

The Role of Distributed Leadership in Functional 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 this process. The purpose of this article, based on a comparative qualitative case study, was to explore how effective distributed leadership contributes to school improvement. Ethnographic interviews were conducted with principals from five purposefully selected functional schools in the South African province of KwaZulu-Natal to establish the perspectives of participants on the role of distributive leadership in school improvement. The outcomes of this study 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 all types of schools with guidelines to increase positive perceptions regarding the role of distributed leadership in school improvement.