

## **Participative Decision-making: Perceptions of School Stakeholders in South Africa**

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**ABSTRACT** Participative decision-making has increasingly become the agreed-upon model around the world for the operation of schools, particularly those in the public education systems. A critical element of the model is devolving enhanced levels of decision-making from the centre (head office) to schools. While this reform is viewed as a positive step, policy based on democratic principles takes some time to filter down to rural schools. The research on which this article is based aimed at investigating the extent to which rural schools understand, perceive and implement participative decision-making (PDM). The inquiry followed a qualitative approach. The findings highlighted achievements in these schools and factors that hindered the proper implementation of PDM. This research recommended that principals should create a space for debate and dialogue for all stakeholders to participate sufficiently in the school governing body (SGB) structure. Such a platform would allow stakeholders to air out their dissatisfaction and ensure their right to participation on issues dealing with school governance.