

## **The Principal as a Distributed Leader: Supporting Change and Improving South African Schools**

**R. J. (Nico) Botha<sup>1</sup> and P. K. (Paul) Triegaardt<sup>2</sup>**

*<sup>1</sup>Department of Education Leadership and Management, College of Education,  
University of South Africa, P.O Box 392, Pretoria, 0003, South Africa*

*<sup>2</sup>P.O Box 57476, Madinat Zayed Region, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates  
E-mail: <sup>1</sup><botharj@unisa.ac.za>, <sup>2</sup><p\_triegaardt@hotmail.co.uk>*

**KEYWORDS** Moving Schools. School Improvement. School Leadership. School Principal

**ABSTRACT** Prospects for the development and improvement of schools through exceptional principal leadership alone have proven to be both impractical and insecure. The idea of leadership distributed across a group of stakeholders has proven to be a useful framework for understanding the realities of schools and how schools might be improved. In this paper, based on a qualitative study, five South African school principals express their experiences on distributed leadership and give insights on how the distribution of leadership can support change and improve schools. The principals participating in this paper sought to focus their daily routines on the distribution of leadership tasks to ensure an improvement in school effectiveness and, subsequently, in academic outcomes. The paper concludes with recommendations on how so-called 'stuck' schools can be improved via effective distributed leadership into 'moving' schools.