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POLICY ▪ LEADERSHIP ▪ MANAGEMENT ▪ GOVERNANCE FOR SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS


## Community perspectives of schooling

The General Household Survey (2010) released by the DBE (Department of Basic Education) in April this year, which has a focus on schooling, provides a host of useful information about the state of schooling in this country from a consumer's perspective. The survey, which has been conducted every year since 2002, uses data collected by trained fieldworkers from a representative sample of 30 000 households from across the country, usually by means of a personal structured interview with one of the adult members of the household and in their language of choice. The other value of the survey is that it gathers a broader array of data than that obtained from school-based sources such as the Education Management Information System (EMIS), which compiles data drawn from the statistical returns that schools are required to complete each year.

Several articles in this edition are based on information provided in the GHS (2010) document because of the relevance that they have for schools. Some of the data provides a disturbing view of how little things seem to have changed in some parts of this country. An example of this is the continued prevalence of corporal punishment in schools despite the fact that it is both illegal and unconstitutional. Although the article 'A little bit of mischief – is there a relationship between corporal punishment and NSC results?' makes a light-hearted attempt to prove that there is a link between the corporal punishment and NSC results, the continual use of corporal punishment in schools is unacceptable and needs to be eradicated.

We have also used the data from the GHS to examine the issue of over-age learners in schools, which is a problem that I have increasingly become aware of through my work with underperforming schools. Our analysis shows that the problem is most acute in Grades 10 and 11 where over-age learners nationally make up more than 50% of the learner population of those grades. Most of these learners will have repeated at least one grade in their school careers and the majority have little chance of passing at the end of Grade 12, yet they sit in the system. Anecdotal evidence from discussions with principals suggest that they stay in school at the insistence of their parents who, unaware that other educational options may be available to them, chose to keep them at school as they see the achievement of a NSC as their child's only hope of escape from a life of poverty or crime.

The obvious alternatives for these over-age learners should lie either with learnerships, supported by the relevant Sector Education Training Authorities (SETAs) that receive millions of rands' worth of funding each year from the 1% levy on the payroll of the industry they are meant to serve, or with the FET colleges that now offer a range of industry-specific vocational training courses leading to a National Certificate Vocational qualification which is equivalent to a National Senior Certificate. We examine some of these options in the article 'What options for over-age learners?'

The article 'Deputy-principals – partners, puppets or unsung heroes?' is the first article that we have carried that deals specifically with the relationships between

*Continued on page 2...*

### In this issue:




**SM&L**
Is published five times a year by Ednews. It seeks to provide the leaders of South African schools with current and relevant information on issues of policy, leadership, management and governance.

# Meeting of Council of Education Ministers (CEM)

The Council of Education Ministers (CEM) is a statutory body established in terms of the National Education Policy Act and consists of the Minister and Deputy-Minister of Education and the nine provincial MECs for Education. The Director General is also required to attend these meetings in order to report on them and to advise the members on the responsibilities of the DBE. Although the council normally meets monthly, it does not always provide briefings on these meetings.

The most recent CEM media release provided by the DBE reports on the meeting of 22 March 2012 and indicates that the following matters were discussed and/or decided at this meeting:

**1. Provincial audit of learner and teacher numbers**
Provincial education departments are required to undertake an audit of teacher and learner numbers and to finalise teacher 'profiles'. This data is needed to improve the efficiency of teacher deployment.

**2. Improving teacher subject knowledge**
The council agreed that all teachers who teach grades in which CAPS is being introduced should receive appropriate 'orientation' and that they should also be provided with DVDs and other support material. It was also agreed that further support should be provided through the use of ICT and that subject committees be established as a way of sharing good practice.

**3. Teacher accountability and class attendance**
The council agreed that there was a need to 'scrutinise' the way in which provincial education departments managed their human resources. The committee is clearly concerned about levels of accountability in the system, particularly in relation to curriculum coverage and teacher and learner attendance. A decision was also made to 'clean up' the PERSAL system to ensure that the department has correct data on who it employs, where they are employed and the subject that they can teach.

The council also supported the use of teacher and learner attendance registers and the use of class period control registers, together with the monitoring of these, as a means of increasing levels of accountability within the system.

**4. Integrated School Health Programme**
The council noted that the Integrated School Health Programme was due to be introduced in the near future. The main objective of the programme, which would be implemented with the collaboration of the Departments of Health and Social Development and with the support of the National Treasury, was health screening aimed at eradicating specific health barriers to learning.

The matters reported on in this media release suggest that the political heads of education, which is what this grouping represents, are concerned about levels of accountability in the system, particularly those relating to the efficient and effective use of teachers. This is as it should be as personnel costs represent by far the greatest slice of the department's budget and simply ensuring that all teachers are fully and properly utilised is likely to result in a significant improvement in learner performance. As Dr Taylor suggested in a paper presented at the New Millennium Business Conference, Wits University Business School in 2001, 'A high priority in this regard is to reduce the salary bill by increasing the teacher:pupil ratio, and directing the released funds towards textbooks, stationery and other "strongly cognitive" resources.' ■

*...Continued from page 1*

deputy-principals and principals. It is a by-product of a literature search that I did in preparation for a presentation that I was invited to make at a conference of deputy-principals. An effective partnership between principals and their deputies is critical if schools are to prosper and I hope you will find the article as stimulating as I found researching the topic for it.

Erich Cloete, our regular columnist, provides some good advice on two issues in this edition. His article 'Appoint future stars' is sure to set you thinking about the way in which you go about identifying the best candidate when making appointments to leadership positions, while his article on financial management provides excellent advice on this important topic. ■

# General Household Survey 2010

**The most recent General Household Survey, which focussed on schooling and is based on data collected in 2010, provides a fresh perspective and wealth of important data on how basic education is perceived by the general population.**

The General Household Survey (GHS) is conducted during the month of July every year by Statistics South Africa. The Survey, which has been conducted every year since 2002, is designed to obtain information on the availability of goods and services in South African households and covers the six broad areas of education, health, work and employment, transport, housing, and access to other services and facilities. The data used in the survey is collected by trained fieldworkers from a representative sample of 30 000 households from across the country, usually by means of a personal structured interview with one of the adult members of the household in their language of choice. The General Household Survey[1] for 2010 was recently released by the DBE and has a focus on schooling.

One of the great values of a survey of this kind is that it provides data about the availability of goods and services, particularly those provided by government departments, from the perspective of those who are the recipients of those goods and services. Put more simply, it is a survey that tells the government what its customers think of the quality of service. It therefore provides a more honest view of government service than that sold to the general population by government departments and political leaders in their annual reports to parliament.

The 2010 report, with its focus on schooling, provides a fresh perspective and wealth of important data on how basic education is perceived by the general population and it is for this reason that we have devoted a substantial part of this issue to the report. ■

**Reference**

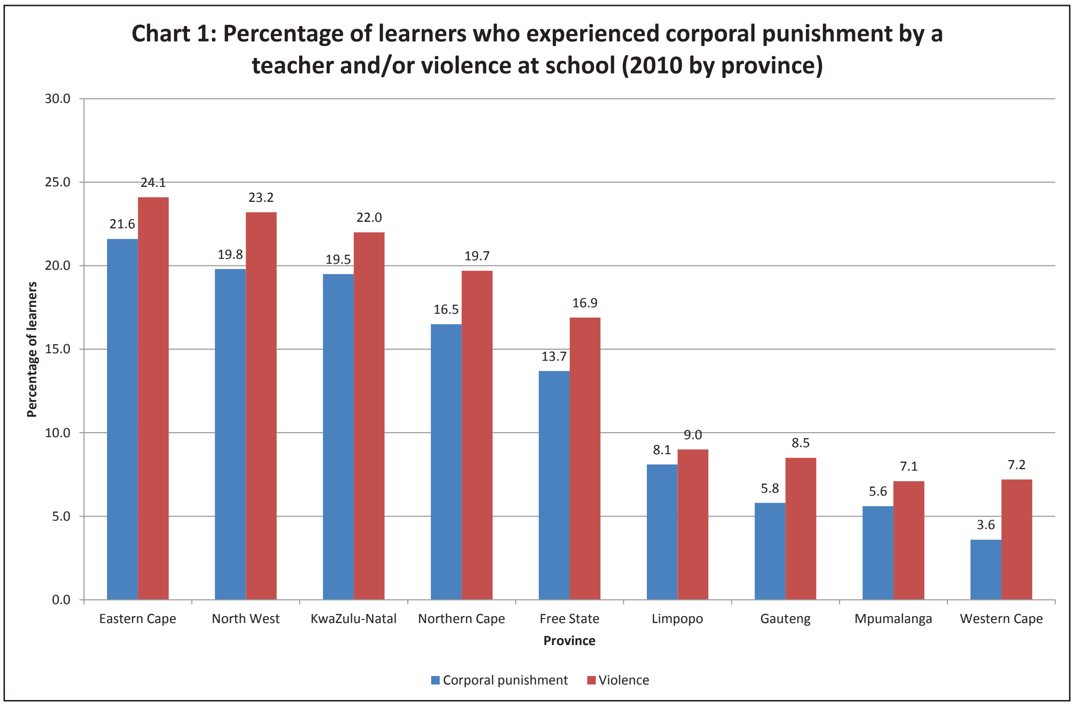
1 General Household Survey (GHS) 2010: Focus on Schooling, Department of Basic Education, 2012. (Downloaded from the DBE website http://www.education.gov.za/).

# A little bit of mischief – is there a relationship between corporal punishment and NSC results?

**The most recent General Household Survey focussed on schooling, based on data collected in 2010. It provides troubling data on the persistent use of corporal punishment in some schools.**

The data from the 2010 General Household Survey (GHS) provides a troubling perspective of our public education system as viewed through the eyes of the families who send the children to school each day trusting that they will be provided with an education that will help them become gainfully employed and productive citizens. Some of the most disturbing of the data is that which relates to children's experience of school as places where they are faced with violence and the prospect of corporal punishment for misbehaviour, despite the fact that corporal punishment has been banned in schools in terms of the South African Schools Act since 1996.

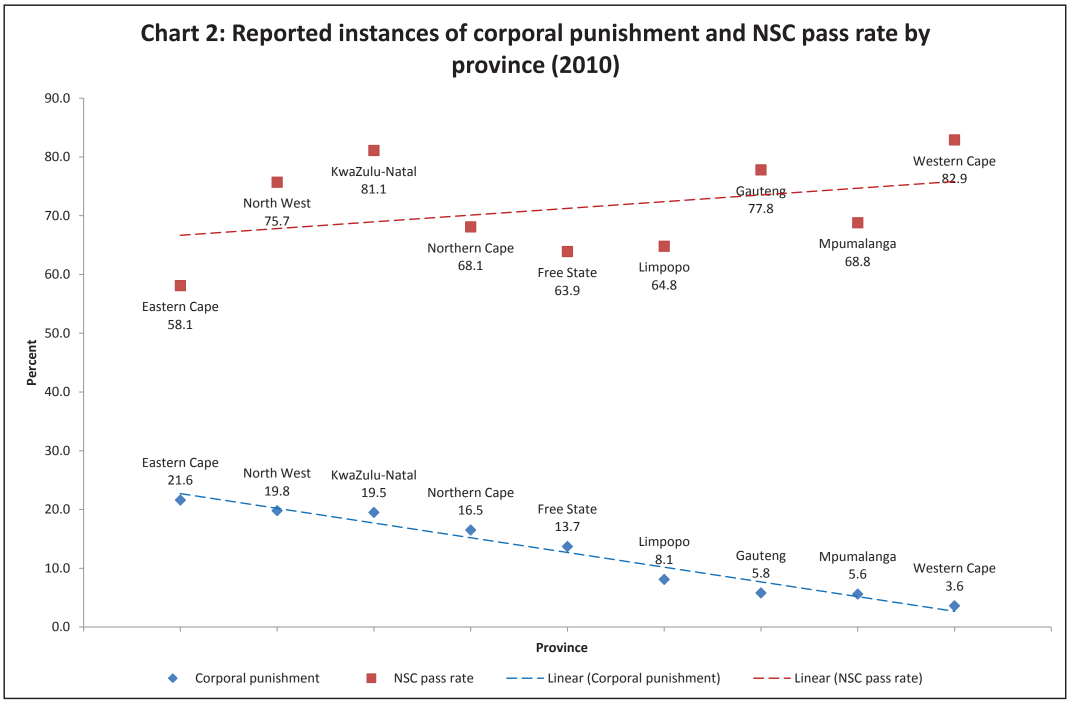
Chart 1 sorts the provinces from left to right by the percentage of learners who have experienced corporal punishment by a teacher at school in 2010 (shown in blue). The maroon bars represent the percentage of learners who experienced violence at school in 2010. The extent of both the use of corporal punishment and the level of violence should be a huge concern to everyone involved in education as it shows that




in three provinces (Eastern Cape, North West and KwaZulu-Natal) one in every five children attending schools experienced corporal punishment by a teacher. Nationally the figure is 12.9% (not shown), which translates to approximately one in every 10 children.

It should be no surprise that Chart 1 suggests a clear relationship between a child's experience of violence at school and of corporal punishment by a teacher. Representing the data in this way does not of course provide a proper picture of the nature and extent of the problem and it would be wrong to interpret it in a way that suggests the problem is typical of all schools in a province. It is more likely that there will be some schools where violence is prevalent and corporal punishment is an institutionalised common practice, and other schools where violence is almost unheard of and where corporal punishment is entirely absent.

We decided, perhaps a little mischievously, to see if we could determine if there was a link between the reported levels of corporal punishment in the schools of each province and the province's 2010 NSC results. The scatter graph with trend lines shown in Chart 2 suggests that there may well be. To produce the graph we sorted the provinces from left to right according to the percentage of learners who experienced corporal punishment and then added their 2010 NSC results to see if a pattern would emerge. You will notice from the graph that the two trendlines for the two sets of data diverge as they move from left to right. This divergence suggests a negative relationship between corporal punishment and NSC results, or in simple terms the chart shows that the less you beat the better your result, so spare the rod! ■



# What future for over-age learners in our schools?

**The recently published General Household Survey (GHS) 2010 provides some insightful perspectives of our schooling system reflecting as it does the views of families and their personal experiences of the schools and schooling.**

Our public school system has its fair share of problems but there are also areas in which it has achieved some remarkable successes given its fractured past.

One of its greatest successes has been in the achievement of almost universal enrolment of all school-age children. Data from the 2010 General Household Survey (GHS) shows that 98,7% of all 7–15-year-olds attend an educational institution and although this figure includes children who may attend institutions other than schools, the vast majority will be enrolled in local public schools. Another positive feature of our public education system is the small difference in enrolment rates in terms of gender and race for this sector of the population. The survey shows that for this age group there are slightly more boys out of school than girls (1,4% vs. 1,3%) and the racial breakdown of those not in school is: Indian/Asian 0,2%; White 0,4%, African/Black 1,4% and Coloured 1,5%. The figures for the 16–18-year age group are also good, with 82,9% of this group attending educational institutions of some kind. While the majority of 16–18-year-olds attend schools, significant numbers are likely to be enrolled in FET colleges and other similar training institutions.

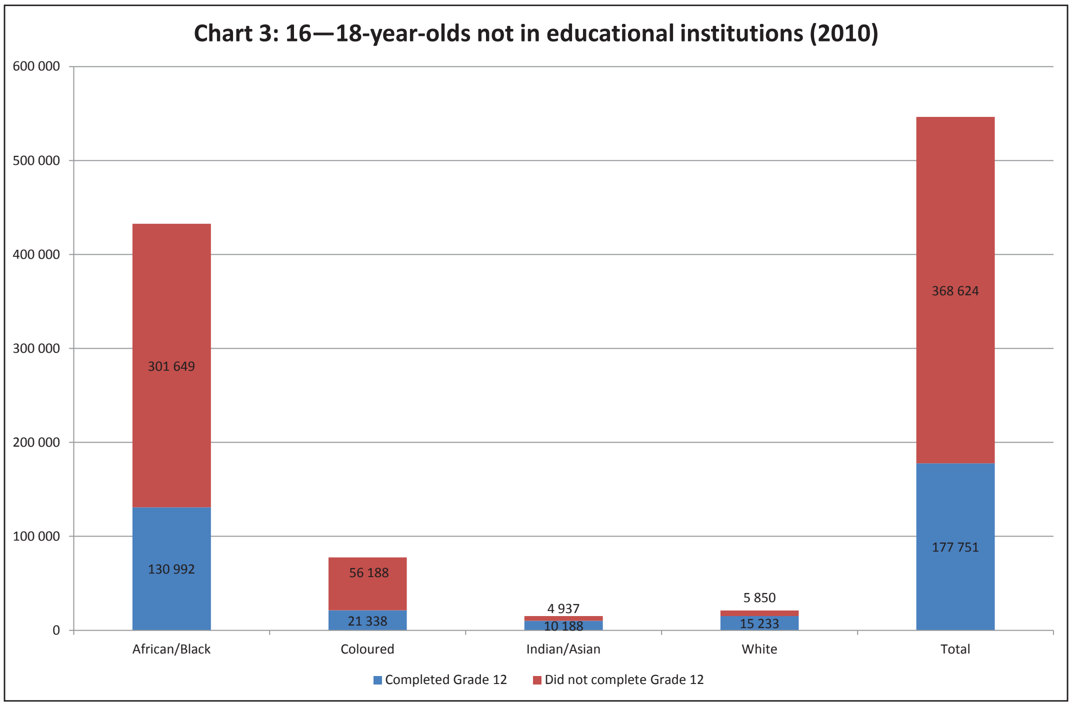
*One of our public school system's greatest successes has been in the achievement of almost universal enrolment of all school-age children. Data from the 2010 General Household Survey (GHS) shows that 98,7% of all 7–15-year-olds attend an educational institution.*

While the high proportion of children of school-going age enrolled in educational institutions is a positive feature of education system, the relatively high number of 16–18-year-olds not attending educational institutions, the 17% – more than half a million young people – not engaged in any form of formal education or training should be of concern to government. The GHS provides some useful data on the distribution and profile of the 16–18-year-old group.

Chart 3 is based on data provided in the GHS and shows the racial profile of this group and a breakdown on the basis of their completion or non-completion of Grade 12. What this data doesn't show, however, is how the school-going portion of this group is performing and progressing at school and it is our experience with aspects of schooling in two black townships in Cape Town that led to our investigation of this matter.

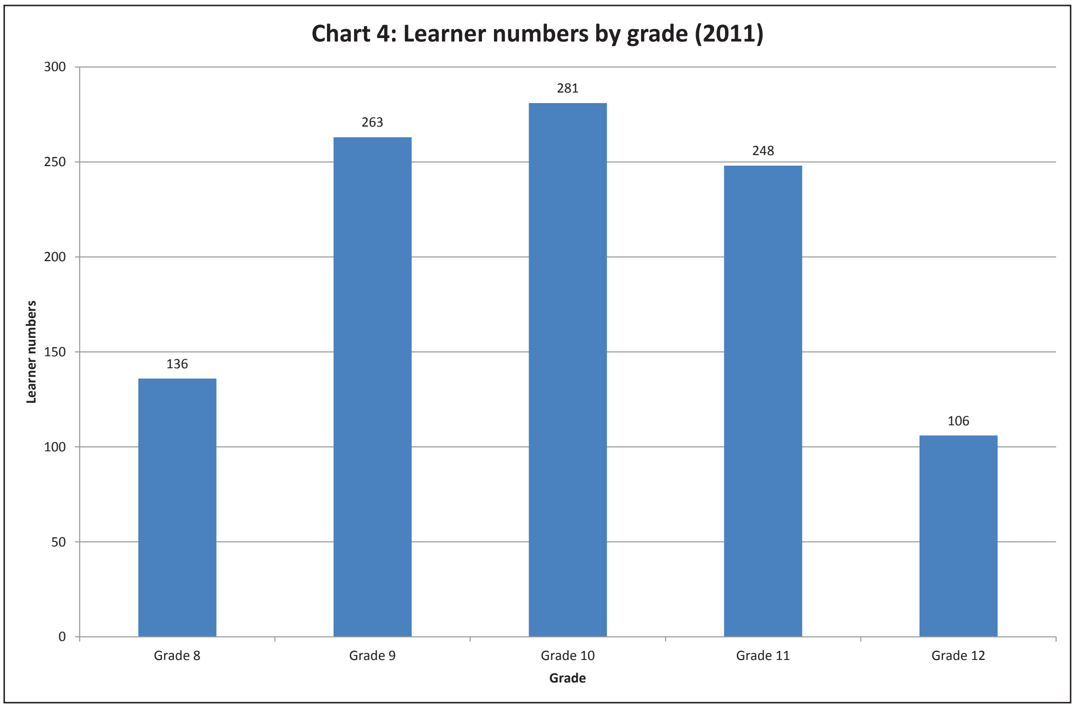
*The relatively high number of 16–18-year-olds not attending educational institutions, the 17% – more than half a million young people – not engaged in any form of formal education or training should be of concern to government.*

Chart 4 shows the typical learner enrolment profile of the high schools in Khayelitsha. The shape of the chart clearly illustrates the bloated learner numbers in Grades 9, 10 and 11. This numbers bulge is a product of two kinds of pressure – political pressure from above for high NSC pass rates in Grade 12, and policy pressure from below insisting that learners proceed from grade




to grade with their age cohort. The result is that the majority of learners move through the school system from Grade 1 to Grade 9 with their age cohort even if they are weak. Where schools try and keep individuals who are underperforming back they are thwarted by district officials who simply insist that failure rates of more than 10% are unacceptable.

This all changes when these same learners need to proceed from Grade 9 to Grade 10 and the final NSC examinations approach. Suddenly the policy of promoting learners with their age cohort goes out the window and decisions are made on the basis of the likelihood of a given learner passing at the end of Grade 12. The evidence for this is clear in the following charts that are based on data extracted from the 2010 GHS and the DBE's 2009–2010 School Survey.





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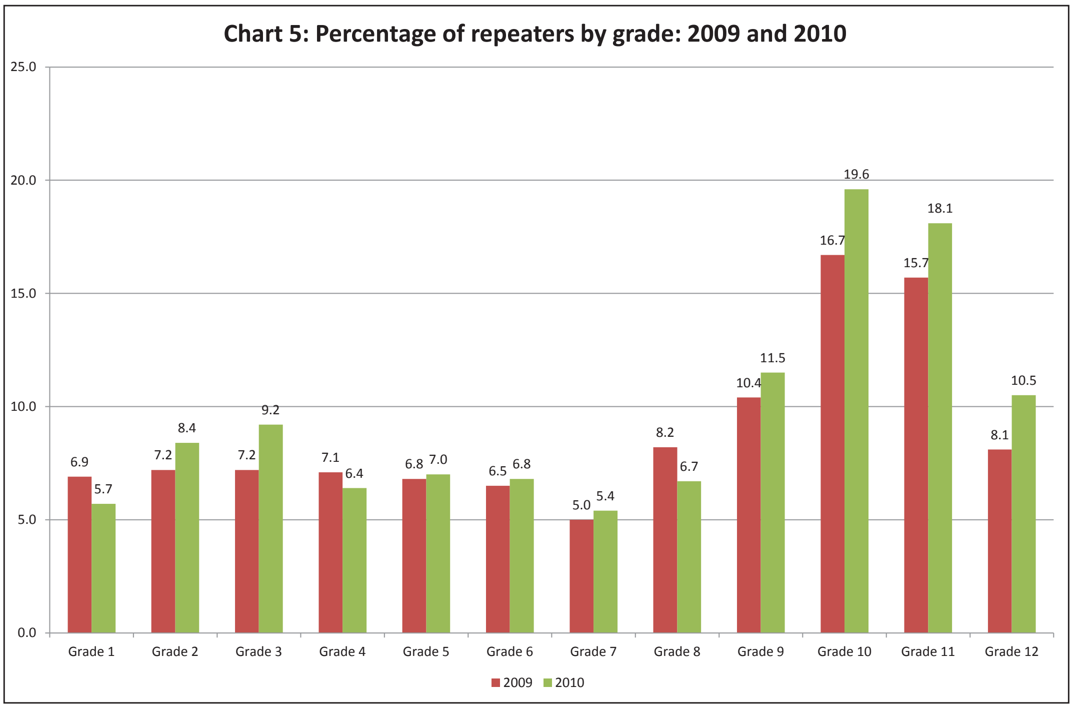
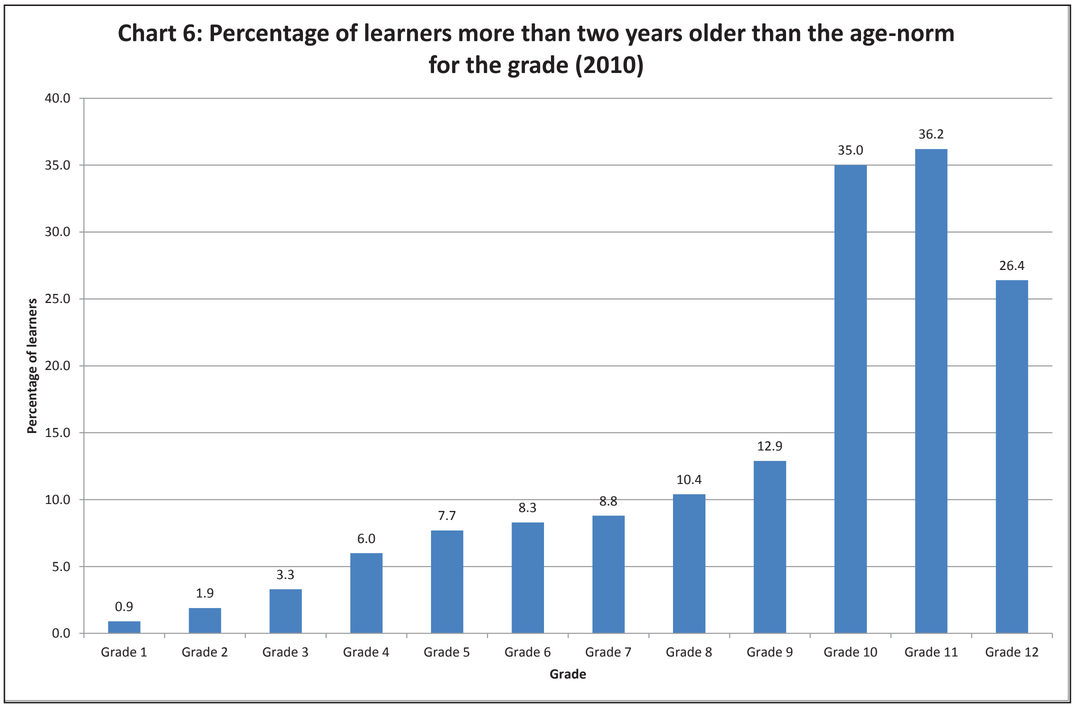
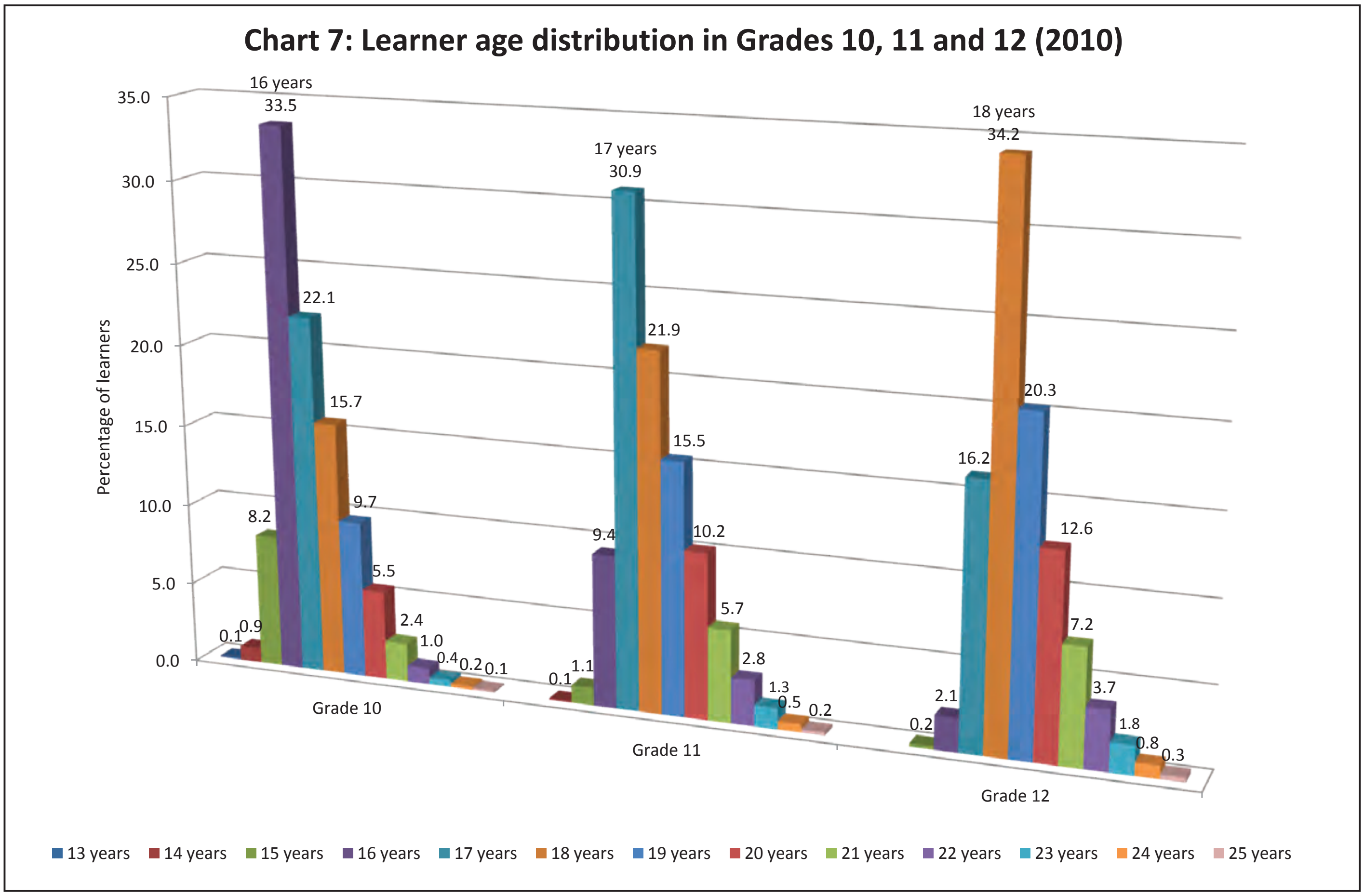



Chart 5 shows the percentage of repeaters by grade for 2009 and 2010 and illustrates quite clearly the jump in the percentage of repeaters in Grade 10 and 11 relative to the other grades. It also shows that the percentage of repeaters in both of these grades is greater in 2010 than 2009, suggesting that school principals are being more rigorous and effective in the efforts at vetting potential NSC failures and preventing them from reaching Grade 12.

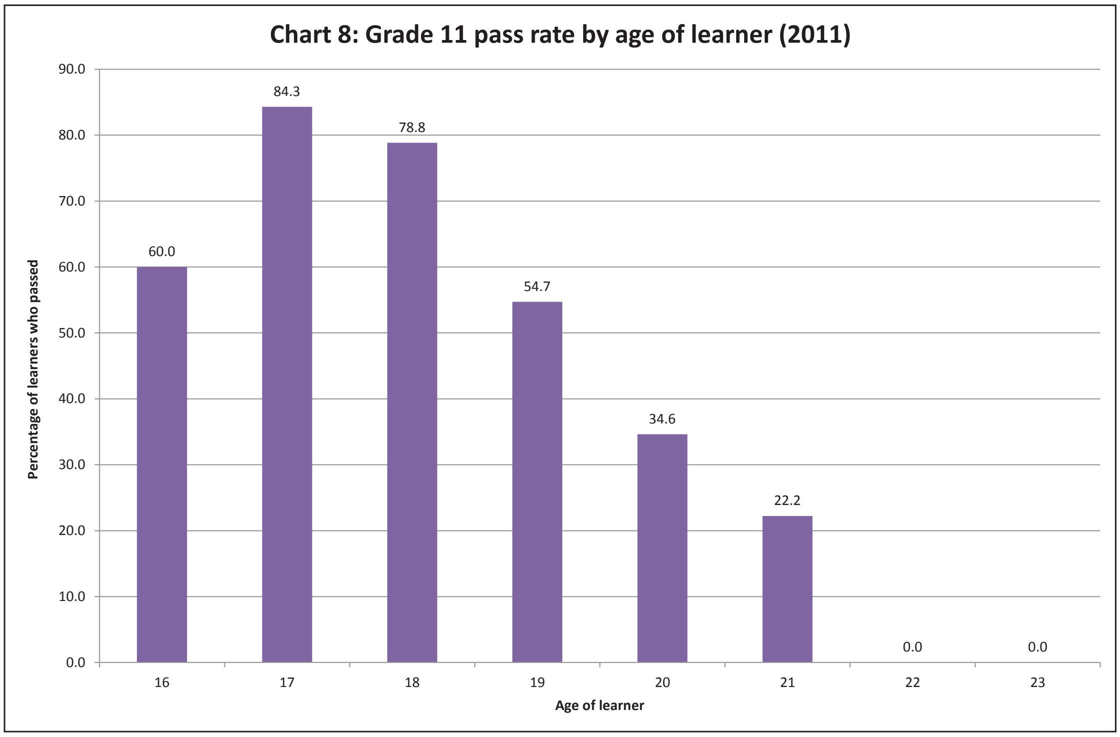
Chart 6 shows the percentage of learners in each grade who are more than two years over the age norm for the grade. The age-norm for a grade is the age that a learner would be if he or she started Grade 1 at age seven and proceeded from grade to grade through the system without repeating a grade. It can be simply calculated by adding six to the grade. So, for example, the age-norm for a learner in Grade 8 would be 8 + 6 = 14 and for a learner in Grade 10 the age-norm is






10 + 6 = 16. What the chart shows is a clear and dramatic increase in the percentage of learners who are more than two years above the grade age-norm in Grades 10 and 11.

Chart 7 shows the national age profile of learners in each of Grades 10, 11 and 12. For each grade the tallest bar in the age profile represents the percentage of learners of the age-norm for that grade, which in



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each case represents approximately a third of the grade. The chart also illustrates quite clearly that the majority of learners in each of these grades are older than the age-norm for the grade.

In an effort to understand the implications for schools of the presence of large numbers of over age learners in Grade 10 to 12 we did an analysis of the Grade 11 year-end results of one of the schools in Khayelitsha that we are working with in an effort to help them improve learner performance.

*The majority of learners in each of Grades 10, 11 and 12 are older than the age-norm for this grade.*

Chart 8 illustrates what we discovered about the relationship between learner performance and age for this school. The age-range of the 271 learners in the grade stretches from 16 years (five learners) to 23 years (one learner) and although the overwhelming majority are either 17 or 18 years old, there remains a significant number who are older than this. Importantly, the chart provides clear evidence that the failure rate of learners increases with age. This is not unexpected as it is likely that these older learners have all repeated at least once in their school career and there is good evidence from research that learners who repeat a grade seldom perform well in later grades. The question for this school and for the many other schools that face a similar situation is 'what's to be done to remedy the situation?' The two most obvious options are:

1. Introduce some form of intensive remedial teaching for these learners in the hope that this will help them to achieve a basic NSC pass.
2. Persuade them to leave.

Both options are difficult, given the resources and circumstances of the schools and the communities that they serve. From informal discussions with the principals of these schools it would seem that the parents of these over-age learners hold the view that a NSC has value, no matter what the standard and that their children should stay at school until they have passed. The fact that schooling is free also means that the cost implications are relatively small compared to the cost of furthering their child's education outside of the schooling system. It would also seem that despite the fact that Life Orientation is a compulsory subject for all learners in every grade, individual learners receive very little guidance on the kinds of alternative options that are available to learners who struggle academically.

The scenario that we have described above is a good example of the disjuncture of the different elements of our education system in this country. On the one hand we are told that there is an enormous shortage of skilled workers and that this is limiting our competitiveness and holding back our economic development; while on the other hand we are failing to provide pathways and support for young people that will allow them to move from the generalist curriculum that schools offer to specialist work-related skills-based training that our economy so desperately needs.

So how could it work in practice and what do schools need to do to help these learners and persuade their parents that there are other educational pathways that may be better for them? We have set ourselves the task of finding answers to these questions because we believe they represent fundamental challenges to many schools and we hope to bring you what we learn from our exploration of this topic in coming editions of SM&L. The next article tells the story of our first step in this journey. ■

Opinion

# What options for over-age learners?

**Many high schools are faced with the conundrum of over-age learners who become stuck in Grades 9, 10 and 11 mostly because they have never mastered the basic knowledge and skills they need to pass matric. Stuck, bored and frustrated, they behave in ways that disrupt the teaching and undermine the learning of their younger peers and their will to excel.**

In our previous article of this edition we used data from the 2010 General Household Survey (GHS) to highlight the conundrum that many schools face with over-age learners. The data illustrated quite clearly how the presence of these over-age learners resulted in inflated learner numbers in Grades 9, 10 and 11 and how their poor performance had a negative effect on the overall pass rates of these schools. The question we posed was 'What's to be done?'

In an effort to answer this question we googled 'Scarce skills South Africa', which led us eventually to the most recent set of official data on 'Scarce Skills Occupations' that included a list of 75 occupations ranked in order of scarcity. Scarcity in this context refers to the number of vacancies for these occupations recorded in surveys undertaken by the Department of Labour. The occupations are organised into the following eight broad categories:

- clerical and administrative workers
- community and personal service workers
- elementary workers
- machinery operators and drivers
- managers
- professionals
- sales workers
- technicians and trade workers.

The first 30 of these occupations in rank order are listed on the following page together with the number of vacancies for these occupations included in the original list.

The best option for over-age learners who have passed Grade 9 and who are looking to improve their employment prospects is to enrol for a National Certificate Vocational (NCV) at one of the Further Education and Training Colleges. The NCV is an equivalent qualification to the National Senior Certificate (NSC) but is specially tailored to meet the needs of specific industry-focussed vocational careers. The NCV qualifications provide training at both a theoretical level and a practical level, with the practical component of the training usually offered in either a real workplace environment or a simulated workplace environment. The NCV is also not a dead-end course and learners who perform well can progress to further studies at universities and universities of technology provided they have appropriate subject combinations and meet the admission requirements for these institutions. Examples of some of these courses, all of which are offered by one college (The College of Cape Town), include:

*The best option for over-age learners who have passed Grade 9 and who are looking to improve their employment prospects is to enrol for a National Certificate Vocational (NCV) at one of the Further Education and Training Colleges.*

- Civil Engineering & Building Construction
- Drawing Office Practice
- Education and Development
- Electrical Infrastructure Construction
- Engineering and Related Design
- Finance, Economics and Accounting
- Hospitality
- Information Technology and Computer Science
- Management
- Marketing
- Office Administration
- Travel and Tourism.

The entire FET Sector, including the 22 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and the 50 FET colleges, are under review because of the failure of this sector to produce a workforce with the necessary skills and in sufficient numbers to meet the needs of our growing economy. Commitment Eight 'To improve the role and performance of FET colleges' of the National Skills Accord, which was agreed to and signed in July 2011 by government and its social partners including business and organised labour, included the following statement: 'It is agreed that the FET colleges will be the preferred training



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providers for skills training programmes and that the skills development levy will be steered towards the programmes that are provided through the FET colleges.'

Given the above, it would seem sensible for schools to encourage over-age learners to make the move to FET colleges, not only because the colleges are likely to provide these learners with better and more immediate career options but also because it makes economic sense in terms of the needs of the country.

The FET colleges and the government, however, need to come to the party by ensuring that economic factors do not become obstacles to this move. In practical terms this means providing financial support for learners who enrol in colleges in the form of allowances for transport, textbooks, stationery and, in some cases, for accommodation and meals. If this kind of support is not provided it is likely that the parents of these learners will rather insist that they remain at school, despite their repeated failures, because they cannot afford to do otherwise. ■

**Scarce Skills 2008 (ranked by occupation)**

| Occupation | Number | Rank |
|---|---|---|
| Call or contact centre workers | 20 185 | 1 |
| Welfare support workers | 19 545 | 2 |
| Special education teachers | 13 885 | 3 |
| Industrial, mechanical and production engineers | 12 665 | 4 |
| Earthmoving plant operators | 10 355 | 5 |
| Enrolled and mother craft nurses | 10 110 | 6 |
| Pharmacists (incl. pharmacist assistants) | 10 030 | 7 |
| Medical technicians (incl. laboratory technicians) | 10 000 | 8 |
| Optical laboratory assistants | 10 000 | 9 |
| Further Education and Training teachers | 9 365 | 10 |
| Training and development professionals | 9 260 | 11 |
| Purchasing and logistic clerks | 9 235 | 12 |
| Truck drivers | 9 125 | 13 |
| Metal fitters and machinists (inc. mechanics) | 8 340 | 14 |
| Bricklayers and stonemasons | 7 225 | 15 |
| Intermediate and Senior Phase school teachers | 7 155 | 16 |
| Other specialist managers | 6 955 | 17 |
| Engineering production systems workers | 6 860 | 18 |
| Security officers | 6 835 | 19 |
| Concreters (incl. shutterhands) | 6 685 | 20 |
| Models and sales demonstrators | 6 300 | 21 |
| Early childhood (pre-primary school) teachers | 6 260 | 22 |
| Agriculture and forestry scientists | 6 175 | 23 |
| Chemistry, food and beverage technicians | 6 145 | 24 |
| Retail buyers | 5 980 | 25 |
| General clerks | 5 625 | 26 |
| Electricians (incl. armature winders) | 5 315 | 27 |
| Electrical engineering draftspersons | 5 145 | 28 |
| Medical and laboratory scientists | 5 000 | 29 |
| Medical imaging professionals | 5 000 | 30 |

# Deputy-principals – partners, puppets or unsung heroes?

**General editor Alan Clark shares some thoughts on the role of deputy-principals.**

I was recently driven to undertake some research into the roles and responsibilities of deputy-principals[1] after being invited to speak at the Catholic Schools Deputy-principals' conference. One of the problems with this kind of invitation is that you are often required to provide the topic of your presentation long before you have to deliver it. A mistake inevitably made in these kinds of circumstances is in the way presenters go about choosing the title for the topic and the blurb that goes with it, before having carefully worked through the specifics of what they plan to say. The focus at this stage is more about articulating an idea in a way which you hope will suggest to those who attend the conference that they will find your presentation helpful, stimulating and entertaining, rather than dreary and dull. Having worded your topic in a way which you hope will create an expectation of something that will be helpful, stimulating and entertaining, you are left, as the conference begins to loom large, with the ominous problem of having to create a presentation that does justice to your 'sparkling' topic. It is usually at this point, as you look in dismay at the title of your topic, that you give yourself a mental flogging for your attempts to be clever and for being stupid enough to have accepted the offer to speak in the first place.

Fortunately these days Google can usually provide a diverse range of material on almost any topic – but not always. My first search for material on deputy-principals threw up a recent paper[2] published by researchers from the National College of School Leadership in England, which was introduced with a quotation from a book by G Southworth[3] that read: 'Remarkably little is known or published about deputy heads'. Fortunately for me, this turned out to be not entirely true, except if seen in relative terms against the very substantial body of published literature on the roles and responsibilities of principals. Fortunately the NCSL literature review included a list of references that extended to four pages and I was able to track down a number of these with the assistance of Edulis, the Western Cape Education Departments Library Service, and EBSCO database, which provides electronic access to the full text of thousands of e-journals through their website http://search.ebscohost.com. The titles of the articles that my search produced provides an interesting perspective on the work that deputy-principals do in schools, how the nature of their work has changed over time and how it is influenced by context. Some examples of the article titles are listed on page 16.

*It is interesting to note that at both primary and high school level the principals have expressed greater levels of satisfaction with the relationship than the deputy-principals.*

Perhaps the most interesting and informative of the articles that I came across in my research for the presentation was one by Ping-Man Wong from the Department of Education Policy & Administration at the Hong Kong Institute of Education[4], which looked specifically at the relationship between principals and deputy-principals. Wong's study was based on data collected from a questionnaire completed by principals and deputy-principals after they had attended and open forum organised by a tertiary institution in Hong Kong. The questionnaire asked respondents to identify the types of relationships that existed between principals and deputy-principals in their schools.

Other questions included:

- the participants status as principal or deputy-principal
- their gender and years of experience as principal or deputy-principal
- the types of schools they served in
- how they described the nature of their principal and deputy-principal relationship
- factors affecting the relationship
- the extent of satisfaction about the working relationship.



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A total of 113 questionnaires were collected after the forum, 66 from primary schools (35 principals and 30 deputy-principals) and 48 from high schools (13 principals and 30 deputy-principals). Most of the respondents were male and had served in the positions that they occupied for approximately 10 years.

Wong analysed the data that he collected from the responses to the questionnaires using a complex three-dimensional matrix that he developed and which was based on his initial literature search of the topic. The three dimensions were Roles, Tasks and functions, and Status. Each of these dimensions was further subdivided into the subsets shown below.

- Roles (principal to deputy-principal): Leader to manager; Leader to leader; Manager to manager; Manager to leader.
- Tasks and functions: Technical; Structural; Human; Educational; Political; Cultural.
- Status: Chief assistant; Mentor-learner; Partners.

In an effort to simplify Wong's analysis and findings we have represented them using the following series of charts.

**Chart 1: Extent of satisfaction with working relationship**

As its title suggests, this chart illustrates the differences in the reported levels of satisfaction of principals and deputy-principals with their working relationship. It is interesting to note that at both primary and high school level the principals have expressed greater levels of satisfaction with the relationship than the deputy-principals.

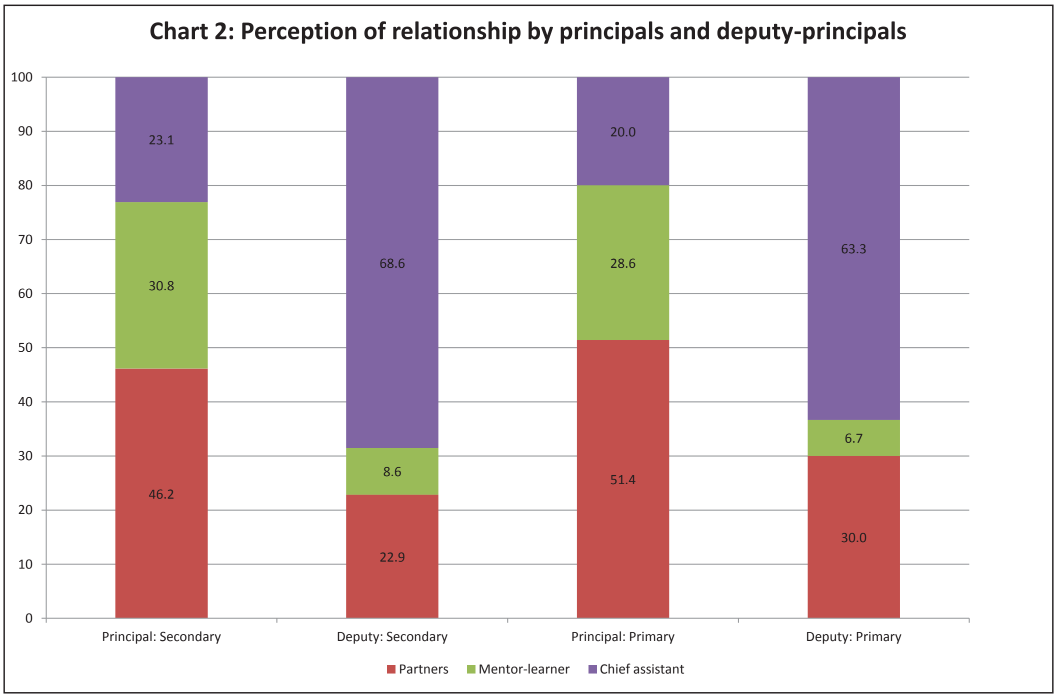

**Chart 2: Perceptions of the relationship by principals and deputy-principals**

This chart provides a breakdown of the perception of the kind of relationship that existed between principal and deputy-principal for each of the four groups (Principal: Secondary, Deputy-principal: Secondary, Principal: Primary and Deputy-principal: Primary). Wong identifies three kinds of principal–deputy-principal relationship:

- Partners: which suggests there is shared responsibility for all aspects of the leadership and management of the school.
- Mentor-learner: which suggests a relationship in which the principal guides the professional growth of the deputy-principal. A mentor-learner relationship includes an assumption that the deputy-principal aspires to become a principal.
- Chief assistant: which suggests a clear hierarchical arrangement in which the deputy-principal is expected to do the principal's bidding.

This chart once again shows a clear difference between the way in which principals and deputy-principals perceive the nature of the relationship with the majority of principals viewing the relationship as one of partnership and the majority of deputy-principals viewing their relationship as being hierarchical.

One of the factors that may influence which of these three relationship types becomes the working norm for




a principal and deputy is the view that the deputy may hold of his or her future career path. Wong refers to the work of Daresh[5] in this regard, who notes that not all deputy-principals aspire to be principals. Daresh goes on to identify six categories of career orientation for deputy-principals:

- Upwardly mobile (those who aspire to be principals)
- Career (those who prefer to remain as deputy-principals and to grow professionally in their role as deputy-principals)
- Plateaued (those who are stuck in their role as deputy-principals and prefer to stick to doing what they know)
- Shafted (those who for some reason have been sidelined and occupy the position in name only)
- Leaving (those who are intent on exiting the system either by choice or ill health or because they have reached the age of retirement)
- Downwardly mobile (those who would prefer to work lower down the school hierarchy perhaps as heads of department or subject heads and are intent on making a career move in this direction)

On the basis of Daresh's classification of deputy-principals' career orientations one would expect the 'Upwardly mobile' deputies to prefer a Mentor-learner-type relationship, while 'Career'-oriented deputies might prefer a Partnership-type relationship. The remaining four groups would most likely prefer Chief assistant or less.

Wong's questionnaire also collected data on factors with the potential to influence the principal–deputy-principal relationship and which the respondents were asked to identify and rate. The following nine factors where listed:

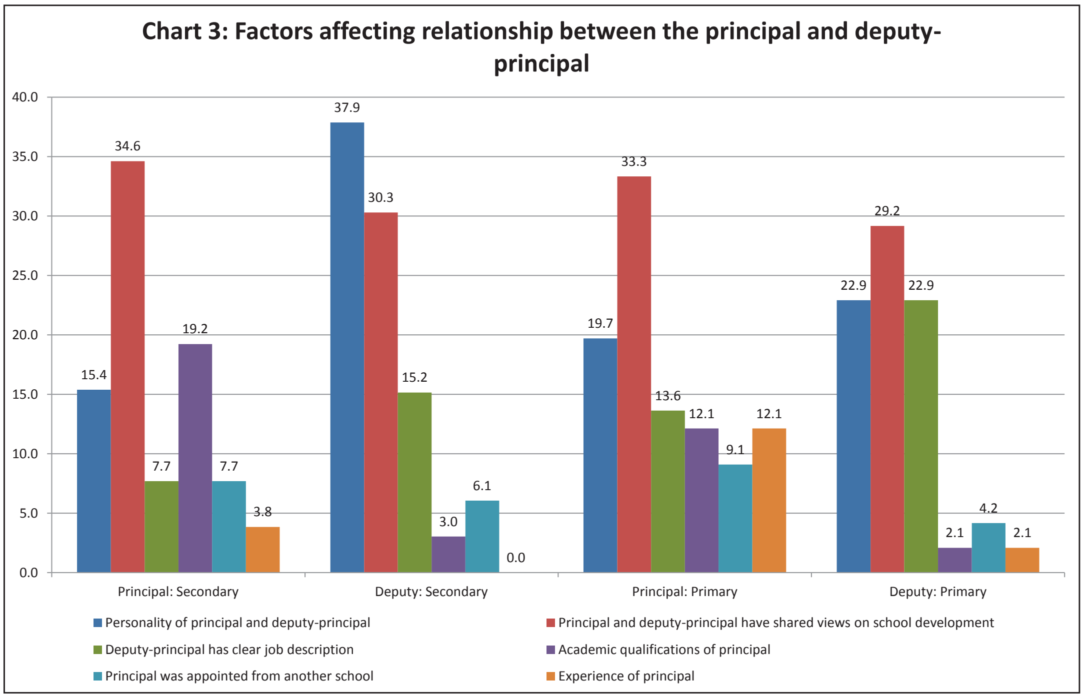
- Experience of principal
- Experience of deputy-principal
- Principal was appointed from another school
- Length of service of deputy-principal in school
- Principal heavily involved in community service
- Academic qualifications of principal
- Personality of principal and deputy-principal
- Principal and deputy-principal have shared views on school development
- Deputy-principal has clear job description.

**Chart 3: Factors affecting relationship between the principal and deputy-principal**

Chart 3 illustrates how the principals and deputy-principals rated the influence of the six factors that were perceived to have the greatest influence on their relationship. Although this chart shows once again that principals and deputy-principals have diverse views on the factors that influence their relationship, there are three factors that all four groups consider to be important contributors to an effective working relationship. These are:

- The personalities of the principal and deputy-principal
- Shared views on the development of the school
- A job-description for the deputy-principal that clearly defines his/her role, areas of responsibility and levels of authority.

Mike Hughes and Chris James[6], working with primary schools in South Wales (UK), made a number of similar




findings to those of Wong. Their work involved semi-structured individual interviews with 10 principals and their deputies from schools selected by the research team based on their experience of the schools as having successful principal–deputy-principal partnerships. Hughes and James conclude that successful principal–deputy-principal relationships depend on the following:

- A shared understanding of their mutual authority, position, areas of operation and responsibilities. Interestingly, none of the deputies involved in the study had a written job description!
- Trust and respect, which included a willingness to confide in one another while trusting that each would maintain confidentiality.
- An understanding of the need to present an image of orderly co-existence, co-operation and collaboration if they are to cultivate and promote trust and respect throughout the school.
- Shared values and beliefs. They found that relationships are better where the principal and deputy-principal shared the same social, moral and educational values and beliefs.
- A mutual willingness to talk as this was seen as the most useful tool for resolving conflict. It is better to discuss problems and differences of opinion than to avoid, ignore or deny them.
- The need for principals to consult their deputies before making decisions.
- Loyalty and support. The need for mutual loyalty and support is particularly important when decisions are unpopular.

Hughes and James also identified ways in which differences in personality-type and leadership-style can contribute to the effectiveness of the operational effectiveness of the principal and deputy-principal as a leadership team. They suggest that this leadership team is more effective where:

- The role and responsibilities of the deputy-head are clearly defined and are based on the personal attributes, interests and expertise of the deputy.
- Differences in leadership and management style of the principal and deputy-principal are acknowledged and valued.
- Differences in career pattern and experience (e.g. service at same school vs. service at many schools) are valued because they are complementary, adding breadth and depth to their common understanding of their shared roles and responsibilities.
- Differences in personality and interpersonal strategies and skills are recognised and valued.

The real value of the kind of appreciation of differences that Hughes and James have suggested arises when the principal and deputy-principal understand one another sufficiently well to allow contexts to determine their respective roles and actions. So the strong disciplinarian acts when strong discipline is needed, the task-driven partner drives operationally critical tasks such as mark schedules and timetable, while the people-driven partner looks after the people side of the school, dealing with angry parents and dissatisfied teachers. Hughes and James go on to suggest that the principal–deputy-principal partnership is a little like that of the parents in a family and that 'While the mother and father of the family "get on" (the united front) they can contain organisational anxiety: when they do not, anxiety levels will increase'. It is a good metaphor for understanding the importance of a relationship that is critical to the overall health of a school and ultimately to its success as an institution. ■

**A sample of some of the topics addressed in the literature on the roles and responsibilities of deputy-principals**

- Effective assistant principals: what do they do?
- School-based leadership and professional socialisation of the assistant principal
- Dilemmas of assistant principals in their supervisory role: reflections of an assistant principal
- The influential assistant principal: building influence and a stronger relationship with your principal
- Empowering the primary school deputy-principal
- Measuring the perception of the primary deputy-principal's responsibilities
- The relationship between the head and the deputy-head in primary schools
- The career perspectives of deputy-head teachers
- Developing more effective primary deputy (or associate) heads
- Assistant principals: the case for shared instructional leadership
- The assistant principal: crisis manager, custodian or visionary?
- Examining administrative leadership behaviour: a comparison of principals and assistant principals
- The assistant principalship – an overview of the frustrations, rewards
- Contextualising the role of the assistant principal
- Through the looking glass: an upfront and personal look at the world of the assistant principal
- Socialisation and career orientation of the assistant principal
- Heads on deputy-headship: impossible roles for invisible role holders?
- Two heads are better than one
- What do we know about the job and career satisfaction of secondary school assistant principals?
- The assistant principal: essentials for effective school leadership
- Restructuring the assistant principal's role

**References and notes**


1 For the sake of consistency, we have used the term deputy-principal to describe the person who ranks second in a school's hierarchy. Alternative terms for the same position include vice-principal and assistant principal.

2 Harris, A, Muijs, D and Crawford, M (2003) 'Deputy and Assistant Heads: Building leadership potential, A review of literature' carried out for NSCL by The Leadership Policy and Development Unit, University of Warwick. NSCL

3 Southworth, G (2003) *Leading Improving Primary Schools: The Work of Headteachers and Deputy Heads*. London: Falmer Press

4 Wong, P (2009) A conceptual framework for understanding the working relationship between school principals and vice-principals in *School Leadership and Management*, 29:2)

5 Daresh, JC (2002) *What it means to be a principal: Your guide to leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Corwin Press

6 Hughes, M and James, C (1999) The relationship between the Head and the Deputy Head in primary schools in *School Leadership and Management* 19:1

# Lessons in innovation from the world's best companies

**Recent research by the Hay Group suggests that there are lessons to be learned about the importance of innovation from the world's best companies.**

The Hay Group is a global management consultancy that works with leaders to transform strategy into reality. Their focus is on developing talent and in helping people and organisations to be more effective and to realise their full potential. The company's more than 2 600 employees work in 85 offices spread across 47 countries, including South Africa.

Each year the Hay Group works with *Fortune* magazine to identify the world's 100 most admired companies. A rigorous process is used to identify and select the top 100 companies and is based on the following nine 'attributes of reputation':

- quality of management
- quality of products/services offered
- innovativeness
- value as a long-term investment
- soundness of financial position
- ability to attract, develop and keep talented people
- responsibility to the community and/or the environment
- wise use of corporate assets
- effectiveness in conducting its business globally.

The companies are identified by means of a survey of top executives and directors from these companies and of industry analysts. The list for 2012, published in the March edition of *Fortune* magazine, was based on a survey undertaken in 2011. The list of the top 20 companies for Leadership is provided in the adjacent box.

A team from the Hay Group examined the research data to assess the extent to which these top companies fostered innovation, as innovative thinking is considered to be an essential survival tool for business success in an ever-changing and unpredictable world. They identified four practices that promoted and supported innovation within these top companies:

**Global top 20 Best Companies for Leadership**

1. General Electric
2. Procter & Gamble
3. IBM
4. Microsoft
5. Coca-Cola
6. McDonald's Corporation
7. Accenture
8. Wal-Mart Stores
9. Johnson & Johnson
10. Unilever
11. Toyota
12. Nestlé
13. 3M
14. Southwest Airlines
15. Exxon Mobil Corporation
16. PepsiCo
17. Siemens
18. Shell
19. Dow Chemical Company
20. FedEx

- **Flat, streamlined management structures**
  Traditional multilayered, hierarchical management systems strangle innovation because they tend to be conservative and cautious and as a result respond too slowly to new ideas and new markets. Because the pace of change is so quick there is a need for quick decisions when opportunities arise because getting in at the start allows you to be the leader of the pack. The top companies increase their ability to respond quickly to changing conditions by reducing and streamlining management structures. Authority and decision-making powers are devolved to lower levels of the organisation enabling individual employees and teams to respond quickly to changes in the

business environment and to opportunities that may derive from them. The performance of leaders in the top companies included evaluation of the ability to be ‘agile’ in their response to changing circumstances.

*The ability of leaders to work collaboratively with their peers and to build collaborative business relationships is considered to be an essential part of the work of leaders in the top companies.*

- **A working environment that encourages an innovative mind-set**
  The top companies understand that their long-term success depends on the ability to respond proactively to changing circumstances. Innovation and experimentation within the company is therefore encouraged and supported. This includes encouraging employees to discuss the future needs of its customers and supporting innovative projects even though these may be appear to be unprofitable.

*These companies value cultural and ethnic diversity in their workforce because differing perspectives provide an environment in which new ideas can flourish.*

- **A broad perspective**
  The top companies work to broaden the perspective of their workforce by making room for new ideas and encouraging alternative views. These companies value cultural and ethnic diversity in their workforce because differing perspectives provide an environment in which new ideas can flourish. Sustainability and the ideals of young, next-generation employees are incorporated into the organisation’s culture, which also looks to encourage employees to develop their skills and broaden their professional growth.

- **A focus on collaboration**
  The ability of leaders to work collaboratively with their peers and to build collaborative business relationships is considered to be an essential part of the work of leaders in the top companies. Leaders who develop good collaborative partnerships are rewarded for their efforts with team-based performance assessment included in the incentive plans of these companies.

The authors note at the end of their report that the responsiveness of these top companies is driven by leadership that values innovation and the greatest determinant of their success in this regard. ‘While responsive organisational structures are important contributors, effective, capable leadership is the single most important element in creating a culture of innovation. Leadership clarifies strategies and customer needs; elicits new insights from diverse, collaborative teams; and earns the focused effort and dedication that innovation requires. In short, leadership creates a climate in which innovation is the expected norm, not the miraculous exception. Such an environment is an elusive goal, but the Best Companies for Leadership provide examples that every business can follow to encourage and support innovation.’

This finding is similar to the finding from nearly all of the research into the factors that use learner performance as a measure of school success and which Leithwood *et al*. summarised thus: ‘Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school.’[1]

**References**

1 Leithwood, K, Louis, KS, Anderson, S & Wahlstrom, K (2004) *How Leadership Influences Student Learning,* Learning from Leadership Project*,* Wallace Foundation

# Appoint future stars

**Erich Cloete**

**Appointing school leaders and managers as well as educator staff is something that takes place on a continuous basis, and a school's success or failure depends largely on whether the right people are appointed.**

There are many views as to which criteria need to be taken into consideration to ensure that we get the right people on the bus, when making appointments of school leaders and managers. Some school governing bodies or interviewing panels create a post profile, identifying certain dimensions such as team building, managerial skills, leadership, development orientation, knowledge and discipline and then base their questions on these dimensions. Others make use of a combination of case studies, presentations, role-play and questions, some of which are recorded for analysis afterwards. Principals and school governing bodies would agree that whatever method is used to make a proper appointment, it is not as easy as it sounds and can be a hit-or-miss affair because you may end up appointing past stars, not future ones.

*Whatever method is used to make a proper appointment, it is not as easy as it sounds and can be a hit-or-miss affair because you may end up appointing past stars, not future ones.*

Peter Bregman[1] suggests an effective way to place a person in a position to succeed, is to ask the question: 'What do you do in your spare time?' To demonstrate his point he uses the example of Captain CB Sullenberger, who made an emergency landing on 15 January 2009 with his 50-ton passenger aircraft, softly gliding it onto the Hudson River in New York City, saving the lives of all 155 people on board. In Captain Sullenberger's case, the first clue that he would become a hero is that in his teens, when most of his friends were getting their driver's licences, he got his pilot license. He flew glider planes for fun. When he landed in the Hudson River with no engines, he was essentially applying the same skills. He was also an accident investigator and worked with federal aviation officials to improve training methods for evacuating aircrafts in emergencies. As a boy he built model aircraft carriers with tiny planes on them, careful to paint every last piece. Perhaps that attention to detail explains why he walked through the cabin twice, making sure no one was left behind before he made his escape from the sinking plane himself. With this knowledge of all of Captain Sullenberger's activities you might have considered his obsession with aeroplanes dysfunctional. But often people are successful, not despite their dysfunctions, but because of them and they are an indicator of natural motivation, or passion.

Still, it is true that a promising candidate can turn out to be a disaster, leaving frustrated colleagues and tattered relationships in his or her wake. This is why Adele Lynn, author of *Finding Employees with High Emotional Intelligence*[2], suggests that not more, but better interviews should take place. Her suggestion is that interview committees, in addition to their usual method, should expand the interview process and use it to measure the level of emotional intelligence of candidates. She argues that emotional intelligence (EQ for short) accounts for anywhere from 24% to 69% of performance success. From her research it is clear that some positions require more EQ than others, but a solid level of EQ gives a candidate an advantage. If we take her findings into consideration we could cite the example of an expert teacher who is ferociously hardworking but who, at the same time, alienates his or her peers. Or we may question what the benefit to a school would be of a person who has deep management expertise but can't recognise how his or her behaviour demoralises staff.

*An emotionally intelligent leader, school management team member or teacher, is able to regulate and control his or her behaviour.*

There are various aspects to EQ but homing in on the following three in the interview process will go a long way towards identifying candidates with high EQ and eliminating those likely to destroy more value than they create.

**Self-awareness and self-regulation**

Candidates who are self-aware know what drives them and how it affects their behaviour. Educators who are able to regulate their emotions won't let the fear, anxiety or anger they experiences spread to their colleagues or make them lose control. People are generally competent at labelling their emotions and moods and are able to say whether they are happy, sad, angry or anxious, but fewer can articulate strong emotional desires that shape much of their behaviour and identity, such as hunger for power or status, or a strong need for recognition or to be liked.

An emotionally intelligent leader, school management team member or teacher, is able to regulate and control his or her behaviour. When anxious or fearful, such people are self-aware enough to recognise that they tend to broadcast these emotions non-verbally, which allows them to put extra effort into projecting calm optimism. When angry they have the self-control not to rage at their colleagues or staff.

To assess the self-awareness and ability to self-regulate of a teacher or prospective school management team member, ask these questions:

- Tell us about a time when your mood affected your performance, either negatively or positively.
- Tell us about a conflict you had with a colleague or school management team member that you did not handle very well. How could you have handled it?
- A leader and manager has to maintain a productive, positive tone even when he or she is anxious about something. Have you been able to do this in previous situations or positions?

**Reading others and recognising the impact of behaviour on colleague**s

Because so much of a leader's work is accomplished with and through others, the ability to read other people, to pick up their emotions and discern their opinions, can spell the difference between success and failure. Leaders with high EQ are able to read others' cues and adjust their own words and behaviour accordingly.

To assess the skill of a teacher or prospective school management team member in this aspect of emotional intelligence, ask questions such as:

- Tell me about a time when you did or said something that had a negative impact on a colleague, parent or management team member.
- Have you ever been in a situation where you thought you needed to adjust your behaviour? How did you know and what did you do?

Look for a candidate who is able to point to specific examples of when he or she was able to read another's body language and behaviour on his or her own, realising that something was wrong and so was able to adapt his or her actions or words accordingly.

**The ability to learn from mistakes**

An ability to learn from your mistakes means that you can acknowledge your mistakes, reflect critically upon them and learn from them. Whereas one interviewee, when asked about conflicts he had experienced, may tick off several diverse reasons such as a scheduled delay, incompetent colleagues, unreasonable parents and/or unlucky circumstances; another may, in contrast, exhibit self-awareness and openness by answering that she could have documented expectations at the outset of the project and communicated more precisely and consistently with colleagues.

Look for positive patterns in a candidate's past experiences. Ask a question such as:
Have you ever been in a situation where you felt you were on the wrong course and needed to modify or change your behaviour? How did you know? Have you been able to take lessons from it?

A candidate's ability to learn and progress from any experience is important and could be an indicator of future performance.

Some of the high EQ appointments will move up the ladder and progress as we would expect. Others will need to wait until they develop additional skills. Others will be content to contribute right where they are regardless of how they progress. Schools who take EQ into consideration together with their other criteria have a much better chance of achieving better performance in the classroom and in their management teams. ■

**References**

1 Bregman, Peter (2009) *18 Minutes: Find Your Focus, Master Distraction, and Get Things Right* available at peterbregman.com/18-minutes

2 Lynn, Adele B. (2008) *The EQ Interview: Finding Employees with High Emotional Intelligence*. New York: AMACOM

3 Christina Bielaszka-DuVernay (2008) *Hiring for emotional intelligence*. Harvard Management Update

# UCT launches a new School Improvement Initiative in Khayelitsha

**We were recently invited to attend a new initiative by the University of Cape Town (UCT) aimed at addressing some of the inadequacies of schooling in the largely black township of Khayelitsha. The launch took place at the College of Science and Technology (COSAT), which in 2011 moved to new premises and became a fully fledged public school and which we featured in SM&L Volume 6 (1).**

*Dr Clark with some of the principals present at the launch*

Like most initiatives of this kind, the motives are not entirely altruistic and, in his address at the launch, UCT's Vice-Chancellor Max Price made it quite clear that the initiative was partly driven by the university's need to attract larger numbers of local black matriculants with solid foundations in Mathematics and the Sciences into its undergraduate programmes. The programme is being led by Dr Jonathan Clark, Director of the Schools Development Unit (SDU) at the university, who has extensive experience in township schooling, including a spell as principal of COSAT when it operated as a unit of False Bay College and Further Education and Training (FET) College. However, the School Improvement Initiative (SII) also has a broader set of goals and plans to develop extensive links with both primary and secondary schools in Khayelitsha, and to 'contribute positively to long-term change in the community which goes far beyond the schools and classroom'.

Dr Clark has taken pains to involve as many stakeholders as possible in the process in an effort to assure its legitimacy. The university will work closely with the Western Cape Education Department and officials from the Metropole East Education District, which is the district responsible for schooling in Khayelitsha, and has also gained the support of the Khayelitsha Community Forum for the initiative.

The proposed interventions fall into four broad categories:

- Teacher professional development, which will be driven by UCT's School of Education and its Schools Development Unit and will offer a range of university-certified professional development programmes. These include the two-year part-time ACE programmes together with a suite of short courses that are being developed to meet the teachers' professional development needs.


*Dr Jonathan Clark addresses the audience at the launch of SII, which took place at COSAT in Khayelitsha.*

- Linking teacher training to teacher recruitment with the objective of ensuring that there are opportunities for students from UCT's School of Education to do their teaching practice at schools in Khayelitsha. Graduating teachers will also be encouraged to apply for teaching posts at Khayelitsha schools.
- School-based projects that will focus on whole-school development and will also look to extend the SDU's pilot Ikwezi Early Childhood Development (ECD) project to community crèches and primary schools within the township.
- 100-UP, which is a programme directed at identifying and supporting academically gifted Grade 10 learners from each of the 20 high schools in Khayelitsha. From each school five Grade 10 learners indentified as having the best prospects of future academic success are invited to join the 100-UP programme. These learners are then provided with extensive support by the university over the following three years. The support programme includes mentoring, residential holiday camps at UCT's upper campus, a Saturday academic enrichment programme and participation in a range of UCT activities including the annual Mathematics competition, Science expos and Career open days. The programme was launched in 2011 and the participating students together with the 2012 intake were present at the launch of SII. It is worth noting that UCT's 2012 Mathematics competition drew nearly 400 participants from Khayeltisha largely as a result of the support and encouragement that the university provided for schools and learners who showed an interest in participating.

UCT is to be lauded for this initiative, for its decision to draw on its full range of resources and for adopting a model that takes a more holistic community-based approach to the challenges that schools face in communities like Khayelitsha.

We will follow the progress of the SII with interest, hoping that it will produce measureable and meaningful results and if successful become a model for similar interventions across the country. ■

# Our digital divide

**According to data released by the DBE, there are alarming differences in South African schools in terms of their access to and provision of technology and resources.**

The DBE's recently released 'Report on the 2009/2010 Annual Surveys for Ordinary Schools'[1] includes one set of data that provides a very clear illustration of the extent of the schooling divide in this country in terms of access to and the provision of resources. The picture that it paints of the nine provincial education departments is also probably a good proxy for political will and administrative ineptitude.

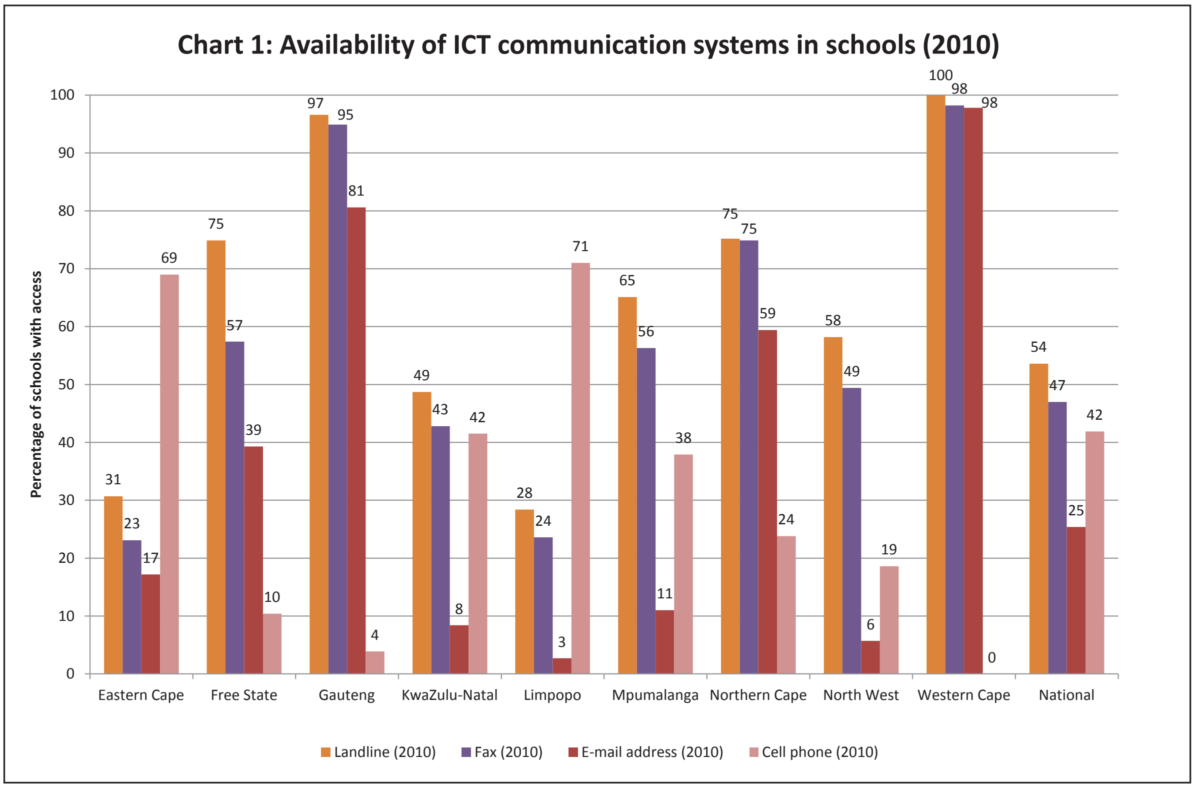
The data set that I am referring to is included in the report under the heading 'Information Communication Technology' and provides data on the primary method used to make contact with schools. The four options offered are:

- email: meaning the school was able to provide an email address as part of its contact details
- landline telephone: meaning the school was able to provide a landline telephone number
- facsimile: meaning the school was able to provide a fax number
- cellular phone: meaning that the principal of the school was able to provide a cell phone number that he or she uses for work purposes.

The data provides a bleak picture. Nationally for 2010 the figures are as follows:

- 25,4% of schools have an email address
- 53,6% of schools have a landline
- 47,0% of schools have a fax number
- 41,9% of schools are making use of a principal's cell phone.

The chart below shows the percentage of schools in each province with access to each of the four forms of communication. The figures for cell phone access represent those schools where the principal's cell phone is the primary means of communication between the district office and the school and should be interpreted as representing schools that do not have direct access to a landline and not that these schools do not have cell phone network coverage. All figures



have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

The fact that a school is able to provide this data is of course no guarantee that any of these forms of communication is operational or that the majority of schools deal with incoming communication in any kind of systemic way. As general editor of SM&L, I have first-hand experience of this from my work with this magazine. Although no data is provided on whether or not schools have a regularly serviced postal address my own experience of dealing with rural schools suggests that their postal address is a post box at the nearest major centre and that mail sent to the post box may be cleared only once a week and sometimes less frequently.

*There is absolutely no reason why those schools that have cell phone coverage should not also have a working fax number and email address with connectivity provided via the cell phone networks.*

The paradox of the parlous state of affairs was brought home to me a few days after I first read the report while I was sitting through a presentation to a school governing body in a recently opened township primary school. The presenters were promoting the use of the latest Apple iPads in primary classrooms in the hope that a donor who was present at the meeting would fund sufficient iPads for all of the children in one grade. iPads may have wonderful educational potential but without wireless connectivity (and a reliable supply of electricity) they are about as much use as the slates that were the technology of Victorian England.

*iPads may have wonderful educational potential but without wireless connectivity (and a reliable supply of electricity) they are about as much use as the slates that were the technology of Victorian England.*

What I find most frustrating whenever I reflect on this state of affairs is that there is absolutely no reason why those schools that have cell phone coverage should not also have a working fax number and email address with connectivity provided via the cell phone networks.

It is clear that quick and effective communication between schools and their district officials and provincial offices is essential for the proper management and monitoring of schools and of learner performance. The technology exists to make it happen in all but the most remote rural areas. It is appalling in this modern day and age that it is not happening. ■

**Reference**

1 Report on the 2009/2010 Annual Surveys of Ordinary Schools, Department of Basic Education, Pretoria, April 2012

# TEDxCapeTownED

**On Saturday 16 June this year we attended our first TEDx event and were delighted by what we discovered.**


*Malinga Nopote, second from left and one of the presenters at TEDxCapeTownED, enjoys lunch with a group of colleagues from Khayelitsha. Malinga shared how her focus on building trust had helped Sinenjongo High School in Joe Slovo Park to improve its NSC pass rate from 44% in 2009 to 98% in 2011.*

SM&L had never heard of TED prior to receiving an email about the event, which was forwarded to us by a colleague. TED is a non-profit organisation, based in the United States, devoted to 'ideas worth spreading'. The TED idea grew out of a conference held in 1984 – which may or may not be significant – which brought together people from the three worlds of Technology, Entertainment and Design, with the word TED derived from the first letter of each of these three words. Each year TED now hosts two annual conferences in California, one in Long Beach and one in Palm Springs, and a third TEDGlobal conference that takes place in Edinburgh, Scotland.

In an attempt to ensure that the great ideas presented by speakers at these conferences were accessible to a wider audience, these talks were released online as 'ideas worth spreading' and thanks to the positive response to these talks from a global audience the TED concept has become a global phenomenon. More than 900 of the best of these TEDTalks are now freely available as downloads from TED and its partners with more added each week. TED has made it possible for communities, organisations and individuals to use the TED model to stimulate dialogue about their own special areas of interest and these events are indentified as being independently organised by being labelled as TEDx events. There are currently 12 kinds of TEDx, including Corporate, City, University and Library-linked events and events devoted to issues relevant to Women, to Youth and to Education. At the time of writing, nearly 30 TEDx events had been hosted in South African cities, universities and civil society organisations, with the most recent being TEDxCapeTownED, which was the one that we attended in Cape Town and which had a focus on schooling.


*Tea break TEDxCapeTownED: Attendees enjoying the tea break and the opportunities that they provide for networking.*

Although TEDx events are organised independently of TED, TED is fairly prescriptive about how the events should be staged. There are several reasons for this including the need protect the TED brand and to ensure that events are properly staged and well supported. Because all TEDx events are recorded live on video it is also essential that the filming and recording process provides material that is of appropriate quality for global distribution via the TED website and the filming and editing of the TEDx presentation therefore requires that this aspect be undertaken by professionals.

One of the novel features of TEDx events is the format: each speaker is given a maximum of 18 minutes to present their idea but may use a variety of formats. The programme is also expected to include at least two official pre-recorded 'TEDTalks'. Other rules include:

- The event must maintain the spirit and purpose of TED, which is 'cross-disciplinary and focussed on the power to change attitudes, lives and, ultimately, the world'.
- The event may not exceed one day in length.
- The event may not be used to make money or to raise funds for charities or other organisations. Ticket prices are limited and may only be used to cover the cost of hosting the event.
- Speakers may not be paid to be present and are required to sign a release form giving TED the right to edit and distribute the video of their presentation.

At the TEDxCapeTownED event that we attended, the day was divided into four sessions with six presentations in each session except the first and last in which there were five presentations with the extra time being devoted to the organisational necessities at the start and end of the day.

The organisers used a novel approach to deal with presentations that challenged the 18-minute limit. As the presenter approached the 18-minute deadline a soft beating of bongo drums warned of the impending deadline, with the drumming increasing in volume as the deadline approached. Fortunately at this event the drums were silent for all except a couple of the presenters, and they quickly succumbed to the beating of the drums finishing what they had to say with seconds to spare.

TED is an exciting and refreshing concept and we would like to encourage our readers not only to visit the TED website as a source of inspiring ideas about issues that may affect them but also to consider organising a TED-ED event or TED Teachers Event as a way of sharing ideas about effective practice in schools.

The videos of TEDxCapeTownED can be downloaded from http://tedxcapetowned.org/videos. All of the presentations were good and some were excellent. Our recommendations are listed below:

- Sir Ken Robinson – Schools kill creativity (one of the two TED videos presented at the event)
- Steve Sherman – The global classroom, live from South Africa
- Taylor Mali – What do teachers make? (the other TED video)
- Craig Charnock – Language learning: bridge to a better world
- Xola Soliki – The power of peers.
- Malinga Nopote – Excellence through trust
- Brent van Rensburg – Your failures are my superstars
- Rich Mulholland – Escaping educational legacide
- Dr Mamphela Ramphele – Rising to our citizens' responsibilities. ■

# NEEDU's new head sets out the unit's priorities

**In a presentation to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Education on 22 May, Dr Nick Taylor, the new head of the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) set out his short-term priorities for the unit.**

Dr Taylor's wealth of experience in the field of educational research and his good understanding of the state schooling in this country was clearly evident in his first presentation to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Education on 22 May. Although at the time of the presentation he was just over one month into his tenure, the tone and content of his briefing suggests that he has a very clear idea of how he perceives NEEDU's role and how it should go about the business of evaluating and reporting on the state of schooling in this country and on the functionality of the various elements of the Department of Basic Education. Dr Taylor was also refreshingly forthright in some of his views and in his responses to some of the questions put to him by members of the committee.

In his presentation Dr Taylor defined NEEDU's mission as the facilitation of school improvement through systemic evaluation and that it order to achieve this it would need to:

- identify those factors that either inhibit or advance school improvement
- evaluate:
  - how the DBE and PDEs (Provincial Departments of Education) monitor schools
  - how the DBE and PDEs support schools
  - the quality of leadership, and the quality of teaching and learning in schools
- make proposals for improving school quality
- publish reports on the state of the education system.

In order to meet its obligations and achieve its objectives NEEDU plans to work constructively ('synergise') with officials and teachers at all levels of the system with the nature of the discussion dependent on the particular level in the system of the party they engage with.

At national level Dr Taylor indicated that the discussion would be strategic in nature and would focus specifically on the following elements:

- the curriculum, with a specific focus on the rollout of the new Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS)
- the Annual National Assessment tests and the use of the data that they provide
- the provision and use of Learning and Teaching Support Materials and particularly workbooks that are produced and distributed by the DBE.

One of the short-term goals of NEEDU will be to assess the performance of eight schools and one district in each province before the end of the current year (2012). Data from this assessment will be used to evaluate the extent and quality of the district support of schools as well as the quality and extent of the support by the province for each of the districts that it evaluates. The recommendations from these assessments will then be first to the schools, then to the districts and provinces and finally to the national office of the DBE. In the following year (2013) there will be follow-up at each level in the system to determine the extent to which NEEDU's recommendations have been acted on together with an assessment of the impact that the recommendations may have had on performance.

At school-level the assessment process will involve the following elements:
1 On-site interviews
1.1 These interviews will be conducted by two fieldworkers employed by the NEEDU. The fieldworkers will interview the principal, all members of the School Management Team (SMT), and the chairperson or senior member of the School Governing Body (SGB).
1.2 Interviews with as many teachers as possible (to a maximum of 12). These interviews will include an examination and analysis of the record books and a sample of learner books of each of the teachers interviewed. The three processes are expected to be completed in two school days.
2 Collection and collation of documentary evidence
The fieldworkers will collect, examine and collate documentary evidence from the following sources when they visit each school:

- learner books, which will be used to assess the following: topics covered; the number of days on which writing was done; the quality and extent of writing (in languages) and calculating (in mathematics and sciences)
- the school's academic programme and year plan
- school and teacher assessment records
- textbook inventory
- teacher attendance register
- minutes of meetings of the SMT and SGB
- school visitors' logbook – this will be used amongst other things to determine the number of occasions on which district officials visit the school and the purpose of these visits.

Once the data has been collected it will be collated and analysed in a way that will allow the NEEDU team to produce a descriptive and objective profile of the school. Part of this process will involve a procedure called triangulation, which is based on an analysis of the answers that different individuals provide to the same questions. For example the NEEDU fieldworkers may pose the same question about teacher late-coming to the SGB chairperson, the principal, individual members of the SMT and individual teachers. If they all provide similar answers, the chances are that this represents a true reflection of the actual position, particularly if this is supported by documentary evidence from the teacher attendance register. If, however, there are wide discrepancies in the answers that are provided, triangulation and an examination of the teacher attendance register should make is possible for the NEEDU team to determine which of the answers represent the most accurate version of what is happening at the school.

In his presentation Dr Taylor made it clear that the purpose of these visits was to provide an accurate and objective description of what was happening at each school and to represent this in their report in a non-judgemental way. Each report would also include a set of recommendations on matters that needed to be addressed. NEEDU's intention is that these recommendations be few in number and specific both in the nature of the matter that needed to be addressed and in identifying which individual or level in the system should take responsibility of dealing with the matter. Recommendations relating to 'workbooks', CAPS and ANA would be directed to the national office of the DBE, while recommendations relating to systems used to monitor and support the work of districts would be directed to the individual provinces. In a similar vein, matters relating to the monitoring and support of schools would be directed to the district offices servicing the schools that are visited while recommendations dealing with school-specific issues would be directed to the principal, SMT and teachers concerned.

Dr Taylor's response to questions posed by the portfolio committee following his presentation provided some revealing perspectives on his view on the current state of public schooling and of the work of NEEDU as well as the extent to which individual members of the portfolio committee view the magnitude and complexity of our public school system.

Judging by the minutes of the meeting of the portfolio committee on which this article is partially based, some members of the committee were confused by a presentation by Ms Palesa Tyobeka, Deputy Director General: General Education and Training and newly appointed Head of Planning and Delivery Oversight Unit (PDOU), that took place immediately prior to Dr Taylor's presentation. This newly established unit in the national office of the DBE has been established specifically to deal with under-performing districts, including the 15 districts that performed below 60% in the 2011 NSC exams. A number of members of the committee voiced concerns about the overlap between this committee, NEEDU and other elements in the system and wondered about the need for both units. This is well illustrated by the following comments by Ms N Gina (ANC) who noted 'that there were already people in place who sought to do oversight over the education system such as provinces, circuit inspectors and school principals. Their job was to make sure effective teaching and learning was taking place at school. However one now witnessed PDOU coming along. There was a huge problem in the country as there were people who sat around not doing their job. This was why we saw the duplication of roles. There were people employed who were paid every day to do the same job PDOU did. What was it that these people were doing?'[1]

Ms Gina's views on our schooling system are probably representative of many people in this country with an interest in education. Dr Taylor's response to the kinds of concerns that Ms Gina articulated reveal his good understanding of the complexities of the schooling system together with his positive and inventive approach to dealing with its challenges. In his response he noted that there were many people in the system that were not doing their job and that in his view there were three reasons for this:

- People who were deliberately avoiding their duties: Dr Taylor does not believe that there are many people in this category any more, although there were large numbers of people in this category in the first five to ten years of democracy.
- People who did not know what their jobs entailed: These individuals required guidance in what was required from them and NEEDU had a big part to play in providing them with the guidance that they needed to meet their obligations and fulfil their responsibilities. This mostly involved instructional leadership and included guidance on curriculum and assessment planning, and on

the monitoring and assessment of teaching and learning.

- People who knew what their jobs entailed but did not know how to do them: In Dr Taylor's view this represented the biggest and most challenging problem faced by the education system as the majority of these people were teachers who did not know their subject and therefore were not able to teach it. Mass training programmes to try to rectify the situation over the past 20 years, including the ACE programmes run by the universities, appeared to have made little difference. There needed to be a better way to train teachers, Dr Taylor suggested, and his proposal for a 'better way' was to provide teachers with good workbooks and train them how to use these workbooks as part of their teaching. This training would be quite specific to the extent that teachers would be told what work to cover each day with the process monitored by the school's SMT. Dr Taylor emphasised that this approach would be an interim arrangement until such time as sufficient teachers were properly qualified and trained in the subjects that they would be expected to teach. ■

**Notes**

1 As reported in the minutes of the committee provided by the Parliamentary Monitoring Group

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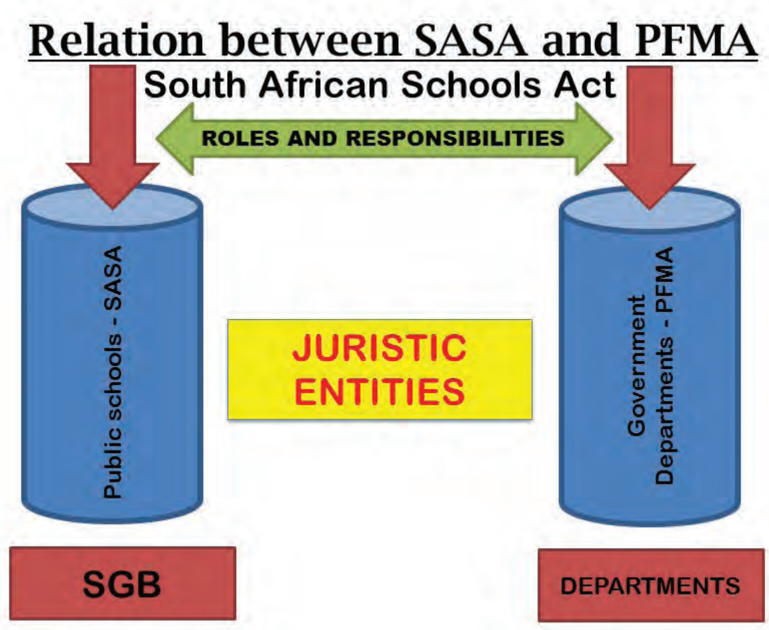
## Management

# Financial management

**Erich Cloete**

**What does good, solid financial management entail? Here are some guidelines that school principals can use to better their financial skills.**

A financially well run school suffers less financial loss and waste, therefore it has more to spend on learners for better education. A school with a good financial reputation may also find staff and learner recruitment easier. It is therefore important for school principals to educate themselves about their financial responsibilities as set out in Section 16 of the South African Schools Act (SASA)[1], which gives clear guidance in this regard. It is important for principals to take note of the following two very important matters that are not interpreted in the same way by all departmental officials in all provinces.



Firstly, in terms of SASA, the school governing body, and not the principal, is the accounting body of the school with regard to finances. Secondly, the Public Financial Management Act (PFMA)[2] is applicable only to government departments and not to schools. The SASA and PFMA are separate entities, as illustrated on page 29. Both are juristic entities. What links them are roles and responsibilities that are listed under SASA. SASA lists the roles and responsibilities of officials and those of principals. The officials fall under PFMA and the principals under SASA. The misunderstanding of this, by various education departments and officials, is a serious misconception of which principals and governing bodies should take note.

Section 16 A of SASA makes the following stipulations that have a bearing on financial management:

- Section 16(2) (a) and (a) ii states that the principal, as he/she is undertaking the professional management of the school, is responsible for the management of all educators and support staff. This means that all financial staff, both state and SGB-employed financial staff, report to the principal and not to the chairperson or other SGB member.
- Section 16(2) (a) v states that the principal is responsible for the safekeeping of all school records. This also includes financial back-ups, to safeguard financial data adequately against unauthorised access, improper use and theft.

  Regular quality back-ups are something that is often abandoned, sometimes to everyone's regret. The following back-up method for financial data could be put to good use: Monday: backup 1, Tuesday: back-up 2, Wednesday: backup 3, Thursday: back-up 4, Friday: back-up 5. On Monday rename Friday's back-up to back-up of week 1 and the process starts all over with Monday, back-up 1. On the second Monday rename the second Friday's back-up to week 2 and continue. It is also good practice to keep a copy of the back-up off site. It is advisable to have a recovery plan to ensure continuity of financial management in the case of an emergency.
- Section 16(2) (b) states that the principal must attend and participate in all meetings of the governing body. This implies that it would be wrong for the SGB or a delegation of the SGB to meet with financial staff or discuss financial matters without the principal being present. This is important as the principal is expected to advise the governing body on the financial implications of decisions relating to the financial matters of the school (section 16(2) h).
- Section 16(2) (f) expects the principal to inform the SGB about policy and legislation. This would include financial matters.
- According to Section 16(2) (h), the principal must assist the SGB with the management of the school fund. This assistance must include:
  - providing information relating to any conditions issued by the Minister or his delegated authority in respect of all financial matters of the school
  - giving advice to the governing body on financial implications of decisions relating to financial matters.
- Section 16(2) (i), (j) and (k) instruct a principal to:
  - take all reasonable steps to prevent maladministration or mismanagement by any staff member or governing body member of the school
  - be a member of the finance committee or delegation of the governing body in order to manage any matter that has financial application for the school
  - report any maladministration or mismanagement of financial matters to the governing body of the school and to the Head of Department.

Looking at the above it becomes quite clear that a principal, in collaboration with the SGB, needs to know how to manage and balance financial risk. Section 16(2) (i) emphasises the importance of putting measures in place to counter financial maladministration or mismanagement.

It is therefore important for the SGB to define possible financial risks and to put internal controls into place. A risk may be defined as any real or potential event that reduces the likelihood of a school achieving its objective. It is also the probability that an event or action will adversely affect the school. It includes the exposure to loss. Internal control is one of the means by which risks are managed. Remember that people at every level of a school affect internal control and that it can only provide reasonable assurance and not absolute insurance regarding the school's achievement. It is also important to remember that the cost of control should not exceed the benefit that will be derived from it.

The duty of the SGB is to oversee risk management as a whole, while the principal's duty in this respect is to provide leadership to ensure the implementation of effective internal controls and responsibilities and to implement policies approved by the SGB. The degree of control required is a matter of good judgement. When financial controls are found to contain weaknesses, principals may choose from the following alternatives:

- Increase supervision and monitoring. A possible solution could be to appoint an internal auditor or even an internal audit committee.
- Institute additional or compensatory internal controls.
- Accept the risk inherent with the weakness in control.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If a principal decides to institute additional internal control measures, the goal would be to provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of objectives such as:

- effectiveness and efficiency of operations
- reliability of financial reporting
- compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

The five components of internal control are:

- **Control of the environment**

It is the responsibility of the principal and the school management team (SMT) to foster a controlled environment that encourages the highest levels of integrity as well as personal and professional standards, and adopt a leadership philosophy and operating style that promotes good, solid internal control and assigns authority and responsibility. Financial staff should be expected to follow school policies and procedures as well as ethical and specific behavioural standards. This would include technical competence as well as ethical commitment. It is also important to ensure that policies and procedures are in place. Give attention to financial policy, administrative procedures and job descriptions. These should include conflict of interest, responsibility, limit to authority, performance standards and control procedures.

- **Risk assessment**

The purpose of risk assessment is to identify and analyse risks associated with financial management. Principals should ask the following questions to identify possible risks:

- What could go wrong?
- What must go right for us to succeed?
- Where are we vulnerable?
- What assets do we need to protect?
- How could someone steal from the school?
- How could the lack of finance disrupt teaching?
- How do we bill and collect our school fees?
- Are outstanding school fees collected in the same year that they are payable?

Once risks have been identified, perform a risk analysis to prioritise the risks and to establish whether immediate action is demanded or not. Possible categories of risks are:

- High impact and high likelihood – demands immediate action. Example: Cash theft of tuck-shop money: what is the likelihood that it would happen – never, unlikely, possible, likely, certain; and what would the impact be: none, minor, moderate, major, extreme? If it is likely or certain that it could happen and the impact is moderate to extreme, immediate action should be taken.
- High impact and low likelihood – consider action and have a contingency plan in case it does occur.
- Low impact and high likelihood – Consider action, it’s likely to happen but the impact is low.
- Low impact and low likelihood – keep this situation under review.

Risks that should be assessed using the above categories could include:

- Cash theft of tuck-shop money, school fees, fundraising money, money received by teachers, donations received, petty cash money and wage money
- Assets: Misplaced, theft, broken or misused
- School fees: Parents not invoiced, incorrect collection procedures, increase in exemptions, errors on accounts
- Suppliers: Authorisation not obtained, exceed budget, supplier not paid on time, double payments etc.
- Payroll: Staff not paid on time, statutory returns not done. Insure that even when your payroll is outsourced that the outsourcing company pays the statutory payments that you have paid to them over to SARS and the other applicable departments.

- **Control activities**

The focus is on preventative management and controls to help to prevent a loss. Examples would be:

- Separation and segregation of duties. Segregation of duties would mean that the person initiating a transaction should not be the person who approves the transaction.
- Proper authorisations
- Verifications
- Reconciliations
- Adequate documentation.
- Please note that a supervisor’s approval, manual or electronic would mean that he or she has verified and validated that the activity or transaction conforms to established policies and procedures.

- **Information and communication**

Key questions to be asked include:

- Does our school get information it needs from internal and external sources in a form and time frame that is useful?
- Does our school get information that alerts it to internal or external risks (legislative, regulatory)?
- Does our school get information that informs the school whether it is achieving its operational goals, financial reporting etc.?
- Does our school provide information to others that alerts them to internal or external risks?
- Does our school provide current financial information to role players?

- **Monitoring**

The purpose is to determine whether internal control is properly executed and effective. All five internal control components should be present and function effectively. ■

**References**


1 South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996
2 Public Financial Management Act (PFMA) No. 1 of 1999
3 Arista company
4 www.fedsas.co.za

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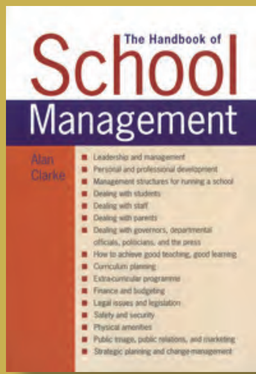


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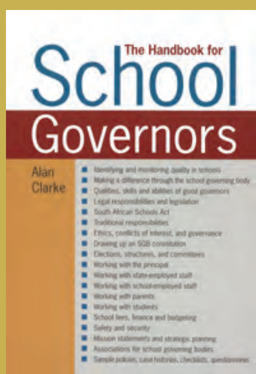


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