

A strategic plan is a management tool for organizing the present on the basis of the projections of the desired future. While strategic planning has been emphasized in many organizations, not much attention has been given to school strategic planning. Yet, school management is a complex process that requires committed and visionary leadership. There have been concerns expressed by government bureaucrats, politicians and a big proportion of the public over what they perceive as lack of and/or inadequate planning practices in schools. The result has been haphazard planning techniques that result in poor prioritization and failure to use the meagre resources available for the right projects. Headteachers seldom involve teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders in making decisions regarding school growth and management. As a result of poor planning, most schools fail to achieve their goals and objectives, and this was reflected through poor academic performance. This study aimed at finding out the effects of strategic planning in effective management of secondary schools in Kericho District. The study employed a descriptive survey research design, targeting all the 36 public secondary schools in Kericho District. Purposive sampling was used to select B.O.G members and teachers. The study sample comprised 36 headteachers, 36 teachers and 36 BoG members. The study utilized questionnaires and interview schedules for data collection. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the quantitative data and the analyzed data was reported using frequency distributions, means and percentages. Analysis of variance test was used to establish the effects of strategic planning on school management effectiveness. The study established that only 31.3% of the schools had prepared strategic plans schools, 21.9% had never prepared strategic plans, while 46.9% were in the process of developing them. Analysis of variance test results indicated that schools with strategic plans were doing significantly better in effective management than those without strategic plans. The main factors that affected strategic planning in the schools were lack of training for headteachers and teachers, lack of strategic planning skills, lack of time due to heavy teaching workload, lack of adequate support from key stakeholders, frequent transfer of headteachers, headteachers not being visionary, and lack of finances to fund the process of strategic planning. Lack of strategic planning was making most of the schools miss out on the benefits of effective planning, which were identified as aiding in establishment of good school infrastructure, helping improve human resource management, enabling schools to properly utilize resources, improvement of discipline of students, and improvement in academic performance. The study recommends that the government should organize intensive training courses on strategic planning for headteachers and other personnel involved in school planning so as to equip them with skills for effective planning. School managers should sensitize B.O.G members, PTA members, teachers, local leaders and community members on the importance of strategic plans and mobilize their support in preparation and implementation of strategic plans. The government should ensure that school funds are released on time and that strategic planning mandatory as a condition for government funding. The Ministry of Education should consider reducing the workload for headteachers by relieving them of their teaching duties so that they can concentrate on planning and monitoring the implementation of strategic plans.