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MODULE SEVEN

UNIT ONE

Defining the Parameters of School Governance

Introduction

The success of every school depends on the way it is managed. The need for the efficient management of schools has placed much more emphasis on the nature and quality of the work of the head as the leader of a team of professional educators, and as the manager of the supply and effective use of resources (human, financial and material). The head therefore needs to gain clear understanding of all the forces and factors which contribute towards governance of the school.

Individual study time: 1 hour

Learning outcomes

After working through this unit, you should be able to:

- define the parameters of school governance
- name the main laws and regulations within the context of which your school operates
- identify the various bodies which have a part to play in the governance of your school.

The head, even as the chief executive of the school, does not act alone or on his own authority, but rather carries out his assignments within the context of laws, regulations, administrative instructions and directives originating from the government, which, as the representative of the people, has the original authority to determine the type of education a country should provide for its citizens.

Schools, whether public or private institutions, also have a number of stake-holders in their activities. Their governance is therefore done through a coalition of interests working together, but performing different functions, all aimed at enabling each school to operate and to achieve its aims and objectives. The head, who as the chief executive is responsible for directing and overseeing the day to day activities of the school, must know what agencies, groups and individuals, constitute this coalition of interests.

Laws, regulations and instructions

Activity 1.1

Consider the different types of laws, regulations and instructions within the context

of which your school is run, and list them.

(Note: You may not have seen all of those you list, but only be aware of them.)

15 minutes

Comments

We hope that the list you have produced includes laws, regulations and instructions such as:

- education acts, decrees or ordinances
- by-laws on education
- legislative instruments
- executive instruments
- policy guidelines
- administrative instructions and directives.

It would be valuable for you to check with other heads, and with the District Education Officer, how complete your answer is. Obtain (perhaps from your District Education Officer) a list of the laws, regulations and instructions which relate to your school. Ensure that your school has a copy of each relevant document available for reference.

We must realise that, in the first place, schools are established and operate within the context of laws, regulations and other legislative and executive instruments passed by government to give direction as to the way formal education in a country should be organised. These laws and regulations are operationalised through policy guidelines which issue from the Ministry of Education and other authorities in the form of administrative instructions and directives.

Who is involved in the governance of schools?

Activity 1.2

Write down a list of as many bodies and groups as you can think of, who have a part to play in the governance of your school.

15 minutes

Comments

The list you have put down probably includes:

- the National Assembly
- the Ministry of Education
- the Regional, State or Provincial Education Authority
- the District or Local Government Education Authority
- the board of governors or management committee
- staff and pupils
- parents
- former pupils
- the immediate community, including employers, religious and traditional leaders, etc.

Again, it is important to realise that governments exercise their responsibility for providing education for their people through their Ministries of Education and other bodies and authorities at the regional, state or provincial and district levels. These different bodies, units and agencies all have a part to play in the governance of schools.

Also, schools as public institutions in which there are a number of stake-holders, cannot be allowed to be run only by the paid staff led by the head according to their own inclinations. Yet it is not possible for all the stake-holders and the public to be there to oversee the running of a school. To represent the interest of stake-holders and the public at large in overseeing the way each school is run, a board of governors or a management committee is set up.

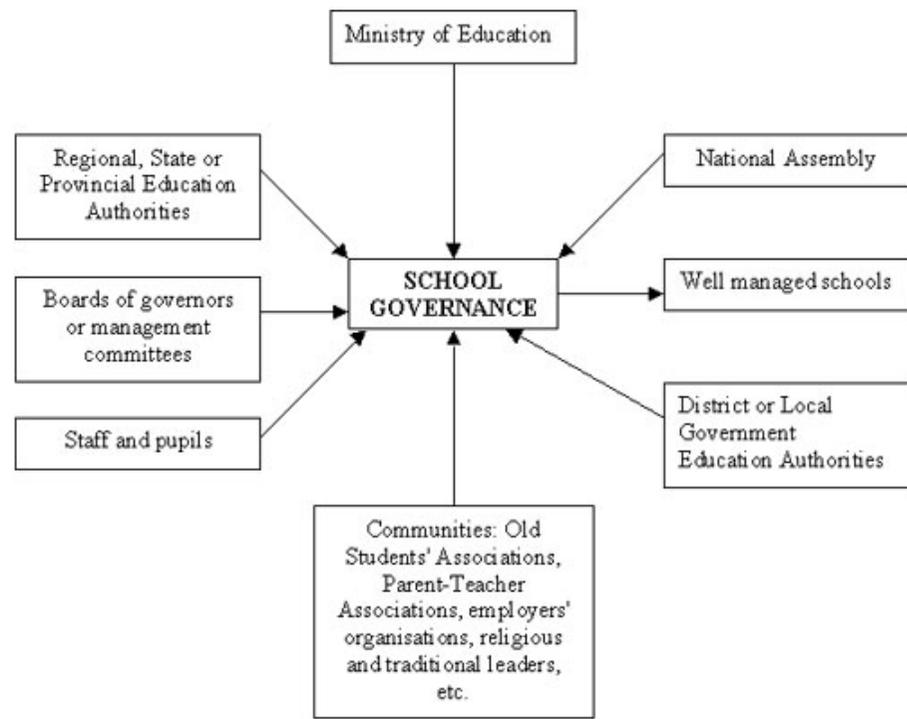
The school community itself, comprising the staff and pupils, constitutes the immediate group of people with whom the head is in constant touch. For efficient, effective and democratic management of a school, these members of the immediate community must participate in its administration. Thus, the staff and pupils of each school bear a part in its governance through various mechanisms.

Furthermore, the influence of the larger community in which the school is situated, is becoming increasingly important in the way a school is operated. This larger community is itself made up of different components, such as employers, religious and traditional leaders, and these groups in their different ways may play important parts in supporting the school. They therefore should bear a part in the governance of the school.

Summary

In this introductory unit, we have looked broadly at what the concept of school governance embraces; namely the laws and regulations within whose context schools operate and the various bodies, agencies and groups who all bear a part in the governance of schools. These relationships are summarised in Fig 1 and are explored more fully in the units which follow.

Fig 1 The parameters of school governance



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