



# Governing Schools Towards Excellence

## THE INTRODUCTION

WHO DOES WHAT

We are committed to provide functional and modern schools that enable quality teaching and learning to protect and promote the right of every learner to quality, equitable and relevant education.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”.








**Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela**

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## Icons (or symbols)

The following icons or symbols have been used to help you move through the material:

	Bright spark ideas icon	Anything out of the ordinary or special
	Do's icon	These are actions / tasks / activities that <b>MUST</b> be done. These are not 'nice-to-haves' but 'must haves'
	Don'ts icon	These are actions / tasks / activities that <b>MUST NOT</b> take place. Failure to not comply could lead to problems or issues.
	Hear this icon	Stories, scenarios and / or cases
	Think About icon	This is asking you, the SGB member, to think about an issue. It helps you think about issues in a new way.
	Tips icon	These are practical tips to be used
	Tools & Templates icon	This is to alert you to a tool or template that is available that will assist you in performing your duties.

## This resource

The following information about the role-players in SGBs is included in this resource book on 'Let's work together: roles & responsibilities':

### Overview

The Chairperson

The Treasurer

The Secretary

The Principal

Parent/ Guardian Representative

Learner Representative

Educator Representative

Non-educator Representative

Co-opted members

The District

# Unit 1: Let's Work Together overview

## Learning Outcomes

**By the end of the Unit new SGBs should be able to:**

- Have a general overview of the tasks ahead of them.

Welcome to the first Handbook for School Governing Body members. By agreeing to be an SGB member, you are showing your commitment to improving teaching and learning.

## Purpose

The purpose of the Handbook is to provide information and guidance about all the responsibilities of an SGB. This does not mean that the SGB actually performs all of the tasks concerned, but they have **responsibility** and **accountability** for the tasks. Although some tasks may be delegated to others in the school, accountability is never delegated. The SGB therefore needs to know:

- What needs to happen
- By when tasks need to be completed
- Why the task is important
- How to do the task
- How to address issues that arise
- To whom the results need to be reported.

## What is a Legislative Framework?

Like all other types of governance, school governance happens within a particular regulatory context. There are laws that give direction on how SGB members should govern in the schools. These laws are referred to as the legislative framework. The legislative framework is a list of all the laws that combine to ensure proper governance of the schools. The framework helps schools to establish and maintain the system of governance to assist them achieve their objectives. So legislation helps to create a single, common framework within which governance can successfully happen.

As SGB members you have a responsibility to work within the legislative framework. The SGB cannot govern except as prescribed by the law. Although each school is a unique entity with different needs and dynamics, they should all be governed and guided by the same legislative framework.

We cannot have every school doing things as it sees fit. That would bring about enormous confusion and chaos.

### **The SGB also needs to be familiar with South African Schools Act (SASA).**

The SASA says that a governing body may also appoint persons who are not members of the governing body to such committees on grounds of expertise, but a member of the governing body must chair each committee.



The SGB member should therefore NOT be dependent on others for the information contained in the Act. The SGB member is encouraged to have a much more extensive knowledge of the Act through their own interaction with it in their role as school governors.

### **Being a member of the SGB means immense responsibility and accountability:**

- It means that you must abide by legislation regarding school governance.
- It means that the parents who elected you trust and believe in you and it is a trust that you must not betray.
- It also means carrying out a range of functions to the best of your ability.
- Finally, it means giving of your valuable time to ensure the success of the school.

However, school governance has quite a long way to go before it becomes as efficient, effective and dynamic as it was envisaged to be. Many SGBs are dysfunctional for various reasons that combine to disadvantage the schools and the learners in a substantial way.



A partnership cannot be successful without trust, which means that there must be openness, co-operation, participation and accountability to work together to achieve the goals set in all spheres of governance and education.

## **The South African Schools Act:**

### **Why did government pass the South African Schools Act (SASA)?**

Post-1994 the government was faced with an enormous task of not only engendering a spirit of reconciliation between the races after years of segregation, but also ensuring that the playing field is levelled, that all people are equal before the law and the plight of the poor is improved. In education, government started by passing the South

African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996, as amended which is the most important piece of legislation governing schools in our country today. It covers, in principle, every aspect of schooling.

## Other Legislative Framework

- National Education Policy Act , (Act No. 27 of 1996), as amended
- The Gauteng Schools Education Act , (Act No.6 of 1995)
- The Regulations and Rules – Governing Bodies of Public Schools published under General Notice 786 of 1997 (“ the Regulations”)

The SASA seeks to build a partnership between the state, the parents, educators, learners and the community. Through this partnership parents have acquired not only a stronger voice in the governance of the schools, but have also rightfully incurred more responsibilities towards the education of their children. The Preamble of the SASA repeats many of the values and some of the rights mentioned in the Constitution. It is within this paradigm that the SASA was promulgated, further emphasising the point that schooling must:

- Advance transformation, democracy and human dignity
- Celebrate diversity
- Uphold human rights
- Develop an ethos for learners to aspire towards achieving their dreams

## School Governance

Governance of a school requires from the SGB to nurture the ethos and culture of a school, formulating policy on those matters prescribed in the SASA, propagating the image of the school in its own and adjacent communities and supporting the entire staff (educator, administrative and support) in their efforts to provide quality opportunities for teaching and learning in the school. It also involves a direct responsibility for managing the finance.



Tips

Lastly, while professional management and school governance are different, some of the responsibilities of governance overlap with those of professional management.

Both school governors and school management have to work in the “best interest of the child”, protect the rights of learners, maintain discipline and ensure sound financial management.

## Professional Management

Professional management” of the school means performing those functions that will facilitate teaching and learning in a school. In most cases the principal, together with the School Management Team (SMT), manages the school in terms of the day-to-day activities of the school. The various roles are about sharing the work that needs to happen. But, the SGB as a unit still has to take **responsibility** and they are **accountable** for the tasks. Although some tasks may be delegated to others in the school, accountability is never delegated. The SGB therefore needs to know:

- who does what; and
- why this is important.

The SGB must also be clear about the consequences of not fulfilling their responsibilities, non-performance, neglect, incompetence, or fraudulent actions. The SGB must take steps to avoid failure. There is practical guidance in the other materials about how to prevent, detect and deal with these issues.

The information in this Handbook could be used as guidance for actions and should be read together with the other materials that give practical advice around SGB functions. SGB members can use this information to ensure that they are fulfilling their responsibilities. Also, the SGB could use the forms, lists and templates to do some of their work and to monitor progress.

- Performs professional management functions (as set out in the SASA)
- Implements instructions or regulations of the department
- Manages personnel
- In charge of the safekeeping of all school records
- Implements all the educational programmes activities
- Implements SGB decisions
- Implements all the curriculum activities
- Assists the SGB as prescribed by the SASA

## School Governance

- Promote the best interests of the school
- Support the professional management staff to carry out their tasks
- Ensure the development of appropriate policies
- Decide on school times, taking into account the employment provisions of staff members and departmental regulations
- Ensures the development of the school by providing quality education for all the school’s learners
- Purchase educational materials (including textbooks) and equipment for the school

## What is difference between management and governance?

The SASA gives us more clarity on the functions of a principal and this sheds more light on the concept of 'professional management' of the school.

<b>Governance vs Professional Management</b>	
<b>Governance</b>	<b>Professional Management</b>
Start and administer a school fund	Assist the School Governing Body with their functions in terms of SASA
Open and maintain one banking account	Support and guide expenditure in consultation with School Governing Body
Keep the financial records of the school	Assist the School Governing Body in keeping proper record of school accounts
Prepare an annual budget and submitted to parents for approval	Support the School Governing Body with their functions in terms of SASA
Draw up and submit audited annual financial statements to the Department of Education	Ensure controls are in place and operating for cash collected
Buy textbooks, educational material or equipment for the school	Monitor compliance with all applicable legislation effecting the schools in assisting the School Governing Body
Supplement the funds supplied by the Department of Education to improve the quality of education in the school	Administer and organise day-to-day teaching and learning at the school
Ensure school fees are collected according to decisions made by the School Governing	
Adopt (accept) a constitution, adopt a code of conduct and develop the mission statement of the	

## What is the Code for Quality Education?

The context of governance is also determined, in addition to the legislation, by the adoption of a Code for Quality Education by government. The Code rightfully declares that the power to improve education lies with all of us.



It commits stakeholders as follows:

**As a DEPARTMENTAL OFFICIAL, I promise to:**

- ensure all schools receive the necessary resources in time for teaching to commence
- ensure all schools have their full staff allocation, and that any vacancies are filled without delay
- improve my own knowledge and skills base to be more effective
- always be available to assist schools, principals and teachers
- respond to requests or concerns of education stakeholders
- visit all schools within the district on a regular basis
- monitor teacher and student attendance, and ensure no child is out of school
- assist all schools to improve their performance, ensuring regular tests are conducted and results are reported to parents.



**As a TEACHER, in line with the SACE Code of Professional Ethics, I promise to:**

- teach, to advance the education and the development of learners as individuals
- respect the dignity and rights of all persons without prejudice
- develop loyalty and respect for the profession
- be punctual, enthusiastic, well prepared for lessons, and of sober mind and body
- improve my own knowledge and skills base to be more effective
- maintain good communication between teachers and students, among teachers themselves and between teachers and parents
- provide regular information to parents on their children's progress
- eliminate unprofessional behaviour such as teacher-pupil relationships, drunkenness, drug use, assault, sexual harassment and others
- make myself available to provide extra-mural activities.



### As a LEARNER, I promise to:

- accept that the main reason for being in school is to learn and develop academically, socially and culturally
- adhere to school rules
- respect the legitimacy and authority of teachers
- participate in Representative Council for Learners (RCLs) to safeguard my interests
- show respect to other learners and not to discriminate
- avoid anti-social behaviour like theft, vandalism, assault, sexual harassment, alcohol and drug use, and other activities that disrupt the learning process.



### As a PARENT, I promise to:

- involve myself actively in school governance structures;
- have regular discussions with my children about general school matters
- cultivate a healthy, open and cooperative relationship with my children's teachers
- create a home environment conducive to study
- assist in the protection of educational resources such as textbooks, chairs, tables and others.



### As a COMMUNITY, we promise to:

- ensure that every school-going child is at school
- ensure a safe and crime-free environment for schooling, and to protect the school and its assets from vandalism
- monitor the performance of schools, and report problems to relevant authorities.

**Remember we, the departmental officials, educators, parents, learners and the community, pledge to undertake these responsibilities to ensure quality education for all.**

## What is the composition of the SGB?

The SASA recognises the rights and responsibilities of all stakeholders and makes it compulsory for every public school in the country to establish a school governing body.

**As a legal structure established in terms of the South African Schools Act, the SGB, is a full compliment of all relevant stakeholders that make a direct contribution to the education of a child.**



## Committees

We know that the SGBs can establish committees to help them perform their tasks so that good school governance can prevail. Committees are established to make the work of the SGB easier.

Not everyone on the SGB can do everything that is required. It is also important that the workload of the SGB be shared by all members. It is unfair if a few members do all the hard work. However, the number of committees ought not to be so many as to make the work of the SGB very difficult and time-consuming.

Some of these committees (like the finance committee) might meet quite often while others meet on a needs basis. The SGB of an ordinary public school which provides education to learners with special education needs must also establish a committee on special education needs.

## What are the functions of the SGB?

The functions of the SGB can be grouped into four broad categories as follows:

### Policy development

- Adopt a constitution
- Determine the admissions policy for the school
- Determine the language policy of the school
- Determine the religious practices to be followed at the school
- Develop a mission statement of the school
- Adopt a Code of Conduct for learners which will spell out disciplinary procedures.

## What is a CODE OF CONDUCT for SGB in Gauteng

Throughout the document there are instances when a member of the School Governing Body will have to conduct himself / herself in a particular manner. This section of the policy will bring together instances previously mentioned and other instances not mentioned in the document as the Code of Conduct of the School Governing Body of (Name of School)

All members of a governing body occupies a position of trust towards his / her public school, therefore in the performance of their function they should:

- At all times conduct themselves with respect, honesty and integrity and in the best interest of the school.
- Confine themselves to matters related to the governance of the school and not interfere with the professional management of the school
- In making a decision as a member of the SGB, ensure that the decision is:
  - (i) Made fair, justifiable and legitimate.
  - (ii) unbiased
  - (iii) Not influenced by ulterior motives
  - (iv) In the interest of the school.
- Promote an environment that does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, colour, ethnicity, gender and creed.
- Co – operate with each among each other and with other SGBs and work together harmoniously to achieve the aims of the school.

- Govern the public school ethically within the framework of all applicable legislation
- Avoid any situation that may place him/her in a situation of conflict between his/her personal interests and the interests of the school. If any such situation arises he/she must declare it in writing to the School Governing Body and recuse himself/herself from such situation.
- Not discuss confidential matters with members of the public, use confidential information improperly and use such information only for the purpose that it was intended.
- Not accept bribes under any circumstances.
- Ensure that the school property is reasonably protected.

*For more detail on acceptable norms and standards in the design, construction of new schools and additions, alterations and improvements, as well as school infrastructure backlogs please refer the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996.*

## Resource Management

- Promote the best interests of the school and encourage its development by providing quality education for all learners
- Assist the principal, educators and other staff members perform their professional functions
- Determine the times of the school day
- Administer the school property, buildings and grounds
- Encourage parents, learners, educators and other staff to offer voluntary services
- Recommend to provincial heads of departments on the appointment of educators at the school
- Give permission for school facilities to be used for educational programmes not offered by the school, if requested by the provincial Head of Department

## Financial Management

- Prepare an annual budget
- Establish and run a school fund
- Raise revenues including voluntary contributions to the school in cash or some other form
- Open and maintain a bank account
- Prepare annual financial statements according to the prescribed guidelines
- On request by an interested party, make annual financial statements available for inspection

- Annually report to parents, learners, educators and other staff at the school

### **The SGB must:**

- raise extra funds to improve support to learners
- establish a school fund
- open a school bank account
- ensure all money is paid into the school bank account
- make sure that all school assets are only used for educational reasons
- prepare a budget each year
- present the budget to parents and get their approval
- determine school fees if the majority of parents agree to this
- enforce payment of school fees
- keep records of:
  - grant fee exemption after following the correct process
  - money received
  - money spent
  - assets
  - financial transactions
- appoint an accountant and auditor to look at the financial records of the school
- submit a copy of the annual financial statements (that have been checked by the auditor) by the end of June for the last year (Jan – Dec)

Often the treasurer (who may be assisted by the finance officer) is required to report on and oversee the functions related to finance. However, the whole SGB is accountable for good financial management of the school.

### **Allocated Functions**

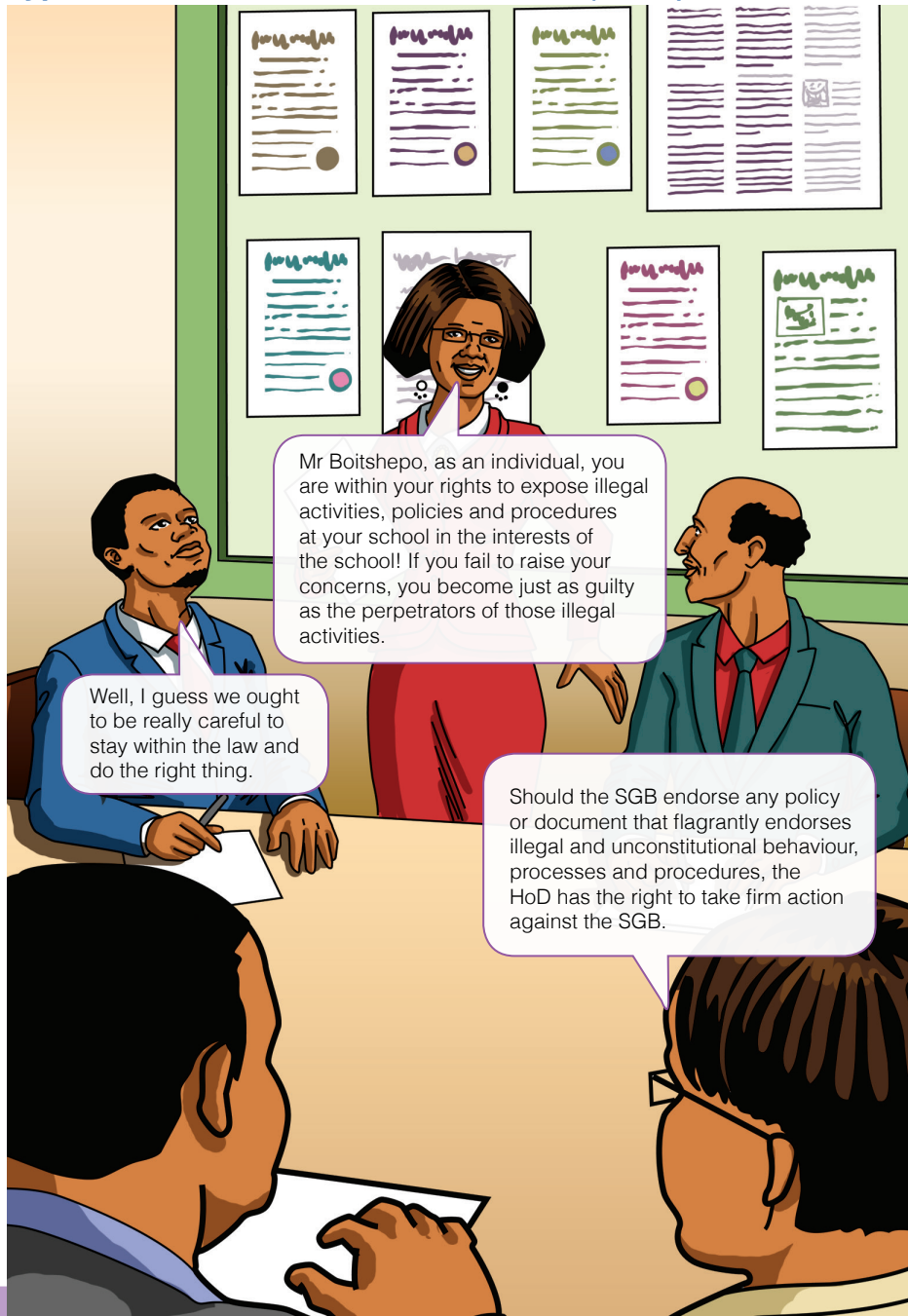
- Maintain and improve the school property, buildings and grounds
- Decide on the extramural curriculum and the choice of subject options according to provincial curriculum policy
- Buy textbooks, educational material and/or equipment for the school
- Pay for services to the school

## Typical interaction of a functional SGB





## Typical interaction of a functional SGB (Cont.)









**Physical Address:**

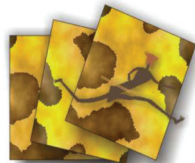
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