

[個別論文]

How Did School-Based Governance Lead to Distributed Leadership, Partnerships and Improved Student Learning

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Abstract: Schools being social organizations, the community participation leads to improved performance resulting from higher levels of motivation of the teachers and students. In affecting desired cultural changes, the administrators have to work hard in developing trust and confidence between different stakeholder categories by involving and empowering them with distributed leadership enabling them to work towards the realization of the shared vision. Research samples comprised of school councilors from 66 Victorian, 33 ACT and 71 NSW schools in Australia and a research project in England. Findings from both the quantitative and qualitative research suggest that when compared to what they experienced under the centralized, bureaucratic models, the School-based governance (SBG) has created more autonomous, flexible, better quality, effective schools, accountable not only to the systemic managers but also to school communities. In the process, SBG has led to distributed leadership, genuine partnerships and better teaching and learning environments leading to improved student learning.

Introduction

In the 1970s, the effective schools movement which emerged as a consequence of the Coleman's Report of 1966, revealed the importance of building partnerships between the parents and teachers, suggesting that such partnerships would improve the morale of the students and teachers. It was also suggested that participation could lead to ownership of the policies resulting in a higher degree of commitment towards the implementation of the policies formulated with the involvement of the parties. In this context what matters most is what the community together shares, what the community together believes in, and what the community together wishes to accomplish for their children. This shared vision becomes the primary source of authority and energizer for what a school community does.

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A school community comprising of all relevant categories of stakeholders with the principal could be the followers of a dream who are committed to make it real. Accordingly, leadership becomes a shared and distributed responsibility which is nothing more than a means to make things happen. Not only the formal leadership of the principal but also other members of the school community has an obligation to embody community values and aspirations. Thus, in terms of school-based governance (SBG), the principal empowers and distributes the leadership tasks and responsibilities to teachers, students, parents and the community representatives enabling them to share the obligation to lead. In a partnership between the school and the community, leadership need not be defined as the exercise of power over the others as was the case in traditional models of school governance. What is needed is the exercise of wit and will to work together to achieve the goals set in accomplishing the shared vision of the partnership. Here the leaders of the respective stakeholder categories spread the message of the shared vision and set goals to their constituencies enlisting their support to improve student learning.

This paper, based on several research projects conducted in three school systems in Australia and one in England examines how SBG could lead to distributed leadership, partnerships and improved student learning. Australian data were drawn from three different SBG models with varying degrees of devolution implemented in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), Victoria and New South Wales (NSW) while British data were taken from Leicester in England.

How to Democratize School Governance

In the modern world, unlike in the past, most educational reforms are politically motivated. Since the release of the American Report on A Nation at Risk in 1983, almost all school reforms concentrated in restructuring the school systems, often involving downsizing, economic rationalism and devolution. In the process of down-sizing and restructuring, action was taken to flatten the bureaucratic structures within the educational systems as well as the schools. With the devolution or transfer of authority to individual schools, the bureaucratic controls imposed by the systemic authorities were substantially reduced. A governing body or a community forum known as the school council or board was instituted at the apex of the school's hierarchy. This reduced the position of the principal to that of a chief executive officer (CEO) from that of sole authority figure of the school. The principal became one amongst a number of representatives of relevant stakeholder categories whereby the leadership roles and power and authority had to be distributed while employing the combined wisdom of all to make decisions on important issues affecting the school. All the stakeholders had to be bound by the common desire to do their best for the kids.

Within the schools, even though the formal structures such as the positions of the principal, deputy and assistant/vice principals, head teachers, year coordinators etc. remain in place, in practice, the super-ordinate-subordinate relations are not strictly adhered. Instead more collegial

forms of governance and administration were encouraged. Unlike in the case of the traditional bureaucratic model, teachers and students were not required to be at the mercy of the principal as they had the liberty of voicing their views at the governing body. When key policy issues or controversial matters arise, teachers and students could air their grievances at the governing body. While top down communication was pushed to the background, placing more emphasis on horizontal and bottom-up communication from the teachers, students and parents. On the other hand, when authority was devolved by means of an Act of Parliament or a State Assembly, even the Minister for Education found it difficult to interfere with the authority already transferred. Local politicians also found it difficult to interfere with school policies, as it is much more difficult to influence the thinking of a group of people rather than that of a bureaucratic official.

In responding to a question whether there were any problems in having a council composed of different sections of the community, a Victorian primary school principal was of the opinion that he did not confront any problems. Instead, he found that people with different backgrounds providing a variety of inputs to improve the council operations and the directions that the school can take. He was of the view that the council could take the best out of those opinions and suggestions, so long as some of them do not try to push their own agendas. His experience was that 90% of the council members used to express their opinions honestly and quite forcefully leading to due consideration given to the suggestions and come to decisions by consensus (Cited in Gamage, Sipple and Partridge, 1996).

A Victorian secondary school principal who appreciated community participation in his school stated:

This school council has little problem in formulating policies. Prior to any policy being formulated, it goes to a sub-committee where extensive discussion is carried out at all levels. Students, teachers, parents and ancillary staff are involved if required. It may take a little bit of extra time to come up with a policy; however, we believe it is worth (Cited in Gamage, 1998b: 316)

Importance of Building Mutual Trust

In terms of the bureaucratic model of school management, the principal was vested with the total authority to lead and manage a school. The teachers were free to teach the students as they thought fit, of course, subject to the systemic directions issued through the principal. School authorities encouraged the parents to leave their kids at the gate rather than come in and watch what was happening inside the school. Most meetings or forums between the school and the parents were employed by the school authorities to provide information. The parents were treated as laymen and women who would not be able to contribute to the core business of the school. Because of this gap between the internal and external communities of the school, the concept of SBG with community participation was resisted by most teacher organisations around

the world. In fact, the SBG model developed in Los Angeles in the United States in 1989 was the product of a bitter contract dispute between the United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA) and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). The UTLA President has even referred to this outcome as a peace treaty that evolved out of a war (Hanson, 1990). However, such conflicts or struggles did not occur in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) where the concept of SBM or SBG was first developed in 1967 based on the efforts and expectations of all relevant stakeholder groups including the teachers in partnership.

What was important was to build mutual trust between the internal and external communities of the school. Because of the diversity of personalities, interests, attitudes and expectations of each individual and stakeholder category, this was a very complex and difficult task. Traditionally, it was believed that it was the privilege of the teacher to teach and it was the duty of the student to learn while it was the responsibility of the principal to lead and manage the school. The parents were expected to support the school. No party was expected to interfere with the other's sphere of control or influence. Even when parent teacher associations (PTAs) and parents and citizens' associations (P&CAS) were established they were expected to support the decisions made by the school authorities with no questions asked. In such a context, a partnership is formed with a view to work together in realizing the shared vision, by building positive relations and learning to trust and place confidence in each other resulted in a new organizational culture.

In achieving this goal, effective communication was of paramount importance. Everyone had to be given a fair chance to express his or her views on a given issue and it was the idea or the opinion, which was considered but not the person who came up with the idea or expressed the opinion. As wider participation based on democratic ideals was desirable, a committee structure of the governing body was designed. This enabled those who were not on the governing body but were interested in participation to make contributions to school improvement for the realisation of the shared vision of improving student learning. A committee structure with a consultative process enabled stakeholders to develop mutual understanding and work together for the common good. Even though changing the school culture takes time, the new relationships and working arrangements affected the then existing values, beliefs and norms which gave rise to a new school culture. When a true partnership was built, the school authorities were able to part with the old concept of referring to the external community comprising of parents and community as 'them' while school administrators and teachers were referred to as 'us' whereas when mutual trust was built, both groups came to be referred as 'we'.

An ACT primary school principal commenting on the effectiveness of community participation praised his school as a fantastic one where he had parents working in classrooms, assisting the teachers after undergoing training as parent helpers. He also boasted in having 20 people attending the executive meetings of the parents and citizens association. He believed that they had a very keen interest in helping the school by participating actively in school improvement

work. He felt that this situation had a lot to do with the attitudes that he as the principal adopted towards them by convincing them at the beginning that the responsibility to develop the children was a joint responsibility. His message was that kids should not be dropped at the gate and expect the school to take responsibility but should join them to help the kids in partnership (Cited in Gamage, 1998)

A community representative of a high school board, emphasizing the strength of the partnership and the trust and confidence built on mutual understanding of the parties involved stated:

At most board meetings, it is a case of getting agreement around the table from the different areas. It is not a case of, for example, the principal and the teachers deciding en-bloc that they want to do something, ignoring the views of the parents and whatever else. In fact, I can hardly remember, at all, ever coming to a vote on anything. It is by general agreement around the table (Cited in Gamage, 1995: 283-284)

Self-Evaluation Leads to a Shared Vision and a Better School

Nowadays, it is believed that in moving a school on a path of improvement of student learning, it is better to start with an analysis of the current status of the organisation. In developing a most feasible and realistic plan, it would be better to start with a proper diagnosis of the current situation with a complete study of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) to the school's survival. This study can be undertaken by a working party on the basis of research and wide consultation with all categories of stakeholders. Once the study is completed, it should be discussed widely within the school community followed by brainstorming sessions to generate ideas in developing a shared vision for the school. In all these processes, it is important for the leader to be actively involved. When it comes to the development of a vision, the leader should be able to guide the group by asking the right questions and projections supported by data in a convincing manner. The vision could be a future state of the school which could be accomplished in 3-5 years, by building on the strengths to overcome the weaknesses, making use of the opportunities available and planning strategies to avoid or confront the possible threats while taking advantage of the opportunities that are there.

When a vision is developed, it should be articulated in such a way enabling everyone involved to own the vision. It needs to be a dream, which everyone can visualise how the school would be, when the vision is realised. Vision needs to be a short memorable clear statement with room for interpretations. It needs to be in sight when setting either personal or organisational goals. At the next stage, it is better to establish sub-committees and working parties to establish the goals that are needed to achieve in accomplishing the vision.

In 2000, the Northamptonshire in England has adapted a survey instrument for self-evaluation of the schools based on an instrument developed by Mortimore and Stoll in 1995. The factors that

the survey focused included: Leadership Style; Communication of values and goals; Teamwork; The learning environment; Teaching and learning; Expectations; Positive and constructive feedback and reinforcement; Monitoring and enquiry; Pupil rights and responsibilities; Learning organisation; and Partnership and support (Burton, 2000: 9). The initial responses from participating schools have confirmed that it helped to provide a wider view of the school since it drew on the perceptions of all relevant stakeholder categories. It also helped the governing body to have a better understanding of the school community's expectations while it enabled head-teachers to either confirm or re-assess the key issues and priorities in their school improvement plans. This type of stakeholder participation in formulating school policies increased the confidence of teachers and leaders as they were assured of community support for the direction that the school was heading (Burton, 2000).

A Strategic Plan in Place of a School Development Plan

In the past, a school's preferred option was the development of a school development plan without a shared vision and with limited flexibility and much less effort put in developing the strategies to achieve the goals. But, in the modern world, similar to many other fields, school education has undergone unprecedented change due to the advancement of technology, globalisation and changing expectations of the society. Educational leaders find it extremely difficult to face the challenges and predict the future for their organisations. Strategic planning is a means by which they can establish and maintain a sense of direction. It is a continuous process by which an organisation is kept on course, through making adjustments when both the internal and external contexts are changing. Planning cannot be considered as having completed when the written document is finalised, it is only a record of the process at a given point of time; the difficult part is the implementation.

In strategic planning the emphasis is placed on evolutionary or rolling plans, enabling adjustments to be made to suit the changing circumstances. Strategic planning, helps us to look more systematically into the future, first adopted in the military establishments and later in the business world, has now become a standard norm of management thinking in most organisations. The strategic planning enables the schools to prepare the best fit between the school and the environment leading to the development of the best strategies in moving the organization forward. Today, strategic planning is a technique, which assists leaders and managers in dealing with the increasingly turbulent environments and new challenges arising out of globalization, increasing societal demands, decentralization and devolution of authority, advancement of information technology which is confronted by the school authorities. The school development planning stresses the link between planning and school improvement and as strategic planning takes an overall view of the long-term development with the flexibility for accommodating adjustments in keeping with the changing situations, many educational institutions have

embraced the new concept.

Once the shared vision and the goals are agreed to at the organisational level, it is important to organise the school development or strategic plan. In drafting a strategic plan, it is important to establish a strategic planning group. This group or the working party needs to be entrusted with the overall responsibility of coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the plan. Within the purview of this team, it is better to establish smaller teams involving distributed leadership with the responsibility of setting sectional or divisional goals and organizing the strategies to achieve the goals for their particular division or area or faculty to be incorporated into the overall plan. When the final draft is ready, it is better to provide an opportunity for all those affected and interested to express their views and accommodate desirable and feasible amendments before the governing body approves the plan.

When the plan receives council approval, it becomes the responsibility of the CEO to organise the implementation by those who were made responsible for various faculties and/or sections in keeping with the target dates. The same strategic planning group or team leaders can be entrusted with the responsibility of implementing and monitoring the progress with monthly progress reports by the principal to the governing body. If and when problems arise, action needs to be taken to address them without delay. On the other hand, at the end of each year, another year needs to be added with necessary amendments to the priorities and goals, making it a rolling plan in moving the school towards excellence.

In responding to a question whether her school had a strategic plan, a principal of a Community College in Leicester, England, responded:

Yes, we have a strategic plan, which was prepared by consulting senior management, the teachers and to some extent, the students. We have very broad aims; we try to focus our plan on outcomes for students. And each of our aims and goals, we have targets to achieve, which we monitor. The governors are very much involved in each term, when I report to them in writing on the monitoring of the plan. So they have a very important role in monitoring at the level of an overview (Cited in Gamage, 2000a: 10)

A primary school teacher governor in Leicester described as to how the concept of strategic planning evolved during the past few years. She was proud to state that everyone around the school was involved in the process. To begin with the members of staff put together their three-year rolling program and governors had their part to play. The staff used to meet during the summer and discuss what the school has achieved and what we hope to achieve. Usually, they have discussions with the head-teacher for input and advice and staff have the ownership of this document (Cited in Gamage, 2000a).

In terms of the scheme operative for local management of schools (LMS), in England and Wales, if the governing body was able to manage its finances in such a way to have a budget

surplus in a given year, the surplus remains with the school while they are expected to carry forward a deficit if any to the next year.

Developing a Concept of Distributed/Shared Leadership

Based on the strategic plan, the school leader should undertake a review of the administrative structure within the organisation with a view to removing any bottlenecks, which obstructs the smooth functioning. In view of the participatory process of decision-making, the committees can be established as subcommittees of the governing body or as school committees with relevant authority and responsibility. Naturally, each committee will have its own leader resulting in distributed leadership which becomes a shared leadership with the principal. This would enable wider participation, tapping the full potential of all-organizational members as well as empowerment and transformation of a group of people to leadership roles. These measures are likely to give rise to a healthier organisational climate and culture with happy and contented staff which is likely to boost staff and student morale leading to more effective teaching and learning environments and improved student achievements.

With the implementation of SBG with its representative nature of the governing body (GB), gives rise to the emergence of leaders within all stakeholder categories. The representatives of teachers, students, parents and local community get automatically empowered because of the authority vested in the GB as well as specific responsibilities that are likely to be assigned to individual members, committees and group or team leaders. Many opportunities also arise for the other members of staff and community to be involved in different sub-committees and working parties that are usually established for policy development. This creates a distributed and shared leadership not only within the school but also outside the school. In the past, the school community got the messages only from the school leader, but with SBG same messages are given by a number of leaders in many different voices. Empowerment and participation enable them to claim ownership, which in turn increases their commitments to the process of implementation with higher levels of motivation and morale. Thus, it could be made a genuine partnership where everyone plays his or her role in moving towards the creation of an effective school with higher levels of student achievements.

A primary school principal in New South Wales (NSW), Australia; appreciating the significance of the involvement of local community and the distributed leadership commented that he had empowered the school council which was expected to function as an advisory body. Even on occasions where he was not happy with the decisions made by the council he proceeded to implement them as it was the collective wisdom. One in particular was asking parents to pay for their children's text books whereas the usual practice until then was to provide everything free. Even though school had financial problems, he as principal opposed it and recorded his dissent. But, he implemented the majority decision. In view of the fact that the council owned the decision,

the members persuaded everyone conform to it and pay for text books. If not the school could have gone broke and two years later, the principal acknowledged that it was definitely the right decision proving the importance of combined wisdom. He praised the school community indicating that most community members were professionals who had a great deal of expertise and could generate an idea on their own and follow it through developing a lot on its own (Gamage, 2000b).

Importance of Effective Communication and Decision-Making

Communication could be considered as the glue that holds the different parts of any organization together. It helps the members to achieve both organisational and individual goals as well as to implement and respond to organisational change, coordinate organisational activities, and engage in virtually all organisationally relevant behaviours. On the other hand, breakdowns in communication lead to disastrous repercussions. It is also important to note that any aspect of a leader/manager's job does involve communication. Serious problems arise when directives are misunderstood or when informal remarks by a top-level manager are distorted. Any such situation leads to a breakdown in communication. Hence, it is clear that communication is unavoidable within any organisation; it is only effective communication that is avoidable. Every leader or manager needs to be an effective communicator. In fact, everything that a leader/manager does communicates something in some way to somebody or groups.

In social contexts such as in schools, communication is so important it is fundamental to the integrative process in educational administration and management. Communication expects to share messages, ideas or attitudes that produce understanding between the sender and receiver. Communication is the process that supplies necessary technical and coordination related and motivational information to all corners of an organisation. The design of the communication structure should be contingent upon the nature of the task to be planned. Communication is a complex process as multiple sources may send competing and conflicting messages simultaneously. Information also gets distorted when transmitted through intermediate levels of supervision. When the receiver interprets the message also it is subject to distortion. Although perfection is virtually impossible, there are techniques to improve the communication process at both the individual and operational levels. A Victorian high school teacher representative praised his school's communication processes and provision of information:

Information is supplied to members in written form before any discussion is started. Each council meeting is supplied with full details, whether it is with newspaper cuttings, documents from other schools, views of individuals, parents, students and teachers. I think school council has an excellent opportunity to read through these, well before hand and talk to other people before the actual decision is made. If anybody feels that there wasn't sufficient information, then the decision-making process is put off until further information is available so there is no attempt to ram decisions through the council (Cited in Gamage, Sipple and Partridge, 1996: 30).

It is widely recognized that decision-making is at the heart of an organization or central to the administration and it is one of the primary responsibilities of a leader or manager. Organizational policies are the products of decision-making which establishes the values and guidelines for operational decisions. What we refer to as organizing is the distribution of authority to officers and groups for decision-making in organizational settings. Communication is essential to the transmission of information to decision-makers. Evaluations, auditing or even committees of enquiry are processes through which judgments are made on the quality of decisions. The quality of administration is largely a function of the organisation's capability to make qualitative and effective decisions supported by an effective network of communication. Effective leaders often prefer to create the structures and lay down the procedures for others to be involved in decision-making rather than making a large number of decisions by him or her.

In most complex organisations, the governing bodies work through a committee structure to make the process more democratic, efficient and effective. Time-consuming broader issues are referred to the relevant committees for detailed study, supported by appropriate research and consultation before arriving at a final decision by the governing body. Commenting on the effectiveness of the committee structure, a Victorian secondary school council president stated that at their council, the policy formulation begins with the sub-committee structure in the school and many of the issues were thrashed out at that level before it actually came to the council. The council received the recommendation with all the necessary support material and information that need to develop the policy. It worked most effectively as there was no particular power group at all. Members had equal opportunities to contribute to policy development. They expected the principal to give some general directions and valued his opinion usually arrived at after consulting different groups within the school. Thus, he believed that it was a co-operative and effective approach to developing school policies (Cited in Gamage, 1998a). In making SBG effective, one need to understand the inter-relatedness and the inter-dependence of communication and decision-making within organizations where decision-making is the essence of leading participatory models of governance, since it was the management of communication and decision-making that makes a difference to effectiveness.

Developing Partnerships with Business and Industry

In almost all countries in the world, education is a significant item of expenditure in government budgets. However much is set apart for educational development, it is never enough, especially, with the advancement of IT, the demand for funds have increased further. Thus, it has become necessary for the schools to find other sources of supplementary finances. Business and industry that employ the graduates trained by the school systems is an obvious target for such finances. There are many occasions where employers complain that school graduates do not stand up to the competency standards required by their business or industrial organisations. The

dramatic advances made by technology have resulted in rapidly changing working environments, which necessitate discarding traditional concepts of school curriculum as well as teaching and learning. SBG with community participation provides a golden opportunity to get employers to participate in decision-making at the school level, as key stakeholders employing the secondary school graduates. This arrangement enables the schools to appoint local business and industry leaders as community representatives to their governing bodies, empowering them to contribute their input in shaping the school curriculum in such a way as to meet the contemporary needs and competency standards of the modern workplaces.

A Victorian primary school principal, who appreciated the contributions made by the business community at his school, commented that the school had a couple of businessmen running their own businesses as members of the school council. The principal was of the view that they were extremely busy, yet their input to council was high. Only problem was the difficulty of getting them to scheduled meetings or undertake some inspections with them and everything else was definitely a plus. The difficulty of time was a very small price to pay for the contribution by these business and industry representatives (Cited in Gamage, 1998b)

Thus, by taking part in SBG, the business community has a great opportunity not only to contribute their ideas and opinions but also to provide badly needed funding for equipment and facilities for programs of study. This type of partnerships provides opportunities for apprenticeships benefiting the organisation in particular and productive investment in human resources development in general. Students who are interested in career opportunities in these areas also get motivated better when they see the linkage between school learning and life skills for gainful employment when they are out of school.

In the contemporary world, most governmental reforms involve economic rationalisation and downsizing of the bureaucracies. When the need for expansion of the services increases with increasing population, the amount of resources allocated becomes less and less in real terms. Education being one of the biggest budgetary items of any country fixing priorities between competing demands between health, education and social security becomes pretty difficult. Considering the large numbers that are being employed by school systems in particular, attempts to improve teacher salaries lead to significant increases in government expenditure. But, if a country needs to improve its economy especially in an era of a knowledge society, it needs to have a well-educated competent workforce. In this context, if a country is to meet this need, it must consider providing quality education to its potential workforce as an investment and not as another item of expenditure. SBG enables the school systems to downsize their huge bureaucracies cutting down overhead costs and transferring the savings to meet the school needs. Apart from voluntary labour provided by the parents and the community, funds raised by the school community, supplements the limited resources to upgrade the facilities and equipment.

A Victorian primary school teacher commenting on how the school's limited resources were

supplemented by the community pointed out that the school council was very interested in raising funds for the school. One particular program that they have had was for raising money for the computer education. In one year alone, they spent a sum of fourteen thousand dollars (\$14,000 = 1,400,000 Yen) on buying computers and all that money, was raised by the council. When the school was run down, the school council did things like painting the library, painting the canteen, all in their own time. They took an active interest in maintaining the physical surroundings of the school. The working bees that were organized were very well run. The school community was always ready to provide funds or free labor for any particular project that the school had at any time (Cited in Gamage, 1998b: 319).

Improving Student Learning

Research on effective schools have shown that parental involvement in school level decision-making and other school activities motivates both the students and teachers. A genuine partnership between the school and the community provides opportunities for the community to acquire a better understanding of what goes on inside the school and what teachers are doing for their kids. Such an understanding enables them to make a more effective commitment towards school activities with a view to improving student learning. At a time of limited resources and budget cuts, the voluntary work by the parents in assisting the teachers in their classrooms as parent helpers enable them to create more effective classrooms while the community contributions to working bees enable the school to maintain the buildings and grounds neat and tidy creating a more pleasant environment conducive to student learning. The development of policies such as the students' code of discipline with the participation of the school community enables effective implementation of such policies, as students become alerted to the fact that their parents and community at large have supported such measures. In turn this creates an orderly and positive school climate helping to improve the quality of student learning further.

A teacher representative of a Victorian primary school responding to a question whether there has been any positive impact of community participation on the quality of student learning has stated:

This is my third year in the school, and when we came, the physical condition of the school was appalling. It hadn't an up-date for many years and the last up-date was in the 1970s ... And together with the new principal, when Chris arrived, parents seemed to be waiting there for an impetus to get moving and together we have virtually reconstructed the school. It's being repainted; it's being carpeted and ground work done to such an extent that we actually won an award last year. ... That physical improvements in changing the school obviously has had a positive impact on the environment that the children work in, and therefore their curriculum and input has gone on in leaps and bounds. In the case of parent participation program in classrooms, ... they organise and run all activities, ... not just, at fund-raising level

but at the core of curriculum and ground development. ... We couldn't have done without them (Cited in Gamage, 1998b: 320).

A high school principal commenting on school council's impact on the teaching and learning environment stated that policy development at the school was slow and laborious but thorough. The principal was of the firm view that the council had a significant impact on the curriculum development, assessment, reporting and also teaching and learning. It was clear that when the teachers and parents could have their input helped the process. The principal also felt that the resources allocation was based on a keen interest to support the teachers by providing learning areas with sufficient money, as much as the school could afford and also by the allocation of teaching-aids and other equipment. The Council had a particularly strong role in the development of performing arts, by undertaking the development of a \$500,000 Performing Arts Centre, including an auditorium, learning and teaching spaces, even when the Government grant was limited to \$95,000. The school council was able to face the challenge of raising a sum of four-hundred and ten thousand dollars (\$410,000 = 41,000,000 Yen) to supplement the government funding (Cited in Gamage, 1993).

A primary school teacher from the ACT, commenting on how the active support of the school council led to teacher motivation resulting in better quality teaching and learning has stated:

No decision is made in the school without the school council. They play a very positive role in maintenance around the school, both inside and outside. Fund raising goes towards computers and anything that the teachers might need. The school council in conjunction with the Parents' Club work together very well. The Council is so supportive makes teaching a lot easier (Cited in Gamage, 1996)

On the other hand, the concept of a learning community can be incorporated within the whole school community. Small teams of teachers, administrators, parents and when relevant students can band together to study different aspects of the school organisation in moving the organisation towards excellence. The team approach assists to consolidate mutual understanding towards the creation of genuine partnerships and take pride in helping the school.

Importance of Ensuring Accountability

In the past, the school leaders were required to be responsible and accountable only to the systemic authorities. But, in terms of the legal provisions and administrative procedures introduced with SBG, now, the school leaders have been required to be responsible and accountable not only to the systemic authorities but more importantly to the school community through the governing body (GB). Several procedures have been adopted in getting the school leaders to render this accountability. School governors or councilors have the right not only to

raise questions at the meetings on any issue deemed appropriate but also to call for written reports. Apart from that at regular meetings of the GB, the principal in his or her capacity as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is required to report the progress made on the implementation of the decisions already made and policies adopted. The GB is also empowered to institute committees of inquiry on any issue, if it is deemed expedient to do so. At the end of the school year, the principal is required to submit an annual report including an audited statement of accounts to the school community and the systemic authorities through the governing body.

Conclusion

In a careful examination of the legislation enacted for implementing SBG, it is clear that it has incorporated many of the recommendations made by the researchers on effective schools and have produced an alternative model of school governance/management to that of the bureaucratic model. It has enabled the schools to modify the bureaucratic structure to a significant degree by instituting a representative governing body at the apex of the hierarchical structure. Even though the formal structure may have a principal, deputy principals, heads of faculties and year coordinators, the super-ordinate and subordinate relations, impersonality, bureaucratic rules and top-down communication have been replaced to a significant degree with more collegial forms of management and horizontal communication. Arising out of the partnership between the school community and the school, more resources in the form of voluntary services and financial resources have been made available. This situation has enabled the creation of better teaching and learning environments which motivates both the teachers and students, conducive to student learning

The representative nature of the governing body and the significant numbers of sub-committees and working parties has enabled wider participation by stakeholder/groups. These new structures have empowered many of those who want to participate and make contributions towards student learning. The parental and community contributions, availability of additional resources and many opportunities to be involved and make contributions have improved the motivation and morale of the staff and students. In turn, these factors have contributed to create safe, healthy and positive teaching and learning environments leading to better quality, efficient and effective schools. In the final analysis, SBG has made schools more autonomous, flexible, participatory, accountable and effective in meeting the societal needs leading to distributed/shared leadership, genuine partnerships and better quality student learning as evident from the opinions expressed by the stakeholders.

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