CHAPTER 7

GUIDELINES FOR THE EFFECTIVE TRANSFORMATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE GAUTENG PROVINCE

7.1 INTRODUCTION

According to the literature survey and the empirical investigation conducted within a representative sample of secondary schools in the Gauteng Province, the following guidelines can be established. If education managers could implement these guidelines in the management of their schools, they should be able to manage transformation more effectively.

7.2 GUIDELINES FROM THE LITERATURE STUDY

The following guidelines, affecting all the stakeholders, are derived from the literature study:

7.2.1 Quality management as a transformation measure

Whitaker and Moses (1994:50) (cf Chapter 3 paragraph 3.2) explain *quality management* as a means of ensuring that the *standards of performance* are improved or *set high* enough for all concerned, in order to ensure that school personnel have a greater degree of *commitment* and *accountability* towards outcomes.

The education manager will be able to fulfil the above mentioned obligations by paying particular attention to the following areas of concern:

★   **The educator**

In order to ensure that the educator acquires quality information and skills about his offerings, the education manager must realize potential in his team. Allocation of duties must be expertly done with the aim of building a team of educators that will offer excellent work at all times. Educators who are not motivated enough to complete allocated functions competently, need motivational talks to inculcate a sense of duty and encourage them to focus on their work. Timeous intervention in the form of an orientation programme containing the expected transformational changes must be communicated to the educators (see paragraph 2.4).

On the other hand, the formation of a school support group will also help relieve stressful situations. By and large, powers have to be devolved to the lower level to ensure that leadership qualities are identified amongst the educators.

★   **The education manager**

It is paramount that the education manager must always strive to become a cultural leader who understands the macro-organizational level of dealing with the demographic trends and patterns of emerging social groups. From a micro-organizational level, the education manager should be able to serve the needs of a diverse culture and be sensitive to their language development and acquisition. By so doing, education managers and educators of diverse cultural institutions must learn to communicate in at least a third language and a sign language for the deaf and dumb. The latter will ensure the flow of communication with disabled persons.

Quality management can also be enhanced by the education manager's ability to organize effectively and be skilled in processes like time tables, effective meeting techniques and room allocations. If time is utilised efficiently, the overall performance of all concerned will be maximised.

Transformation does not depend on the stringent policies designed by government, but on the ability of the school to restructure itself by utilizing their own cultural needs and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching in their individual schools. Decentralised powers and more autonomy by the district will enable the school to begin to flourish, develop and empower itself.

★   **The learner**

It is the aim of the school to develop the learner to meet the standards prescribed in the work environment, where competence in technology, communication and leadership will place him/her in good stead. The learner must be able to meet the challenges in the economic world by improving the quality and relevance of learning.

Schools must prepare the learner for community life where involvement, participation, caregiving and the establishment of youth organizations with the purpose of empowerment and skills development will be entrenched. The above mentioned factors will result in crime reduction, skills acquisition and improved quality of life. The gap between the school and the community will thus be narrowed.

★   **The parent**

The fact that parental involvement in the school's affairs will yield improved and well prepared learners is undebatable. In many instances, parents may be unsure of what to do to assist the schools. Education managers must regard this as a challenge, and make a conscious effort on their part to draw up a plan of action to bring the parents along.

Parents must be made to believe that their involvement is irreplaceable, legitimate and ongoing. The parents and the school must realize that every child is unique; find information about the child's school progress; communicate the contents of the school documents (for example the school policies, mission and vision statements); establish

a rapport with the school; recommend the organization of seasonal activities enjoyed by both the school personnel and the parents; create a two-way communication strategy; organize formal and informal neighbourhood gatherings (for example lunches and picnics), arrange for grandparents' day in order to explain to them the changes in education and societal structures; and invite the learners for a mentor day due to the realization that children need mentors to help shape their characters.

The above mentioned factors will ensure that the school manages quality and standards of performance with the intention of holding the school accountable and responsible to the community it serves.

7.2.2 Prioritizing equality in schools

Chisholm (1994:11) (cf Chapter 4, paragraph 4.3.1) has this to say about transitional issues:

"… the preparation for this transition, the consensus about *priority* **areas**, and the overall shifting balance of focus means that the momentum is fully in the direction of *addressing the major* **inequalities** in education".

In simple terms, the above expresses sentiments about what should be done to address the main inequalities in schools as a measure of transforming them.

❏   More powers should be devolved to the schools to enable them to transform. Government should target the schools and focus on the implementation of policies already drawn up, while allowing autonomy and transparency in the schools. For example, schools must be allowed to bring about desired changes in the curriculum to suit their needs. The learner's choice of learning material should be broadened so as to maximise deployment in the communities and the world of work.

❑ Schools must be empowered to manage recruitment, appointment and induction programmes with regard to staffing. With clear and explicitly written motivation from the school about the need to employ extra staff members, permission should be granted with the ultimate purpose of improving performance and enhancing progress.

The following guidelines will result in the acquisition of quality staff in the schools:

▸ Schools must begin to market themselves vigorously, and take initiative in recruiting large numbers of learners as well as appoint quality educators.

▸ Clear guidelines must be formulated by the schools for fair and non-discriminatory appointments of staff members who will move the institution in a desired direction.

▸ Periodical appraisal of the newly appointed staff member will bring about improvement in the areas of uncertainty. The above should be objective, ongoing and non-judgmental.

7.3 GUIDELINES FROM THE COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

7.3.1 Comparison between the key concepts derived from the quantitative and qualitative research

Everything being equal, the above-mentioned data contain the following similar aspects:

❑ Transforamtion is a fundamental change impacting positively on education management and society. It eliminates the old way of doing things. It is a paradigm shift.

❑ Stakeholders embracing the parents, learners and the educators are at liberty to

❑ Stakeholders embracing the parents, learners and the educators are at liberty to make their voice heard.

❑ The key concepts incorporated in the Employment Equity Act (1998) are operationalized by ensuring that learners are gender-sensitive in their selection of representatives (RCL). The SGB is also aware of the focal points contained in the act, and process educator appointments according to expectations.
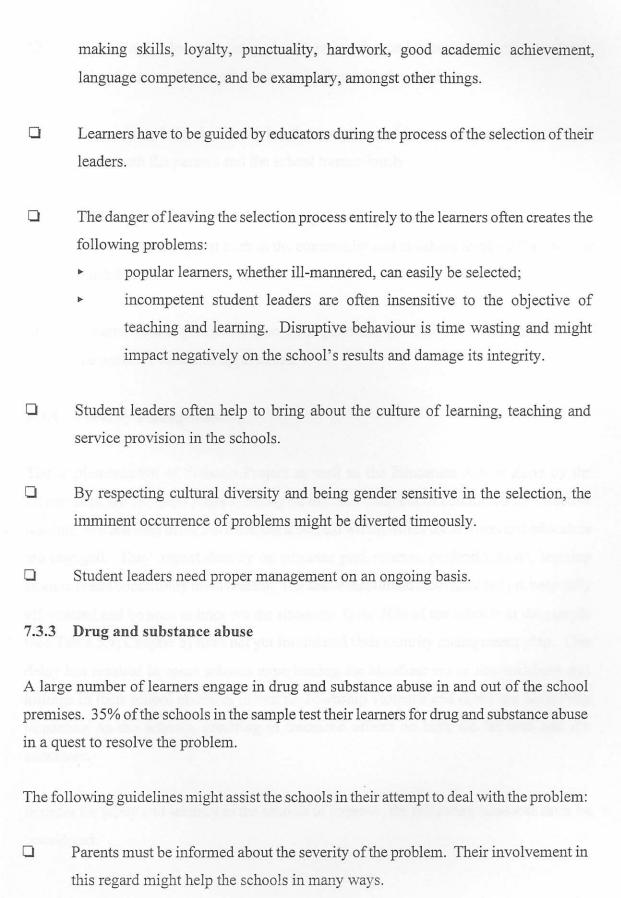
❑ Parents are generally unsupportive when it comes to their involvement in school matters.

❑ Uncertainties arising from the lack of guidelines with regard to drug testing adversely affect the culture of learning and teaching, on the grounds that most learners indulge in such substances.

From the above-mentioned factors, the researcher can justifiably say that this research appropriately interweaves the quantitative touchstone with the qualitative point of view, in order to guide the education manager on transformation issues.

From the empirical survey conducted in the Gauteng secondary schools, the following important guidelines can be suggested.

7.3.2 Student leaders can help stabilise the school

The election of the members of the Representative Learner Council (formerly SRC), and/or Prefects should be taken seriously. The following factors should be heeded:

❑ Quality leadership (both the learners and management) will lead to quality performance and improved standards. Student leaders must display characteristics that include the following: assertiveness, respect, good and informed decision

making skills, loyalty, punctuality, hardwork, good academic achievement, language competence, and be examplary, amongst other things.

❑ Learners have to be guided by educators during the process of the selection of their leaders.

❑ The danger of leaving the selection process entirely to the learners often creates the following problems:

▸ popular learners, whether ill-mannered, can easily be selected;

▸ incompetent student leaders are often insensitive to the objective of teaching and learning. Disruptive behaviour is time wasting and might impact negatively on the school's results and damage its integrity.

❑ Student leaders often help to bring about the culture of learning, teaching and service provision in the schools.

❑ By respecting cultural diversity and being gender sensitive in the selection, the imminent occurrence of problems might be diverted timeously.

❑ Student leaders need proper management on an ongoing basis.

7.3.3 Drug and substance abuse

A large number of learners engage in drug and substance abuse in and out of the school premises. 35% of the schools in the sample test their learners for drug and substance abuse in a quest to resolve the problem.

The following guidelines might assist the schools in their attempt to deal with the problem:

❑ Parents must be informed about the severity of the problem. Their involvement in this regard might help the schools in many ways.

❏   The school's document on code of conduct for the learners must indicate clearly what the school's intentions are in dealing with the problem.

❏   Expert knowledge in identifying the symptoms of drug and substance abuse will assist both the parents and the school tremendously.

❏   Professional advice and counselling is a requirement after such discoveries. Learners need support both in the community and at school level on their way to rehabilitation.

❏   A framework or guidelines from the Department of Education on how to deal with the problem would be appreciated.

7.3.4   Security management

The implementation of Tirisano Project as well as the Education Action Zone by the Department are excellent ideas focusing on the establishment of conditions for effective teaching and learning in the environmental context within which the learners and educators are engaged.   They impact directly on educator performance, professionalism, learning resources and community involvement. The above mentioned ideas have not yet been fully effectuated and be seen to improve the situation. Over 30% of the schools in the sample (see Table 5.7, Chapter 5) have not yet formulated their security management plan. This delay has resulted in some schools experiencing the bloodiest era in firearm abuse and killings in their school premises in years. Township violence and crime are negatively impacting on the schools, resulting in traumatic effects on both the learners and the educators.

In order for safety and security in the schools to improve, the following measures must be considered:

❑ The installation of alarm systems, security fencing, panic buttons, and burglar proofing are some of the physical features that can help to alleviate the problem.

❑ A security management plan must be formulated by every school with the involvement of the community, including the church, the student leaders, the SGB, as well as the South African Police Service, who will give guidelines on how to manage safety and security in the schools. The possibilities of establishing a Security Management Forum must be looked at.

❑ School Nightwatchmen must be provided with equipment like Two-way Radios, to enable them to communicate and call for help at the earliest convenience.

If the schools are declared safe havens and crime-free zones, then investment in the form of technology will be a stone's throw away. Learning and teaching must occur in an atmosphere that is safe and secure.

7.3.5 Managing transformation

Measures to transform the school and its management go beyond the modification and formulation of policies, but goes deep into restructuring the institution with the aim of improving service delivery. For a school and its community to transform, education managers have to:

❑ ensure that the process of change and transformation is extensively articulated to all those affected by it;

❑ encourage a change of mindsets from all those involved;

❑ encompass the services of agencies and individuals outside the school by engaging in ongoing discussions and partnerships about the key transformation issues;

❏ establish committees (for example Transformation Committee) with the objective of expediting the transformation process;

❏ allow openness and transparency in discussions resulting in constructive inputs;

❏ base all measures to transform a school on a system of fairness and integrity;

❏ planning, consultation, implementation and accountability by the school manager and his team must be the "buzz" words;

❏ ensure that quality service is prioritised by allowing improvement of conditions and processes that would result in excellent learner outcomes.

7.3.5.1 Curriculum changes

The aim of changing Curriculum 2005 to Curriculum 21 could be ascribed to the intention of government to seek a long term plan for a curriculum whose objectives are to develop a competent learner with excellent decision making and thinking skills to ensure the prevalence of quality by meeting the demands of the 21st century.

The following aspects with regard to the new curriculum should be considered:

❏ Education authorities need to ensure that principles aligned to curriculum changes are timeously communicated.

❏ The quality and standards of performance are not compromised by simplifying the key aspects of the curriculum.

❏ Extensive training of the educators and the authorities about the new curriculum takes place systematically and purposefully.

❑ Added effort be made to address the problem of teacher-pupil ratio in the township schools, as well as the improvement of school buildings and facilities.

❑ The learner's background be taken into consideration when the final strategies of the actual learning and teaching are formulated. By and large, the socio-economic conditions of a community have a way of impacting directly on learning.

7.4.5.2 The Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998

The aims of the Act are two-pronged. Its main objective is to achieve equity in the workplace by:

❑ promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination; and

❑ implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups, in order to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce.

The principles underpinning the Employment Equity Act can be interpreted as follows in the education sector:

❑ The filling in of an advertised post must be done in compliance with this act, taking into consideration that designated groups, i.e. blacks, women and people with disabilities, should enjoy fair treatment and not be discriminated against.

❑ It is incumbent on the education manager to articulate the contents of the Act to the School Governing Body and the School Management Team, due to the powers vested on them to participate in the interview and selection procedures.

❑ Schools must go an extra mile in analysing and understanding the contents of the Act by

- ▸ holding workshops about the key issues contained in the Act and ensure implementation as well as make the document accessible;
- ▸ inviting experts in the field to help all affected parties to understand and incorporate its contents.

❑ The core issues of the Act will help put issues of racial diversity into perspective, employ women and disabled people in promotional posts as well as support them, by so doing implementing affirmative action principles in the workplace; and taking an added responsibility by removing discriminatory practices.

7.3.6 Staff development

In order for the school manager to develop the staff, the following areas demand his/her attention:

❑ The education manager must always lead by example, i.e. develop himself/herself first.

❑ Education managers must stimulate debate or talk on issues that will encourage the educators to participate in meaningful discussions around matters that affect them.

❑ Educators need constant motivation by external sources. An invitation to a Member of Parliament or any reputable individual or groups to address the staff members can be of great educational help.

❑ Education managers can delegate educators to perform important duties, and then allow them to give a report. Educators should be encouraged to perform duties that are beyond their normal routine.

❑ Education managers must try by all means to be transparent on issues that concern the school.

❑ Coaching clinics and workshops that are meticulously planned will motivate the educators and keep them on the alert about innovations and challenges in education and life in general.

❑ Educators need support to reduce stress levels as well as identify a number of causes of educator stress as follows:

▶ *Professional stressors:*

These stressors are caused by work related problems, including disruptive student behaviour, curricular issues, overload of work, administrative problems, change related issues by authorities and role ambiguity, amongst other things.

▶ *Personal stressors:*

These are related to issues that affect the educator's personal life, for example, finance, relationship (like marital discord resulting in divorce), living conditions, health and domestic problems that concern children.

Education managers must be on the alert in case some of the above-mentioned factors tend to affect the educator's ability to perform duties and exhaust the educator emotionally resulting in temperamental or other unacceptable emotional behaviour towards colleagues and the learners.

The education manager must be pro-active by, for example, changing the role played by the educators, as well as offer support and constant supervision, with the aim of improving the quality of the work done. External help by a psychologist can also be summoned.

7.3.7 Educator–parent empowerment and development

Education managers must empower and develop educators and parents by following the guidelines provided. They have to:

❑ identify and workshop educators who will resume leadership positions in the future;

❑ ensure that Educator Fora develop decision making skills for educators to enable quality and accountability to be part of a broad spectrum of their professional lives;

❑ take the trouble to facilitate change and transformation management by including these aspects in INSET programs;

❑ ensure that the network between the parents and the educators is sustained, enabling them to work collaboratively and arrive at decisions that will serve the interest of the school;

❑ encourage the parents to serve in various committees in the school.

7.3.8 The management of resources

Resources can be managed in the following ways:

❑ All resources, whether human, financial or physical must be well-managed.

❑ A Resource Management Committee might be established in order to supervise, plan, execute and manage resources.

❑ The day-to-day maintenance of school buildings and grounds should be prioritized. It is through such management that problems can be identified and resolved timeously. Services of ordinary citizens (sometimes free of charge) might be engaged.

❑ Proper record keeping of services and maintenance will encourage the school to plan strategically, being fully aware of the life-span of certain facilities.

❑   It is suggested that stock taking of school equipment be done at least once every term.

❑   Human resource management forms the key to the school's success in its quest to achieve its goals.

❑   Quality service provision, including gender sensitivity should not be overlooked in the appointment of service providers.

❑   All other principles and guidelines contained in other official documents should be adhered to in the provision and management of human resources. (For example: South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996, Education Laws Amendment Act No. 100 of 1997, Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998, and Employment Equity Act No. 58 of 1998.)

❑   Fund-raising forms part of a series of efforts by the school to supplement state resources. It is paramount that the school be in a position to manage these resources to the best interest of finance providers.

❑   School fund also remains one of the big sources of finance in the school. Ongoing encouragement for the parents or guardians to meet such obligations is necessary.

❑   Transparency with regard to financial matters is encouraged. It is proper for all the stakeholders to know about the financial status of the school as well as its sources.

❑   The school's financial status prepared by an accountant or auditor, and approved by the parents must be forwarded to the Department six months after the end of each financial year.

7.4   CONCLUSION

Education managers have a renewed mandate from government and the communities to redirect their schools to transform, following renewed and advanced prescriptions precipitated by the change of government.

It is imperative that education managers must strive to demystify the problems encountered in education and other societal circles, by constantly engaging in some form of research or fact finding missions themselves.

The scenario created by the author in the previous chapters must formally be translated into tangible programmes of action aimed at improving the schooling system.

The panacea for managing transformation lies in the role played by the education managers in occupying the central position in the communities by operationalizing the theories prescribed as supporting materials in various ways. A synthesis of frameworks and mind-boggling terminology encountered in a quest to empower educators and education managers must not make them forget who they are and what they stand for.