

**Author: Dr M. G. Prew, Director: Education Management and Governance Development, Department of Education, Pretoria, South Africa.**

**From Botha to Mandela: How South Africa is transforming its school managers from an authoritarian to a democratic mode of leadership.**

**Introduction**

This paper looks at the impact of prevailing national management and leadership models on school management. In doing so it focuses on the translation of a vision of democratic, culturally appropriate school leadership into policy and then into a plan of action, which translates the policy into tangible changes in the system. It examines in some detail the educational thinking and politics behind the development of the emerging education management policy framework and architecture in South Africa. It relates this policy development process to the changes in the dominant styles of leadership in schools. While the policy has not yet been implemented at school level the discussions and publicity that have surrounded its development in the last year, are already influencing the way that many principals see their role and is beginning to have an impact on their management style.

The competency of school principals is considered a national imperative in South Africa, which poses an enormous challenge to the education system. The demand for professional school managers is growing. A major challenge within the education system is finding visionary and competent school leaders, with appropriate administrative skills and professional education management competencies. The demands on school management have changed, with emphasis growing on managing the school as a learning environment, which is safe, diverse, integrated, and challenging and appropriate to a 21<sup>st</sup> century progressive African country.

**Context**

South Africa has just over 27,000 public schools, of which some two thirds are primary schools. On the salary payment system there are 25,000 principals. These principals manage schools ranging in size from small farm schools with under 50 pupils to large secondary schools in townships with over 1000 pupils.

The principal of a school is the manager and accountable officer in that institution and is also a member of the School Governing Body (SGB), by right.

The appointment of principals is undertaken through a fairly complex process. Since 1997 principals have been interviewed by school governing bodies (SGB), which are dominated by parents. The SGB recommends their preferred candidate to the head of the provincial department (as the employer). The head of department then makes the appointment. It is reported that principals are appointed for all sorts of reasons – because they are good teachers, they belong to the majority teachers’ union, or come from the right area or ethnic group, or are related to someone on the SGB (Ministerial Review

Committee on School Governance 2004). As there is no provision for professional involvement in the interviewing of candidates for the post of principal, and as the heads of provincial department all report that they only apply their minds to appointments when there is a dispute, the SGB has had *de facto* control over the selection of principals for schools.

The Education Laws Amendment Act (SADE 2006c) has modified this by laying down that SGBs must provide the head of department with three names of preferred candidates so that the department can make the final choice. This does not fully resolve the problem of unsuitable candidates becoming principal. The core problem is that there is no objective method of selecting candidates for principalship.

### **Political Agenda**

In 1994 most, and still today many, principals in South African schools use an authoritarian leadership style, which in many ways reflects the dominant management style prevailing during the apartheid era and perpetuates a particular top-down management culture. The image of State President P.W. Botha, in the mid 1980s, wagging his finger at the nation as he told the nation off was highly symbolic of the management style of the time, in all sectors, including education.

As the new age dawned and President Mandela took over the reins of state power a more democratic style of leadership and an invigorating culture of transparency began to emerge in state structures. Under President Mbeki's national stewardship this opening up of the culture of management in South Africa has become more nuanced. Probably the most important additions are the increasing focus on the relationship between management in all sectors and '*ubuntu*'<sup>1</sup>, elements of the national transformational agenda (Makgoba 1999), and more recently the concept of a 'developmental' state. This comes with an emphasis on elements of management which, it could be argued, are more social and cultural in nature – and possibly more 'feminine' than 'masculine'.

### **Influence of the Prevailing Political Management Modes on the Education System**

The impact of the prevailing management style during the apartheid era was pervasive in schools. It was a natural extension of the highly authoritarian apartheid regime, and of the education philosophy and curriculum imposed on most schools, known as Fundamental Pedagogics (Enslin 1984). This, *inter alia*, insisted on the original sin of children (de Vries 1978; Suransky 1995), so assumed children arrived at school with no useful 'Christian' knowledge and morals. It was a short jump from this philosophical underpinning to use of corporal punishment in schools so that the children would see the error of their ways and to drive out their innate wickedness. It encouraged an overweening respect and status for teachers, but it also tied them tightly into a perversion of education. Buckland (1984) charts the instrumentalist control of social policy under

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<sup>1</sup> Ubuntu is a 'unifying vision enshrined in the Zulu maxim 'umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye' ('one is a person through others'). The individual commonly says: 'I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am'. The ideal of ubuntu is the common spiritual ideal by which all black people south of the Sahara give meaning to life and reality. This concept is usually described as the spiritual foundation of all African societies' L. Teffo in Makgoba 1999.

Botha. This translated into tight control of teachers within the context of Christian Nationalist Education (CNE) and a system of structured compliance (Jansen 2003). Further, it should be noted that most black teachers were trained to teach in colleges of education, which were managed by Afrikaaners, who were deployed by the state to take on this important role of making sure that black schools under-taught their pupils and worked within a CNE framework.

Logically, principals were often seen by those in the struggle against white minority rule as 'sell outs', as purveyors of the oppressor's language, education norms and culture. They were therefore seen in many communities as legitimate targets during the struggle for basic rights (Naidoo 1992). This situation tended to make such principals – who were almost always male – resort to even more authoritarian methods.

The changes under Mandela and then Mbeki to more inclusive, distributed and developmental leadership styles, reflecting national and international trends, have not been reflected rapidly or strongly in most schools. This gap between national expectations around the management of public institutions and the reality in schools has sharpened.

Schools and teachers are notoriously resistant to change in South Africa, as elsewhere in the world, and usually for good reason, particularly as the intent behind change and the actual impact are often at variance (Fertig 2000). While there was some attempt at broadening the basis for decision-making in many schools and changing the culture of management and of the school itself, with the introduction of the concept of a school management team (SMT) (SADE 2000a) many principals carried on much as before, while delegating tasks to that team. Equally most principals carried on sanctioning the use of corporal punishment in their schools after it was outlawed in 1997 (Leoschut and Burton 2006). More than half of 3247 secondary school age respondents in a recent survey reported that they had been 'caned or spanked for their transgressions'. In Eastern Cape 65.3% of pupils report they have been the victims of corporal punishment (Leoschut and Burton 2006). Linked to this is that 11.5% of the respondents who said they felt unsafe in their school reported it was particularly in the principal's office that they felt unsafe.

The failure to keep up with prevailing management changes in the country has led to considerable tensions between principals and the other elements in the community. As the prevailing national management styles have moved towards a more inclusive style it has seemed anachronistic that schools, sitting in the midst of the community, are often dominated by authoritarian leaders. The tension has come out particularly in the relations between such principals and the school's governing body (SADE 2004). This is particularly common in urban areas. However, in rural areas there has often been a contrary pressure, with parents in some patriarchal, traditional communities insisting that principals remain male, use corporal punishment, maintain tight discipline and act in every sense '*in loco parentis*' (Education Rights Project 2005; SADE 2000b). This faces these principals with a different dilemma – how to manage a school when the department is insisting on a management style and a school climate and culture that is in conflict with

what the community's cultural norms and particularly what traditional authorities expect (Ministerial Committee Report on Rural Education 2005).

### **Impact of the Political Changes on Policy, Initiatives and Practice**

Overall the changes outlined above impacted at three levels: on policy and legislation; on initiatives related to that policy; and on practice.

At a policy level the main changes that we need to discuss are the increasing focus on the rights of children, curriculum changes, introduction of school governing bodies and finally, and most important for this debate, redefinition of the role of school leaders and particularly the principal. This section will look at these policy changes and reflect on the impact they had on education interventions and initiatives and the practice in schools.

#### *Rights of Children*

Although the Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution is explicit that the rights of children take precedence over all other rights, this is not borne out in reality (SAHRC 2006). The Department of Education has attempted to engender this culture through its Values in Education and the School Safety campaigns, in particular. However, there is still considerable concern that the rights of children are not taken seriously in schools and particularly so by principals, when it comes to issues of access, safety and gender-based violence, language of teaching and learning, religious and racial tolerance and so on (SADE 2001; 2005; SAHRC 2006). This, ironically, is linked to greater decentralization and self management at school level (Motala and Pampallis 2001), which has allowed local and petty prejudices and norms to dominate schools.

This situation led to a further concern, and one that was common in schools which had been formerly reserved for white pupils, around the cultural norms and climate in the school (see Ministerial Review Committee on School Governance 2004). There has been much written about these schools, which now often have a majority black pupil population, and how they maintain a Eurocentric, Christian ethos, which is often at odds with the pupils, leading to conflict and academic failure (see Dr Pityana in Ministry of Education 2001). This situation is reinforced by the staff remaining predominantly or totally white and the manipulation of elections to the school governing body of such schools to ensure that a majority of members – if not all members – remain white (SADE 2001; SADE 2004).

#### *Curriculum Changes*

South Africa, during the 1990s, after decades of isolation, began to take part in international education comparability studies, including TIMSS (Howie 1997; 2001). To the shock of a country that tends to pride itself on being high performing, South Africa has consistently come bottom or near bottom on all such studies. This, and the democratic changes sweeping the country, made it imperative that the apartheid era syllabi be abandoned and a new curriculum introduced. The first attempt at this was the ill-fated Curriculum 2005. By 1999 it was recognized that this reform made the necessary break with the past 'it signaled a dramatic break with the past' (Review

Committee on Curriculum 2005, 2000), but there were serious flaws in this attempt at a curriculum based on Outcomes Based Education (OBE).

The so-called Chisholm Report (Review Committee on Curriculum 2005, 2000) indicated that the outcomes based education underpinning was not the problem, but the complexity of the curriculum and poor implementation and school level management were identified as being barriers to its effective implementation. Further, it can be argued that the rigid imposition of one universal truth (Fundamental Pedagogics) with another one (Curriculum 2005) was problematic. It was stifling teachers' natural creativity and bringing them lockstep into accepting that there are 66 essential learning outcomes – no more and no less! This report led to major revisions and the launching of the much more flexible Revised National Curriculum Statement from 2001. This has been rolled out through the whole system between 2002 and 2006. The focus during these revisions in the curriculum has in part been on the critical role that principals and their management teams need to play in managing the implementation of curriculum change in the school. This was a role that many principals avoided: principals tended to see their role in the context of administration and assumed they had no direct curriculum related role. This change confronted that assumption.

#### *School Governing Bodies*

School Governing Bodies were introduced in 1997 as a result of the South African Schools Act (SADE 1996). They were elected for a three year term in 1997. They include in their statutory membership a majority of parents, the balance of membership is made up of professional staff, non-teaching staff, and secondary school pupils. They have considerable powers – including setting school policy over uniform, language, admissions, religion, behaviour and discipline – as well as collecting fees, developing the school's budget, paying for services, maintaining and developing the school's infrastructure, choosing and ordering learning and teaching support materials (SADE 1996a).

Such a wide range of powers challenged many principals and the period from 1997 – 2000 was characterized in a large number of schools by a turf-war between the SGB and the principal or SMT. Education to some extent suffered. However, in many schools the principals realized that they were the only common factor in both the SGB and SMT. So if they used this position carefully they had the ability to control the school either through the SMT or if that was not working then they could shift their power to the SGB (see Brijraj 2004). There are many recorded cases of principals using their position in the SGB to run the school without conferring with the school's staff (SADE 2004).

There is no denying that the advent of the SGB has impacted on management practice in many schools. Decisions which were taken exclusively by the principal now have to be discussed and agreed with the SGB. Many SGBs require information and levels of accountability of the school's managers. It has further made the defining of the role of school managers in relation to the school governors an issue (Ministerial Review Committee on School Governance 2004).

### *Redefining the Role of School Leaders*

The role of principals has become, since 2000, a major concern of the Department of Education. It has led to pressure to redefine the role of management in schools in South Africa. There has been considerable criticism about the role and practice of school managers. They have been accused in the press and through the education system of being lazy, abusing alcohol and learners, being dismissive of pupils' rights and so forth. Locally, there was some resonance in fora of principals and education management specialists of the growing body of international literature examining the role of the principal and broader management team in successful school improvement initiatives. The consensus is that 'transformational' leaders are most effective in adopting and sustaining innovation in schools, as compared to 'transactional' managers, although the South African Department of Education has regularly emphasised the complementary nature of the two elements of management in schools and indicated the importance of both (Prew 2005).

Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) define a transformational leader as one who builds a school vision and mission, provides intellectual stimulation to colleagues while providing individualised support, symbolises professional practices and values, demonstrates high performance expectations and develops structures to foster participation in school decisions. Christensen (in Fullan, 1996) undertook a review of school effectiveness literature and found that principals of effective schools communicate goals, share decision-making, create and articulate the school vision and support staff. Her own research indicated that the most critical were 'fostering the process', 'supporting staff', 'promoting learning' and 'promoting parental involvement'.

In the 1990s South Africa saw many schools presenting a facade of transformational leadership with vision and mission statements in place, a pretence at shared leadership and an assertion that parents are involved in decision-making, but the reality, indicated by a number of intensive school studies, was very different (Link Community Development 1997). Behind the façade principals were often dominating all aspects of the school, but with very limited management skills. This led to high levels of tension in many schools, and in some schools the total collapse of all management (Prew 2003). This created even greater pressure to change the management of schools.

The redefining of the role of school management included another important element: the promotion of the concept of the self-managing school as part of an overall decentralisation thrust (Motala and Pampallis 2001). This is implicit in the South African Schools Act (SADE 1996a), although such powers are largely devolved to school governing bodies and not the school managers. This created role confusion, as already mentioned. However, over time, the very expression 'self-managing schools', gave urgency to the argument that school management needed to be rehabilitated and given a more central role in the schooling system. This was not articulated clearly until the national Minister of Education on the first day of the 7<sup>th</sup> International Confederation of Principals (ICP) Conference in Cape Town on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2005 gave a press conference. She clearly stated a new vision for the role of principals in South African schools. It talked to the need to professionalise the role of the principal and to prepare them to play a

critical role as leader of the school. This has acted as a key pressure in driving change in the way that principalship is constructed, positioned and understood.

### **The Key Role of School Management in Change**

The last section indicated a number of the pressure points that began to come to bear on school managers and on the education system more generally during the late 1990s and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century leading to an environment that made change in school management approaches appear inevitable.

It had been recognized in the mid 1990s in South Africa that school management was key to improvements in the education system (SADE 1996b). This was reinforced by the findings of international school effectiveness studies which indicate across different schooling systems that the most consistent factor across all effective schools – however defined – is the professional leadership by the principal (Sammons et al 1997). This gave the initial impetus around defining and improving school management.

There was a concerted attempt through the Task Team on Education Management Development (SADE 1996b) to posit an alternative education management philosophy and system. However, this attempt floundered in early 1998 when it was increasingly politicized and personalized within the national Department of Education. This had the unfortunate result of removing education management as a serious concern from the implementation of the new curriculum and as a consideration in the introduction of all new school innovations. The Chisholm Report indicated that this had undermined the delivery of Curriculum 2005. The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) attempted to redress this, but with little success. The problem lay in the relative political strength of curriculum compared to the education management section at national level, and the allocation of limited resources to new resources and training teachers rather than managers.

The other major change that was desperately needed was the redefining of the role of principal, which divorced it from previous constructs and foregrounded professionalism. Any professionalism that had been attached to the role of principal, had been eroded in most schools, during the latter years of the apartheid regime and into the present democratic era. This needed to be rebuilt if principals were going to take on a leadership role in the new dispensation.

All of this indicated the need for a system-wide understanding of the role of school managers that was in tune with broader developments in the national ‘developmental’ state system and in the wider management arena nationally.

These are the roots of the holistic education management development process that began to unfold in the Department of Education from 2003 onwards, culminating in the publication of a number of critical documents and the launching of a number of programmes in 2006. It is these documents and programmes which are the basis for the second section of this paper.

## **A New Education Management Architecture**

### ***The Policy Framework and Standard for Principalship***

In 2003 the Directorate for Education Management and Governance Development of the national Department of Education initiated a process that led to the development of a new education management architecture, which was finalised in 2006.

This architecture includes: the Education Management Policy Framework (EMPF); the South African Standard for Principalship (SASP); the entry-level qualification for principalship; and job regrading and improvements in the pay and conditions of principals. The EMPF is the map, the SASP is the guide and the entry-level qualification and new conditions of employment are the vehicles.

The focus of these documents was on school management generally, however they constantly foreground the role of the principal. This was partly as an acknowledgement of the particular extent to which principals had been marginalized, which the Task Team process in the 1990s had deepened rather than alleviated (SADE 1996b), both through its failure, which took school management off the map for nearly a decade, and because of its clear focus on distributed leadership within the school. This latter was sometimes translated into attempts by the school's SGB and staff to marginalize the principal.

The starting point for the new architecture that began to emerge in 2005 was the belief that infuses all these documents that the child is at the centre of all management endeavours in the school. This means that all management actions have to be explainable in how they advance the interests of the child and the learning process.

These documents are all prefaced by a set of assumptions and values, which are explicit in the policy. The key assumption is that school management is not an end in itself, but is a means to making sure that the curriculum is delivered effectively so that teaching and learning are given primacy. Further, the EMPF assumes that the principal must be successful not only in terms of running the school but also in the context of whole school development and the broader school improvement process. This it is assumed is best achieved 'through self-managing school communities which support collaborative environments conducive to the high quality teaching and learning' (SADE 2006a:10). The policy documents reflect a view that encouraging transformational leadership when basic transactional management skills are lacking, as is the case in many South African schools, is misguided: it is important to develop basic competence in transactional leadership before – or at least in tandem with guiding principals towards higher order, transformational skills. It is also assumed that these managers should be able to draw on their existing knowledge and linkages and this includes community related knowledge and partnerships. Finally, the EMPF assumes that school management is not a gender-specific or able-body-specific task but should be open to all based on their ability. To achieve equity of access, it is acknowledged that there will need to be more opportunities created for under-represented groups.

The required values, while educational and social in nature, are mainly constitutionally based – and in no sense religious based. This needs to be emphasized given the Christian Nationalist nature of apartheid education, which was also values-based, but based on sectarian religious values, which alienated as much as they included. The starting point in the new architecture is that school management is as much a values-based enterprise as a purely technical one. The values are ones of professionalism, humanity, nurturing, inclusion, hard-work, honesty and integrity, fairness and decisiveness. Overall the Standard makes clear that these values are rooted in principles of democracy and ‘ubuntu’. This is essential in making the architecture talk to both aspects of reality for schools managers: being a school manager in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and of being a principal in Africa. The Standard uses these values as the basis to identify the main actions that the principals are expected to take and how these relate to the knowledge and skills that the principal needs. Underlying these changes is an intention to change the culture and climate of schools, to one which is more open, transparent, co-operative and where all stakeholders feel welcome and have clear roles and responsibilities. This means that principals – and particularly those that were advantaged under the previous regime – must reflect on their practice and ensure that in running the school they are being inclusive and are not prejudicing any pupil based on race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or gender. This is a struggle for some principals and many find themselves in the press (Sunday Times 30 July 2006). Further they are now challenged to understand the needs of a ‘developmental’ state, particularly in the attitudes and skills required of pupils leaving school. These concerns are catered for within the new architecture.

These documents acknowledge that to effect the principles and values embedded in the new education management policy and the Standard requires ‘a profound change in the culture and practice of schools’ (SADE 2006b:2). This has to go hand in hand with the improvement in the ‘professional standards of leadership and management for the benefit of the learners and the quality of the education service as a whole’ (SADE: 2006b:2). However, the documents also acknowledge that a set of documents, however well crafted, cannot of themselves bring about change in the way that schools operate and in the culture and climate of those schools. The documents can create political and operational space and give direction, but behind them needs to come orientation, training, inducements and other operational activities supported by a strong communications strategy and media campaign making clear what is expected of school managers in South Africa.

The Standard builds on the EMPF and identifies six generic, inter-dependent roles of the principal in any school. These are:

1. Leading and Managing the Learning School;
2. Shaping the Direction and Development of the School;
3. Developing Empowering Self and Others;
4. Working with and for the Community;
5. Assuring Quality and Securing Accountability;
6. Managing the School as an Organisation.

The policy and the Standard envisage a principal who runs a South African school in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He or she is in tune with the needs of a computerized and communication-sophisticated society while having an African, developmental, empathetic and community driven approach to the role of school leader – firm but open, supportive but decisive. The envisaged principal has a range of skills and knowledge in line with the requirements of being a 21<sup>st</sup> century educational institutional leader. This implies being accountable and creating systems of real accountability in the school for those that report to the school principal, with an understanding of the difference between accountability for accountability's sake and accountability which impacts positively on performance and quality of the service delivered. Finally, and most significantly, the principals must be able to work within and with the community using an understanding of 'ubuntu' and the needs of a developmental state.

### ***Entry-level Qualification for Principalship***

The entry-level qualification for principals is perhaps the most critical part of the architecture. It articulates and operationalises the policy and the SASP. It gives them substance and turns them from pieces of paper with intent into tangible programmes that can have real impact at school level. The qualification is at a fairly basic academic level – being a certificate. This is at the same level on the National Qualification Framework as a first degree (without honours). This is to ensure that the qualification is accessible to most principals. A survey of the principals and aspirant principals entering the pilot programme run by the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGSLG) and the University of Johannesburg found that about 3% of entrants lacked the qualifications even to be a teacher, let alone a principal (Kunene 2005), which was a similar percentage to those that had a Masters degree or doctorate. This indicates that at least 750 principals are in the same position nationally – lacking basic teaching qualifications. A similar number would appear to be having higher degrees. The significance is that for the other 94% this course will be set at about the correct level and be meaningful. However, it should be noted that it is explicitly stated by the Department that having a more senior qualification, which is research based or academic, cannot be RPL-ed<sup>2</sup> against the ACE qualification. This ensures that those with Masters and doctorates, along with those with first and teaching degrees, will still need to do the course if they wish to access the post of principal.

The entry-level qualification for principalship is officially the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE): Education Management and Leadership (Principalship). It has a core curriculum that has been developed by a consortium of 14 universities and the Department of Education with the direct involvement of the funder, the Shuttleworth Foundation. This is the first time that a national qualification has been developed in South Africa involving the following features:

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<sup>2</sup> South African legislation creates space for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) which allows the candidate, if accepted, to get the qualification or have part remission based on previous experience. The decision was made that in the ACE (Principalship) only the language and computer skills could be RPL-ed and nothing else as this would circumvent the purpose of the qualification which relates to actual proven practice which no other qualification available does.

- a) *Agreement and co-operation between higher education institutions in developing the course and materials.* Traditionally institutions of higher education in South Africa are very jealous of their independence from government interference and leadership (even though they are heavily funded from the public purse through the Department of Education) and are resistant to working together with other HEIs, making any real national programme impossible. It took several months of discussions and a presentation at the Deans' Forum, with all education deans present from every HEI in the country, before they agreed, with reservations to the project. A number of deans indicated a particular concern that this project would be used as a 'Trojan Horse' for other national government programme. They did acknowledge that another national programme – the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) – which was aimed at upgrading un- and under-qualified teachers, foundered on the basis of poor quality courses and materials which in that case had been left to HEIs to develop.
- b) *Separate registration as a mainstream qualification (not an outreach programme) in each university but with a national communications strategy.* This was a stricture based on the rollout of the NPDE and all the problems related to that programme. The NPDE had been effectively privatized in some HEIs and in one institution the senate and vice chancellor had no knowledge of the NPDE programme being delivered by his university: it was being run by a member of staff as a money-making venture! In another the number of candidates who dropped out over the two year part-time course was disguised: the HEI was claiming money it had no right to. It was in effect stealing from the government. To avoid repetition of such abuses it was agreed that a national programme which goes through all the academic registration processes at each HEI was the only route by which HEIs could present the qualification.
- c) *National recognition, related to employment of the successful candidates, attached only to the universities that were part of the development process.* As employer, the Department of Education has every right to restrict access to the course and effectively register the institutions which can deliver the course. As the standards for the ACE are approved by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) any *bona fide* higher education institution can use and deliver a course based on the standards. However, those institutions which are not approved by the Department, while they can present the course, will not be able confer on candidates access to short-listing for the position of principal. This is not meant to punish the institutions but is a recognition that they were not part of the development process (and all could have joined the process) and are not quality assured by the national monitoring process. This restriction will only work if the national Department of Education ensures that all principals and aspirant principals are aware of which institutions have been registered.
- d) *Professional materials development process by a consortium of NGO and university experts.* While the original intention was for the HEI personnel who developed the course outline to develop the materials it became clear that the HEI lecturers were not experienced or qualified to do this. An NGO which specialises in developing education course materials was contracted to manage a number of

specialists in developing the modules. The aim is to develop the core materials: the HEIs can contextualise and enrich these modules but within guidelines.

- e) *Management of the development process and monitoring of the delivery through a consortium involving the Department and the universities.* This is considered essential to ensuring that the delivery process maintains its integrity and quality. The involvement of all the main delivery agents ensures that there is a high level of peer review and learning that can be fed back into the delivery to create an iterative process of improvement.
- f) *A predominantly site-assessed professional qualification, which is based on actual proven skill in the workplace, supported by networked learning communities of principals with mentors.* This is **the** critical element. This is what makes the difference from all other educator training programmes. The qualification only has value if a candidate improves her practice in her own school. For this to be effective two new elements need to be added – the use of professional support structures and assessment on site, in the school. The identifying and training of professional mentors and assessors is a key part of the programme. During the trial period during 2007 – 8 HEIs are being encouraged to use a variety of different models of support, including use of their own staff, NGOs, retired or practicing principals and web-camera technology.
- g) *A package of benefits for successful candidates including pay scale and qualification level benefits.* During the trial period the package is less explicit: the practicing principals are being encouraged to enroll. Their course fees will be paid in full, and if they do not have a Level 6 qualification then they will get a pay notch increase. From 2009 the aspirant principals will have access to a wider range of benefits – although in return they will pay part or all of the costs of the course. The benefits will include a one-off payment for completing the course of half the cost of the course, a pay notch increase (or two), and the access to short-listing for the post of principal. Being short-listed is increasingly attractive as the post of principal attracts an increasing salary and status.

The result should be a qualification that is accessible to all aspirant principals in the knowledge that they will have a portable qualification which has currency in any part of the country. This is not the case at present – a principal in one province, if s/he moves to another province often has to return to the classroom or seek work outside education.

The qualification will be piloted during the period 2006 – 8 with a major national evaluation in 2008 determining whether the course is adequate to be used as an entry-level qualification for principalship. During the piloting the main candidates will be practicing principals. This was decided as:

- These principals have never been trained and so may be very vulnerable once their senior staff goes on the course. Training them will prevent this problem;
- There is a strong sense in the system that there are many sitting principals who need training and that this could be used to deal with this concern in the short-term;
- The course provides a relatively objective basis on which to determine failing principals and use it as the basis for identifying areas where remedial measures

are needed to bring the principal up to the knowledge and skills levels commensurate with the post;

- The key concern that should the course turn out from the evaluation to be inadequate for the purpose of training new principals practically then the system faces a serious problem of what to do with those aspirant principals who passed the course during the trial period. Using sitting principals obviates that problem.

Once it has been adapted in line with the recommendations of the evaluation then it will be implemented nationally as an entry-level qualification. This means that as a critical number of aspirant principals have the two year, part-time qualification that it becomes a requirement for short-listing by school governing bodies which have the responsibility of interviewing new principals and recommending appointment to the employer – the provincial head of department. With a through-put rate of at least 3000 candidates per year, it is estimated that a critical number will be reached by 2010, with some 5000 having graduated (assuming some drop out or take longer than two years to complete). This is measured against the average of 800 principal posts (3.2% of total) that become vacant annually.

While the qualification is to be delivered in the first few years by the higher education institutions the Minister is keen that the Department develops an education management institute, which would take responsibility for delivering the qualification nationally. This institute could be sited in a university, or as an independent structure, or as part of the Department of Education.

### ***New Conditions of Service and Professional Status***

The new architecture is bolstered by a further pillar: that of professional status along with a new salary structure and improved conditions of service. This is all part of the package for school managers.

The salary of principals has for some time been determined by the number of pupils in the school. This led to some serious distortions in the system and perhaps more important gave a rationale for falsifying student numbers. This has serious financial implications for the system. The delinking of the principal's salary from the pupil numbers should alleviate this situation. The principal's salary is now linked to the more easily verifiable staff complement in the school. Overall this led to an approximately 30 - 40% increase in the salary of most principals. This has helped lay a positive foundation for further changes. These changes include:

- The formation of a new professional status called the 'Educational Institution Management Service', which will delink the 26,000 principals from the overall educator workforce of some 330,000. This has implications for their union status, their professional status and for the flexibility of their pay and conditions.
- A defined career path for school and education managers which allows school managers to specialize in management, supported by a range of qualifications, while high performing teachers can specialize through a parallel career structure in curriculum support and specialization;

- The professionalisation of the interviewing and appointment of principals with recommendations that the interviews for principal posts should include a majority of professional officers (staff from the school, principals from other schools, district officials as well as parent members of the SGB). This will be accompanied by a protocol for interviewing candidates for the post of principal;
- Clear definition of roles and responsibilities for the managers of schools, which emphasise their role in leading and improving the school, against which they can be held accountable;
- Identification of failing principals, with removal against set criteria of those who are acting in violation of the law, and the setting of performance targets for those who are struggling, to be met over a few years. Failure to do so will lead to dismissal.

Taken together these changes are expected to create the space and enabling environment necessary for the transformation of school management from one that is predominantly authoritarian to a more democratic mode of management. While this will take some years it will depend to some extent on the turnover of the principals and so the number of new entrants who have been trained in the new regime.

### **Conclusion**

South Africa has seen a change in the prevailing forms of management over the last twelve years in line with the changes in the models of political leadership, as the apartheid era ended and a new democratic era dawned. These have increasingly led to changes in the culture of the institutions of government and business. However, the management of many schools has not kept pace with this change. In many schools a management style more in tune with Botha's style still predominates. This authoritarianism is reflected in the culture and climate of these schools, which are all too often unattractive environments, which are not conducive to learning. The emerging South African education management architecture described in this paper is informed by concerns about this reality, which is central to the failure of many schools to present a basic level of education to their pupils, and aims to rectify this situation.

The architecture informs policy and leadership development processes for principals, which draw on concepts of African leadership, while reflecting international concepts of site- and system-based efficiency, effectiveness and accountability. While it cannot change the way that individuals manage their schools it creates the environment and space in which change is encouraged, and where it is harder to maintain a Botha-esque management style against staff, union, head office and community pressure, which can now use the Department's own policy statements in support of their demands that such principals open up their management approach. Principals are further challenged to manage their schools in a way which is sensitive to the prevailing cultural background of their learners and the direction that the 'developmental' state is taking. This involves sensitivity to concepts of 'ubuntu' and to the national transformation agenda. The Department, as employer, does not expect principals to slavishly act in a politically correct manner, but equally it does not expect principals to run their schools as havens of apartheid or colonial norms, or as personal fiefdoms.

The new education management architecture is also designed to create the space and the criteria against which to professionalise the role of principal. At the same time it allows for putting in place remedial measures for struggling principals or those who are finding it difficult to adapt to the new dispensation, and to remove principals who are determined to go on running their schools in violation of the law and policy, or who abuse alcohol, drugs and pupils.

The operational apex of these improvements is the entry-level qualification for principals. The success of these changes will only be assured after some five years when a critical number of the present principals (4,500 of the weaker principals) and a pool of over 9,000 aspirant principals have been trained in the skills of school management and leadership and as principals prepared for the present dispensation, and have proven that they can manage their schools in an inclusive, transparent manner, while exhibiting management skills appropriate to the South African state.

Finally, it should be noted that South Africa is probably the first country which has an entry-level qualification for principals based on a set of school management standards, which is itself rooted in an education management policy. This means that we have a holistic approach which should be comprehensive, strong and context-rooted enough to lead to real change in schools over the next decade.

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