

# Quality Education News

Tel: 012-349-5006 ♦ Fax: 012-349-1232 ♦ www.saqi.co.za

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## The Editor discusses a huge excellence in Governance award ...

### Dear Friend of Quality Education

Last year was the Year of the Tiger and in education it was – at times – ferocious. The teacher strike and its impact on thousands of classrooms and staffrooms have been indelibly clawed into our memories. This is the Year of the Rabbit. Apparently, this is meant to be a quiet, gentle year in which to lick past wounds, 'chill out' and take things gently. May 2011 be a good year for you.

There's a distinctive new award that's being introduced this year. A South African award for Quality School Governance is being established. The aim is to have a Grand Prize of R100, 000 for the winning school. There are prizes of R50, 000 and R25, 000 scheduled for the runner-up and third-placed schools. All public (state) schools are most welcome to enter the competition.

The initiator of this award is Terry Booysen, Chief Executive Officer of CGF (Corporate Governance Framework) Research Institute. He is a most generous sponsor of the project. CGF advises major companies and corporations on good governance. The Institute helps organisations to be compliant with South African company law but also to be outstanding quality organisations. Mr Booysen is a Board member of the South African Quality Institute (SAQI).

At the annual Proudly South African gala event, the winning school will receive the award as well as the floating trophy. The project is officially owned by Proudly SA and patroned by CGF.



The floating Quality School Governance trophy was commissioned by the Corporate Governance Framework. Terry Booysen (right), CEO of CGF, is seen handing over the trophy to Herbert Mkhise, Acting CEO of Proudly South African.

Why did Terry Booysen initiate this Quality School Governance award? His own experience with the corporate world served as an impetus. Excellent governance in a company makes outstanding results possible. There are undoubted parallels in schools. A school that displays sound governance has the potential to be a place of great achievement and quality. Good governance results in learners, parents and staff working together to create the best possible place for education to take place. The awards aim to help schools make those necessary changes for the good of all its stakeholders.

Too often, award criteria are formulated in a way that gives advantage to certain individuals or groups. If you have the money or physical resources, you have a better chance to be a winner. That doesn't apply with the Quality School Governance awards. As Terry Booysen states:

*... the criteria will not comprise any heavy weightings placed on academic results but rather such criteria which is within the control of any public school, be they in the rural communities or urban sub centres. This has been purposefully done. The playing fields are levelled. There are no unfair, anti-competitive advantages when comparing the size, location and support of schools as they are found in different areas across South Africa.*

More details about the awards follow in this newsletter. Schools will also be informed by Proudly South African and the media. May the awards be a positive influence in acknowledging and encouraging excellence in quality school governance.

Sincerely

*Richard Hayward*



This newsletter is edited by SAQI and distributed to those schools benefiting from their participation in the MySchool programme. MySchool acts as a conduit which raises and delivers essential funding for education and social development on a sustainable basis. This enables members of the community to participate in the future development of our nation.



# Good governance and good quality go together

When there's good governance in a school, good quality education happens ... and vice-versa. Good governance impacts hugely on the education in a school. When it's absent, a school will find it very difficult to give the children the education that they deserve. There will, however, still be those schools where governance is poor but sound education takes place. That is because there are dedicated teachers who selflessly give of their best no matter how appalling the school situation.

Included in the Awards evaluation process is an assessment of the quality of education given by the school. The Quality in Education model devised by SAQI offers a guideline.



Quality in Education model (Hayward, R 2008 in *Making quality education happen: a how-to guide for every teacher*, page10)

The model has five pillars which – if built into the way the school is run – guarantee a quality organisation. Certain leadership and management principles and practices are used by all stakeholders. The five pillars are:

## 1: Values

The first pillar is the most important one. If it's not in place, true quality cannot happen. Even if the leadership is dynamic and exciting, it does not follow that it's a quality school. Core values such as honesty, integrity, respect, openness, teamwork and trust are needed. A school imbued with values would, for example, not appoint staff on the basis of 'jobs for family, favourites and friends' or political and teacher union membership.

## 2: Leadership

We are in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Yet there are still schools that are still led in a mid-1950s manner. The principal and senior management use an authoritarian, top-down leadership style. Initiative and creative thinking are discouraged. The workplace motto seems to be, 'Do uncritically and unquestioningly everything you're told. Modern leadership is very different. It encourages the sharing of ideas and teamwork, is emotionally sensitive to

each unique individual and is imbued with a spirit of servanthood. When assertive leadership is needed, it's done in a firm but non-aggressive way.

## 3: Improvement plans

Every quality-driven person and organisation is in a state of continuous improvement. What might have been brilliant five years ago might barely be OK today (think cellphones!) In a few years time it could be obsolete. Quality schools do immediate, short and long-term planning for every facet of the school. Everyone's striving to 'up their game', to improve.

## 4: Communication

Quality schools excel at communication. Information is conveyed promptly by newsletters and information circulars. A small percentage of our schools are able to also communicate by means of SMSs and the website.

Every communication is a relationship. Think of the ways that a teacher could talk to a child or parent. That communication could be warm, encouraging, and respectful or it could be abusive, insulting, patronising ... and many more ways. Quality schools 'walk the talk' of open communication. There are communication channels for folk – whatever their age – to voice their concerns, needs and yes, even wants!

## 5: Tools and techniques

John Donne stated that, "no man is an island." Neither is a school. For a school to excel, it needs the support of others beyond the school gates. It needs to adapt the tools and techniques used by organisations outside education that have improved their own quality. Examples of such techniques that improve school quality are: benchmarking, brainstorming, De Bono thinking skills and quality circles. These techniques cost virtually nothing to implement but are worth a fortune in achieving quality.



# At what level is your Board/School Governing Body (SGB)?

Every Board of Governors or SGB is in a state of continuous change. The quality of its school governance is either progressing or regressing. Even in the same school, the organisational climate changes as members move on and off the Board. A new Chair or Principal/Head of School can make a huge impact to the overall interpersonal 'vibe' and professional effectiveness of the Board.

Each member should have competencies which they are able to offer to help fellow governors and the school. Examples would be building construction, financial management, fundraising and labour law. Whatever their different contributions every member should have a set of values that align with those of the school.

Boards have different levels of effectiveness (doing the right things) and efficiency (doing things right). If you serve on a Board you might like to ascertain its present level of effectiveness. The evaluation grid has been adapted from Ram Charan's book titled *Boards that deliver* (ISBN 0-7879-7139-1). The original grid was for use in the corporate world.

The effectiveness levels of Boards /SGBs			
	Level 1 - Ceremonial	Level 2 - Liberated	Level 3 - Progressive
<b>Group dynamics</b>	<p>The Chair or Principal is all-powerful. Everyone else is passive.</p> <p>There is no meaningful dialogue.</p> <p>The framework is rigid and unbending.</p> <p>Leadership is autocratic and authoritarian.</p>	<p>Governors are free to speak up but dialogue is fragmented. There's a lack of focus.</p> <p>A few governors overstep the boundaries as to what should be discussed.</p> <p>The framework is open and at times, a free-for-all.</p> <p>Leadership is free-rein or laissez faire.</p> <p>Members go off at a tangent thereby wasting energy.</p> <p>Most of the time no meaningful decisions are reached.</p> <p>Board pledges to improve its' effectiveness but does not do rigorous self-evaluation.</p>	<p>Mutual respect between school leadership and other governors.</p> <p>One or two governors emerge as facilitators to channel lively debates.</p> <p>The framework is semi-rigid.</p> <p>Leadership is democratic but - when necessary - assertive.</p> <p>True consensus is reached through open, honest and values-driven debates of key issues.</p> <p>Self-evaluation takes place to achieve continuous improvement.</p> <p>Governors take the results seriously and act on them</p>
<b>Supply of information</b>	<p>School leadership tightly controls information flow.</p> <p>Often the right amount of information is not given. It's either too little or too much.</p> <p>Information is summarised at a complex level and presentations are too long. Confusion can result and members might feel inadequate about not understanding issues.</p>	<p>School leadership willingly makes information available.</p> <p>However, leadership is frustrated by <i>ad hoc</i> demands of certain governors that leave them scrambling to get information which isn't always necessary.</p> <p>Board asks for more information but what they get is not presented well. Information provided doesn't help them understand the core issues.</p>	<p>Information is digestible, focused, regular and timely.</p> <p>School leadership anticipates the information needed by the Board.</p> <p>The governors understand the way in which the school is run as well as relevant education legislation.</p>
<b>Focus on substantive issues</b>	<p>The focus is on compliance only.</p> <p>Usually rubber-stamps the chair or principal's decisions.</p>	<p>Board wants to make a contribution but is overwhelmed by issues.</p> <p>It becomes driven by compliance and routine issues.</p> <p>Little or no 'breakthrough' leadership.</p>	<p>Board and principal jointly set agendas.</p> <p>Regular meetings are held (more than prescribed minimum, if needed).</p> <p>Board focuses on issues that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Value-added</li> <li>Able to achieve long-term sustainable success</li> <li>Compliance related</li> </ul>



The late Dr Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert (left) presented Dr Richard Hayward with a copy of *Making quality education happen: a how-to guide for every teacher*. One of the many positions that Van Zyl Slabbert held was non-executive Chairman of Caxton and CTP Printers. He most generously sponsored the printing of Hayward's book. To date, there have been 18,000 copies of the 20,000 print-run distributed across the country. Van Zyl Slabbert's practical gesture of goodwill has helped to further spread one of his noble goals for South Africa: quality education for all its children.

## A free Quality read

Back numbers of QEN can be downloaded from two sites. The first site is [www.MySchool.co.za](http://www.MySchool.co.za). On the home page, click on 'Services'. Then go to 'Quality Education News'. The second site is [www.saqi.co.za](http://www.saqi.co.za). Click on 'Education'. All the newsletters are at the end of the section.

## An almost free Quality read

If you would like a copy of *Making quality education happen: a how-to guide for every teacher* posted to you, please contact Richard Hayward. His contact details are 011-888-3262 or [rpdhayward@yahoo.com](mailto:rpdhayward@yahoo.com). The book is sent by registered post and costs R 35 by EFT or R41 by bank deposit.

## Are you a member of SAQI?

'Walk the talk' of Quality. Become a member. The annual membership fees are considerably less than those charged to businesses and corporations. Yet the benefits are the same. SAQI has a fee structure that is mindful and sensitive to the financial situation of schools. Please speak to either Vanessa du Toit or Paul Harding on 012-349-5006. You'll be pleasantly surprised!

## Continuous Professional Development

Quality schools, district, regional and provincial head offices are in a state of continuous professional development. SAQI facilitates a number of programmes including education – focussed ones. Examples of such programmes are:

- Dealing with complaints and difficult parents
- Five pillars of a Quality school: Total Quality Education
- Goal setting: turning Quality theory into practice
- How do you rate yourself as a Quality leader?
- How your leadership style impacts on change management
- Is there a bully in the staffroom?
- Values for a Quality school
- "What can I do? The children are impossible to teach!"
- "Why should we change? Everything's working OK!"



Workshops are done in all nine provinces. Poor schools are sponsored. For more details, kindly contact either Vanessa du Toit on 012-349-5006 ([vanessa@saqi.co.za](mailto:vanessa@saqi.co.za)) or Richard Hayward on 011-888-3262 ([rpdhayward@yahoo.com](mailto:rpdhayward@yahoo.com))