

PEDAGOGICAL POLITICAL PROJECT AND THE PARTICIPATION OF THE STUDENT UNION: AUTONOMY OR TUTELAGE OF ACTIONS?

PROJETO POLÍTICO PEDAGÓGICO E A PARTICIPAÇÃO DO GRÊMIO ESTUDANTIL: AUTONOMIA OU TUTELAMENTO DAS AÇÕES?

PROYECTO POLÍTICO PEDAGÓGICO Y PARTICIPACIÓN DEL SINDICATO DE ESTUDIANTES: ¿AUTONOMÍA O TUTELA DE LAS ACCIONES?



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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze how the Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP) of two public schools considers the participation of the student council as a tool for developing autonomy among its members. It adopts the following question as its guiding principle: Is it possible to identify elements within the PPPs of schools that indicate actions to be carried out by the participants of the Student Council in a way that contributes to the development of student participation and autonomy? To this end, the methodological approach adopted was a review of the literature (authors and academic publications) on the subject, the selection of two Political-Pedagogical Projects for reading the proposed actions, and a documentary analysis of these projects. The results achieved indicate that although the PPPs of the schools surveyed list democratic principles of participation and document that they prioritize these, in the associations this does not occur freely and autonomously on the part of the students. The existing associations operate in a fragmented manner, given that student actions are established in accordance with the opinions of the management team, which leads us to note a weakness both in effective student participation, with a view to exercising citizen autonomy in school spaces, and in the continued low representativeness of student councils in public schools.

Keywords: Pedagogical Political Project. Student Guild. Student Participation.

RESUMO

O artigo em tela tem como objetivo analisar como o Projeto Político-Pedagógico (PPP) de duas escolas públicas contempla a participação do grêmio estudantil enquanto instrumento de desenvolvimento de autonomia pelos sujeitos que o integram. Adota como questionamento norteador a seguinte inquietação: É possível identificar no interior dos PPP das escolas elementos que indiquem ações a serem realizadas pelos sujeitos participantes do Grêmio Estudantil de maneira que contribua para o desenvolvimento da participação e

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autonomia discente? Para isso, adotou-se como percurso metodológico a revisão de literatura (autores e produções acadêmicas) que versam sobre o assunto, seleção de dois Projetos Políticos Pedagógicos para leitura das ações propostas e a análise documental dos mesmos. Os resultados alcançados indicam que apesar do PPP das escolas pesquisadas elencar princípios democráticos de participação e documentarem que primam por estes, nas agremiações esta não ocorre de maneira livre e com autonomia por parte dos estudantes. As agremiações existentes possuem sua atuação de maneira fragmentada, haja vista as ações estudantis são estabelecidas em acordo com os pareceres da equipe gestora, o que nos leva a constatar uma fragilidade tanto na participação estudantil efetiva, com vias ao exercício da autonomia cidadã em espaços escolares quanto a permanência da pouca representatividade dos grêmios estudantis em escolas públicas.

Palavras-chave: Projeto Político Pedagógico. Grêmio Estudantil. Participação Discente.

RESUMEN

El presente artículo tiene como objetivo analizar cómo el Proyecto Político-Pedagógico (PPP) de dos escuelas públicas contempla la participación del consejo estudiantil como instrumento de desarrollo de la autonomía de los sujetos que lo integran. Adopta como pregunta orientadora la siguiente inquietud: ¿Es posible identificar en el interior de los PPP de las escuelas elementos que indiquen acciones a ser realizadas por los sujetos participantes del Consejo Estudiantil de manera que contribuyan al desarrollo de la participación y la autonomía estudiantil? Para ello, se adoptó como metodología la revisión de la literatura (autores y producciones académicas) que trata el tema, la selección de dos Proyectos Político-Pedagógicos para la lectura de las acciones propuestas y el análisis documental de los mismos. Los resultados obtenidos indican que, a pesar de que el PPP de las escuelas investigadas enumera principios democráticos de participación y documenta que estos prevalecen, en las asociaciones esto no ocurre de manera libre y con autonomía por parte de los estudiantes. Las asociaciones existentes actúan de manera fragmentada, ya que las acciones estudiantiles se establecen de acuerdo con las opiniones del equipo directivo, lo que nos lleva a constatar una fragilidad tanto en la participación estudiantil efectiva, con vistas al ejercicio de la autonomía ciudadana en los espacios escolares, como en la permanencia de la escasa representatividad de los consejos estudiantiles en las escuelas públicas.

Palabras clave: Proyecto Político Pedagógico. Gremio Estudiantil. Participación Estudiantil.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP) is the macro document of a school unit. And because it is the epicenter of the actions to be developed in the school, it has as one of the structural elements the interaction of the school and local community, through pedagogical actions aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning of students. In addition, it is the guiding document that should express what concept of Education believes, the mission of the school, the pedagogical current that guides it and how school management will enable the effectiveness of participation mechanisms, thus consolidating democracy in the educational establishment (Veiga, 1995; Vasconcellos, 2006).

In this sense, observing the effectiveness of democratic principles and mechanisms, the PPP must be prepared with the participation of all segments and the school community, including the various subjects interested in improving the quality of education: teachers, parents, management team, financial team, other servers and students, being able to participate in this democratic process of elaboration of the most important school document, also through Grêmio representation.

The article in question aims to analyze how the Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP) of two public schools contemplates the participation of the student council as an instrument for the development of autonomy by the subjects that integrate it. It adopts as a guiding question the following concern: Is it possible to identify within the PPPs of schools (municipal and state) elements that indicate actions to be carried out by the subjects participating in the Student Council in a way that contributes to the development of student participation and autonomy?

To answer this question, the methodological path was adopted the literature review (authors and academic productions) that deal with the subject, selection of two Pedagogical Political Projects to read the proposed actions and the identification of points related to the actions directed to the activities to be carried out by the student council of the same. In the table below, we explain our understanding of the methodological instruments: bibliographic review and document analysis.

Table 1

Methodological path used to write this article

Literature Review	Document Analysis
It is elaborated from all the bibliography already made public in relation to the theme of study. It consists mainly of books, journal articles and currently with articles and periodicals available on the Internet. This type of research is common in any area of knowledge	Made from materials that have not received analytical treatment. Documentary analysis differs from bibliographic research due to the nature of the sources. The documents are rich and stable sources of data, not requiring contact with the research subjects. Thus, documents, research reports, statistical tables, autobiographies, regulations, laws, notarial documents, norms, opinions, letters, memoranda, personal diaries, etc. are considered.

Source: Tenfen, Tenfen and Korah (2018, p. 33-34)

Thus, as shown in the table, we understand that the bibliographic review and the documentary analysis complement each other, enabling a greater understanding of the concern: *Is it possible to identify within the PPPs of the schools (municipal and state) elements that indicate actions to be carried out by the subjects participating in the student council in a way that contributes to the development of student participation and autonomy?*

It is worth informing that the theoretical contribution of this work is based on authors such as: Veiga (1995; 2007); Vasconcellos (2006), Brito (2022), Hora (2012), Antunes (2002), Muñoz (2004), Brito, Miranda and Sousa (2023), as well as Carvalho and Lagares (2022). The researchers referred to express in their propositions the importance of the implementation of the PPP built in the collective, that students (represented in student unions) need to develop their citizenship formation by participating in the decision-making processes of the school in which the school and local community, through their participation in the review and implementation of this considerable document, contribute to the elucidation of democratic processes in the school environment.

This article is organized into four parts. Starting with this Introduction, followed by two sections and ending with Final Considerations. In the first section, reinforcing conceptual arguments are presented about the relevance of the PPP as the epicenter of the school's pedagogical actions, striving for collective participation both for its elaboration and in the effectiveness of the actions listed, mechanisms that promote democratic processes within the school and that implement in a procedural way the active participation of the school community, place and students, always remembering that this process is also marked by tensions and debates that enhance the construction of this manuscript.

In the second section, the documentary analysis undertaken in the PPPs of a municipal and a state school is presented, identifying the occurrence of relationships between the current legislative actions with the guarantee of the implementation/performance of the associations in the school units. Finally, in the Final Considerations, the findings resulting from the study undertaken, with ways to exercise citizen autonomy in school spaces, highlighting the role of the student council.

2 THE POLITICAL-PEDAGOGICAL PROJECT AS THE EPICENTER OF DEMOCRATIC ACTIONS IN THE SCHOOL UNIT

Democracy is not built only with discourse (Antunes, 2002, p. 67).

The title of this section begins with a word (which in our view) is of paramount importance in the field of geological studies regarding earthquakes, "epicenter", (Dourado, 2020) and which, according to the Michaelis Dictionary (online), originates in the area of Geology studies and refers to the "point on the earth's surface hit first and most intensely by seismic waves". Considering the PPP as the central document for the organization of an educational institution, it can be understood as the epicenter of the pedagogical, financial and administrative actions that should be developed in the school. These, in turn, should promote a movement (generating a seismic shock), that is, in all the dimensions that make up the schools, aiming at improving the quality of teaching and effective democratic management.

Thus, the elaboration and implementation of the PPP goes through periods of collective construction, mobilization in the participation of various segments and subjects that work in the school unit such as: management team, teachers, local community, parents and students. It is through this representative plurality that this document becomes the legal instrument within the school unit that regulates all the action of the school team. In this regard, Vasconcellos (2006, p. 169) conceptualizes the Political-Pedagogical Project as being:

[...] the institution's overall plan. It can be understood as the systematization, never definitive, of a participatory planning process, which is perfected and concretized in the journey that clearly defines the type of educational action that one wants to carry out. It is a theoretical-methodological instrument for intervention and change in reality. It is an element of organization and integration of the institution's practical activity in this transformation process.

As mentioned by the author cited above, the global and integral planning of a school institution involves the collective elaboration of the PPP, which takes place in a participatory way, not ordinary but daily, carrying out a review whenever necessary so that its implementation does not materialize with an autocratic-bureaucratic character, centered only

on the school team to the detriment of the participation of the local and student community (Vasconcellos, 2006).

Another interesting perspective is that of Veiga (1995, p. 13), when he clarifies that the PPP provides "the democratic experience necessary for the participation of all members of the school community and the exercise of citizenship". By enabling the participation and exercise of citizenship in a democratic way, it favors the organization of the pedagogical, financial and administrative work of the school aiming at the elimination of centralizing attitudes in educational institutions, aligned by the school manager and his team. In this way, when this document is built by several hands, implemented and reviewed annually (or with another periodicity) by the entire school and local community, the bureaucratic routine of the school is defragmented and allows the subjects involved to know the school routine, its strengths, weaknesses in order to solve the problems detected throughout the school year.

This, to a certain extent, also impels us to recognize that putting into effect democratic and participatory principles in the school environment is not a simple task as it is sometimes presented in the discourse, given that exercising mechanisms of participation aiming at the development of democratic actions among the subjects directly and indirectly present in school practices, involves tensions and contradictions, in addition to being an exhausting work full of conflicts (Beane and Apple, 1997).

In the same direction, Hora (2012, p. 20) points out that "the consolidation of democratic management within the school is not a spontaneous and easy process". Despite the existing obstacles to the effectiveness of democratic management, the PPP of an educational institution becomes the preamble that consolidates the participation of the community, contributing to the implementation of a political and citizen culture of the participants in this process of collective construction. Regarding the process of elaboration of the PPP, Hora (2012, p. 53) points out that:

Elaborating the political-pedagogical project of a school means mobilizing the entire school community around a great movement that aims at the global transformation of the school: a work that identifies the real conditions of the school and also the ideal working conditions for all.

Thus, it is important to emphasize that the collective construction of the PPP in Brazilian educational institutions is a legal achievement, resulting from struggles and discussions in the period of redemocratization of the country, which began in the 1980s. The participation of the local community and students in the school's decision-making processes is widely referenced in legislative actions such as: Federal Constitution (1998, Article 206, Item VI), Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education (LDB - Law No. 9,394/1996, Article 3,

item VIII; Article 14) and in the National Education Plan (PNE-Law No. 13,005/2015, Goal 19). Although there is all the legal apparatus that supports and suggests the participation of the community in the school's actions, Veiga (2007, p. 115) points out that:

It is impossible for the existence of the law - by itself - to democratize the management of the school, that is, the law is an important instrument for democratization, but in isolation it does not direct democracy and participation; for this, it is necessary to have policies that make them viable. It is interesting to consider that the legal mechanisms aim to guarantee the space for processes of collective deliberation on the pedagogical practice of the school, as something instituted. If the mechanisms are decreed, the school needs to be open to the construction of the space for the exercise of autonomy (emphasis added).

In view of the above, it is understood that the legislative actions enacted in the federative spheres are important for the effectiveness of democratic management in school units, but these alone do not guarantee that management will excel in the democratic and participatory principles of the local community. Brito *et al.* (2022, p. 220) reinforce that "the path to democracy is a daily construction that requires participation, debate, dialogue, respect for the different, and the establishment of horizontal conditions for its implementation".

With this, it is understood that the participation in the elaboration and discussions of the actions provided for in the PPP cannot be the responsibility of the school manager and his team alone, but if it occurs, the adoption of centralized actions such as this one, will demonstrate that school management does not excel in democratic principles, evidencing a school organization still centered on the perpetuation of autocratic principles, that permeate capitalist society, expressing the tendency of stratified social divisions and maintenance of power in the hands of the dominant class (Hora, 2012; Carvalho and Lagares, 2022).

Thus, it is emphasized that in order to transcend managerialist practices in the educational sphere, the school team must foster elucidatory practices that lead to democratic management, through the daily reflection of actions that promote the participatory process of the school community, both local and of students in the instances of collective deliberations (Brito *et al.*, 2022), and it is necessary not only to limit oneself to meetings for the transfer of financial investments, discussions on how to apply some resource from the programs instituted in the school aimed at physical improvement or acquisition of pedagogical materials for the school unit.

In this regard, Carvalho and Lagares (2022, p. 88), emphasize that by promoting "moments of speech" of all participants in decision-making processes in the school unit, they come to understand in practice that they can directly influence their reality in a political way,

given that "the more one participates, the more one learns the games of democracy and the more democratic practices are deepened".

The learning provided by these deliberative moments is essential for citizen participation to occur both in a micro and macro way. This will lead them to feel interested in contributing to the materialization of participatory actions, which can be effective in their entry into councils, unions, associations, and in the case of students, in associations in the various federated entities.

In addition to favoring participatory and democratic processes, the construction, review and implementation of the PPP also enables school units to exercise in practice autonomy (pedagogical and financial) as a result of collectively decided actions. Through these, democracy is strengthened in the school environment, to the extent that the school also develops an environment favorable to the institutionalization of participatory citizenship, which, as Gadotti emphasizes:

The school must *train for citizenship*, and for that, it must set an example. The democratic management of the school is an important step in the learning of democracy. The school does not have an end in itself. It is at the service of the community. In this, the democratic management of the school is also providing a service to the community that maintains it (Gadotti, 2004, p. 35, emphasis in the original).

Reinforcing this proposition, Ciseski and Romão (2004) emphasize that the pedagogical function of the school is not only to teach content provided in teaching programs, given that such a practice does not contribute to democratic and citizen learning on the part of the student, but that this should favor students to learn democracy in *praxis* participatory, because when they are involved in collective decision-making processes, they understand that they are part of a project of society in which they are inserted.

Thus, putting into effect the democratic and participatory principles through the elaboration of the PPP is a daily exercise and this process presupposes some procedures that are not carried out in a linear or sequential way, as provided in Table 2, which presents the criteria for the implementation and possible effectiveness of democratic management through this document:

Table 2*Criteria for implementation and effectiveness of democratic management*

Train the members of intercollegiate bodies	Participation in a democratic environment requires learning. For the full exercise of democratic management in the school environment, it is necessary to train the segments: councils, associations, associations, etc. The training offered needs to go beyond modular studies of the functions of each person within the intercollegiate body. It is necessary that the formative moments be reflective and effective in praxis, because this is the path to a political and citizen education.
Consult the school community	The implementation of democratic principles does not occur in isolation or centered on one person or team. Thus, holding meetings and assemblies to listen to the school community is essential for the interventions and discussions of the actions listed in the PPP. Consultation with the school community needs to be a two-way street: it is necessary to listen, systematize and give feedback on the deliberations that have taken place. When this consultation occurs in a participatory and involved manner, everyone feels co-responsible for the applicability of the actions listed.
Institutionalizing democratic management	Democratic management is institutionalized when democratic, autonomous and participatory principles are chained in school direction. Therefore, the more management excels in these principles, the more possibilities there will be for school subjects to continuously promote participatory processes. As mentioned above, institutionalizing democratic management is not an easy job, it is surrounded by tensions and conflicts.
Transparency and agility in information and negotiations with the community	To favor the participatory and democratic process in the school, it is necessary to democratize the information that permeates the school environment. Access to information on school progress needs to be transparent and should be known to all. For this, the discussion agendas need to be made public before they happen, because if someone wants to include or request changes, the school management can include the topic in time or reschedule it for the next meeting. The information must be disseminated by digital and analog means (bulletin board, letters, printed messages, memos, etc.).

Source: Prepared by the authors based on Hora (2012), Ciseski and Romão (2004) and Antunes (2002).

In accordance with what has been presented, it is understood that the PPP of an educational institution goes through processes of mobilization/training of the subjects involved in its elaboration and implementation, especially when it will take as a founding principle of participatory democratic management. The criteria presented in Table 2 reinforce the assertion that exercising democratic management in the school environment requires more than establishing democratic and participatory principles in official documents, but that the school also becomes the predominant field of its effective realization.

In this sense, Flach and Luz (2022) reinforce that the spaces and mechanisms of democratic management existing in the school environment are favorable for participation

and elucidation of the character of participatory and citizen democracy. Therefore, it is necessary that school management, committed to the participatory processes that permeate the PPP, adopt strategies that aim at the effective participation of the school and extra-school community, thus promoting the consolidation of space for the performance of councils, associations and associations.

In order to identify as the PPP of two public schools: one municipal and the other state, the result of the investigation of this research is presented, identifying the elements that indicate actions to be carried out by the subjects participating in the student council in a way that contributes to the development of student participation and autonomy.

3 DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS: WHAT THE PPP SAYS ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE OF ASSOCIATIONS IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Education is the alternative for the formation of citizen consciousness, but in order for it to be able to fulfill its function of social emancipation, the postulated values must be for human formation and not for the formation of human capital (Ribeiro, 2019, p. 105).

According to what has been stated in the epigraph, it is of fundamental importance that there is an understanding of the entire school team that education is the path of citizenship and political formation of students and that their active participation in the school's decision-making contributes to this human formation, of contents and learning of socially produced knowledge by all generations.

For citizenship education to be effective, it is necessary that the mechanisms of democratic management occur within school spaces are unrestricted and unlimited, that is, everyone, including students, need to participate autonomously, in the main space of their school representativeness: the student council.

The Michaelis Dictionary (on-line) has as the meaning of the entry *grêmio*, that it has an etymological origin in the Latin *gremium* and means "lap, lap, breast". Currently, this term has been used to designate individuals who act in a corporate manner governed by statutes and regulations. In the school environment, the student council is the main representative association of students who have cultural, political and citizenship training purposes.

The guiding question that led to the writing of this article was the following: Is it possible to identify within the PPPs of municipal and state schools elements that indicate actions to be carried out by the subjects participating in the student council in a way that contributes to the development of student participation and autonomy?. In order to answer this question, an

investigation was undertaken on how the associations are included in the actions and activities developed in the school³.

Table 3 below briefly presents the municipal location, the levels and modalities of education offered in the schools where the PPPs were borrowed to carry out the research.

Table 3

Levels and modalities of education offered in the surveyed public schools (2025)

School	Stages	Modality
Municipal (Tocantnia)	Elementary School (Early and Final Years)	Youth and Adult Education (EJA)
State (Miracema do Tocantins)	Elementary School (Final Years) Regular High School	Youth and Adult Education (EJA), Regular High School, National Program for the Integration of Professional Education with Basic Education in the modality of Youth and Adult Education (PROEJA): Nursing Technician

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the PPP of the schools surveyed (Tocantins; Tocantnia, 2025).

In time, it is important to emphasize that the implementation of student unions in school units is established by law in all federative spheres of Brazil, namely: Free Guild Law (1985), Federal Constitution (1998), Education Plans at the national, state and municipal levels (2014/2015, PNE, Goal 19 and strategy 19.4) and Statute of the Child and Adolescent (ECA-1990, Article 53, item IV). Carvalho *et al.* (2023, p. 15) clarifies that:

As spaces for democratic-participatory learning, the unions are fundamental to the promotion of students' autonomy and their socio-political formation, therefore, a place for the exercise of their citizenship. The legislation, by establishing the need to create these spaces within public schools, seeks to demarcate that the unions contribute to the construction of democracy in the school, in the municipality and in society, therefore, they cooperate to strengthen the public sphere.

It can be inferred, therefore, that the associations contribute to the construction of democracy in the school environment, and are also an integral part of the school's guiding document, the PPP, and that in it, there are actions that include student participation in the school's decision-making processes and not only the protection of pedagogical actions set out in the action plan prepared and decided by the management team. teachers and other adults.

³ In respect of the right to anonymity and in compliance with the standards of the Brazilian Association of Technical Standards (ABNT) that guides academic publications, the information of the educational institutions researched will be referred to as municipal school and state school.

Table 4 below presents the data produced from the readings and analyses of the schools' PPPs with a focus on the student council and how these are arranged in their action plans for execution in the year 2025 with regard to attributions, standardization, and representativeness.

Table 4

Analysis of the PPP of a municipal and state school on the performance of the Student Councils (2025)

PPP in Analysis	What is recorded about student unions
Municipal	<p>It establishes that it is the responsibility of the school manager to ensure the implementation of school councils and student councils (p. 27); Regulates the participation of the association in the class council held bimonthly (p. 32); He sees the student council as a space for the formation of children's leaders (p. 33); The internal regulations (annex to the PPP) ensure that students in Article 2, Item IV "meet with colleagues for the organization of the guild or educational campaigns, under the student conditions established and approved by the board" (p. 154);</p>
State	<p>Regulates the participation of the student council and class representatives in class councils held bimonthly (p. 53); It establishes that the restructuring of the association and the action plan of this intercollegiate body is the responsibility of the school's multidisciplinary team (p. 65); Aiming at youth protagonism, the PPP establishes that the weekly reception of the other students will be carried out by the management and multidisciplinary team with the participation of the student council and class representatives (p. 67);</p>

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the PPP of the schools surveyed (Tocantins; Tocantínia, 2025).

The analysis undertaken by the authors points out that in the PPPs of both the municipal and state schools, there are indications that the school management reinforces attitudes that restrict the performance of the student unions, revealing a centrality of the actions proposed with the student involvement supervised either by the multidisciplinary team or by the management, as stated in what refers to the holding of meetings to organize the members and/or establish plans must have authorization.

Attitudes such as these are far from contributing to the effectiveness of the management mechanisms that enable the autonomy and political and civic education of students and reminds us of what Martorano (2011) warns, that the development and vitality of intercollegiate bodies is an indication that democracy is implemented in this space and that the absence expresses democratic decline, favoring autocratic attitudes aimed at perpetuating attitudes typical of the capitalist hegemony of power.

Another observation found was that one of the recurrent actions in both PPPs is the institution of the participation of the association in the class councils, which is carried out in schools every two months, that is, minimum participation, far from the incentive of daily exercise for the development of participatory citizenship. It is perceived that this action in itself does not contribute to the political and civic formation of the student, since the participation in this school action occurs only as a bureaucratic and not formative character.

A relevant finding in the PPP of the municipal school is the written record that among the functional attributions of the school principal, is to ensure the creation and implementation of the school council and the association. A management that strives for democratic principles will adopt the necessary strategies and procedures so that the participation of the local and student community is also achieved within the scope of participatory management.

In this sense, Brito, Miranda and Sousa (2023, p. 326) reinforce that "it is necessary for the school team as a whole to foster, contribute and grant spaces so that students can exercise their citizenship. This process is carried out in Brazilian school units with the creation of student unions" by and with students, not only by the manager and his team.

The PPP of the municipal school records that the association is a space for the formation of "student leaders" and that the Grêmio organization must be approved by the board. Now, political and citizen education goes beyond training leaders, as this practice contributes to the formation of demagogues and autocrats, who seek to use their influence to perpetuate themselves in power (Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2018). Democratic work is a demanding and challenging job, which requires commitment and concessions from those involved.

In this line of reasoning, Paro (2014, p. 70) reinforces that "the final objective that guides democratization must be the student and the development of his autonomy". Thus, the imposing tutelage of the actions of the unions, with the authorization and approval of the board or another adult, does not contribute to the formation of the students' autonomy.

Regarding the tutelage of an association, Idelbrando (2021, p. 58) points out that centralizing attitudes in student decision-making in the figure of the principal demonstrate hierarchical and hegemonic attitudes, in addition to the perpetuation of power arising from the function exercised by the school manager. Attitudes of "few decide and many obey without any resistance" are reinforced to students. The author also highlights that "it is a common attitude: to decentralize tasks to parents and students and centralize decisions to management, but with an air of participation (Idelbrando, 2021, p. 15).

This, to a certain extent, reminds us that the political and citizen education of the student does not take place with the participation of actions pre-defined by the school board and its team, and as Hora (2012, p. 109) points out that:

Learning, which comes from the participation of all in the administration of the educational process, enables each of the subjects, individually and all collectively, *the growth of the human person in all its aspects: dignity, performance, criticality, capacity for decision and action*, and must be respected in its individuality and sociability (emphasis added).

In view of what we found in the analysis of the PPPs, the understanding is reaffirmed that in order to exercise democracy in the school environment, it involves degrees of participation, involvement and autonomy. Regarding this discussion, Lagares *et al.* (2022) emphasize that the autonomy of a school (and consequently of intercollegiate bodies, such as associations) does not occur involuntarily, but is built daily in a collective way and with the involvement of all. Soares, Azevedo and Ramos (2019, p. 228) also reinforce that:

Thinking about a citizen school requires thinking about democracy within the school, through a pedagogical project that aims to form active, thinking students, participants in a society and future professionals who are active and critical to face the confrontations and challenges of society. Participating actively and democratically is not a simple act, on the contrary, it is the result of a long process, of struggles and engagement of those who make the school [...].

In order for citizenship education to materialize in the implementation of an association, it is understood that there is a need for students to understand the exercise of citizenship as resulting from involvement in decisions that affect their peers and the community to which they belong. In this way, the opening of mechanisms for participation and the effectiveness of democracy within the school environment must be occupied by the *gremistas* in an integral way, given that democracy is not complete if there is no representation (Muñoz, 2004). In the same vein, Brito, Miranda, and Sousa (2023, p. 327) reinforce that "when talking about the democratic aspect of public schools, it is necessary that democracy simply transcends the creation of student unions as an end in itself".

Thus, the political and citizen education provided by an association is only possible to be achieved with the active participation of students in decision-making moments. Student participation does not take place only during the period of election of the *Grêmios* slates or in the pedagogical activities established collectively or individually by the school management. Democracy is effective when students become aware of the needs and problems of the school and, through dialogue, are able to collaborate with the school management in order

to change reality in a joint effort for change (Muñoz, 2004). The two PPPs taken as objects of investigation, present important points for us to continue discussing the importance of student unions in public schools, especially those in Tocantins, which are still little researched, both from the municipal and state perspectives.

4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

As presented in this article, the Pedagogical Political Project of a school unit is a guiding document and epicenter of the pedagogical, financial, and administrative actions that will be taken by the school board with a focus on the implementation and strengthening of democracy in the school environment (Dourado, 2020).

The effectiveness of democratic principles and their mechanisms in the school includes primarily the creation and strengthening of intercollegiate bodies, especially student unions. The promotion of an association must occur from the initial stages of schooling, as established in the legislative actions enacted and in force in all federated entities and cited in the course of the arguments brought by this text, and it is also pointed out that the creation and implementation of this intercollegiate body in the school units can become a powerful space for integral formation, citizen and student policy demands time and collective effort from the entire school unit (Brito, Miranda and Sousa, 2023).

The PPP of an educational institution is the document that guides and guides the actions of the school, and discussed in this work, it is also a gateway to the existence of actions that guarantee student performance in order to consolidate the participation of students in an active, engaging, representative way and with a view to the practice of an education socially referenced in the rights and duties of Brazilian citizens guaranteed in the 1988 Constitution, the much vaunted "Citizen Constitution".

The investigative study exposed in this article led to the identification of elements and actions present in Pedagogical Political Projects (PPP) of two public schools in the interior of the State of Tocantins, leading to the realization that these still do not guarantee the effective participation and performance of students autonomously, in the school's decision-making process or even its representative organization untethered from bureaucratic and centralizing management. Therefore, it is crucial that the PPP, when reviewed and implemented in 2026, seeks to establish actions aimed at student participation in a participatory and consistent way.

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