



## The need for an Understanding of Education Law Principles by School Principals

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Principals and teachers work in increasingly uncertain and challenging environments involving complex legislative frameworks. The roles and responsibilities of principals and teachers are changing to meet new demands and capabilities that require educators to adapt and acquire new knowledge and skills relating to child protection and aspects of criminal law to as an essential component of managing the school environment. They are being challenged on a daily basis to critically examine and evaluate the legal rights and obligations of various stakeholders, including students and parents, educators and administrators associated with the role of management within schools. The literature indicates that legislative structures, including the constitution, legislation and rulings and common law arising from them, have had significant impact on corporate governance of schools. Similarly, studies indicate that the influence of legislative structures as a determinant in decision-making in the school environment have become an increasing concern for school principals that may impact on other aspects of school decision-making including curriculum and pedagogy. The moves towards standards and accountability and distributed models of leadership have also influenced governance of schools and increased the complexity of responsibilities and expectations of school leadership. The implications are significant if principals are deterred from pursuing innovative educative strategies due to potential litigation risks.