

TERRITORIES OF DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE SELECTION PROCESS OF SCHOOL MANAGERS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF JOÃO PESSOA/PB

TERRITÓRIOS DA GESTÃO DEMOCRÁTICA DA EDUCAÇÃO SOB O VIÉS DO PROCESSO SELETIVO DE GESTORES ESCOLARES DO MUNICÍPIO DE JOÃO PESSOA/PB

TERRITORIOS DE LA GESTIÓN DEMOCRÁTICA DE LA EDUCACIÓN BAJO EL ENFOQUE DEL PROCESO SELETIVO DE GESTORES ESCOLARES DEL MUNICIPIO DE JOÃO PESSOA/PB



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ABSTRACT

This study is justified by the need to critically analyze Public Notice No. 001/2025 – SEDEC/JP, which regulates the selection process for school administrators in the Municipal Education Network of João Pessoa/PB, given the problem of its compatibility with the constitutional principle of democratic management of public education. The objective is to investigate to what extent the adopted model materializes the assumptions of participation, technical merit, leadership rotation, and school autonomy, as per the 1988 Federal Constitution, the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (Law No. 9.394/1996), and Goal 19 of the National Education Plan (Law No. 13.005/2014). To this end, qualitative, exploratory-descriptive research is conducted, developed through document analysis of the public notice, based on the content analysis technique. Thus, it is observed that the process formally incorporates technical criteria and public consultation with the school community, representing progress compared to exclusively discretionary models. However, relevant tensions are identified, such as procedural asymmetry between incumbent principals and new candidates, the absence of explicit objective criteria for periodic evaluation, the lack of a clear limitation on successive reappointments, and reduced deadlines that may restrict the expansion of access to the position. This leads to the conclusion that the model approaches formal democratic management, but presents limitations regarding substantive democratization, especially concerning the effective redistribution of decision-making power and the guarantee of institutional alternation. The study contributes to the debate on school governance and the improvement of municipal regulations for the selection of managers.

Keywords: Democratic Management. School Management. Selection of Managers. Educational Policies. Community Participation. Educational Governance.

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RESUMO

O presente estudo justifica-se pela necessidade de analisar criticamente o Edital nº 001/2025 – SEDEC/JP, que regulamenta o processo seletivo para gestores escolares da Rede Municipal de Ensino de João Pessoa/PB, diante do problema de sua compatibilidade com o princípio constitucional da gestão democrática da educação pública. Objetiva-se investigar em que medida o modelo adotado materializa os pressupostos de participação, mérito técnico, alternância de lideranças e autonomia escolar, conforme a Constituição Federal de 1988, a Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional (Lei nº 9.394/1996) e a Meta 19 do Plano Nacional de Educação (Lei nº 13.005/2014). Para tanto, procede-se à pesquisa qualitativa, de natureza exploratório-descritiva, desenvolvida por meio de análise documental do referido edital, com base na técnica de análise de conteúdo. Desse modo, observa-se que o processo incorpora formalmente critérios técnicos e consulta pública à comunidade escolar, configurando avanço em relação a modelos exclusivamente discricionários. Contudo, identificam-se tensionamentos relevantes, como assimetria procedimental entre diretores em exercício e novos candidatos, ausência de critérios objetivos explícitos para avaliação periódica, inexistência de limitação clara de reconduções sucessivas e prazos reduzidos que podem restringir a ampliação do acesso à função. O que permite concluir que o modelo se aproxima de uma gestão democrática formal, mas apresenta limites quanto à democratização substantiva, especialmente no que se refere à redistribuição efetiva do poder decisório e à garantia de alternância institucional. O estudo contribui para o debate sobre governança escolar e aperfeiçoamento de normativas municipais de seleção de gestores.

Palavras-chave: Gestão Democrática. Gestão Escolar. Seleção de Gestores. Políticas Educacionais. Participação Comunitária. Governança Educacional.

RESUMEN

Este estudio se justifica por la necesidad de analizar críticamente la Convocatoria Pública n.º 001/2025 – SEDEC/JP, que regula el proceso de selección de administradores escolares en la Red Municipal de Educación de João Pessoa/PB, dado el problema de su compatibilidad con el principio constitucional de gestión democrática de la educación pública. El objetivo es investigar en qué medida el modelo adoptado materializa los supuestos de participación, mérito técnico, rotación de liderazgo y autonomía escolar, según la Constitución Federal de 1988, la Ley de Directrices y Bases de la Educación Nacional (Ley n.º 9.394/1996) y el Objetivo 19 del Plan Nacional de Educación (Ley n.º 13.005/2014). Para ello, se realiza una investigación cualitativa, exploratorio-descriptiva, desarrollada a través del análisis documental de la citada convocatoria pública, con base en la técnica de análisis de contenido. Así, se observa que el proceso incorpora formalmente criterios técnicos y consulta pública con la comunidad escolar, lo que representa un avance en comparación con los modelos exclusivamente discrecionales. Sin embargo, se identifican tensiones relevantes, como la asimetría procedimental entre directores en ejercicio y nuevos candidatos, la ausencia de criterios objetivos explícitos para la evaluación periódica, la falta de una limitación clara a las reelecciones sucesivas y plazos reducidos que pueden restringir la ampliación del acceso al cargo. Esto lleva a la conclusión de que el modelo se acerca a la gestión democrática formal, pero presenta limitaciones en cuanto a la democratización sustantiva, especialmente en lo que respecta a la redistribución efectiva del poder de decisión y la garantía de la alternancia institucional. El estudio contribuye al debate sobre la gobernanza escolar y la mejora de las normativas municipales para la selección de directivos.

Palabras clave: Gestión Democrática. Gestión Escolar. Selección de Directivos. Políticas Educativas. Participación Comunitaria. Gobernanza Educativa.

1 INTRODUCTION

The construction of democratic management in Brazilian education is a constitutional principle and one of the pillars of public educational policies since the country's redemocratization. Provided for in Article 206 of the Federal Constitution of 1988, the democratic management of public education is formalized as one of the principles that should govern teaching, reflecting the aspiration for a more participatory and less hierarchical school, aligned with social aspirations for greater inclusion and justice (Brasil, 1988). This legal framework was the basis for a series of subsequent reforms that sought to operationalize this concept in education systems.

The consolidation of this principle in the legal-educational system occurred with the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB), Law No. 9,394/1996. The legal text reinforces democratic management, explicitly associating it with the participation of the school and local communities, and with the role of education professionals in the elaboration of the school's pedagogical project (Brasil, 1996). In this sense, the LDB not only reiterates the constitutional precept, but also advances by suggesting mechanisms for its implementation, albeit in a non-prescriptive way, delegating to the education systems the definition of specific norms.

Historically, the concept of democratic management in Brazil emerges in opposition to the authoritarian and centralizing model in force during the military regime (1964-1985) and is strengthened in the context of social mobilizations by *Diretas Já* and by the National Constituent Assembly itself. As Paro (2010) and Luck (2006) point out, the experiences of popular participation, such as the movements to choose principals by direct election in municipal and state networks, were fundamental to pressure and shape the incorporation of this principle into legislation, transforming a demand from civil society into State policy.

On the theoretical level, democratic management in Brazilian education dialogues deeply with the notion of school as a public space and the exercise of citizenship. For Gadotti (2009), the democratization of school management is a process inseparable from the social quality of education, as it implies not only administrative efficiency, but above all collective construction, respect for diversity and training for autonomy. Thus, its implementation requires overcoming a clientelist and patrimonialist political culture still rooted in many instances of public administration.

However, the trajectory of implementation of democratic management reveals a considerable distance between the normative discourse and the daily practices in schools. Challenges such as the fragile participatory culture, the overload of teachers' work, the lack of specific training for collegiate management and the persistence of centralizing bureaucratic

structures are pointed out as recurrent obstacles. As Dourado (2007) analyzes, there is a permanent tension between democratic-participatory and managerialist management models, the latter often hegemonic in educational policies, which results in contradictory and fragmented processes of real democratization of school units.

The research question that guides this study consists of analyzing to what extent the Public Notice No. 001/2025 – SEDEC/JP, which regulates the selection process for school managers of the Municipal Education Network of João Pessoa/PB, materializes the assumptions of the democratic management of public education. The general objective of the research lies in the relevance of understanding whether the normative mechanisms adopted favor participation, technical merit, alternation of leaderships and school autonomy, contributing to the improvement of municipal policies for the selection of managers. As specific objectives we seek: To identify the elements of participation, technical merit, alternation of leaderships and school autonomy present in the adopted model; to evaluate the weaknesses and procedural tensions that limit subjective democratization; contribute to the debate on school governance and to the improvement of municipal regulations for the selection of managers.

2 METHODOLOGY

This research is a basic study, with exploratory-descriptive objectives, developed through a qualitative approach. The methodological option is justified by the need to understand the meanings, intentions and structures that make up the selection process of school managers, going beyond the quantification of data (Gerhardt; Silveira, 2009). As the main technical procedure, documentary analysis is adopted, an appropriate method for the systematic investigation of official documents, allowing a critical apprehension of their content and context (Cellard, 2008).

The main source of data is the Public Notice of the Selection Process for School Managers of the Municipal Education Network of João Pessoa/PB, referring to the last contest held (2025). The document was selected because it constitutes the normative instrument that regulates access to the position of director, materializing, at the local level, the legal principles of democratic management. The analysis focuses on the structure of the process, the selection criteria established and the conditions of participation envisaged for the candidates.

The operationalization of the analysis followed the stages of content analysis as proposed by Bardin (2016). Initially, an exhaustive reading of the notice was carried out, followed by the organization of the material and the formulation of analysis indicators. In the

exploration phase, the content was systematically coded and categorized, based on the following analytical criteria, elaborated from the theoretical framework on democratic management: clarity of the rules and stages of the process; equity in the treatment between incumbent managers and new candidates; preparation time granted for the preparation of projects and participation in the stages; and the existence of provisions that favor or not the reelection of managers already in office.

As a complementary technique, a systematic bibliographic research was carried out in secondary sources, such as scientific articles, dissertations, theses and comparative educational legislation. This stage aimed to contextualize the analysis of the specific case of João Pessoa, confronting it with experiences of other Brazilian municipalities and states that adopt selection processes considered more transparent and participatory, thus identifying possible advances and weaknesses.

As this is a study based exclusively on the analysis of documents in the public domain, there was no direct involvement of human beings, and therefore the need for submission to a Research Ethics Committee does not apply, as provided for in CNS Resolution No. 510/2016. The interpretation of the data is of a critical-analytical nature, aiming not only to describe the public notice, but also to reflect on its implications for the materialization of the principles of democratic management within the municipal education network.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The democratic management of public education in Brazil is a structuring principle of the educational system, whose legal foundation is solid and progressive, emerging as a response to social demands for participation and quality in education. The constitutional genesis of this principle is based on the Magna Carta of 1988, which, in its Article 206, item VI, establishes the "democratic management of public education, in accordance with the law" as one of the principles on which education must be taught (Brasil, 1988). This provision reflects the context of redemocratization of the country and enshrines, at the highest normative level, the aspiration for an educational administration permeable to community participation.

The operationalization of the constitutional precept was implemented by the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB), Law No. 9,394/1996. In its articles 14 and 15, the LDB unfolds the principle, determining that education systems define the norms of democratic management, which must ensure the participation of education professionals in the elaboration of the school's pedagogical project and the participation of the school and local communities in school councils or equivalent (Brasil, 1996). The law, therefore,

advances by indicating fundamental mechanisms for the democratization of management, even though it delegates to the federative entities the task of specific regulation.

The implementation of the principle received a significant boost with the creation of the National Education Plan (PNE). The PNE 2014-2024, instituted by Law No. 13,005/2014, not only reiterates democratic management as a principle, but elevates it to the condition of a strategic goal. Specifically, Goal 19 of the Plan is dedicated to "ensuring conditions, within 2 years, for the effectiveness of the democratic management of education, associated with technical criteria of merit and performance and public consultation with the school community" (Brasil, 2014). The PNE also provides for detailed strategies, such as the guarantee of resources and the training of the actors involved, giving the character of a long-term State policy to the democratization of management.

In the field of basic education, the Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Basic Education and the Valorization of Education Professionals (FUNDEB), made permanent by Constitutional Amendment No. 108/2020 and regulated by Law No. 14,113/2020, also incorporates democratic management as one of its principles. The FUNDEB legislation links democratic management to the use of resources, determining that plans for the application of resources must be prepared in a participatory manner, ensuring transparency and social control over the financing of education (Brasil, 2020). Thus, the legal basis extends to the financial sphere, reinforcing the idea that democracy in school is also exercised over the allocation of resources.

The interpretation and legal enforceability of these grounds are reinforced by CNE/CEB Opinion No. 8/2021, which deals with the rules for the democratic management of public education. The document, prepared by the National Council of Education, reaffirms that democratic management is a right of the school community and a duty of the State, detailing its constituent elements, such as transparency, effective participation, school autonomy, and the appreciation of professionals (Brasil, 2021). The Opinion serves as a guideline for education systems, guiding the elaboration of their norms and giving greater conceptual density to the legal principle.

In summary, the democratic management of education in Brazil has a legal and robust framework that goes from the Federal Constitution to the infra-legal norms and guidelines of the education councils. This normative trajectory, however, as Dourado (2007) warns, evidences a permanent tension between formal provision and effective implementation, with legal advances sometimes being contrasted by management practices that are still centralizing or merely formal. Thus, the legal foundations represent both a historical

achievement and a permanent field of struggle for their full materialization in the education networks and in the daily life of schools.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The analysis of Public Notice No. 001/2025 – SEDEC/JP shows a structure normatively aligned with the constitutional principles of public administration — legality, impersonality, morality, publicity and efficiency — as provided for in article 37 of the Federal Constitution of 1988 (Brasil, 1988). However, under critical examination, significant tensions emerge when the document is confronted with the foundations of the democratic management of public education, provided for in article 206, item VI, of the same Constitution, in Law No. 9,394/1996 (LDB) and in Goal 19 of the National Education Plan (Law No. 13,005/2014).

The Federal Constitution establishes that education will be provided based on the "democratic management of public education, in accordance with the law" (Brasil, 1988). The LDB, in turn, determines that education systems must ensure the "participation of education professionals in the elaboration of the school's pedagogical project" and the "participation of the school and local communities in school councils or equivalent" (BRASIL, 1996). The PNE 2014–2024, on the other hand, defines as a goal "to ensure conditions for the effectiveness of the democratic management of education, associated with technical criteria of merit and performance and public consultation with the school community" (Brasil, 2014).

It is observed, therefore, that the national legislation articulates three central dimensions: participation, technical merit and public consultation. The public notice analyzed formally incorporates these dimensions by providing for objective test, curriculum analysis, interview and consultation with the school community. However, the way in which such mechanisms are structured reveals ambiguities in the materialization of the democratic principle, especially with regard to the legal nature of the function of school management.

4.1 PURPOSE OF SELECTION AND NATURE OF THE FUNCTION

Item 1.2 of the notice defines selection as a mechanism of qualification for the exercise of a function of trust. Such classification is not merely terminological; It carries relevant political-administrative implications. In the scope of administrative law, the functions of trust are freely appointed and dismissed by the competent authority, even if restricted to permanent servants. This characteristic implies a bond of political or administrative trust, which can strain the principle of school autonomy.

Tragtenberg (2005, p. 82) states that: "The administration is not neutral. It expresses power relations and translates interests that materialize in the institutional organization." By applying this perspective to the educational context, it is understood that the school board is not only a technical management function, but a strategic space of mediation between the State, the community and the pedagogical project. Thus, by defining the position as a function of trust, the public notice can reinforce a verticalized logic of power, in which the permanence of the manager depends on the relationship with the central authority, even if there is community consultation.

Souza (2009, p. 130) argues that democratic school management implies "effective sharing of decision-making power and not just consultative or legitimizing participation in previously established decisions". The distinction is crucial. Merely formal participation does not alter the hierarchical structure; it only clothes it with a democratic appearance.

Paro (2010, p. 23) points out that: "The democratization of school management supposes the overcoming of the authoritarian and centralizing logic that has historically marked the administration of Brazilian public schools." By maintaining the management as a function of trust subject to dismissal "at any time", the public notice can produce a paradoxical effect: participation in the selection process is expanded, but the possibility of subsequent vertical control is preserved. This duality highlights the tension between the bureaucratic rationality of the State and the democratic rationality of the school.

In addition, Goal 19 of the PNE establishes that democratic management must be "associated with technical criteria of merit and performance and with public consultation with the school community" (Brasil, 2014). João Pessoa's model partially meets this command, by articulating objective testing, curriculum analysis and public consultation. However, the asymmetry between acting directors and new candidates, provided for in the notice itself, weakens the principle of isonomy and may compromise the effectiveness of merit as a universal criterion.

Dourado (2007) warns that recent educational reforms have been marked by a tension between democratic-participatory models and managerialist models. In the first, collective construction and autonomy are privileged; in the second, efficiency, control and accountability are emphasized. The public notice analyzed seems to be located in this zone of intersection: it incorporates participatory mechanisms, but maintains strong administrative centralization.

Therefore, the legal nature of the school management function is not a secondary element. It conditions the degree of autonomy of the manager, the stability of the pedagogical project and the democratic culture of the school itself. If the function remains essentially linked

to the trust of the central authority, school democracy tends to operate within structural limits previously defined by the state apparatus.

Therefore, we evidenced structural tensions derived from the classification of school management as a function of trust. Such a configuration requires critical reflection on the difference between procedural democratization and substantive democratization, in the context of municipal education networks.

4.2 ASYMMETRY BETWEEN INCUMBENT DIRECTORS AND NEW CANDIDATES

The systematic reading of item 1.3 and its sole paragraph of Notice No. 001/2025 – SEDEC/JP reveals an institutional design that establishes differentiated treatment between acting directors and new candidates. While they are fully submitted to the stages of curriculum analysis, interview with classification score and objective test, they only participate in the interview without assigning a score, and in the consultation with the school community, as long as they remain in the same unit and function. Such a normative distinction configures a procedural asymmetry that, although legally possible, produces concrete effects on the equity of the selection process.

From the constitutional point of view, the public administration must observe the principle of isonomy (Brasil, 1988), which implies equal treatment to those who are in an equivalent situation. In the case under analysis, candidates who compete for the same function are subject to different requirements, which relativizes the equality of conditions. In the field of educational management, Souza (2009, p. 133) argues that "democratic management presupposes equality of conditions of participation and a real possibility of alternation in the exercise of power". Alternation, in this sense, is not a mere procedural detail, but a structuring component of school democracy.

By favoring the permanence of managers in office, the public notice can reduce the institutional openness to the renewal of leadership. Paro (2010) recognizes that the election of principals represents an advance in the democratization of public schools, but warns that no model is immune to distortions. As already highlighted, "the process of electing directors [...] does not necessarily guarantee that the most competent candidate or the most committed to the community will be elected", and may even encourage populist practices. However, the solution to this risk does not lie in the creation of implicit barriers to alternation, but in the improvement of mechanisms for technical evaluation and community participation.

Dourado (2007) argues that contemporary Brazilian educational policies operate in tension between participatory democratization and managerial rationality. The model analyzed seems to fit into this hybrid logic: it incorporates public consultation and technical

criteria, but structures the process in such a way as to preserve administrative continuity. Asymmetry, therefore, is not only technical; it is structural, as it conditions the effective possibilities of circulation of power within the school. When democracy assumes predominantly confirmatory contours, that is, aimed at the ratification of the existing leadership, there is a risk that the democratic principle will become a legitimizing formality.

4.3 PERIODIC EVALUATION AND DISMISSAL "AT ANY TIME"

Items 1.13 and 1.13.1 of the notice establish that the approved principal will be periodically evaluated by the Department of Education, and may be exonerated "at any time" in case of low performance or practice of disciplinary acts. The performance evaluation provision is compatible with the principles of efficiency and accountability in public management; However, the absence of objective criteria explained in the public notice itself and of a clearly delimited appellate instance raises questions as to legal certainty and the autonomy of the function.

Tragtenberg (2005, p. 91) warns that "every administrative structure that concentrates decision-making power without control mechanisms tends to reproduce hierarchical relations of domination". In the school context, the centralization of evaluation exclusively in the Secretariat can produce political-administrative dependence on the manager, reducing his margin of autonomy to implement critical or innovative pedagogical projects.

Paro (2010) argues that democratic management requires effective social control, which presupposes the participation of the school community in the evaluation of the principal. The LDB itself provides for the performance of school councils as collegiate instances of deliberation (BRASIL, 1996). Thus, performance evaluations could incorporate participatory mechanisms and transparent pedagogical indicators, ensuring contradictory and ample defense.

Dourado (2007) emphasizes that accountability must be articulated with transparency and participation, otherwise it will become a unilateral instrument of control. The possibility of discretionary dismissal "at any time" can generate institutional instability, making it difficult to continue medium and long-term pedagogical projects. Instead of strengthening efficiency, such a mechanism can induce defensive behaviors and strategic alignments to the central authority, to the detriment of school autonomy.

4.4 TRAINING COURSE: PROGRESS WITH STRUCTURAL LIMITS

The provision of a mandatory training course for new candidates and optional for principals in office represents a relevant measure towards the professionalization of school

management. Luck (2006) emphasizes that effective educational leadership depends on the articulation between pedagogical, administrative and relational competencies, which requires specific and continuing education. From this point of view, the requirement of a structured course contributes to raising the technical standard of the function.

However, the exemption granted to the directors in office maintains a formative asymmetry. If training is considered essential for the quality of management, its obligation should reach all candidates, regardless of the precondition. Souza (2009) argues that democratic management involves continuous institutional learning, not restricted to the moment of access to office.

In addition, technical training, by itself, does not change the structure of distribution of decision-making power. Paro (2010) observes that the democratization of the school requires a transformation of the internal relations of authority, and not just administrative qualification. Thus, although the course strengthens the technical dimension of management, it does not eliminate the previously identified procedural asymmetries, configuring an important advance, but limited from a structural point of view.

4.5 CONSULTATION WITH THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY: THOUGHTFUL PARTICIPATION

The provisions that regulate the consultation of the school community institute a mechanism of weighted participation between segments, seeking a representative balance between teachers, technicians, students and parents. This provision is in line with article 206 of the Federal Constitution (Brasil, 1988) and the LDB (Brasil, 1996), which ensure community participation in school management.

Gadotti (2009, p. 71) argues that "the democratic school is the one that is built with the community, and not for the community". From this perspective, the consultative process represents a positive element, as it expands the legitimacy of the choice. The prohibition of undue advertising and the possibility of inspection by appointed representatives reinforce procedural transparency.

However, sociological analysis suggests that the prolonged permanence of managers can generate accumulation of symbolic capital. Bourdieu (1998) defines symbolic capital as the social recognition that legitimizes positions of power and authority. In contexts in which principals remain for long periods, affective bonds, political networks and care relationships can influence the community decision, even if formally the process is equitable.

Souza (2009) warns that school democracy cannot be reduced to a procedural ritual; it must ensure effective conditions of dispute and alternation. The absence of an objective

limitation of successive reappointments can consolidate almost permanent leaderships, weakening the democratic circulation of power.

4.6 TIMING AND TIMELINE: IMPLICIT BARRIER TO ENTRY

The selection process schedule establishes relatively short deadlines for registration, preparation of the management plan and completion of the evaluation stages. While such deadlines meet formal requirements of legality and publicity, their brevity can operate as an implicit barrier to entry for new applicants.

Dourado (2007) observes that democratic processes require adequate time for debate and collective construction. The elaboration of a consistent management plan requires institutional diagnosis, analysis of indicators and articulation with the school community. Reduced deadlines tend to favor candidates already in management, who have accumulated information and familiarity with administrative procedures.

Paro (2010) adds that effective participation requires objective conditions of preparation. When institutional time is compressed, competition can benefit those who already occupy a privileged position in the school structure. Thus, although the schedule is legally valid, its configuration can negatively impact the expansion of access to the function and the renewal of leadership, stressing the principle of democratic management.

5 DISCUSSION

The discussion that follows is based on the assumption that the democratic management of public education, as inscribed in the Federal Constitution of 1988 and regulated by LDB No. 9,394/1996, cannot be analyzed only from the perspective of normative compliance, but must be examined in its institutional materiality and in its concrete effects on school dynamics. As Paro (2010) warns, the democratization of the school is not limited to the creation of formal devices of participation, requiring an effective transformation of the power relations that structure the school organization. In this sense, the analysis of Public Notice No. 001/2025 – SEDEC/JP demands critical reflection on the tensions between technical merit, public consultation and administrative centralization, as well as on the limits and possibilities of achieving substantive democratic management at the municipal level.

5.1 IMPLICATIONS FOR DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT

Democratic management, as a constitutional principle inscribed in article 206 of the Federal Constitution (BRASIL, 1988) and regulated by LDB No. 9,394/1996 (BRASIL, 1996), is not reduced to the existence of formal participation procedures. It presupposes equal

access to management functions, alternation of leadership, effective social control and institutional autonomy articulated with public responsibility. Goal 19 of the National Education Plan reinforces this conception by associating democratic management with technical criteria of merit and performance and with public consultation with the school community (BRASIL, 2014).

The model analyzed in Public Notice No. 001/2025 – SEDEC/JP combines elements of technical merit: objective test, curriculum analysis and training course with public consultation with the school community. However, it preserves strong administrative centralization, especially in the final appointment and the possibility of dismissal. Such a configuration evidences the tension pointed out by Dourado (2007) between democratic-participatory models and managerialist models of educational management.

Souza (2009, p. 129) argues that democratic management implies "real sharing of power and institutionalization of mechanisms that guarantee effective participation". When participation is maintained within structural limits previously defined by the central administration, there is a risk of producing what can be called the bureaucratization of democracy: participatory procedures coexist with decision-making concentration.

Paro (2010) warns that the democratization of the school is not limited to the creation of formal instances of consultation; It is necessary to transform internal power relations. Otherwise, democracy becomes a symbolic formalization without substantive redistribution of authority. In this scenario, the combination of technical merit and administrative centralization can generate a hybrid model that preserves traditional hierarchies under the guise of participatory.

Thus, the implications of the analyzed model point to the risk of formalizing democratic management without structural transformation of power relations within the school, which can favor the perpetuation of leaderships and limit the democratic circulation of power.

5.2 LEADERSHIP RENEWAL

The literature on educational leadership highlights the importance of periodic renewal for institutional vitality. Luck (2006) argues that school leadership is a determining factor for the mobilization of the pedagogical team and for the construction of collaborative cultures. However, prolonged permanence in office can produce ambiguous effects: if, on the one hand, it ensures administrative continuity, on the other hand, it can reduce the capacity for innovation.

Paro (2010) states that the democratization of school management presupposes a real possibility of alternation in the exercise of management. The absence of an explicit limitation

on renewals, associated with the structural advantage of the directors in office provided for in the notice, may hinder the renewal of leadership.

From an organizational perspective, such a scenario can generate institutional immobility and crystallization of pedagogical practices. Dourado (2007) observes that excessively stable management processes tend to reproduce consolidated administrative routines, reducing openness to new perspectives and innovative experiences.

In addition, the institutional dependence on specific leaders can weaken the collective autonomy of the school, shifting the focus from democratic management to a personalistic logic. In this context, alternation does not represent instability, but a healthy mechanism for the circulation of ideas and institutional strengthening.

5.3 SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Several studies indicate that pedagogical leadership exerts a significant influence on learning indicators and the school climate. Luck (2006) emphasizes that effective school management articulates strategic planning, pedagogical monitoring and mobilization of the teaching team. However, the quality of management does not result exclusively from the prolonged permanence of the manager, but from the combination of continuing education, transparent accountability and collegiate participation.

The Federal Constitution (BRASIL, 1988) and the LDB (BRASIL, 1996) establish that democratic management must articulate autonomy and responsibility. Dourado (2007) highlights that accountability should be associated with clear and transparent indicators, avoiding discretionary practices.

Without objective criteria made explicit in the evaluation process, periodic evaluation can take on political rather than technical contours. Tragtenberg (2005, p. 91) observes that administrative structures that concentrate decision-making power tend to reproduce hierarchical relations of domination. Applied to the school context, this reflection indicates that monitoring mechanisms need to be institutionalized in a participatory way, ensuring contradictory and transparency.

Therefore, the quality of school management depends less on individual continuity and more on the consolidation of institutional training practices, objective technical evaluation and collegiate participation.

5.4 PARTICIPATION, LINKS AND LOCAL POLITICAL CULTURE

Democratic management must also be analyzed in the light of local political culture. In municipal networks, especially in contexts of community proximity, managers build affective

bonds, care networks and political articulations that influence school dynamics. Bourdieu (1998) calls symbolic capital the social recognition that legitimizes certain positions of authority.

In schools where principals stay for long periods, the accumulation of symbolic capital can impact consultation with the school community, even when the procedure is formally equitable. Gadotti (2009, p. 71) states that "the democratic school is built with the community", but this construction occurs within historical power relations.

Souza (2009) warns that school democracy is not neutral; It develops in contexts marked by symbolic and political disputes. Thus, community participation must be understood not only as a procedural mechanism, but as a field of interaction crossed by historical ties and interests.

Recognizing this dimension is fundamental to understand that democratic management is not automatically carried out by the existence of public consultation, but requires structural conditions that ensure equitable competition and effective alternation.

6 CONCLUSION

The analysis of Public Notice No. 001/2025 – SEDEC/JP reveals an institutional design that, in formal terms, incorporates central dimensions provided for in the Brazilian legal system for the effectiveness of the democratic management of public education. By articulating objective test, curriculum analysis, training course and consultation with the school community, the selection process dialogues with article 206, item VI, of the Federal Constitution (Brasil, 1988), with arts. 14 and 15 of Law No. 9,394/1996 (Brazil, 1996) and Goal 19 of the National Education Plan (Brazil, 2014), which associate democratic management with technical criteria of merit and performance, as well as community participation. From this point of view, the model analyzed meets the formal requirements of institutionalization of participation and professionalization of the management function.

However, the substantive analysis of the normative arrangement evidences relevant tensions. First, structural asymmetries favorable to the directors in office are identified, who do not fully submit to the same classification requirements imposed on new candidates. This differentiation compromises procedural isonomy, a basic principle of public administration (Brasil, 1988), and weakens institutional alternation. As Souza (2009, p. 133) argues, democratic management requires "equality of conditions of participation and real possibility of alternation in the exercise of power". The absence of this material equality tends to convert the selection process into a mechanism for confirming already consolidated leaderships.

Secondly, the provision for periodic evaluation without explicit details of objective indicators, measurable goals and a specific appellate body raises concerns about legal certainty and the autonomy of the manager. Dourado (2007) warns that accountability must be accompanied by transparency and social control, otherwise it will become an instrument of vertical control. Tragtenberg (2005, p. 91) reinforces this concern by stating that centralized administrative structures tend to reproduce "hierarchical relations of domination" when not submitted to institutional mechanisms of shared control. The lack of clearly defined objective parameters can shift the evaluation from the technical field to the political field, compromising pedagogical stability.

In addition, the reduced deadlines of the schedule and the lack of explicit limitation of successive renewals are factors that can restrict the renewal of leaderships. Paro (2010) argues that the democratization of school management presupposes effective circulation of power and not mere procedural formalization. The prolonged permanence of managers, especially in municipal contexts marked by community proximity, can produce a concentration of symbolic capital, in the terms of Bourdieu (1998), consolidating almost permanent leaderships and weakening institutional alternation.

In this way, the model is close to formal democratic management, as it incorporates public consultation and technical qualification criteria. However, it has limits with regard to substantive democratization. The distinction between formal democracy and substantive democracy is relevant in this context. The first refers to the existence of institutionalized participatory procedures; the second implies effective redistribution of decision-making power and the creation of structural conditions of equity. According to Paro (2010), the democratization of the school requires a transformation of internal relations of authority, not just the regulation of participatory stages.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the weaknesses identified, it is initially recommended to standardize the evaluation stages for all candidates, ensuring procedural equality and strengthening the constitutional principle of equality. The equalization of the requirements would contribute to greater legitimacy of the process and expansion of democratic competition.

Secondly, it proposes the public and transparent definition of objective performance indicators, based on measurable pedagogical, administrative and financial criteria, articulated with the school's political-pedagogical project. Dourado (2007) emphasizes that institutional evaluation must be formative, participatory and guided by clear goals.

It is also recommended the creation of a specific appellate body for cases of dismissal, ensuring an adversarial and ample defense, in line with the principles of due administrative process. Such a measure would strengthen institutional autonomy and reduce the risk of political interference.

The limitation of successive reappointments is a relevant measure to promote alternation of leaderships and democratic circulation of power. Comparative experience in state and municipal networks shows that mandates with limited possibility of reappointment favor pedagogical renewal and institutional strengthening.

It is also suggested to extend the deadlines for the preparation and preparation of management plans, ensuring objective conditions for the participation of candidates and promoting qualified debate within the school communities.

Finally, it is recommended the mandatory inclusion of continuing education for all managers, regardless of the previous condition, reinforcing the professionalization of the management function. Luck (2006) argues that effective educational leadership depends on permanent updating and development of strategic competencies.

8 STUDY CONTRIBUTIONS

This study contributes to the academic debate by deepening the distinction between formal democracy and substantive democracy in school management, showing that the mere institutionalization of public consultation and technical criteria does not guarantee effective redistribution of decision-making power. By critically analyzing the municipal normative design, the research highlights the tensions between technical merit and community participation, illuminating the challenges of school governance in federative contexts.

In addition, it offers subsidies for the improvement of municipal regulations for the selection of managers, by proposing measures that strengthen isonomy, transparency and institutional alternation. Finally, it broadens the theoretical reflection on educational governance by articulating contributions from Paro (2010), Dourado (2007), Souza (2009), Luck (2006), Tragtenberg (2005) and Bourdieu (1998), contributing to the understanding of democratic management as a field of institutional and symbolic disputes within the Brazilian public school.

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