

# **A MODEL FOR IMPROVING DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

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**No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included in the processes from birth. A society that cuts off from its youth severs its democratic lifeline.**

**Kofi Annan, Ghanaian statesman  
former Secretary-General of the UN  
Winner of the 2001 Nobel Peace prize**

# ROADMAP OF PRESENTATION

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2. EVIDENCE OF UNDEMOCRATIC  
TENDENCIES IN SOUTH AFRICAN  
EDUCATION

3. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- CONCEPTUALISING DEMOCRACY
- ADVANTAGES OF DEMOCRATISING EDUCATION
- SA CONSTITUTION
- SA SCHOOLS ACT

OPEN SOCIETY

MAJORITY  
**ACCOUNTABILITY**  
**DEMOCRACY ???**

TRANSPARENCY

RULE OF LAW

DE

CONSTITUTIONAL

MAN

LAW

DEMOCRACY

consciousness

FEDERALISM

ALL OR NONE LEAVE VOTE

PARTICIPATORY

DEMOCRATIC ALTERNATIVE

DEMOCRACY

*Power sharing*



# CONCEPTUALISING MODELS OF DEMOCRACY

## POLITICAL DEMOCRACY (Representative & governmental)

### LIBERAL MODEL

Fundamental socio-

#### Disadvantage:

Tends to favour the rich and talented

**Most Free**

### REPUBLICAN / FEDERALIST MODEL

#### Disadvantage:

Tends to mask oppressive rule of minorities

**Most Accountable**

### SOCIAL MODEL

#### Disadvantage:

Tends to create a sluggish & wasteful welfare state

**Most Equal**

### ELITIST MODEL

#### Disadvantage:

Tends to create a corrupt bureaucracy

**Most Effective**

### PARTICIPATORY MODEL

Power-sharing in every organization in society  
Participatory management  
Joint decision-making

**Most Acceptance (buy-in) & most responsive**

### DELIBERATIVE MODEL

Critique: Impractical to implement in poor socio-economic conditions & illiterate communities

Open conversations  
Transparency in systems & processes  
Sharing of information & reasons

**Most Consensus & most justifiable**

## PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY (Grass roots & organizational)

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# WHY DEMOCRATISE EDUCATION?

## GOOD REASONS FOR DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION

- Education shapes democracy ↔ Democracy shapes education
  - **Hidden curriculum** – learners imitate adults – actions speak louder than words – School leaders are role-models
- Democratisation improves effectiveness and accountability
- Democracy prevents power abuses - e.g. monopolisation / concentration of power / corruption
- Democracy leads to greater equality between classes
- Democracy improves participation - satisfies stakeholders / parents
- Educator professionalism is enhanced through self-responsibility & accountability - workforce less tolerant of centralist bureaucracy
- Deliberative democracy raises standards of equity / fairness – emphasises joint-decision making and consensus
- Democratic management / administration practices improves efficiency

# CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Preamble of Constitution:

S.A. is a **democratic and open society**  
every citizen is **equally protected by law**

Section 1 – RSA is a **democratic state** founded on the values of:

- » **Fundamental rights** – Human dignity, equality & freedom
- » **Rule of law & supremacy of the Constitution**
- » **Political rights**
- » **Democratic criteria** - Accountability, responsiveness & openness

• **Section 7 – Bill of rights is the cornerstone of democracy in S.A**

§ 7(2) the state must respect, protect and promote the fundamental rights

- **THEREFORE: ORGANS OF STATE** (e.g. departments of education, schools and School Governing Bodies) must adhere to the **RULE OF LAW** & promote **FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS** in order to **PROMOTE DEMOCRACY**.

# DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION LEGISLATION

## SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS ACT, 1996

- **PREAMBLE:** - Advance democratic transformation of society
  - protect and advance diverse cultures and languages
  - uphold fundamental rights of learners, parents and educators
  - partnership between the state and parents - funding & governance
- **PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY IN SA SCHOOLS ACT**
  - Section 20 – Governance functions of SGB – decentralization of power to parents and grass roots stakeholders.
  - Section 21 – allocated functions of SGB – power-sharing
  - Section 28 – democratic election of governing body
  - Sections 36 – 44 – SGB responsibility for financial management of schools
  - SGB to determine language policy (§6); rules for religious observances (§7); adopt a code of conduct (§8); suspend & recommend expulsion – serious misconduct of learners (§9)
- **PARTNERSHIP: FUNCTIONS IN EXCHANGE FOR RIGHTS**

In exchange for voluntary (free) performance of governance duties the SA Schools Act gives parents governance rights to determine policies and perform governance functions.

# EVIDENCE OF UNDEMOCRATIC TENDENCIES IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

# DEMOCRACY IN SA IS UNDER THREAT

- 72 countries of the world (35%) are not democracies.
- Historically, most young democracies in Europe, Asia, Africa and South America reverted to dictatorships or one-party rule within 20 years after becoming democracies e.g. France = 14 years ➔ Napoleon Bonaparte
- Russia = 8 years ➔ Vladimir Putin
- Undemocratic political / social warning bells - **democracy in South Africa is not certain** because:
  - Citizens, educators & learners lack knowledge and understanding of democracy
  - Education system is failing to teach, demonstrate & reinforce democracy
  - No longstanding democratic tradition & culture & understanding
  - Dominant party rule – no serious political competition
  - Danger of tyranny of the majority – Disregard of minority fundamental rights
  - Strong state machinery in post-industrial economy leads to bureaucracy, non-accountability – Elitist tendencies & Increased centralisation

# EXAMPLES OF UNDEMOCRATIC PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS AND THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

- BUREAUCRACY & AUTOCRATIC / AUTHORITARIAN ADMINISTRATION

- Failure to expel ill-disciplined learners on recommendation of SGB

*(Pearson High school v Head of Education Department, Eastern Cape Province; Maritzburg College v C R Dlamini NO, 2005)*

- Imposition of language policies by education authorities in contravention of the rights of school governing bodies.

*(Middelburg Primary School, 2003; Mikro Primary School, 2005; Seodin Primary School, 2005; Ermelo High School ,2007-2009)*

- Undermining SGB's function to recommend appointment of educators.

*(Point High School; Settlers Agricultural High School; Observatory Girls Primary School; Laerskool Gaffie Maree; High School Carnarvon; Kimberley Girls' High School ).*

- Recentralization of power by administration.

# EXAMPLES OF UNDEMOCRATIC PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS AND THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

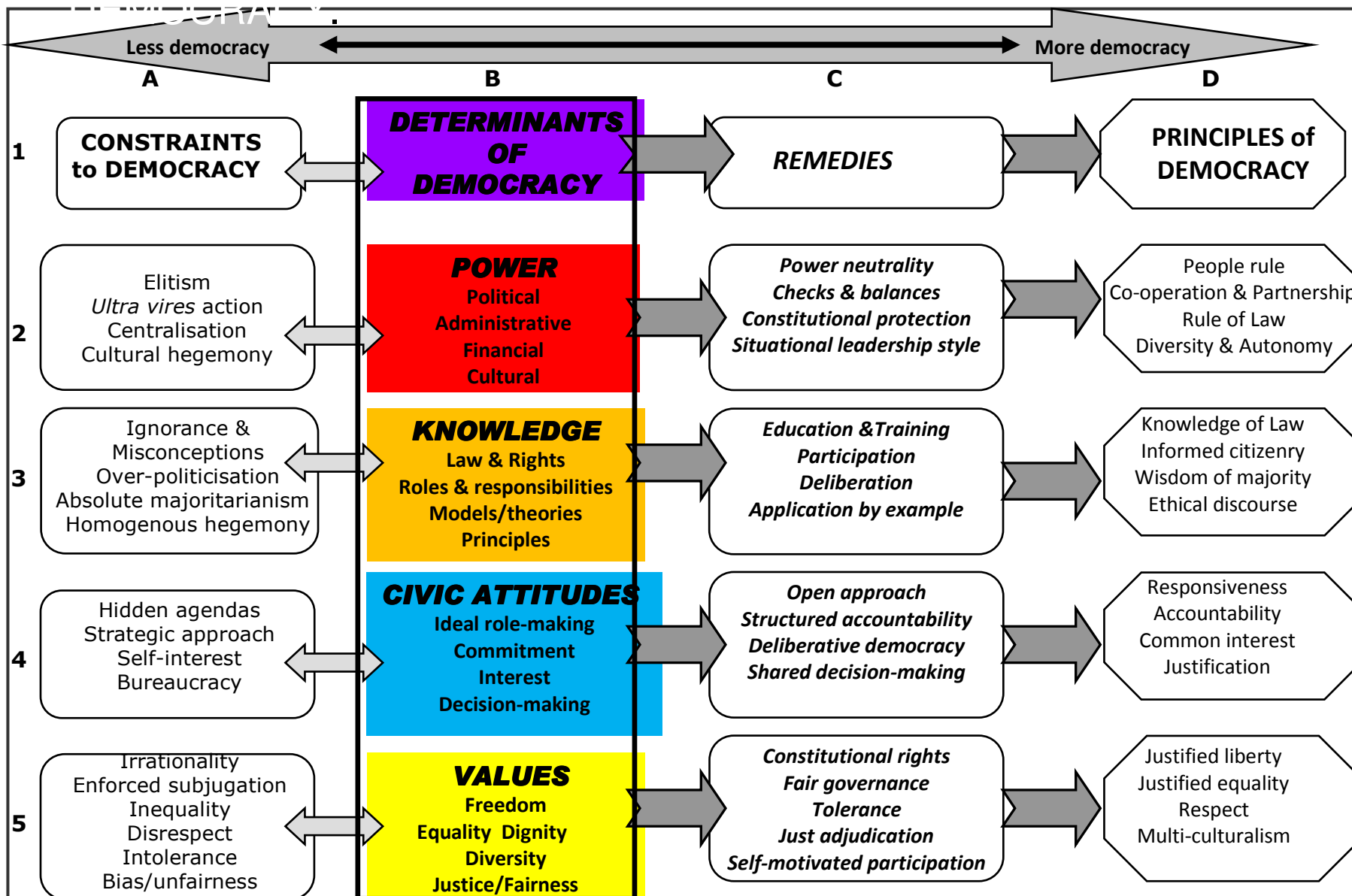
- NON-TRANSPARENCY
  - Failure to report on results
  - Non-deliberation - Failure to rationally discuss differences and/or provide justifiable reasons for decisions
- DISRESPECT OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS
- DISRESPECT FOR THE RULE OF LAW
- FAILURE TO ENABLE PARTICIPATION

# SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

# CREATING DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL CULTURES

1. RESPECT & ENFORCE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS
2. ADHERE TO THE RULE OF LAW «» avoid anarchy
3. PROVIDE DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION
4. ENABLE OPENNESS (PARTICIPATION) «» avoid elitism & bureaucracy
5. PROVIDE FORUMS FOR DELIBERATION
6. PROMOTE POWER SHARING «» avoid centralisation & elitism
7. DEMONSTRATE & APPLY DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES
8. ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY + RESPONSIVENESS + TRANSPARENCY

# Model 1: A THEORETICAL PREMISE TO IMPROVE



# Situational Leadership for School Governance

Determining the appropriate leadership role according to the situation and maturity level of followers

Relationship behaviour  
High ↑  
↓ Low SUPPORT BEHAVIOUR

Share ideas & enable decision-making  <b>PARTICIPATE</b>  Low task High relationship <b>M3</b>	Explain decisions & provide opportunity for clarification  <b>CONVINCE</b>  High task High relationship <b>M2</b>
Low task Low relationship <b>M4</b>  <b>DELEGATE</b>  Delegate all responsibility for decisions	High task Low relationship <b>M1</b>  <b>COMMAND</b>  Specific instructions & supervision of execution

← Low TASK BEHAVIOUR High →

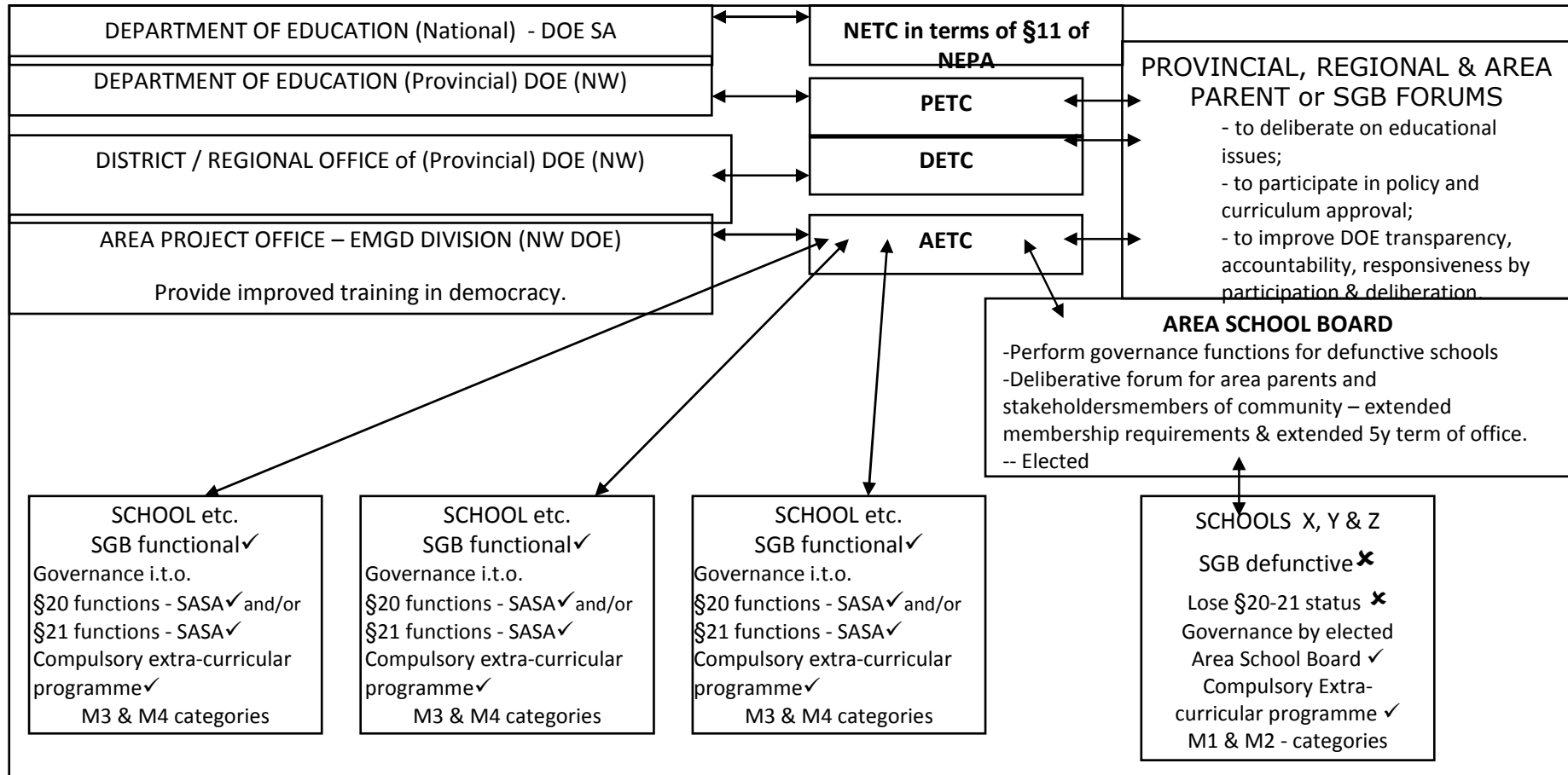
According to Hersey and Blanchard's leadership theory

## MATURITY LEVEL

M4 High	M3 Medium-High	Medium-Low M2	M1 Low
Competent & willing, motivated	Competent but unwilling or uncertain	Incompetent but willing or motivated	Incompetent & unwilling or uncertain



# The model of applied deliberative democracy for differentiated school governance.



NETC: National Education & Training Council; PETC: Provincial Education & Training Council;  
 DETC: District Education & Training Council; AETC: Area Education & Training Council;  
 SGB: School Governing Body; NEPA: National Education Policy Act.

**Education is a human right with immense power to transform. On its foundation rest the cornerstones of freedom, democracy and sustainable human development.**

**Kofi Annan**



# Thank you for attending

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