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cooperative school governance

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GOVERNING BODY FOUNDATION
National Office

CEO: Dr Anthea Cereseto
Tel: 011 886 0031
Cell: +27 82 610 5756
Email: ceo@gbf.org.za
Web: www.gbf.org.za

Undercurrents

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be available. This will be a sticking point. The GBF, however, opposed the compulsory submission of the admission and language policies for approval within thirty days of the amendment coming into effect. The timeline is too short and the PED does not have the capacity to approve all the policies. Also, schools should be allowed to determine their policies, within the restrictions of the legislation applicable. Where school's policies are found to be incorrect, the PED can draw the SGB's attention to these matters at that stage.

The GBF rejected the duty imposed on SGBs to monitor school attendance. This is an operational matter and falls under the responsibility of the principal and the HOD of the PED. It also rejected the requirement for SGB members to declare their financial interests. There are other ways of preventing the mischief that this amendment seeks to address, for example, by means of recusal as required in terms of SASA section 26(1).

The Constitution provides for concurrent national and provincial legislative competence. We drew attention to some areas of school operation that would be best regulated at a national level to avoid the disparities between provinces that cause confusion and provincial over-reach, for example, the appointment of staff, the management of school finances, and the SGB election process.

While the GBF supports the inclusion of Grade R in compulsory basic education, this amendment could not come into operation until Grade R can be properly funded and fully resourced. At the moment there are not enough posts, qualified teachers, classrooms and learning materials available in the system—or the finances to provide them.

We emphasised the need for a reasonable timeframe for submitting documents and endorsed the amendment that stated approval would be deemed if there were no PED response after 60 days. The GBF would like that provision to be included whenever schools are required to lodge documents. We also stated that that the timeframe for PEDs to respond to all applications that schools were required to make should be 14 days and that if no response were received within 14 days, approval should be deemed. I don't know whether we will win this battle but it would certainly make life easier for schools to do their work lawfully.

We rejected the requirement for a quorum at the various meetings dealing with school finances and the budget. While we understand why