

## Enhancing Learner Achievement through Effective School Leadership: Experiences from Selected Rural Schools in South Africa

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**ABSTRACT** The role of school leadership in the South African educational context has become incredibly complex and its effectiveness needs to be investigated. The roles of school principals are expanding as a consequence of the devolution of powers from local, regional or national bureaucracies to school level. Such devolution increases complexity in the role of principals. The goal of this qualitative study was to explore the roles of school principals in enhancing learner achievement in schools. Premised on the qualitative research approach, a purposive sampling technique was used to select 6 schools identified by district education officials as having performed well for the past five years and seen as having effective leadership. The findings reveal that effective leadership in schools is vital if schools are to succeed in providing good learning opportunities. The findings reinforce recent literature that defines leadership as a shared social influence that enhances goal achievement.