

## **Distributed Leadership Towards' School Improvement: Case Study in South African Schools**

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**ABSTRACT** A common thread in contemporary research on principal leadership is the ways in which principals take important decisions. These decisions have become increasingly more complex in a system of school-based management. The concept of shared or distributive leadership becomes vital in the process. Distributed leadership implies that leadership is not held by one leader only, but leadership roles are distributed among the rest of the school management team. The purpose of this paper, based on a qualitative case study in a few South African schools, was to explore how effective distributed leadership contributes to school improvement. Ethnographic interviews were conducted with principals from five (n=5) purposefully selected effective or functional schools in a school district in the KwaZulu-Natal province to establish the perspectives of participants on the place and role of distributive leadership in school improvement. The outcomes of this paper show that distributive leadership serves as a significant contributor to school improvement in functional schools and are of importance to all educational managers as they will be able to provide schools with guidelines to increase positive perceptions regarding the role of distributed leadership in school improvement.