the groups selected, I could not generalise the findings as a true representative and reflection of the whole

schools in the province. Parents represented in the study may have limited information with regard to legal frameworks and policies relating to the inclusion, participation in school activities. I was also aware that Limpopo is predominantly populated by the Pedi-speaking population; due to the illiteracy level of the parents in rural schools, interviews will be conducted in English and translated to Pedi if parents cannot understand English. Responses from parents will be translated verbatim to the English language.

### **1.12 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

I have established through rigorous online literature search of articles and dissertations that no research project on ‘the role of SMTs and parents in learner academic achievement’ has ever yet been carried out in rural secondary schools of Sekhukhune Limpopo Province. This study has focused and limited on rural secondary schools of Sekhukhune Limpopo Province only. The schools targeted to form part of this research project are geographically located in Greater Tubatse, Makhuduthamaga, and Fetakgomo municipalities of Greater Sekhukhune Limpopo Province. All of these schools serve rural communities.

### **1.13 ETHICAL AND POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Miller, Birch, Mauthner, and Jessop (2012) define ethics as “the morality of human conduct in relation to social research; it refers to the moral deliberation, choice, and accountability on the part of researcher throughout the research process.” This study was conducted after application for permission to conduct research was approved by the HOD of Limpopo department. Permission to proceed with the research project was also obtained from the circuit managers and principals of the participating schools. I issued letters of invitation for participation to the SMTs in schools and parents to invite them for voluntary participation in the research project. Consent forms were issued to the SMTs and parents to give their voluntary consent to participate in the study. The security and safety of the participants were guaranteed by ensuring the participants that their names would remain anonymous and would not be published in the final report. Participants were also advised that their participation in the research process was voluntary and they were free to withdraw at any time. Participants were also informed that the final product of the research project will be kept at the library of the University of Pretoria as archives. I assumed that, since the study was focused on the role of the School Management Teams in enhancing learner academic achievement, the research project has no link or intention to incite political issues.

## **1.14 DIVISION OF CHAPTERS**

The structure of the dissertation is set out below

### **1.14.1 Chapter 1: Background information**

This chapter will focus on and provide a synopsis of, the topic of the study on the introduction and background. Other aspects covered include the research topic, the statement of the problem, research questions, aims of the study, the literature review, research design and delimitation of the study, research methodology, (sampling procedures , research instruments) data collection strategy (observations, document analysis, focus group and interviews), as well as providing a definition of key terms.

### **1.14.2 Chapter 2: Literature review**

Relevant sources including books, articles, publications, Government Gazettes and policy documents, such as the South African School Act 84 of 1996, the Children’s Act, 38 of 2005 and the Constitution of South Africa, 1996 and other materials related the research topic will be chosen and reviewed in this chapter. This chapter will also provide the definitions of parental involvement from various researchers, and will explore the historical background to this issue and the aims of the research. “Irrespective of school phase, research suggests that if we want to improve the life chances of all children, then parents and schools must work in partnership and be involved at every stage of a child’s schooling experiences” (Campbell, 2011: 6).

### **1.14.3 Chapter 3: Research methodology**

In this chapter, the data collection process that was followed in this study by the researcher will be discussed. This study will use two research instruments namely: focus group and interviews. The chapter will deal with document analysis, observation of the interactions between parents and SMTs in each participating school.

### **1.14.4 Chapter 4: Presentation, interpretation and analysis**

This chapter serves to present, analyse and discuss the data generated during the field study, which includes qualitative participant observations, document analysis, and individual interviews with three SMT members including principals and HODs as well as focus group interviews with five parents of Grade 8-12 learners in each participating school. Findings of this research study will be discussed and presented in the form of tables and quotes. The chapter presents data collected from participants through tables containing information of the



participants, which the researcher obtained through interviews and focus group interview guide. Predetermined research questions were used to gather information from the participants.

#### **1.14.5 Chapter 5: Findings, recommendations and conclusion**

This chapter gives an overview of the data presented and interpreted in Chapter Four (4) followed by the discussion of the findings and recommendations. The concluding paragraph gives the synopsis of the topic of the study including the literature and recommendations for development and the suggestion for future research.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

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### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

Extensive literature searches conducted online consisted of various international and local journal publishing websites using the keywords: the role of school management teams, parent involvement, and learner academic achievement. To narrow the search, the focus was mainly on the research studies compiled on parental involvement and learners' academic achievement ranging from 2007 to 2014. Rapp and Duncan (2011:1) posit that: "parental involvement is an important indicator of students' success in school. When schools engage families in a manner connected to improving learning, students do make greater gains." "Students at all grade levels do better academic work and have more positive school attitudes, higher aspirations, and other positive behaviours if they have parents who are aware, knowledgeable, encouraging, and involved (Georgiou, 2007)." "To promote student growth and school success at every grade and age, well thought out parent community school partnerships, linked to school improvement goals, are needed in every community" (Gary and Witherspoon, 2011). "The issue of poor parental participation is not only peculiar to developing countries such as South Africa" (Mncube & Naicker, 2011:152). Findings from a study by Miksic (2015:7) in Head Starts revealed, "Performance standards require that parents be invited to become integrally involved in the development of the programmes in education." "Curriculum and approach to child development and education; be provided with opportunities to increase their child observation skills and to share assessments with staff that will help plan the learning experiences, and be encouraged to participate in staff-parent conferences and home visits to discuss their child's development and education."

Campbell (2011:11) stated, "When parents and schools interact closely together they share information among themselves and these information-sharing helps families to better understand the schools and schools to understand the families". This reiterates that SMTs in schools can learn from parents about every child's rearing information, which may include their health and mental abilities because parents know their children better. Parents can also provide SMTs with information from a family medical practitioner to enable the schools to know the type of children they are dealing with. "Parent involvement can broadly be defined as the ways in which parents support their children's education in words and in deeds to improve their academic excellence. Parents can be involved in the school setting or at home; their aspirations and expectations for their children also matter. Examples of these traditional

understandings of parent involvement include attending parent-teacher conferences, participating in the PTO/PTA, supervising field trips, volunteering in the classroom, supervising their children's homework, reading to their children, or discussing school and general academic aspirations with their children" (Miksic, 2015:2). "Researchers cite parent-family-community involvement as a key to addressing the school dropout crisis and note that strong school-family-community partnerships foster higher educational aspirations and more motivated students" (Gary et al., 2011:91). A study conducted by Prew (2009:833) in Soshanguve, which focused on the implementation of a school development programme to promote school community interaction, confirms that "80% of the schools that lacked school development projects (SDP) still encountered poor community relationships with high levels of criminal activities." Prew (2009: 833) revealed that "86% of secondary schools without school development projects (SDPs) indicated an urgent need for parents and community members helping in the school."

## **2.2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE ROLE OF SMTS AND PARENTS IN LEARNER ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

Since 1994, education has been identified as a pillar of the success of the young democracy and key to improving the standard of living and developing the lives of the poor. The late President Mandela asserted that, "Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of the mineworker can become the head of the mine and that the child of a farm worker can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another (NEEDU, 2013)". South Africa has been faced with many challenges in building a system of education that can compete and match with the international community. South African Minister of education, Motshega contends that "the challenge of providing quality Basic Education for all our children is not only at the heart of the Millennium Development Goals set by the international community, but it is actually a social commitment which every government owes the citizens of its country" (SACMEQ III, 2010:3). Subsequent changes of different education provisioning policies ranging from OBE, C2005, NCS and finally the current CAPs justifies South Africa's dire need to find an education model that can best serve the interest of its developing immature democracy to the one that can compete with international standards. Msila (2009:310) insists that, "The current system of education referred to as the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in South Africa is not a

purely Africanised version of education. There is a constant mention of the inclusion of indigenous system, though, which alludes to the acceptance of African philosophy.”

The struggle against apartheid, which used learners to achieve democracy through violence, left a legacy of community violence, strikes by learners and poor culture of observing education and schools as a national liberation tools. This sporadic perpetual activities which can still be experienced in some township and rural communities culminating in the burning of education provisioning institutions, are scapegoats of the negative effects on the quality of education provided which is responsible for the many challenges school leaders and educators are facing nowadays. Motshekga (2015:62) posits, “The department is focusing on the need to engage young people on the issues of values in society, and how these values form the basis for harmony, peace, and wellbeing of the nation”. The call for quality education provisioning that can produce quality learners, who can contribute positively toward the economy to strengthen the democracy, has been a slogan of much political and education leaders discourse. “Bearing from the pre-democratic era which was characterised by segregation, inequitable distribution of resources, violence, and intimidations, the past regime has left a legacy where the majority of the dominant population is characterized by low Socio Economic Status (SES) with poor education background” (White Paper 1 (3) (9): (1995).

“Millions of adult South Africans are functionally illiterate, and millions of South African children and youth are learning in school conditions which resemble those in the most impoverished states” (White Paper 1, 1995). The South African pre-democratic education system was characterised by bureaucratic structures. Many decisions orchestrated by the top leadership were imposed with no provision made for democratic bargaining; therefore, little attention was given to the voices of parents and communities at schools level as equal partners in a collaboration to enhance academic achievement. Within the ambits of the pre-democratic era a legacy of non-engagement was created and left behind to escalate to the current modern democratic era where we find many parents still, inactive to participate and acting in isolations of schools to enhance their children’s academic performance. “The current democratic government has attempted to address transformation through changes to legislation, redress and fundamental shifts in the education system” (Motshekga, 2015:62). The new system introduced new laws and policies that expect parents and guardians to play a crucial role in the education of their children; parents have to share the responsibility of education with the SMTs in schools. “The education system bears a particular responsibility in building a new peace-loving society, with a shared sense of national identity and greater social cohesion”

(Motshekga, 2015:62). Asmal (2000-2004:8) emphasised “the need to make the co-operative government work and breaking illiteracy among adults and youths.” The preamble of the Constitution states that, “The aims of the Constitution as healing the divisions of the past and a society based on democratic values, social justice, and fundamental human rights; improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law; and build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations” (CAPS, 2011).

The principle of the implementation plan for Tirisano/working together (200-2004:8) requires “all schools to establish appropriate communication channels and structures to ensure timely and effective reports back to parents and the community about the performance of the school.” Political and unions leaders have taken a stand to revolutionise the education system by advocating for quality teaching and learning campaign. During the State of the Nation address in Cape Town in 2009, President Zuma indicated that, “Teachers, learners, and parents must work together with government to turn our schools into thriving centers of excellence.” SADTU (2012:6) in its call for quality teaching and learning campaign, point out that, “Parents/community, teachers, and learners need to cooperate, to form a community based parental support. This should include the identification of schools, churches, and other community structures in the community that will be used as learning units where all community learners would come together for an hour or two for an after school session”. Findings from Gardiner (2008:13) established that “villages and rural Communities are difficult to reach, the physical conditions in schools are inadequate, and learner performance in comparison to schools elsewhere is weak.” The findings from a study by Msila (2012:303) confirm this by “establishing that apart from the lack of resources in rural areas, there is an absence of participation by important stakeholders such as the parents and the community.”

### **2.3. WHAT IS PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN LEARNER ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT?**

Okeke (2014:1) believes that “parental involvement describes a situation in which parents are perceived as active partners in the process of educating their children.” Parent involvement encompasses parents’ aspirations to invest their time, energy, attention, and resources in their children with the expectation that children will perform better in schools. The opinions of Okeke suggest, “Parents need to devote time to support with activities such as parent readings

and completion of home activities given to children to enhance their academic performance.” Parents need to have direct interaction with their children by monitoring their learning at home and at school. Rapp and Duncan (2011:3) cited “the difference between school-based and home-based involvement.” With school based involvement they say “requires parents to make actual contact with school personnel (for example, attending school meetings, talking to teachers, supporting school events, and volunteering time at the school).” According to Rapp et al., (2011:3), home-based involvement “encompasses assisting with homework, responding to children's academic performance, and talking with children about happenings at school.” Rapp et al., (2011:3) assert that, “Parent-child interaction involves the degree to which a parent is engaged in their child’s life, knows their child’s whereabouts, and makes sure their child’s homework is completed.”

Van Velsor and Orozco (2007) say, “Parent involvement in the school is associated with student improvement in a variety of areas including academic performance, attitude and behavior, attendance, school adjustment, and engagement.” Many parents, however, need help from SMTs by capacitating them on how they have to provide the basic skills of a supportive home learning environment. Parents and community may feel interested in volunteering in school activities, but need help from the SMTS to show them how and where to start. They may think that teachers will not welcome them when they need to involve in their children’s education or how to fit in them in a tight school schedule. SMT need to provide platforms in schools and opportunities for parents and community members who feel interested in supporting children and educators.

Children approaching secondary school level are on the verge of reaching the adolescent stage. These children may begin to show problematic behavior to their teachers, which may sometimes have a negative effect on the learner academic achievement. When parents and community are consistently involved, such obvious undesirable behavior may easily be thwarted. “Parental involvement factors of communication and parental aspiration had consistent direct effects for both initial achievement status and subsequent academic growth” (Georgiou, 2007). Okeke (2014) contends that, parental involvement is perceived as “combination of supporting student academic achievement and participating in school-initiated functions”. Mncube (2010: p. 234) notes that the “concept entails awareness of, and achievement in, schoolwork, an understanding of the interaction between parenting skills and learner success in schooling, and a commitment to consistent communication with educators about learner progress”. This study seeks to provide strategies and suggestions taken from

research on family and community involvement in schools to help SMTs, parents and the community to design a long-term approach in order to establish sustainable positive involvement of all concerned.

#### **2.4. WHAT IS THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL COMMUNITY RELATIONS?**

The term management of school community relations describes a situation where SMTs develop relationships with the community. The community can be defined by characteristics that the members share, such as culture, language, tradition, law, geography, class, and race. A community refers to groups of people living in the same geographic location or environment sharing similar cultural practices, language, values, rites and customs, exercising synergic relations, compassion and empathy among the members of the group. Schools as well can be viewed as communities because they constitute learners, teachers, and parents with a common goal of education. “Community plays an important part in the education system” (Student Speak Out, 2008). Students, teachers, and parents agree that community support is vital to the success of schools and individual students. Epstein (2011) argues about “practices that schools and communities can execute separately and jointly with a common aim of improving child’s academic achievement.” This implies that assessing and evaluating children competencies in relation to what they have learned in the classroom from teachers and parents with the intention of promoting them from one grade to another is the responsibility of the school.

Many research studies perceive and acknowledge parents as being the first teachers and nurturers of the children. This implicates that education takes place not only in schools but also within homes, families, communities, and society. Therefore, schools and parents can jointly teach children how to read, write, and speak properly to enhance academic achievement. Epstein (2011) asserts, “Teachers, relatives outside the immediate family, other families, and members of the community can provide important guidance and encouragement to these students. As support from school, family, and community accumulates, significantly more students feel secure and cared for, understand the goals of education, work to achieve their full potential, build positive attitudes and school behaviors, and stay in school.” Different responsibilities may be assumed by the different groups to ensure that children’s learning take place. In a South African rural context where tradition, culture, and rituals are still regarded as pertinent to child’s learning and development, the community contributes by sending children to circumcision or initiation schools to teach them about cultural rites, values, and customs so that they will become responsible male and female citizens. The church as a community

structure contributes by instilling values such as fear of God, respect, refraining from telling lies, criminal acts, stealing and other values that contribute to children's learning and development. These values that the child learns from the community may have a direct and indirect contribution to increasing learner academic achievement.

In managing school community relations SMTs need to initiate outreach programmes and functions that will help to improve relationships with the community to increase parental involvement in schools. Guidelines for Full Service Inclusion (GFSI) state, "School and community members including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Division of Private Occupational schools (DPOs) are involved in ongoing advocacy initiatives that seek to identify, include out-of-school children, and raise awareness about barriers to learning." The community must support parents and families in the upbringing, socialising, and education of the children. Schools should not act alone, but in collaboration with parents and community members in preparing the children to be responsible future citizens of the communities and the country. SMTs must know the communities they serve and the community must know the schools that impart education to their children. "Where the community is itself fragmented and in some crisis, the schools are even deeper in crisis" (Prew, 2009:824).

Mbokodi and Singh (2011:39) state that "the envisaged partnership between parents and the school lies in the management of organizational systems, physical and financial resources, human resource management, the management of teaching and learning including extra-curricular activities, and the management of policy, planning, school development, and governance." Involvement of parents and community in schools ensures that all children benefit, irrespective of family background or SES status. Modisaotsile (2012:3) reiterates, "Involved communities are able to articulate local school needs, hold officials accountable and mobilize local resources to fill gaps when government response is not adequate." All communities should value education for their children. Families either have the power to take command and work toward the wellbeing of their children, or remain powerless and leave their children worse off. Education as a public good, therefore, must not only be valued by the community, but must be advanced and protected or preserved to ensure a better future for all." Parent and community involvement in learners' academic achievement conveys messages to the children that school is important, as this will change learner's attitude and perceptions about schooling and learning. Gardiner (2008:12) agrees that "It is very important to bring schools and communities much closer together, although this is a complicated and challenging



undertaking for both schools and community members. However, one reason why it should take place is that it creates a key link between education and development”

## **2.5. HOW IS PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION (PI), LINKED TO THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL COMMUNITY RELATIONS?**

Education is essential and must contribute to the development of the communities around. When people in a community are when educated, the community will become more civilized and developed. Amendt (2008:19-20) contends that “Literature tends to focus on two camps: school-community connections, and school as a community. Supporters of school community connections are concerned with the relationship between the school and surrounding community. Shared governance, coordinated services, and community schools fall in this category. School as a community tends to focus on the school as a community unto itself. Professional teaching communities, democratic community, social justice, and students’ sense of community in schools fall in this category.” A learning community is inclusive of teachers, staff members, administrators, students, and parents. Schools as public institutions in a democratic society have a moral and social obligation to promote democracy and the democratic way of life (Mncube & Naicker, 2011:145). Mncube and Naicker (2011:145) further declare that principals must push for equity and ensure that all voices are heard in school structures, even if this brings them into conflict with other interest groups.

KZNDE (2012:23) draft document on curriculum Management and Delivery Strategy point out that “education is a social phenomenon. Parent and community involvement play a vital role in learners’ academic success. The shared responsibility translates into a child who is developed holistically - has good character, good marks, good morals, healthy ambitions etc. Schools have a particular responsibility for engaging parents and communities in improving learners’ performance. It is without a doubt that the community can be a very positive force in the life of a school.” Schools are institutions within communities that must impart knowledge to the people. Parents send children to attend at those schools to acquire knowledge and skills, therefore, this brings about the link between PI and school community relation. Learners originating from the same community form the majority of the population in schools. Educators and parents also form a portion of the school population. Besides, other stakeholders including external organizations’ and departments of education forming a school community structure because they can indirectly contribute toward realization of the school vision by offering financial support and physical resources. The school community relation describe a situation

where the school staff, students, parents, external organisations and community members create and make decisions, and take actions that affect many aspects of the school community in a collaborative manner.

PI may differ from each school, since schools have different population demographics. The quality of academic achievement does not rely solely on the quality of schools and teaching offered but on the extent to which SMTs. School leaders that consistently engage parents and community exercise parental involvement in the schools create a high level of trust between family and community in a reciprocal way. The situation is characterised by a willingness to be involved in school activities. Parents and staff members develop learning programs, policies, improvement plans, values, and beliefs jointly. Community involvement results in staff members, students, parents, and community members assuming leadership roles within the school and community as they work together toward a shared vision.

Communities are rich with culture and traditions that can be of importance to schools to enhance learner achievement. SMTs that have close relations with communities around them will experience fewer problems related to discipline and misbehaviour of the learners that may have a significant influence on learner academic achievement. Findings from a study by Goodall (2010:61) reveal, “Mothers who received both the parent training and classroom intervention reported that their children were better able to regulate their emotions, as compared with control group children or children who only received the classroom intervention.” “The schools with low levels of community involvement also indicated lower matric (exit exam) pass rates, low-level decision-making, and failure to develop inclusive plans, poor security and low levels of internal reflection” (Prew, 2009:824).

Bullying, gangsterism, vandalism and theft are a major problem that bothers many schools today. If schools maintain healthy relations with the community, there will be fewer problems experienced related to bullying, vandalism and theft. Gordon and Louis (2009:5) supports that, “A school that is accountable to the community reflects local values and customs, has indicators of success that are visible and well-communicated to the public, and allows parents to choose schools if they are not satisfied with the service.” Okeke (2014:2) state, “studies that have measured the effect of close parental relationships and support on children’s educational attainment have noted that statistically, such children usually obtain very high scores in the area of psychosocial and behavioral competence”. Van Deventer and Kruger (2011:257) maintain, “Local dignitaries need to be invited to share with the learners the life history of the

school.” In order to maintain healthy relations schools need to invite community members across all spectrums this will include invitations of different church leaders to address learners on religious matters, the local chiefs in the case of rural schools should also be invited to share with learners some community values and needs, that are pertinent to their studies.

Professionals from the community as well as political figures, business owners and other important people who will serve as role models to the learners, should come and influence learners on their studies to improve performance. Van Deventer and Kruger (2011:255) state, “The community must be involved in curriculum planning since the school perpetuates the community beliefs, values, and tradition. They believe that “education involves the transmission of people knowledge, culture, attitude, and skills to the next generation and therefore it is appropriate for the community to make an input into the curriculum in order to achieve this”. Communities cannot all be the same. Each community has its value system and needs. The creation of healthy relations between schools need community involvement during curriculum planning. Schools also must offer subjects that will reflect community needs and help in closing the gaps relating to poverty and unemployment.

Prew (2009:838) revealed that, “schools with successful community involvement reported increased parent attendance at key governance and fund-raising. According to Prew, “successful community involvement engage parents during planning of meetings.” Prew maintains that successful school also reflect, “Increased parental interest in their children’s performance in class with more parental visits to school.” He asserts that successful community involvement reflect, “Improved admission levels because pupils left city schools and returned to Soshanguve schools.” He fined that there is “increased willingness to volunteer to help the school.” Prew study established that, “the schools benefited from donations from parents and thee was increased willingness to protect the school against crime.” Findings from Prew revealed, “the community was excited about its schools and watching the streets, school absenteeism and school-based crime fell and achievement rates rose.” Prew (2009) contends that: “Involvement of the micro-communities in each school in Soshanguve seemed to be closely related to the functionality of the school.” Van Deventer and Kruger (2011) contends, “Through community participation in the work of the school, parents may become more interested in the things their children are doing and this may in turn help to reduce the number of learners dropout in schools”.

Van Deventer and Kruger (2011:257) identified that “in promoting good school community relations, schools must encourage learners to participate in the social, economic, and cultural life of the community and that school facilities and resources are made available to the community for educational and social purposes.” This suggest that, when there is a link between schools and the community, they become service centres for the whole community. This also suggest that community members will be involved in real decision-making process of the school, which in fact, often driven by the community. Communities will also view schools as their properties because they are involved in managing them. Therefore, this will help in maintaining the security of schools property. Prew (2009:841) contend, “The culture of learning and teaching in schools with effective home, school and community partnership improves. Home school and community partnership has positive impact on ‘team work, planning and organizing skills, budget, and prioritisation.’”

The SMT and parents must identify those problems that interferes with effective engagement of the parents and the community and must find common grounds to eliminate them to ensure that parents and community are meaningfully involved. SMTs need to influence learner achievement by bringing together parents, churches, business, civic and social organizations, and government in a friendly manner to encourage each aspect to fulfill its responsibility to learner academic achievement. Goodall, Vorhaus, Carpentieri, Brooks, Akerman, and Harris (2010:8) believe that “Schools are in a stronger position to respond to their communities when they receive information and data identifying how their performance compares with other schools and services”. SMTs must share information about school developments and learners’ progress with the parents and the community when learners are progressed from one grade or location to another. The SMTs need to keep parents and community informed about learner success and progress by engaging the community in ongoing discussion, and constantly highlighting the importance of high standards for student achievement within the community. The SMT need to make it clear to all stakeholders, through words and action that it is most important focus is on learner academic achievement. Through cultivation of a culture of transparency, honesty, openness, and leadership within the school, the SMT can build trust, support and synergistic relations with parents and community that contributes toward learner academic achievement.

## 2.6. ROLE OF PARENTS IN LEARNER ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The South African Schools Act conceptualise “parent” as the biological or adoptive parent or legal guardian of a learner.” SASA, 84 of 1996 section 3 (6) (a) compels “all parents to send children of school going age to school failure to do so is subject to imprisonment for six months.” Parents are the first teachers and caregivers of the children, support is required from them in improving learner academic achievement include directing children, simplifying tasks and homework’s, explaining new concepts, relating information to similar contexts, assisting children on how to respond to questions. White Paper 2 states that, “Parents have the inalienable right to choose the form of education, which is best for their children, particularly in the early years of schooling, whether provided by the state or not, subject to reasonable safeguards which law may require.” “SMTs need to consult parents and advise them about school curriculum so that they can be able to choose the right subjects for their children. Parents must support positive student attitudes and behaviour toward learning” (GFSI). This implies that parents need to monitor learners and reinforce positive behavior and performance by sanctioning undesirable behaviour.

When SMTs involve parents, learners will refrain from unacceptable conduct and this will indirectly have positive effects on learner academic achievement. DePlanty (2010:361) states, “Researchers have found that parent child discussion about school helps improve academic achievement and reduce problematic behaviour.” “Parental involvement may be very essential in school-based activities of their children” (Rafiq et al., 2013:211). The views suggest that these activities may involve contacts with teachers, checking the attendance of children in school, monitoring their activities in school, checking their periodical academic progress reports. On the other hand, home-based involvement encompasses assisting with homework, responding to children's academic performance, and talking with children about happenings at school. In a study conducted by Mncube (2009:97) in secondary schools of KwaZulu-Natal, “Parents agreed that they have the right to ask schools how they are teaching the national curriculum (96%), and also that it is the parents’/guardians’ duty to make sure that their children attend schools (96%).” The knowledge of their responsibilities is also evident in parents’ responses, as they suggest that it is the parents or guardians’ responsibility to provide time and space for their children’s homework (94%). They also agree that it is the parents or guardians’ responsibility to work closely with the school (93%), and that it is the parents or guardians’ responsibility to help children with school homework (93%), while 91% of the

parents are of the opinion that parents or guardians should be more involved in making decisions about school activities.

Rafiq et al (2013:210) contends that, “Parental involvement may include activities like helping children in reading, encouraging them to do their homework independently, monitoring their activities inside the house and outside the four walls of their house, and providing coaching services for improving their learning in different subjects.” Rafiq et al., (2013:211) further contends, “Parents’ involvement activities include the use of strategies designed to create a ‘fit’ between the child’s skill levels and task demands. “These strategies may involve efforts to break homework tasks into manageable parts and may involve shaping homework demands to child capabilities while supporting the child’s reach for understanding” (Kathleen et al., 2010). They contends that, “Homework is often presented as a school requirement for successful child learning, and parents often create school-like structures to support homework success (e.g., arranging the environment, establishing schedules for time use).” (Kathleen et al., 2010) state, “Parents may employ specific approaches to reinforcing desired behaviour, including praise, reference to family standards, and extrinsic rewards.” Finally, they foresee, “Parental involvement in children’s homework appears to influence student outcomes because it offers modeling, reinforcement, and instruction that support the development of attitudes, knowledge, and behaviours associated with successful school performance.”

## **2.7. PARENTAL RIGHTS TO INVOLVE IN EDUCATION TO ENHANCE LEARNER ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

Modern education laws equip parents with inalienable fundamental rights to be involved in their children’s education to enhance their academic performance. School Management Teams (SMTs) should train and capacitate parents with education laws since they are partners in education so that they will know their rights and realise that engaging in learner’s education in enhancing achievement is extremely important. Consultative Paper No 1 (1999) section 7.10 posits, “Parents and learners should become an integral part of all assessment and should have full access to records of their children.” The principles of ‘Batho Pele’ contends, “transparency” meanwhile the Constitution (32) emphasise, “The right to access to information held by the state and any information that is held by another person.” SMTs are compelled by the law to report to parents about learner progress and promotion (PAM). SMTs must note that parents and learners have rights in respect of assessment procedures and therefore should be able to make informed decisions and should be empowered to play a more active role in the

process of assessment (Consultative White Paper 1, 1999). Consultative White Paper 1 (1999) section 3.17 affirms that, “Partnerships should enable parents to participate in the planning and implementation of inclusion activities.”

Parents have the right to be respected during the decision-making process at school. The Constitution (10) deliberates about, “The right to human dignity and this provides parents with inherent right to have their inputs respected during policymaking process and subject choices for their children.” Education White Paper 1, contend that, “Decision-making authority is to be shared among parents, teachers, the community (government and civil society), and the learners.” Parents have the right to decide on the choice of subjects to be taught to their children. The White Paper 1 on Education and Training (1995) section 3 asserts, “Parents have an inalienable right to choose the form of education which is best for their children, particularly in the early years of schooling, whether provided by the state or not, subject to reasonable safeguards which may be required by law. Parents' right to choose includes choice of the language, cultural or religious basis of the child's education. Parents or guardians have the primary responsibility for the education of their children, and have the right to be consulted by the state authorities with respect to the form that education should take and to take part in its governance.”

The Education White Paper 2 emphasises, “The right of parents to be involved in schools governance.” It also states that, “They have the right to exercise authority in the home and engage in a meaningful communication with teachers. Be involved in planning and maintaining parents’ groups.” And finally, they have the right to be involved in the drawing of school policies and school programmes. The National Education Policy Act, 27 of (1996) advocates, “Broad public participation in the development of education policy and the representation of stakeholders in the governance of all aspects of the education system.” Parents in terms of the laws “have the right to understand the evaluation techniques and access to special education services for children with special needs” as contemplated by the Consultative White Paper 1. “Parents who are well informed on policies and resource allocation in the education sector, and involved in decision-making regarding their children, can exert considerable influence and contribute solutions to the challenges in the education system” (Modisaotsile, 2012: 3).

## **2.8. POLICY IMPERATIVES ON LEARNING DIVERSITY AS A BARRIER TO LEARNERS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT (LAA)**

“The high level of illiteracy among adults with infrequent exposure to English at fluent and competent level give little opportunity to rural children to live, think and work in a language environment beyond that of their mother tongue” (Gardiner, 2008: 22). Lack of effective support at home particularly with the teaching of language to children in rural areas is a barrier that hampers academic achievement. In realising excellent academic achievement, barriers to learning should not be underestimated. Teaching parents about how to help learners at home will try to address many problems that interferes with the effective achievement of the children in their studies. The National Education Policy Act (1996) asserts about, “Enabling the education system to contribute to the full personal development of each learner, and to the moral, social, cultural, political, and economic development of the nation at large, including the advancement of democracy, human rights.” Parents are the key factors toward ensuring that children develop to their full personal development. SMTs should not disregard barriers to learning that learners may face, that can hamper effective learning, and can hinder full development of the children through marginalisation of parents who are the key influences of increased learner academic achievement. NSSIAS (2008:95) regards parent “as equal partners in learners’ education.” NSSIAS (2008: 95) need “schools and SMTs to implement SIAS to enhance learner academic achievement.”

SIAS refers to screening, identification, assessment, and support. The implication of SIAS is to ensure that SMTs in schools caters for learning diversity to improve learner academic achievement, by providing support to a learner identified with barriers to learning. The National Education Policy Act (1996) is endeavouring “to ensure that no person is denied the opportunity to receive an education to the maximum of his or her ability because of physical disability.” The Education White Paper 6 (2001:16) posits that, “all children and youth can learn and that all children need support.” “The absence of a reading culture in rural communities is very worrying” (Gardiner, 2008:21). The White Paper 6 acknowledges “diversity in learners due to age gender ethnicity, language, class, disability, and HIV/AIDS that can influence negatively on their academic achievement in schools.” NSSIAS (2008:96) state that, “parent and caregivers must play a meaningful role in forming partnership with the teachers to ensure that the support outlined in the individual support plan is successful.” They consider inclusivity across different learning capabilities of children off which the role to be played by parent will be of paramount importance.” NSSIAS (2008: 96) further emphasise that,



“The role to be played by parents in the SIAS process is not a matter of choice, but compulsory.”

SIAS refers to screening identification assessment and support. The policy caters for identification and support of learners with barriers to learning through the involvement of parents. This policy regards parents as the most important role players in support of inclusive education to enhance learner’s academic achievement. CAPs (2011:10) asserts, “the key to managing inclusivity is ensuring that barriers are identified and addressed by all the relevant support structures within the school community, including teachers, district-Based Support Teams, Institutional Level Support Teams, parents and special schools as Resource Centres.” Research confirms parents as being key factor in the early identification of barriers to learning of the child to enhance their academic achievement. SMTs need to identify barriers to learning in collaboration with parents in enhancing academic achievement. These barriers may originate from socio-economic aspects due to lack of access to basic services, poverty, and under-development. “Inclusivity should become a central part of the organisation, planning, and teaching at each school” (CAPS, 2011:5). CAPS (2011:5) argues that, “there are also some factors that places learners at risk such as physical, emotional, sexual abuse, violence; political instabilities and HIV/AIDS; attitude; inflexible curriculum at school; language and communication; inaccessible and unsafe environments; inappropriate and inadequate support services; lack of parental recognition and involvement; disability; lack of human resource strategy.”

SIAS requires parents to provide SMTs and educators with the background information of the children. This may include information regarding children’s health, psychological and physiological experiences. Information from family medical practitioners will enable schools to know the children better and be able to relate any barrier encountered. With the information received from the parents, SMTs can initiate necessary support structure. Teachers at classroom level spend most of their time in contact with the learners, therefore; they are the key connectors of schools and families. “When children are struggling with their schoolwork, due to learning difficulties or disabilities, then parents are generally more inclined to be active in PI activities” (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011:43). Learners identified with barriers must be SMTs reported, so that communication to assist such learners can be established with the parents. SMTs needs to establish and implement necessary support structures, to support learners with barriers in enhancing their academic achievement.

Parental comments and observations can assist educators at schools to establish exact nature of the child's barriers to learning because parents are assumed as the first educators of the children. PAM, SASA, White Paper 6, National Protocol on Assessment, all require parents "to establish contact with schools and educators regarding children's progress." The findings from Mncube (2009:98) reveal that, "Eighty-eight per cent of parents know that they have the right to complain to the school if they are not satisfied with the progress of their children." Mncube asserts that "this figure suggests that there are parents who are still not aware of this legal right." SMTs in schools should provide parents with full information about all options relating to subject and career choices, so that they can make informed choice regarding subjects and career opportunities for their children. Reciprocally, principals must remain in close communication and contact with these parents and coordinate their services in the school and their contributions must be acknowledged. "This step of the school administration will stabilise the school home relationship on sustainable grounds" (Ahmed & Said, 2013).

## **2.9. ROLE OF SMTS IN INVOLVING PARENTS IN LEARNERS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

The School Management Team (SMT) is a structure formed by the principal, the deputy, and the various heads of different learning areas in a school. Policies do not specify the number of teachers in SMT structures. The number of teachers promoted determines the size of the SMT. The role of SMT in school is that of bridging the gap between school and home. The practice by principals regarding the lack of parental involvement negatively affects relations between schools and home. Rapp and Duncan (2011:4) believe that, "The principal is the key individual in creating successful parent-school partnerships." "School leaders must convince teachers, students, parents, and community members of the value of working together for the benefit of the school and the students it serves." Teachers have strong connections with parents. This implies that the relationship between teachers and home is very important for the success of students in the process of education. For this purpose, principals may provide relevant training to their teachers so that they could communicate with parents effectively on issues of children in the process of education.

By virtue of his or her position the principal can influence parents and educators to work together to enhance learner performance. "School leaders, are in a unique position to provide leadership in implementing PI strategies that speak to community needs" (Van Velsor & Oroszco, 2007). SMTs can promote parental involvement in schools to enhance academic

achievement by allowing parents to volunteer in the education of the children. Parents can volunteer their services to schools free. This will help to strengthen relations and trust between schools and home. SMTs need to identify parents who are active and enthusiastic to render voluntary service in schools. SMTs need to extend parental involvement activities in crucial school activities such as planning and policy formulations. The White Paper 2 contends that, "Parents or guardians have the primary responsibility for the education of their children, and have the right to be consulted by the state authorities with respect to the form that education should take and to take part in its governance." This will make parents feel that they are more important to schools. Parents can help their children in doing the schoolwork including homework and assignments, and by so doing supportive home they create environment to learn. SMTs need to establish a network between schools and home to share information related to the children performance and progression of children. SMTs must develop a database of all parents of the learners in schools containing home and work contact numbers so that SMTs can communicate with parents at any time.

Hornby and Lafaele (2011:44) asserts that, "Teachers' goals for parent teacher meetings include discussing children's progress and any difficulties they are having; finding out from parents how children are coping with school; identifying ways in which parents can help their children at home; and, identifying potential conflicts with parents". They contends that, "Parents' goals for parent teacher meetings include: discussing children's progress and any difficulties they are having; comparing their children's progress with that of others in the class; learning more about the school and methods of teaching used; and, questioning teachers about any concerns they have". When parents are consistently involved schools, learners are likely to attain high level of academic achievement. Mncube and Naicker (2011:152) articulated, "The purpose of management at schools is to promote effective teaching and learning." This implies that SMTs need to establish environments in schools where parents feel welcome and accepted. Parental decisions regarding what to be included and what curriculum schools must offer to their children must be welcome respected irrespective of their SES status. Campbell (2011:6) state that, "School leaders have a critical role to play in building trust and mutual understanding between schools and communities. Trust is nurtured through relationships, through information, and through knowledge."

According to Personnel Administrative Measures, the SMTs is “responsible for orchestrating daily instructions to educators for effective functionality of the schools. The SMTs must ensure that educators prepare lessons according to work schedule, assess, control, feedback learners and ensure classes are attended for timeous completion of work programmes. According to PAM, SMTs must also “moderate, educators and learners’ portfolio, classwork and homework books to ensure that scope is covered. PAM implies that the SMT must establish clear standards for student performance and a support system for monitoring student performance that is credible and ongoing in increasing academic achievement. The SMT is responsible for administrative work to ensure the smooth running of the school. PAM maintains that, they must “communicate and report to parents about the progress of the learners.” Van Velsor and Oroszco (2007) cited “research findings that show when schools make clear, deliberate efforts to involve parents, their socio-economic status, and education level become an inconsequential factor in their willingness to participate in the schools.” Rapp and Duncan (2011:6) state, “For school leaders, the ability to create and implement an effective parental involvement model is an essential component of increasing student achievement in school. If parents, principals, and teachers work together for the success of each child, then every child wins”.

The role of the School Management Teams (SMTs) is to improve teaching and learning in schools; improve learner academic performance through networking with the parents and community; providing expert support to educators to overcome challenges threatening conducive teaching and learning environment. Okeke (2014:1) contends that, “There is substantial evidence to suggest that parents’ involvement in the education of their children can make a significant difference in the educational attainment of those children.” “School counselors (SMTs) who build positive relationships in which parents share their dreams for their children can support parents and children in achieving those dreams” (Van Velsor & Oroszco, 2007). Schools that excel academically have a leadership that is having good relations with the community. Education is a matter of collaboration between schools and homes. Schools that act in isolation from home and families are likely to perform badly. Such schools have characteristics of high levels of indiscipline, poor observation of instructional time by educators, high levels of absenteeism of learners and educators, poor educator morale and high levels of stressors with subsequent poor learner academic achievement. “Therefore school leaders should play an integral role in ensuring that transformational leadership prevails in their schools” (Modisaotsile, 2012:5). The concept transformational leadership relates to the empowerment of the staff members, stake holders, subordinates with individualised

consideration to support their ideas. Findings from SACMEQ III (2010:39) and NEEDU (2012:7) revealed “highest percentage of schools where teacher and learner attendance of classes was irregular in some provinces, which reduces the time-on-task and, therefore, impacts negatively on the levels and quality of teaching and learning.”

Ahmad and Said (2013:117) asserts that, “When parents value education and show it through encouraging their children and support the school, children also realise the importance of schooling and learning. In this way, a strong sense of ownership develops among parents, students and the community which is essential for a successful educational process.” Ahmad et al., (2013:117) argued, “Principals may create a climate of trust and collaboration between school and home through effective planning throughout the year and its implementation by involving parents.” In this regard, SMTs must ensure parents that, “their participation is critical for the success of school and their children education” (Ahmed et al., 2013:118).

## **2.10. THE ROLE OF SMTS IN INVOLVING SINGLE PARENTS IN LEARNERS’ ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

The learner demographics in rural schools originate from heterogeneous family structures. Some learners originate from single parent families headed either by the father only or the mother only. A single parent family refers to a family structure made up of one parent only who carries all of the family responsibilities for raising a child or children. Changes in family structure due to death or divorce affect parental involvement and learner academic achievement in schools. Many children cannot cope with the unbearable effects of the loss of one parent and this affect their moral and their excellent academic achievement. Babalis, Tsoli, Nikolopoulos, Maniatis (2014:23) identified “various origins of single parenting: the formal dissolution of marriage, separation/divorce, and the death of a parent, the voluntary single parenthood-single mother and the informal dissolution of marriage, after abandonment of the family by one parent.” Research nationally and internationally acknowledges that PI in child’s education has significance influence on academic performance.

Findings from The Urban Child Institute (2014) establish a dramatic “increase in single parenting originating from adolescent pregnancy, which poses a major threat to effective parental involvement in children’s education to improve academic performance.” The Urban Child Institute (2014) argued that, “Teen fathers abandon their parenting responsibilities due to fear and inability to provide adequately for their child, leaving the mother with even less social support and financial assistance.” The Urban Child Institute (2014) says, “Adolescents

who become parents often have a shortage of key life skills and other resources that are vital to the parenting process. Finally they say “Teen parents tend to have less knowledge about child development and effective parenting, and often misjudge their infant or toddler’s ability to adapt and learn.”

“The position of the South Africa government in the global economy depends to a large extent on the competencies of its people and these competencies are developed and set early in life. Human development thus begins well before a child enters the primary school” (White, 2001:5). “A baby born to a teenage mother is likely to have more difficulty in acquiring cognitive and language skills as well as social and emotional skills like self-control and self-confidence” (The Urban Child Institute, 2014). These abilities should be acquired and developed during the early stages of development and growth, and are very important for learner readiness to excel at school. UNICEF (2000) state, “Quality in education occurs when learners are healthy, well nourished, and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities.” “Educational and management processes must, therefore, put the learners first, recognizing and building on their knowledge and experience, and responding to their needs” (Bengu, 1995). In mitigating, the poor parenting gap by teen mothers and adult single parents, SMTs need to initialise training programmes to equip all parents with good parenting practices that can contribute positively toward increased learner academic achievement. UNICEF (2000) affirms that “schools can play a role in helping parents to enhance the ‘home curriculum’ and improve the quality of parental involvement in their children’s education.”

Consultative Paper No 1 (1999) Section 3.19 asserts that, “in building partnership with parents, special attention should be given to single mothers and those parents who live in rural areas.” According to The Urban Child Institute, “The prevalence of births to adolescent mothers negatively affects high school graduation and increases unemployment.” The Urban Child Institute (2014) asserts that, “Without a high school diploma or equivalent, teens, and adults will encounter greater difficulties in securing quality employment and have lower earning potential.” A less educated population and unskilled workforce negatively affect the economy and make it difficult for communities to break aggressive cycles of poverty and crime as resources are consistently depleted. “Studies on early childhood development find that adolescent mothers are less likely than older mothers to engage in emotionally supportive and responsive parenting” (The Urban Child Institute, 2014).

SMTs in schools should motivate a parent irrespective of his or her family structure to involve in his or her child's education to boost the psychosocial adjustment of children emerging from single parent families. Lange, Dronkers, and Wolbers (2013:329) posit that, "the future success of children greatly depends on the household from which they grow up." The findings from study by Babalis et al., (2014:23) confirms that, "Students who come from a single parent family, find it difficult to follow and cope with the instructions in the lesson, having difficulties in learning, being often abstract and not liking school, compared to students who belong to a nuclear family." Mather (2009:2) asserts that, "Most single mother families have limited financial resources available to cover children's education, childcare, and health care costs."

"Research focusing on children in families where the mother is depressed indicates emotional and behavioural difficulties, attachment and academic problems, self-regulation difficulties and problematic peer relationships" (Eloff & Finestone, 2016:2). Langea, Dronkers, and Wolbers (2013:329) confirm that, "Living in a single parent family is negatively related to children's educational performance compared to living with two biological parents." Babalis, et al., (2014:23) cites, "Various factors of family origin that can influence negatively the performance of the children from single parent families in school." According to Babalis et al such factors involve: "Low academic expectations of lone parents, lack of parental involvement in their children's education; low socio-economic status of a family resulting with consequent stress of a lone parent to cope with the requirements of new family patterns; poor quality of children's interpersonal relationships with both parents, time phase of the traumatic experience of separation or divorce (before, during or after divorce) as well as the supporting frame-assistance provided to single parent family from parents, siblings, friends, family, school, state and other networks." Langea et al., (2013:331) asserts that, "Income can also affect school outcomes through enabling a child to participate in extra-curricular activities, like lessons after school, special trips or summer camps." Such activities improve children's skills directly, but also indirectly via general intellectual stimulation, which affects subsequent learning.

The purpose of this study is to explore interactions between SMTs and parents in rural secondary schools to enhance learner academic achievement. In their quest to improve school, performance and functionality, SMTs should be prudent about identifying learner behaviour problems influenced by family structure and income. Children from complete family structures have better chances of succeeding in schools because their chances of encountering psychosocial stress are minimal as compared to the children of single parents. Mather (2009:2) contends, "Research established that seven in 10 children living with a single mother are poor

or low-income, compared to less than a third (32 per cent) of children living in other types of families. “While part of the problem is fewer potential earners in female-headed families, many of these families are also at a disadvantage because of problems with collecting child support payments from absent fathers” (Mather, 2009:2).

Findings from Babalis et al., (2014:20) confirms that, “Single parent families, which emerged after divorce occupied an important place among other family types, endangering a large number of children to display behavioural problems and poor school performance.” Children of single parents need to work harder to achieve higher academic score. Babalis et al., (2014:25) asserts that, “Proper education and training of teachers will contribute the most, through seminars on issues related to school psychology and mainly to normal school adjustment of students from alternative types of family life.” “Children of single parent families are being ranked in high risk groups not only as far as the risk of educational failure is concerned, but also regarding the possibility of social progress and acquisition of emotional wellbeing and mental resilience, i.e. psychosocial adjustment” (Babalis et al., 2014:20-21). SMTs are perceived as key role players in schools to facilitate PI activity. Therefore, their responsibility is to bridge the psychosocial gap experienced by learners from single parent families that may ultimately have negative effects on their school performance through consistent involvement parents.

## **2.11. ROLE SMTs SHOULD PLAY TO SUPPORT VULNERABLE AND ORPHAN CHILDREN, TO ENHANCE THEIR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

The role of the SMTS in improving learner performance should not marginalise the educational needs of orphans and vulnerable children, who are faced with mammoth challenges negatively influencing their academic performance as they have been turned into heads of families after death of parents. SMTs in particular, can leverage significant improvements in the lives of orphans and vulnerable children by exploring strategies through which parents and care takers can be included in the education of this poor kids. “The implications for generations of orphans in sub-Saharan Africa are extraordinarily grave, but governments, international agencies, non-governmental organizations, schools and other community groups can still alter the course of the crisis” (UNICEF 2003:6). Schools as public social institutions are neutral places where various sectors and institutions can deliver services to those who need them most. Findings from study by UNICEF (2003:1) revealed an “alarming figure of about more than 14 million children under the age of 15 have lost one or both parents to AIDS, the vast majority of them



in sub-Saharan Africa.” UNAIDS prognosis of the number of children orphaned by AIDS globally by 2010, was expected to exceed 25 million. “In 2013 the figure of orphans had globally projected to a progressive soaring number of 17.8 million” (UNAIDS, 2013:6).

Mohlakwana (2013:17) perceived “child-headed household as children in crisis, as their behaviour is maladaptive in terms of societal expectations. She further content that, “these children assume different roles, especially as caregivers for their siblings in child-headed families.” The footnotes of SASA section (5) (f) provide that, “Admission in schools must be based on an educationally sound basis in order to ensure that the physical, psychological and mental development of the child is taken into account.” OVC children are faced with weird of challenges, which hamper their progressive academic achievement at school. The Constitution of South Africa (28) (5) (d) advocates for the “protection of children from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation.” The implication suggest that marginalisation and undermining the challenges experienced by vulnerable and orphaned children to receive quality education through the inclusion of guardians and caregivers to enhance their academic achievement, is a violation of the constitutional rights of these learners to be protected from abuse and maltreatment and negligence. The Constitution alludes to the “urgency and progressive realization of the rights of all citizens to basic quality education.” Quality teaching and learning in schools cannot take place without the involvement of parents, guardians, and caregivers to support the schools in enhancing learner academic achievement. The preamble of SASA debates on the “creation of an education system that will redress past injustices in educational provision, provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners.”

Mohlakwana (2013:14) emphasised that “it is the responsibility of the school to improve the attendance of OVC because they have emotional, physical, psychosocial, personal, and intellectual needs.” This implies that, poor collaborative effort to support children by SMTs and guardians to enhance their academic achievement will have a negative impact on the performance of OVC. These needs according to Mohlakwana (2013:14) “may be fulfilled by the school, depending on the nature of the child. Schools are expected to function according to a set of values that will fuel love, respect, and peace.” SMTs should see to it that these children have fundamental education rights and needs that must be realised and fulfilled. It is the responsibility of the SMTs in schools to pay special focus to vulnerable and orphaned to secure their education rights as the most marginalised children. Mohlakwana (2013:17) contends that, “Schools lack the expertise to deal with the challenges faced by child-headed families in their midst as some of their educators do not have appropriate skills”. Engaging guardians and

caregivers of orphaned and vulnerable to support this poor children to excel in their studies will boost their morale to perform to their limits.

The preambles of SASA further argues about, “the creation of an education system that will lay a strong foundation for the development of all our people’s talents and capabilities to advance the democratic transformation of society, combat racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance.” SASA further discourse about an education system that will “contribute to the eradication of poverty and the economic wellbeing of society, protect and advance our diverse cultures and languages, uphold the rights of all learners, parents, and educators.” The policy discourse about inclusivity and collaboration with guardians and parents is a step forward toward the provision of quality teaching and learning that will equitably uplift the potentials of all learners irrespective of their home conditions. The Constitution further enshrines “the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality, and freedom.” Section (33) of the Constitution state that, “Everyone has the right to administrative action that is lawful, reasonable, and procedurally fair.”

SMTs in schools that do not cater for involving guardian of OVC affect the dignity, equality, and freedom of children, guardians and parents to receive the education that can transform their lives to rescue them from economic poverty cycles. When SMTs include parents as partners in the education of their children to enhance their academic performance, they abide the constitutional and legislative requirements on inclusivity and collaboration to ensure that there is fairness, equality, and human dignity in the provision of education to all children irrespective of their SES. Section 41 of the Constitution on co-operative governance debates about the following: “(i) Fostering friendly relations; (ii) assisting and supporting one another; (iii) informing one another of, and consulting one another on, matters of common interest; (iv) co-ordinating their actions and legislation with one another.” This implies that teaching and learning must be managed in collaboration with the community and the parents in schools without marginalising OVC, hence the saying, “It took a village to raise a child.”

Reed and Bhat (2014) discovered that “school children walk into a classroom with a heavy weight on their shoulders.” Reed and Bhat (2014) assert that, “Children in poverty are more likely to be hungry or malnourished, exposed to trauma, stress or violence, affected by family or neighbourhood turmoil or faced with severe health problems; poverty should not be seen as an excuse to say that low-income children cannot succeed.” Reed and Bhat (2014) emphasise

that, “Addressing the effects of poverty, then, is key to unlocking opportunities and closing the achievement gap in the district.” Reed and Bhat (2014) contends that, “Schools are naturally and rightly focused on learning, however, schools are an ideal location to deliver services, because it is easier for children and families to take advantage of them and because social services staff can team up with teachers to meet a child’s academic and other needs.” Reed and Bhat (2014) contemplates that, “investing in school-based supports that go beyond classroom instruction from mental health services to robust after school programmes is a proven way to increase attendance, raise grades and test scores and reduce behavioural problems.” The role that SMTs should play is to ensure that learner academic performance is progressively increased by making schools friendly and inviting zones to all parents and guardians to support teaching and learning.

## **2.12. AREAS IN WHICH SMTS CAN INVOLVE PARENTS IN LEARNER ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

Epstein (2011:130) identified areas, which schools and SMTs can adopt to involve parents to enhance in enhancing the academic achievement of their children. The first type of involvement is **parenting**: schools help families to understand child and adolescent development (school need to organize workshops to train parents to understand the stages of development of the children). Parents need to establish home environments that support children as students (parents monitor students reading behaviour, ensure that children do not spent much time on things that will exhaust their time for reading like TV, cellphone chats, or oversleeping or playing with friends; parents must buy additional books to help them to teach learners at home how to read). DePlanty et al., (2010:361) asserts that, “Many educational sociologists believe that adolescence is the most complex social period in the life of an individual.” “Throughout this critical time in a teenager’s life, families and schools need to work together.”

The second type of involvement is **communication**: schools can design and conduct a two-way communication system with parents at home. Schools need to engage parents through telephone contact, memos, report cards about learner results, letters, and SMSs to tell them about the school programmes and performance of the learners. Information about learner’s progress will help parents to make about monitoring children’s progress at home and offer assistant and support to their children. Thirdly, **volunteering**: SMTs recruit parents to help the schools with other activities such as sports, cleaning of the schoolyard and toilets for the learners. This suggests that teaching and learning that can effectively increase academic

achievement should take place in healthy, safe and secure environments, and this can be possible through consistent inclusion of parents to volunteer service in schools as stated by SASA.

The fourth type of involvement is **learning at home**. This involves providing families with strategies and skills on how to help students with home works and curriculum-related activities and be involved in decision-making process in schools. Antonopoulos, Koutrouba & Babalis (2011) cite that, “Students aged 11–17 years, whose families are actively in close contact with school, achieve higher grades in tests’ scores, have higher self-esteem, social competence, and aspirations for enrolment in college, and, finally, are less prone to substance abuse.” Parents who know their children’s capabilities by collaborating with educators will be able to know and plan for their children’s future. Rafiq et al., (2013) argue that, “Schools must also work with parents to ensure that students set academic goals, prepare for career transitions, and make appropriate course selections.” “Extensive research over the last years has clearly confirmed that the bilateral communication between teenagers’ parents and junior high or high school teachers has an observably constructive impact on adolescent students in terms of homework management and educational expectations” (Antonopoulos et al., 2011).

The fifth type of involvement is **decision-making**. This include taking into account, inputs from all parents irrespective of low SES on all school decisions. White Paper 1 and 2 emphasise parental involvement on decisions made by schools on the education of their children. Kathleen, V et al (2001) observed, “More positive student attitudes toward homework, in turn, are related to student decisions about time and effort to be spent on homework, sense of personal responsibility for learning, and persistence in task completion.” Positive support received from parents by students will enable them to take informed decisions about behaviour, associations with other learners, and future career path, as well as decision relating to their health and reproduction. SASA acknowledge the lack of capacities in parents. Schools must train parents to interpret government policies. This should involve particularly policies related to curriculum matters, for parents to be aware of what the curriculum expects their children to learn and know. This will enable capable parents to help learners with relevant information for their studies.

Lastly, Epstein speaks of **collaborating with the community**. This serves to strengthen support to school, students, and families by organizing activities to benefit the community and increase student-learning opportunity. This implies that schools need to develop programmes such as open days or parent days to invite parents to come and inspect their learners CASS files and to provide support where necessary to their children. Schools must identify areas that will hinder parents from being actively involved in school activities and eliminate these. Antonopoulos, Koutrouba and Babalis (2011) suggest, “Parents of the aforementioned students, due to meaningful and productive school-parent communication, gradually tended to experiment with alternative and more flexible methods fostering their children’s academic performance and socio-emotional skills”.

### **2.13. BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS IN LEARNER ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

Msila (2012:305) state, “Local and international research has shown that the educational level of parents and their socio-economic status has an influence upon their involvement in schools.” If schools do not make efforts to involve all families in as a whole, the issue of parental involvement will only occur in some families and not others. The Minister of education in South Africa asserts that, “There are serious performance disparities, which tend to run along poverty lines as seen in relatively poorer performance in rural schools and schools that are at the lower end of the socio-economic scale” (SACMEQ III, 2010:3). Van Velsor (2007) posits, “Low-income parents encounter both demographic, psychological, teacher attitudes, and school climate as barriers to school involvement.” Van Velsor (2007) postulates that, “Psychological barriers include work that often prevents low-income parents from devoting time to their children's schooling. Parent also complain of responsibilities of caring for children and elderly parents that interfere with low-income parents' abilities to become involved, transportation problems and lack of resources associated with lower income families may hinder PI. Parents who speak languages other than English may experience fewer opportunities to volunteer in the schools, and lack of confidence related to parent’s educational background. Parents perceive themselves as not being capable of helping their children at school.” This suggest that, teachers and schools forget that they are interacting with illiterate parents, therefore, they use language and concepts that parents could not understand. These strained relations and keep parents away from involving in schools.

In a study conducted by Msila (2012) in rural villages of Eastern Cape, some parents argued that they sometimes get the sense that “some teachers do not appreciate their involvement.” They also agreed that sometimes when they have nothing to offer and are poor they feel their state of poverty; that the school will not benefit from them. Msila emphasise, “The nature of schools is also perceived as being uninviting by some poor parents.” In contrast to findings by Msila in the South African context where parents appears to be hard-to-reach. In a similar study by Ahmed and Said (2013) in Pakistan discovered that, “The school principals are contextual factors to effective parental involvement in learner academic performance.” Ahmed & Said (2013) found out that, “Principals have weak understanding of the types of parental participation in education. They do not know how parents should take part in the process of education.” They establish that, “the majority of them think that parents should only attend school meetings and conferences and that a large majority of principals’ remains ignorant that parents should participate in all activities of the school.” Ahmed & Said (2013) think that, “There is no need for school principals to use various ways and means to engage parents in the process of education.” They recommended that, “principals should be provided with comprehensive training on the concept of parental participation in learner academic achievement.”

Ahmed and Said (2013) contends that, “Parents who suffer from racism and those with negative school experiences distance themselves from the schools.” They see poverty as having both direct and indirect effect on PI in schools because parents from poor family background will feel interested in coming to school to support teaching and learning since they are undermining themselves.” Ahmed and Said (2013) indicate that, “Parents also face barriers that relate to the school culture itself.” They said that “Teachers with negative attitudes will not value the presence, participation or opinions of parents and therefore perceive parents as hindering their work of the schools and make negative judgments about low-income parents that contributes to lack of involvement.” Findings from Ahmed and Said (2013:122) revealed that, “Principals consider parental involvement in education as interference in school affairs.” They state that, “Barriers related to school climate may include: schools in low socio-economic status are less likely to encourage parental involvement than those in higher socio-economic status; power differentials related to education and professional expertise may lead to unequal relationships between teachers and parents.” DePlanty et al, (2007:362) establish that, “Schools can also affect PI levels because many parents want to become involved but are not encouraged or do not have the open communication or support from the school to do so.” Findings from a study

conducted by Mncube (2009: 96) established that, “The majority of parents indicated during the interviews that they are afraid to challenge the status quo of the School because they feared victimisation (failing) of their child or children.”

DePlanty et al., (2010) assert that, “Teacher efficacy has much influence on PI.” They view “teacher’s sense of efficacy as a teacher’s own judgment about his or her capability to influence student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated.” They assert that, “If a teacher has feelings of isolation or separateness, more than likely the teacher will not contact parents nor try to get them to participate in at home activities.” They contend that, “Higher efficacy teachers might invite and receive more PI than do lower efficacy teachers.” Bojuwoye & Narain (2008:277) cite, “Lack of time or energy due to long hours of heavy physical labor.” According to Bojuwoye and Narain (2008:277) this may include: “embarrassment or shyness about one’s own educational level or linguistic abilities; lack of understanding or information about the structure of the school and accepted communication channels; perceived lack of welcome by teachers and administrators; and teachers and administrators’ assumptions of parents’ disinterest or inability to help with children’s schooling.” Findings from their study reveal, “In South Africa, most parent participants had relatively little formal education (66% had less than or up to high school education) and reported family incomes indicating lower SES status.” Stats SA (2011) justified this by revealing “an alarming rate of illiteracy at 92, 3% in Limpopo whereby poor households had a head that had not attained matric.”

Research acknowledges that the education level of parents has a direct impact on learner achievement. This implies that parent with poor education background will not be able to establish family-like schools as conceptualised by Epstein (2011). Jensen (2009) cites, “Socio-economic status correlates with good parenting, which research has found, improves academic achievement.” Parents with poor education background will be less involved in school because they feel ashamed to interact with teachers whom they perceive as being educated. Georgiou (2007) say, “Research findings suggest that the amount of schooling that parents received has an effect on how they structure their home environment and how they interact with their children to promote academic achievement.” Mncube (2009:96) state that, “The majority of governors interviewed indicated that the use of only English language in governing body meetings has a negative effect on participation of some members, i.e. those who cannot express themselves fluently in English.”

Rapp and Duncan (2011) posit that, “Educators, understanding of the effects and barriers of low socio-economic status is a vital component in improving school-parent partnerships for low-income families.” Antonopoulos, Koutrouba and Babalis (2011) argued, “Communication is hindered by teachers due to lack of co-operation as a result of professional burnout, lack of self-confidence, knowledge, skills, and training on communication therefore school personnel must know the families they serve to provide optimal education for their children.” Policies in South Africa acknowledge poor involvement due to disabilities that are encountered by parents themselves. GFSI (2010) require “schools to maintain information about parents who themselves are disabled so that their access and inclusion needs can be met.” SMTs need to identify learners whose parents are disabled to ensure that the process of inclusion in their children’s education to enhance academic performance does not leave them out.

#### **2.14. BENEFITS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN LEARNER ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

“Research nationally and internationally suggest that parental involvement in children’s learning is positively related to achievement” (Campbell: 2011). A higher level of parental involvement in schools can lead to higher level of social interaction within schools, families and the communities with a positive impact on learner academic achievement. Social interaction appears when SMTs, parents and community work in collaboration meanwhile family members create such interactions by gathering together to share their past schooling experiences and knowledge to assist learners at home. Interaction between SMTs, parents and community leads to establishment of family-like schools and schools like family structures with a common aim of improving children’s academic performance (Epstein, 2011). “The concept of social interaction is linked to social capital, which was developed, by Putman and Bourdieu” (Häuberer, 2011:14-15). Social capital bonds people together, generate trust and mushrooms into networks between neighborhoods with the aim of achieving a common goal being improving learner academic achievement. The social glue between SMTs, parents, and community created by social interaction will generate the feeling that schools are community property and inheritance. The parents and community members will then help in protecting schools from vandalism, theft, and robbery.

Social interaction can lead to the formation of relationships, which will benefit parents and capacitate them with curriculum policy imperatives on how to help their children at home with schoolwork. Van Roekel (2008: 2) in Washington D.C reveals, “Parents lack the expertise and



resources to help their child, or they express frustration with school bureaucracies or policies they find impossible to understand or change they see this as a challenge that hinders them to getting involved in their child's education." PI at homes and in schools can improve the quality of student learning and reduce inequalities and barriers of learning among students from different social origins. Parents meet other parents at school during gatherings and therefore a reciprocal learning process occurs among them sharing knowledge and skills they have to assist their children to enhance learner academic performance. Furthermore, they learn on how to interpret school policies, curriculum-related policies and know about school extra-curricular activities.

Van Velsor and Oroszco (2007) argued, "At school personnel must know about the families they serve to provide optimal education for their children". SMTs simultaneously acquire the opportunity to learn about parents expectations for their children. "The existing literature has already indicated that social ties, trust, and collaboration among teachers will enhance teaching effectiveness, teaching outcomes, self-efficacy of teachers, teacher professionalism, continuous learning capacity of teachers, and learning performance of students" (Tsang, 2010: 126). Social interaction among children ensures that they learn from each other about what that should do in relation to behaviour and response to their schoolwork. Interaction between teachers and learners makes them know their learners. This will help them deal with learning diversities and learning barriers that may negatively affect their academic achievements. "Previous research found that close, positive student teacher relationships are positively related to a wide range of child social and academic outcomes in school. A positive student teacher relationship has been defined as the teacher's perception that his or her relationship with the child is characterized by closeness and a lack of dependency and conflict" (Topor, Keane, Shelton, & Calkins, 2010: 186).

Finally, the social interaction process between SMTs, parents, and the community complements Epstein's theory of overlapping sphere of influences. The theory recognises "three contexts in which students learn and grow the family, the school, and the community. Social relationships occur at institutional level (e.g., when a school invites all families to an event or sends the same communications to all families) and at an individual level (e.g., when a parent and a teacher meet in conference or talk by phone)." Epstein posits, "The model of school, family, and community partnerships locates the student at the center." The assumption of Epstein is that "if children feel cared for and are encouraged to work hard in the role of

student, they are more likely to do their best to learn to read, write, calculate, and learn other skills and talents and to remain in school.”

## **2.15. HOW CAN SMTS EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT PI IN LEARNER ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT?**

Different studies have suggested different strategies and ways SMTs in schools can use to create comprehensive plans to involve parents and the community in the education of children. Comprehensive partnership strategies generate positive attitudes about the school and the community by taking into account various capacities of the population composition of the school. Goodall et al., (2010: 5) asserts, “Schools which successfully engage parents make use of a broad understanding of parental engagement, and their parental engagement strategies accord with the interpretations and values of the parents they are aimed at.” They view, “Parental engagement with children’s learning as effectively supported when parents receive clear, specific, and targeted information from schools.” Goodall et al (2010: 5) contends that, “Parents need specific, detailed guidance on programs and on their expected contribution.” They emphasised that, “Effective leadership on parental engagement is essential to the success of programs and strategies and that parent engagement should be led by a senior school leader.” “It is, therefore, a priority to identify interventions that are effective in supporting parental involvement particularly those parents who are either not significantly involved in their children’s education or who are not involved at all” (Goodall et al, 2010:3).

Van Roekel (2008:3) suggests the following strategies to ensure that partnerships between schools parents and community in learner academic achievement remain effective and sustainable. “Firstly, SMTs must begin by analyzing or surveying educators and families to determine needs, interests, and ideas about collaborating.” “Secondly, they SMTs must develop and pass family-friendly policies and laws.” Thirdly, SMTs need to “draw a flexible schedule to encourage participation by diverse families.” Fourthly, there is a “need to provide professional development or training of teachers on family and community participation in school.” Fifthly, “Training for parents and community stakeholders on effective communications and collaborating skills must be offered.” Goodall et al., (2010:5) state, “Many parents lack the confidence and knowledge to know how best to support children with their school work, and their learning generally.” They maintains that, “Focus must be on some aspects of literacy, for example, training parents to teach specific reading skills to their children this will involve: encouraging parents to listen to their children to read.”

The sixth strategy by Van Roekel (2008:3) involves the need to “provided better information on school and school district policies and procedures.” Seventh, they say, “there is need to ensure timeous access to information, using effective communications tools that address various family structures and are translated into languages that parents/families understand.” Eighth, they indicate the need to “hire and train school community liaisons who know the communities’ history, language, and cultural background to contact parents and coordinate activities.” Ninth, that say, SMTs need to “collaborate with higher education institutions to infuse parent, family, and community involvement in education into teacher and administrator preparation programs.” Tenth, they state that SMTs “must develop an outreach strategy to inform families, businesses, and the community about school and family involvement opportunities, policies, and programs.” Eleventh, they indicate that SMTs must “regularly evaluate the effectiveness of family involvement programs and activities.”

Van Roekel (2008:3) further suggests that SMTs “need to develop comprehensive, goal oriented programs of school, family, and community partnerships.” He point out that, “Schools can also establish a parent teacher home visit project, whereby educators and parents visit students and their families at home, to help them built trusting relationships, and shared instructional tools.” He also suggested the establishment of Parent Centers, which provide tuition for adult Basic Education to parents aspiring to develop themselves, and this according to him will help to reduce learner dropout by 16 percent if parents take part in such programs.” Findings from his study reveal, “In California, parents increased their knowledge and skills to support their children’s academic achievement and enrolment in higher education by participating in the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) program.”

Epstein (2011) suggest, “Effective partnership between SMTs, parents and the community requires establishment of action team for partnership.” She point out that “the team will serve as a committee to facilitate the partnership program between school, families, and the community, and that the action team guides the development of a comprehensive program of partnerships.” She indicates, “The action team takes responsibility for assessing present practices, organising options for new partnerships, implementing selected activities, evaluating next steps, and continuing to improve and coordinate practices for all six types of involvement.” According to Epstein, “the composition of the team should include at least three teachers from different grade levels, three parents, and one administrator and one member from the community.” She indicates, “The members of the action team lead these activities, other teachers, parents, students, administrators, and community members must assist them.” She

contends that, “the team starts by collecting information about the school’s current practices of partnership, along with the views, experiences, and wishes of teachers, parents, administrators, and students and that partnership programmes must be reviewed periodically to improve its continuity and progress incrementally, by including more families each year in ways that benefit more students.”

## **2.16. WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EFFECTIVE INTERACTION BETWEEN SMTS AND PARENTS?**

Findings from a study conducted by Bull, Brooking and Campbell (2008:6) in New Zealand revealed features that show “a successful interaction between homes and schools.” Brooking and Campbell (2008:6) point out that, “In building successful home school partnership firstly, “relationships between home and schools should be collaborative and mutually respectful.” Although the study acknowledges that, “Building successful home-school partnerships takes time and commitment but the first step in a successful home school partnership is the establishment of positive relationships between teachers and parents.” Empirical findings of data collected during their study through interviews of both parents and teachers justified the researchers’ comments. Interviews of parents in their study supported the idea that the schools and principals valued them in involving in the education of their children. Secondly, Brooking and Campbell (2008:6) note that, “successful home-school partnerships should be multi-dimensional and responsive to community needs.” Successful partnerships should have a range of projects and activities that meet the needs of the communities. Schools should listen to feedback from parents to provide activities that would best meet their community expectations for the parents to be encouraged to involve in schools. The findings of the study show that “it is important that parents have inputs in determining what sorts of activities they want to be involved in, and that their feedback about the effectiveness of these initiatives is taken into account.”

Thirdly, Brooking and Campbell (2008:6) suggest that, “Successful home-school partnerships should be embedded in school development plans, be well resourced, and be reviewed regularly.” They state, “The success of home school partnership will rely on how schools operate.” They point out “some schools can operate without home school partnership, however, findings from the study revealed that most schools with successful partnerships put the program in the main streams of the schools planning process.” Fourthly, they posit, “Successful home-school partnerships are goal oriented and focused on learning.” They contend that though “the

building of relationships is an important initial step in establishing home–school partnerships, but the purpose of the partnership is to lift achievement, it is important that once the relationship be established; there should be a shift to a more task-oriented approach with strongest emphasis on learning.” They posit, “Teachers and parents should develop a “shared language of learning” that will enabled them to talk about achievement, progress, and assessment, and that both partners should be clear about their roles in supporting learning.” They believe, “Learning messages should be consistent between home and school; they asserts that, “parents need to have the opportunity to talk about successful home school partnerships and think about how their own education was different from that of their children, and therefore emphasis should be on teachers learning from parents as well as parents learning from teachers.” Fifth, Brooking and Campbell (2008:6) asserts that, “effective parental engagement happens largely at home.” This reiterates the fact that “schools should have strategies in place to help parents support their children’s learning at home. This implies that need to train parents about “study hints” and tips on specific questions to ask their children about their learning, interactive homework requiring input from the family, and sharing learning goals with families so they can reinforce their children’s out-of-school learning.

The sixth feature of successful home school partnership provides that there should be two-way communication between school and parents. Parents would only be able to support their children’s learning if schools engage them through accurate and effective communication. Schools should communicate information about their children’s progress and programs in general. Effective communication will give parents information and at same time enable teachers to draw on the expert knowledge that parents have about their own children. They emphasize that “where home–school partnerships seemed to be working well, teachers will be aware of the extent to which they could learn from parents and there was genuine two-way communication.” The seventh feature of successful home school partnership entails that “building successful home-school partnerships takes time and commitment.” Findings from their study reveal, “Most principals reported that involving parents in the education of their children became easier as time went on.” They acknowledge, “If early strategies for enhancing parental engagement were seen by parents as worthwhile, parents were more likely to take a more active role in subsequent initiatives and in many schools with successful home–school partnerships, teachers, parents, and sometimes students identified principals, as a key player in the development of the partnerships.” They state, “The commitment of staff was also critical

to the success of home– school partnerships, though, and some principals were specifically recruiting staff with a commitment to the idea.”

## 2.17. CONCLUSION

Many studies acknowledge that PI in schools has a positive impact on the improvement of learner academic achievement. SMTs, parents, and the community need to work together as partners in schools with the common goal being to improve learner academic achievement. The partnership between SMTs, parents and the community can be successful if parents and teachers are trained by SMTs. Goodall et al., (2010:54) maintain that, “Parental support programmes which focus not only on academic outcomes but which also included training in parenting skills, were more effective in improving cognitive outcomes.” “Parents need to be ensured that their participation is critical for the success of school and their children education” (Ahmed & Said, 2013:118). Schools need to establish committees that will facilitate PI programmes.

At home, parents need to support children and help them with reading and writing of schoolwork. When more parents at all grades are continuously involved, children’s attitude to learning will dramatically change and their academic performance will increase. Children will see schools and education as being important for building their future. Parents from all SES groups need to be encouraged to be involved in their children’s education. SMTs and teachers must accept the viewpoints of parents irrespective of their SES. Higher level of interaction between SMTs and parents will create social relationships. Teachers will know parent expectations about their children’s progress and will be able to assist parents to ensure that they meet their expectations. “With regard to school improvement and school effectiveness research consistently shows that parental engagement is one of the key factors in securing higher student achievement” (Goodall et al., 2010:16). Mncube (2009:96) recommend that, “More should be done in educating educators about parental involvement in schools, and also educating and encouraging parents in participating in school activities.” Mncube further asserts that, “Most parents interviewed indicated that they had not received any training in this regard, particularly in sporting activities, which are new to them.” To make this possible, ways of encouraging parental involvement in school activities should form part of the curriculum of pre-service educators, and existing educators should be given the necessary in-service training.

Interaction between SMTs and parents in enhancing learner academic achievement should not leave out parents from single-family structure. Children from single parent family structures

are major contributors toward many education anomalies and school failure rate, which impact negatively toward the performance of the schools, the whole education system, and the economy of South Africa. The aim of the South African education system is to develop the population and to equip them with competencies and skills that will enable the country to compete with the global economic needs. SMTs need to maintain an egalitarian approach toward collaboration and interaction with parents to ensure that schools remains centres and agents of the transformation process since democracy without education will be useless. Parents irrespective of family structure, SES, age, gender, and physical disabilities should be motivated to involve in their children's education to improve academic performance.

Training and capacitating parents with the education laws will help to alleviate many education ills related to improving learner academic achievement and school performance. Education is a tool to liberate people from all forms of poverty, oppression, slavery, and servitude. "A less educated population and unskilled workforce negatively affect the economy and make it difficult for communities to break aggressive cycles of poverty and crime as resources are consistently depleted. Studies on early childhood development find that adolescent mothers are less likely to older mothers to engage in emotionally supportive and responsive parenting (The Urban Child Institute, 2014)." Increased parental involvement will help to reduce self-inflicted poverty and oppression brought by increased teen pregnancies that have a negative effect on the economy of the country since a lot of money supposed to improve education provisioning through the acquisition of quality teaching and learning resources is channelled to OVC children and children with single parents to provide for their basic life needs.

Quality teaching and learning occur when parents who are perceived as partners in education are engaged in the education of their children to enhance their academic performance. The cruelty of lack of inclusion of parents in children's education in rural schools has devastating effects on the economy and the illiteracy level of South African citizens. SMTs in rural schools and educators should consider that the new laws aimed to eliminate illiteracy and poverty through the provision of quality education. Rural communities nowadays are filled with many unemployable youth roaming the streets without having attained matric due to poor commitment and lack of patriotism to provide quality education through consistent interaction with parents. By allowing them to exercise their democratic rights on their children's education. SMTs need to provide transformational leadership by ensuring that subject teachers at class level involve parents across all domains, and by reporting children's conduct, progress, and promotion to parents, so that parents can assist educators where the need may be with the

correction of unbecoming behaviour that can hamper increased academic performance. Teachers need to respect the rights parents have with respect to the education needs of their children by involving and advising them with subject choice and career opportunities so that they make right decisions about the children's future. In mitigating the unbearable effects and challenges to effective learning encountered by learners from single parent families because of divorce of the parents or loss of a parent due to death, SMTs need to have a link with department of social services or psychologist to give learners and single parents counselling so that they can cope and concentrate on their studies. Familiarizing parents with assessment and evaluation techniques will enable to assist their children at home knowing what the school will expect from their children to respond to exam question.

The trajectories of the modern education laws in improving collaboration and the interaction between SMTs and parents to enhance learner performance is to bring about swift changes in education provisioning by eliminating the injustices of the past regime, which was based on discrimination, the inequitable distribution of resources and misrepresentation. The activities of the apartheid education system in South Africa have left indelible scars that mushrooms into cycles of poverty, diseases, unemployment, and xenophobic wars among Africans battling for limited resources because parents were not given the right or being capacitated to assist teachers to teach children at home and school to influence increase learners school performance. Lack of proper education and skills to cope with employment demands of the modern global economic trends among the African population bearing its origin from harsh discriminatory laws of the past regime. These laws have negatively affected the current level of illiteracy and unemployment among the indigenous African population.

Research already acknowledges that parents should be observed as the first teachers of the children. Charity begins at home. The first learning process as research already postulated starts at home where parents teach their children to talk, to walk and to respect as well as to discern between evil and good. This skills that parents possess in teaching a child from infancy, toddler and childhood stage to perform basic life functions set a mammoth task that must not be underestimated by SMTs, and can be of great value to educators in schools to increase learner academic performance. No matter how illiterate parent may be perceived they possess some skills that professional teacher training and development cannot match to compete their right to be the first teaches and nurtures of child development process. The researcher want to examine and explore the collaborations and interactions of the SMTs and the parents in rural secondary schools of Sekhukhune Limpopo to uncover how learner achievement is enhanced.



This study seeks to establish how professionalism in the education fraternity withheld by school-based management is purposefully utilised to exploit the considerable skills of the unprofessional to build standard of quality in education provisioning. SMTs in schools are the patrons of the delivery of quality teaching and learning by enhancing learner academic performance in schools through consistent influence and the training of other staff members on how they should regularly interact with the parents of the learners to enhance performance. The discourse on policies and laws regarding the delivery of quality teaching and learning campaign should not be seen as mere symbolism by SMTs, teachers, and parents of rural secondary schools of Sekhukhune District. SMTs are grassroots agents of change they should influence others in order to change schools as functional agents of transformation, to keep the wheels of the young democracy rolling toward a competitive global economy.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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### 3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

#### 3.1.1. Research paradigm

“Interpretivism holds the view that reality is multi-perspectival and that the way humans create meaning is by offering accounts of what they do, and this in turn affected by context” (Briggs, 2011:32). “Interpretivism acknowledge that reality is not out there as an amalgam of external phenomena waiting to be uncovered as facts, but a construct in which people understand reality in different ways” (Briggs, 2011:32). “There cannot be an objective reality which exists irrespective of the meaning humans bring to it” (Briggs, 2011:32-35). The rationale for using this method, since the study is qualitative in nature, was to interact with participants in the research process to have the assessed and explored on how participants construct meaning out of the context. The link between the topic under study and the paradigm was that participants might had a different meaning or understanding of the concept of partnership in enhancing learner academic achievement. This study took place in schools as educational institutions where SMTs and parents were involved as participants. The researcher through qualitative case study research method wanted to uncover how different meanings to the context were attached through interaction and collaboration in enhancing learner academic achievement.

#### 3.1.2. Methodology and design

“Methodology is the theory of how researchers gain knowledge in the research context and why” (Briggs, 2011:27). This study employed the qualitative research method incorporated with case study as the research design. Pacho (2015:44) asserts, “Qualitative approach was chosen for this study because it attempts to make sense of people’s experience, perception, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour in a given cultural context.” The rationale behind the use of qualitative research method in this study was to explore the feeling, attitude and perceptions of the participants with regard to collaboration and interaction in enhancing learner academic achievement. I found qualitative methodology appropriate for this study because it could typically be used to answer questions about the complex nature of phenomena. I also wanted to describe and understand the phenomena from the participants’ point of view. Pacho (2015:44) maintains, “Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct and methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or a human problem.” The rationale here is that I wanted to build a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, report

details views of informants, and conducts of the study in a natural setting” (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009:73).

Pacho (2015:44) maintains that, “The purpose of qualitative researchers is to seek a better understanding of complex situations, and their work is often exploratory in nature.” Through interviews and focus group interviews, the research in this study gained understanding of the perceptions and attitudes of the participants’ understanding of the concept of interaction to enhance learner academic achievement. The empiricism and naturalistic point of this study emerged when the researcher interacted with the natural world where participants being SMTs and parents were engaged through interviews and focus group interviews, to establish how they understood the effects of their interactions in learner academic achievement. “Qualitative research is also empirical, inductive, and interpretative of a situation within a specific context” (Pacho, 2015:44).

Maree (2011:78) state, “Qualitative research is based on a naturalistic approach that seeks to study the phenomenon in context on a real world setting and in general whereby the research is carried out in real life situation.” According to Pacho (2015:45) “qualitative researchers have one great advantage over quantitative researchers, as new pieces can be added to the research puzzle or entire new puzzles conjured while we gather data, and this can even occur late in the analysis.” “Qualitative case studies are typically used for exploring an area not previously studied, yet the topic of manufacturing strategies, in general, has been studied intensively for several decades” (Barratt, Thomas, & Li, 2001:329). Srivastava and Thomson (2009:73) claim that, “Quantitative research methodology typically answers where, what, who and when questions.”

“A case study research is a systematic inquiry into an event or set of related events, which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest” (Maree, 2011:75). A case can be something relatively concrete such as an organisation, a group or an individual, or something more abstract such as an event, a management decision or a change programme (Rose et al., 2015:1). This study employed a multiple case study approach in order to understand the similarities and differences between the cases and to ensure that evidence generated is strong and reliable (Gustafsson, 2017:9). The rationale is based on the assumption that the more case studies a research project has, the more likely it is that it is confident and reliable in its representativeness. According to Gustafsson (2017:7) when conducting a case study the

researcher first has to identify the case and the specific type of the case that shall be implemented. The case that I identified in this study is the SMTs and parents of rural public secondary schools of Sekhukhune Limpopo Province to establish how they interact to increase learner achievement. Gustafsson (2017:11) indicates that, “when using a multiple case study it can benefit a researcher enabling him or her to analyse the data within each situation and across different situations.” “The strength of using case study research method is on its use of multiple sources and technique in data collection process” (Maree, 2011). This study employed varied data collection methods which involved interviews, focus group inter views, observations and document analysis. (Pacho, 2015:45) maintains that, “the purpose of a case study is to understand one situation in great depth: a particular individual; programme, or event is studied in depth for a defined period.”

This study was conducted for a period of six moths commencing from the last quarter of 2016 and finished on the first quarter of 2017. During this process I visited each of the participating schools twice in a month. During those visits through observations the researcher collected extensive data on the individuals, programmes, or events on which the investigation was focused. These data often include observations, interviews, documents, past record, and so on. The researcher also recorded details about the context surrounding the case, including information about the physical environment and any historical, economic, and social factors that have bearing on the situation. Pacho (2015:45) contends that, “a case study can promote understanding or inform practice for similar situations.” Pacho (2015:45) state that “This enable the identification and examination of a wide variety of factors that could contribute to a theoretical explanation of the ‘apostolate’ and contributed to developing new directions for understanding the situation and for future research.” Pacho (2015:45) indicates that, “the strength of a case study may also suggest a corresponding weakness.” The link with the topic is that qualitative case study research takes place in a natural world, in which the researcher will interact with participants through questions to uncover how they attach meaning and understanding of PI in learner academic achievement. This will provide the researcher with a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the situation.

### 3.1.3. Sampling

“Sampling refers to a process of selecting a portion of the population for study” (Maree 2011: 79). According to Maree, sampling consists of probability and non-probability sampling methods. Probability sampling includes simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling. “Non-probability sampling includes convenience sampling, quota sampling, purposive sampling, and snowball sampling” (Maree 2011:172-176). The sampling strategy in this study assumed the non-probability sampling method. Non-probability involved the selection of a finite population that was to be studied. I did not involve random selection of population. I purposefully sampled SMTs and parents of Grade 8-12 learners. The rationale was based on the I assumption that SMTs and parents particularly of Grade 8-12 learners had extensive experience of interaction in creating conducive conditions to enhance learner academic achievement. “It is a subjective method used to decide which element is included in the sample” (Lavaskas, 2013). Under non-probability, I used purposive sampling technique. “Purposeful sampling is used for the identification and selection of information rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources” (Palinkas, Green, Wisdom & Hoagwood, 2013).

“Purposeful sampling involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or have experience with a phenomenon of interest” (Palinkas, Green, Wisdom & Hoagwood, 2013). “Besides being knowledgeable and experienced, participant availability and willingness to participate and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner is of paramount importance in purposeful sampling” (Palinkas et al., 2013). In this study I sampled SMTs and parents of Grade 11 learners because they were available and willing to participate in the research project. Pacho (2015:46) asserts, “Participants were selected through purposive sampling in which people or other units are chosen, as the name implies, for a particular purpose.” He states, “The sampling procedure involved the deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possessed, therefore the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who are willing to provide the information by virtue of their knowledge or experience.”

SMTs were purposely sampled because as the management of the school they were perceived to be rich with information relating to interaction and collaboration. Meanwhile parents of Grade 8-12 were also sampled on the basis of the period of exposure to schools and children’s education. I assumed that their long term period as parents in the schools made them suitable

to be involved in the study as they were rich with information regarding interaction and collaboration with the schools. The rationale for using purposive sampling in this study was that a specific group of participants was targeted which I assumed that they are the key holder of the information required to answer the research question. “Samples for qualitative inquiry are generally assumed to be selected purposefully to yield cases that are information rich” (Palinkas, Green, Wisdom & Hoagwood, 2013). From a population of N=33 circuits and N=342 secondary schools in Sekhukhune district Limpopo, six (6n) public secondary schools were purposive sampling sampled. The purposive sampling strategy of the six public secondary schools was based on their history of their performance for past six years in terms of the school performance reports. The rationale for the sampling of public secondary schools in this study was based on the assumption that in South African education system, performance of secondary school learners is evaluated in terms of grade 12 results.

Maree (2011: 79) maintains that, “sampling decisions are made for the explicit purpose of obtaining the richest possible source of information to answer the research question.” From each school in each circuit, the following category of participants based on their demographics were purposively sampled. This included a population of three (3n) SMT members which included HODs, deputy principals, principals and five (5n) parent’s members of grade 8-12 learners. The rationale for purposive sampling of this group of SMT members was based on the assumption that SMTs (HODs, deputy principals and principals) are part of the management of the schools therefore they possessed information that might help in answering the research questions. “However, like other types of non-probability sampling, in this study I had no way of forecasting or guaranteeing that each element of the population was represented in the sample” (Pacho, 2015: 46). This study involved only three SMT members and five parents of Grade 8-12 learners per participating school, some schools had more than three SMT members or parents, therefore I could not generalise that the views of the few SMTs and parents involved were the same as those of the other SMT members not involved in the study. “When purposive sampling is used, some members of the population may possess little or had no chance of being sampled since purposive sampling is deliberately and unashamedly selective and biased” (Pacho, 2015: 46). He further argues that, “The focus of purposive sampling approach is to acquire in depth information from those who are in a position to give it.” The link between purposive sampling method and the topic was that I wanted to obtain rich data regarding how the SMTs and parents in schools interact and collaborate in enhancing learner academic achievement.

## **3.2. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES**

### **3.2.1. Research instruments**

Literature search from various sources including online journals and articles were used, to provide information related to similar research studies previously conducted. Additional information was obtained from the libraries, internet, articles, dissertations, reports and booklets on a variety of subjects were used as fruitful sources of information for this research project. The focus was on acquiring information that was useful to answer the research question. The information collected should be relevant and correct so that the research question could be answered. Pacho (2015:47) maintains that, “data collection instruments refer to the methods researchers use to gather data for a study.” Pacho (2015:47) indicates that, “in qualitative research study, many sources can be used for gathering data; they may use observations, interviews, written documents, audio-visual materials to answer the research question.” The main source of data in this research project included observations, interviews, and focus group interviews conducted at the research sites.

### **3.2.2. Focus group and individual interviews**

“Focus group research is defined as a method of collecting data, in a safe environment, from more than one individual at a time, regarding a specified area of interrogation” (Onwuegbuzie, Leech & Collins, 2010:711). This study involved five parents of Grade 8-12 learner from each school that participated. Focus groups were conducted separately from the interviews of the SMTs. “With regard to focus groups, we identify types of data that can be collected in addition to the actual statements made by the participants” (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2010:711). Beside the information obtained from the focus group interviews the researcher also used observation and document analysis to triangulate the data gathered. Rennekamp and Nall (2008) contends, “Members of a focus group should have some characteristic that they share in common.” My assumption on the participants was that parents of Grade 8-12 learners possessed similar information in relation to their experience of interactions with the schools. They indicate that “focus group members may share common characteristic like having “limited years of service with the organisation.” “Other characteristics used as criteria for determining focus group membership include occupation, past use of a service, age, gender, family characteristics or a combination of these” (Rennekamp & Nall, 2008).

Rennekamp and Nall (2008) suggested that, “Focus group members may be composed of six to twelve people, and are guided through a facilitated discussion, on a clearly defined topic, to gather information about the opinions of the group members.” This study involved five parents of Grade 8-12 learners from each of the six schools involved. The rationale for involving a minimum number of five parents in this study was based on my assumption that parents in rural schools are difficult to find. However this did not limit the number of parents that participating schools invited to involve in the study. In some of the participating schools due to non-availability and poor responses of the parents to school invitations I resorted to emergent sampling approach taking advantage of what the context provided to find answers to the research questions. Rennekamp and Nall (2008) suggest that, “Focus group interview can be conducted around a large table or with participants seated in a circle of chairs therefore participants are typically given name tags to wear, and that “a moderator welcomes the group and asks a series of six to ten open-ended questions. An assistant moderator or recorder takes notes.” All of the parents sampled from each of the six schools were interviewed at the same time in each school. I prepared twenty two pre-determined open-ended questions for the focus group interview process. The rationale for posing this number of questions was to engage the participants into a more talk action, to make them feel relieved so that more clarity and responses should be given on the issue of their interactions with SMTs to increase learner achievement. The six groups of parents were interviewed with the same set of questions. The researchers used tape recorder and a video camera to capture the interview process.

According to Rennekamp and Nall (2008), “the discussion is often tape-recorded for later playback and that it is important, however, to let participants know that they are being recorded.” Rennekamp and Nall (2008) posit that “focus group interviews typically last no longer than 90 minutes in length.” Each focus group interview in each school took 60 minutes. They state that, “The goal of a focus group is to promote self-disclosure among participants because a group, rather than an individual, is asked to respond to questions, therefore dialogue tends to take on a life of its own.” Individual parents participant in each group were motivated to give their own personal views. “The rationale for using a focus group is based on the assumption that group interactions will be productive in increasing the responses of the participants, activating forgotten experiences, and realising inhibitions that may discourage participants from disclosing information” (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2010). The researcher assumed that when parents are interviewed in groups they would be motivated to participate in responding to research questions so that every parents’ point of view could be



captured in related to the researcher question. Secondly, “focus groups produce data rich in detail that is difficult to achieve with other research methods” (Maree, 2011:90).

Onwuegbuzie, Leech, and Collins (2010) claims, “The importance of using focus group in qualitative research: First, “focus groups are economical; second, using focus groups might increase the number of participants in the study; fourth, the interaction among participants can be identified through focus groups; fifth, “focus groups have high face validity.” The five (5n) parent’s participant to be elected for this study in each participating school, will be engaged in focus group interview guide. I assumed that when focus group was used all of the parent participants in each school were to be interviewed at once, therefore considerable amount of time would be saved because every participant had chance to respond. “All responses were be noted and recorded to help the researcher during data analysis stage” (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2010). The purpose of conducting individual interviews was to allow me the opportunity to gain more insight of the parent participant’s own opinions on the issue of interacting with SMTs to improve learner academic achievement. This study cherished the idea that when parents and SMTs work together putting the child in the centre, learner achievement would significantly be improved. Parents were viewed as being important in influencing higher learner academic achievement.

### **3.2.3. Focus group interview guide**

This study followed suggestions laid down by Laforest (2009:2-4) in conducting a focus group interview process. Laforest (2009:2-4) suggests that, “In designing the interview guide, concepts to be investigated must clearly be defined and questions that captured the aim of the study will be identified.” Laforest (2009:2-4) indicates that, “questions must carefully be phrased prior the focus group interviews, to elicit the maximum amount of information.” He further suggests that there is a “need for cautiousness to ensure that no leading questions are used.” He points out that “open-ended questions that allow respondents to describe their views must be used.” This study used open ended questions. Participants were free to respond to express their own point of view on how they understood the interaction process with the SMTs in enhancing learner academic achievement.

Laforest indicates that, “The interview process need to start with questions, which are more significant and then be followed by those that are less significant toward the end of the interview process.” In this study each focus group interview process with the parents was initiated with questions that were easy to answer the reason was that the researcher wanted to

draw the attention and interest of the parents to get involved and participate in responding to the questions. Finally he state that “The researcher have to introduce himself or herself clearly and explain the goals and objectives of the interview, as well as the ground rules for participation, during his introduction.” During the interview processes, before the researcher could start with the interrogations he cordially introduced himself and explained to the participants why he invited them to be involved in the research project. I further indicated to the participants the importance prompted the research project to take place. I also aroused the interest of the participants by reflecting on the performance of the learners in rural secondary schools of Sekhukhune Limpopo Province.

#### **3.2.4. Limitation of focus group interview**

Masuku (2011:187) identified, the following disadvantages of focus group interview: “The number of questions that could be asked should be greatly restricted in the group setting because the available responsive time should be limited in order to hear the viewpoints of everyone involved.” “Confidentiality could not be guaranteed, hence controversial and highly personal issues would not be very suitable in focus group interviews. In this regard, the prevailing political climate of suspicion and distrust could have exercised an inhibiting effect on the participants.” He indicates that “during focus group interviews, those who realized that their viewpoint was a minority perspective may not be inclined to speak and risk a negative reaction from other group members.” Masuku (2011:187) pointed out that, “focus group interviews were only beneficial for the identification of major themes, but not really for the microanalysis of subtle differences and hence were triangulated strictly. He finally indicated that, “topics of focus group interview were narrowly focused; usually, seek reactions to certain phenomena instead of exploring complex life issues in depth and in details. In this study, individual interviews were also used to overcome such limitation.”

#### **3.2.5. Developing questions for focus groups**

Rennekamp and Nall (2008) contend that, “There are different types of general questions used in focus group interviews (see Annexures 3 and 7).” They are typically arranged in the same order as presented below: “Opening questions are used to get people talking and feeling comfortable.” He indicate that, “They should be easy to answer, but should not emphasize differences among group members, and that introductory questions are used to “get the group to start thinking about the topic at hand (see Annexures 3 and 7).” They say, “They help to focus the conversation.” They also talked about Transition questions these questions “provide

a link between the introductory questions and the key questions.” They posit that “they typically ask participants to go into more depth than introductory questions.” They indicate that “key questions focus on the major areas of concern and that, the majority of the time is devoted to discussions of these questions (see Annexures 3 and 7).” Lastly they indicate that “ending questions bring the session to closure. They allow participants to identify the most important aspects that were discussed (see Annexures 3 and 7).” They contend, “Ending questions include the following: the summary question, which is asked after the researcher, has given a short summary of the significant ideas of the discussion.” Rennekamp and Nall (2008) state that, “There is a need to “confirmed whether the summary is adequate; and the final question, which follows an overview of the purpose of the study by the moderator, in order for participants to confirm if everything considered important has been covered.”

### **3.2.6 INTERVIEWS**

Maree (2011:87) defined interviews as “a two-way communication in which the interviewer asks the participants questions to collect data and to learn about the beliefs, views, opinions and behaviour of the participants.” Onwuegbuzie, Leech and Collins (2010) believe that, “nonverbal communication also can be important for attaining a deeper shared meaning, in which both the interviewer and interviewee increase their awareness of the contextual nature of the voice.” They posit that, “Non-verbal communication and speech combined often interact in a way that increases *Verstehen*, with nonverbal communication (e.g., facial expression, hand gesture) clarifying the meaning of words spoken, and words clarifying the meaning of nonverbal communication.”

Onwuegbuzie, Leech, and Collins (2010) state four basic modes of “nonverbal communication: (a) proxemics (i.e., use of interpersonal space to communicate attitudes); (b) chronemic (i.e., use of pacing of speech and length of silence in conversation); (c) kinesic (i.e., body movements or postures); and (d) paralinguistic (i.e., all variations in volume, pitch, and quality of voice).” During the interview process the researcher was busy examining the nonverbal communication of the participants. In this study participant felt uneasy to respond to some of the question. In case where participant failed to respond the researcher examined their faces to establish the nature if it was link to fear or lack of knowledge in relation questions asked. “The rationale behind using interviews is to help the researcher to see the participants create their own meaning to the context through interaction in enhancing learner achievement” (Maree, 2011:87).

Creswell (2014:191) asserts, “Interviews are useful when the participants cannot be observed, participants can provide historical information, and allow research control over the line of questions.” The rationale for the researcher to have used pre-determined open ended research questions was to uncover what the researcher had no opportunity to observe in relation to participant interaction in the contexts. Participants gave their own oral inputs and comments on the research question. They also gave information that helped to shed more light and information to answer the research question. I also accommodated questions that aroused from the research process that had direct influence and related to the information required to answer the research question. Data was recorded through note taking and video recording so that the I would be able to replay the recordings to analyse the responses made and for the final drawing of conclusion about participants in relation to the research question.

### **3.2.6.1. Selection of interview location**

The interview process of the participating parents was carried out at the schools after necessary arrangements were made with the school principals. Laforest (2009:2-4) suggest that, “The seating arrangements should be in such a way that participants would be able to relax. “The place selected should be neutral, confidential, comfortable, quiet, free of distractions, and easily accessible for the participants” (Laforest, 2009:2-4). In all of the participating schools parents were interviewed in a separate room. In some schools the interviews were conduct outside due to lack of accommodation. This was a challenge because the process was not free from distraction by learners loitering outside, however the participants were seated in such a way that the recorder could be able to capture any single response given without distraction.

### **3.2.6.2 Semi-structured interview**

Laforest (2009:2-4) proposed that, “Semi-structured interviews should be used to gather qualitative information.” In this study I used pre-determined semi-structured open-ended questions for both interviews and focus group interviews, to have participant interrogated to uncover how they interacted in order to create meaningful relationships to enhance learner performance. According to Laforest (2009:2-4) the “interviews of this type are suited to work with small samples and are useful for studying specific situations or for supplementing and validating information derived from other sources used for making safety diagnoses.” Laforest (2009:2-4) indicates that, “Key informants from a community under study are privileged witnesses, or people who, because of their position, activities, or responsibilities have a good understanding of the problem to be explored.”

According to Laforest (2009:2-4), “these witnesses are not necessarily members of the population targeted by the study, but they all have a major interest in that population.” This study purposively sampled ordinary parents of Grade 8-12 learners. The rationale was that, I wanted to find out how parents who are not members of the SGB are involved in the academic activities of the children to enhance learner achievement. He states that: “Semi-structured interviews can be a way of capturing concerns and perceptions of groups that have not been contacted with other data collection methods. Laforest further recommends that, “The stakeholders or the list of community organizations be consulted to identify key informants. Due to time factor the researcher in this study did not get the opportunity to extend invitation of other stakeholders to participate in the research process. The focus group interviews with parents were audio-taped and notes were taken. Notes helped in capturing nonverbal communication. Before the interview process was started participants were informed at the beginning of the interview process that the discussion would be recorded, in order to have everyone’s comments captured.

### **3.2.6.3 Interviewing participants**

Laforest (2009:2-4) believed that, “Semi-structured interviews should last from 60 to 90 minutes. The reason for this was that sixty-minute interviews were perfectly acceptable and ensured that neither the interviewer nor the respondent should not lose their concentration”.

### **3.2.6.4 Preparing the interview process**

Laforest (2009:2-4) contends that, “When preparing the interview process the following suggestions must be adhered to: firstly, the researchers should “study the interview plans (see Annexures 8 and 9).” Secondly, “decide which questions are most appropriate for the respondent or prepare new ones (see Annexures 8 and 9).” Thirdly, “Draw up a consent form specifying the rules of the interview and the confidentiality commitment, or adapt the sample form given in (annexures 6 and 7).” In this study I issued participants who were free to volunteer their participation with consent forms to fill. I informed that they were not legally bound to the research project and that they were free to withdraw at any time they wish. Fourthly, “Contact the respondent; explain the goal of the interview and the safety diagnosis project, obtain his or her permission.” Before the actual interview process could start I made contact with the participants to inform them about the date and time of the interview process. During the interview before the actual interrogation process could start I explained to the participants the purpose of the researcher project. Fifthly, “Schedule an appointment and agree

on where the interview should be held; the place selected should be neutral, confidential, comfortable, quiet, free of distractions, and easily accessible for the respondent. If necessary, send the consent form and the interview plan to the respondent; if necessary, prepare equipment for recording the interview.” Sixth, “Contact the respondent again to confirm the date and location of the interview.” I used video recorder to capture the interview process.

### **3.2.6.5 Initiating interviews**

According to Laforest (2009:2-4), “it is highly recommended that interviews be taped (with a digital or other type of tape recorder), even if they will not be transcribed in full.” He point out that “taping can only be done with the prior approval of the respondent (see annexures 6 and 7) and if he/she refuses, notes must be taken instead.” During this research project the participants were informed that the interview process would be video recorded. Laforest (2009:2-4) suggests the following when initiating the interview process: “Start the interview with a general; open-ended question; Ask as few questions as possible; the respondent should do most of the talking.” The researcher gave the participants ample time to respond to the questions to elaborate their own views and understanding in relation the research questions. He indicates that “referring (anonymously, of course) to statements made in other interviews or to findings based on other data sources as a good way to encourage respondents to express themselves.” I used to give participants examples of what other research studies said about interaction of parents and SMTs in learner education.

The rational was to motivate the participants and to have them encouraged to give more responses during the interview process. He indicates that, “It is also useful for validating information already gathered and respect the respondent’s pace and do not be afraid of pauses or silences.” He point out that “interviewers should not judge what respondents say; they must keep the interview focused on the topics previously defined.” Laforest (2009:2-4) states that, “One has to refrain from suggesting answers and be careful not to ask leading questions, and there is a need to “be careful not to ask closed questions that leave respondents no room to elaborate and that can slow the interview’s pace.” Finally he state that one must “be sure to cover all of the pertinent topics included in the interview plan. Ask clear and direct questions such as how, Where, When, Who, What, Why, and How much. In addition, how many? (See Annexure 8 and 9).” The predetermined open ended research questions consists of a varied of questions that aimed at uncovering what participants knew and what were they used to do to interact with to enhance learner academic achievement. Laforest (2009:2-4) indicates that, “If

necessary, formulate questions so that informants answer on behalf of the people they represent; Listen carefully to all answers and ask more questions to obtain additional information; lastly, ensure that key informants thoroughly understand each question.” I ensured understanding of participants by repeating questions so that participants might not give irrelevant responses. When questions were repeated the participant had clear focus of what the research questions was expecting how they were supposed to respond to them.

Masuku (2011:184) argued that, “When interviewing participants we cannot observe everything such as the feelings, thoughts, intentions, and behaviours that have occurred at some previous point in time.” He point out that, “interviews enable the researcher to learn about the complexities of participants’ experiences from their points of view.” Masuku (2011:187) state that, “The goal of an interview is to understand the participants’ experiences and perceptions related to a given situation in a nonthreatening way, so that the meanings emerge, develop and are shaped by and in turn, shape the discourse.” Masuku (2011:187) posits, “The researcher wanted to talk interactively with participants, ask questions, listen to them, gain access to their accounts and circumstances, and analyse their use of language and construction of discourse on the phenomenon researched.” According to Masuku (2011:187), “using interviewing enables the researcher to conceptualise himself or herself as active in data generation, which is preferable to trying to remain neutral in data collection.” Masuku (2011:187) point out that, “Qualitative interviewing permitted the verbatim recording of responses. Interviews allowed the researcher to clarify certain issues and probe further for more information.”

#### **3.2.6.6 Concluding interviews**

Interviewers or the researcher thank the participants for participating in the study and explain how the results would be sent to them after data analysis was completed. Soon after the interview, I summarise what the respondent said and wrote down my impressions and any things that stood out. I agree with Laforest (2009:4) when he showed the importance of this process and stated that “This made it easier to transcribe and analyse the interview”

#### **3.2.7 TAPE RECORDING**

Briggs (2012:274) notes that, “Recording of the interview ensures that the richness of the individual statements is not lost and that answers can be retained.” During the process of this research project the researcher used both video and audio recordings. The advantage of using video and audio has been outlined by Briggs. Another advantage of using tape recording was

to save time and enabled the researcher to reflect on the interview process data was analysed. The recordings helped me to identify gaps that need to be explored in a follow-up interview.

### **3.2.8 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

Masuku (2011:190) cites, “Documents are an important source of data common in most schools and provide evidence and details of personal and professional lives of school personnel.” Document analysis was focused on observation of document such as the school year plan; attendance registers; minutes of meetings about learner performance and progress; records for collection of learner reports by parents; school policy action plan on PI as well as result analysis of each grade to ensure trustworthiness and credibility of data collected from participants. The use of document analysis provided me with an opportunity to compare the findings from the interview process with the information obtained from the documents used as guidelines for daily practice. Creswell (2014:191-192) posits that, “The advantages of using document analysis include: enabling the research to obtain the language of the participants, can be accessed at a time convenient to researcher, represent data which participants have given attention, as written evidence it saves the researcher time and expense of transcribing.” Masuku (2011:191) says, “Document analysis should be aimed at augmenting data obtained through observations and interviews.” He indicated that “Data obtained from documents were required to reveal those aspects of the study that would have occurred prior to the investigations and the goals or directions that might have been taken.” According to Masuku, (2011:191) “documentary analysis gives the researcher an epistemological position, which suggests that texts, written records, visual documents, artefacts, and phenomena can provide or count as evidence of the ontological properties.”

### **3.2.9 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION**

Creswell (2014:190) defined observation as “when the researcher takes field notes on the behaviour and activities of the individuals at the research site.” According to Creswell, “qualitative researcher may also engage in roles varying from non-participant to complete participant.” Pacho (2015:50) state, “Participant observation as a period of intense social interaction between the researcher and the subjects, during which data are unobtrusively and systematically collected.” He also says, “During this period, social researchers immerse themselves in the lives and situations of the people they wish to understand; they share life with them and even empathize with them.” My in this study remained as a complete observer of the participant activities. I recorded in a structured and unstructured way using semi-



structured predetermined questions that were posed to uncover the realities of persistent engagement to enhance learner's academic performance. I also observed meetings between parents and SMTs in each participating school and the strategies that each school use to reach parents of the learners in improving learner academic achievement. "The researcher during this study asked general open-ended question to allow the participant to freely, provide their own oral account, views and opinions" (Creswell, 2014:190).

"During the observations process the researcher had the following advantages as out lined by Creswell (2014:191), firstly: "The researcher had first-hand experience with the participants; the researchers recorded the information as it was occurring; thirdly, the researcher noticed unusual aspects during observation, and this was found useful in exploring topics, which were uncomfortable to participants" "The rationale for the researcher to use observations in this study was that, it was used as a research instrument because of the importance of the social setting and the researcher's interest to find out more about what happened in it" (Creswell, 2014:191). The following advantages of qualitative observations are cited by Masuku (2011:181) firstly, "observations enabled the researcher to understand and capture the context within which people interact." Secondly, "Participant observations provided the researcher with the first-hand experience of a setting and this allowed the researcher to be open, discovery-oriented, and inductive because the researcher did not have to depend on the prior conceptualisation of the setting."

Masuku indicated that, "Getting close to the people in a setting through the first-hand experience would allow the researcher to draw on personal knowledge during the formal interpretation stage of analysis." Thirdly, he pointed out that, "Observational fieldwork afforded the researcher with the opportunity to view things that might have routinely escaped out from awareness among the people in the setting." "Direct observations also gave the researcher the opportunity to learn things that participants would otherwise be reluctant and shy to talk about in an interview due to their sensitivity" (Masuku, 2011:181). "Observation enabled the researcher to have a 'direct line' with the processes and outcomes of an intervention (Masuku, 2011:181)." "Participant observations helped the researcher to gather knowledge and evidence of the social and natural world setting by participating and experiencing "natural or real" life settings or interactive situations" (Masuku, 2011:181).

"The rationale for the adoption of observations during this research project was based on the assumption that not all knowledge could be pronounced, accounted or constructed during the

interview process, therefore meaningful knowledge should be generated by observing phenomena” (Masuku, 2011:181). Masuku (2011:182-183) listed “five limitations associated with using participant observations that the researcher should take into consideration.” “First, the researcher as the main instrument may lose objectivity and focus by becoming emotionally involved with participants.” Secondly, “The researcher may have difficulty in participating and taking detailed field notes simultaneously.” Thirdly, “The researcher may not be there at the time of a spontaneous occurrence, which may be of interest.” Fourthly, Masuku stated that, “Observations are limited to the duration of the event and therefore, life histories cannot be obtained through observations.” Finally, “There are situations that are taboo for observations.” “The latter two were of particular importance to this study because the researcher could not stay in the schools for as long as he would prefer to because of time was a limiting factor.”

Masuku revealed, “The researcher could found a lot of relevant information on the theme of the research utilising observation as a data gathering method.” “Due to the limitations indicated by Masuku above, the researcher also used qualitative interviewing of the participants during the research process as alternative methods of data collection to argument the data collected through observations.” Although observations were used in this study as an alternative method to supplementing other data collection methods, it provided little empirical data on the real life activities of the participants’ interaction with the context to create meaningful interaction that to enhance learner academic achievement. It had the advantage of giving the researcher the opportunity to see and obtain first-hand information about the real life interactions at the research site.

### **3.3. DATA ANALYSIS**

Frederick (2013) states that, “data analysis stage is the period when power seems to return to the interviewer; here the interviewer recast the story into a new historical and socio-cultural context.” During data analysis staged I repeatedly listened to the video recordings to capture what the responded were saying during the interview process. Maree (2011:99) postulates that, “When qualitative data analysis was carried out after each interview process the main aim of the researcher was to get summary of what was seen, observed and heard during the site visits. I also wanted to establish patterns that would help in understanding and interpreting of what had emerged during the interview process.” This study adopted thematic data analysis method. Braun and Clarke (2012:57) defined thematic data analysis as “a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data

set.” During the interview process I attempted to identify, organise and classified themes and patterns that seemed to similar. The rationale for this identification, organisation and classification was helped me to develop themes and codes that would form the basis of data analysis stage. “This method, then, is a way of identifying what is common to the way a topic is talked or written about and of making sense of those commonalities” (Braun & Clarke, 2012:57).

The rationale for using thematic analysis in this study was on the fact that it “was found to be suitable to a wide range of research interests and theoretical perspectives (Braun & Clarke, 2012:57). I observed thematic analyses to be a useful basic method since it was believed to be able to work with a wide range of research questions. Thematic was assumed to work in a variety of research interests including people’s experiences or understandings to those about the representation and construction of particular phenomena in particular contexts” (Braun & Clarke, 2012:57). Various research questions used during this research project were designed in such a way that that they would uncover various experiences and perceptions of the participants in relation to their interactions and collaborations in schools to support learners education. According to Braun and Clarke (2012:57), “thematic analyses can be used to analyse different types of data, from secondary sources such as media to transcripts of focus groups or interviews.” “It works with large or small data-sets and it can be applied to produce data-driven or theory-driven analyses” (Clarke, & Braun, 2013:4).

Laforest (2009:5) suggested the following tips when doing data analysis: firstly, “transcribe and reread the tape recordings or notes made during the interviews.” This was congruent with the my actions during the data analyses stage of this research project data on the video tapes was read and reread so that a clear picture of the participants’ views and opinions could be obtained. He point out that “since transcribing recordings in their entirety can be a cumbersome task, a compromise solution is to simply identify and write down the main themes that emerge as you listen to the tapes.” Secondly, he suggests that, “the information gathered should be classified using an analytical framework based on the topics discussed by the participants during the interviews process.” Thirdly, “answer the question “What?” For example, what were the principal problems raised by the participants? Fourthly, identify the main ideas expressed for each topic.” Fifthly, “identify the most important points and classify them by the topic/title of the study.” Lastly, “validate the findings among the members of the project team and with other designated authorities.”

According to Rennekamp and Nall (2008) “analysis of focus group data involves three steps: indexing, management and interpretation.” Rennekamp and Nall (2008) point out that, “The language used and the content should be thoroughly examined.” “Repetition, explanation, justification, vernacular terms, implicit and explicit assumptions, and new phrases will be highlighted.” “The themes were then compared and consolidated, including repetition in the themes across participants.” The collection and analysis of data helped me to make adjustments and tested emerging concepts, themes and categories against the subsequent data. Rennekamp and Nall (2008) believe that, “Building of themes enabled the researcher to build a coherent interpretation of the data that was collected, and provided an opportunity for the researcher to generate insight into the data.” They asserts, “After the completing the analysis a written report of the study should be prepared and discussed with key stakeholders.” They indicates, “The report should often include the purpose of the study, description of the procedure used, summary of the findings, and the implications of those findings often presented as recommendations.” According to Rennekamp and Nall, “In the summary of the findings, data should frequently be organized around the initial questions, which were to be answered by the focus group study.” I tried to build themes which had direct link to the research question the rationale being to avoid deviation and to keep the researcher focused the aim of the research question.

Bernard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure, and Chadwick, (2008:429) contend that, “Two fundamental approaches to analysing qualitative data; the deductive approach and the inductive approach.” According to Bernard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure, and Chadwick (2008:429), deductive approaches involve “using a structure or predetermined framework to analyze data. They indicate that, “Essentially, the researcher imposes their own structure or theories on the data and then use these to analyse the interview transcripts.” They mention that, “This approach is useful in studies where researchers are already aware of probable participant responses.” They state that, “The disadvantage of using this approach is that it is inflexible and can potentially bias the whole analysis process as the coding framework has been decided in advance, which can severely limit theme and theory development.”

Bernard et al., (2008:429) state that, “The inductive approach involves analyzing data with little or no predetermined theory, structure, or framework and uses the actual data itself to derive the structure of analysis.” According to Bernard et al (2008:429) “this approach is comprehensive and therefore time-consuming and is most suitable where little or nothing is known about the study phenomenon.” “They indicate that “the inductive analysis is the most

common approach used to analyze qualitative data and is, therefore, the focus of this paper.” Srivastava and Hopwood (2009:77) posit, “Inductive analysis means that the patterns, themes, and categories of analysis come from the data; they emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis.” In this study I followed an inductive data analysis process. Themes and codes used to analyse the data collected originated from the data. Srivastava and Hopwood (2009:77) state, “Interview transcripts, field notes, and observations provide a descriptive account of the study, but they do not provide explanations therefore it is the responsibility of the researcher to summarize and provide explanation.” Data collected through audio and video recording was transcribed and converted into text, which was finally developed into codes or themes. Recurring data was classified under one theme. I finally provided descriptive account of the data presented.

### **3.4. CREDIBILITY**

Anney (2014: 276) defined “credibility as the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings and established whether the research findings represent plausible information drawn from the participants’ original data.” Credibility of the findings in this qualitative research project was involved when the results of the research were compared and triangulated with the findings generated through other research methods employed. According to Anney, “This depends on the richness of the information collected, rather than the amount of data gathered.” Anney indicates that, “This involves triangulation through multiple analysis and member checks where the participants or readers are the ones who can judge the credibility of the results.” During the interview processes I used to request the participants to repeat what they said. Anney (2014:276) contends, “Qualitative researcher establishes rigour of the inquiry by adopting the following credibility strategies: prolonged and varied field experience, time sampling, reflexivity (field journal), triangulation, member checking, peer examination, interview technique, establishing authority of researcher and structural coherence, interpretation of the participants’ original views.” I managed to spent considerable amount of time in each research site by interacting with the participants through open-ended research questions. I also used filter and follow up questions to ensure that I follow what the participants were saying.

Anney (2014:276) points out that, “Prolonged engagement in field or research site when conducting qualitative research data collection requires the researcher’s self to immerse him or herself in the participants’ world.” According to Anney, this “help the researcher to gain an

insight into the context of the study, which minimizes the distortions of information that might arise due to the presence of the researcher in the field.” In this study I took time engaging with participants to ensure credibility of the findings. Anney suggests that, “The researcher’s extended time in the field improves the trust of the respondents and provides a greater understanding of participants’ culture and context.” He indicated that the researcher has to ensure “the use of peer debriefing to provide him or her with the opportunity to test their growing insights and to expose themselves to searching questions.”

“A qualitative researcher during the research process is required to seek support from other professionals willing to provide scholarly guidance, such as members of academic staff, the postgraduate dissertation committee, and the department” (Anney, 2014:276). In this project I used to get assistance from the academic staff members of the faculty of education of the registered institution. Sometimes support was obtained from the supervisor. Feedback from the academic staff helped to improve the quality of the results and findings of the research project. “A qualitative researcher, when writing his/her report should present his/her findings to peers to receive their comments” (Anney, 2014:276). During the final compilation of this research project the supervisor and the academic staff members were persistently engaged to provide their support. The perceptions and view point of the academic staff member were central in developing the conclusions of this research project.

### **3.5. TRIANGULATION**

Anney (20014: 277) and also Lacey and Luff (2009:27) defined triangulation as “a method that involve the use of multiple and different methods, investigators, sources and theories to obtain corroborating evidence”. “Triangulation helps the investigator to reduce bias and it cross-examines the integrity of participants’ responses” (Anney, 20014:277). Crewel (2104) “recommends the use of multiple approaches, and these should enhance the researcher’s ability to assess the accuracy of findings as well as convince readers of that accuracy.” Crewel (2014) suggested strategies through which data should be validated. Firstly, with triangulation he postulates that, “Themes are established based on converging several sources of data or perspectives from participants, then this process can be claimed as adding to the validity of the study”. Secondly he point out, “Member checking to determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings through taking the final report or specific descriptions or themes back to participants and determining whether these participants feel that they are accurate.”

According to Anney (2014:277) member checks mean that the “data and interpretations are continuously tested as they are derived from members of various audiences and groups from which data are solicited.” Creswell (2014) states, “This procedure can involve conducting a follow-up interview with participants in the study and providing an opportunity for them to comment on the findings.” Thirdly, Creswell (2014) talked about “rich and thick description.” He asserts that, “This description may transport readers to the setting and give the discussion an element of shared experiences.” He states that, “When qualitative researchers provide detailed descriptions of the setting, for example, or offer many perspectives about a theme, the results become more realistic and richer.”

In this study, the data collected through the use of interviews, observations and document analysis methods. The data was compared with data obtained from the interviews and document analysis to ascertain if there was no deviation from credibility and reliability. I also ensured that triangulation of sources involved checking members for consistency of different data obtained through observation, individual and focus group interviews and document analysis. The information collected was compared and double checked to confirm if there was relationship between the data.

### **3.6. CONFORMABILITY**

Anney (2014:279) identified, “Conformability as the degree to which the results of an inquiry could be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers.” Conformability looks at how the research findings are supported by the data collected. Anney (2014:279) states that, “This is the process to establish whether the researcher has been biased during the research process.” This author believes that, “Conformability is “concerned with establishing that data and interpretations of the findings are not figments of the inquirer’s imagination, but are clearly derived from the data.” He speaks of, “audit trial of the study to demonstrate how each decision has been made, and it involves an examination of the inquiry process and product to validate the data, whereby a researcher accounts for all the research decisions and activities to show how the data were collected, recorded and analyzed.” “In order for an auditor to conduct a thorough audit trial, the following documents should be kept for crosschecking the inquiry process: raw data, interview, and observation notes, documents, and records collected from the field, test scores, and others (Anney, 2014:279).” Data collected and analysed including the data collection tool used would be handed to the university. The supervisor and colleagues

would be invited to confirm and corroborate the data to establish that data analysed and presented originated from the participants involved.

### **3.7. GETTING FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS**

Matthew and Huberman (2014:309) contend that, “Local participants can act as judges, evaluating the major findings of a study through what has been colloquially labelled member checking.” To ensure trustworthiness of the data collected, “I used member checks to verify understanding.” “I also verified raw data by submitting note transcripts to the participants to verify correctness and errors.” Miles and Huberman (2014:309) posit, “Participants were allowed to make comments on the summary of findings, evaluating the accuracy and assess the research findings, interpretations, verifying researcher predictions and conclusions expressed during the interview.” “Giving feedback in the course of the study changed participants’ actions or perspectives, which were the main goal of the study” (Matthew & Huberman, 2014:309).

### **3.8. TRUSTWORTHINESS/RELIABILITY/DEPENDABILITY/AUDITABILITY**

“Trustworthiness refers to when multiple methods of data collection such as observations, interviews, and document analysis are used” (Maree, 2011:80). To generate trustworthiness of the data collected multiple methods of data gathering were adopted. This included individual interviews, focus group interviews, observations, and document analysis. Data collected through this methods was compared to generate trustworthiness of the findings. Maree (2011:215) defined reliability as “the use of the same instrument at different times or administered to different subjects from the same population.” The core issue here was on whether the research process was consistent, reasonably stable over time and across researchers and methods. “Reliability address issues of quality and integrity by having things done with reasonable care, and to ensure whether a research study is reliable, dependable and auditable” (Matthew and Huberman, 2014:312). They suggest that, “The research questions need to be clear and the features of the study design are congruent with them.” They indicates that, “The researcher’s role and status within the site should be explicitly described, and that data need to be collected across a full range of appropriate settings, times, respondents, and so on, as suggested by the research questions and that data quality checks must be made.” They also suggested that, “Forms of peer or colleague review must be in place.” Anney (2014:278) contends, “Dependability involves participants evaluating the findings and the interpretation and recommendations of the study to make sure that they are supported by the data received from the informants of the study.”



The main research question of this study was: what was the role of the SMTs and parents in enhancing academic achievement of rural secondary school children? I assumed that the question was clear because it was focused on the following key elements: the role of the SMTs involvement, the role of parents, and learner academic achievement. The study needed to explore and examine the role of SMTs in involving parents and the impact on learner academic achievement. My role as a researcher was explicitly a complete observer of the process of interaction of SMTs and parents in learner education to enhance academic achievement. The sampling procedures as discussed above gave details of the samples and data collection sites. To ensure reliability I used the same research instrument and data collection tools were used during the interrogation process of all participants of the sampled schools involved in the study.

### **3.9. RESEARCHER EFFECTS AND BIASES**

Matthew and Huberman (2014:296) observed that, “In conducting social research, a researcher is likely to create social behavior in others that would not have occurred ordinarily.” “That the behavior, in turn, can lead to bias, observation, and inference, thus confounding (an appropriate term in this instance) the natural characteristics of the setting with the artificial effects of the researcher–researchee relationship. “They contends that, “Biases in a qualitative research study may assume the following patterns: *firstly, the holistic fallacy*, which involves interpreting events as more, patterned and congruent than they really are.” Secondly, they talk about “Elite bias, which involves overweighting data from articulate, well-informed, usually high-status participants and underrepresenting data from less articulate, lower status ones.” Thirdly, they indicate personal bias, “the researcher’s personal agenda, personal demons, or personal axes to grind which skew the ability to represent and present fieldwork and data analysis in a trustworthy manner. They talked about “going native, by losing your perspective or your ‘bracketing’ ability, being co-opted into the perceptions and explanations of local participants.”

#### **3.9.1. Avoiding biases originating from researcher effects on the site**

Matthew and Huberman (2014:298) suggested that, “in avoiding biases originating from researcher effects a researcher should to stay on-site as long as possible and spend some time simply hanging around.” They indicated that, “The researcher need to fit into the landscape, taking a lower profile and use unobtrusive measures such as reading the site’s publicly accessible documents.” Each school participated in the research project was visited twice before the actual interview process could start. The rationale for this process was to obtain a clear insight of the realities of the sites visited in order to eliminate bias during that would

emerge from the response of the participants during the interview process. They said, “The researcher should make sure that his/her intentions are clear for participants including why you are there, what you are studying, how you will collect information, and what you will do with it.” They indicated that “The researcher needs to consider co-opting a participant -asking that person to be attentive to his/her influence on the site and its inhabitants.” They say, “The researcher must do some of his/her interviews off-site in a congenial social environment (cafe, restaurant, participant’s home), by way of reducing both your threat quotient and your exoticism.” Lastly, they indicate that, “The researcher must not inflate the potential problem because he/she is not really such an important presence in the lives of these people.” I asked questions and listened carefully to all responses from the participants. The responses were noted and recorded so that I could generate themes for data analysis.

### **3.9.2. Avoiding biases stemming from the effects of the site on the researcher**

Matthew and Huberman (2014:296) stated, in avoiding biases stemming from the effects of the site on the researcher, the researcher should to firstly, “Avoid the elite bias by spreading out your participants.” The sitting arrangement of the participant during the research process was determined by the size of the accommodation in which the interview process took place. In some instances participants were seated comfortably around tables and the accommodation had enough space to allow movement. Some schools did not have enough accommodation interview process were held outside. In this case participants were seated in a way that they could not influence each other to create biasness. Secondly, “Include lower status participants and people outside the focus of your study (peripheral or former actors).” Thirdly, “Avoid co-operation or going native by spending time away from the site.”

Fourthly, “Spread out your site visits by making sure to include dissidents, cranks, deviants, marginal, isolated people with different points of view from the mainstream, people less committed to tranquillity and equilibrium in the setting.” This study involved schools which are in three different circuits of Sekhukhune Limpopo being: Malegale; Ngwaabe; and Mmashadi. These schools were situated in distanced geographic locations. Most of these schools serve marginalised poor rural communities. The distance between the sampled schools helped me to experience less bias of the responses from the participants. I paid visits to the schools in different dates and times. Fifthly, “Keep thinking conceptually and translate sentimental or interpersonal thoughts into more theoretical ones.” Sixth, “Consider finding a participant who agrees to provide background and historical information for you and to collect information

when you are off-site (such co-optation may be more useful, in bias-reduction terms, than the information provided).” I only concentrated on participants who were willing and interested to take part in the research project. During the interview process I used the predetermined questions to interview the participants.

Matthew and Huberman (2014:296) posit that, “The researcher need to triangulate with several data collection methods, don’t overly depend just on talk, just on observation, or just on documents to make sense of the setting; If you sense you are being misled, try to understand and focus on why a participant would find it necessary to mislead you.” The following data collection methods were be used: interviews; focus group interviews, observations and document analysis. Member checking helped me to validate and triangulate the data collected. They posits that “follow that trace as far upstream as you can; do not casually show off how much you do know.” Filter and follow-up questions were also used to follow responses from the participants. After completing the data collection, I sent the draft to colleagues to inspect to establish misled and deviation from the research questions. According to Matthew and Huberman (2014) “a covert plea for confirmation that deludes only the person making it.” They said that the researcher need to “show field notes to a colleague.” They indicate that “another researcher is often much quicker to see where and how you are being misled or co-opted; keep your research questions firmly in mind.

### **3.10. ETHICAL AND POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Miller, Birch, Mauthner, and Jessop (2012) defined “ethics as the morality of human conduct in relation to social research; it refers to the moral deliberation, choice, and accountability on the part of researcher throughout the research process.” The approval for research of this study was granted by the HOD of the Department of Education in Limpopo. Permission was also obtained from the circuit manager and principals of the schools sampled for this study.

### **3.11. ANONYMITY, VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION, SAFETY, AND SECURITY**

Participants were informed that their participation in the research process was voluntary and they were not bound by any law to continue with the research. The security and safety of the participant was guaranteed by ensuring them that their names would remain anonymous. Letter of invitation for participants were delivered to the school principals and handed over to the SMTs and parents of Grade 8-12 learners. Codes were used to hide the names and identity of the participants of participants. For example, they were addressed as participants from school A, school B and school C. The use of codes ensured that the identity of the participants

remained anonymous and that any person who come across the research report would be unable to associate the response to the participant. This ensured that the personal details of participants remained unknown. Participants were also ensured that transcripts, audio tapes, notes taken would be destroyed once information was examined and the research completed. “Participants were informed of the findings and recommendations of the research” (Maree, 2011).

### **3.12. INFORMED CONSENT**

Pacho (2015:46) stated that, “The principle of confidentiality requires that the data collected should be used for the study’s purpose only and should not be accessed by a third party.” Pacho (2015:46) postulated, “The principle of voluntary participation requires that all human-subject research participants provide voluntary informed consent to participate in research.” In this study I visited all of the six schools in advance to make appointments for conducting the interviews with the SMTs and parents of the children attending each the schools. Invitation letters and consent forms were issued to the SMTs and parent participants sampled for completion. Mack, Woodson, Kathleen, Queen, Guest, Namey (2011:9) Stated, “Informed consent is a mechanism for ensuring that people understand what it means to participate in a particular research study so that they can decide in a conscious, deliberate way whether they want to participate.” I explained the purpose of the research project to the participants. All parents and SMT members responded positively by signing the consent forms to signify voluntary participation in the project. According to Mack et al., (2011:10), “the first task in achieving informed consent is to inform people about the research in a way they can understand.” Mack et al., (2011:10) suggests that, “One may begin by approaching community leaders and explaining the research to them and there after the leaders may then facilitate a community forum where interested people can learn about the research and ask questions.” Mack et al., (2011:9) indicate that, “In some situations, it may be necessary to obtain formal permission from community leaders or gatekeepers before research can begin.”

The Mack et al., (2011:11) identified “two types of informed consent: The first type is ‘written consent’.” Written consent means that “a person receives a written form that describes the research and then signs that form to document his or her consent to participate.” For illiterate participants, the form was read to them, and they made some kind of mark in place of a signature, and then a witness usually signed as testimony that the consent is authentic. They contends that, “Written informed consent may also be described as documented informed consent.” The second type is oral consent. According to Mack et al., (2011:11), “Oral consent

means that “a person receives all of the information needed for consent either verbally or in writing and then verbally consents to participate.” They indicates that, “In oral consent the participant does not sign a consent form. This is described as “waiving the requirement for documentation of informed consent.” Mack et al., (2011:11) state that, “This does not mean that the requirement for informed consent is waived.” According to the Mack et al., (2011:11), “Most ethics committees require the researchers to maintain accurate records of how and when consent was obtained for each participant.” They states, “Oral consent is generally acceptable for research with minimal risk, or where a loss of confidentiality is the primary risk and a signed consent form would be the only piece of identifying information for study participation.” In this study I did not coerce or threaten the participants to volunteer all of the participants volunteered willingly without any intimidation.

### **3.13. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The following factors limited the generalisability of this study. Firstly, samples drawn from a population of only six schools in Sekhukhune Limpopo Province. The research was conducted on a small group of participants. Due to the size of the groups selected, I could generalise the findings as a true representative and reflection of the whole schools in the province. Secondly, some parent’s participants involved in the study were illiterate. Parents represented in the study had limited information with regard to legal frameworks and policies relating to the inclusion participation in school activities. I was aware that Limpopo is predominantly populated by Sepedi speaking population. Due to the illiteracy level of the parents in rural schools, interviews with parent participants only were conducted in Sepedi because some parents could not talk English nor understand it. Interview questions for parents were posed in English and then translated to Sepedi for parents who could not talk nor understand English. Responses from parents were translated verbatim to the English language.

## CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

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### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter is focused on the presentation, analysing and discussion of the data generated during the field study. The main data collection tools were individual interviews of the SMTs, focus group interviews with the five parents of Grade 8-12 learners and document analysis. Data was also collected by observing the same SMT members and parents who were interviewed in order to triangulate the collected data. The main objective of this study was to explore the experiences of the SMT members and parents in collaborating and interacting to improve the academic performance of the learners. This study involved six secondary schools in three circuits of Sekhukhune, Limpopo Province. A total number of six schools with 18 SMTs and 30 parents were involved in the research process. The circuits included in the study were Ngwaabe, Mmashadi, and Malegale. All of the six rural secondary schools used in the study are public schools selected based on the basis of their geographical location, academic performance, and their historical background. Information regarding these schools was obtained from the NSC school performance report, schools, circuit managers as well as curriculum advisors.

The sampled participants of the study differed from one school to another. Firstly, In schools A and B, the samples of the participating SMTs involved the HODs only, meanwhile schools C, D, E and F the samples involved Deputy and two HODs. Secondly, the sampling of the parent members also differs from one to another. In school A and B relevant samples of parents of Grade 8-12 learners were acquired meanwhile in school C, D, E, and F heterogeneous samples of parents revealed that the schools experienced challenges with acquisition of parents. This varied groups of parents involved the inclusion of parents working in the school NSNP programme as cooks. The researcher in schools C, D, E, and F observed and experienced poor and minimal response of the parents to school invitations during the commencement the research process. These poor response prompted me to resort to the emergent sampling approach. “Opportunistic, emergent sampling takes advantage of whatever unfolds as it unfolds by utilising ‘the option of adding to a sample to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities after fieldwork has begun” (Harsh, 2011:8).

The findings of this research study are discussed and presented in the form of tables and quotes as follows: First, each of the six schools involved is described and discussed in terms of the location, the total number of learners and enrolment of teachers' information, as well as its infrastructure. Secondly, the characteristics of the participating schools SMTs and parents are described. Thirdly, the chapter tries to answer the main research question and the sub-questions raised. Qualitative data is usually text that derives from interviews, observations, or already existing documents. Interviews are usually audio or video-recorded and must be transcribed verbatim in order to create data that can be analysed further. "The transcript should therefore be a word-by-word account and not paraphrased" (Langalibalele, Mabuza, Govender, Gboyega, Ogunbanjo, and Mash, 2014:1). During the data collection process I immediately started with the data analysis process in the field by making field notes. This strategy helped me to acquaint myself with the qualitative data by reading the transcripts and observation notes or listening to the tapes. During this process, I took notes of key ideas and recurrent themes as they emerge, their own reactions to the data and any remarks on the quality of the data or methodological issues. "If there is a large amount of data then it may be necessary to select a representative sample of the data for this stage" (Langalibalele et al., 2014:1).

#### **4.2. PRESENTATION OF DATA COLLECTED**

Firstly, I describes the schools and participants in tables. I also tried to interpret the data displayed to make sense of parental involvement and learner achievement. Thereafter, paragraphs are set out that present important themes, which occurred from the study and from the questions structured in the form of individual and focus group interviews with the participants (SMTs and parents of Grade 8-12 learners) in each participating school. "The transcript should therefore be a word-by-word account and not paraphrased" (Langalibalele et al., 2014:1). Individual interviews conducted with SMTs were conducted in English meanwhile focus group discussions with parents were conducted in Sepedi. I used the participant's own words verbatim and without any alterations made. Responses from the parents had to be translated by the researcher. The following tables provides important data obtained during the site visits at each of the six (6) high schools involved in the study. Before each of the schools is described, a profile of these schools was obtained via observations, interviews and document analysis as research instruments, as shown in table below.

**Table 4.1:** Data on the demographics of the participating school

Characteristics of Schools	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
Province	Limpopo	Limpopo	Limpopo	Limpopo	Limpopo	Limpopo
District	Sekhukhune	Sekhukhune	Sekhukhune	Sekhukhune	Sekhukhune	Sekhukhune
Circuit	Malegale	Malegale	Ngwaabe	Ngwaabe	Ngwaabe	Mmashadi
Type of school	Ordinary public secondary	Ordinary public secondary	Public technical secondary	Public technical secondary	Ordinary public secondary	Ordinary public secondary
Grading	Post level 3	Post level 4	Post level 4	Post level 4	Post level 4	Post level 4
Section	21	21	21	21	21	21
Quintile/SES	1	1	1	1	1	1
Date of visit	2016/08/24	2016/10/20	2016/10/28	2017/01/17	2017/01/23	2017/01/25
Staff enrolment	23	31	50	21	26	36
Number of SMT members	4	5	11	4	6	7
Male SMT	2	4	3	3	4	6
Female SMT	2	1	8	1	2	1





Learner enrolment	532	1029	1321	650	1097	1096
Parent enrolment	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parents involved	4	5	9	4	5	6
Learners from single families	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of support staff	0	6	6	0	0	2

It can be noted that most of these schools are quintile 1 and differ significantly in terms of learner enrolment. The lack of records of the expected number of parents to be involved denotes a lack of interest in parents' engagement. The schools also do not have records of children from single parent families and this signifies a lack of interest in involving parents and guardians of vulnerable children. This confirms the contentions of the Minister of Education, Angie Motshekga that schools treat children as if they are all the same.

**Table 4.2:** Data on policies from each school

Policies	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
PI	0	0	0	0	0	0
Learner Discipline	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Language Policy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Assessment	0	0	0	Yes	Yes	Yes
Admission	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
HIV/AIDS	0	0	0	Yes	Yes	0
Safety	0	0	Yes	Yes	0	Yes
Religious policy	0	0	0	Yes	0	0
SGB Constitution	0	0	0	Yes	Yes	Yes
Finance policy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
School policy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Learner attendance policy	0	0	0	0	0	0

Teacher attendance policy	0	0	0	0	0	0
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The mere fact that the schools have no policies relating to parental involvement or learner attendance show that schools may not be aware of the significance importance of engaging parents in the academic activities of the children to enhance their achievement. They should have an incentive plan in place for learner attendance. From the findings it appears that none of the participating schools have teacher attendance policy therefore it is difficult to conclude how SMTs manage learner instructional time to ensure that teachers attend classes in time. None of the participating schools have a parent policy to help them to manage parent involvement in learner education, this is congruent with research the findings that schools in rural communities do not involve parents in the education of their children.

**Table 4.3:** Data displaying the list of outreach activities and PI programmes

School initiative	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
Gardeners	0	0	Yes	0	0	0
(NSNP)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Parent activities	0	0	Yes	Yes	0	0
Literacy programmes	0	0	Yes	0	0	0
Parent workshops	0	0	0	0	0	0
Motivation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Home involvement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parent days	0	0	Yes	0	0	0
Parents' decisions	SGB	SGB	SGB	SGB	SGB	SGB
Parents in planning	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parents in policy	SGB	SGB	SGB	SGB	SGB	SGB
Subject choices	Grade 9	Grade 9	Grade 9	Grade 9	Grade 9	Grade 9
Reporting	Quarterly	Quarterly	Quarterly	Quarterly	Quarterly	Quarterly
Parent committee	0	0	0	0	0	0

It is noted that none of these schools conduct parent workshops, neither do they have parent committees. Parents in private schools are essential to help in the running of the school regarding fund raising and motivation of children. In rural schools the culture is such that teachers keep parents away as the teachers want to be the experts. They are concerned that parents may see their misdemeanours if the parents are more engaged in their child's education. The lack of school initiated outreach projects like gardens particularly in rural context where poverty is so deeply entrenched to attract parents and community signifies ignorance of SMTs. Parent activities, parent days and parent engagement in planning are key features of successful home-school partnership to enhance academic performance. However, only schools C and D realised the significance importance of engaging parents in some of this activities to leverage the academic performance of the learners.

**Table 4.4:** Data describing the results obtained by each participating school from 2011 to 2016

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
School A	61.9	71.2	60.0	64.6	59.6	55.6
School B	82.9	64.1	68.7	61.1	44.4	63.9
School C	48.5	31.5	51.4	76.4	78.4	67.3
School D	41.7	63.3	29.5	75.0	25.6	55.3
School E	27.6	37.5	23.4	43.8	60.0	24.4
School F	95.6	78.1	83.1	89.2	79.6	62.6

It can be deduced from the findings of the results that a failure rate in schools has become a norm and that some schools have been performing badly for a consecutive period of six years. These findings are congruent with the contention of the Minister of Education that failure rate in schools has become chronic. School E seems to be the weakest performing school, whereas Schools B, C and F show signs of improved learner achievement in matric. The consistency of performance is not stable. It seems that all the schools have unexpected declining matric pass rates in 2016, with the exception of schools B, C and D. This culture of a persistent decline in school performance exposes the poor instructional leadership practice by SMTs against the provisions of the education laws that hold principals and SMTs liable for school performance. Instructional leadership involves the abilities of the leader to set goals and instructions to subordinates through planning and setting example as a leader to implement to implement the goals of the organisation. This justifies the contentions of Bush that South African policies are symbolic in nature, despite their language emphasising democracy and collaboration in schools for collective governance and decision-making.

### 4.3. CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

The following table presents important characteristics regarding the participants in the study. These characteristics were revealed by the data collected while interviewing of participants about their personal information.

**Table 4.5:** School A Characteristics of SMTs involved in the study

Characteristics of SMTs	HOD 1	HOD 2
Gender	Female	Male
Age	46	57
Qualifications	B.Ed. Hon/ ACE Science	ACE Man
Years of experience as teacher	16	34
Experience in current position	6	8
Further study	0	0
Number of lessons taught per week	30	28
Subjects taught	Physical Science	LO/ English
Grade teaching	10/11/12	10/12
Workshopped on PI	0	0
Knowledge of PI laws	0	0
Managerial activities	Finance/admin/HOD/SGB sec	Departmental Head

**Table 4.6:** School B Characteristics of SMTs involved in the study

Characteristics of SMTs	HOD 1	HOD 2	HOD 3
Gender	Female	Male	Male
Age	49	47	52
Qualifications	ACE MATH/ STD	ACE SCIENCE/ STD	STD
Years of experience as teacher	25	20	26
Experience in current position	2	4	10
Further study	0	0	ACE
Number of lessons taught per week	18	18	12
Subjects taught	Life Sciences	Physical Sciences	Natural Sciences
Grade teaching	10	10/11	8
Workshopped on PI	0	0	0
Knowledge of PI laws	0	0	0
Managerial activities	Head of Agriculture and Life Sciences	Head of Science Department	Head of Social Science Department

**Table 4.7:** School C Characteristics of SMTs involved in the study

Characteristics of SMTs	Deputy principal	HOD 1	HOD 2
Gender	Male	Female	Male
Age	43	59	59
Qualifications	B.Ed. Honours	ACE	B.Ed. Honours
Years of experience as teacher	21	30	30
Experience in current position	3	5	30
Further study	0	0	0
Number of lessons taught per week	18	10	20
Subjects taught	Business Studies	Geography	Northern Sotho
Grade teaching	12	10/11	8
Workshopped on PI	0	0	0
Knowledge of PI laws	Yes	0	Yes
Managerial activities	Admission /Internal exams/Time book/Leaves /IQMS	Social Sciences Department Grade 8/9 exam Adopt a class	Head of languages D.C. committee





**Table 4.8:** School D Characteristics of SMTs involved in the study

<b>Characteristics of SMTs</b>	<b>Deputy principal</b>	<b>HOD 1</b>	<b>HOD 2</b>
Gender	Male	Female	Male
Age	51	41	54
Qualification	B.Ed. Hons	ACE/STD	B.Ed. Hons
Years of experience as teacher	28	11	22
Experience in current position	8	3	6
Further study	0	0	0
Number of lessons taught per week	15	12	12
Subjects taught	Geography	English	Maths
Grade teaching	10/11/12	12	11
Workshopped on PI	0	0	0
Knowledge of PI laws	Yes	0	Yes
Managerial activities	Academic	Departmental Head	Departmental Head

**Table 4.9:** School E Characteristics of SMTs involved in the study.

Characteristics of SMTs	Deputy principal	HOD 1	HOD 2
Gender	Male	Female	Male
Age	43	49	60
Qualifications	B.Ed. Hons N/S	STD/ACE	STD
Experience in current position	5	1	10
Years of experience as teacher	18	21	29
Further study	0	0	0
Number of lessons taught per week	15	20	20
Subjects taught	Physical Science/ Technology	Sepedi/ Social Science	English
Grade teaching	10	12/9	9/10
Workshopped on PI	0	0	0
Knowledge of PI laws	0	0	Yes
Managerial activities	Departmental Head	Academic/ admin	Departmental Head



**Table 4.10:** School F Characteristics of SMTs involved in the study.

Characteristics of SMTs	Deputy principal	HOD 1	HOD 2
Gender	Male	Male	Female
Age	53	49	57
Qualification	B.Ed. Hons Management	BSc Hons /PGCE	B.Ed. Hons Management
Years of experience as teacher	16	21	33
Experience in current position	13	4	10
Further study	0	0	0
Number of lessons taught per week	20	18	20
Subjects taught	Life Sciences	Physical Science	Maths
Grade teaching	12	12	12
Workshopped on PI	No	No	No
Knowledge of PI laws	Yes	Yes	Yes

Managerial activities	Academic	Departmental Head	Departmental Head
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It can be observed that SMTs from one school to another differ to a great extent in terms of experience, qualifications and workload. One can assume that the three variables have influence on the quality of engagement of parents in education to enhance academic achievement. Qualification communicates acquisition of the embedded skills and knowledge relating to the management of parent involvement in schools while experience communicates the time of exposure in a particular place of employment and its effect with the acquired skills during the period of exposure in terms of engaging parent in enhancing learner academic achievement. The interpretive assumption is that, the higher the experience coupled with higher qualifications, the higher the rate of involvement of parents in the education of the learners to enhance academic achievement. The epistemological assumption of knowledge of parent involvement suggests that there should be practical application of the concept to demonstrate an understanding of how knowledge and experience affects the rate of interactions within the context to enhance the quality of learner’s academic achievement.

**Table 4.11:** School A Demographics of parents and parental activities

Characteristics of school	Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3	Parent 4	Parent 5
Gender	Female	Female	Male	Male	Male
Age	34	46	65	50	50
Highest grade passed	12	10	11	11	10
Number of learners at school	1	1	1	1	1
Relationship with the child	Guardian	Mother	Father	Father	Father



Current grade of child	11	11	11	11	11
Number of years as parent in school	4	4	4	4	4
Workshopped on PI	0	0	0	0	0
Knowledge of policies	0	0	0	0	0
Assisting learners with homework	Yes	Yes	0	0	0
Involved in school meetings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Volunteering in school activities	0	0	0	0	0
Involved in school outreach activities	0	0	0	0	0
Voluntary visits to school	0	0	0	0	0
Assisting school with learner discipline	0	0	Assemblies	0	0
Collecting learners reports	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Interesting data is shown in the above tables because although all parents in this school were involved in parent meetings, only two out of the six assisted with children's homework. This may be a sign that the parents themselves do not want to be involved in the school as they are

either too busy or working in another town or city. Parents do not seem to volunteer in school activities, are not involved in school outreach programmes and do not volunteer to visit the schools. There could be a barrier that is being created between the teachers and parents and parents may not want the teachers to victimise their children if they are always on the school premises. I believe that the teachers in this school do not really want parents in their schools as the parents are a hindrance and could report bad teaching or bad assessment. But the other reason may be the fact that in African rural context, teachers are considered superior and still respected by the parents therefore parents who are more than likely to be illiterate, will not involve themselves in school activities, out of respect.

**Table 4.12:** School B Demographics of parents and parental activities.

Characteristics of school	Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3	Parent 4	Parent 5	Parent 6
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Female	Female	Male
Age	47	65	40	56	50	59
Highest grade passed	9	7	12	9	12	9
Number of learners at school	3	1	1	3	1	2
Relationship with the child	Mother	Guardian	Mother	Mother	Mother	Father
Current grade of child	12	12	11	11	12	12
Number of years as parent in school	5	5	4	4	5	5

Workshopped on PI	0	0	0	0	0	0
Knowledge of policies	0	0	0	0	0	0
Assisting learners with homework	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Involved in school meetings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Volunteering in school activities	0	0	0	0	0	0
Involved in school outreach activities	0	0	0	0	0	0
Voluntarily visits school	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Assisting school with learner discipline	0	0	0	0	0	0
Collecting learners' reports	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

All the parents in this school assist with homework, and they voluntarily visit the school. And they are involved in parent meetings. School B is also one of the school that has performed better than the other schools with matric exams. This might be due to the positive attitude of the principal, school management teams and staff on their efforts to embrace parents as partners in learning.

**Table 4.13:** School C Demographics of parents and parental activities

Characteristics of school	Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3	Parent 4	Parent 5
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
Age	41	41	44	49	39
Highest grade passed	12	11	10	11	8
Number of learners at school	1	1	1	1	1
Relationship with the child	Mother	Mother	Mother	Mother	Mother
Current grade of child	10	11	11	12	10
Number of years as parent in school	3	4	4	5	3
Workshopped on PI	0	0	0	0	0
Knowledge of policies	0	0	0	0	0
Assisting learners with homework	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Involved in school meetings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes





Volunteering in school activities	0	0	0	0	0
Involved in school outreach activities	NSNP	NSNP	NSNP	NSNP	NSNP
Voluntary visits to school	0	0	0	0	0
Assisting school with learner discipline	0	0	0	0	0
Collecting learners' reports	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

School C information shows that all these parents are involved in the national school nutritional programme. This could have persuaded the parents to realise that the school cares about their children and they are involved in the homework. This school also showed a decline in matric results in the previous three years.

**Table 4.14:** School D Demographics of parents and parental activities

Characteristics of school	Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3	Parent 4
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female
Age	30	41	52	52
Highest grade passed	12	11	0	0
Number of learners at school	2	1	2	2
Relationship with the child	Mother	Mother	Mother	Mother
Current grade of child	8/10	10	10/11	8/11
Number of years as parent in school	3	3	4	4
Workshopped on PI	0	0	0	0
Knowledge of policies	0	0	0	0
Assisting learners with homework	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Involved in school meetings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Volunteering in school activities	0	0	0	0

Involvement in school outreach activities	NSNP	NSNP	NSNP	NSNP
Voluntary visits to school	0	0	0	0
Assisting school with learner discipline	0	0	0	0
Collecting learners' reports	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Like the above school, these parents have said that they assist their children with homework, are involved in the NSNP and in parent meetings.

**Table 4.15:** School E Demographics of parents and parental activities

Characteristics of school	Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3	Parent 4	Parent 5
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
Age	42	43	48	36	52
Highest grade passed	11	10	10	11	5
Number of learners at school	2	2	1	2	2
Relationship with the child	Mother	Mother	Mother	Mother	Mother
Current grade of child	12	12/11	12	11	12



Number of years as parent in school	5	5	5	4	5
Workshopped on PI	0	0	0	0	0
Knowledge of policies	0	0	0	0	0
Assisting learners with homework	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Involved in school meetings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Volunteering in school activities	0	0	0	0	0
Involved in school outreach activities	NSNP	NSNP	NSNP	NSNP	NSNP
Voluntary visits to school	0	0	0	0	0
Assisting school with learner discipline	0	0	0	0	0
Collecting learners' reports	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

School E had the weakest achievement rate in matric, yet parent assisted with homework, NSNP and meetings.

**Table 4.16:** School F Demographics of parents and parental activities

Characteristics of school	Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3	Parent 4	Parent 5	Parent 6
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
Age	48	50	48	48	38	50
Highest grade passed	10	4	10	12	8	9
Number of learners at school	1	2	1	1	1	1
Relationship with the child	Mother	Mother	Mother	Mother	Mother	Mother
Current grade of child	12	9/8	10	11	10	10
Number of years as parent in school	5	2	3	4	3	3
Workshopped on PI	0	0	0	0	0	0
Knowledge of policies	0	0	0	0	0	0
Assisting learners with homework	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes



Involved in school meetings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Volunteering in school activities	0	0	0	0	0	0
Involved in school outreach activities	0	0	0	0	0	0
Voluntary visits to School	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Assisting school with learner discipline	0	0	0	0	0	0
Collecting learners' reports	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Like in other schools presented above, school C has little evidence of involving parents in enhancing learner achievement. Despite the lack of parental involvement in learner education, the school is fairly doing well in terms of matric results. Like in all other schools above the only programme available in school C to engage parents is the NSNP programme.

## **4.4. DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTEXT**

### **4.4.1. Schools as a system**

Schools are public social institutions that function as a system, which requires collaborative interaction between the SMTs, teachers and parents; hence, the community, environments, both influence them. Epstein (2011) states, “Partnerships can improve school programs and school climate, provide family services and support, increase parents’ skills and leadership, connect families with others in the school and in the community and help teachers with their work.” The core function of a school is to equip children with knowledge and skills gained through professional teaching and learning. Support from the community, parents and other stakeholders can leverage the quality of teaching and learning. Goodall et al., (2010:5) assert, “Schools which successfully engage parents to make use of a broad understanding of parental engagement, and their parental engagement strategies accord with the interpretations and values of the parents they are aimed at”.

Findings from Bull, Brooking and Campbell (2008: 7) reveal that, “Many schools had strategies in place to help parents support their children’s learning at home.” Such strategies according to Creswell, included “study hints in the form of school newsletter, the provision of specific questions for parents to ask children about their learning, interactive homework requiring input from the family, and sharing learning goals with families so they can reinforce their children’s out-of-school learning.” As a resident of the community in which the six (6) high schools are situated, I was familiar with the geographic location of the schools participated in the study. “Despite widespread acknowledgement that parent involvement will benefit schools to achieve remarkably high learner academic achievement however, there are clear gaps between the rhetoric on PI found in the literature and typical PI practices found in schools” (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011:38). Data accumulated through interviews in this study exposes overwhelming confusions and misunderstanding with regard to practical application of the concept parent involvement in learner education to enhance academic achievement. This is affirmed by responses received from SMTs of the six schools involved where the concept seemed to be associated with SGB functions in schools.

The data presented below was obtained through participant observations, document analysis, individual interviews of the SMTs, and focus group interviews. Case study schools were situated in different circuits: Malegale, Mmashadi, and Ngwaabe. These Schools were visited by the researcher during term three, and four of 2016 as well as term one of 2017. The schools

are scattered over a wide area, and due to time constraints, the researcher decided to put in a concerted effort by aggressively focusing on those schools that were easily accessible. Data presented shows similar cultural practices and patterns among the secondary schools in the rural area of Sekhukhune in involving parents in the education of their children to enhance learner performance. The majority of the responses from the SMTS from participating schools confuse parental involvement with SGB roles. Despite being parents, SGBs' role is mainly focused on the effective governance of the schools, not with individual learner performance in the classroom. In some schools the researcher established and experienced the difficulties and challenges that SMTs are faced with in involving parents in rural secondary schools of Sekhukhune Limpopo Province. Empirical data supports literature that parents in rural schools are cannot be involved in learner education. Despite this big challenges, some schools make great strides in devising strategies on how parents can be involved to enhance learner performance. This strategy ranges from quarterly meetings with parents of the learner to discuss quarterly analysis of results, engaging parents in gardening projects and AGM whereas some do not bother to find ways in which parents can be motivated to realise the importance of being part of their children's' education. However, many SMTs interviewed acknowledge that PI in children's education can ensure a positive outcome to student achievement and that their attitudes toward parents had really changed and feel that there is a need in establishing a successful home school partnerships.

This study mainly focused on the role of the SMTs and parents to enhance academic performance. The most striking finding from this project is the dearth of school initiatives to involve parents of children in enhancing learner achievement. This case studies conducted in Sekhukhune Limpopo Province established little rigorous data linking home school partnerships to improved outcomes for students. Most of the schools adopted have varied strategies to facilitate engagement with parents.



#### 4.4.2. Context analysis

##### School A

This school shared similar characteristics with school A. It is also classified as a section 21 ordinary public secondary school situated in the Malegale circuit, 20 /30 kilometers from the nearest small town of Jane Furse and 130 kilometers from Polokwane. The school was chosen because of its SMT enrolment, geographic location, and performance for the past five years. According to the National Norms and Standard for School Funding, the school is also classified as quintal one. This posits that the school is situated in a deeply arid and poor geographic location where the majority of parents are unemployed and cannot afford to pay school fees. There is no form of industrial development or any form of economic activity to provide employment for the community. The school principal is a male who seemed to be always busy. Due to the approaching NSC, trial examination, he did not manage to be part of the sampled participants for the research process. The school did not have a deputy during the researcher visit but the post has already advertised. The researcher was connected with one of the female HODs who was quite willing to connect the researcher with other HODs and parents.

The sampling process then assumed the form of the emergent sampling approach. Three HODs and five parents were a sample for the research process. The research process started with interviewing of the parents and then followed by the HODs in the second round of the research visit. The demographics of the participating parents indicates that they have passed Grade 10, 11, and 12. All parents participants involved in this school their children are doing grade 11 and have served for a maximum period of four years as parents in the school. Two of the five parent participants in the focus group interview indicated that they had only come home for the past week ending and they were on their way back to work the very same day meanwhile one introduced herself as a guardian for her half-sister doing Grade 11 and their parents passed on several years ago. I immediately identified a problem with effective parental involvement in the school. Data from the observation schedule shows that the school does not have any initiative to involve parents in school activities.

Data obtained through focus group interviews with some parents reveals that most parents work in other provinces such as Gauteng and Mpumalanga, far away from their homes and children and come home only once during month end. The school has a total learner enrolment of 488 learners fully accommodated in 14 overpopulated classrooms. There are eighteen (18) educators inclusive of six SMT members accommodated in a well-resourced office; each SMT

member has a separate office. Tuition is offered from Grade 8 to 12 for a maximum period of seven hours per day. Willing educators offers extra morning and afternoon lesson. The school has arranged with the parents of Grade 10, 11, and 12 learners to pay additional fees for learners to attend Saturday classes at nearby secondary school. The observation schedule and interview process reveal that parents meetings are held quarterly after issuing learners with reports to discuss and analyse the performance of the learners. The school has a telephone line and a fax machine with additional photocopiers but there is no internet connection. Despite, the presence of a telephone line within the school, communication with parents is done through sending letters via learners home. The question is on the effectiveness of this method since some learners do not appreciate the presence of their parents at school taking it that the teachers will report them for their bad behaviour and truancy, while some feel due inferior complex due to home conditions and the illiteracy of their parents.

*Parent 1: Some teachers insult learners with their parents. This creates a barrier for some parents to come to school to support teaching and learning. Proper procedure must be followed to reprimand inappropriate actions of the educators so that parents and teachers can work together.*

Despite the presence of a hall, which is used by some of the learners, due to insufficient classrooms, parents' meetings are held on the open environment within the schoolyard. Observation schedule reveals that there is no special room allocated to parents since the school has no comprehensive plan for PI to support learners and educators to enhance learner achievement. The interview process with the parents reveals that teachers are not happy and willing to engage the parent in classroom activities. One parent laments that some teachers use vulgar words when addressing learners and this create barriers for some parents to become fully involve in supporting class teaching to enhance learner academic achievement.

*Parent 1: Some teachers insult learners with their parents this creates a barrier for some parents to come to school to support teaching and learning. Proper procedure must be followed to reprimand inappropriate actions of the educators so that parents and teachers can work together.*

Data obtained from the NSC Grade 12 school performance report indicates that the school registered 63 learners in 2011, about 61.9% (39 learners) passed. In 2012, about fifty-two learners were registered for Grade 12 NSC certificate and only 71.2% (37 learners) passed. In 2013, 55 learners registered for Grade 2 NSC certificate only 60.0% (33 learners) passed. In

2014, 65 learners registered for NSC Grade 12 certificate, only 64.6% (42 learners) passed. In 2015, the school registered 94 learners for NSC certificate with forty-four progressed learners, only 59.6% (56 learners) passed. The Limpopo benchmark for Grade 12 was 60%. Although the school for the past five years has not fallen below 60% the performance is not satisfactory because only half the number of learners registered for NSC certificate are promoted to tertiary level, meanwhile the other half registered fail their examinations. “Research has also shown that successful students have strong academic support from their involved parents” (Mutodi & Ngirande, 2014:280). The aim of education is to produce learners who are self-reliant and economically viable to beat the odds of poverty within the global competitive economy. Many rural communities are still engulfed by poverty, HIV/AIDS, malnutrition, and starvation. Education is perceived, therefore, as the only means and key to success, to relieve poor communities from poverty. The question is how public secondary education provisioning can be made productive to yield the kind of learners, who can meet the competitive needs of the modern economic trends to rescue poor communities, if SMTs and parents are still not interacting in rural schools to enhance academic achievement. The focus group interview reveals that parents have good aspirations about their children’s future.

*Parent 4: “We wish that our children will have a bright future. I used to tell my children that they must not be like myself because I did not get the opportunity to be educated”.*

The literature affirms that consistent involvement of parents in the education of a child has a direct link with improved academic excellence. For 2016, about eighty-eight learners are registered for the NSC Grade 12 certificate with up to twenty-four progressed learners. Progressed learners refer to learners who failed the grade for two or three consecutive years and therefore the age cohort in terms of policy require schools to promote them to another grade to be on par with his or her age group. The chances of these learners to making it during examinations are very slim without progressive commitment and support from teachers and parents. Principals need to be prudent to develop strategies in collaboration with teachers and parents to support these learners to enhance their performance. Despite the efforts of the principal of this school to engage parents, the response to school calls to attend parent meetings is very poor. Findings from focus group interview with parents reveal that parents are not involved accordingly in enhancing the academic performance of the learners. Some teachers feel threatened by the presence of parents in the school. The observation schedule on the school timetable and the year plan provide less evidence of planning for parental involvement in classroom teaching and learning as well as home visits.

*Parent 2: “Some teachers make parents hate coming to school, because they use abusive language to children at school and when the parent hears this from their children they do not feel like coming to school. This creates a situation where the parent does not feel welcomed at school.”*

*Parent 3: “Sometimes they welcome us; sometimes they do not because they think we are interfering with their work”.*

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the SMTs in this school do not understand what PI in learner education means. SMTs associate the concept of parental involvement in learner academic achievement with the roles played by the SGBs. Although the SGBs in schools are parents, their main duty is to supervise on the effective governance of the school rather than interacting with the educators to enhance learner academic achievement. Interview schedule with the SMTs defined the concept correctly as the involvement of the parents in the education of their children, but there is no practically implementation of the concept in the school. Observation provided limited data on the progressive and persistent engagement of the parents in the education of the children. The interview schedule with SMTs posits that parents are only involved on a quarterly basis during the collection of learner’s report. Parents are also involved when the school needs to discuss the results of the learners and seek advices from parents on the strategies that can be used to improve the study habits of the children. On the issue of how parent involvement can benefit the school it appeared from the responses made that the SMTs confuse this with the roles that parents can play to enhance learner academic achievement. The school does not have a policy nor a committee on parent involvement in enhancing learner academic achievement. Government policies and laws admonish collaboration between schools and parents to support the children’s learning.

The school seems to be encountering a challenge with parental involvement in learners’ education. The interview schedule indicates that the SMT in the school has never ever organised nor attended any workshop from the Department of Education about the importance of involving parents in learner education. Public schools are juristic in nature. They need to be led and managed through policies and laws that subordinates the laws of the country. It is imperative that SMTs in school should know what the laws of the country say about education provisioning in public education institutions. The interview schedule revealed challenging gaps in policy awareness among the SMTs in the school relating to parent involvement in learner academic achievement. “Poverty should not be seen, as an excuse to say that low-income

children cannot succeed” (Reed & Bhat, 2014). Rural schools are characterised by learners from various family structures and SES status. Education laws in South Africa require schools to identify learners whose performance is affected negatively by barriers to learning originating from SES through implementation of screening identification assessment and support (SIAS). The interview schedule revealed that the school has no plan to implement SIAS. It appeared from the interview with the SMT that the school is not aware of what the concept SIAS mean. The aim of SIAS is to ensure that learners in schools receive equal attention in the provisioning of education. Chandler published in the Washington Post (2014) a report that, “Schools need to have a teacher liaison or a school social worker who will keep track of all homeless children or students and connecting them and their families.” According to Chandler, “these liaisons need more support and training to do a comprehensive assessment for how homeless children are identified and served.”

The interview with SMT reveals that the school does not involve parents during the formulation of policies and curriculum planning. The interview further asserts that subject choices are done with parents and learners of Grade 9 only. Parents across all Grades need to be informed of the subjects that their children are doing and the career opportunities associated with them. Anecdotally, the school does not have any programme to inform parents about career choices in relation to subject choices made. The SMTs acknowledge that parents should support their children’s learning at home by monitoring their study habits and purchasing of additional resources to boost their studies. The observation schedule shows that the school have no outreach activities that keeps parents involved. Reed and Bhat (2014) in the Washington Post contend, “Addressing the effects of poverty, then, is key to unlocking opportunities and closing the achievement gap in the District.” Although outreach activities do not have any direct link toward with enhancing learner academic achievement, however consistent engagement of parents in the schoolyard will help to change the perception and the attitude of the community about the school. The only activity that exist is the NSNP programme in which only few parents are involved. The literature asserts that majority of parents in rural areas are illiterate. SMTs should initiate training programmes to help parents read and write so that they can able to involve in other school activities beside NSNP programme. Reed and Bhat (2014) state, “Schools naturally are rightly focused on learning.” However, “Schools are also an ideal location to deliver services, because it is easier for children and families to take advantage of them and because social services staff can team up with teachers to meet a child’s academic and other needs” (Reed and Bhat, 2014).

Illiteracy is a barrier that negatively influences effective involvement of parents in schools to enhance academic achievement. The interview with the SMT indicates that the school does not have any literacy programmes to equip parents with skills so that they can be able to assist their children at home with reading and doing home works. Reed and Bhat (2014) further asserts that, “Investing in school-based supports that go beyond classroom instruction from mental health services to robust after-school programs is a proven way to increase attendance, raise grades, test scores, and reduce behavioural problems.” Reed and Bhat (2014) state, “The District is making progress to engage parents in their children’s education through privately funded parent-teacher home visits that give families information to support their children’s learning at home.” The interview further reveals that the school has no plan on how parent involvement in learner academic achievement can be improved. However, the interview indicates that SMTs acknowledge the significance of parent involvement in learner education. Responding to the question concerning the importance of community, involvement the SMT admits that community can protect the school against theft and vandalism.

### **School B**

This is also a Section 21 post level 4 ordinary public secondary school situated in Malegale Circuit. Like School A and B, the school in terms of National Norms and Standard for School, funding is identified as quintile 1. The majority of the parents cannot afford to pay school fees. It is located in the rural area of Sekhukhune where the majority of the learners registered come from poor families with unemployed parents. Some parents work far away from their homes in provinces such as Gauteng or Mpumalanga having left children alone or with guardians, and they come home at month end. The school has a total learner enrolment of 1029 and staff enrolment of thirty-one educators. There are 19 classrooms overpopulated by learners from grade 8 to 12. Tuition starts from 08h00 in the morning to 15h00 evening extended with morning and afternoon studies. This school enjoys the support of the parents and the community. The SMT is made up of the principal (male), the deputy (male) three HODs (two males and one female).

The school has no conference hall, so parents meetings are held in steel corrugated shelter within the schoolyard. The schoolyard is so big and divided to ensure effective control of the learners. During the first and second visit in the third and second term, the researcher observed that the school entrance is always locked to control access to visitors and learners for coming late. The school has no office for the principal and staff members, and three classrooms were

occupied. One classroom is subdivided to accommodate the principal, the deputy, and the administrative clerk. Other two classrooms, one is used by the HODs and the other by the educators. Additional mobile classrooms are used by learners. Observation during the two-term visits revealed a high level of commitment by educator and learners to teaching and learning.

The two research visits coincidentally clashed with the trial and final examination writing and preparations. The principal and the deputy-principal due to examination pressure did not manage to participate in the research process. Emergent sampling involved three HODs, one female and two males as well as six parents two male and four females. The demographics of the SMT vary in terms of experience, age, qualifications, and the number of years serving as SMT members at the school as well as managerial activities of each member of the SMT. The years of experience range from two to four to ten years, this provides a little period of exposure to interact and deal with parental involvement activities. Reflecting on the learner enrolment of 1029 as compared to staff enrolment of thirty-one educators, the school has an insufficient number of SMT members.

School profiling further indicates that SMTs are overloaded with responsibilities ranging from moderation, teaching and other managerial activities allocated to them and this may interfere with the effective involvement of parents to enhance the academic achievement of the learners. The observation schedule indicates that the school has no records of the total number of parents of the learners enrolled. The observation schedule further reveals that the school has a garden but it has ceased exist due to a shortage of water. Argall and Allemano (2009: 8) state, “Schools are well placed to lead a communal strategy to improve the education, health, and socio-economic well-being of orphans, vulnerable children, and families ravaged by poverty, HIV and AIDS.” There are five parents involved in the NSNP programme. An interview guide for the parents reveals that they pay R500.00 for extra classes on Saturdays for Grade 10, 11, and 12 to improve learner readiness.

*Parent 6: We have started with a payment of R500.00 to R950.00 that can be used to pay teachers who help our children with Saturday classes.*

The NSNP coordinator has a list of orphaned learners and vulnerable children. Food left over from in the school nutrition programme is distributed to orphans and vulnerable children toward the end of each term. The observation schedule indicates that, despite the overwhelming support and respond of parents to school gatherings, school C has similar practices to school A and B because the school timetable and the year plan show little efforts of planning for parent

engagement in school activities to enhance learner achievement. The school has no policy nor committee on PI. The interview guide with SMTs emphasise, that SMTs misunderstood and confuse the concept of PI to enhance learner academic achievement by conceptualising and confining it with SGB role.

*HOD 2: During parent meetings, we engage with parent members of the SGB and encourage them to involve themselves in helping learners with activities at home.*

The school profiling indicates that the SMTs have not ever received any training during teacher training. The observation schedule shows that the school does not receive any support from the Department of Education on how to involve parents effectively in learners' education to enhance achievement. The SMT has little capacity in terms of education legislation and laws that requires the school to involve parents in the education of their children to enhance academic performance. The focus group interview guide with the parents indicates that the SMT of school has not ever bothered to train parents about their roles, rights, and responsibilities at school and home to enhance academic achievement. It is evident that parental training is crucial when it comes to understanding their fundamental duties as prescribed by the South African Schools Act. Despite the lack of initiatives to capacitate or to involve parents in school activities, the principal is so determined to involve parents on a quarterly basis to discuss the results of the learners and motivates parents to help their children at home. Comment from a parent indicates that:

*Parent 6: No, they handle it this way; they call the SGB members and train them rather than calling all the parents.*

The school has a wireless telephone with fax but they rely on learners to convey messages about parent meetings. Sometimes they arrange with the local chief to convey messages to parent during a community meeting at the tribal authority. Although the method is not effective, some scores of parent respond well to school meetings. The use of modern technology, such as cell phones and emails, could speed up and enhance the communication between the school community and the parents. Most parents in South Africa have cellular phones nowadays, which can ensure most effective communication between the school and its parent community.

*HOD 1: We write letters and send them home with learners to deliver to their parents; sometimes we communicate with the local chief to convey messages about parents meetings at*



*school during tribal community meetings. In some instances, we use loudspeakers to call parents to come to school meetings.*

Data obtained from the NSC school performance report indicates that in 2011 about seventy learners were registered for NSC Grade 12 examination, about 82.9% (58 learners) passed. In 2012, 64 learner were registered and 64.1% (41 learners) passed. In 2013, about 115 were registered and only 68.7 % (79 learners) passed their NSC examination. In 2014, about 108 registered their Grade 12 NCS examination, about 61.1 % (66 learners) passed. In 2015, about 144 were registered for the NSC, with up to 35 progressed learners, about 44.4% (64 learners) passed. For 2016, the school registered (166). Although the school performance has not ever fallen below the Limpopo benchmark of 60 %, except in in 2015 where the school obtained 44.4 %, the overall performance is not satisfactory because half the number of the learners are progressed to tertiary level meanwhile the other half fail their NSC examinations. The majority of learners from rural schools come from poor family backgrounds ranging from poverty-stricken homes, single parenting due the death or divorce of parents, and vulnerability due to loss of parents, as result of HIV/AIDS that have a negative impact on their learning to perform very well. SMTs in rural secondary schools need to deal with these challenges by consistently involving parents and guardians to enhance children's academic achievement. "Schools that work to meet these challenges by making involvement easier and more convenient for all families, will gain support from parents and improve student achievement" (Naong & Morolong, 2011:256).

The interview process indicated that the SMT pays little attention to learner diversity to ensure that learners with diverse learning abilities receive equal attention from both parents and teachers to enhance their academic performance. In responding to the question: How does your school effectively implement SIAS to ensure that learners with diverse learning abilities receive equal attention to cater for their educational needs? majority of the SMT responses to this question appeared to be negative. The concept seemed to be new to SMT participants; it was evident that SMTs are not implementing SIAS in the school. In the GFRLD (guideline for responding to learner diversity) Motshekga (2011: 3) state, "Schools act as if all learners are the same." Motshekga indicates that, "Many schools operate with an evaluation system that rewards only a certain number of abilities, therefore, this often gives rise to an early, and mistaken separation of those considered 'bright' and those considered not intelligent." According to the GFRLD, "If teachers are not responsive to these needs and provide the necessary support learners may experience barriers to learning." "Inclusive education is a

process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners and can thus be understood as a key strategy to achieve” (Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education, 2009:10). Education provisioning in schools should not only consider a particular group of learners. All children need to be given special attention with respect to barriers encountered. SMTs should therefore ensure that parents are involved in sharing with them the growth history of the child including any physical psychological and emotional development. This information can be of great help to teachers to know the type of a children and how they can help children from various social problems to overcome their challenges that interferes with the academic achievement.

Data obtained through observation schedule of the school timetable and the year plan provides no empirical evidence of schools adherence to PI in learner academic achievement. The school year plan shows little planning of parents meetings on a quarterly basis to discuss performance rather than how parents should be hands on to help learners and educators to improve their academic performance. The school has a policy and a code of conduct for the learners with no efforts to indicate the insertion of sections to emphasise the importance of parents and the role they should play in school to influence higher learners’ performance. The school policy does not mention any participation/involvement in curriculum matters, as well as the daily running of the school. However, it is important to mention that parents have the right to have the curriculum explained to them. This includes the various options with regard to subject choices for their children and the right to formulate the language policy. During the interview, responses from SMTs indicated that parents are involved in subject choices only when children passed Grade 8 to Grade 9.

### **School C**

This is an ordinary public technical secondary school in the Ngwaabe Circuit. Unlike schools A and B, school C offers a variety of streams ranging from technical, science, general, computer application technology and commercial stream. The school is similar to other schools discussed above because it is located in the rural settlement of Sekhukhune District. School C, is situated 10 km away from the nearest small town of Steelpoort. Despite being in the semi-urban settlement, the majority of the learners registered originate from poor households. The school is ranked quintile 1 according to National Norms and Standards for Schools funding. The majority of the parents in this settlements are not employed, and therefore, they cannot afford to pay school fees. The principal is female warm and generous to welcome the

researcher. Although she did not form part of the participants due to final year learner examinations workload, she approved and appreciated the fact that her school to was part of the research process. The researcher then resorts to emergent sampling process, which involved one-deputy principal and two HODs.

Data obtained through school profiling indicates that the participants have a long history ranging from 20 to 35 years of working at the school (refer to demographics of participants). The school enjoys the support of the close developing mining and industries in its neighborhood in the Greater Tubatse municipality. The researcher observed that an assortment of resources had been donated to the school including modern smart boards which help educators and learners to link teaching from another twinned school, and there are also printers, photocopiers and modems for an internet connection to enhance teaching and learning. The school has a well-resourced library with an assortment of books for learner reference. There are thirty-five classrooms, which are fully occupied and overpopulated by the learners due to its highest learner enrolment. Tuition starts from Grade 8 to 12. The oral interview reveals that parents meetings are held outside in the open environment since there is no conference hall.

Data obtained through an oral interview with SMTs reveal that the school was established in 1984. The total learner enrolment obtained from the school SA-SAMS records during the time of researcher's visit to the fourth quarter of 2016 was 1321 (refer to school profile). Findings from the NSC school performance report show that the school registered 103 Grade 12 learners in 2011 for NSC examination and only 48.5% (50 learners) passed. In 2012, the school registered 213 Grade 12 learners and only 31.5 % (67 learners) passed the NSC examinations. In 2013, 111 learners sit for their NSC examination but only 51.4% (57 learners) passed. In 2014, about eighty-nine learners were registered for Grade 12 NSC certificated and only 76.4% (68 learners) passed their NCS examination. Statistically, the 2014 results did show a tremendous increase in the promotion of the number of learners who obtained Grade 12 NSC certificates to pursue their studies at tertiary level. In 2015, the school registered 102 learners for NSC certificate with up to 14 learners progressed and about 78.4% (80 learners) passed. For 2016, the school has registered 148 learners for the NSC examination.

Anecdotal findings indicate that the stable and progressive increase in learner academic performance from 2014 to 2015 is linked to increased involvement of parents in teaching and learning. The findings from an interview with the SMTs indicate that parents are consistently engaged in learner education. However, the observation schedule does not provide enough data

of any comprehensive programme planned for parental engagement in the education of their children. The interview with SMTs reveals that parents are involved in a way that they have to sign learner books to signify that they have seen and assisted learners with homework. Despite the variety of policies that the school has planned, observation reveals that there is neither any committee nor policy put in place to manage parental involvement to enhance academic achievement. Data obtained through the observation schedule reveals that the code of conduct for the learners says little about roles and rights of parents in supporting learners with education needs. These include: to assist learners with homework, signing learners' homework books to acknowledge to have seen and assisted the learner, supporting learners with resources such as buying additional textbooks, calculators and paying for learners school trips and excursions as well as coming to school every quarter by invitation to observe learner's books and performance. Empirical evidence reveals no consistent and progressive interaction between parents and teachers to support and enhance academic achievement during normal class teaching.

*HOD 1: We used to invite all parents of learners for different grades every year from as early as January, to come to school to check learners' books. Each grade called parents on its specific day. Class teachers and subject teachers of different grades address each group of parents of learners for a particular grade. At home, parents are involved by assisting learners with homework. The principal informs parents during school meetings to assist by relieving learners from heavy home responsibilities and chores to give them enough time to study. Each parent must sign the homework book to show that he/she has seen and assisted his/her child with the homework concerned.*

School C, shares similarities with schools A and B in that little or no attention is given to planning for the implementation of SIAS, to cater for learner diversity. Responses from the SMTs were negative with regard to SIAS implementation; this indicates that SMTs in rural schools setting are not exposed to inclusivity in education. The findings of the study are congruent with those of previous researches that confirm minimal or non-involvement of parents in rural schools to enhance learner academic achievement. Purdy and Meneely (2015: 148) contend, "In communities beset by high unemployment many pupils, teachers, and parents were found to lack aspiration and too often seemed to accept the hopelessness of the situation as irreversible." In many rural schools, learner population comprises children from the heterogeneous family structure with various source of income to survive. Research has already indicated that rural communities are heavily suppressed by poverty, which has a direct impact

on learner performance. Children from households which are poor due to unemployed parents, single parent headed, or child-headed household may perform poorly as compared to children from the well flourishing household. The GFRLD (2011: 4) asserts that, “Teachers have an important responsibility in making sure that all learners from whatever background feel included and affirmed in the classroom. One of the key aspects of responding to diversity in the classroom is through differentiation. It is the responsibility of the SMTs to ensure that learners are differentiated and given the right treatment to enhance their performance.” The GFRLD (2011: 4) contends, “In dealing with differentiation SMTs and teacher’s needs to break down the curriculum into manageable pieces, considering the fact that, some learners require an advanced level of content and others may still be grappling with what is being taught in the grade”. This provides schools with an ideal opportunity to establish a relationship with parents at home, to guide parents on how they should start with a home like school conditions so that they can be able to assist their children with schoolwork.

#### **School D**

This is also a post level 4 public technical secondary school in Ngwaabe circuit situated 13 to 15 kilometres away from the small town of Steelpoort. The school is similar to schools A, B, C in the sense that it is also classified as quintile 1 according to the National Norms and Standard for School Funding. Like school C, the school subject streaming is tailor made to offer technical subjects to meet the local community needs since it is located near highly developing mining area. Despite its location, being near a booming mining development, the majority of its learner enrolment population comprised originate from poor rural households whose parents cannot afford to pay school fees for their children’s education. The interview schedule revealed that it is the only secondary school in the small tribal community that offers tuition for secondary education.

Data obtained through school profiling provides that the school has a total learner enrolment of 650 with one male principal, one male deputy, three HODs, and seventeen educators. Access to the school was gained via the circuit manager who telephonically contacted the school principal on behalf of the researcher. Letters of invitation were also issued to the principal and the SMT of the school to participate in the study. The researcher took an interest in involving the school because it is situated in a community that has been marred by violence and strikes when demanding jobs from the nearby mining companies and protesting the expulsion of non-

residence of the community from being employed by the mines. Another aspect that attracted this research to that site is the performance of the school for the past five years.

Research findings from many national and international studies uphold parents as the key influencers of learner achievement. Data obtained from the NSC school performance reports (refer to table on analysis of results) reveal that the school has not been doing well; performance seemed to have been fluctuating for the past five years. In 2011, the school performed at 41.7%. The total number of learners' enrolled for the NSC in 2011 was 36 but only 41.3% (15) passed and 58.3% (21) learners failed. In 2012, performance at least improved to 63.3% meeting the minimum requirement of the 60% benchmark for being functional schools in South Africa. The total learners enrolled for the NSC in 2012 were 49 and only 63.3% (31 learners) managed to pass and 36.7% (8 learners) failed to obtain their matric certificate. In 2013, the school registered 61 learners for the NSC examination but only 29.5% (18 learners) passed with up to 70.5% (43 learners) having failed to meet the requirements for promotion. In 2014, the school performance soared significantly up to 75.0% from a total learner enrolment of 20 registered for the NSC and 25% (5 learners) failed to pass matric. Anecdotal findings suggest that the increase in performance relates to constant involvement of parents during open days to inspect their children's school work. The deputy-principal indicated in an interview, that previously the school planned open day programmes where parents of the learners of various grades were invited to come to school to check learners' books.

In 2015, the school obtained 25.6% pass rate with about 117 learners registered for the NSC but learners only 30 learners progressed and a total of 74.4% (87 learners) failed. Drawing from the analysis of the school performance report for the past five years, the school is not doing well. The benchmark for performing schools in Limpopo is 60%. Schools performing under 60% were regarded as dysfunctional schools. Empirical findings from observation of the school timetable and year plan do not provide any credible evidence of any planning for parental engagement in school activities to enhance learner academic performance. "Involvement at home, especially parents discussing school activities and helping children plan their programmes, has the strongest impact on academic achievement" (DePlanty, Coulter-Kern & Duchane, 2007: 361). The parent's interview at the school shows that they understand the concept of involvement in learner education to enhance academic.

*Parent 3: We must encourage our children to try hard to read their books. They have to stop playing. When they come tonight, they must read their books. So that there is something wrong by the teachers, we will also be able to say that our kids really are studying. If you are a literate parent you can see for yourself that the child did try to do his or her Schoolwork but failed 1... 2... 3, therefore the teachers encouraged them same as the parents. At home, we must encourage them*

*Parent 4: It is true what she said, we support the idea that we must encourage our children. Learners will only pass when they respect their educators. When teachers instruct them to move from the toilets to the class they must do so and this will make them pass but if teachers are trying so hard to discipline the children, and meanwhile parents support inappropriate behaviour among the children, they will not pass.*

The school was visited twice; first during the last quarter of the year 2016, due to the final year NSC examinations. The research rescheduled the appointment to the following year 2017. The second visit was in the first quarter of the year 2017. The principal of the school is a male. Though present during the time of the research visit, he was not interested in participating in the research process. The samples involved in the research process included a male deputy principal, one male HOD and one female HOD, as well as four parents who are working in the NSNP programme. The age group of the parents involved in the study ranged from 30 to 50. Two parents are able to read and write, one has passed grade 12, the other one managed to do grade 11 meanwhile two parents did not go school at all. During the time of research visit, the researcher noticed some parents who were busy cleaning the schoolyard.

The deputy principal indicated that these parents are deployed by the local, municipality as part of the EWP programme to assist in cleaning the community by collecting litter all around, helping in the maintenance of the community gardens and sometimes coming to school to assist in removing the grass and papers littered all around the schoolyard. The involvement of parent from the NSNP programme, justifies how hard parents can be involved by the school to enhance children's academic performance. The school has no garden or any outreach programme that they use to attract parents to engage in school. The response of the deputy suggests that the school had a garden before, but this ceased to exist because parents were not willing to take part voluntarily.

*Deputy: Eish! Outreach programmes that involve community in the school...so normally we have them here, but what I want to say is that now the community does not want to work for*

*the fun of it. They need money...mmm...they want to work for free...even if you say come and do this for the learners they will say, How much are you going to pay for us?*

The school has an administration block with a staffroom and there are enough classrooms, but none of the classrooms is reserved for parent meetings. The interview process with SMT reveals that parents are hard to involve in school activities. The deputy indicates that parents come in majority when there is something wrong at the school, particularly when learners have failed to be promoted to the next grade, it is when they come to school to complain. This suggests the fact that many parents like to be involved in schools when they hear negative stories about the school.

*Deputy: Here at school...No I think Ah...especially where the...there is a problem at school...yah when there is a problem they will come in large numbers. When maybe they say the school is not doing well in terms of funds, when principal or deputy principal has done so they come in large numbers but specifically to the problems that relate to their children Hei! They do not come...mmm*

The school has neither a library nor a computer laboratory, which the school, can use to enhance learning by engaging parents with skills to teach learners how to read nor to operate computers. Learning is an experimental process, therefore, schools with fewer resources make children less enlightened by providing little opportunity for learners to explore and research independently to develop self-confidence, as opposed to school with a variety of resources. However, observation reveals that the school has a workshop used for technical subjects. The school has not formulated any policy to oversee the issue of engaging parents in learner education to enhance achievement. The deputy-principal on the issue of programmes that the school is offering to promote parents involved indicated that the school is doing nothing to promote parent involvement to enhance the achievement of the learners.

Although involvement of parents in non-educational programmes does not have any positive influence on the academic achievement of the children, persistent engagement of parents will help in changing the attitude of the learners about the school. The school communicates meetings via letters handed out to the learners to give to parents at home. Sometimes the school uses SMSs to inform parents about school meetings. The SGB also announces school parents meetings during funeral and burial cases where parents can be found to be the majority. GFSI



(2010: 18) asserts that, “School should recognise that not everyone communicates via written or spoken English.” The GFSI (2010: 18) indicates that, “there is a need to audit the communication needs within the school and for the parent community and provide notices, reports, information and directions in appropriate forms, e.g. home languages, large or reduced print, braille, digital text, tape, videos in South African Sign Language, computer discs, DVDs, USB and pictograms.”

*Deputy: Yah this one of communication...usually we communicate with the parents via the learners through the letters and then we also have got the SMSs. We also make use of the SGBs when they are at funerals during the weekend. They will announce that...yah...so what I can say the question of letters they usually give the learners letters*

Similar to school C, little attention is paid to learner diversity to influence the academic performance of children from diverse family structures and learners of various deformities. The SMT response to the implementation of SIAS to give equal attention to learners with diversity was negative. SMTs seem not to be aware of the requirements of White Paper 6, which instructs parents and educators to give attention in a collaborative manner to diverse learning abilities of children at school. The responses received from the SMTs indicate that SIAS is not implemented in the school to eliminate barriers to learning and this has a negative effect on the academic achievement of the children. SMTs appeared to have little capacity in terms of legislation and policies, which encourage persistent engagement of parents in children’s education to enhance academic performance. SMTs should make a point of involving parents of the learners to share with them the health status of their children. The deputy indicates that the school has no policy to address SIAS, but individual teachers do give attention to learners with diversity on learning.

*Deputy: This issue of...Yah! This one, we do not have a policy on that. I think for myself as a subject teacher I know the individual learner. I know their barriers, I know their problems that now; this one has this kind of problem and this one has this kind of problem and then I know how to address them. I think this one even though we have been doing it as subject teacher not as...collectively as a school. I think we used to have that policy where now what do we do in terms of a learner who has this kind of problem, because an individual will differ with many aspects. Some come from poor families, some come from good families but they do not perform, some do not have food and so...so...so!*

School D appeared to be similar to school C in that little attention is given to the implementation of PI in the school. “Parents should continue to wield considerable influence on children's development as children progress through school” (Nermeen, Heather & Votruba-Drzal, 2010: 14). During observation of the school year plan, the school timetable shows that the school has no plan to integrate parent involvement in school programmes. Parents are involved in school on quarterly basis when they come to collect progress reports of the children. The school policy and the code of conduct show no insertion of how parents should be engaged in the academic achievement of their children. (UNESCO, 2009: 14) contends, “The barriers to inclusion can be reduced through active collaboration between policy-makers, education personnel and other stakeholders, including the active involvement of members of the local community, such as political and religious leaders, local education officials, and the media.” The interview with the principal reveals that the school sometimes engages local church leaders particularly on Mondays and Fridays, when the school holds assemblies to motivate the children spiritually.

*Deputy: Yah...Especially the...the...priest...on Fridays and Mondays we normally have the assemblies every Monday and every Friday...throughout the whole year*

The issue of illiteracy among most parents in rural communities is contextual and hinders an effective partnership between school and home. The school has no literacy programme to equip parents with writing and reading skills. “In particular, training parents to teach their children to read, proved to be more effective than training parents to listen to their children read” (Wilder, 2014: 385). Parents who cannot read and write can cultivate literacy in their children if teachers are willing to devote time to assist such parents’ impatiently. The profiling of parent participants in the study shows that 50% of parents involved in the study cannot read and write. This suggests the fact that most parents in rural schools lack interest in involving in learner academic achievement because they are illiterate. The individual interview with the deputy indicated that parents are not willing to even if there are programmes designed to benefit the parent’s literacy skills.

*Deputy: No! No! We do not have any other basic education here... what I did last I went to the nearest mine to come and help us especially in the payments because we have teachers who are not working here. We are have the retired teachers there to come and offer this and we must remunerate them and they say hei...we will see... even now... because we have this*

*program... what is that? Eh... part times they are not signing the register 2, 3, 4...but they do...*

“Literature asserts parent involvement as a factor that has been consistently related to increased academic performance of the children” (Topor, Keane, Shelton, & Calkins, 2010: 186). The interview with parents shows that parents try to assist learners at home with their schoolwork, but the challenge is parents are unable to read and write. Wilder (2014: 386) established that, “Assisting children with homework did not have a significant impact, but home activities that provided appropriate structure, environment, and material conducive to learning, did have the significant positive effect on academic achievement.” “Studies have shown that students performed better academically and had more positive school attitudes if they had parents who were aware, knowledgeable and involved” (Mutodi & Ngirande, 2014:280). The interview schedule with the school management teams affirms that the school involves parents sporadically on a quarterly basis when parents came to collect reports for their children. “A weaker, but still significant positive relationship was present between school-based involvement and academic achievement” (Wilder, 2014: 386).

*Deputy: On a quarterly basis...usually we engage them eh...on quarterly basis when we must give them the results...because we give out the results on a quarterly basis they must come and collect the reports...progress reports for the learners*

The Constitution as the supreme law of the country surpasses all laws by enshrining the right of all citizen. Parents in terms of White Paper 1 and 2 have “unlimited rights in the education of their children.” However, it appears from the interview with the SMTs and parents that the school ignores the right of parents in the education of their children, especially when coming to subject choice by excluding parents from making a suitable choice of subjects for their children. “Many parents feel uninformed about current educational practices and how they can be more involved with their child’s learning” (Mutodi & Ngirande, 2014:280). SMTs seemed to lack capacity in terms of the laws and legislation relating to engaging parents in learners academic achievement. The teachers and the learners deal with the issue of learner subject choices. It appears that there used to be no workshops organised to teach parents about the type of subjects the school offers. Teaching parents about subject choices and career choice will help to heal problems related to learners following wrong careers or an increased level of unemployment in the future due to a lack of information. It is the responsibilities of the SMTs

to highlight to the parent the streams offered by the school and careers associated with such streams.

*HOD 1: Usually we are unable to engage the parents. The parents just decide that their children will have to do this and this and this. Once the children arrive at the institution, they will just tell you that I want to follow this stream. They talk about this with their parents at home. When you tell him or her that you cannot be able to follow this stream, they cannot listen. They will tell their parents at home, parents want their children to do these subjects, and they cannot change. Even if the learner is not suitable, so we cannot violate the wish of the parents. Parents never arrive at this institution and talk to us.*

### **School E**

This is also a quintile 1, post-level 4 secondary school situated 20 to 30 kilometres away from a small town of Steelpoort. The school is situated in deep arid community of Sekhukhune land. Despite its close location to highly developing mining industries most parents are not employed. Like in schools A, B, C, and D, in school E learners do not pay school fees. The school receives Section 21 allocations from the Department Of Education. There are five parents working in the NSNP programme. Unlike school D that offers technical streams, school E is an ordinary public secondary school. The science stream is coupled with accounting to equip learners with wide range of career opportunities. School E is similar to school D because they are both situated in communities that had been the centre of community strikes to demand jobs and the expulsion of non-residents from being employed by the local mining industries. The school has a learner enrolment of 1097, with 26 staff members including the SMT. The school has one male principal, one male deputy principal, three male HODs and two female HODs. There are enough classrooms to accommodate learners from Grade 8 to 12. Like in school A, B, C and D, school E offers tuition from 8h00 in the morning to 15h00 in the evening. Despite the presence of enough classroom there is no room to accommodate parents during parents' meetings. The deputy indicates that meetings are held under a shelter constructed in the schoolyard, used as carport.

The samples of participant involved in the research process of the school include one male deputy-principal, one male HOD and one female HOD. The researcher was interested in involving the school in the study to see how parents in this community, which has previously been the centre of community strikes, collaborate with SMTs and teachers in school to enhance the academic achievement of their children. Secondly, the researchers involved the school

based on its history of performance to establish the influence of interaction between SMTs, parents, and teachers to enhance learner academic achievement. Parents' negative responses in terms of the laws that provide them with the right to participate in their learner's education unleashed lack of capacity that still needs to be fulfilled through persistent involvement and support by the school. Among most of the parents involved, their children are in Grade 11 and 12, this suggest that these parents they have long-term experience ranging from four to five years of involvement in the school. The researcher in this case study developed interest in exploring and establishing if the long-term decline in learner performance has no direct link with the inconsistent involvement of the parent.

Empirical data obtained from the school performance report indicates that the school has not been doing well for the past five years. In 2011, the school obtain 27.6% pass rate from the NSC examination from a total of 76 registered learners for the NSC examination, and only 21 learners passed meanwhile about 72.4% (55 learners) failed to acquire their matric certificates. In 2012, the school registered about 48 learners for the NSC examination only 37.5% (18 learners) passed the examination to acquire matric certificates and 62.5% (30 learners) failed. In 2013, about 77 learners were registered for the NSC examinations. Only 23.4% (18 learners) passed matric meanwhile about 76.6% (59 learners) failed to acquire matric certificates. For 2014, the school registered 73 learners for NSC examination in matric. Only 43.8% (32 learners) passed meanwhile 56.2% (41 leaners) failed their matric. Performance for the past four years has always been trapped below 50% pass rate. It was only in 2015 that the school managed to obtain 60% from a total leaner enrolment of 70 registered for the NSC matric examination. Only 60.0% (42 learners) passed the examination to acquire matric certificates, meanwhile 40% (28 learners) failed to obtain matric. In 2016, the school performance dropped drastically to 24%. Parental involvement in learners' academic achievement has always been upheld by researchers as being significant to learner's academic achievement. Drawing from the findings of the school performance, the school is not doing well to promote scores of learners to obtain matric certificates.

Observation schedule shows that the school has no garden or any activity to engage parent's movement in school, not related to academic achievement of the learners. Large numbers of vulnerable children in these AIDS-affected communities struggle to access those resources and services they desperately need and are entitled to. "Despite this, most children still attend school, making schools an obvious avenue through which to address the multiplicity of needs of vulnerable children" (Argall & Allemano, 2009: 3). SMTs need to create programmes that

will keep parents involved in school activities to motivate and change the attitude of the community about the school. During the research visit, the researcher observed that only parents involved through NSNP programme are always available in school. The school has no telephone, internet connection, a library, or laboratory. The SMT of the school did not however attend or organise workshops to capacitate the teachers nor the parents about the importance of collaboration to enhance academic achievement. Parent's responses to school invitations are very poor. The interview schedule with the SMTs reveals that the school communicates meetings by sending letters home via learners to the parents. Sometimes the school resort to making announcements about school meetings during burials when there is a funeral case at the community. Sending parents letters home via learners seems not to be an effective method of attracting parents to school gatherings. Sometimes the school uses a loud tailor to call parents for meetings.

*Deputy, school E: We communicate with them through the learners and the letters sometimes the chairperson of the SGB eh... over...eh...in an afternoon, they use the loudhailer so that they involve them. They just call them through the loudhailer that we are having meeting at the school. There are some that are far away and we know that they may not come like those who are staying at 'New-stands' and Beth. We just ask the service provider... the transport service provider... to pick the parents to the schools so that we can have the maximum participation of...*

The focus group interview schedule indicates that parents understand clearly the concept parental involvement in learner academic achievement. The concept was defined as when parents encourage their children at home by checking his or her books to see how the child is doing at school and if the child is not doing the schoolwork one can go to school to find out from the teachers. Illiteracy in rural areas interferes with the effective involvement of parents in learner's academic achievement. Most parents involved to participate in the study in school E terminated their studies before they could complete matric. Data on the demographics of the parents who participated in the study indicate that they terminated their education before passing matric. Two parents terminated their studies at Grade 11, the other two at Grade 10 and only one parent terminated studies at Grade 5. Parents' responses suggest that they are trying hard to help their children with homework but they encounter challenges with the new curriculum, which has changed largely as compared to the curriculum of their times. Some parents cite problems initiated by the children at home. Where they fool their parents by acting as if they are fully committed to studying their books, meanwhile they are not. Some children

refuse assistance from the parents to say their parents are giving them wrong answers in response to homework questions. Data from the demographics of the parents indicates that, parents had neither volunteered in school or undergoes training about parent's involvement in learner academic achievement. The observation schedule of the school policy, the school timetable, and the year plan shows no progressive integration of parents in the school programmes to enhance learner academic achievement throughout the year. Parent responses on the issue of voluntary visits to school, volunteering in school activities and assisting school with discipline seemed to be negative. Most parents 'acknowledge responding well to school invitations to attend school parent meetings but the turnout of parents to meetings is minimal.

*Parent 1, school E: Truly speaking the curriculum has changed so much as compared to the previous old curriculum. The same thing applies to me as well. When I open a textbook, I can see that the content is very different to the one we know. The problem with our children is that when the teachers has finished his or her lesson they do not make follow-up to ask him or her to clarify misunderstandings. They must follow teachers to ask them because the children themselves do not understand anything at all. You find that a child does not understand what they are learning; but they ignore the teachers and just want the period end so that the teacher leaves the class. They don't even bother to ask the teacher to explain step by step how they can find the answers... they keep quite... if you children do not ask in the class, teachers took it as if they understand.*

Public schools are social institutions that provide free primary and secondary education to children in various communities. Schools need a leader and a managed who are instructional to lead in accordance with the requirement of the laws and policies. The observation schedule reveals a high level of ignorance among SMTs in the school to implement laws that support collaboration between schools and parents to enhance learners' academic achievement. GFSI (2010:17) posits that, "Effective arrangements should be made for involving parents in all aspects of their children's school lives and decisions that have to be made." The school year plan, policy, and timetable do not include any information of how parents should consistently be engaged in the education of their children to enhance their academic achievement. The school has no committee responsible for parent involvement. Despite the good response from the deputy-principal on what education legislation says in terms of involving parents in schools to enhance academic achievement, the school has still not planned or implement the policy.

School E is similar to school D because school E has no plan on how learners with barriers to learning can be supported. Reed and Bhat (2014) state that, “Poverty puts tremendous pressure on children and makes it so much harder for them to take advantage of the quality education system that the District is building.” SMTs should note that quality education in schools could not be achieved if children from low SES and single parents’ are not given same attention. “Failing to deal with vulnerable children is a system failure for schools” (Mohlakwana, 2013: 11). White Paper 6 require schools to implement SIAS to give learners with various deformities an ample opportunity to learn by considering and providing support to their barriers to effective learning. The concept SIAS appeared to be completely new for SMTs in the school. Drawing from the responses from the SMTS the school does not cater for learner diversity to address those barriers that challenge many rural children to perform.

### **School F**

The school is situated in the Mmashadi circuit 2.4 kilometres from Jane Furse plaza. This is also a quintile 1 public secondary school classified under Section 21 according to the National Norms and Standard for School Funding. The total enrolment of the school comprises 1096 learners with 36 staff members. The total number of SMT members is seven including: a male principal; one male deputy principal; and five HODs males and one female. The school is located in an RDP settlement of Jane Furse suburb. The majority of the learners enrolled in this school originate from poor households whose parents cannot afford to pay school fees. The locality of the school is completely rural with no industrial development to provide parents with jobs. The interview with the deputy principal reveals that majority of the parents work as hawkers and some are employed by local chain stores at Jane Furse Plaza, meanwhile some parents work as far away as Gauteng or Mpumalanga, coming home only during month end. The school has six blocks of classrooms, which are overpopulated, with learners from Grade 8 to 12. There are two administration blocks and a computer laboratory. The computer lab does not have any computers. The interview with the deputy indicated that the school is still awaiting donation of laptops from Old Mutual. There is no science laboratory to perform science practicals nor a library to increase the literacy skills of the learners. The school has a mobile telephone line and 10 laptops used by the educators only for the preparation of lessons. There is no internet connection available; educators use their own 3G modems to connect to the internet.



Observation schedule state that the school does not have any outreach activity except the NSNP program in which only six parents as cookers are involved. The deputy-principal says that the school is busy planning to start a gardening project to benefit parents in the community. The school has no list of learners coming from single families or orphans. Research confirms that schools are ideal place where vulnerable children and poor community members should be supported through school initiated outreach programmes because learners' spend most of their time at school. Each school should establish a widely representative School Support Team, which would lead the care and support programme in the school and community around it (Argall & Allemano, 2009:1). The school has two support staff members' one male and one female paid from parents' pockets. The female is responsible to clean the administration offices meanwhile the male cleans the schoolyard.

Empirical data obtained from the school performance report indicates that the school is doing well in terms of Grade 12 learner performance. The school registered 45 learners for the NSC Grade 12 examination, about 95.6 (43 learners) passed matric, and only two (4.4%) failed the examination. In 2012, about 27 learners were registered to write the NSC Grade 12 examinations; about 55.6% (15 learners) passed the examination, while 44.4% (12 learners) failed to obtain matric certificates. In 2013, 44 learners were registered and 84.1% (37 learners) passed the examination to acquire matric certificates, while only 15.9% (7 learners) failed. 74 learners was registered in 2014 NSC matric examination, about 89.2% (66) learners passed the examination to obtains, matric certificates and only 10.8% (8 learners) failed the examination.

In 2015, 113 learners were registered to sit for final NSC matric examination, about 79.6% (90) learners passed and 23 (20.4%) failed to obtain their matric certificates. For 2016 the school registered 190 learner for NSC matric examination inclusive of 71 progressed learners, about 62.6% (119) passed meanwhile 37.4% (71) failed. Drawing from the analysis of the school results from 2013 to 2016, the school performance has never dropped below 60%. The decline of the results in 2016 to 62.6% was influenced by the highest number of progressed learners to sit for NSC matric examinations. Progressed learners referred to learners who are struggling with their studies, have repeated a grade three times, and then due to age cohort have to be promoted to the next grade to move in the same level as other learners of their age group.

South African education legislation encourage consistent participation of parents in learner education to enhance their academic achievement. Research studies in education uphold parents as the key influencers of the children's education throughout their studies across

different grades. The concept of parents' involvement in education to enhance academic achievement was defined well by SMTs as being when parents are made to form part of the learning process of their children. It has also been viewed as a way when parents as stakeholders participate in their learner education where they share some academic programs at school. The focus group interview with parents related that parents viewed the concept as means supporting educators by encouraging the children to read and come to school so that academic achievement of the learners could be improved. However, the interview with the SMTs reveals a similar practice with school F as the other schools above. All of the schools involve parents sometimes. In most cases they are involved on a quarterly basis when parents are invited to collect quarterly reports for their children. The involvement of parents during the collection of learner results is congruent with policy imperatives.

The National Protocol on Assessment (2005:9) asserts, "Teachers must report regularly to learners and parents on the progress of the learners." Schools are compelled to feedback parents with the progress of the learners through report cards. However, the interview established that SMTs of school F exercise similar patterns of non-engagement of parents in classroom activities as practiced by the above schools. The school does not engage parents to observe how teaching and learning is taking place in the classrooms. Involving parents regularly through open days to allow parents to check learners' portfolios will help to cure indiscipline's such as truancy, late coming, lack of respect, and lack of submission of given tasks within stipulated timeframe.

The focus group interview guide further asserts that the school should involve parents when presentation of the budget is supposed to be made to the parents for adoption. Further, the interview with the SMTs state that parents were also involved in the education of their children during orientation of the newly admitted grade 8 learners in January. The interview with SMTs of school F reveals similar patterns of engagement of learners during subject choices as practiced by schools A, B, C, D, and E. Parents of Grade 9 learners who have just been promoted from Grade 8 are the only one engaged during the selection of subjects. The law states that parents have "inalienable right to be involved in the education of their children particularly in subject choices." Reflecting on the imperatives of the South African education laws, parents should be informed of the value of the subjects which learners are following across all grades in relation to future career choices. The legislation on the involvement of parents during subject choices focuses on the production of learners who will meet the highly developing competitive economic needs.

Observation of the school year plan, timetable, and school policy shed little empirical data on how the school has planned for consistent involvement of parents to enhance academic achievement. The laws uphold “parents as partners in the education of their children.” No school is immune from the application and implementation of the law. The SMTs agreed and view parent’s involvement in learner’s education to be significantly beneficial to school to produce better results and to assist with payment for educational trips for the children. This was affirmed by the focus group interview guide with parents which showed that when parents are involved in school learners will be encouraged to study hard, listen to their teachers in classrooms, and become disciplined and finally the school performance will be significantly higher.

The interview suggests that the role of the SMTs in the school is to promote parent involvement in children’s education. SMTs need to initiate motivation days about twice a year where parents and former learners of the school are invited to come to motivate other learners. It appeared from the interview that school has no policy or committee appointed to manage a parent involvement initiative in the education of their children to enhance academic performance. The responses of the SMTs associate parent involvement in learner education with the SGB roles. Despite being parents since they have been entrusted with the responsibilities of being SGB members, their role is confined to supporting the improvement of academic achievement through effective governance of the school.

*HOD 2, school F: Yes, they are....you are talking about the school governing body...we do not have one but we are used to do such type of things...and parents put their comments...*

School F has a similar practice to the other schools that participated in the study in terms of communicating meetings and invitations of parents to school activities. The school resorts to conveying messages about parent’s gatherings by using learners or writing letters that are delivered home to parents by the learners. The focus group interview reveals different attitudes of learners of school F as compared to those of school E about parents’ meetings. Some parents in school F indicated that their children feel hurt when their parents do not come to school meetings, unlike in school E where parents indicated that some learners appeared to be reluctant for parents to attend school meetings. The interviews acknowledge that learners are not reliable messengers to deliver the messages about parent meetings to their parents therefore the school changes its method by using the local radio station to broadcast messages about parents meetings at school.

Despite the SMTs, the indications are that parents' attitudes to school meetings are very positive, and school F encounters similar challenges with parent involvement to those encountered by the other schools in the sense that parental responses to meetings are very poor. However, the SMTs of school F states, that the school does not experiences any barriers to engagement of parents, but the response persistently diminishes. Amidst lack of intuition to initiate activities that will attract multitudes of parents to engage in learner education, the SMT of school F possesses similar view as those of schools B, C, D, and E that parents can be useful in securing the school premises against vandalism and theft. Unlike in other schools that were involved in the study, in school F parents normally come to school in large numbers when new cookers in the NSNP programme are to be selected. This is congruent with the findings from school D and E where the deputy of school E and parents of school E, state that parents do not want to involve in school without any payment.

*HOD 1, school F: eh...is very poor...in fact parents meetings are poorly attended...parents meetings are poorly attended... I cannot say they did not get the information. You see this community has many people but is not a scattered community the information spread eh...very fast...it spread very fast. It is just that the parents are very reluctant...yah...they are reluctant to attend the parent meetings and I do not know where this culture comes from. You know... when we had this function last week for these newly admitted learners almost 90% of parents were here. Isn't that their learners were coming here for the first time? We were even telling them that eh...you are here today but on parent meetings, you are not here. I don't know as to whether the problem is the scheduling of the meeting because normally we have meetings on Saturday or Sunday but that function because it was during the course of the day that they even had this chance of...eh...maybe not being at work...most of the parents are working around the plaza... and...crossing. Most of them those that come they work around here...in fact within this kind of community parents just dump their learners here and just go away.*

The interview process with the SMTs of the school disclosed enormous policy implementation gaps at school level, in terms of giving vulnerable learners and learners from low SES as well as their parents' adequate attention to be treated equally, as compared to other learners and parents from well prosperous families through effective implementation of SIAS. "Schools not only benefit the child but also can serve as important resource centres to meet the broader needs of the community schools not only benefit the child but also can serve as important resource centres to meet the broader needs of the community" (Mwoma & Pillay, 2016: 83). Policy discourse on the implementation of SIAS emphasise on learner diversity in schools originating

from diverse family and social influences that interferes with enhanced academic achievement of learners in schools. Identification of vulnerable learners and involvement of their parents in academic activities by SMTs to eliminate those barriers that hinders learner academic achievement is pertinent to the provision of quality teaching and learning in schools.

“All learners deserve quality education regardless of their status that will equip them with knowledge, skills, and competencies to increase personal earnings and contribute to economic productivity” (Mwoma & Pillay, 2016: 83). Similar to school A, B, C, D and E, schools F has no implementation plan for SIAS and this concept appeared to be completely new to the SMTs of the school. “With the abolition of school fees in public schools in Sub-Saharan Africa, many children are enrolled in schools.” “However, the number of OVC has increased, presenting new challenges in handling the large numbers and in addressing their educational rights” (Mwoma & Pillay, 2016: 82). The submissions made Mwoma and Pillay concur with the response of the interview guide that some children are staying alone while parents are away to work in other provinces.

*Deputy: Yah! Like as I was saying before awwa! Parents here are just negligent. They do not...aih...they will never come to school...aih! They do not like that one of being here...they say no we are remaining behind with the kids. A kere most of these kids here they have got children at home... and their mothers are working in Jo'burg...and there is the grandmother cooking food for them when coming back home. Aih... if you are going to establish another committee... saying it is going to work in conjunction with the SGB...aih...you are not going to succeed...aih...you are not going to succeed. They will say no why should I spent my time coming to school whereas I should be doing something at home for my children. A kere the majority of them is unemployed. This is a quintile 1 school, and most of these kids come from these RDPs.*

SMTs of school F appeared to be similar to the other schools because the school has no literacy programmes to equip parents with reading and writing skills so that parents can interpret curriculum policies and laws on involvement. The DBE should ensure that adult-based learning especially in Literacy be held at the school in the evenings. The interview process indicates that the SMTs lack capacity in terms of education related laws, that protect the rights of parents. Responding to the issue of barriers that parents impose on themselves the deputy identify lack of literacy as a major barriers that deters parents from being effectively engaged in learner academic achievement. Without the ability to read and write the collaborative process to

support the children at home to enhance academic achievement may be difficult, since reading and writing are core activities in the learning process of all subjects studied in school. Similar to other school practices, the school has no data of parents and learners from single-family structure.

#### **4.4.3. Data analysis**

##### **4.4.3.1. Themes which emerged during data collection process**

The following nine themes emerged during the data collection process; “encouraging positive parenting skills, enhancing communication with families, increasing volunteerism and attendance at school, enhancing learning at home through homeschool visits, increasing the number of parents in leadership and decision-making roles, improving community collaborations, capacitating parents with legislations and laws to improve awareness of their rights, dealing with barriers and vulnerable children that prohibits effective involvement, knowledge of legislation and laws on parent involvement.”

###### **4.4.3.1.1. Knowledge of the concept of parental involvement**

Okeke (2014:1) says that, “Parental involvement describes a situation in which parents are perceived as active partners in the process of educating their children.” A comprehensive view of parental involvement envisaged in this study goes beyond just parent activities in school settings but in subject orientated participations. “The view of parental involvement is grounded in the understanding that learner achievement is influenced by multiple contexts being the home, the school and the community” (Mutodi & Ngirande, 2014:280). The concept entails hands-on engagement of parents beyond participation in school governance. Parents need to assist learners, teachers, and schools; with various activities, that directly involves in enhancing the academic achievement of the children at school. According to Hornby and Lafaele (2011: 45) “Teachers’ goals for parent-teacher meetings include discussing children’s progress and any difficulties they are having; finding out from parents how children are coping with school; identifying ways in which parents can help their children at home; and, identifying potential conflicts with parents.” “Parents goals for parent-teacher meetings include: discussing children’s progress and any difficulties they are having; comparing their children’s progress with that of others in the class; learning more about the school and methods of teaching used; and, questioning teachers about any concerns they have” (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011: 45).

Research indicates that parental involvement is associated with learner outcomes, such as lower dropout and truancy rates as well as higher grade points averages. “Involvement at school may include parents volunteering to assist in the classroom, attending workshops, or attending school plays and sporting events” (Naong & Morolong, 2011:237). Parenting style is often defined as a ‘typology of attitudes and behaviours that characterise how a parent will interact with a child across domains of parenting’. However, SMTs and parents of the six schools involved in the study acknowledge the significant influence engaging parents in their children’s education but practical implementation of the concept at school level remains symbolic.

*Deputy school F: Mm! Oh...The involvement of parents in the academic achievement of learners...Is true...a kere... we serve as loco parentis. Eh... the involvement is really-really...is needed because they must support this kids. They must support them...to...to... go.... substantiate the learning process that we did in the school because not everything can be learned from the school. Some of these things they learn from home and then they bring knowledge here and refine it and we put it the way that is needed by the curriculum*

Reflecting on the responses made by the SMTs of the six schools involved, it appears that the SMTs understand clearly, what the concept of parental involvement in education in order to enhance academic achievement. “Parents can contribute their insight and knowledge, which complement the professional skills of schools staff in ways that strengthen academic and social programs” (Naong & Morolong, 2011:242). The concept goes beyond collection of learner progress reports on a quarterly basis or during at the end of the year. Despite clear definition of the concept of parental involvement in learner academic achievement by the SMTs of the six schools involved in the study, the lack of comprehensive planning and implementation of the concept, denotes that parental involvement is conceptualised and confined to collection of learner reports, reporting of financial statements and election of SGBs only. “This is congruent with findings from Naong and Morolong” (2011:242) that, “education in historically disadvantaged schools has experienced problems that undermine initiatives to promote parental involvement.”

Similar patterns of parental engagement are exercised by the secondary schools of Sekhukhune. Data obtained through the interview process reveals that five of the six schools engaged in the study practise sporadic engagement of the parents on a quarterly basis during the collection of learner reports. However, this study yields a mixture of similarities and important differences in parents’ involvement agendas among the six schools participated in the research project,

which could be hindering the establishment of effective parent involvement in the participating schools. A different practice was established by the interview process with the SMTs of school C. The concept of parent involvement at school C was not fully documented in the school policy, timetable and year plan but the interview suggested that parents of all grades are involved on different days throughout the year in open days to check learners work. This was confirmed by observation of the school policies by the researcher where it was established that sporadic examples of parental engagement are visible in the learners' code of conduct and school policy.

Epstein speaks of overlapping spheres of influences. Effective learning should overlap from school to home and the community to influence improved academic achievement. At home, parents need to assist with reading, homework and monitoring the study habits of their children. At school, parents need to be key influencers in excellent achievement by taking a lead in activities deemed suitable for them to manage to show their children how they value schools and education. They need to find out about progression, promotion, and the conduct of their children. According to Epstein's theory, the children's learning should assume a reciprocal process between schools and home. Pertinent to parental involvement initiative is the transformational leadership ability of the SMTs in schools to initiate involvement activities of the parents. Purdy and Meneely (2015: 148) asserts, "Schools play a crucial role in encouraging personal attainment and building up self-esteem, and who suggests that schools achieve this by creating 'orderly learning environments' which allow pupils to succeed, and, importantly, 'by accepting that pastoral care implies making academic demands of young people'".

Drawing from the findings of the results, the schools participated in the study drawn from a five-year period and the researcher established upheavals and inconsistency in terms of NSC learners' performance. Similarities in poor performance exist between schools D and E although little variance of good performance exist between school A, B, and C. Data reveals that school F has been doing well during the past five years though performance has never been at 100%. The findings of elements of poor performance among the six secondary schools involved in the study are congruent with the contentions of the National Ministry in the school performance report that schools in Sekhukhune are performing badly that poor performance has become recurring trend for a period of three or more years. Deletions and Meny-Gibert (2009: 47) observed "most South African, learners do not have access to good quality education, and the primary reason for dropout in the post-compulsory phase of schooling is the poor quality of education received by learners." Quality teaching and learning appeared to be



absent in the schools due to no involvement of the parents in their children's education to enhance academic performance. Twenty years down the line after the inception of democracy there are still many dysfunctional schools in rural arrears of South Africa. The higher level of failure rate is inconsistent with the higher level of expenditure lost from the taxpayer's money through the funding of schools aimed at improving better outstanding results.

Quality teaching and learning in schools cannot take place without consistent involvement of parents to enhance academic achievement. However, effective involvement of the parents relies heavily on the initiatives of the SMTs to create a supportive environment at schools to capacitate parents about their roles of engagement in enhancing learner academic achievement. The literature asserts that parents in some schools are involved only when there is a problem with a learner's behaviour or performance. This was confirmed by the responses received from the SMTs of the schools involved that parents are involved when they have to collect their children's progress report. Drawing from the responses of the SMTs, it could be revealed that there is a lot of contradiction pertaining to knowledge of the concept and its application, since SMTs of the six school seems to confuse parent involvement in learners' academic achievement with SGB roles. Lack of comprehensive systems and progressive plans in the six schools engaged in the study signifies a dearth of the culture of inclusion and collaboration between the SMTs and parents in rural schools. This was affirmed by Msila (2013: 447) "It is a critical commonplace that school leadership and management inefficiency lead to underperformance and paralysis of the school as an organisation."

#### **4.4.3.1.2. Encouraging positive parenting skills**

Masud, Thurasamy and Ahmad (2014) state that, "Among the several factors that affect academic achievement, parenting style is one of the most important aspect to enhance learner academic achievement." They further indicate that "because of the relationship between parenting style and academic achievement, scholars have highlighted the various aspects of parenting styles that help in boosting the academic outcomes of adolescents." Masud, Thurasamy and Ahmad (2014) explored, "Various aspects of parenting styles, which help in the development of young children, especially the school-related outcomes." Masud, Thurasamy and Ahmad (2014) state that, "As role models, parents' play a significant role in the child development therefore family environment is also one of the factors in children's cognitive, emotional, social, and behavioral competence." "It has been well known that students with high academic achievement are important assets to any country, while low

academic achievement may cause negative consequences such as stress, hopelessness, delinquency, psychopathology and substance abuse” (Masud, Thurasamy & Ahmad, 2014). The concept of parenting refers to when parents care for their children by giving them the ample support they need in their early stage of development. The concept involves when parents ensuring that children get all the necessities they deserve including shelter, food, clothing, safety, and quality education.

Masud, Thurasamy and Ahmad (2014) conceptualise, “Parenting styles as a constellation of attitudes toward the child that are communicated to the child and that, taken together, create an emotional climate in which the parent’s behaviours are expressed.” Authoritative parents are caring and open minded to their children opinions. These parents provide direction and support to their children. They indicate that, “Lack of discipline, undemanding and highly responsive represents characteristics of permissive parenting and that children are free to make decisions in their social matters.” South African laws hold parents responsible to take care of their children by providing the necessary support required that would boost the physiological, psychological, and academic development of the children. SASA section 3 deliberates about “compulsory registration of children to schools from the early age of seven to age fifteen.” The implication of the law is to eliminate the overwhelming illiteracy among South Africans by coercing parents to assume their reasonable responsibilities to ensure that children are at school. UNICEF (2000) state, “Quality in education occurs when learners are healthy, well nourished, and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities.”

*Parent 5, school A: “No we did not receive any training about parental involvement*

The interview process and the focus group interview revealed administration malpractices among the six schools involved in the research project in relation to engagement of parents in the education of their children to enhance academic performance. Information gained through the interviewing of the SMTs and focus group interview of the parents that the schools do not have any literacy programmes designed to equip parents with parenting skills and capacities, and this signify to ignorance and sabotage of the South African education system laws, which emphasize the need for capacity building programmes in schools. Responses received from interview of the SMTs of the six schools indicate that teachers and parents never had workshop with the SMTs about parent involvement in learner academic achievement to enhance performance. The focus group interview with parents confirmed that the schools did not

however provide them with any support in relation to dealing with adolescent and peer pressured learners to leverage accountability and responsibility in children's growth and development. UNICEF (2000) affirms that, "Schools can play a role in helping parents to enhance the 'home curriculum' and improve the quality of parental involvement in their children's education."

*Parent 1, School A: No! We did not, but we feel female learners should be given permission to use contraceptives*

Epstein (2011: 130) claims, "Parenting entails when schools help families to understand child and adolescent development." The views of Epstein imply that schools need to organise workshops to train parents to understand stages of development of the children. "Beyond academic attainment, education can benefit children through the development of capabilities such as self-regulation, self-confidence, resilience, determination, and aspirations for future success" (Emerson, Fear, Fox & Sanders, 2012:15). Parents need to establish home environments that support children as students to monitor students' reading behaviour to ensure that children do not spend much time on things that will exhaust their time for reading like TV, Cellphone Chats, or oversleeping or playing with friends; parents must buy additional books to help them to teach learners at home how to read). Amidst the lack of comprehensive planning for progressive engagement of the parents revealed through interviews and the observation schedule, success factors for outstanding improvement in learners' academic performance among the rural secondary schools of Sekhukhune Limpopo Province are very slim. The responses obtained through focus group interview schedule with parents of the six secondary schools engaged contradict some claims made by SMTs that parents are unwilling to be involved in the education of their children to enhance academic performance. "Human development thus begins well before a child enters the primary school" (Education White Paper 5, 2001).

*Deputy, school C: We do not have a written document, but in our school we indicated that parents will always be invited if there are some concerns about the children. For example, learners used to go on some excursions, we involve parents, and the school is used to be identified for competitions. Parents are used to be invited for sport activities, learners are used to be invited for things of science and technology... last time learners visited Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, then in that regard the parents are involved in being part of what their children are doing.*

The model of overlapping spheres of influences envisages a link between three contexts being the home, the school, and the community by locating the child at the centre. The aim of education is to produce learners who are fully academically equipped with knowledge, and skills to compete with the demands of the fast technologically developing society. This was affirmed by the Urban Child Institute (2014) that, “Without a high school diploma or equivalent, teens, and adults will have greater difficulty in securing quality employment and have lower earning potential.” The literature state that the most common contextual factor in effective partnership between parents and schools is illiteracy. When SMTs in schools voluntarily initiate programmes that aimed at equipping parents with knowledge and skills, the likelihood of learner academic achievement will be realised. The majority of rural schools are overpopulated with high enrolments of OVCs following the introduction of free education and the NSNP programs.

The interview schedule reveals ignorance of OVC in rural secondary schools, which poses another major threat concerning the realisation of outstanding academic achievement of the learners in schools. The interview established that none of the six schools involved have list of learners identified as OVC, so that they can be given adequate attention to cope with unbearable family problems that interferes with their concentration in schools. This was affirmed by the GFRLD grade R-12 (2011:3) by stating that, “schools act as if all learners are the same.” Parenting initiatives should not underestimate the dire need for pastoral care and training of OVC parents and guardians to give their maximum support to these children. It is evident from the findings of the interview schedule that these schools treat children as if all are come from the same family. This interferes with quality in education provisioning among secondary school learners of Sekhukhune Limpopo province.

*Deputy, school F: A kere... those parents cannot just be easily identified unless we go through our SA-SAMS records.*

#### **4.4.3.1.3. Enhancing communication with families**

“The key to parental or community involvement in a school’s operations is communication” (guideline to QLTC). It emerged from the interview process that the schools involved in the research process share similar characteristics concerning how they communicate with the parents of the learners. The concept communication refers to a way of exchanging or sharing information between two or more individuals. The model of overlapping spheres of influences envisages communication between the three contexts which are the home the school and the

family as the only means to communicating issues relating to children between the three spheres. Gary and Witherspoon (2011:47) contends, “Effective communication is essential for building family-school-community partnerships and is the foundation for strengthening relationships and all other partnership efforts.”

The interview schedule and the focus group interview reveal similar patterns of practices used by the participating schools to communicate with the parents about meetings. Amidst the fast developing technological inventions that schools can use to communicate meetings, it appeared that the schools which participated in the study are still relying on unreliable traditional and backward methods of sending learners to call parents for school gatherings. “Lack of appropriate communication by schools to parents is linked to lower levels of parental engagement, particularly in lower-performing schools, and parents are more likely to engage when school personnel value, expect, and invite them to be involved” (Emerson, Fear, Fox, Sanders (2012:42). The school profiling indicates that despite the presence of telephone line in some schools, letters are the most common alternatives of interacting with the parents.

*Deputy, school E: We communicate with them through the learners and the letters sometimes the chairperson of the SGB eh... over...eh...in an afternoon, they use the loudhailer. So that they involve them, they just call them through the loudhailer that we have a meeting at the school. So are far away nowadays and we know that they may not come, like those who are staying at 'New-stands' and Beth, then we just ask the service provider... the transport service provider to bring the parents to the schools so that we can have the maximum participation of...*

SMTs of the schools highlighted some distortions and ineffectiveness of the methods used due to the untrustworthiness of the learners. This was confirmed by the focus group interview group with parents that some learners do not deliver the messages about school meetings to them. Responses of the parents seemed to support the contentions of Mutodi and Ngirande (2014: 280) that “many parents feel uninformed about current educational practices and how they can be more involved with their child’s learning.” Emerson, Fear, Fox and Sanders (2012: 41) state that, “Schools can communicate and foster relationships with parents through email, websites, blogs, podcasts, and social networking applications or websites.” “The use of these technologies can reduce scheduling barriers that restrict opportunities for face-to-face meetings, convey information to multiple families at once, efficiently share information about school policies and assignments, and provide tips for engaging in learning” (Emerson, Fear,

Fox, & Sanders, 2012:41). Some parents indicated that they are willing to attend school meetings, but it seemed that their children bar them from coming thinking that the school will expose their misbehaviour to their parents. The finding support the fact that parents are usually very involved in their children's early education but this involvement tends to decrease when children proceed to high school, since secondary school children seek to exercise more autonomy. In school D a different practice has been established. The interview with the deputy reported some cost associated with the use of SMS therefore the method is not used quite so often to communicate with the parents.

*Deputy, School E: Yah! It shows that the learners cannot deliver the messages...some say ah! I do not need you at school because if you are there you will embarrass me...*

Epstein (2011:130) among the six types of involvement she suggests that schools can design and conduct a two-way communication system with parents at home. She further asserts, "Schools need to engage parents through telephone contact, memos, and report cards about learner results, letters, and SMSs to inform them about school programmes and children progress." Information about progress of the learners will help parents to think about monitoring children's work at home and offer assistant and support to their children. PAM envisages "communication with parents about the progress of the learners in school and home." Findings from the interview schedule with SMTs reveal similarities between schools C, D, and E, the schools have innovated a new method of loud hailing around the community to call parents for school meetings. "Teachers as primary decision-makers and agents concerning relations with parents must issue an explicit invitation to parents to join them in a partnership, which can be enacted in any number of school initiatives" (Lemmer, 2013:39). Despite claims by some SMTs that the method seemed to be effective, the observation schedule provide no evidence to substantiate the reliability of the method. The interview with SMTs of schools C, D, and E established that the schools have initiated in another method where the SGBs over the weekend announced school meetings at funerals.

*Deputy, school D: Yah...! This one of communication...! Usually we communicate with the parents via the learners through the letters. And then we also have the SMSs. We also make use of the SGBs. When they are at the funerals during the weekend, they will announce that...yah...so what I can say on the question of letters. We usually give the learners letters.*

#### 4.4.3.1.4. Increasing volunteerism and attendance at school

Gary and Witherspoon (2011:6) state that, “Most school professionals now realize that the job of educating students cannot be achieved by their efforts alone.” “Rather, it requires a collaborative effort with families, Communities, and other stakeholders” (Gary & Witherspoon, 2011:6). SMTs as a school management team should initiate activities not only in direct relation to learner schoolwork to motivated parents to keep involved in school. Parents who volunteered at school, perceive education as being more valuable than other parents do, and this will in turn be associated with improvement in students’ academic skills and achievement. The observation schedule indicates that five schools which participated in the research project do not have projects in which parents can be attracted to become involved in school. Epstein’s type of involvement refers to volunteering as pertinent to increasing and changing the attitudes of parents toward involvement in schools. The lack of school-initiated programmes signifies a lack of interest by SMTs of the participating schools to involve parents in the education of the learners to enhance academic performance. Epstein’s six types of involvement imply that schools should influence parents to help with other activities such as sports, and cleaning of the schoolyard and toilets for the learners since effective teaching and learning take place in safe and secured environments.

The observation schedule revealed that school C has developed a garden to be used as an outreach to benefit unemployed parents from the local community. Meanwhile; schools A, B, D, E, and F do not have any gardening project. “The establishment of partnership is not spontaneous but requires an outreach from school to parents within a democratic environment and partnership is enacted in an open-ended range of activities” (Lemmer, 2013:35). “It was concluded that when parents come to school regularly to know about the well-being of their children, it reinforces the view in the child’s mind that school and home are connected and that school is an integral part of the whole family’s life” (Adewumi, Olojo & Falemu, 2012:199). The observation schedule shows that the six participating schools do not have programmes to encourage volunteerism by parents. This was affirmed by the interview and the focus group interview that parents are not willing to volunteer without payment. This was affirmed by Lemmer (2013:42) that “some parents do not necessarily prefer a partnership with teachers above the traditional parent teacher relationship.”

*Deputy, school D: Eish! Outreach programmes that involve community in the school. So normally, we have them here. However, what I want to say is that, now the community does not*

*want to work for the fun of it: they need money... mmm... they don't want to work for free... even if you say come and do this for the learners they will say how much are you going to pay for us?*

#### **4.4.3.1.5. Enhancing learning at home**

“Many researchers recognise the important role of a strong positive bond between homes and schools that play in the development and education of children” (Mutodi & Ngirande, 2014:280). “PI is one factor that has been consistently related to a child’s increased academic performance” (Topor et al., 2010:186). Findings from a study conducted by Rafiq et al., (2013) in Pakistan established that, “frequency of parents’ consultation with teachers was considered to be very important element in their children’s academic activities.” “The reason why parents are considered the most essential people in their children’s early and later lives is that children observe and learn from, and later apply as parallel to their early observations.” Children learn through observations from their parent. This can provide different experiences at home; children can then relate the different experiences from their parent about their attitude, values, and beliefs of their education at the school. Children coming from highly literate parents, tend to show greater academic performance in their studies than children of less educated parents, who have not being exposed to any form of education. Parents, who are educated, know how to establish home-like school environments for their children to study successfully. “Involvement at home, especially parents discussing school activities and helping children plan their programmes, has the strongest impact on academic achievement” (DePlanty, Coulter-Kern & Duchane, 2007:361)

“When schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in school, but also throughout life” (Adewumi, Olojo & Falemu. 2012:197). Observation schedule of the participating schools’ timetables, year plans, and school policies does not provide any plausible information relating to their schools’ plans on how to do home visits to interact with parents to establish teacher-parent relations in order to support children with their studies. The interview with the SMTs established lack of commitment to establish a link between schools and home in order to provide support to parents and learner. “The parent-teacher partnership is enacted through an open-ended range of diverse activities, which can take place at home, in the school or in the community” (Lemmer, 2013:38). “Many failing schools have low pass rate because among other things, there is no commitment among teachers” (Msila, 2013:447). “Learning at home involves providing families about how to help



students with homework and curriculum related activities and decisions” (Epstein, 2011:30). SMTs need to initialise home visits to help parents at home to create conditions that are conducive for learners to study. Formal education is one of many ways that children learn and develop. Learning begins well before children enter school. Once children are attending school, they continue to learn both inside and outside the classroom. Parents play a critical role in providing learning opportunities at home and in linking what children learn at school with what happens elsewhere. “By participating in learning interactions and activities outside the school, parents become important actors in a child’s learning” (Emerson Fear, Fox & Sanders, 2012:17). The model of overlapping spheres of influence envisages that support should overlap from school to home to influence commitment to parents to support learners with their schoolwork. This was affirmed by Lemmer (2013:40) stating that, “Parent partners become empowered by becoming more informed about child progress, individual needs and how to assist learning.” Research studies on parental involvement in learners’ education asserts, “the most accurate prediction of a student’s achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which that student’s parent is able to create a home environment that encourages learning to express high expectations for their children’s achievement and future careers” (Adewumi, Olojo, and Falemu, 2012 :196).

#### **4.4.3.1.6. Increasing the number of parents in leadership and decision-making roles**

Epstein’s (2011: 30) six type of involvement identifies decentralisation of decision to parents to motivate them realises that schools value their involvement in enhancing academic achievement. The interview and the focus group interview of the six schools provide no credible information on any activities of the school, which are headed by the parents. It was confirmed that decisions normally are taken by the SGB then decentralised to other parents. The interview also established that when school policies are drawn, only the parent component of the SGB are involved, meanwhile other parents are not involved. Responding to the question about subject choices, the SMTs indicate that only Grade 9 learners are involved and issued with consent forms to give parents at home to make decisions about the subjects learners may follow at school. White Paper 2 states that parents have the inalienable right to choose the form of education, which is best for their children. One SMT member in one of the schools indicates that the principal normally is the one who draws up school policies and then dictates to other SMT members and the parents. This suggests that the lack of collaborative efforts to engage teachers and other stakeholders like parents in the formulation of policies in schools as organisation is a gross violation of democratic education laws.

*HOD 1, school D: Ah... we don't put them in...normally the school policies are drawn by the principal. We the SMT and the educators we are not involved in drawing the school policies.*

The National Education Policy Act, 27 of 1996 (1996) states, “Broad public participation in the drawing up of public education policy and the representation of stakeholders in the governance of all aspects of the education system.” Increasing parent involvement in school activities will engender a sense of ownership of the school property and its system; this will help to motivate parents to realise that their involvement in school activities is important. The interview established that comments made by SMTs of the six schools contradict their assumptions and suppositions on the roles that parents can play in schools with the actual implementation of programs to engage them in the children’s education. SMTs of schools A, B, D and F assume that parents can help the school with discipline. Meanwhile at school C the assumption is on parents’ assistance with resources that will help learners to achieve in their studies. Without vast programmes identified to envisage parents’ assumption of leadership roles in schools, effective involvement of parents will not be realised to enhance academic achievement of the children. The interview schedule further established that the six schools involved in the study had never tried to motivate teachers to engage parents in class teaching to reinforce learners to perceive that their parents have an interest in what they learn at schools. This will motivate learners study harder to improve their academic achievement. “Research studies assert that when schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed, not just in school, but also throughout life” (Adewumi., Olojo & Falemu, 2012: 197).

*Deputy, school F: Ah...! Ah...! Aowa (no)...! Nothing... nothing sir... nothing altogether. We usually don't do it...we usually don't do it...even though these educators they don't even like somebody coming to see what they are doing in the class. A mere class visit is a challenge even if you don't visit them you just walk past the class the teacher while teaching he will just keep quiet until you have passed by. I don't understand whether they don't have confidence in the subject they are teaching or what or maybe there are other factors that I don't know. Things di thomile go no senyega (getting spoiled) in the past we want to do away with the files...we want to do away with the class visits.... so I am a teacher you are not going to tell me what to do. So in our school things are now turning the other way round because teachers now start to create what we call team teaching now.*

#### 4.4.3.1.7. Improving community collaborations

Epstein speaks of “collaborating with the community, to strengthen and support school, students, and families by organizing activities to benefit the community and increase student-learning opportunity.” “Community plays an important part in the education system” (Student Speak Out, 2008). The concept of community can be defined by characteristics that the members share, such as culture, language, tradition, law, geography, class, and race. The interview reveals that the SMTs of the participating schools acknowledge the significant influence that community involvement will have to schools. Community organizing involves “mobilising people to combat common problems and to increase their voice in institutions and decisions that affect their lives and communities” (Holcomb-McCoy & Bryan, 2010: 264). The SMTs of the six schools agree that persistent involvement of the community in schools will improve the security of the school property. Some SMTs indicate that some members of the community are rich and this can benefit the school and learners by offering donations and bursaries to the learners to further their studies. The National Education Policy Act, 27 of 1996 (1996) advocates, “Broad public participation and representation of stakeholders in the governance of all aspects of the education system. This implies the fact that parents should be involved in school planning.” At school D the deputy indicated that they tried even to engage the local community chief to assist with involving parents, but the response of parents to school call remain poor. The literature confirms that some parents make excuses when called to school meetings.

*Deputy: Yah! We did try to talk to the chief and even the priest, normally what we are doing eh...we have the...the assemblies on Mondays and Fridays in the past we were inviting all the church leaders of different denominations to come and deliver the sermons on Mondays and Fridays.*

Epstein (2011) argue that, “There practices that schools and communities can execute separately and jointly with a common aim of improving child’s academic achievement.” Epstein’s model of overlapping spheres of influences emphasise the link between the school, the home, and the community with a common aim of developing the child at the centre. The model of overlapping spheres of influences posits that influence on the development of the child overlaps from the school through professionally designed academic programmes, the home through parental support to motivate the child to study and the community by acquiring values that will influence positive attitude in the child to study. The spheres of influence, which

are the home, the school, and the community, should reciprocally influence the child to develop into a responsible adult. Epstein (2011) asserts, “Teachers, relatives outside the immediate family, other families, and members of the community can provide important guidance and encouragement to these students.”

*Deputy, school C: Yah... because some of the community members they have money if they can be grabbed... I mean if they can be encouraged to attend meetings, really they can assist in making some financial and physical donations to the school. Sometimes we used to have some former students who used to be part of parent meetings. They assist by inviting companies. I remember this year we have an institution called The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). So... one of our learners... former learner, is a top man there. So he invited the company to our institution to come here. The company is dealing with researchers, so they came here to do career exhibitions from science and technology.*

The interview schedule revealed indispensable roles that some parents, stakeholders, and community members are playing in supporting some schools. The interview schedule indicates that six of the participating schools are involved in programmes that engage community members including local pastors. Focus interview guide of the parents in school A and C confirmed this that they use to come to school to attend prayer meetings with teachers to give the learners spiritual support confirmed this. In school C the interview schedule, reveals that the school is used to engaging the local artisans from the nearby Tubatse Ferrochrome used to teach learners about career opportunities so that they can make the right choice about the subjects they have to follow while still at school. Another parent affirms that he normally used to come to the school to share sermons with learners during assembly times. Despite the lack of formal planning for effective involvement of the parents in school C to enhance academic achievement, the interview schedule revealed that the school is committed engaging stakeholders such as experts from the companies to interact and motivate the learners to develop positive attitudes about their studies.

At school F, the interview schedule established that the school receives support from companies such as Old Mutual. The SMT highlight that the school has received a donation of laptops and a computer lab from the same company and that the company has already trained some teachers to equip them with management and leadership skills and practices. The interview further revealed that School F received support from Old Mutual to leverage enhanced academic achievement by enrolling some of the school learners at the LEAP school

over the weekends. These findings are congruent with the assumptions of the SMTs of the six schools and assertions of the literature that community involvement in schools can improve learner academic achievement. “Literature asserts that schools are in a stronger position to respond to their communities when they receive information and data identifying how their performance is compared with other schools and services” (Goodall et al., 2010:8)

*Deputy: Mh... mh....yah...teaching and learning we are helped by the LEAP school...SLP LEAP school...Old Mutual...the one yah... that donated some those laptops here...old mutual...and then some of the educators especially the management undergoes training ya Old Mutual...school leadership programme...some of them have graduated...they were certificated*

From the interview schedule, it was also revealed that the six schools do not organised home visits. Home visits will help to improve relations between schools and homes because SMTs will have firsthand information about every child at school and the families they are living with. The model of overlapping spheres of influences state that communication is the binding force between the three spheres being: the home; the school; and the community. Interacting with the community through home visits will open a wide range of communication channels to the school. Emerson, Fear, Fox and Sanders (2012:43) contend that, “The school is not the only place outside the home, which influences and contributes to a child’s academic achievement and psychosocial development.” Emerson, Fear, Fox, and Sanders (2012:43) indicate that, “Community engagement refers to the support and advocacy that organisations outside the school can provide to improve student learning and promote family engagement.”

#### **4.4.3.1.8. Capacitating parents and teachers with legislations and laws to improve awareness of their rights**

Studies have shown that students performed better academically and had more positive school attitudes if they had parents who were aware, knowledgeable, and involved. The interview and focus group interview with the parents reveal that none of the six schools has programmes to teach parents about the laws and policies pertaining to their rights to be involved in the education of their children. The literature asserts that the principal is the key individual in creating a successful parents school partnership. The home, school, and community partnership will only become sustainable when parents are knowledgeable their roles and rights of engagement within the school. These findings were supported by parents’ comments at school F that the school does not offer any literacy programmes to teach them about policies related to the curriculum (CAPS) their children are doing. One parent indicates that at primary schools

they were used to being orientated about the curriculum so that they know how to assist the children at home. It was evident from the data gathered through interviews that schools do not involve parents during the formulation of policies and formulation of class rules to promote a sense of ownership among parents and learners. Gary and Witherspoon (2011:47) cite, “Schools can help parents to feel empowered and capable of supporting their children’s learning by providing them with general knowledge about the learning process and specific skills and strategies they can use to promote their children’s overall growth in learning.”

*Parent 4 school F: Usually they do this at primary schools not at secondary school.*

*Parent 6 school B: This one is handled in such a way that they only call the SGB and train them but parents in general are not trained. They only train the SGB, which is the school governing body. They workshop them and then it is unusual that SGBs in return train the parents.*

“Performance standards require that parents be invited to become integrally involved in the development of the curriculum programmes and approaches for the development of the children and be provided with opportunities to increase their child observation, skills and to share assessments with staff. That will help plan the learning experiences; and be encouraged participating in staff-parent conferences and home visits to discuss their child’s development and education” (Miksic, 2015:8). The literature acknowledges the high levels of illiteracy among adults and the infrequent exposure to languages like English that perceived as being contextual to effective parent involvement to enhance academic achievement. However, that laws states that school should capacitate parents to close the illiteracy gaps that prohibit parents from involving in schools. The best way to achieve effective qualities of education is the partnership of parents and teachers in imparting valuable skills, conduct, and knowledge to the students.

#### **4.4.3.1.9. Dealing with barriers prohibiting effective involvement**

Research studies suggested that parents happen to become less involved in their children's education over time, especially after primary school education. “The most commonly cited social issues facing people in their communities were (in order of significance) isolation/loneliness, family breakdown, debt, lack of self-esteem and low income, low education/skills is ranked as the 10<sup>th</sup> most prevalent social issue overall” (Purdy & Meneely.

2015:149). The decline in parental involvement in secondary school education may occur because students need to be more independent, as they progress from one grade to another. Therefore parents give more space to their adolescents' children, and some parents feel less knowledgeable about curriculum issues offered at high schools which are complex. The concept of parent involvement in learner academic achievement entails hands-on academic activities where the parents engages with the learners at home and teachers at schools to enhance performance. Generally, parents should manage their adolescents' careers by helping to select courses, helping with homework, encouraging of educational goals, and attendance at school events. The barrier to help with homework tasks posed by the complex nature of the new curriculum (CAPS) is confirmed by the responses from the focus group interview with the parents of the six secondary schools who participated in the study. About 40% of the parents from the six schools participated in the study complained about the lack of capacity in relation to the new curriculum, which is very different from the old one they know, and this hinders their effective involvement in helping learners to complete their homework.

*Parent 1 school E: Truly speaking the curriculum has changed so much as compared to the previous old curriculum. Even myself, when I open a textbook I can see that the content is very different to the one we know. The problem with our children is that when the teachers finished his or her lesson. He or she does not make follow-up to ask him or her to clarify misunderstandings. They must follow teachers to ask them because the children themselves do not understand anything at all. You find that a child does not understand, what they want is that, they only want period to end so that the teacher may leave the class. They do not even bother to ask the teacher to explain systematically how they can find the answers. They are silent...if the children do not ask teachers in class; teachers took it as if they understand.*

*Parent 1 school F: We do sometimes offer ourselves to assist them but children are children. We do encourage them rather than just leaving them like that. Whether they are given homework or not, when they are given homework, they do write and we assist where possible. The current syllabus is not the same as the previous syllabuses of our times. We do not understand it clearly, only here and there, I used to help them here and there.*

“Secondary schools are often seen by parents as large bureaucratic organizations, which are not welcoming to parents, and is considered one of the reasons why there is a tendency for higher levels of PI in primary than secondary schools” (Lafaele and Hornby, 2011: 40). When parents perceive that teachers are not open to involving them in their children's education this

acts as a major barrier to PI” (Lafaele & Hornby, 2011:41). Similarly, schools, which are welcoming to parents, and make it, clear that they value PI, they develop more effective PI than schools that do not appear inviting to parents. “Parents who believe children’s intelligence is fixed and that school achievement is mainly due to children being lucky enough to have the high ability will not see the point in getting too involved in their children’s education” (Lafaele & Hornby, 2011:40).

“Family circumstances can be major barriers to PI. For example, solo parents and those with young families or large families may find it more difficult to get involved in PI because of their caretaking responsibilities” (Lafaele & Hornby, 2011:41). The interview schedule with some SMTs affirms that some parents could not come because they claim to be cooking food for their children who went to school. SMTs should encourage parents to send other family members if they feel they will not be able to attend school meetings. “When parents are unemployed, money could be an issue as they may not be able to afford a car or to pay babysitters in order to get to school meetings” (Lafaele & Hornby, 2011: 41). “Learning should be based on the clear understanding that learners are individuals with diverse characteristics and backgrounds, and the strategies to improve quality should, therefore, draw on learners’ knowledge and strength” (PGIE, 2009:11). Interventions to promote inclusion do not need to be costly. Several cost-effective measures to promote inclusive quality education have been developed in countries with scarce resources. “These include multi-grade, multi-age and multi-ability classrooms, initial literacy in mother tongues, training-of-trainer models for professional development, linking students in pre-service teacher training with schools, peer teaching and converting special schools into resource centres that provide expertise and support to clusters of regular schools” (PGIE, 2009:12).

“The barriers to inclusion can be reduced through active collaboration between policymakers, education personnel and other stakeholders, including the active involvement of members of the local community, such as political and religious leaders, local education officials, and the media” (PGIE, 2009:12). The SMT should identify learners at risk, facilitate support from relevant service providers, and monitor the progress. A directory of service providers near the school should be developed and made well known at the school. Encourage a programme of story writing, book club, poetry, art, music, and dance in the school as well as sports to encourage child participation, and to increase connectedness, and cohesion.



“Research has found that there is a high risk of educational underachievement for children who are from low-income housing circumstances” (Kapinga, 2014: 123). “Leaving school with fewer qualifications often translates into lower earnings in subsequent years and even into lower educational attainment in the next generation” (Purdy & Meneely, 2015:147). Mwoma and Pillay (2016:88) assert, “The difficulties learners experience may be worsened if teachers are not able to identify such learners in good time for adequate intervention.” Findings of their study indicated that the challenges deterring teachers from supporting OVC include lack of sufficient time for individual attention to OVC. The findings revealed in the schools with no data of OVC learners suggest lack of a commitment to assist these learners and to give them the necessary attention. However the policies asserts that “inclusivity should become a central part of the organization, planning, and teaching at each school” (CAPS, 2011:5).

The interview schedule at School F suggest that most parents are illiterate. Many researchers on similar studies have viewed the issue of illiteracy as a deterrent to effective involvement of the parents to enhance learner academic achievement. “However education policies assert that the key to managing inclusivity is ensuring that barriers are identified and addressed by all the relevant support structures within the school community, including teachers, district-Based Support Teams, Institutional Level Support Teams, parents and special schools as Resource Centres” (CAPS, 2011:5). Schools should establish systems, which motivate parents to realize that they are warmly welcomed to involve enhancing the academic achievement of their children irrespective of their level of education. “Interventions that target vulnerable parents and carers to support them to develop specific parenting skills can create pathways to improved academic outcomes” (Emerson, Fear, Fox & Sanders, 2012: 43). “When parents perceive that teachers are not open to involving them these acts as a major barrier to PI, Similarly schools, which are welcoming to parents, and make it, clear that they value PI, develop more effective PI than schools that do not appear inviting to parents” (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011:40)

*Deputy: A kere...eh...as I have mentioned majority of these parents are not eh...illiterate*

The interview schedule established that some learners’ attitudes appeared to be barriers to effective involvement of parents in schools to enhance academic performance. This finding is congruent with literature that state parental involvement diminishes as learners progress to higher grades since learners in secondary schools seek more independence. At schools C and E, interview process found out that learners do not like teacher-parent relationships thinking that parents will disturb the peace within the school premises. This was confirmed by the focus

group interview schedule at school E that some parents are willing to come to school meetings, but they did not receive invites from schools because their children are dishonest.

*Deputy: the first one is that...in fact our children don't like parent-teacher relationship. Children, parent-teacher relationship they don't like it. For example, if you ask a child here at school. What is the telephone number of your father? They will say, "ah...I forgot them." Without knowing whether you want those parent contacts for family matters or what, they will just tell you "I don't know the contacts numbers."*

The interview schedule reveals that the majority of parents in rural areas are unemployed. The deputy of school indicates that most parents of learners enrolled at the school, work as hawkers selling fruit at the nearby taxi ranks of Jane Furse. Meanwhile some are employed at the nearby shops in the Jane Furse plaza. This is congruent with research suggestions that when parents are poor money could be a problem for non-involvement in school. "When parents are unemployed, money could be an issue as they may not be able to afford a car or to pay babysitters in order to get to school meetings" (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011:41). However, the interview at school E claims that the school sometimes offers parents who are staying very far transport to come to school meetings.

*Deputy: We communicate them through the learners and the letters. Sometimes the chairperson of the SGB eh... over...eh...in an afternoon they use the loudhailer. So that they involve them, they just call them through the loudhailer to say that we got a meeting at the school. So that... some that they are far away nowadays... because we know that they may not come, like those who are staying at 'New-stands' and Beth. Then we just ask the service provider... the transport service provider to bring the parents to the schools. So that we can have the maximum participation of...*

#### **4.5. CONCLUSION**

Drawing from the findings it is apparent that rural schools do not value the involvement of parents as significant important partners in the education of their children to improve academic performance. Research studies perceived parents being influencers of learner academic performance. No matter how well schools can perform, parents are seen as being first teachers of the children. Their role in influence learning in schools is so indispensable and therefore cannot be replaced by anything else. SMTs as innovative agents of change should began to initialise change in schools with the inclusion of parents in the education of their children. The South African laws accord parents and SMTs to work together to leverage academic

performance of the children. The policy discourse on inclusion and collaboration should not be compromised with poor and ineffective transformational leadership practice. Consistent engagement of the parents in learner education will contribute to eradicating and social problems experienced in schools that interfere with effective learner academic achievement. Schools have been perceived as the rightful places where transformation should began, therefore, SMTs are the grass root agents of change. Engagement of parents in the education of their children is the first step toward realisation of democracy in public social institutions, through collaboration and inclusion. The situation of non-engagement of parents in schools as revealed by the findings exposes the weakness and the existence of a gap between policy and practice in the South African rural context. This concurs with the opinions of Bush and Jansen to view South African policies as being symbolic in nature.

## CHAPTER 5: OVERVIEW, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

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### 5.1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

It has become a general trend that good performing secondary schools in South Africa are judged in terms of the Grade 12 results, but outstanding performance of learners at Grade 12 level depends largely on the competencies and skills that learners have acquired at lower grades. South African policies at provincial level are influenced and drawn up in line with the national policies. In South Africa performing secondary schools are benchmarked on a pass rate of 60% or higher. Secondary schools failing to obtain 60% or higher are classified as dysfunctional schools. The benchmarking process does not affect lower grades including Grade 8 to Grade 11. SASA section (58B) contends, the “Principal of a public school at the beginning of the year, should prepare a plan setting out how academic performance at the school will be improved. It is within the ambits of this crucial planning process that prudent effective managerialism in schools should include and define the significance roles of parents to support academic achievement of the learners.” Emphasis from districts and circuits on supportive efforts and strategies to improve academic performance in rural secondary schools are focused mainly at Grade 12 learners, yet poor performance is still encountered at lower grades, pose a major threat toward the acquisition of excellent learners’ academic achievement. Reflecting on the results analysis as discussed in Chapter 4 from 2011 to 2016, many schools in Sekhukhune have been performing poorly for the past six years. Congruent to this perpetual ill performance is what Ngcobo (2010) state, “Despite years of reform effort, South Africa continues to lag behind in international comparisons and has failed to significantly raise the performance of historically disadvantaged learners.”

The culture of failure rate in some schools has become chronic and the symptoms of this is poor parents and community involvement to enhance academic achievement. In the light of this recurring poor performance it can be deduced that South African education system in rural areas is plagued by ineffective and poor instructional leadership practice. The South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 and PAM hold principals and HODs at schools responsible for learners’ academic performance. The law require school management teams to orchestrate instructional leadership through consistent interaction with parents as stakeholders in learner education to leverage academic performance in schools. The question to raise amidst this gradual increase in the decline of learner academic achievement is: What do SMTs who are

expected to be prudent and instructional to try new techniques do to emulate increased academic performance of the learners? The literature views parents as being the key influencers of learner academic achievement. This study does not conclude that parents are the sole single factor in improving academic achievement of learners in schools. Some schools can still perform to their limits without consistent engagement of parents in academic achievement, therefore it depends on the managerial and leadership abilities of the SMTs to work as a team. However, recent findings established the significant influence on the role of parents to improve academic achievement of the children.

This study was intended to explore the role of the school management teams and parents in learner academic achievement in the rural schools of Sekhukhune Limpopo Province. Parent involvement has been perceived by many research studies nationally and internationally as significantly important to increase learner academic achievement. Various models and theories of effective leadership in education practice, put a high premium on principals as key influencers of instructional leadership practice to effect change in schools. Such effective changes as postulated involve the inclusion of parents in the education of their children. Instructional leadership practice encompasses the leadership's ability to be dynamic to integrate various other models and leadership styles in order to be productive in achieving organisational mission and vision. Schools are community-based organisations with the key focus on producing economically viable and competitive children through effective quality teaching and learning, born out of the participative and collaborative efforts of SMTs and parents as partners in learner education.

This study was interested in exploring how school leadership in this context interacts with the other contextual factors to facilitate a transformational change to improve learner academic achievement. Effective change in schools should always be conceptualised with improved learners' results. This study indicates that shared leadership, networking, and collaboration require shared responsibility and accountability between SMTs and parents in all school activities and programmes to enhance academic achievement of the children. However, the level of the involvement of the stakeholders is not consistent in these schools. The SMTs resilience and ability to initiate and enhance the rate of interactions between schools and parents to involve in the academic achievement of learners, is an important factor. This study wanted to answer the following research questions:

### 5.1.1. Main research question

- What is the role of the SMT and parents in enhancing academic achievement of Secondary School children?

### 5.1.2. The secondary or sub-questions which guided the study were:

- How can the SMT improve parental involvement in order to enhance learner achievement?
- What are the barriers encountered with parent involvement in learner academic achievement?

## 5.2. OVERVIEW

The Annual National Assessment Diagnostic Report (2014) disclosed overwhelming poor performance of learner in lower grades including Grade 9. Failure of Grade 9 learners in secondary schools to adequately express themselves across various competencies of the assessment in mathematics and English justifies that effective quality education in public secondary schools is not taking place. The National Education Policy Act, 27 of 1996 (NEPA) (1996:11) state, “A learner who has repeated one or more years at school in terms of this policy is exempt from the age grade norm.” NEPA (31) asserts, “In principle, learners should progress with their age cohort. Amidst this declining standard of performance learners have the right to be promoted even if they do not meet standards to be promoted to the next grade.” Findings from ANA linked to the poor performance of learners in numeracy and reading highlight the significant importance of home-like schools and schools like home environments as conceptualised by Epstein (2011), where teachers and parents can reciprocally teach children to read and write.

It is therefore, the profound responsibility of the SMTs to capacitate parents and teachers on how they should execute their roles to engagement in supporting learners. Increase in the quality of learner performance relies unequivocally on the interaction between SMTs and parents. It is within the range of these ANA findings that Block (2010:1) perceived “the educational standards of South African children as comparatively the worst, amongst the world and the Southern Africa region and in Africa as a whole.” Pertinent to the culture of poor learner performance in rural schools is the issue of non-engagement and lack of interactive efforts among stakeholders due to the failure to execute responsibilities by both parents and SMT members in schools. The SMTs in schools are leaders and managers who have to try various

strategies together with parents to improve the academic performance of the learners. Effective implementation of the concept parent involvement in learner academic achievement cannot be isolated from outstanding leadership abilities that SMTs should display to improve the quality of results.

## **Chapter 1**

This chapter presented us the prelude to the research project. The focus of this chapter was on the introduction and background to the topic of research. Other aspects discussed include statement of the problem, research questions, aims of the study, literature review, research design and delimitation of the study, research methodology (sampling procedures, research instruments) data collection strategy (focus group and interviews). This chapter also provides definition of some terms used in the study. The working assumption and demarcation placed the study within a specific gap in the literature on the role of the school management teams and parents in learner achievement in the rural secondary schools of Sekhukhune Limpopo province.

## **Chapter 2**

This chapter reviewed the literature on the role of the SMTs and parents in learner achievement. Relevant sources related to the topic of the study were chosen and discussed in this chapter. The sources included are books, articles, publications, Government Gazettes and policy documents, such as the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, the Children's Act, 2005 and the Constitution of South Africa, 1996. This chapter also presented the definitions of parental involvement and its significant influence on learner academic achievement and explored the historical background to this issue and the aims of the research. This chapter further explored the roles of engagement in the following subtopics: the role of community involvement in education; what the laws says about the involvement of the parents in education to address diversity in learning; barriers that hinders effective involvement of parents in education; what roles parents and SMTs play in supporting the education of the children; benefits of parent in learner education; the role of SMTs in supporting vulnerable children; the areas that SMTs can involve parents in learners education; the characteristics of effective involvement of parents; and how SMTs should involve parents in learner education; the final concluding paragraph summarises the literature review.

### **Chapter 3**

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the research paradigm, methodology, design as and the data collection process that was followed in this study. Interpretivism and case study methods were used. This study used the following data collection techniques namely observation, document analysis, instruments, focus group interviews and interviews. The chapter also reviewed the sampling strategy which chose the purposive sampling approach, data analysis method which embraced thematic data analysis, as well as the limitations and delimitations of the study.

### **Chapter 4**

This chapter presented, analysed and discussed the data generated during the field study, which consisted of qualitative participant observations, document analysis, and individual interviews with three SMT members and focus group interviews with five parents of Grade 11 learners in each participating school. The chapter presented data relating to demographic and biographic information of the participants, which the researcher requested through interviews and the focus group interview guide. Pre-determined research questions were used to gather information from the participants. Data collected was presented in tables and quotes. Finally the collected data was analysed through themes which were located to suitable themes justified by literature quotations.

### **Chapter 5**

This chapter presents the overview final recommendations for further study. The concluding paragraph gives the synopsis of the topic of the study based on the research paradigm including the literature and recommendations for development as well as the suggestions for future research and also reflects on the aim of the research, and states how the research questions have been addressed.



### **5.3. SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS**

In discovering what role the SMTs of secondary schools of Sekhukhune, Limpopo Province play, to interact with parents in enhancing academic achievement of children. I aligned responses with the research questions in accordance with the following categories of parental involvement practices that frames the study to facilitate a clear focus of analysing the findings. It is noted that the SMTs resilience and ability to initiate and enhance the rate of interactions between schools and parents to involve in the academic achievement is an important factor.

#### **5.3.1. Sub-question 1**

The first subsidiary research questions revealed how SMTs in rural secondary schools of Sekhukhune Limpopo Province will improve parent involvement to enhance academic achievement. Findings from the interview and the focus group interview relate varied inputs to promote parent involvement in the education of their children to enhance academic achievement. At school C, an SMT member stated that the school needed to develop an action plan for parents to allow them to call parents of different grades at different days to engage them in the education of their children. SMT at school C seemed to be confused and have run out of ideas on how they can improve parent involvement effectively. In school E, one SMTs member indicate that the school need to develop a policy and try to shift the time for parent meetings, which was, normally around 10h00 am to 16h00 pm when everybody will be back from work to attract a greater number of parents to attend school meetings. Inputs at school D include suggestions to encourage the learners at home to study and listen to their teachers. Other responses include calling for parent's meeting where parents will address parents about the importance of being involved in schools.

Parents posit that if schools could be left under educators alone leaners will not be motivated to learn. It can be assumed from the responses that this question has been addressed. Suggestion made by the SMTs and parents concur with the findings from document analysis which sheds no information on the records of meetings consistently held with the parents to motivate them to be involved in the education of the children. The school timetables, the year plans, and even the school policies do not show any indications to accommodate parent's involvement to enhance academic achievement of their children. Despite claims made in certain schools that parents are involved, the lack of formal planning in the school systems among the six schools suggests that schools undermine the significance influence that the parents can have in enhancing academic achievement. The interview and the focus group interview further

discover that the schools do not have literacy programmes. The role of literacy programmes in schools is to equip parents with knowledge and skills. Literacy programmes can help to reduce the overwhelming illiteracy problems that cause many parents to become less interested to involve in activities because they cannot read and write.

The observation schedule further provides that five out of six schools do not have gardens to involve poor parents as outreach programmes. Although outreach activities like gardens do not have a direct influence on the academic achievement of the learners but they can have a positive influence on parents to be engaged in school activities. The interview guide reveals that some schools have developed close ties with some community members to share some sermons with the learners during assembly times. In schools C and F, I discovered that some companies are showing their support through donations and are supporting learners with career programmes and teachers with leadership training skills. These findings are congruent with research studies on the interaction of the communities with schools as affirmed by Doiron and Lees (2009:138) that “It takes a village to raise a child.” In which we understand all members of the community share some responsibility for raising children.” Schools have a long tradition of involving community members/organizations in various mutually beneficial projects. Van der Berg, Taylor, Gustafsson and Armstrong (2011) assert, “Effective schools require well selected individuals as principals together with management teams that understand and fulfil their roles as leaders of the curriculum, ensuring that an organised environment conducive to learning is present.”

### **5.3.2. Sub-question 2**

The second subsidiary research question sought to discover the barriers that the schools encountered in implementing effective parent involvement. Barriers to learning are perceived as major deterrents to the effective involvement of parents in schools to enhance academic achievement. Varied contradictory responses were received from both interviews and the focus group interview guides. Despite claims from SMTs that the school does not encounter barriers with engaging parents in their children’s education, parents continue to distance themselves from the schools. This was confirmed by the focus group interview with parents that some learners happen to forbid their parents from involving in school. Parents indicated that learners do not inform them about school meetings meanwhile they explicitly told their parents not to come to school meetings because they fear to be embarrassed by other learners. Some learners fear that teachers will reveal their bad behaviour to the parents that is why they prohibit them

from attending school meetings. In another focus group interview, guide parents indicate that teachers seemed to create barriers against parents coming to school because they used vulgar words to learners and this make some parents develop negative attitude to teachers and therefore during parent meetings they choose not to attend.

The interview also reveals that sometimes parents come to school when there is a problem with a child. The only thing parents know is to come to school to complain to the teachers that they made their children fail. Another barrier established through the interview, is poverty due to unemployment. Parents who are poor and are not working seemed to be uninterested in engaging in school activities, as they are ashamed and undermining themselves. The parents confirmed this indicating that they cannot come to school to volunteer for no payment. SMTs appeared not disinclined in engage parents during the formulation of policies and planning of the school programmes. This create a barrier because the habit of non-engagement of parents during policy formulation process means there is no capacity building for parents therefore parents feel empty and uninformed about school programmes and therefore they choose not to come to school meetings or to engage in support of the child education to enhance academic achievement.

Lack of capacity among the SMTs in terms of the laws and legislative framework that encourage consistent engagement of parents in their children's education to enhance academic achievement is a barrier. The unavailability of policies that guide how parents should be engaged, the roles they should play in enhancing academic achievement, poses barriers to effective parental involvement in influencing excellent academic achievement. SMTs seemed not to be using their professionalism to initiate projects as outreach to the community to cater for poor parents. This is another barrier that needs to be addressed. Lack of support from the Department of Education to support schools with strategies to use to motivate parents to engage in learners' education is a barrier. This question appeared to have been answered because varied form of barriers were shown as discussed above. These deter effective parental involvement in enhancing academic achievement of their children.

## **5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

### **5.4.1. Recommendation regarding research sub-question 1**

#### **5.4.1.1. Increasing home school relations and communication**

The contexts in which schools operate in Sekhukhune Limpopo Province have a very strong impact on the way learning is conceptualised. Findings revealed misconceptions about the concept. The interview and focus group interview schedules indicate that responses of the SMTs and parents support each other in the definition of the concepts. They both see that parents should play a role in assisting their children with school related work. SMTs acknowledge that learning does not take place at school only and that some of the things learners learn them from home and bring them at school to be refined. The overlapping spheres of influences affirm this that there are separate things that the school, the community, and the home do, that contribute to influence the development of the children. However, the views of the SMTs across all the six schools engaged in the study on the question seeking to elevate the roles SMTs in schools are playing to support the education of the children seemed to present a different picture of the actual implementation of parent's involvement in learners' education to enhance academic achievement.

The practices and the application of the concept seemed to differ with the actual definitions given. The six schools appeared to be managing the concept through common sense without formal planning and policy guideline being used to envisage practical application of the concept in the schools. In fact, not among all the six schools actual parental involvement is applied to support the academic part of the children at the school. From the six schools involved similar patterns of engagement appeared. The six schools as confirmed by the observations, document analysis, interviews, and the focus group interviews engage parents normally during the collection of learner reports and analysis of the term-by-term results. In some instances, parents are called to come to schools when the schools experiences problems with learners or during disciplinary hearings. The concept of parent involvement in learner education to enhance academic achievement goes beyond the collection of results and dealing with learner transgressions. It requires hands-on engagement between either SMTs, teachers, or parents per se to support the learning process of the children at home or in schools through consistent interaction to monitor progress and development of the children.

One of the most profound strategies which has surfaced from many research deliberations and recommendations for improvement on similar topic of study to leverage an effective home-school relationships is the setting up of home visits by SMT members in schools. Chatting and reporting to parents about learner performance and progress helps to strengthen home-school relations giving little room for any learner indiscipline. SMTs of well performing schools take cognisance that the establishment of relations with the homes will pave ways to establish training programmes to capacitate parents about strategies to support and establish condition at home that suit learners to concentrate at their studies. The SMTs of well performing schools will see the pertinence of acquainting parents with good parenting practices including awareness of adolescent which may have implication for learners at secondary school level to interfere with their academic achievement. It can be assumed that in rural secondary schools many female and male teen learners are already teen parents due to lack of proper education about the implications of the adolescent stage by their parents. This is affirmed by the contentions of The Urban Child Institute (2014) noting a dramatic increase in single parenting originating from adolescent pregnancy. Okeke (2014:6) posits, “Through home visits, teachers can establish a deeper understanding and healthy relationship not only with the parents of the child, but also with every member of a particular family.”

Wilder (2014:390) contends, “The most prominent parental involvement components were communication between parents and children regarding school, checking and helping with homework, parental educational expectations and aspirations for their children, and attendance and participation in school activities.” In establishing strong connection between schools and home, effective communication strategies appear to be of prominent importance. SMTs of well performing schools develops quick responses through consistent evaluation and analysis of the methods used to establish gaps that interferes with smooth communication between schools and homes and come up with alternatives to nurture and keep sustained links with the parents at home. Beside reliance on the learner as the quick and cheap method to convey messages home, they can make use of: SMSs, telephone contacts, emails or drop boxes, bearing in mind that majority of parents nowadays are capable of using cell phones. SMTs of well performing schools in the rural school context, bearing in mind the adversity of poverty, can establish healthy links with the main rural community structures such as traditional leaders, church leaders and political leaders with significance influence to parents to back for assistance with communicating messages about school events. This methods will mitigate gaps that create

barriers to effective involvement where in some learners appreciate their parents coming to schools.

#### **5.4.1.2. Engaging parents in learner activities**

Wilder (2014:378) asserts, “Family involvement can be generally defined as the parents’ or caregivers’ investment in the education of their children, to more specific ones that perceive parental involvement as parents behaviours in home and school setting meant to support their children’s educational progress.” Wilder’s definition of parental involvement in learner education of their children paves the way to a rigorous debate about the main objective of this study. The aim of the main research question focused on the academic activities the schools allocate to parents to support in the classrooms and at home. The model of overlapping spheres of influence identified three context being the home, the school, and the community. This model assumes that a reciprocal form of learning should emerge from the intertwined context to benefit the child at school.

At the beginning of every year when schools re-opens SMTs need to invite parents to ensure that parents are encouraged to take part in the curriculum activities of their children. It is important that parents tell the teachers about the background of the children so that educators know how to interact with the children in the classrooms. When schools plans activities for the upcoming year, parents need to be given priority to be part of the school curriculum activities. SMTs need to ensure that parental roles are clearly outlined and featured on the school plans like the timetable, year programme and other curriculum related plans to motivate and encourage parents to see that they are welcomed at school. SMTs can supply parents with school time tables so that they may know how daily school activities including; times for breaks, when the school knocks off, and when study times begin as well as sports and cultural activities are taking place. Action plan of school events, functions and parents workshop intervals must be drawn up in collaboration with parents, so that parents are aware of what is happening at school.

“Researchers have noted that positive relationships between parents and schools have not been adequately forged” (Bacon & Causton-Theoharis, 2012:2). SMTs in realising the significant influence of the parents on their children’s education they need to include on the school timetable open days at least once per quarter, to allow parents to see how their children are performing. This will afford parents the opportunity to make comments where necessary if they are not satisfied with the quality of the tasks and number of work output given to the learners.

NEPA (1996:11) (32) state that, “A learner’s needs must be attended to through the efforts of the learner, and his or her teachers, with support from the learner’s family and peers.” A critical view is cited by Bacon and Causton-Theoharis (2012:2) that, “Equal collaboration is impossible because ‘the expectation of equity directly contradicts the hierarchic structure of knowledge and status imbedded in the positivist paradigm of professionalism.” The discourse of parent involvement in learner education to enhance academic achievement is strongly supported by the laws of the country to ensure that collaborative support is given to the learners to enhance academic achievement.

It should be born out of prudent instructional leadership practice that SMTs engage parents in the academic activities of their children. SMTs of well performing schools plan in collaboration with parents policies that have a direct influence on learner achievement. Engaging parents will motivate them realise to that they are also part and parcel of the school and this will increase their desire be involved in leaners’ education. Successful SMTs in afford the parents the opportunity to share their knowledge and skills. Outsourcing knowledge from parents to come and teach their children will motivate children to realise how their parents value education. SMTs of well performing schools celebrate successful events with the parents of the learners such as giving learners and teachers who have performed well in their studies awards in the presence of their parents to let them see the progress the school is making. “Rewarding positive engagement of desired behaviour as discussed by Heystek et al., (2008:82) will leads to pleasant response of parents to school invitation to attend meetings.”

Wilder (2014:378) contends, “Training parents to teach their children to read proved to be more effective than training parents to listen to their children read, although both interventions had a statistically significant impact on achievement.” The views of Wilder as deliberated above suggests the idea that SMTs should initiate and encourage teachers to train and acquaint parents about curriculum expectations of their children’s pertaining to the skills and competencies they need to master for promotion and progression. In the light of the findings produced by the ANA diagnostic report (2014) unleashed “failure of learners at grade 9 level to express themselves in prescribed competencies of the assessment confirms the fact that the significant influence of the parents in enhancing the academic achievement of their children cannot be underestimated.”

### **5.4.1.3. Capacity building and empowerment**

It was deduced from the interviews and focus group interviews that teachers in the schools did not receive any training and support from their SMTs as their immediate supervisors about engaging parents in learner education to enhance academic achievement. It also appears from the interviews that SMTs did not get any support or training from the government concerning how schools can implement parental involvement initiative in schools effectively from the government. The SMTs of the six schools involved in the study admitted that they do not have any committees, policies nor have they received any training from the government about parental involvement in learner education to enhance academic achievement. Drawing from the findings, it can be assumed that the main research question has been answered. Actual parental involvement in the six schools is not taking place. From the findings, there is an indication of sporadic engagement during the collection of the results of learners and dealing with misconducts. Actual parental involvement among the six schools through interactive engagement in learner education to support with home visits, helping parents with strategies to support learners at home and even to engage parents in class activities to reinforce increased motivation to learn is not taking place. SMTs confuse the concept of parent involvement in learner academic achievement with the roles that are played by the SGBs in schools.

The interview guide and the focus group interview schedule reveal shockingly diverse responses in terms of the laws that require parents to partner with schools to support their children's education. Parent's participating in the study among all the six schools involved in the study appeared to lack capacity in terms of the power which the laws gives them to intervene in the learning process of their children to enhance academic achievement. Conversely teachers as well seemed to be unsure of the laws that empower parent's participation in education to enhance academic performance. Some responses on the knowledge of the laws about partnership with parents lack reference. The South African Schools Act, the Education Law Amendment Act, the White Paper 2, and White Paper 6 on "inclusivity in Education and many other policies including curriculum related policies envisage increase involvement and collaboration with the parents of the learners in schools."

The issue of illiteracy has been cited as a deterrent which drives away many rural parents from participating in the education of their children. The South African Schools Act section 19 envisages "enhancement of capacities to promote effective functioning of the schools." SMTs of successful schools perceive this as an opportunity to acquaint parents through parent



workshops about the laws that formulate their rights to participate in the education of their children. Training of parents about their right to be involved in the education of their children is congruent with the contentions of NEPA (4) (b) that, “The education system should contribute to the full personal development of each student, and to the moral, social, cultural, political and economic development of the nation at large, including the advancement of democracy, human rights and the peaceful resolution of disputes.” SMTs of well performing school when teaching parents about their involvement rights know at the same time that they are improving the quality of parenting at home. This is affirmed by the contentions of Handa, McDonnella, Honarib, and Sharrya (2013:88) that, “Quality of parenting is believed to shape the emotional environment of the family and play a critical role in children’s psychosocial development.”

#### **5.4.1.4. Collaboration with stakeholders**

Effective instructional leadership practices facilitated by SMTs of well performing schools create conditions for collaborative working relations between peers and the stakeholders. SMTs should establish and nurture sustainable healthy working environment within their schools as well as in the external environment. The White Paper on Education and Training (1995) Chapter 4 (10) acknowledges “poor relations between schools and communities which have been distorted and disrupted by the years of struggle for legitimacy.” The creation of healthy relations between schools and the communities served by SMTs of well performing schools, is congruent with legislative imperatives “echoing for the restoration and rehabilitation of the ownership of the schools to their communities through the establishment and empowerment of legitimate, representative governance bodies.” Decentralisation of governance of schools down to the communities which they serve through consistent engagements and interactions by establishing committees on which community members serve by occupying prominent decision-making position in school programmes will restore the sense of ownership of schools among communities.

Many rural schools are still trapped by the scourge of the legacies of apartheid with under developed infrastructure and poor resources due to the inequitable distribution of funds and resources needed to ensure equal provisioning of quality teaching and learning of South Africans. However the new democratic National Norms and Standard for Schools Funding has tried to mitigate the gap by introducing new laws to ensure equality in the allocation of resources. The poverty gap of poor resources and infrastructure in rural schools remained

unchallenged by insufficient funds and resources allocated to rural schools. The observable shortage of resources such as libraries, science labs, internet connections, telephone lines, electricity, roads, conference centres in schools and classrooms not forgetting administration blocks, sabotage the quality learning for rural children. SMTs of well performing schools will prudently attract rich stakeholders and community members to support schools with donations of funds and resources to leverage the quality of education provided in rural schools.

Establishing healthy relations will not only benefit the school but learners as well through the funding of learners who are doing well in their studies with bursaries and employment opportunities in completing their studies. It has been observed that vandalism, theft and destruction of property and burning of schools by community members and learners during strikes and criminals, either during community political unrest demanding resources which are not even related to education or for criminal purposes, hold the delivery of quality teaching and learning at ransom. Transformational SMTs of well-functioning schools through compassion and empathetic efforts, mitigate gaps by attaching value systems to community culture and values by attending community events and inviting community members to take part in school. Teachers and other staff members should also be motivated and encouraged to act alike. This will help to cure many ills relating to misconceptions attached to schools by community members.

#### **5.4.1.5. Outreach programmes and welcoming environment**

“It is also very important that the school community is seen to be giving back to the community.” “If the principal, teachers and learners are seen to be willing to initiate or support community efforts, members of the community will be more motivated to support and get involved in supporting the schools” Motshekga (QLTC) (2012:43). Another pertinent issue that has been so profoundly debated by research as the main affliction of poor parental engagement in the learner academic achievement in rural school is poverty. During the recent spate of violence around South African communities, schools particularly in rural context had become victims of circumstances. It can be assumed that this kind of trend where school property is destroyed for unjustifiable reasons attributes is caused lack of relations, negative perceptions of the SMTs due to poor performance, the lack of value system due to lack of initiatives by SMTs to develop outreach activities that will attract the community to the school. Drawing from the findings it has been established that only one school among the six school has a gardening project. Poor community members are hired to produce vegetables for the school

nutrition programme to benefit the learners and sell some for personal income. Outreach programmes are not confined to the limits of gardening projects. Innovative SMTs goes to the extent of inviting experts to share with learners and parents career choices so that learners at schools can choose subjects responsibly.

Community members belonging to different denominations can be invited to share and motivate positive behaviour through sermons. This helps to restore morals, respect, honesty and discipline of the learners in schools. The concept of moral regeneration has been so loudly debated by political leaders following the inception of the democratic era focusing on the restoration of the culture of learning among children, eliminating and denouncing violence and indiscipline in schools as being legacies of the struggle for legitimacy. The White Paper (1995) Chapter 3, confirms that, “Schools, colleges and universities were part of the arena of political mobilisation and confrontation with the security forces.” Schools and children have been perceived as targets and rightful places of influential debates about moral regeneration. Therefore SMTs can invite political leaders to persuade learners to change attitude and perceptions against education and schools. In one of the schools an SMT member deliberates about the interference of community politics in schools which have significantly influenced poor learner academic achievement. This can boost the morale and attitude of learners in schools, amidst the denouncing and forbidding of initiation practices which the democratic laws perceive as inhumane practices. SMTs and parents need to mobilise and come up with strategies that will assist in maintaining discipline in schools to motivate learners’ positive behaviour. White Paper (1995) contends that, “The restoration of the culture of teaching, learning and management involves the creation of a culture of accountability.”

SMTs of well performing schools as innovative agents of transformation should create a safe and welcoming environment where parents feel free to come and share their skills and support with teachers and learners. Padayachee (2014:6) asserts, “Core values of Bathopele, wherein deliberation is on teamwork, emphasizing cooperation with one another and with our partners in education in an open and supportive way to achieve shared goals.” Among other key principles of Bathopele: “access; courtesy; openness; and transparency” can be regarded as the basic fundamental pillars of establishing healthy relations between schools and parents. The implication is that a welcoming school environment should be accessible with no barriers to forbid parents to interact with the schools to enhance learners’ academic achievement. In one of the schools parents indicated, teachers insults learners and their parents. Insults are part of initiations practices that are forbidden by legislation. Insults of parents and learners can create

a toxic culture which can have significant influence on the rate of involvement, characterised by alienation and the withdrawal of support of schools by parents.

SMTs need to ensure that teachers use a language which clearly understood by all parents considering the level of illiteracy so that parents find schools courteous, with no signs of rudeness and impoliteness. The presence of parents in schools need to be treated with great respect and politeness, serviced with information about their children's performance which should be given to them promptly and unhesitant. This will promote the rate of involvement in school activities to enhance academic achievement. When SMTs respond with home visits the rate of interaction will further be expanded and improved. Therefore schools will be viewed as community centres for learning and social support with increased community and parent collaboration in children's learning to enhance academic achievement. It is in the best interest and under the auspices of the education laws that schools should ensure unwavering respect and protection of the rights of learners and parents in educational institutions.

#### **5.4.1.6. Sharing decisions and delegation of responsibilities**

“Scholars, in fact, have found that strong leadership plays a pivotal role in the formation of collaborative partnerships between schools and other community agencies and in creating and sustaining legitimate shared decision making” (Gordon & Louis, 2009:8). Schools which experience high level of parental involvement in learner academic achievement democratise decisions and delegate some responsibilities to parents. The White Paper (1995) asserts that, “The principle of democratic governance should increasingly be reflected in every level of the system, by the involvement in consultation and appropriate forms of decision-making of elected representatives of the main stakeholders, interest groups and role players.” In one school an SMT member indicated that school policies are drawn by the principal only, without engaging SMTs or parents and then they are imposed the entire staff. The law acknowledge illiteracy as part of the legacies of apartheid which has caused a lot of harm to the entire disadvantaged group. Therefore, SMTs should not underestimate parents because of their level of illiteracy.

SMTs should not take advantage of parents' illiteracy or take unilateral decision. As described by the law they have the inalienable right to be informed and engaged in the education of their children. Irrespective of the level of illiteracy, parents are partners in the education of their children. The laws further emphasise broad public participation of the stakeholders in the decision making-process of all government institution. Engaging parents in school decision-

making processes, either during policy development, drafting of school budgets, assessment policy, religious policy, and many other policies will improve relations or develop parents' sense of self confidence and efficacy. Parents who are made part of the decision-making processes develop a sense of ownership of the policies of the school. This will help to reduce tension when the implementation process take place. Schools where SMTs do not engage parents are riddled with violence, factions sabotage, and poor observation of learners' conduct time, and finally poor learner academic achievement.

SMTs of well performing schools consider the delegation of responsibilities and some leadership roles to be part of strategic management to increase the number of parents involved in schools. During school meetings parents can be given the responsibility to chair and even organise school parent meetings. The South African Schools Act talks about "cooperative governance implying that schools should give parents and stakeholders roles to play in the, management of some school activities." SMTS can delegate responsibility to parents to manage for managing school nutrition programme (NSNP). Parents can be encouraged to come to school to monitor the NSNP, to check food to see if it is in good condition and healthy, do stock taking and report to parents about the problems they discover with the NSNP programmes. Parent members of the SGB can be given responsibilities to procure and purchase school items. This will motivate parents to keep involved in school activities. Community members and parents can be given the responsibility to conduct school assemblies and assist schools with discipline. This will motivate learners to take schooling seriously because their parents are supporting some school activities. Delegation of responsibilities will improve trust and honesty which will mushroom into a network of social interactions. Andriani (2013: 8) state, "Social networks can be considered as a powerful means to spread information and knowledge at lower transaction costs and uncertainty."

Different studies suggested different strategies by which comprehensive plans to involve parents, families, and the community in the education of children can be created by SMTs in schools. Van Roekel (2008:3) suggests, "The following strategies to ensure that partnership between schools parents and community in learner academic achievement remain effective and sustainable." "Firstly, SMTs must begin by analysing or surveying educators and families to determine needs, interests, and ideas about collaborating." Secondly, the SMTs must "develop and pass family-friendly policies and laws and establish a committee that will manage parent involvement initiative." The committee should identify gaps that interfere with effective involvement and develop strategies to deal with them to increase the number of parents

involved in schools to enhance academic achievement of the learners. Activities of the committees should feature on the school programmes and some on the school timetables so that teachers and learners, as well as parents know, when a particular activity that involves parents is to take place.

SMTs during school meetings should delegate responsibilities to parent to lead and chair meetings to develop their leadership skills and confidence. This will boost parent morale to consistently be engaged in school activities. Thirdly, SMTs need to “draw a flexible schedule to encourage participation by diverse families.” This means that SMTs need to integrate parent involvement in school plans. The school timetable should reflect time allocation for parent open days. The year plan and school policy need to outline clearly how parent involvement is going to be managed by schools and the number of occasions parents should available at school to support teaching and learning. Fourthly, there is “a need to provide professional development or training of teachers on family and community participation in school.” Fifthly, “training for parents and community stakeholders on effective communications and collaborating skills must be offered.”

Goodall et al., (2010:5) state that, “Many parents lack the confidence and knowledge to know how best to support children with their school work, and their learning generally.” They maintains that, “Focus must be on some aspects of literacy, for example, training parents to teach specific reading skills to their children. This will involve: encouraging parents to listen to their children reading.” The heartbreaking report on failure rate of learners in Grade 9 suggests dearth of culture of teaching and learning in rural secondary schools. SMTs need to initiate workshops to acquaint parents with curriculum policy so that they will be able to know which arears they can emphasise at home to assist learners to improve academic performance. This will help to revitalise the culture of learning through the engagement of parents, families and the community. Sixth: there is a need to provided better information on school and school district policies and procedures. Seventh: there is a need to ensure timeous access to information, using effective communications tools that address various family structures and are translated into languages that parents/families understand. Eighth: hire and train school community liaisons who know the communities’ history, language, and cultural background.

The role of the school community liaison is to contact parents and coordinate activities including meetings as well as to steer the committee to be operational. Ninth: SMTs need to collaborate with higher education institutions to include parent, family, and community

involvement in education into teacher and administrator preparation programmes. Tenth: SMTs must develop an outreach strategy to inform families, businesses, and the community about school and family involvement opportunities, policies, and programmes. Eleventh: SMTs must regularly evaluate the effectiveness of family involvement programs and activities. Van Roekel (2008:3) further suggests that SMTs “need to develop comprehensive, goal oriented programs of school, family, and community partnerships.” He point out that “schools can also establish Parent Teacher Home Visit Project- whereby educators and parents visit students and their families at home, to help them built trusting relationships, and shared instructional tools.” Home visits will establish healthy relations between schools and homes. Parents will feel that the schools welcomes them to be partners in the education of their children. He also suggested the establishment of Parent Centres, which provide tuition for Adult Basic Education to parents aspiring to develop themselves, and this, according to him will help to reduce learner dropout by 16 percent if parents take part in such programmes. Findings from his study reveal that: in California, parents increased their knowledge and skills to support their children’s academic achievement and enrolment in higher education by participating in the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) programme.

Epstein’s (2011) suggests, “Effective partnership between SMTs, parents and the community requires the establishment of action team for partnership.” The team will serve as a committee to facilitate the partnership programme between school, families, and the community. The action team guides the development of a comprehensive programme of partnerships. The action team takes responsibility for assessing present practices, organising options for new partnerships, implementing selected activities, evaluating next steps, and continuing to improve and coordinate practices for all six types of involvement. The composition of the team should include at least three teachers from different grade levels, three parents, and one administrator and one member from the community. Although the members of the action team lead these activities, other teachers, parents, students, administrators, and community members must assist them. The team starts by collecting information about the school’s current practices of partnership, along with the views, experiences, and wishes of teachers, parents, administrators, and students. Epstein contends, “Partnership programmes must be reviewed periodically improved continuously and its progress is incremental, to include more families each year in ways that benefit more students.” “Finally there is a need to review the partnership programs to be periodically to improve them continuously and ensure that its progress is incremental, to include more families each year in ways that benefit more students.”

Schools as public institutions and organisations should not be managed through common sense. SMTs of highly performing schools ensures that all school programmes and activities are managed and control by policy to ensure effective implementation. Lack of a policy to manage parent involvement in learner education around the sampled rural schools, raises questions concerning the effectiveness of leadership practices followed by the SMTs to improve learner academic achievement. Policy serves as a guideline and source of reference to ensure effective implementation and consistency. Parent involvement is pertinent to the improvement of learner results. The involvement in their children's education is a legal right that should not be infringed by individual interest. The SMTs of highly performing schools should bear in mind that any policy inconsistent with the provisions of the Constitutions and other legal frameworks infringing the rights of other people and individuals is illegal.

#### **5.4.2. Recommendations regarding research sub-question 2**

##### **5.4.2.1. Learner's diversity and lack of school initiatives**

Poverty, illiteracy, vulnerability and single parenting, are the biggest common allies for the effective achievement of outstanding academic performance in rural schools. SMTs of well performing schools are dynamic innovative agents of change. Through application of their competencies in problem solving skills they will identify problems that emanate from community and family context that have a disastrous impact on learners academic achievement. SMTs need to find alternative solution to deal with the problems and implement their planned actions to eliminate these. It can be assumed that education in rural communities is plagued by deficiencies effected by Poverty, illiteracy, vulnerability and single parenting. The focus of schooling is teaching and learning to produce vibrant and quality future responsible and accountable humans. It is born out of intuition through transformative leadership practice that such competencies can be nurtured and sustained within an environment still plagued by poverty, illiteracy, vulnerability and diverse social problems capturing the attention of learners to excel unequivocally.

A highly intuitive transformational SMT leadership practice will prudently identify such barriers; initiate activities and fund them such as gardening projects for poor illiterate community members and parents to generate income for their families, SMTs of schools with home economics teachers can also initiate afterschool programmes to teaching parents about cooking and baking to start their own confectionery businesses to support their families to eliminate poverty. SMTs of well performing schools serving in poverty stricken communities



which are so carefully debated by diverse literature findings, should infuse practical knowledge mitigated with theory by motivating excellent knowledgeable educators in business studies to teach parents and communities about business plans and the registration of small micro-medium enterprise (SMME). Retired illiterate parents possessing skills in certain fields can be attracted to make use of such opportunities offered by local school teachers to perpetuate their informal skills from previous employers to benefit the community by establishing their own self-employed registered small businesses.

#### **5.4.2.2. Influences of poverty and vulnerability as barrier**

The literature shows that many learners in rural communities originate from families ravaged by poverty and some suffer from various disabilities that interfere with their concentration to learn effectively. Inclusivity laws in education require schools to recognise those diversities that learners possess so that schools can initiate proper structures to give them support to enhance their academic achievement. The findings of interviews and focus group interviews of all the six schools involved in the study revealed that the schools do not have formal plans to implement SIAS. The screening identification and support of learners with diverse social problems is the responsibility of the SMTs and teachers in schools to assist those learners to excel in their studies by overcoming any barriers that interfere with the academic excellence.

This study does not underestimate and single out the significant influence of vulnerability and its negative impact on learner academic achievement. Vulnerabilities of learner population in most rural school settings are varied and diverse, ranging from single parenting and child-headed families. Their adversity and impact on learner academic achievement have unbearable effects on the communities and the country at large. Children born of vulnerable and single parenting families often have short-term exposure to formal education. Lack of concentration in schools due to psychological capture originating from family social problems, in most cases force these children to terminate their education journey at lower grades. Babalis, et al., (2014:21) assert that, “The exposure of children in conflict and hostile environments preceding the divorce are related with behaviour and adjustment problems to a greater extent than the divorce per se.”

It can be assumed that majority of learners with disciplinary problems at schools have social problems linked to poor parental care and support with less or no access to basic life needs and necessities. Normally, their future finally ends up being bleak and culminates various forms of criminal activities ranging from house breakings, unemployment, murder, robbery, fraud and

theft to satisfy their needs. The rapid increase in the number of HIV infections due to the abuse of children falling under this group, originate from lack of proper care and support. It is therefore difficult for learners under compulsory school going age trapped by this crucial social problem to evolve into well performing learners at school. Intuitive transformational SMTs leadership practices should be sure to identify such learners and encourage teachers as well to identify any change in learner behaviour that has shown exposure to a social problems. Teachers should note and report to SMTs immediately so that parents or guardians can be contact to initiate support.

#### **5.4.2.3. Poor community relations and planning as barriers**

SMTs need to establish a data base of learners belonging to this groups and their guardians so that proper support and care could be initialised at school level. Teachers are recognised by the law as legal guardians of the children at schools with equal standing of care and support as biological parents. They have to treat them with respect and care as their own biological children not as colleagues. They have to avoid unethical interaction with learners that would bring the reputation of the profession into shameful status. Various media reports about unethical sexual relations between teachers and learners destroy the prospects of healthy relations between schools and families. SMTs of well performing school should interact with each learner through home visits to establish the home and family status of each and every learner. The history of every learner growth, parents and their contacts should be kept at school in leaner profiles. SA-SAMS has simplified management and administration in schools, capturing of information of this leaners cannot be a difficult task. When schools have records of this learners available it will be easy to access by anyone willing to provide support.

Database containing learner demographics and biodiversity's will enable SMTs to establish relations with non-education institutions with equal interest in education and development such as clinics and social development to offer children of compulsory school going age affected by poverty due to single parenting, and being orphans to help them by offering proper support required to enhance their academic achievement. Findings from school reveal the there are no proper records of vulnerable learners to nurture and provide sustained support. School that do not recognise vulnerable children defies the provisions of the legislation about provision of equitably quality teaching and learning. Creative innovative agents of change amidst this need to initialise programmes in schools, such as adopt a child, where teachers are encouraged to

identifying and support vulnerable learners. Teacher support can include providing uniforms, food, and other needs that interferes with their academic achievement.

Heystek, et al., (2008:81) cite, “Achievement theory which identified three needs being: achievement, affiliation, and power. Achievement theory focuses on goals improving performance, and tangible results.” The focus of this study is on the improvement of learner academic achievement and the achievement of tangible results in rural secondary schools. SMTs of well performing schools eager to achieve and obtain outstanding learner results should plan and stick to their plan (draw up a policies on community engagement, ensure that the policy is implement and kept on being monitored), accept responsibility (initiate a team that will become accountable for success and failures) and become goal orientated (ensured that tasks are allocated responsibly to accountable people and keep on evaluating the success and failures, ensure that goals are achieved). The theory of affiliation envisages motivation of people to make friends, to become members of groups, and associate with others. It is assumed that many rural communities are ravaged by poverty and illiteracy which hinders the effective involvement of parents and community in schools to support children’s learning. When schools, parents and the community affiliate to work as a team such challenges that poses a threat to learner academic achievement can easily be overcome.

#### **5.4.2.4. Parent and community attitudes as barriers**

The theory of affiliation conceptualises that SMTs should motivate and encourage teachers and staff to develop friendships with the parents and community members around the school. This association and befriending, with the parents and community members will eliminate stigmas attached by parents undermining and regarding themselves a being illegible to interact and be involved in their children’s education, thinking that teachers are the only one to teach children because they are educated. The focus of affiliation theory is on companionship, interpersonal relations and concern for others. Empathy and compassion are the central focus of the theory that should be practised by SMTs and teachers to create room for healthy relations between schools and communities. Through persistent home visits to learners’ homes and families, healthy relation will be initialised between schools and homes. Reciprocally, SMTs and parents will know each other better. Teachers and learners will also know each other better, this will engenders healthy interpersonal relations between schools, homes and the community. It can be assumed that it is better to deal with someone you know very well than the one you do not know. It is therefore difficult to maintain discipline at schools with teacher possessing little

background about the family social origins of learners. If teachers know learners' homes, family members and SES level; they have a better chance of implementing appropriate strategies and approaches in the classrooms to gain the trust of the learners. Affiliation theory emphasises companionship and interpersonal personal relations which can assist SMTs and teachers if practiced in mitigating challenges experienced with parent involvement and discipline of learners at school.

#### **5.4.2.5. Culture and political influences as barriers**

The theory of power as cited in Heystek et al., (2008:81) envisage “the desire to obtain and exercise control over others, resources, and the environment.” The theory argues that “individuals who have accessed excessive power can either emerge as totalitarians or more democratic in leadership positions and this denatures the quality of effective leadership practice in democratic institutions.” It is commonly believed that South Africa is formed of diverse communities ranging from urban, semi-urban and rural communities. The research study in question focused mainly on rural community schools of Sekhukhune Limpopo Province. Most of these schools which participated are located in land predominantly owned by traditional leaders. It can be assumed that traditional leaders and political structures within communities might have influence on the issues of effective involvement of parents in schools to enhance academic achievement, especially if SMTs in school leadership are not indigenous community members around. This is confirmed by comments from one SMT member that during community violence in pursuit of service deliveries from local municipalities' school children were used as baits to achieve community demands. This is confirmed by the assertions of Wilder (2014:378) “It is believed that the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement is impacted by various factors. Some of the most prominent, and thus most frequently investigated factors, include ethnicity, prior achievement, and socio-economic status.”

It can also be assumed from this comments that parents who are bona fide servants of the local traditional leadership councils may have problems with responding to school invitations, particularly if SMTs members do not have healthy relations and obedience to traditional leaders. Culturally in terms of traditional norms, customs and values parents and the learners residing in traditional jurisdictions, abide by authority and rules of the chiefs in control of the communities. In light of this, one can discern that the significance of influence from these traditional leaders and political leaders, has a far much reaching impact on the quality of parent

involvement in learners' academic achievement, particularly if it appears that SMTs do not interact and report school activities as expected to these authorities. One can assume that the theory of power as contemplated above in schools located under the jurisdiction of traditional leadership, may emerge when SMTs and traditional leaders are not in good terms and began to engage in a power to control schools, parents and learners. This will result with SMTs in schools being alienated by parents subordinates to local traditional authorities, leaving SMTs with no support in the academic achievement of the children.

Transformative SMTs, as agents of innovative change should courteously establish relations through obedience, collaboration and interaction by decentralising the authority and power of the ownership of the schools to parents and community members. Paying regular visits to the traditional leadership council's headquarters, sharing and reporting school events and incidents, indicating to the traditional leadership and political structures about the importance of their involvement in school activities and the significant influence that they have on the improvement of school community relations. This will assist in eliminating poor parent involvement experienced in the schools. Research studies have gained prominence in reporting the issue of safety and security of the lives of learners, teachers and school properties as pertinent to effective delivery of quality teaching and learning. Interaction with communities will help with the protection of schools because the community members if engaged will value and respect them as their property.

#### **5.4.2.6. Challenges from state inflictions and lack of resources as a barrier**

“In South Africa, for example, the language of transformation is used to underpin a non-racist post-apartheid education system” (Bush, 2015: 6). “The policy is rich in symbolism but weak in practice because many school principals lack the capacity and the authority to implement change effectively” (Bush, 2015: 6). The views of Bush are congruent with the findings of the study. South African laws in education provisioning emphasise collaboration and participation of SMTs and parents in schools to enhance academic achievement with little or no support to ensure implementation of policy at school level. The QLTC guidelines provide comprehensive strategies of engagement and collaboration of the stakeholders in schools to enhance learner academic achievement. However observations prove that none of the sampled schools put those strategies into practice to engage parents and community to influence academic achievement of the poor rural learners. Drawing from these findings, it is apparent that with the lack of support received by the SMTs from the state, comprehensive policies that are designed

to ensure delivery of quality education will remain symbolic. In the wake of this higher volumes of teacher attrition rates due to loss of morale where many teachers resign, it is important that parents should be motivated and be trained to involve in schools to enhance learners' academic achievement. Portes (2008) confirms that, "The current reforms and programs fail to organize and sustain the necessary conditions to empower most children placed at risk with access to equitable educational opportunity." The state should provide support to SMTs by training them on how parent involvement should started.

Observable features discovered by the study such as shortage resources and poor dilapidated infract-structure, have effect on the decline in parents morale to value schools around their communities. Anecdotal findings suggest, literate parents withdraw their children's to enrol them in private schools due to poor resource and poor performance of rural schools. This has negative effect on parent involvement in enhancing leaner academic achievement. Bearing from these, state should review and acknowledge the urgency and need to developed rural schools' infrastructures to restore the culture of teaching and learning. State should consider the importance of training parents about their right to involve in the education of their children this improve involvement of parents to enhance academic achievement of the children.

Finally, state resilience and intuition should offered schools through formulation of policies with clearly defined roles of engagement to guide SMTs in schools on how they should effectively implement parent involvement to enhance academic achievement of the children. The state should hire personnel who would specifically deal with school engagement initiatives, train SMTs in schools about the stakeholder involvement in learners' education, and keep on monitoring, and supporting the effectiveness of the implementation of the programme. However the state should review the sources of supply of educators as pertinent innovative grassroots agents of transformation. Teachers are treasures and archives of knowledge, with impeccable skills and diverse competencies to inspire the younger developing generation in rural school context to compete with their age cohort groups in urban context. The role of teachers is to influence and motivate children to exercise and reveal their competencies when exposed to common instruments of assessment. This will enable and give the SMTs in rural schools room to effectively engage parents in the academic achievement of their children.

## **5.5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

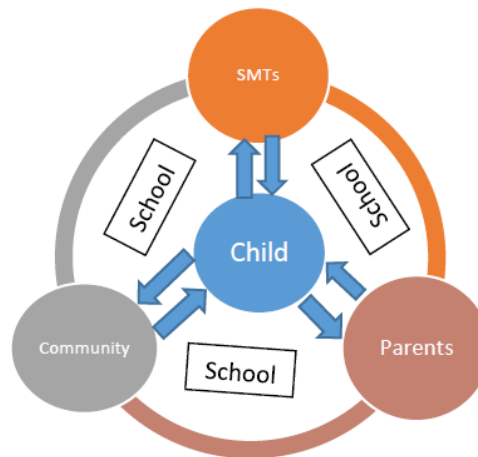
In the light of the literature and research findings of this study it can be assumed that parents are the key influencers and co-partners of the education of their children to enhance academic achievement. The findings of this study establish the poor link between policy and practice particularly with the implementation of parental involvement in rural secondary schools. This study recommends that future studies should focus on the effectiveness of rural parental training and engagement in learner academic achievement. Drawing from the findings as discussed above, the following questions have been identified as additional recommendations to be considered for future research: How should SMTs develop policies with clearly defined roles of engagement for teachers, learners, parents, and the community to serve as guideline for schools, parents and the community, as well as other stakeholders? What are the strategies that good schools follow in order to ensure parent- teacher-child relationships? What projects should SMTs initiate to serve as an outreach to benefit poor household to cultivate the value of schools to the community? How can the DoE initialise training of the parents about their laws that encourage them to engage in School to provide support in the realisation of development of capacities to enhance learner academic achievement? How can schools keep parents informed about all the activities taking place?

## **5.6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

The philosophical assumption of this study is grounded on the interpretivism perception that knowledge is not out there to be uncovered as dispersed particles, but needs to be constructed through human social interactions with the context. The consensual discourse around Epstein's model of overlapping spheres of influences puts the child at the centre. Epstein's model of overlapping spheres of influences rest upon the concurrent assumption that education that leads to a meaningful development and growth originates from consistent socialisation and interaction of the school, the home and the community. The assumption is that when the three contextual trajectories persistently interacts, the child acquires pleasant psychological outcomes which are beneficial to effective learning process. The school gives to the child formal education through professional pedagogy to develop the child's academic and cognitive competencies and skills. The rationale for the provision of formal education by the schools is to enable the child to respond appropriately within the context and the environment around him or her. In order to ensure that the child effectively conceives comprehensively the pedagogical discharges of the school in realisation of the school goals about the child, effective managerial

measures are put in place to control behaviour. The community and the home provides the child with informal education pertinent to moral regeneration. The child become exposed to home and community values that shapes morals and behaviour. The community and the parents members acts as role model that motivates the child’s positive thinking about education and the future. This calumniates in the child conceptualising the school, the home and the community as resourceful centre for knowledge enrichment.

**Figure 1.2. Diagram illustrating reciprocal circles of learning through interactions of the SMTs, community and the parents.**



This diagram illustrate and suggest that effective learning took place when there is a cyclical and reciprocal link between the SMTs, the community and the parents. This diagram suggest that the learning process of the child should reciprocally emerged between the SMTs, the community and the parents. These three trajectories are the core structures that can contribute meaningfully to the total upbringing of the child. The arrows suggest that all forces including; care, support, love, protection, shelter and education which forms the fundamental basis of parenting. The forces originating from the three triangular environmental planes of the circle, should be equally directed to the child. This suggest that in school environments where there is imbalanced fundamental forces of parenting between the SMTs, the community and the parents, children become exposed to unfavourable external environments that will hamper their progressive learning process. The imbalanced environment occurs when the SMTs are not intuitive, innovative and invitational to the parents and the community. Such schools become dysfunctional and unproductive. This diagram illustrates that there should be a cyclical approach and equal sharing of information between the three environments within which the child lives. The sharing of information between the three environments that circulate the child will contribute to meaningful development and growth of the child. The school as a professional learning environment provides the child with academic skills that shapes and



crafts his or her intelligence. This skills will enable the child to survive the harsh full economic challenges posed by the environment in which the child lives. The SMTs in schools setup and plan structures and support systems in collaboration with the parents and the community to realise the needs of the three environments that will help to alleviate barriers to effective transmission of the academic skills. Such structures includes formulation of committees, programmes, policies and plans to ensure implementation and initiation of a conducive learning process.

The link provided by the circles outside suggest that the SMTs should share information relating to the child's development, progression and promotion to the parents and the community. The SMTs should also share barriers which are deterrent to the effective learning process of the child. Similarly parents and the community should reciprocally feed the school with information relating to the child and support the school to improve discipline. The community and the parents will discharge to the child informal education relating to culture, norms and customs appropriate to the environment in which the child lives. This will help to equip the child with acceptable morals and behaviour that conforms to home and community practices. Support from the community to leverage effective learning process may include funding and provision of resource to the school. Some community members and parents when meaningfully linked by the SMTs to the school share their success stories to the child and act as role models.

The arrows pointing inside links the child at the centre with the three environments suggest that support should come from home, community and the SMTs equally focused on the child to learn and develop. The arrows that points to the outside environments suggests growth and development. This implicates that effective development and growth of the child depend to a large extent on the SMTs, parents and the community. This arrow also suggest that the child will through meaningful support, develop as a responsible adult. The arrows further suggest that the child at the centre enjoy the monopoly to outsource information from the parents the community and the SMTs at schools. This diagram suggest that when there is a link between the home, the school and the community cyclones of learning emerged to feel the child as an empty vessel. The cyclical and reciprocal sharing of information between the three environments; the SMTs, the school and the community put the child at the centre of a learning environment and exposes schools as valuable learning organisations.

The concept of social interactions occurs when parents are required and compelled to support schools to motivate positive learner behaviour that conform to the realisation of school goals. Parents bring with them parental skills, family values and customs that can support accountable and responsible development and growth of the children. The community where the children resides bring its own influences, community values and custom that enable the child to interact and relate with others in the community. The epistemology of this diagram is grounded on the assumption that social interaction of the three contexts focusing on a common goal being the child, produce pleasant outcomes in the form of increased learner academic achievement. This is congruent with Andriani (2013:3) contentions' that, "social capital consisting of higher associational activities inside a community able to foster a sense of civic engagement where cooperation, reciprocity and mutual trust are developed and used in order to solve collective action and asymmetric information problems." The epistemology of this study is embedded in the assumption that consistent social interaction and reciprocal sharing of information about the child between the SMTs, parents and the community will motivate appropriate behaviour among the children that will contribute to increased academic performance.

Finally the diagram does not underestimate the urgent need for support and care of the OVC and low SES children in the schools, the community and home. The Constitution advocates for human rights, equality, equity and human dignity. The Constitution views education as a universal human right. Taking into account that many rural communities are captured by cycles of poverty and orphanage. From the research finding it is revealed that many children populating many public secondary schools in rural communities originate from poor households where parents reflects low SES and possesses poor education background. The cyclical and reciprocal link between the SMTs, the home and the community will put all children at the centre of receiving unwavering maximum support and care irrespective of their SES, as children from affluent families. This will fulfils their constitutional right to receive quality basic education in public secondary schools.

SMTs of well performing schools plan and institutionalise support structures including the establishment of School Based Support Teams with a clear focus on leveraging support and care of OVC and low SES. This team should be constituted by parents, teachers, co-opted community members and learners in the case of a public secondary schools. The involvement of parents, the community, the learners and teachers contributes to capacity building and information sharing in schools. The interaction of this groups is congruent with the assumptions of the diagram on reciprocal interaction and link between the SMTs, the community and the

parents. The team should collaboratively draw their action plan and policy to outline their scope of operation to identify children with barriers to learning.

The School Based Support Team is not a replacement of the SMTs but a support structure to the SMTs. The function of the School Based Support Teams should among others involve the collection of information about children who reflects barriers to learning due to low SES. The School Based Support Teams report such barriers to the SMTs. The SMTs interacts with the family of the children so that such children could receive maximum support to improve their academic performance. The school Based support Team on behalf of the SMTs should interact with the stakeholders to outsource funds and donations for the OVC and low SES. It is the responsibility of the School Based Support Teams to advise the STMs to send children who show persistent barriers to learning to psychologist and social workers. As appeal for support from SMTs is mushroomed and acquired from the external organisations to assist learners with barriers to learning cyclones of learning emerged to the children.

Drawing from the research findings, I therefore reiterates that this research study has realised its goals as posed by the main research question. What is the role played by the SMTs and parents in rural secondary schools of Sekhukhune Limpopo Province to enhance the academic achievement of the children? The school performance report revealed poor performance of learners in rural secondary schools of Sekhukhune Limpopo Province. The data collection and analysis of the research unleash misdemeanour in relation to equitable provision of quality basic education in public secondary schools of Sekhukhune Limpopo Province. The data collection exposes heterogeneous findings in relation to the management of parent involvement initiative in the education of their children. Findings indicates that out of the six schools involved only one school engage parents in the academic activities of the children. Although some schools show promising performance even though parents are not involved. But the consensual discourse about the significance influence of parental involvement in the academic activities of the children remains unchallenged. I therefore concur with Epstein (2011) that effective learning occur between the school, the home and the community by supporting the child at the centre of the spheres of influences of learning. In this study in relation to the South African education system, I strongly emphasise that SMTs in schools are grass roots agents of change. SMTs should inspire other stakeholders and external organisations to initiate beneficial and reciprocal cyclones of learning for the children in rural school setting.

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## ANNEXURES

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### ANNEXURE 1



The HOD

**Limpopo Provincial Department of Education**

### **APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS AROUND SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

I, **Masha Ben Maphoke**; student at the University of Pretoria currently studying towards a Masters of Education Degree in Education Management, Law and Policy. I hereby kindly apply for your permission to conduct research in school around Sekhukhune District. The research topic for the study is based on ‘**The role of the school management teams and parents in learner achievement**’. Your school has been identified based on 2014 school performance report to be part of the research process. This is a qualitative case study research, which will need to involve three schools in Sekhukhune District Limpopo Province. The purpose of the research is to explore and examine the roles played by the SMTs and Parents in public rural Secondary Schools of the latter District in enhancing learner’s academic performance. Participants of the research process purposively sampled for the study will involve (3) SMT members and (5) parents of grade 11. The research process will take place in the form of focus group interview of the parents and the interviewing of the SMT.

Your participation in this research process is voluntary and your school together with the participants is free to withdraw from the research process at any time. I further need to ensure and guarantee that Information collected from your school together with the responses from the participants will remain confidential and anonymous. The study will not publicize the names of the participants or whatsoever. Findings will be made available on open website. No clues as to your identity will be given in the final report. You are also free to ask questions at any time should there be any issues that you want to be clarified on. Feedback of the findings and researcher comments will be made available to your school and the participants as soon as the final report has been compiled. The final report will be stored and accessed at the library of the University of Pretoria as archives.

For any research-related queries, please contact my supervisor, Dr. Keshni Bipath at, or email:

Keshni.Bipath@up.ac.za

Tel: 0124203663

Fax: 0124203581

Cell: 0836278570

If you need further information, please contact me using the details below:

Name: MASHA BEN MAPHOKE

Mobile Number: 0760129815

Email: maphoke73@gmail.com /maphoke73@live.com

Kind regards



DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**

Ref: 2/5/6/1

Enq: MC Makola PhD

Tel No: 015 290 9448

E-mail: [MakolaMC@edu.limpopo.gov.za](mailto:MakolaMC@edu.limpopo.gov.za)

Maphoke MB  
University of Pretoria  
Private Bag X20  
Hatfield  
0028

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

1. The above bears reference.
2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct research has been approved. Topic of the research proposal: **“THE ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS AND PARENTS IN LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT.”**
3. The following conditions should be considered:
  - 3.1 The research should not have any financial implications for Limpopo Department of Education.
  - 3.2 Arrangements should be made with the Circuit Office and the schools concerned.
  - 3.3 The conduct of research should not anyhow disrupt the academic programs at the schools.
  - 3.4 The research should not be conducted during the time of Examinations especially the fourth term.

CONFIDENTIAL

Cnr. 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE, 0700, Private Bag X9489, POLOKWANE, 0700  
Tel: 015 290 7600, Fax: 015 297 6920/4220/4494

***The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people!***



- 3.5 During the study, applicable research ethics should be adhered to; in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).
- 3.6 Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.
- 4 Furthermore, you are expected to produce this letter at Schools/ Offices where you intend conducting your research as an evidence that you are permitted to conduct the research.
- 5 The department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wishes you success in your investigation.

Best wishes.

MUTHEIWANA NB  
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT (ACTING)

09/06/16

DATE



## ANNEXURE 2

### The Principal

#### APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

I, **Masha Ben Maphoke**; student at the **University of Pretoria** currently studying towards a Masters of Education Degree in Education Management, Law and Policy. I hereby kindly apply for your permission to conduct research at your school. The research topic for the study is based on **‘The role of the school management teams and parents in learner achievement’**. Your school has been identified based on 2014 school performance report to be part of the research process. This is a qualitative case study research, which will need to involve three schools in Sekhukhune District Limpopo Province. The purpose of the research is to explore and examine the roles played by the SMTs and Parents in public rural Secondary Schools of the latter District in enhancing learner’s academic performance. Participants of the research process purposively sampled for the study will involve (3) SMT members and (5) parents of grade 11. The research process will take place in the form of focus group interview of the parents and the interviewing of the SMT.

Your participation in this research process is voluntary and your school together with the participants is free to withdraw from the research process at any time. I further need to ensure and guarantee that Information collected from your school together with the responses from the participants will remain confidential and anonymous. The study will not publicize the names of the participants or whatsoever. Findings will be made available on open website. No clues as to your identity will be given in the final report. You are also free to ask questions at any time should there be any issues that you want to be clarified on. Feedback of the findings and researcher comments will be made available to your school and the participants as soon as the final report has been compiled. The final report will be stored and accessed at the library of the University of Pretoria as archives.

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Fax: 0124203581

Cell: 0836278570

If you need further information, please contact me using the details below:

Name: MASHA BEN MAPHOKE

Mobile Number: 0760129815

Email: [maphoke73@gmail.com](mailto:maphoke73@gmail.com) / [maphoke73@live.com](mailto:maphoke73@live.com)

Kind regards





## ANNEXURE 3

### The Circuit Manager

#### APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

I, **Masha Ben Maphoke**; student at the **University of Pretoria** currently studying towards a Masters of Education Degree in Education Management, Law and Policy. I hereby kindly apply for your permission to conduct research in Secondary Schools around your circuit. The research topic for the study is based on ‘**The role of the school management teams and parents in learner achievement**’. Your school has been identified based on 2014 school performance report to be part of the research process. This is a qualitative case study research, which will need to involve three schools in Sekhukhune District Limpopo Province. The purpose of the research is to explore and examine the roles played by the SMTs and Parents in public rural Secondary Schools of the latter District in enhancing learner’s academic performance. Participants of the research process purposively sampled for the study will involve (3) SMT members and (5) parents of grade 11. The research process will take place in the form of focus group interview of the parents and the interviewing of the SMT.

Your participation in this research process is voluntary and your school together with the participants is free to withdraw from the research process at any time. I further need to ensure and guarantee that Information collected from your school together with the responses from the participants will remain confidential and anonymous. The study will not publicize the names of the participants or whatsoever. Findings will be made available on open website. No clues as to your identity will be given in the final report. You are also free to ask questions at any time should there be any issues that you want to be clarified on. Feedback of the findings and researcher comments will be made available to your school and the participants as soon as the final report has been compiled. The final report will be stored and accessed at the library of the University of Pretoria as archives.

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Kind regards

## ANNEXURE 4

**Dear Parent**

### **INVITATION OF PARENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT**

I, **Masha Ben Maphoke**; student at the **University of Pretoria** currently studying towards a Masters of Education Degree in Education Management, Law and Policy. I am hereby kindly inviting you to participate in a research process to take place at the school where your children have been enrolled. The research topic for the study is based on: **the role of the school Management Teams and parents in learner achievement**. This is a qualitative case study research which will need to involve three schools in Sekhukhune District Limpopo Province in which parents and SMTs will serve as participants. The purpose of the research is to explore and examine the roles played by the SMTs and Parents in public rural Secondary Schools of the latter District in enhancing learner's academic performance. The research process will take place in the form of focus group interview of the parents and the interviewing of the SMT and will consume only 60-90 minutes of your time.

Your participation in this research process is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the research process at any time. I further need to ensure and guarantee that Information collected from you will remain confidential and anonymous. The study will not publicize your names as participants or whatsoever. Findings will not be disclosed to anybody including your colleagues. No clues as to your identity will be given in the final report. You are also free to ask questions at any time should there be any issues that you want to be clarified on. Feedback of the findings and researcher comments will be made available to you and your SMT as soon as the final report has been compiled. The final report of the thesis can be accessed on an open website or stored in the library of the University of Pretoria as archives.

The research process will take place as follows:

1. Date\_\_\_\_\_
2. Time\_\_\_\_\_
3. Venue\_\_\_\_\_

For any research-related queries, please contact my supervisor, Dr. Keshni Bipath at or email:

[Keshni.Bipath@up.ac.za](mailto:Keshni.Bipath@up.ac.za) Cell: 0836278570

If you need further information, please contact me using the details below:

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Kind regards



## ANNEXURE 5

Dear SMT members

### INVITATION OF SMTs TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

I, **Masha Ben Maphoke** student at the **University of Pretoria**, currently studying towards a Masters of Education degree in Education Management, Law, and Policy, hereby kindly inviting you to participate in a research process to take place at your school. The research topic for the study is **the role of the school management teams and parents in learner achievement**. This is a qualitative case study research project, which will need to involve three schools in Sekhukhune District Limpopo Province in which parents and SMTs will serve as participants. The purpose of the research is to explore and examine the roles played by the SMTs and Parents in public rural Secondary Schools of the latter District in enhancing learner's academic performance. The research process will take place in the form of focus group interview of the parents and the interviewing of the SMT and will consume only 60-90 minutes of your time.

Your participation in this research process is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the research process at any time. I further need to ensure and guarantee that Information collected from you will remain confidential and anonymous. The study will not publicize your names as participants or whatsoever. Findings will be available on an open website or repository and will be stored in the library of the University of Pretoria as archives. You are also free to ask questions at any time should there be any issues that you want to be clarified on.

The research process will take place as follows:

1. Date\_\_\_\_\_
2. Time\_\_\_\_\_
3. Venue\_\_\_\_\_

For any research-related queries, please contact my supervisor, Dr. Keshni Bipath at, or email: Keshni.Bipath@up.ac.za Cell: 0836278570

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Name: MASHA BEN MAPHOKE

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Email: [maphoke73@gmail.com](mailto:maphoke73@gmail.com) /[maphoke73@live.com](mailto:maphoke73@live.com)

Kind regards

**ANNEXURE 6**

**CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS**

1. Title of research project:

**‘The role of the school management teams and parents in learner achievement’**

2. I .....hereby voluntarily grant my permission for participation in the project as explained to me by.....

3. The nature, objective, possible safety, and health implications were explained to me and I understand them.

4. I understand my right to choose whether to participate in the project and that the information furnished will be handled confidentially. I am aware that the results of the investigation may be used for the purposes of publication.

5. Upon signature of this form, you will be provided with a copy.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**ANNEXURE 7**

**CONSENT FORM FOR SMTs**

1. Title of research project:

**‘The role of the School Management Teams and parents in learner achievement’**

2. I .....hereby voluntarily grant my permission for participation in the project as explained to me by.....

3. The nature, objective, possible safety and health implications were explained to me and I understand them.

4. I understand my right to choose whether to participate in the project and that the information furnished will be handled confidentially. I am aware that the results of the investigation may be used for the purposes of publication.

5. Upon signature of this form, you will be provided with a copy.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_





**ANNEXURE 8**

**FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENT PARTICIPANTS**

School name	Circuit	Date

**SCHOOL CODE NAME (MARK WITH X/√)**

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>
----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------

1. What do you understand by parent involvement in learner academic achievement?  
Motivate your answer.

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

2. How often do you involve yourself with your children’s learning at home?

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 ....

3. Do you sometimes help your children with: (explain your answer)

- a) homework’s

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

- b) Reading

.....  
 .....  
 .....

.....  
.....

c) Mathematics

.....  
.....  
.....

d) checking school work on daily basis

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

4. Do you offer any voluntary service to the school to support your children's academic achievement?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

5. How do you communicate with your children's teachers to find out about his/her progress?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

6. How does the school offer you workshops about CAPs to know what will be expected of your children to learn for examination purpose? (motivate your answer)

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

7. Do you think your involvement in school to support and enhance your children's learning can have any positive impact on their academic achievement? Motivate your answer.



.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

8. How are the perceptions and attitudes of the teachers when you involve yourself in your child's education?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

9. On which aspects does the school often involve you in your child/children's education?

.....  
.....

10. How does the school offer you support to deal with barriers encountered by your children?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

11. Do you feel that teachers welcome your support to your children's education?

.....  
.....

12. Do you encounter any barriers with regard to your involvement in your children's education at school?

.....  
.....  
.....

13. How can you as parents help the school to improve parent involvement in your children's education?

.....  
.....

14. What is your understanding of the law about your involvement in your children's education?



.....  
.....  
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.....  
.....

15. In which way do you help the school in drawing school policies like learner’s code of conduct, language policy, admission policy etc.?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

16. How do you feel when the school invites you to participate in your children’s education to enhance their academic achievement?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

17. Which activities in school do you sometimes feel that you can help with to enhance your children’s academic performance?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

18. Did you as parents receive any training about your involvement in your children’s education? Motivate your answer.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

19. How can you describe the level of support you receive from school about parenting on the following aspects:

a) Adolescent

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

b) peer pressure

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

e) Learner accountability/ responsibility

.....  
.....  
.....  
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.....

20. Do you think it is proper for the schools to involve parent in the selection of subject for your children/ elaborate your answer.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

21. What are your future aspirations for your children's learning and how can you help the children to realize them?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

22. What should be done to make you participate more actively in your children's education?

.....  
.....  
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**ANNEXURE 9**

**INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SMTs**

School name	Circuit	Date

**SCHOOL CODE NAME (MARK WITH X/√)**

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D X</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>
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**POSITION OF SMT MEMBER (MARK WITH X/√)**

<b>PRINCIPAL</b>	<b>DEPUTY</b>	<b>HOD</b>
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1. What do you understand by the concept parent involvement in learner academic achievement?
2. What role do SMTs and parents play in enhancing learner academic achievement?
3. What are the benefits of Parental Involvement?
4. Is your school having any policy on parent involvement?
5. Do you have any committee that manages parent involvement in learner education?
6. How does your school communicate with the parents of the learners?
7. How can you describe the level of response by parents on communiqués about school parent meetings?
8. When do you engage parents in their children's education to enhance the children's academic performance?
9. Have you ever organized workshops for teachers and parents on parental involvement? (Motivate)
10. What is your understanding of the legislation on parent involvement in learner academic achievement?
11. How does your school effectively implement SIAS to deal with barriers to learning to improve learner achievement?
12. To what extent parents are involved during:

- (a) Formulation of school policies
  - (b) Curriculum planning and management
  - (c). learner subject choices
13. What roles do you think parents should play in supporting their children in education to enhance learner achievement?
  14. What is the attitude of the teachers regarding the involvement of parents in school?
  15. Do you have any outreach programs that involve the community in the school? (Motivate your answer).
  16. Does the school offer any literacy programs for parents (adult basic education) for parents who cannot read and write?
  17. How can you describe your understanding of parental rights to their children's education?
  18. Can you describe the level of support your school gets from the department with regard to parent involvement in your school?
  19. How can you describe attitudes and perceptions of parents with involvement in children's education?
  20. According to your experience on which arrears are parents likely involved in their children's' education?
  21. Do you encounter any barriers with regard to parent involvement in learner academic achievement? Motivate.
  22. In what ways can you say parents create barriers to their own involvement in children's education?
  23. In what ways can you say teachers create barriers to parental involvement?
  24. Are there parents who cannot be meaningfully involved in their children's education? Explain.
  25. Has your school ever consider involving parents of learners from single families?
  26. How does your school improve parent involvement in leaner academic achievement?
  27. How can you describe the impact that parents can make if they are meaningfully involved in learner academic achievement?
  28. How can SMTS effectively implement parent involvement programs in their children's education to enhance academic achievement?

29. How can community involvement benefit the school and the children to improve their academic performance?
30. What strategies can (a) teachers and the school, (b) government use to empower parents to become effectively involved in their children's education?



# OBSERVATION SCHEDULES FOR SCHOOL A

## ANNEXURE 10

### OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR SMTs

CATERGORY OBSERVED		OBSERVER NAME		
SMTs		MASHA B.M		
DATE OF OBSERVATION		SCHOOL NAME		
Term 3 2016/08/24 and term 4 2016/10/20		School A		
PURPOSE OF OBSERVATION				
How SMTs interact with parents of the learner's to enhance academic performance?				
No	TIME	ACTIVITY OBSERVED	OBSERVATION	COMMENTS
1		Communication with parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners are the most common means of communication with parents.</li> <li>Sometimes letters are given to learners to deliver to their parents at home.</li> <li>The school has a telephone line but is not used to call parents to school when they need them for meetings and other issues related to a child</li> <li>There are two computers used for admin purpose with internet connection using 3G modem but they are not used to communicate with the parents</li> <li>There is no formal database of parent with contact numbers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school need to improve its method of communication by using other methods like telephone since many parents today have cellphones ad many cellphones are capable of receiving sms</li> <li>The school is situated in rural areas still under the leadership of traditional leaders. Many parents' respect traditional leaders. The school has the advantage of liaising with traditional leaders to assist with motivating parents to interact with teachers</li> <li>The SMT need to also initiate strong relation with local churches and political leaders to help with motivation of parents to attend school activities</li> <li>The nearby primary school is another advantage of the Secondary school to use to communicate with the parents</li> </ul>
2		Organizing parent meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School parents meetings are held on quarterly basis only</li> <li>to discuss learner performance for the term</li> <li>Few parent respond to such meetings</li> <li>Meetings are held outside since the school does not have enough classrooms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School meetings can be deferred to community public meeting places like rational leadership place/house when majority of parents used to meet as well as local churches and other pubic paces over w]the weekends when many parents are off duty and will not complain of work related issue</li> </ul>



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School hall is present but is used by the learners as a classroom because the school is overpopulated with high learner enrolment</li> </ul>	
3		Engaging parents in children's learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No indication of parents being engaged in classroom activities</li> <li>• No outreach activities except the NSNP program where few parents are used to cook for the learners</li> <li>• No indication of any school initiated program to promote movement parents in school premises</li> <li>• The interview process provides that parents are motivated to assist learners with homework.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school should start to plan for open days where parents will sometimes be called to see the school work of their children</li> <li>• Some parents or community members can be invited to come during school hours to observe teaching and learning in the classrooms</li> <li>• Parents, who were teachers, can be invited to assist with certain subject.</li> <li>• Community leaders and senior citizens need to be invited to give motivational talks during school events like cultural ceremonies and recite to the children about the past history of the community and the school</li> <li>• Language teachers can organise debates where parents will be invited to listen to their children.</li> <li>• Some parents need to be delegated with certain responsibilities to manage to motivate the learners and capacitate the parents with leadership skills to make them feel welcomed by the school</li> <li>• The school need to start with literacy programme for parents in the evening so that parents who could not read and write can be given the opportunity to learn these skills that would help them to assist their children at home.</li> </ul>
4		Organizing outreach activities for parents at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No indication of school initiated programmes to fully engage parents in schools</li> <li>• School has no garden nor and y project for the poor parents to involve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broad activities need to be initiated to encourage parents in numerical numbers to actively be involved</li> <li>• School assemblies can be delegated to parents if this may not interfere with the learners right to education</li> <li>• Universities can be invited to advise leaners and parents</li> </ul>



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only NSNP program is existing that took about four parents</li> </ul>	<p>about career choices and degrees for the children to pursue after matric.</p>
5		Engaging parents in learner discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners are ordered to come to school with their parents if there is a case</li> <li>In some cases the teachers handle disciplinary issue themselves if failed they are referred to principal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disciplinary committee need to be established to deal with learner cases</li> <li>Impartiality need to be adhered</li> <li>LRC as learner representative must be involved to listen to cases related to their colleagues</li> </ul>
6		Organizing parents to volunteer at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School year plan provide no evidence of any committee that exist to organise parents meetings</li> <li>No policy is drawn to manage parent involvement on school activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Committee comprising parents and teachers need to established to handle parent involvement activity</li> <li>The committee must intact responsibly to plan all activities that relate to involvement of parents</li> </ul>
7		Involving parents in policy formulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The interview with some parents and SMTs indicate no evidence of parent participation during policy development process</li> <li>Minutes of school parent meeting provides no data of parents involved during formation of policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents have unlimited rights to their children's education therefore they must be part of the policy drawing process so that they know the kind of rule</li> </ul>
8		Reporting of children's performance to parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School organise parent gatherings on quarterly basis to report to parents about children performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMT need to sometimes visit children's homes after school hours to see and know where they come from and establish friendly relations with parents.</li> <li>School need to initialise new program where teachers report during the course of normal teaching and learning other issue that will negatively inters with the children's performance in the classroom like children's behavior and how they interact with teachers</li> </ul>
9		Organizing parent open days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School policy and year plan provide no evidence of open days</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School need to plan when parents will come to school</li> </ul>



				to see how children are doing
10		Decision making with parents during school/parent meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During parent meeting that took place during the research process the SMT indicated higher level of respect to parents decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision making process should be extended other areas like formulation of school policies, curriculum and subject choices for the learners</li> <li>• Decision making process should be extended to school budgets so that parents make insertion on the type resources that to be purchase to improve the quality of teaching and learning.</li> </ul>
11		Home visits by SMTs and Educators to improve school home relation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year plan and the school time table does not provide any indication of school home visits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home visits need to be initiated and planned to show parents that they are welcomed in school</li> </ul>
12		Establishment of parent involvement committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minutes of school parents meetings show no evidence of existing committee established to manage parents meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school must start to establish a committee to manage parent involvement in children's education</li> </ul>
13		Involving parents in curriculum planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School policy does not show any indication of planning to involvement parents in curriculum planning activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents should know the type curriculum that what their children are doing at school therefore when the school plan must be invited</li> <li>• Language use by teachers during parents meetings need to be adjusted to the one that all parents understand to motivate them to be part of the meetings and other activities of the school</li> <li>• School need to organise workshops to train parents about policies and curriculum statement so that parents so that they will be able to know understand what the curriculum expects their know</li> </ul>
14		Persistent involvement of parents in school activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation of the school during the two term visits reveal no evidence of any activity planned to engage parents in the school except parents in the NSNP program</li> <li>• Parental involvement mainly took place in the beginning of a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school need to establish more activities to involve large numbers of parents</li> <li>• Parents need to be motivated by delegating certain activities like school assemblies to them</li> <li>• School meetings need to chaired by parents</li> <li>• Sports activities can be manage by parents who are</li> </ul>



			term to discuss result analysis	capable and have knowledge of sports
15		Dealing with barriers to learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence of how parents are involved to deal with barriers to learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School policy need to be reviewed to indicate how barriers to learning originating from the three context school , home and community can be tackle to improve children who felt victims of such barriers to improve their performance</li> <li>Parent know them children very well from their infancy involving them regularly will help teachers to know the type of children they are dealing with</li> </ul>
16		Involving parents in subject choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only grade 9 learners are involved in learners subject choices but this is not documented in the school policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other grades should also be considered so that parents and children know the career choices that their children will follow after matric</li> <li>Higher institutions can be organised to guide parents and learners about career opportunities so that children and their parent do not make wrong decisions about the subjects their children followed at secondary school level</li> </ul>

#### ANNEXURE 11

#### OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS

CATEGORY OBSERVED		OBSERVER NAME		
PARENTS		MASHA B.M		
DATE OF OBSERVATION		SCHOOL NAME		
Term (3) 2016/08/24 and term (4) 2016/10/20		School A		
PURPOSE OF OBSERVATION				
How parents interact with SMTs to enhance learner academic performance?				
No	TIME	ACTIVITY OBSERVED	OBSERVATION	COMMENTS
1		Responding to school invitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observation during the two term visits reveal fewer number of parents responding to school invitations</li> <li>Only parents of learners in grade 12</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School SMT need to be creative to establish news ways to attract parents</li> <li>Parents of other grades need to be motivated to involve in school activities and programmes</li> </ul>



			<p>seemed to responds well to school meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home visits can relieve parents to feel that they welcomed at school</li> </ul>
2		Involving in school meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Countable number involves in school meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMTs need to shift school meetings to community places where majority of parents are inclined to meet</li> <li>• Traditional councils and leaders can be used to motivate parents to support schools</li> </ul>
3		Involving in school outreach activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No evidence of outreach activities exist within the school</li> <li>• No evidence of parents offering to assist school</li> <li>• Only SGB and the cookers in the school NSNP programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School should initialise programs that need to attract parents across all spheres to take part in school</li> </ul>
4		Assisting learners with home work at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus group interview schedule with parents provide little information that some parents are inclined to help learners at home</li> <li>• Knowledge of subject content seemed to be a challenge to many parents to assist children at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training parents about curriculum policies and initialising programmes that capacitate parents with reading and writing skills can improve the situation</li> </ul>
5		Volunteering in school activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No evidence of volunteering activities by parents in the school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents need to be invited and motivated to help the school even with simple activities like cleaning the school yard and fixing broken windows</li> </ul>
6		Voluntary school visits to find out about learner progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No evidence gathered about parents paying voluntary visits to school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMTs should motivate parents to come to school anytime to find out about performance and progress of their children</li> </ul>
7		Collecting learner reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only few number of parents directly observed come to collect reports on quarterly basis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents should be motivated to realise that learner performance relies much on their consistence support</li> </ul>
8		Interacting with teachers to understand curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No data driven from observation schedule to support parent interaction with</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMTs need to teach parents about curriculum related activities and rights to involve in the education of their children</li> </ul>



		requirements for their children	teachers with curriculum matters	
9		Assisting school in dealing with learner discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation revealed no evidence of parents involvement in disciplinary issues</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discipline is broad and varied</li><li>• More parents need to engaged in activities that directly influence behavior support</li><li>• Delegating responsibilities to parents to manage can motivate learners</li><li>• Engaging parents in class teaching can help to boosting discipline and motivate learners to change</li><li>• Invitation of people from health department to teach learners about adolescent can boost behavior and learner academic achievement</li></ul>
10		Taking part in school planning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No data of parent involvement in planning</li><li>• School policy does not say anything about involving parent during planning</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School policy need to be reviewed to value the presence of parents during planning of school activities</li></ul>

ANNEXURE 12

**OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOL POLICY, TIME TABLE, RESULT ANALYSIS, AND MINUTES OF MEETINGS**

CATEGORY OBSERVED		OBSERVER NAME		
SCHOOL POLICY		MASHA B.M		
TIME TABLE				
RESULTS				
MINUTES OF MEETINGS WITH PARENTS				
DATE OF OBSERVATION		SCHOOL NAME		
Term (3) 2016/08/24 and term (4) 2016/10/20		School A		
PURPOSE OF OBSERVATION				
Do school policy, timetable, results analysis, as well as minutes of the meetings reflect persistent involvement of parents to enhance learner's academic performance?				
No	TIME	ACTIVITY OBSERVED	OBSERVATION	COMMENTS
1		School policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No insertions of parent involvement clauses in the school policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School policy must be changed to accommodate parents</li> </ul>
		To what extent does the school policy debate about parent involvement?		
		School time table	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The time table does not provide any parent days</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The time table should be planned in a way that parent days are given chance so that parent will be given time to visit school during open days</li> </ul>
2		Is there evidence of parent involvement days on school timetable?		
3		School year plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence of planning for parent involvement revealed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMT should plan how parents will be involved by indicating the school policy</li> </ul>
		Did the school plan for parent involvement?		
		Analysis of school results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data of the school results obtained from the NSC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent involvement in various activities will</li> </ul>





4		<b>To what extent do learners perform?</b>	school performance report reveal that the school performance is moderate and unstable. Performance for the past five years stuck between 50 and 60 percent	change the attitude of the learners.
5		<b>Minutes of school meetings with parents</b>  <b>How do minutes of parents meetings deliberate on parent involvement to enhance a learner academic performance?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation of minutes of school parents meetings show little consistency of interaction of parents with the school on quarterly basis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing parent involvement in the school will help the school to eliminated many barriers the deter progressive learner academic achievement</li> <li>• SMT need to explore various activities for parents to be involved</li> </ul>
6		<b>Roll calls of meetings with parents</b>  <b>Does the roll call reflect high numerical number of parents that attend school meetings?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation schedule retained little data of the consistency of parent involvement.</li> <li>• Rollcalls provides that only few out of the total parent population managed to attend school meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school must initiate outreach programmes to attract parent to come to the school meetings</li> </ul>

# OBSERVATION SCHEDULES FOR SCHOOL B

## ANNEXURE 10

### OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR SMTs

CATERGORY OBSERVED		OBSERVER NAME		
SMTs		MASHA B.M		
DATE OF OBSERVATION		SCHOOL NAME		
2016/08/24 TO 2016/10/20		School B		
PURPOSE OF OBSERVATION				
How SMTs interact with parents of the learner's to enhance academic performance?				
No	TIME	ACTIVITY OBSERVED	OBSERVATION	COMMENTS
1		Communication with parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners are the most common means of communication between parents and school</li> <li>Sometimes invitation letters are given to learners to deliver to their parents at home.</li> <li>The school has a telephone line but is not used to call parents to school</li> <li>There are two computers used for admin purpose with internet connection using 3G modem but they are not used to communicate with the parents</li> <li>There is no formal database of parent with contact numbers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school need to improve its method of communication by using other methods like telephone since many parents today have cellphones ad many cellphones are capable of receiving sms</li> <li>Many parents' respect traditional leaders. The school has the advantage of liaising with traditional leaders to assist with motivating parents to interact with teachers</li> <li>The SMT need to also initiate strong relation with local churches and political leaders to help with motivation of parents to attend school activities</li> <li>The nearby primary school is another advantage of the Secondary school to use to communicate with the parents</li> </ul>
2		Organizing parent meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School parents meetings on quarterly basis only. The aim is to discuss learner performance for the term</li> <li>Few parent respond to such meetings</li> <li>Meetings are held outside since the school does not have enough classrooms.</li> <li>School hall is present but is used by the learners as a classroom because the school is</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School meetings can be deferred to the community public meeting places like rational leadership place/house when majority of parents used to meet as well as local churches and other pubic paces over w]the weekends when many parents are off duty and will not complain of work related issue</li> <li>Parents should be catered with food when attending school meetings particularly in rural setting were majority are poor this will motivate</li> </ul>



			overpopulated with high learner enrolment	parents to come to school during meetings
3		Engaging parents in children's learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No indication of parents being engaged in classroom activities</li> <li>• No outreach activities except the NSNP program where few parents are used to cook for the learners</li> <li>• The interview process provides that parents are motivated to assist learners with homework.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school should start to plan for open days where parents will sometimes be called to see the school work of their children</li> <li>• Some parents or community members can be invited to come during school hours to observe teaching and learning in the classrooms</li> <li>• Parents, who were teachers, can be invited to assist with certain subject the rational being to motivate children.</li> <li>• Community leaders and senior citizens need to be invite to give motivational talks during school events like cultural ceremonies and recite to the children about the past history of the community and the school</li> <li>• Language teachers can organize debates where parents will be invited to listen to their children.</li> <li>• Some parents need to delegated with certain responsibilities to manage to motivate the learners and capacitate the parents with leadership skills to make them feel welcomed by the school</li> <li>• The school need to start with literacy program for parents in the evening so that parents who could not read and write can be given the opportunity to learn some skills that would help them to assist their children at home.</li> </ul>
4		Organizing outreach activities for parents at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No indication of school initiated programs to fully engage parents in schools</li> <li>• School has no garden nor and project for the poor parents to involve</li> <li>• Only NSNP program is existing that involve about four parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broad activities need to be initiated to encourage parents in numerical numbers to actively be involved</li> <li>• School assemblies can be delegated to parents if this may not interfere with the learners right to education</li> <li>• Universities can be invited to advise leaners and parents about career choices and degrees for the children to pursue after matric.</li> </ul>



5	Engaging parents in learner discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners are ordered to come to school with their parents when having a case at school</li> <li>• the teachers handle disciplinary issue themselves</li> <li>• justice not fairly followed to apply procedural and substantive fairness</li> <li>• SGBs are to discuss cases involving learners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciplinary committee need to be established to deal with learner case of transgression consistently and procedurally fair</li> <li>• Impartiality need to be adhered</li> <li>• LRC as learner representative must be involved to listen to cases related to their colleagues</li> </ul>
6	Organizing parents to volunteer at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School year plan provide no evidence of any committee to organise parents meetings</li> <li>• No policy is drawn to manage parent involvement on school activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee comprising parents and teachers need to established to handle parent involvement activity</li> <li>• The committee must intact responsibly to plan all activities that relate to involvement of parents</li> </ul>
7	Involving parents in policy formulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interview with some parents and SMTs indicate no evidence of parent participation during policy development process</li> <li>• Minutes of school parent meeting provides little data of parents being involved during formation of policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents have unlimited rights to their children's education therefore they must be part of the policy drawing process so that they know the kind of rule</li> </ul>
8	Reporting of children's performance to parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School organise parent gatherings on quarterly basis to report to parents about children performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMT need to sometimes visit children's homes after school hours to see and know where they come from and establish friendly relations with parents.</li> <li>• School need to initialise new program where teachers report during the course of normal teaching and learning other issue that will negatively inters with the children's performance in the classroom like children's behavior and how they interact with teachers</li> </ul>
9	Organizing parent open days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School policy and year plan provide no evidence of open days</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School need to plan when parents will come to school to see how children are doing</li> </ul>



				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insertion of open days for parents will increase learner discipline and bunking of classes by educators</li> </ul>
10		Decision making with parents during school/parent meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During parent meeting that took place during the research process the principal indicate to respect the decision of the parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision making process should be extended other areas like formulation of school policies, curriculum and subject choices for the learners</li> <li>• Decision making process should be extended to school budgets so that parents make insertion on the type resources that to be purchase to improve the quality of teaching and learning.</li> </ul>
11		Home visits by SMTs and Educators to improve school home relation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year plan and the school time table does not provide any indication of school home visits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home visits need to be initiated and planned for to show parents that they are welcomed in school</li> <li>• SMT should consider doing home visits to change the attitudes of the community, parents and learners about the school</li> </ul>
12		Establishment of parent involvement committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minutes of school parents meetings show no evidence of existing committee established to manage parents meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school must start to establish a committee to manage parent involvement in children's education</li> </ul>
13		Involving parents in curriculum planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School policy does not show any indication of planning to involvement parents in curriculum planning activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents should know the type curriculum that what their children are doing at school therefore when the school plan must be invited</li> <li>• Language use by teachers during parents meetings need to be adjusted to the one that all parents understand to motivate them to be part of the meetings and other activities of the school</li> <li>• School need to organise workshops to train parents about policies and curriculum statement so that parents so that they will be able to know understand what the curriculum expects their know</li> </ul>
14		Persistent involvement of parents in school activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only in the NSNP programme</li> <li>• Normally parent are involved at the end of a term to discuss learner results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school need to establish more activities in which will be involved in large numbers</li> <li>• Parents need to be motivated by delegating certain activities like school assemblies to them</li> </ul>



				<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School meetings need to chaired by parents</li><li>• Sports activities can be manage by parents who are capable and have knowledge of sports</li></ul>
15		Dealing with barriers to learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No evidence on how pare could be engaged in dealing with barriers to learning to improve academic performance of the children</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School policy need to be reviewed to indicate how barriers to learning originating from the three context school , home and community can be tackle to improve children who felt victims of such barriers to improve their performance</li><li>• Parent know the children very well from their infancy</li><li>• involving them regularly will help teachers to know the type of children they are dealing with</li></ul>
16		Involving parents in subject choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Only parent grade 9 learners are involved in learners subject choices but this is not documented in the school policy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Other grades should also be considered so that parents and children know the career choices that their children will follow after matric</li><li>• Higher institutions can be organised to guide parents and learners about career opportunities so that children and their parent do not make wrong decisions about the subjects their children followed at secondary school level</li></ul>

**ANNEXURE 11  
OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS**

CATEGORY OBSERVED			OBSERVER NAME	
PARENTS			MASHA B.M	
DATE OF OBSERVATION			SCHOOL NAME	
2016/08/24 TO 2016/10/20			School B	
PURPOSE OF OBSERVATION				
How parents interact with SMTs to enhance learner academic performance?				
No	TIME	ACTIVITY OBSERVED	OBSERVATION	COMMENTS
1		Responding to school invitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation during the two term visits reveal fewer number of parents responding to school invitations</li> <li>• Only some of the parents of learners in grade 12 seemed to responds well to school meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School SMT need to be creative to establish news ways to attract parents</li> <li>• Parents of other grades need to be motivated to involve in school activities and programs</li> <li>• Home visits can relieve parents to feel that they welcomed at school</li> </ul>
2		Involving in school meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Countable number involves in school meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMTs need to shift school meetings to community places with where majority of parents are inclined to meet</li> <li>• Traditional councils and leaders can be used to motivate parents to support schools</li> </ul>
3		Involving in school outreach activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No evidence of outreach activities exist within the school</li> <li>• No evidence of parents offering to assist school with activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School should initialise programs that need to attract parents across all spheres to take part in school</li> </ul>
4		Assisting learners with home work at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus group interview provide little information that some parents are inclined to help learners at home</li> <li>• Knowledge of subject content seemed to be a challenge to many parents to assist children at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training parents about curriculum policies and initialising programmes that capacitate parents with reading and writing skills can improve the situation</li> </ul>



5		Volunteering in school activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence of volunteering activities by parents in the school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents need to be invited and motivated to help the school even with simple activities like cleaning the school yard and fixing broken windows</li> </ul>
6		Voluntary school visits to find out about learner progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence gather of parents paying voluntary visits to school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMTs should motivate parents to come to school anytime to find out about performance and progress of their children</li> </ul>
7		Collecting learner reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only collects reports on quarterly basis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents should be motivated to realize that learner performance relies much on their consistence support</li> </ul>
8		Interacting with teachers to understand curriculum requirements for their children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No data driven from observation schedule to support parent interaction with teachers with curriculum matters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMTs need to teach parents about curriculum related activities and rights to involve in the education of their children</li> </ul>
9		Assisting school in dealing with learner discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observation revealed no evidence of parents involvement in disciplinary issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discipline is broad and varied</li> <li>More parents need to engaged in activities that directly influence behavior support</li> <li>Delegating responsibilities to parents to manage can motivate learners</li> <li>Engaging parents in class teaching can help to boosting discipline and motivate learners to change</li> <li>Invitation of people from health department to teach learners about adolescent can boost behavior and learner academic achievement</li> </ul>
10		Taking part in school planning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No data of parent involvement in planning</li> <li>School policy does not say anything about involving parent during planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School policy need to reviewed to value the presence of parents during planning of school activities</li> </ul>



ANNEXURE 12

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOL POLICY, TIME TABLE, RESULT ANALYSIS, AND MINUTES OF MEETINGS

CATEGORY OBSERVED		OBSERVER NAME		
SCHOOL POLICY TIME TABLE RESULTS MINUTES OF MEETINGS WITH PARENTS		MASHA B.M		
DATE OF OBSERVATION		SCHOOL NAME		
2016/08/24 TO 2016/10/20		School B		
PURPOSE OF OBSERVATION				
Do school policy, timetable, results analysis, as well as minutes of the meetings reflect persistent involvement of parents to enhance learner's academic performance?				
No	TIME	ACTIVITY OBSERVED	OBSERVATION	COMMENTS
1		School policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No insertions of parent involvement clauses in the school policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School policy must be changed to accommodate parent in school activities</li> </ul>
		To what extent does the school policy debate about parent involvement?		
2		School time table	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The time table does not accommodate parent days or activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The time table should be planned in a way that parent days are given chance so that parent will be given time to visit school during open days</li> <li>Parent open days should be considered as an option to increase learner achievement</li> </ul>
		Is there evidence of parent involvement days on school timetable?		
3		School year plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence of planning for parent involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMT should plan how parents will be involved by inserting sections of the school policy that support parent involvement in school</li> </ul>
		Did the school plan for parent involvement?		
4		Analysis of school results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School performance is moderate for the past five years stuck between 50 and 60 percent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent involvement in various activities will change the attitude of the learners.</li> <li>If parents consistently engaged in academic activities performance can be improved</li> </ul>
		To what extent do learners perform?		



5	<b>Minutes of school meetings with parents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of minutes of school parents meetings show little consistency of interaction of parents with the school on quarterly basis</li><li>• It appears parents are not interested in coming to school meetings</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increasing parent involvement in the school will help the school to eliminated many barriers the deter progressive learner academic achievement</li><li>• SMT need to explore various activities for parents to be involved</li></ul>
	<b>How do minutes of parents meetings deliberate on parent involvement to enhance a learner academic performance?</b>		
6	<b>Roll calls of meetings with parents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No data of the consistency of parent involvement.</li><li>• Only few out of the total parent population manage to attend school meetings</li></ul>	SMTs should devise more strategies in attracting number of parents to involve in school activities

# OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOL C

## ANNEXURE 10

### OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR SMTs

CATERGORY OBSERVED		OBSERVER NAME		
SMTs		MASHA B.M		
DATE OF OBSERVATION		SCHOOL NAME		
2016/10/30		School C		
PURPOSE OF OBSERVATION				
How SMTs interact with parents of the learner's to enhance academic performance?				
No	TIME	ACTIVITY OBSERVED	OBSERVATION	COMMENTS
1		Communication with parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners are commonly used to communication with parents</li> <li>The school has a telephone line but is not used to call parents to school when they need them for meetings and other issues related to a child</li> <li>computers are used for admin purpose not used to communicate with the parents</li> <li>There is no formal database of parent with contact numbers</li> <li>Sometimes school use loudspeakers to call parents for school meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school need to improve its method of communication by using other methods like telephone since many parents today have cellphones ad many cellphones are capable of receiving sms</li> <li>The school is situated in rural areas still under the leadership of traditional leaders. Many parents' respect traditional leaders.</li> <li>The school has the advantage of liaising with traditional leaders to assist with motivating parents to interact with teachers</li> <li>The SMT need to also initiate strong relation with local churches and political leaders to help with motivation of parents to attend school activities</li> <li>The nearby primary school is another advantage of the secondary school to use to communicate with the parents</li> </ul>
2		Organizing parent meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School parents meetings are held on quarterly basis only to discuss learner performance for the term</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timing of parent meeting seems in appropriate since few parents respond to such meetings some they may liaise wok related problem</li> <li>Parents should be catered with food when attending school meetings particularly in rural setting were majority are poor this will motivate parents to come to school during meetings</li> </ul>



3		Engaging parents in children's learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No indication of parents being engaged in classroom activities</li> <li>• The interview process provides that parents are motivated to assist learners with homework.</li> <li>• Interview provides that parents of grades 9 are sometimes on quarterly basis invited for open days.</li> <li>• Educators of various grades address parents meetings during open days</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school should start to plan for open days where parents will sometimes be called to see the school work of their children</li> <li>• Some parents or community members can be invited to come during school hours to observe teaching and learning in the classrooms</li> <li>• Parents who were teachers, can be invited to assist with certain subject the rational being to motivate children.</li> <li>• Community leaders and senior citizens need to be invite to give motivational talks during school events like cultural ceremonies and recite to the children about the past history of the community and the school</li> <li>• Language teachers can organize debates where parents will be invited to listen to their children.</li> <li>• Some parents need to delegated with certain responsibilities to manage to motivate the learners and capacitate the parents with leadership skills to make them feel welcomed by the school</li> <li>• The school need to start with literacy program for parents in the evening so that parents who could not read and write can be given the opportunity to learn this skills that would help them to assist their children at home.</li> </ul>
4		Organizing outreach activities for parents at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School has NSNP program about six parents cook food for the learners</li> <li>• The school has a garden. Parents are working to make income in the school garden.</li> <li>• Some products are used by the NSNP for leaner's food</li> <li>• The school invites engineers from the nearby mines to teach leaners about careers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broad activities need to be initiated to encourage parents in numerical numbers to actively be involved</li> <li>• School assemblies can be delegated to parents if this may not interfere with the learners right to education</li> <li>• Universities can be invited to advise leaners and parents about career choices and degrees for the children to pursue after matric.</li> </ul>



5	Engaging parents in learner discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners are ordered to come to school with their parents</li> <li>• Rule of natural justice not fairly followed to apply procedural and substantive fairness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciplinary committee need to be established to deal with learner case of transgression consistently and procedurally fair</li> <li>• Impartiality need to be adhered</li> <li>• LRC as learner representative must be involved to listen to cases related to their colleagues</li> </ul>
6	Organizing parents to volunteer at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School year plan provide no evidence of any committee sting no committee that exist to organize parents meetings</li> <li>• No policy is drawn to manage parent involvement on school activities</li> <li>• The school has erected shelters for parents to sell fruits and sweets to learners I the school yard</li> <li>• Some parents are employed as cleaners of the schoolyard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee comprising parents and teachers need to be established to handle parent involvement activity</li> <li>• The committee must interact responsibly to plan all activities that relate to involvement of parents</li> </ul>
7	Involving parents in policy formulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no evidence of parent participation during policy development process</li> <li>• Minutes of school parent meeting provides no data of parents involvement during formation of policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents have unlimited rights to their children's education therefore they must be part of the policy drawing process so that they know the kind of rule</li> </ul>
8	Reporting of children's performance to parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School organise parent gatherings on quarterly basis to report to parents about children performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMT need to sometimes visit children's homes after school hours to see and know where they come from and establish friendly relations with parents.</li> <li>• School need to initialise new program where teachers report during the course of normal teaching and learning other issue that will negatively inters with the children's performance in the classroom like children's behavior and how they interact with teachers</li> </ul>



9		Organizing parent open days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School policy and year plan provide no evidence of open days</li> <li>• The interview suggest that sometimes parents are called to come for open days</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School need to plan when parents will come to school to see how children are doing</li> <li>• Insertion of open days for parents will increase learner discipline and bunking of classes by educators</li> </ul>
10		Decision making with parents during school/parent meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMT member indicate that decision are taken by the principal alone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision making process should be extended other arears like formulation of school policies, curriculum and subject choices for the learners</li> <li>• Decision making process should be extended to school budgets so that parents make insertion on the type resources that to be purchase to improve the quality of teaching and learning.</li> </ul>
11		Home visits by SMTs and Educators to improve school home relation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year plan, school, and the school time table does not provide any indication of school home visits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home visits need to be initiated and planned for to show parents that they are welcomed in school</li> <li>• SMT should consider doing home visits to change the attitudes of the community, parents and learners about the school</li> </ul>
12		Establishment of parent involvement committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minutes of school parents meetings show no evidence of existing committee established to manage parents meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school must start to establish a committee to manage parent involvement in children's education</li> </ul>
13		Involving parents in curriculum planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School policy does not show any indication of planning to involvement parents in curriculum activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents should know the type of curriculum that their children receive at school</li> <li>• Language use by teachers during parents meetings need to be adjusted to the one that all parents understand to motivate them to be part of the meetings and other activities of the school</li> </ul>



				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School need to organise workshops to train parents about policies and curriculum statement so that parents so that they will be able to know understand what the curriculum expects their know</li> </ul>
14		Persistent involvement of parents in school activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no evidence of any activity planned to engage parents in the school except parents in the NSNP program</li> <li>• Parental involvement mainly took place in the beginning of a term to discuss result analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school need to establish more activities in which will be involved in large numbers</li> <li>• Parents need to be motivated by delegating certain activities like school assemblies to them</li> <li>• School meetings need to chaired by parents</li> <li>• Sports activities can be manage by parents who are capable and have knowledge of sports</li> </ul>
15		Dealing with barriers to learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school does not debate about how parents could be engaged in dealing with barriers to learning to improve academic performance of the children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School policy need to be reviewed to indicate how barriers to learning originating from the three context school , home and community can be tackle to improve children who felt victims of such barriers to improve their performance</li> <li>• Parent know them children very well from their infancy involving them regularly will help teachers to know the type of children they are dealing with</li> </ul>
16		Involving parents in subject choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only grade 9 learners are involved in learners subject choices but this is not documented in the school policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other grades should also be considered so that parents and children know the career choices that their children will follow after matric</li> <li>• Higher institutions can be organised to guide parents and learners about career opportunities so that children and their parent do not make wrong decisions about the subjects their children followed at secondary school level</li> </ul>

**ANNEXURE 11  
OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS**

			<b>OBSERVER NAME</b>	
<b>PARENTS</b>			<b>MASHA B.M</b>	
<b>DATE OF OBSERVATION</b>			<b>SCHOOL NAME</b>	
<b>2016/08/24 TO 2016/10/20</b>			<b>School C</b>	
<b>PURPOSE OF OBSERVATION</b>				
<b>How parents interact with SMTs to enhance learner academic performance?</b>				
<b>No</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>ACTIVITY OBSERVED</b>	<b>OBSERVATION</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
1		Responding to school invitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fewer number of parents respond to school invitations</li> <li>Only some of the parents of learners in grade 12 seemed to respond to school meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School SMT need to be creative to establish news ways to attract parents</li> <li>Parents of other grades need to be motivated to involve in school activities and programs</li> <li>Home visits can relieve parents to feel that they are welcomed at school</li> </ul>
2		Involving in school meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Countable number are involves in school meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMTs need to shift school meetings to community places with where majority of parents are inclined to meet</li> <li>Traditional councils and leaders can be used to motivate parents to support schools</li> </ul>
3		Involving in school outreach activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence of outreach activities exist within the school except NSNP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School should initialise programs that need to attract parents across all spheres to take part in school</li> </ul>
4		Assisting learners with home work at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus group interview schedule with parents provide little information that some parents are inclined to help learners at home</li> <li>Knowledge of subject content seemed to be a challenge to many parents to assist children at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training parents about curriculum policies and initializing programs that capacitate parents with reading and writing skills can improve the situation</li> </ul>
5		Volunteering in school activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence of volunteering activities by parents in the school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents need to be invited and be motivated to help the school even with simple activities like cleaning the school yard and fixing broken windows</li> </ul>





6	Voluntary school visits to find out about learner progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>No evidence gather about parents paying voluntary visits to school</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>SMTs should motivate parents to come to school anytime to find out about performance and progress of their children</li></ul>
7	Collecting learner reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Only few number of parents directly observed come to collect reports on quarterly basis</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Parents should be motivated to realise that learner performance relies much on their consistence support</li></ul>
8	Interacting with teachers to understand curriculum requirements for their children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>No data driven support parent interaction with teachers with curriculum matters</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>SMTs need to teach parents about curriculum related activities and rights to involve in the education of their children</li></ul>
9	Assisting school in dealing with learner discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Observation revealed no evidence of parents involvement in disciplinary issues</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Discipline is broad and varied</li><li>More parents need to engaged in activities that directly influence behavior support</li><li>Delegating responsibilities to parents to manage can motivate learners</li><li>Engaging parents in class teaching can help to boosting discipline and motivate learners to change</li><li>Invitation of people from health department to teach learners about adolescent can boost behavior and learner academic achievement</li></ul>
10	Taking part in school planning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>No data of parent involvement in planning</li><li>School policy does not say anything about involving parent during planning</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>School policy need to reviewed to value the presence of parents during planning of school activities</li></ul>

ANNEXURE 12

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOL POLICY, TIME TABLE, RESULT ANALYSIS, AND MINUTES OF MEETINGS

CATEGORY OBSERVED			OBSERVER NAME	
SCHOOL POLICY TIME TABLE RESULTS MINUTES OF MEETINGS WITH PARENTS			MASHA B.M	
DATE OF OBSERVATION			SCHOOL NAME	
2016/08/24 TO 2016/10/20			School C	
PURPOSE OF OBSERVATION				
Do school policy, timetable, results analysis, as well as minutes of the meetings reflect persistent involvement of parents to enhance learner's academic performance?				
No	TIME	ACTIVITY OBSERVED	OBSERVATION	COMMENTS
1		School policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No insertions of parent involvement clauses in the school policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school policy should be changed to accommodate parent involvement</li> </ul>
		To what extent does the school policy debate about parent involvement?		
2		School time table	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The time table does not provide any spaces reserved for parent days or activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The time table should be planned in a way that parent days are given chance so that parent will be given time to visit school during open days</li> <li>Parent open days should be considered as an option to increase learner achievement</li> </ul>
		Is there evidence of parent involvement days on school timetable?		
3		School year plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence of planning for parent involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMT should plan how parents will be involved by documenting that in the school policy</li> </ul>
		Did the school plan for parent involvement?		
4		Analysis of school results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance for the past five years is remained between 50 and 60 percent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent involvement in various activities will change the attitude of the learners.</li> <li>If parents consistently engaged in academic activities performance can be improved</li> </ul>
		To what extent do learners perform?		



5	<b>Minutes of school meetings with parents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of minutes of school parents meetings show little consistency of interaction of parents with the school on quarterly basis</li><li>• It appears parents are not interested in coming to school meetings</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increasing parent involvement in the school will help the school to eliminated many barriers the deter progressive learner academic achievement</li><li>• SMT need to explore various activities for parents to be involved</li></ul>
	<b>How do minutes of parents meetings deliberate on parent involvement to enhance a learner academic performance?</b>		
6	<b>Roll calls of meetings with parents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No data of the consistency of parent involvement.</li><li>• Roll calls provide that only few out of the total parent population manage to attend school meeting</li></ul>	SMTs should device more strategies in attracting number of parents to involve in school activities

# OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOL D

## ANNEXURE 10

### OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR SMTs

CATERGORY OBSERVED		OBSERVER NAME		
SMTs		MASHA B.M		
DATE OF OBSERVATION		SCHOOL NAME		
2017/01/17		School D		
PURPOSE OF OBSERVATION				
How SMTs interact with parents of the learner's to enhance academic performance?				
No	TIME	ACTIVITY OBSERVED	OBSERVATION	COMMENTS
1		Communication with parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners are used to communication with parents for gatherings.</li> <li>The school has no telephone line</li> <li>There is no formal database of parent with contact numbers</li> <li>Loud speakers are sometimes used</li> <li>SGB announce parents meetings during funeral</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school need to improve its method of communication by using other methods like telephone since many parents today have cellphones ad many cellphones are capable of receiving sms</li> <li>The school is in rural under the leadership of traditional leaders.</li> <li>The school has the advantage of liaising with traditional leaders to assist with motivating parents to interact with teachers</li> <li>The SMT need to also initiate strong relation with local churches and political leaders to help with motivation of parents to attend school activities</li> <li>The nearby primary school is another advantage of the secondary school to use to communicate with the parents</li> </ul>
2		Organizing parent meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School parents meetings are held on quarterly basis only. The aim is to discuss learner performance for the term</li> <li>Few parent respond to such meetings</li> <li>School has a shelter where meetings with parents are held</li> <li>No available parent classroom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School meetings can be deferred to common community public meeting places like rational leadership place/house when majority of parents used to meet as well as local churches and other pubic paces over w]the weekends when many parents are off duty and will not complain of work related issue</li> </ul>
3		Engaging parents in children's learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No indication of parents being engaged in classroom activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school should start to plan for open days where parents will sometimes be</li> </ul>



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The interview process provides that parents are motivated to assist learners with homework.</li> </ul>	<p>called to see the school work of their children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some parents or community members can be invited to come during school hours to observe teaching and learning in the classrooms</li> <li>Parents, who were teachers, can be invited to assist with certain subject the rational being to motivate children.</li> <li>Community leaders and senior citizens need to be invite to give motivational talks during school events like cultural ceremonies</li> <li>Language teachers can organize debates where parents will be invited to listen to their children.</li> <li>Some parents need to be delegated with certain responsibilities to manage to motivate the learners and capacitate the parents with leadership skills</li> <li>The school need to start with literacy program for parents in the evening so that parents who could not read and write can be given the opportunity to learn.</li> </ul>
4		Organizing outreach activities for parents at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No indication of school initiated programmes to fully engage parents in schools</li> <li>School has no garden nor and project for the poor parents to involve</li> <li>Only NSNP programme is existing that took about four parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broad activities need to be initiated to encourage parents in numerical numbers to actively be involved</li> <li>School assemblies can be delegated to parents if this may not interfere with the learners right to education</li> <li>Universities can be invited to advise leaners and parents about career choices and degrees for the children to pursue after matric.</li> </ul>
5		Engaging parents in learner discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaners are ordered to come to school with their parents when have cases</li> <li>In some cases the teachers handle disciplinary issue themselves</li> <li>Rule of natural justice not fairly followed to apply procedural and substantive fairness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disciplinary committee need to be established to deal with learner cases consistently in a fair manner</li> <li>Impartiality need to be adhered</li> <li>LRC as learner representative must be involved to listen to cases related to their colleagues</li> </ul>



6		Organizing parents to volunteer at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School year plan provide no evidence of any committee existing to organise parents meetings</li> <li>• No policy is drawn to manage parent involvement on school activities</li> <li>• Only parents working for the EPWP project initiated by the local municipality clean the school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee comprising parents and teachers need to established to handle parent involvement activity</li> <li>• The committee must intact responsibly to plan all activities that relate to involvement of parents</li> </ul>
7		Involving parents in policy formulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interview with some parents and SMTs indicate no evidence of parent participation during policy development process</li> <li>• Minutes of school parent meeting provides little data of parents being involved during formation of policies</li> <li>• Principal alone formulate policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents have unlimited rights to their children’s education therefore they must be part of the policy drawing process so that they know the kind of rules formulated for their children</li> </ul>
8		Reporting of children’s performance to parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School organize parent gatherings on quarterly basis to report to parents about children performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMT need to visit children’s homes after school hours to see and know where they come from and establish friendly relations with parents.</li> <li>• School need to initialize new program where teachers report during the course of normal teaching and learning other issue that will negatively inters with the children’s performance in the classroom like children’s behavior and how they interact with teachers</li> </ul>
9		Organizing parent open days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School policy and year plan provide no evidence of open days</li> <li>• No parent days organized at school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School need to plan when parents will come to school to see how children are doing</li> </ul>



10	Decision making with parents during school/parent meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During parent meeting that took place during the research process the SMT indicated higher level of respect to parents decisions</li> <li>• Principal and SBB take decisions alone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision making process should be extended other areas like formulation of school policies, curriculum and subject choices for the learners</li> <li>• Decision making process should be extended to school budgets so that parents make insertion on the type resources that to be purchase to improve the quality of teaching and learning.</li> </ul>
11	Home visits by SMTs and Educators to improve school home relation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year plan, school policy and the school time table does not provide any indication of school home visits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home visits need to be initiated and planned for to show parents that they are welcomed in school</li> </ul>
12	Establishment of parent involvement committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minutes of school parents meetings show no evidence of existing committee established to manage parents meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school must start to establish a committee to manage parent involvement in children's education</li> </ul>
13	Involving parents in curriculum planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School policy, plan does not show any indication of involving parents in curriculum planning activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents should know the type curriculum that their children are doing at school therefore when the school plan must be invited</li> <li>• Language use by teachers during parents meetings need to be adjusted to the one that all parents understand to motivate them to be part of the meetings and other activities of the school</li> <li>• School need to organize workshops to train parents about policies and curriculum statement so that parents so that they will be able to know understand what the curriculum expects their know</li> </ul>
14	Persistent involvement of parents in school activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation of the school during the two term visits reveal no evidence of any activity planned to engage parents in the school except parents in the NSNP program</li> <li>• Parental involvement mainly took place in the beginning of a term to discuss result analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school need to establish more activities in which will be involved in large numbers</li> <li>• Parents need to be motivated by delegating certain activities like school assemblies to them</li> <li>• School meetings need to chaired by parents</li> <li>• Sports activities can be manage by parents who are capable and have knowledge of sports</li> </ul>



15	Dealing with barriers to learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence of how parents should be engaged to deal with barriers to learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School policy need to be reviewed to indicate how barriers to learning can be tackled to improve children performance</li> <li>Parent know the children very well from their infancy involving them regularly will help teachers to know the type of children they are dealing with</li> </ul>
16	Involving parents in subject choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only parents of grade 9 learners are involved in learners subject choices but this is not documented in the school policy</li> <li>No evidence of involvement of parents in other grades</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other grades should also be considered so that parents and children know the career choices that their children will follow after matric</li> <li>Higher institutions can be organized to guide parents and learners about career opportunities so that children and their parent do not make wrong decisions about the subjects their children followed at secondary school level</li> </ul>

**ANNEXURE 11  
OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS**

CATEGORY OBSERVED		OBSERVER NAME		
PARENTS		MASHA B.M		
DATE OF OBSERVATION		SCHOOL NAME		
2017/01/17		School D		
PURPOSE OF OBSERVATION				
How parents interact with SMTs to enhance learner academic performance?				
No	TIME	ACTIVITY OBSERVED	OBSERVATION	COMMENTS
1		Responding to school invitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observation during the two term visits reveal fewer number of parents responding to school invitations</li> <li>Only some of the parents of learners in grade 12 seemed to respond well to school meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School SMT need to be creative to establish new ways to attract parents</li> <li>Parents of other grades need to be motivated to involve in school activities and programs</li> <li>Home visits can relieve parents to feel that they were welcomed at school</li> </ul>
2		Involving in school meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Countable number of parents involved in school meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMTs need to shift school meetings to community places where majority of parents are inclined to meet</li> </ul>





				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traditional councils and church leaders can be used to motivate parents to support schools</li> </ul>
3		Involving in school outreach activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence of outreach activities exist within the school</li> <li>No evidence of parents offering to assist school with activities except the SGB and the cooks in the school NSNP program</li> <li>No school initiated project designed to involve parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School should initialise programs that need to attract parents across all spheres to take part in school</li> </ul>
4		Assisting learners with home work at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus group interview schedule with parents provide little information that some parents are inclined to help learners at home</li> <li>Knowledge of subject content seemed to be a challenge to many parents to assist children at home</li> <li>Most parents not able to read and write</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training parents about curriculum policies and initializing programs that capacitate parents with reading and writing skills can improve the situation</li> </ul>
5		Volunteering in school activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence of volunteering activities by parents in the school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents need to be invited and be motivated to help the school even with simple activities like cleaning the school yard and fixing broken windows</li> </ul>
6		Voluntary school visits to find out about learner progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence gather of parents paying voluntary visits to school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMTs should motivate parents to come to school anytime to find out about performance and progress of their children</li> </ul>
7		Collecting learner reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only few number of parents directly observed come to collect reports on quarterly basis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents should be motivated to realise that learner performance relies much on their consistence support</li> </ul>
8		Interacting with teachers to understand curriculum requirements for their children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No data driven from observation schedule to support parent interaction with teachers with curriculum matters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMTs need to teach parents about curriculum related activities and their rights to involve in the education of their children</li> </ul>



9	Assisting school in dealing with learner discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation revealed no evidence of parents involvement in disciplinary issues</li> <li>• Observation revealed that only SGBs are involved during discipline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discipline is broad and varied</li> <li>• More parents need to engaged in activities that directly influence behavior support</li> <li>• Delegating responsibilities to parents to manage can motivate learners</li> <li>• Engaging parents in class teaching can help to boost discipline and motivate learners to change</li> <li>• Invitation of people from health department to teach learners about adolescent can boost behavior and learner academic achievement</li> </ul>
10	Taking part in school planning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation schedule retrieve no data of parent involvement in planning</li> <li>• School policy does not say anything about involving parent during planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School policy need to be reviewed to value the presence of parents during planning of school activities</li> </ul>

#### ANNEXURE 12

#### OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOL POLICY, TIME TABLE, RESULT ANALYSIS, AND MINUTES OF MEETINGS

CATEGORY OBSERVED		OBSERVER NAME		
SCHOOL POLICY TIME TABLE RESULTS MINUTES OF MEETINGS WITH PARENTS		MASHA B.M		
DATE OF OBSERVATION		SCHOOL NAME		
2017/01/17		School D		
PURPOSE OF OBSERVATION				
Do school policy, timetable, results analysis, as well as minutes of the meetings reflect persistent involvement of parents to enhance learner's academic performance?				
No	TIME	ACTIVITY OBSERVED	OBSERVATION	COMMENTS
1		School policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No insertions of parent involvement clauses in the school policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• school policy should be update to accommodate parent involvement</li> </ul>
		To what extent does the school policy debate about parent involvement?		
		School time table		



2		<b>Is there evidence of parent involvement days on school timetable?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The time table does not provide any spaces reserved for parent days or activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The time table should be planned in a way that parent days are given chance so that parent will be given time to visit school during open days</li> </ul>
3		<b>School year plan</b>  <b>Did the school plan for parent involvement?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence of planning for parent involvement revealed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMT should plan how parents will be involved by inserting sections of the school policy that support parent involvement in school</li> </ul>
4		<b>Analysis of school results</b>  <b>To what extent do learners perform?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School performance report reveal that the school performance is moderate and unstable. Performance for the past five years stuck between 50 and 60 percent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent involvement in various activities will change the attitude of the learners.</li> </ul>
5		<b>Minutes of school meetings with parents</b>  <b>How do minutes of parents meetings deliberate on parent involvement to enhance a learner academic performance?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observation of minutes of the school parents meetings show little consistency of interaction of parents with the school on quarterly basis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing parent involvement in the school will help the school to eliminated many barriers that deter progressive learner academic achievement</li> <li>SMT need to explore various activities for parents to be involved</li> </ul>
6		<b>Roll calls of meetings with parents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observation schedule retained little data of the consistency of parent involvement.</li> <li>few out of the total parent population manage to attend school meetings</li> </ul>	SMTs should devise more strategies in attracting number of parents to involve in school activities

# OBSERVATION SCHEDULES FOR SCHOOL E

## ANNEXURE 10

### OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR SMTs

CATERGORY OBSERVED		OBSERVER NAME		
SMTs		MASHA B.M		
DATE OF OBSERVATION		SCHOOL NAME		
23/01/2017		School E		
PURPOSE OF OBSERVATION				
How SMTs interact with parents of the learner's to enhance academic performance?				
No	TIME	ACTIVITY OBSERVED	OBSERVATION	COMMENTS
1		Communication with parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners are the most common means of communication between parents and school</li> <li>Sometimes letters of meetings are given to learners to deliver to their parents at home.</li> <li>The school has no telephone line</li> <li>There is no formal database of parent with contact numbers</li> <li>Sometimes loud speakers are used to call parents</li> <li>Meetings are also announced at funeral gatherings</li> <li>It seems parents have negative attitude to the school</li> <li>Politics seems to interfere with school programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school need to improve its method of communication by using other methods like telephone since many parents today have cellphones ad many cellphones are capable of receiving sms</li> <li>The school is situated in rural areas still under the leadership of traditional leaders. Many parents' respect traditional leaders. The school has the advantage of liaising with traditional leaders to assist with motivating parents to interact with teachers</li> <li>The SMT need to also initiate strong relation with local churches and political leaders to help with motivation of parents to attend school activities</li> <li>The nearby primary school is another advantage of the Secondary school to use to communicate with the parents</li> </ul>
2		Organizing parent meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School parents meetings are on quarterly basis only. The aim is to discuss learner performance for the term</li> <li>Few parent respond to such meetings</li> <li>Meetings are held outside since the school does not have enough classrooms. because the school is</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School meetings can be deferred to community public meeting places like traditional leadership place/house when majority of parents used to meet as well as local churches and other pubic paces over the weekends when many parents are off duty</li> </ul>



			overpopulated with high learner enrolment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timing of parent meeting inappropriate since few parents respond to such meetings some they may liaise wok related problem</li> <li>• will not complain of work related issue</li> </ul>
3		Engaging parents in children's learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No indication of parents being engaged in classroom activities</li> <li>• The interview process provides that parents are motivated to assist learners with homework.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school should start to plan for open days where parents will sometimes be called to see the school work of their children</li> <li>• Some parents or community members can be invited to come during school hours to observe teaching and learning in the classrooms</li> <li>• Parents, who were teachers, should be invited to assist with certain subject the rational being to motivate children.</li> <li>• Community leaders and senior citizens need to be invite to give motivational talks during school events like cultural ceremonies and recite to the children about the past history of the community and the school</li> <li>• Language teachers can organize debates where parents will be invited to listen to their children.</li> <li>• Some parents need to delegated with certain responsibilities to manage to motivate the learners and capacitate the parents with leadership skills to make them feel welcomed by the school</li> <li>• The school need to start with literacy program for parents in the evening so that parents who could not read and write can be given the opportunity to learn this skills that would help them to assist their children at home.</li> </ul>
4		Organizing outreach activities for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No indication of school initiated programmes to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broad activities need to be initiated to encourage parents in numerical</li> </ul>

		parents at school	<p>fully engage parents in schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School has no garden nor project for the poor parents to involve</li> <li>• Only NSNP program is existing that took about four parents with 6 parents working as cookers</li> </ul>	<p>numbers to actively be involved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School assemblies can be delegated to parents if this may not interfere with the learners right to education</li> <li>• Universities can be invited to advise learners and parents about career choices and degrees for the children to pursue after matric.</li> </ul>
5		Engaging parents in learner discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners are ordered to come to school with their parents in case of discipline</li> <li>• In some cases the teachers handle disciplinary issue themselves if failed referred to principal</li> <li>• Rule of natural justice not fairly followed to apply procedural and substantive fairness</li> <li>• SGBs discuss cases involving learners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciplinary committee need to be established to deal with learner case of transgression consistently and procedurally fair</li> <li>• Impartiality need to be adhered</li> <li>• LRC as learner representative must be involved to listen to cases related to their colleagues</li> </ul>
6		Organizing parents to volunteer at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School year plan provide no evidence of any committee that exist to organize parents meetings</li> <li>• No policy is drawn to manage parent involvement on school activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee comprising parents and teachers need to established to handle parent involvement activity</li> <li>• The committee must intact responsibly to plan all activities that relate to involvement of parents</li> </ul>
7		Involving parents in policy formulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interview with some parents and SMTs indicate no evidence of parent participation during policy development process</li> <li>• Minutes of school parent meeting provides little data of parents being involved during formation of policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents have unlimited rights to their children's education therefore they must be part of the policy drawing process so that they know the kind of rule</li> </ul>
8		Reporting of children's performance to parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School organise parent gatherings on quarterly basis to report to parents about children performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMT need to sometimes visit children's homes after school hours to see and know where they come from and establish friendly relations with parents.</li> <li>• School need to initialize new program where teachers report during the course of normal teaching and learning other issue that will negatively inters with the children's</li> </ul>



				performance in the classroom like children's behavior and how they interact with teachers
9		Organizing parent open days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School policy and year plan provide no evidence of open days</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School need to plan when parents will come to school to see how children are doing</li> </ul>
10		Decision making with parents during school/parent meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An SMT indicated that decisions are taken by SGB and principal and then shared with the other parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decision making process should be extended other areas like formulation of school policies, curriculum and subject choices for the learners</li> <li>Decision making process should be extended to school budgets so that parents make insertion on the type resources that to be purchase to improve the quality of teaching and learning.</li> </ul>
11		Home visits by SMTs and Educators to improve school home relation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year plan, school policy and the school time table does not provide any indication of school home visits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Home visits need to be initiated and planned for to show parents that they are welcomed in school</li> </ul>
12		Establishment of parent involvement committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minutes of school parents meetings show no evidence of existing committee established to manage parents meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school must start to establish a committee to manage parent involvement in children's education</li> </ul>
13		Involving parents in curriculum planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School policy, plan does not show any indication of planning to involvement parents in curriculum planning activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents should know the type curriculum that what their children are doing at school therefore when the school plan must be invited</li> <li>Language use by teachers during parents meetings need to be adjusted to the one that all parents understand to motivate them to be part of the meetings and other activities of the school</li> <li>School need to organize workshops to train parents about policies and curriculum statement so that parents so that they will be able to know understand what the curriculum expects their know</li> </ul>

14		Persistent involvement of parents in school activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation of the school during the two term visits reveal no evidence of any activity planned to engage parents in the school except parents in the NSNP program</li> <li>• Parental involvement mainly took place in the beginning of next term to discuss result analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school need to establish more activities in which will be involved in large numbers</li> <li>• Parents need to be motivated by delegating certain activities like school assemblies to them</li> <li>• School meetings need to chaired by parents</li> <li>• Sports activities can be manage by parents who are capable and have knowledge of sports</li> </ul>
15		Dealing with barriers to learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school does not say anything about how parents could be engaged in dealing with barriers to learning to improve academic performance of the children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School policy need to be reviewed to indicate how barriers to learning originating from the three context school , home and community can be tackle to improve children who felt victims of such barriers to improve their performance</li> <li>• Parent know them children very well from their infancy involving them regularly will help teachers to know the type of children they are dealing with</li> </ul>
16		Involving parents in subject choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only grade 9 learners are involved in learners subject choices but this is not documented in the school policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other grades should also be considered so that parents and children know the career choices that their children will follow after matric</li> <li>• Higher institutions can be organized to guide parents and learners about career opportunities so that children and their parent do not make wrong decisions about the subjects their children followed at secondary school level</li> </ul>



ANNEXURE 11  
OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS

CATEGORY OBSERVED		OBSERVER NAME		
PARENTS		MASHA B.M		
DATE OF OBSERVATION		SCHOOL NAME		
23/01/2017		School E		
PURPOSE OF OBSERVATION				
How parents interact with SMTs to enhance learner academic performance?				
No	TIME	ACTIVITY OBSERVED	OBSERVATION	COMMENTS
1		Responding to school invitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observation during the two term visits reveal fewer number of parents responding to school invitations</li> <li>Only some of the parents of learners in grade 12 seemed to responds well to school meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School SMT need to be creative to establish news ways to attract parents</li> <li>Parents of other grades need to be motivated to involve in school activities and programs</li> <li>Home visits can relieve parents to feel that they welcomed at school</li> </ul>
2		Involving in school meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only a countable number involves in school meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMTs need to shift school meetings to community places with where majority of parents are inclined to meet</li> <li>Traditional councils and leaders can be used to motivate parents to support schools</li> </ul>
3		Involving in school outreach activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence of outreach activities exist within the school</li> <li>No evidence of parents offering to assist school with activities except the SGB and the cookers in the school NSNP program</li> <li>Two parents are employed one male and one female working as cleaners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School should initialize programs that need to attract parents across all spheres to take part in school</li> </ul>
4		Assisting learners with home work at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus group interview schedule with parents provide little information that some parents are inclined to help learners at home</li> <li>Knowledge of subject content seemed to be a challenge to many</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training parents about curriculum policies and initializing programs that capacitate parents with reading and writing skills can improve the situation</li> </ul>

			parents to assist children at home	
5		Volunteering in school activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence of volunteering activities by parents in the school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents need to be invited and motivated to help the school even with simple activities like cleaning the school yard and fixing broken windows</li> </ul>
6		Voluntary school visits to find out about learner progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence gathered of parents paying voluntary visits to school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMTs should motivate parents to come to school anytime to find out about performance and progress of their children</li> </ul>
7		Collecting learner reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only few number of parents directly observed during the research process come to collect reports on quarterly basis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents should be motivated to realize that learner performance relies much on their consistence support</li> </ul>
8		Interacting with teachers to understand curriculum requirements for their children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No data driven from observation schedule to support parent interaction with teachers with curriculum matters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMTs need to teach parents about curriculum related activities and rights to involve in the education of their children</li> </ul>
9		Assisting school in dealing with learner discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observation revealed no evidence of parents involvement in disciplinary issues</li> <li>Observation revealed that SGBs is the only one involved during disciplinary issues at the school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discipline is broad and varied</li> <li>More parents need to engaged in activities that directly influence behavior support</li> <li>Delegating responsibilities to parents to manage can motivate learners</li> <li>Engaging parents in class teaching can help to boosting discipline and motivate learners to change</li> <li>Invitation of people from health department to teach learners about adolescent can boost behavior and learner academic achievement</li> </ul>
10		Taking part in school planning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence of parent involvement in planning</li> <li>School policy does not say anything about involving parent during planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School policy need to reviewed to value the presence of parents during planning of school activities</li> </ul>

**ANNEXURE 12**

**OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOL POLICY, TIME TABLE, RESULT ANALYSIS, AND MINUTES OF MEETINGS**

CATEGORY OBSERVED			OBSERVER NAME	
<p>SCHOOL POLICY</p> <p>TIME TABLE</p> <p>RESULTS</p> <p>MINUTES OF MEETINGS WITH PARENTS</p>			MASHA B.M	
DATE OF OBSERVATION			SCHOOL NAME	
23/01/2017			School E	
PURPOSE OF OBSERVATION				
Do school policy, timetable, results analysis, as well as minutes of the meetings reflect persistent involvement of parents to enhance learner's academic performance?				
No	TIME	ACTIVITY OBSERVED	OBSERVATION	COMMENTS
1		School policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No insertions of parent involvement clauses in the school policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changing of the school policy by inserting clauses that debates about parent involvement in school can help to change the situation</li> </ul>
		To what extent does the school policy debate about parent involvement?		
2		School time table	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The time table does not provide any spaces reserved for parent days or activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The time table should be planned in a way that parent days are given chance so that parent will be given time to visit school during open days</li> </ul>
		Is there evidence of parent involvement days on school timetable?		
3		School year plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence of planning for parent involvement revealed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMT should plan how parents will be involved by inserting sections of the school policy that support parent involvement in school</li> </ul>
		Did the school plan for parent involvement?		
		Analysis of school results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data of the school results obtained from</li> </ul>	



4		<b>To what extent do learners perform?</b>	the NSC school performance report reveal that the school has not been doing well for the past six years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent involvement in various activities will change the attitude of the learners.</li> </ul>
5		<b>Minutes of school meetings with parents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation of minutes of school parents meetings show little consistency of interaction of parents with the school on quarterly basis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing parent involvement in the school will help the school to eliminated many barriers the deter progressive learner academic achievement</li> <li>• SMT need to explore various activities for parents to be involved</li> </ul>
		<b>How do minutes of parents meetings deliberate on parent involvement to enhance a learner academic performance?</b>		
6		<b>Roll calls of meetings with parents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation schedule reveal little data about the consistency of parent involvement.</li> <li>• Roll calls provide that only few out of the total parent population manage to attend school meetings</li> </ul>	SMTs should devise more strategies in attracting number of parents to involve in school activities
		<b>Does the roll call reflect high numerical number of parents that attend school meetings?</b>		

# OBSERVATION SCHEDULES FOR SCHOOL F

## ANNEXURE 10

### OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR SMTs

CATERGORY OBSERVED		OBSERVER NAME		
SMTs		MASHA B.M		
DATE OF OBSERVATION		SCHOOL NAME		
25/01/2017		School F		
PURPOSE OF OBSERVATION				
How SMTs interact with parents of the learner's to enhance academic performance?				
No	TIME	ACTIVITY OBSERVED	OBSERVATION	COMMENTS
1		Communication with parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners are the most common means of communication with parents</li> <li>The school has a telephone line but is not used to call parents to school when they need them for meetings and other issues related to a child</li> <li>There 10 computers laptops used for admin purpose with internet connection using 3G modem but they are not used to communicate with the parents</li> <li>There is no formal database of parent with contact numbers</li> <li>Announcement are made over the local radio station (SK.FM)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school need to improve its method of communication by using other methods like telephone since many parents today have cellphones ad many cellphones are capable of receiving sms</li> <li>The school is situated in rural areas.</li> <li>Many parents' respect traditional leaders. The school has the advantage of liaising with traditional leaders to assist with motivating parents to interact with teachers</li> <li>The SMT need to also initiate strong relation with local churches and political leaders to help with motivation of parents to attend school activities</li> <li>The nearby primary school is another advantage of the Secondary school to use to communicate with the parents</li> </ul>
2		Organizing parent meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School parents meetings are on quarterly basis only. The aim is to discuss learner performance for the term</li> <li>Meetings are held outside since the school does not have enough classrooms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School meetings can be deferred to common community public meeting places like rational leadership place/house when majority of parents used to meet as well as local churches and other pubic paces over w]the weekends when many parents are off duty and will not complain of work related issue</li> </ul>



3		Engaging parents in children's learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No indication of parents being engaged in classroom activities</li> <li>• No outreach activities except the NSNP program where few parents are used to cook for the learners</li> <li>• No indication of any school initiated program to promote movement of parents in school premises</li> <li>• The interview process provides that parents are motivated to assist learners with homework.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school should start to plan for open days where parents will sometimes be called to see the school work of their children</li> <li>• Some parents or community members can be invited to come during school hours to observe teaching and learning in the classrooms</li> <li>• Parents who were teachers, can be invited to assist with certain subject the rationale being to motivate children.</li> <li>• Community leaders and senior citizens need to be invited to give motivational talks during school events like cultural ceremonies and recite to the children about the past history of the community and the school</li> <li>• Language teachers can organize debates where parents will be invited to listen to their children.</li> <li>• Some parents need to be delegated with certain responsibilities to manage to motivate the learners and capacitate the parents with leadership skills to make them feel welcomed by the school</li> <li>• The school needs to start with a literacy program for parents in the evening so that parents who could not read and write can be given the opportunity to learn these skills that would help them to assist their children at home.</li> </ul>
4		Organizing outreach activities for parents at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No indication of school initiated programs to fully engage parents in schools</li> <li>• School has no garden nor a project for the poor parents to involve</li> <li>• Only NSNP program is existing that took about four parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broad activities need to be initiated to encourage parents in numerical numbers to actively be involved</li> <li>• School assemblies can be delegated to parents if this may not interfere with the learners' right to education</li> <li>• Universities can be invited to advise learners and parents about career choices and degrees for the</li> </ul>



				children to pursue after matric.
5		Engaging parents in learner discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners are ordered to come to school with their parents</li> <li>• In some cases the teachers handle disciplinary issue themselves</li> <li>• if failed referred to principal</li> <li>• Rule of natural justice not fairly followed to apply procedural and substantive fairness</li> <li>• SGBs are to discuss cases involving learners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciplinary committee need to be established to deal with learner case of transgression consistently and procedurally fair</li> <li>• Impartiality need to be adhered</li> <li>• LRC as learner representative must be involved to listen to cases related to their colleagues</li> </ul>
6		Organizing parents to volunteer at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School year plan provide no evidence of any committee sting no committee that exist to organize parents meetings</li> <li>• No policy is drawn to manage parent involvement on school activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee comprising parents and teachers need to established to handle parent involvement activity</li> <li>• The committee must intact responsibly to plan all activities that relate to involvement of parents</li> </ul>
7		Involving parents in policy formulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interview with some parents and SMTs indicate no evidence of parent participation during policy development process</li> <li>• Minutes of school parent meeting provides little data of parents being involved during formation of policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents have unlimited rights to their children's education therefore they must be part of the policy drawing process so that they know the kind of rule</li> </ul>
8		Reporting of children's performance to parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School organize parent gatherings on quarterly basis to report to parents about children performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMT need to sometimes visit children's homes after school hours to see and know where they come from and establish friendly relations with parents.</li> <li>• School need to initialize new program where teachers report during the course of normal teaching and learning other issue that will negatively inters with the children's performance in the classroom like children's behavior and how they interact with teachers</li> </ul>
9		Organizing parent open days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School policy and year plan provide no evidence of open days</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School need to plan when parents will come to school to see how children are doing</li> </ul>



10		Decision making with parents during school/parent meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence of democratic decision making process during parents meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decision making process should be extended to other areas like formulation of school policies, curriculum and subject choices for the learners</li> <li>Decision making process should be extended to school budgets so that parents make insertion on the type resources that to be purchase to improve the quality of teaching and learning.</li> </ul>
11		Home visits by SMTs and Educators to improve school home relation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year plan, school, and the school time table does not provide any indication of school home visits</li> <li>No evidence of conducting home visits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Home visits need to be initiated and planned for to show parents that they are welcomed in school</li> </ul>
12		Establishment of parent involvement committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minutes of school parents meetings show no evidence of existing committee established to manage parents meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school must start to establish a committee to manage parent involvement in children's education</li> </ul>
13		Involving parents in curriculum planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School policy and year plan does not show any indication of planning to involvement parents in curriculum planning activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents should know the type curriculum that what their children are doing at school therefore when the school plan must be invited</li> <li>Language use by teachers during parents meetings need to be adjusted to the one that all parents understand to motivate them to be part of the meetings and other activities of the school</li> <li>School need to organize workshops to train parents about policies and curriculum statement so that parents so that they will be able to know understand what the curriculum expects their know</li> </ul>
14		Persistent involvement of parents in school activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence except parent 6 parents in the NSNP programme</li> <li>Parental involvement mainly took place in the beginning of another term to discuss result analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school need to establish more activities in which will be involved in large numbers</li> <li>Parents need to be motivated by delegating certain activities like school assemblies to them</li> <li>School meetings need to chaired by parents</li> </ul>





				<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sports activities can be managed by parents who are capable and have knowledge of sports</li></ul>
15		Dealing with barriers to learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The school does not debate about how parents could be engaged in dealing with barriers to learning to improve academic performance of the children</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School policy need to be reviewed to indicate how barriers to learning originating from the three context school , home and community can be tackle to improve children who felt victims of such barriers to improve their performance</li><li>• Parent know them children very well from their infancy involving them regularly will help teachers to know the type of children they are dealing with</li></ul>
16		Involving parents in subject choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Only parents of grade 9 learners are involved in learners subject choices but this is not documented in the school policy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Other grades should also be considered so that parents and children know the career choices that their children will follow after matric</li><li>• Higher institutions can be organised to guide parents and learners about career opportunities so that children and their parent do not make wrong decisions about the subjects their children followed at secondary school level</li></ul>

**ANNEXURE 11  
OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS**

CATEGORY OBSERVED			OBSERVER NAME	
PARENTS			MASHA B.M	
DATE OF OBSERVATION			SCHOOL NAME	
25/01/2017			School F	
PURPOSE OF OBSERVATION				
How parents interact with SMTs to enhance learner academic performance?				
No	TIME	ACTIVITY OBSERVED	OBSERVATION	COMMENTS
1		Responding to school invitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation during the two term visits reveal fewer number of parents responding to school invitations</li> <li>• Only some of the parents of learners in grade 12 seemed to responds well to school meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School SMT need to be creative to establish news ways to attract parents</li> <li>• Parents of other grades need to be motivated to involve in school activities and programs</li> <li>• Home visits can relieve parents to feel that they welcomed at school</li> </ul>
2		Involving in school meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Countable number involves in school meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMTs need to shift school meetings to community places with where majority of parents are inclined to meet</li> <li>• Traditional councils and leaders can be used to motivate parents to support schools</li> </ul>
3		Involving in school outreach activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No evidence of outreach activities exist within the school</li> <li>• No evidence of parents assisting school</li> <li>• the cookers in the school NSNP program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School should initialize programs that need to attract parents across all spheres to take part in school</li> </ul>
4		Assisting learners with home work at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus group interview schedule with parents provide little information that some parents are inclined to help learners at home</li> <li>• Knowledge of subject content seemed to be a challenge to many parents to assist children at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training parents about curriculum policies and initializing programs that capacitate parents with reading and writing skills can improve the situation</li> </ul>
5		Volunteering in school activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No evidence of volunteering activities by parents in the school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents need to be invited and motivated to help the school even with simple activities like cleaning the school yard and fixing broken windows</li> </ul>



6		Voluntary school visits to find out about learner progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence gather of parents paying voluntary visits to school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMTs should motivate parents to come to school anytime to find out about performance and progress of their children</li> </ul>
7		Collecting learner reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only few number of parents directly observed come to collect reports on quarterly basis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents should be motivated to realize that learner performance relies much on their consistence support</li> </ul>
8		Interacting with teachers to understand curriculum requirements for their children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No data driven from observation schedule to support parent interaction with teachers relating to curriculum matters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMTs need to teach parents about curriculum related activities and rights to involve in the education of their children</li> </ul>
9		Assisting school in dealing with learner discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observation revealed no evidence of parents involvement in disciplinary issues</li> <li>Observation revealed that SGBs component are the actors of disciplinary issues at school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discipline is broad and varied</li> <li>More parents need to engaged in activities that directly influence behavior support</li> <li>Delegating responsibilities to parents to manage can motivate learners</li> <li>Engaging parents in class teaching can help to boosting discipline and motivate learners to change</li> <li>Invitation of people from health department to teach learners about adolescent can boost behavior and learner academic achievement</li> </ul>
10		Taking part in school planning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observation schedule retrieve no data of parent involvement in planning</li> <li>School policy does not say anything about involving parent during planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School policy need to reviewed to value the presence of parents during planning of school activities</li> </ul>

ANNEXURE 12

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOL POLICY, TIME TABLE, RESULT ANALYSIS, AND MINUTES OF MEETINGS

CATEGORY OBSERVED			OBSERVER NAME	
<p>SCHOOL POLICY</p> <p>TIME TABLE</p> <p>RESULTS</p> <p>MINUTES OF MEETINGS WITH PARENTS</p>			MASHA B.M	
DATE OF OBSERVATION			SCHOOL NAME	
25/01/2017			School F	
PURPOSE OF OBSERVATION				
Do school policy, timetable, results analysis, as well as minutes of the meetings reflect persistent involvement of parents to enhance learner's academic performance?				
No	TIME	ACTIVITY OBSERVED	OBSERVATION	COMMENTS
1		School policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No insertions of parent involvement clauses in the school policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changing of the school policy by inserting clauses that debates about parent involvement in school can help to change the situation</li> </ul>
		To what extent does the school policy debate about parent involvement?		
2		School time table	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The time table does not provide any spaces reserved for parent days or activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The time table should be planned in a way that parent days are given chance so that parent will be given time to visit school during open days</li> </ul>
		Is there evidence of parent involvement days on school timetable?		
3		School year plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence of planning for parent involvement revealed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMT should plan how parents will be involved by inserting sections of the school policy that support parent involvement in school</li> </ul>
		Did the school plan for parent involvement?		
		Analysis of school results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data of the school results obtained from</li> </ul>	



4		<b>To what extent do learners perform?</b>	the NSC school performance report reveal that the school performance for the past six years is very promising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent involvement in various activities will change the attitude of the learners.</li> </ul>
5		<b>Minutes of school meetings with parents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation of minutes of school parents meetings show little consistency of interaction of parents with the school on quarterly basis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing parent involvement in the school will help the school to eliminated many barriers the deter progressive learner academic achievement</li> <li>• SMT need to explore various activities for parents to be involved</li> </ul>
		<b>How do minutes of parents meetings deliberate on parent involvement to enhance a learner academic performance?</b>		
6		<b>Roll calls of meetings with parents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation schedule retained little data of the consistency of parent involvement.</li> <li>• Roll calls provide that only few out of the total parent population manage to attend school meetings</li> </ul>	SMTs should devise more strategies in attracting number of parents to involve in school activities
		<b>Does the roll call reflect high numerical number of parents that attend school meetings?</b>		