

SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY ELECTION DEFICIENCIES – DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY KNOCKING AT THE DOOR

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SUMMARY

As forums, School Governing Bodies have the makings of a great and unique South African democratic tradition as they reflect local deliberations, participative decision-making by stakeholders in education. The main contention of this article is that the SGB election processes at many public schools in South Africa are deficient. Legal analysis reveals the extent of non-uniformity of SGB election regulations among the nine provinces, as well as unlawful regulatory provisions, the unfair and undemocratic administration of the election process and misconceptions about democracy are causal factors that result deficiencies in SGB elections. The qualitative evidence affirms that parents are concerned about the insufficient information about candidates before and during elections, thus preventing voters from making informed decisions. Undemocratic features in the election process results in the election of unsuitable or incompetent candidates which has a detrimental effect on the governance of public schools. It is therefore recommended that a new set of nationally uniform SGB election regulations, which allows for transparent deliberation between candidates and voters should be promulgated before the next SGB election in order to address these shortcomings.

KEYWORDS: School Governing Body, elections, regulations, Education Law, deliberative democracy, participatory democracy, responsiveness, phenomenological study.

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