

**The effect of school strategic planning on enhancing students' academic performance a  
case of karatu district**

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This study explored effect of school strategic plans on enhancing students' academic performance in secondary schools. It was conducted in four secondary schools in Karatu District, Arusha region. Specifically the study addressed how school design and implement strategic plans in secondary schools, key areas of effective designing and implementation, the contribution of school strategic plans to students' performance and investigated challenges they encountered when designing and implementing school strategic plans and how can be overcome. Using a case study design the study employed both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. All in all 77 respondents took part in the study comprising of one district education officer, four heads of schools, 24 teachers and 48 students. Data were collected using documentary review, interviews, focus group discussion and questionnaire. Sample was selected using purposive and simple random sampling. Data analysis was done using content analysis and SPSS version 20. Themes were identified, codified and tables, and figures used to present the data collected. The study findings revealed that general academic performance for schools that had strategic plans implemented after class hours and during class periods performed better compare to those who did not have any effort for implementation, apart from class hour's periods. Moreover, the two best performing schools had a system of conducting weekly tests and remedial teaching. The other two worst performing schools had no effective implementation of weekly tests and remedial teaching and had no specific plan for national examination classes. This means strategic planning ensures that the learners receive quality education in terms of academic achievements. In these schools strategic plans in place were designed and originated from teachers hence reducing students and parents into mere recipients and implementers. Challenges of designing and implementing school strategic plans include shortage of teaching and learning materials, poor parents cooperation, lack of resources such as buildings, shortage of fund and absence of motivation to support good implementation practices. Generally, the school strategic plans were not well-implemented in terms of teaching activities such as remedial classes, weekly tests, students' follow-up, awareness and cooperation among all stakeholders in order to in enhancing the students' academic performance. It is therefore, been recommended that

enough fund and co-operation with all stakeholders should highly concerned for effective and efficient of strategic school design and implementation. Also, the government should ensure resources are adequately available in schools to ensure teaching and learning enhance students' academic performance, as well as equip teachers with professional and strategic planning knowledge through in-service training for effective planning to take place.