


Challenges in school management: leadership under discussion¹

*Desafios na gestão escolar:
liderança em discussão*

*Desafios en la gestión escolar:
liderazgo en discusión*

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Abstract: This article discusses the subject of school management, aspects of legislation regarding democratic management and leadership practices in three schools in different education networks. Its objective is to understand how school management develops democratic leadership practices in the actions proposed by the management team. The methodology is qualitative with data collection through a structured questionnaire, with managers, teachers and parents. It is identified that leadership in school management materializes from participatory and dialogical actions between management, teachers and parents, as a practical function of cooperation.

Keywords: Leadership. Management. School. Participation.

Resumo: Este artigo discute o tema da gestão escolar, aspectos da legislação referente à gestão democrática e práticas de liderança em três escolas em diferentes redes de ensino. Seu objetivo é compreender como a gestão escolar desenvolve práticas de liderança democrática nas ações propostas pela equipe diretiva. A metodologia é de cunho qualitativo com coleta de dados através de um questionário estruturado, com gestores, professores e pais. Identifica-se que a liderança na gestão escolar se materializa a partir de ações participativas e dialógicas entre gestão, professores e pais, enquanto função prática de cooperação.

Palavras-chave: Liderança. Gestão. Escola. Participação.

Resumen: Este documento analiza el tema de la gestión escolar, los aspectos de la legislación sobre gestión democrática y las prácticas de liderazgo en tres escuelas de diferentes escuelas. Su objetivo es comprender cómo la gestión escolar desarrolla prácticas de liderazgo democrático en las acciones propuestas por el equipo directivo. La metodología es cualitativa con la recolección de datos a través de un cuestionario estructurado, con gerentes, maestros y padres. Se identifica que el liderazgo en la gestión escolar se materializa a partir de acciones participativas y dialógicas entre directivos, docentes y padres, como una función práctica de cooperación.

Palabras clave: Liderazgo. Gestión. Escuela. Participación.

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Introduction

This is an approach to the field of school management and proposes a reflection on the leadership of the school manager regarding the context of school practices. Studies concerning school management have pointed to “[...] a vast and diverse set of normative theories, management doctrines and State and public management reformist programs” (LIMA, 2018, p. 170). The manager’s work intensification at the school has been the subject of investigation and debate focusing on the role multiplying mechanisms that the manager plays in his/her practices, directed to an administrative-managerial bias. Discussing school management in basic education, its legal aspects and democratic leadership practices enables us to understand other forms of management, where actions take place by different school actors.

This paper aims, therefore, to understand how, in three schools of different sets of educational networks, managers develop leadership practices, democracy for the construction of autonomy, participation and implementation of the actions proposed by the management team. There was an interlocution with subjects from three urban schools in the city of Erechim, Rio Grande do Sul - RS (municipal school, private school and state school) regarding the management practices of these schools. These research subjects were the school managers themselves, along with parents and teachers who participate directly in the practice spaces in school management context. The methodology used for this dialogue was of a qualitative nature with data collection through a structured questionnaire.

In particular, the theoretical framework relied on the parameters set in the works of Libâneo (2001), Oliveira (2013) and Lück (2011; 2013) in dealing with aspects of democratic and participative management and school leadership; and also with the understandings explained in the works of Sander (2007), Vieira (2007), Lima (2014; 2018) and Pereira and Silva (2018) in the aspect of school administration and democratization. The authors explain that the democratic management of schools represents an effective democratic achievement of legal documents (Federal Constitution of 1988 and Law of Guidelines and Basis of National Education of 1996), but far from their realization in each concrete school context.

For a better understanding of what is intended in this study, the article is organized in three sections. The first discusses democratic and participatory management, its legal framework and school management. The second brushes up concepts about leadership and school management, presenting the importance of participation and collectivity in the construction of leadership in management. The third section presents the empirical space – what the managers, teachers and parents say, referring to the leadership of management groups. It is identified that management practices promote leadership through dialogue and participation among different school instances. Integration in decision making enables the construction of leadership in management, but also the implementation of actions proposed by the collective of school instances. Thus, everyone becomes a leader and a subject in management practices.

Democratizing school management

One of the main functions of school management is the implementation of pedagogical and administrative development of the education system. This presumes the construction of school autonomy through the commitment and involvement of all actors in democratization, participation, as in practices and actions. The Federal Constitution of 1988 (BRASIL, 1988), in its article 206, establishes the principle of “[...] democratic management of the education for public education”. Not only is this principle of democratic management a possibility in the development of school management, but, above all, one of the important pillars in building the quality of public education – an inalienable right of every human being.

The Law of Guidelines and Basis of National Education of 1996 – LDB / 96 (BRASIL, 1996), in its section VIII of article 3, establishes the constitutional principle of the democratic management of public education to legislate education systems. In article 14, the legislation makes explicit that education systems will define norms for the democratic management of public education in basic education according to their particularities, assuming that the principle of participation of the school community is contemplated with the respective school councils or equivalent. Passador and Salvetti (2013) clarify that the LDB / 96, when dealing with the principle of democratic management and the quality of public education, runs into the failure of precisely defining the mechanisms that guarantee effective educational administrative actions for democratic management.

In an attempt to establish more concrete mechanisms and actions that enable practices of democratic management of education, constituted from a broad debate with society and educators, the government approved the Federal Law No. 13005, of June 25th, 2014, of the National Education Plan - PNE 2014-2024 (BRASIL, 2014). The text states that “The States, the Federal District and the Cities shall approve specific laws for their education systems, regulating the democratic management of public education in their respective fields” (BRASIL, 2019, art. 9). Esquinsani (2016), when dealing with the issue of education financing, clarifies that the legislation regulates from the democratic management and drives the federated entities to debate the democratization of their educational reality.

Democratizing school management practices, guided by the legislation, presumes establishing a resistance to the determinations that affect the daily relations of contradictory state reforms and their organizations “[...] composed of deregulation, privatization and commercialization” (LIMA, 2018, p. 18). These demands associated with production and competitiveness, have shown us difficulty in democratizing management, making managers responsible for the quality of education.

Pereira and Silva (2018) explain that educational management in Brazil is understood as a need to reproduce greater rationality to its management, organized in a flexible and decentralized format in resource management and holding actors responsible for educational quality. School management takes on the principles of business administration, shaped by the precepts of private *ethos* management.

In its history, school management comes from external influences and administrative business models, not being its own or specific to schools. Sander (2007) explains that school management presents a multidimensional character, bearing a specificity in permanent pedagogical and administrative construction, such as political and cultural, which occurs differently from business administrative management. It is in this set of multiple dimensions that the practice of school management is strengthened from the transparency, impersonality, autonomy and participation of the different instances present in the school.

It is in concrete school spaces that human beings act, interact and produce knowledge and “[...] schools are, therefore, organizations and in them the interaction between people stands out for the promotion of human formation” (LIBÂNEO; OLIVEIRA; TOSCHI, 2012, p. 316). In these interactions, some personalities end up standing out as leaders, as managers or as professionals who participate in management. These professionals are constituted not by their hierarchical situation, but by their social qualities and to stir up dialogue and participation: “They are animators of everyone's work”.

By assuming school management, these professionals also develop the exercise of leadership in order to aggregate skills and competencies that contribute to the advancement of educational policies in the school, as well as the social function of the school. For Oliveira (2013), reflection on management, leadership and the school climate are fundamental to democratizing the school. Democracy is “[...] more than a form of government, it is, first and foremost, an associative form of life, an experience shared together” (LIMA, 2018, p. 26). It is a continuous exercise of active participation, dialogue and debate between the various propositions.

School management involves organizing the environment so that the common goals of the school community are achieved. This requires effective school management, with clear objectives and concrete actions. It is not enough to be knowledgeable about management theories. It is essential to integrate the participation of school subjects. Lima (2018) clarifies that democratic school management is, above all, a continuous process that is never completed. The experiences of democracy in schools become an essential question to be researched and answered, at every moment and in every concrete school context. People need to be aware of everything around them and know where they want to go.

Democratizing management is also strengthened by competence, adding the participation of the school community, where everyone is an active subject and participant in management. Democratic management enables “[...] a shift from the concern of input-oriented management to a concern for people, indicating a rediscovery of the role of participation” (CASTRO, 2008, p. 401).

School management is effective when school leaders, when leading school actions, are guided by a general and broader view of their work. This implies that, in democratic management, the participation of the school community in the process of reflection on practice and decision making is implicit. For this, the built knowledge, allied to the developed practice, are fundamental for the construction of a school management system. Democratizing school management demands participation and willingness to dialogue. Lima (2014) clarifies that democratic participation is a joint decision-making process - the core of

democracy. Without participation in decisions, it is not possible to conceive of democratic management at school.

Participation creates conditions for the democratic management to be strengthened. It means putting democracy into action in school management. If there is dialogue in school management, then there are spaces for the contradiction of thoughts, diversities and opinions. Contradiction is one of the elements of dialogue, fundamental for the construction of democracy. Democratic school management “[...] is not only, nor above all, an organizational and management problem, but rather a central issue in the process of democratization of education, the possibility of educating for and through democracy and participation” (LIMA, 2018, p. 26). School management builds its leadership in its practices, dialogue and participation of the various school segments. Leadership is a management phenomenon that is built integrated to the school actors and in the implementation of their actions.

Discussing leadership in school management

Leadership is a phenomenon present since the beginning of primitive human societies. In his anthropological studies, Mello (1959) has shown that the leader is an element present in practically all human clusters, seeking alternatives for the resolution of social and organizational complexities. Honorato (2018), in his studies regarding school administrative leadership, has indicated that, even in the absence of formal hierarchical structures, there are always people who take initiative, conducting decision making in their respective social groups.

Leadership is a way of contributing to the organization and decision making among the participating group. In school management, leadership makes it possible to strengthen management actions in order to achieve the proposed objectives. Leadership contributes to school organization, objective perspective of managers in decision making, motivation of the group and the implementation of proposed actions. The school manager coordinates and guides the “[...] life of the school and all its educational work, and its responsibility should not be diluted among all school management employees, although it may be shared with them” (LÜCK, 2009, p. 23).

Studies on school leadership (LÜCK, 2013; LIMA, 2014) show that the leader is at the head of the organization, has the ability, knowledge and competence to practice management, able to mobilize and influence others to articulate and achieve shared goals in the school. Leadership in management has enabled an improvement in students' academic education, when their practices are focused more on pedagogical and learning issues than on administrative and organizational actions. Pólon (2011) considers that the valorization of the pedagogical dimension of school management and the leadership role comes close to the discussion about what is taught in the construction of the school pedagogical project. Bonamino and Sousa (2012) clarifies that the pedagogical dimension is considered one of the main characteristics of managers in studies on school efficiency.

The increasing complexity in school organization has constantly led to more challenges. Honorato (2018) states how important it is for managers to realize that leadership must go beyond the character of individual management to reach a collective leadership process. Leadership is not an individual and isolated practical action, but a collective process of different school subjects at different times and in their own situations. This implies that leadership is a social process.

Leadership is - as stated above - a social phenomenon present since the earliest records of human groups. The leader is meant to be that individual who has knowledge and competence in the management organization: “It is the ability to influence people to work enthusiastically to achieve the goals identified as being for the common good” (HUNTER, 2004, p. 25). This definition implies that leadership is a process that involves influence and develops in the context of a group in order to achieve the goals shared and proposed by all.

In the context of social organizations, there are understandings that point to the difficulties in identifying leaders capable of leading the process of cultural change, because “[...] change is never simple [...]” (VIEIRA, 2007, p. 59). Resistance happens and not all teachers are willing to leave the classroom and take on the challenge of being a manager. “[...] people are like that. They resist. They react. They drag their feet [...] management is done in interaction with one another. Therefore, even the work of any manager always implies a lot of talking and dialogue” (VIEIRA, 2007, p. 59). Dialogue and participation are essential foundations of school manager leadership.

For Lück (2011), school leadership is an important and inherent feature of school management. It is from the leadership that the manager guides, mobilizes and coordinates the work of the school community, observing the improvement of teaching and learning. The leader, as an individual who exercises the leadership, is seen as one who brings the group together, even though he has no statutory authority imposed by legal devices. Being accepted and, above all, respected, uniting and representing the group in achieving the common yearnings and goals of the school, are important characteristics in school management.

The leader is not the institutional boss. He/she is more than a fixed and central representation in the organization chart. He/she decentralizes his/her leadership as an act of democratic management in which decision making is disseminated and shared by all participants in the school community. Kouzes and Posner (2013) state that the main characteristics of leadership lie in cooperation and the use of group ideas and suggestions in decision making. In a participatory model in which the organization is democratic, power is shared between those who are led and leaders themselves.

Schools are important institutions for fostering reflection on how different social cultures implement different actions in their teaching-learning processes to fulfill their different social and ethical tasks. In addition to being the place of teachers' professional activities and their own relationship with students, the school manager is also a leader of the community to which he belongs. He/she acts with determination in the educational field, whether in construction and management, both pedagogical and administrative in the specific parameters of the society in which it is inserted. It is an activity of everyone at school, where influence is distributed throughout the management organization, “[...] constituting one of the

factors with the greatest impact on the quality of educational processes [...] it is not possible to have management without leadership” (LÜCK, 2011, p. 25).

Leadership, when distributed, is not something done by one individual to others, but a responsibility that emerges from all individuals, given that the “[...] essential task of the school institution is the quality of teaching processes and learning that, through pedagogical-didactic and curricular practices, provide better learning outcomes for students” (LIBÂNEO, 2001, p. 81-82). Leadership starts to make sense when shared across the organization through its own actions.

As a practice, the school manager's leadership shares and discusses with his/her employees, directing their decisions into actions. It requires dialogue between management, teacher and student and their *modus operandi* so that each one exercises their organization and practical function. Practice is a cooperative effort between the subjects who participate in the actions. They are choices and require rules, in order to achieve the objectives proposed by the community, in a continuous process of attention and reflection on practices.

The school, as a social, political, cultural and production entity of diverse knowledge and information, is made and remade in the most diverse complexities: “The exercise of leadership is fundamental to the educational process, so that it can overcome its reproductive tendency that limits enormously the quality of teaching” (LÜCK, 2011, p. 145). It is in the leadership practices of the school manager that we find sufficient strength to advance in various contexts, provided that the manager, as the leader of the institution, involves the school community in discussion and reflection and decision making. to meet the challenges.

Leadership comes not only from the manager, but from the whole school community, focusing on the proposed objectives. The manager has the purpose of assuming the direction defined by the school community, so that everyone, in a participatory and collaborative way, reaches the proposed objectives. Effective managers are leaders who “[...] encourage teachers and school staff, parents, students and the community to use their potential in promoting a positive educational school environment and in developing their own potential” (LÜCK, 2011, p. 148), orienting towards learning and, jointly, solving and addressing difficulties. He/she aims at a motivated, cooperative group that wants to grow.

Methodological path

The research involves three schools, two public and one private in the urban area of Erechim / RS, located in the central area of the city. The schools come from different levels of education systems - municipal, state and private. The choice of the three schools to analyze the leadership practice processes of managers was due to their location (central area) and their proximity, as well as being from different administrative instances.

The approach is qualitative and characterized by the interest in understanding the process of leadership practices of school managers to improve the development of the teaching-learning process of students. Minayo (2004) states that qualitative research is

understood as part of social reality, because human beings are distinguished not by acting, but by thinking about what they do and by interpreting their actions in and for the lived reality.

The data collection strategy adopted in this study consisted of a structured questionnaire with ten open questions, plus documents that inform about the functioning of schools, such as the Political-Pedagogical Projects (PPPs) and the regiments of these schools. It is necessary to clarify that there is no intention to make a comparative analysis between the three schools, but only the characterization of each institution, its specific conditions and a close look at each subject interviewed, focusing on leadership practices in management.

The target audience was the management team, represented by the manager (GP, GE and GM), three teachers (PP, PE and PM) from each institution and three parents (CP, CE and CM) who participated directly in school activities, since they had children studying or because they were on the school board. In all three schools, the questionnaire was answered in person by all members on specific dates scheduled by the school board in early 2017. Data collection was approved by the Ethics Committee (Opinion No. 2.295.704) of Federal University of Fronteira Sul (UFFS). In the empirical analysis - in later pages - samples of the interviews will be presented, starting with the school administrations, afterwards the teachers and, finally, the parents who have students or participate in the school council.

Empirical space: what managers, teachers and parents say about leadership in school management

Following the data analysis is presented, treating the information as a set, differentiating schools and informants. The interest is to learn the movement of all components - managers, teachers and parents -, focusing on the leadership practices of school administrations from three levels of dialogue. The first refers to the perception of managers of the three schools in relation to management practices and how each manager observes their leadership and their actions to improve the teaching-learning process of students. At the second level are the contributions of teachers regarding school management and their observations regarding the leadership of each school management to improve the school process in the classroom. At the third level is the extra-school dialogue, with the segment of parents who participate in the school council or with children in the school institution.

At each level of dialogue dimensions considered fundamental for understanding how managers exercise leadership in school practices were identified. One of the first dimensions that appeared in the dialogues in the three instances was autonomy and leadership in management practices. Institution autonomy and leadership occur in the set of shared actions in each segment (manager, teacher and parents) for collective decision making. Autonomy is an achievement of leadership. The second dimension that presents itself is the practical actions of leadership in management. They are collective actions that enable each subject to participate and put into practice the proposed objectives. The third dimension is participatory, present in all dialogues. Participation and leadership involve the manager, teachers and parents. It occurs through the effort and articulation of the leadership of each manager with

their entire school community. Participation is close to leadership and its subjects, which collectively enables students and everyone in the school community to improve their learning.

Dimensions take place differently in the levels at which dialogues occur within school institutions. Data analysis is presented from the dimensions at their different levels, starting with autonomy and leadership, followed by practical leadership actions in management and to finalize the construction of participation and leadership of managers with the school community, important for leadership to be extended to the entire school community.

Autonomy and school leadership are related to the ability to reflect and analyze their own management practices. It is a connection between theory and practice in the realization of management based on decision making, in view of the proposed objectives, concerning the improvement of teacher-student teaching-learning practices. Barroso (2003) states that autonomy is a way of managing, guiding the various dependencies in which individuals or groups are found. Autonomy is the recognition among the various educational agents, directing them to reach the goals proposed collectively. Lück (2011) believes that school leadership is an inherent characteristic of school management and that the leader is the one who guides, mobilizes and coordinates the work of the school community, but is always integrated with it. Contreras (2012) states that autonomy refers to a permanent search for the fundamentals that guide and determine the practices. It is a process of critical reflection concerning the essence of practices.

In dialogue with the school managers of public schools, we observed that the “State does not interfere with the school’s internal autonomy” (GE). Managers have greater freedom to direct their actions in school contexts. In the private school, the autonomous management follows the organization of the “[...] network, with a strategic planning for managers” (GP). Leadership in managing the private school demonstrates “[...] always available to learn” (GP), sharing with staff to distribute issues and relying on referrals, but organization and guidelines are ready from the maintainer. In the municipal public school, the manager’s leadership and autonomy are constituted with “[...] the commitment of all” (GM). Management demonstrates being attentive to the organization to “[...] generate trust for parents by the way it is managed” (GM) by adjusting their needs.

As for management practices and leadership, the private school, at the beginning of the semesters, makes a “[...] rereading of the context where it is inserted and, from meetings with the management team, with teachers and students, the actions for the semester are built” (EP). The manager explains that leadership is built on dialogue with the school community. The initial step is to listen to the group, the parents' representatives, the teachers, and consequently the actions that can be taken by the group are identified, including participation in the construction of the network's curriculum: “Listening, according to the manager, is the first practice leadership, to after establishing possible actions, where everyone becomes a leader to put into practice” (EP).

Management leadership practices center around “[...] periodic parent-teacher meetings” (GE) to plan, pursue, reflect, and review practices at the public school. Practices and decisions are made with the school community and leadership is constituted in debates

and decisions. Lück (2011) states that school management is a process that has to be effectively shared with a focus on leadership. The manager decentralizes his leadership as an act of democratic management, making the decisions shared by all participants in the school community.

Regarding the constitution of the participation and leadership of managers with the school community, the management of the private institution emphasizes that “[...] it is necessary to articulate, motivate the group, strengthen the actions and the importance of the community. To feel as a leader is to have the group’s recognition” (GP), through actions, participation and dialogue. Lück (2011) states that leading is the integrated and cooperative action of all school participants in promoting an educational and learning environment.

In dialogue with the state public school, the constitution of participation and leadership is always “[...] a challenge, never forgetting that you are a colleague of your colleagues, respect them, because we are on the same level, only with other responsibilities” (GE). Observing the human aspect is fundamental for involvement and participation in actions. Management practices are done carefully, always looking at your fellow teacher, because being in management, beyond remaining a short, determined time, the occupied position is meant to strengthen relationships with the goal of organizing the school, integrating participation.

The management of the municipal public school “[...] does not consider itself a leader, but a matter of personal posture, a reference for the community” (GM). This manager puts himself/herself as a member of the school community and, based on decisions taken collectively, puts the actions into practice. Lück (2013) explains that school practices guided by consistent principles and ideas, present in people's minds and hearts, determine the practices of democratic management and the way of being and doing.

The dimension of autonomy and leadership from the dialogues with teachers of school institutions allows us to understand how important the dimension of the participation of the educator in conducting management really is. Marques (2006) demonstrates that every teacher is a leader and, therefore, responsible for directing education processes, both in the classroom and in the collegiate task - a critical and reflective professional, researcher and producer of knowledge, active participant in school management.

For private school teachers, the manager's leadership and autonomy are based on dialogue, “[...] being able to speak gives people an opening, and that perspective should be invested in student protagonism” (PP). It must be someone who has been in school for a long time, who knows the reality of the school community and that of their fellow teachers. Management has to be participatory, it has to be management “[...] that listens to people who are nearby, that has open dialogues” (PP). The autonomy and leadership of the manager, from the perspective of private school teachers, relies in dialogue and commitment to the school and pedagogical matters. The manager should be close to the teachers and talk about difficulties. In addition to being one of the important protagonists for all teaching-learning work with his students, the teacher also feels subject of the school when participating in management and this makes him also responsible for management practices.

In public schools, teachers express that “[...] there should be an administrator for the technical-administrative issues, because these issues overload the manager, leaving the pedagogical management empty handed - comparing the school to a company” (PE). Pedagogical management is often in the background, which implies difficulty in assisting teachers in the complexity of their instructions. Bordignon and Gracindo (2000) understand that managing a school is different from managing other social organizations, due to its purpose, its pedagogical structure and internal and external relations. Public school teachers explain that “[...] sincerity is everyone's right and it is present in the management of the school itself, because students have rights, but they also have a duty to fulfill, as do management and teachers” (PM). Being open to dialogue, but also knowing how to act and when attitudes need to be taken is fundamental to the good progress of school practice.

In dialogue with the three parents - who either attended school boards or who had children in school -, regarding the importance of managers' leadership, they claim to understand that in addition to the administrative importance of management actions, this leadership has important implications, whether positive or negative, in their children's school lives. According to Libâneo (2001), the importance of the family in monitoring their children for learning, also the active participation of school management is crucial for the school's functioning. For parents who have their children in private schools, leadership and autonomy develops “[...] when the manager and his team try to listen to the whole community, including the parents' suggestions” (CP). Parents also stress the openness that school management offers to participate in various school contexts. Parents have been very involved in the decisions, as in the formulation of the proposed pedagogical project. They explain that leadership in management is critical for them, as parents, to feel welcomed and participative in decisions.

At the state public school, parents state that management “[...] exercises leadership without imposing itself. The manager stands out and assumes the responsibilities, being able to captivate” (EC) the participation of parents in the decisions taken. Parents consider it important and positive that the choice of manager occurs by a vote. Thus, it is possible to know the work of the candidates beforehand and participate in the choice. Paro (2010) argues that the election of principals is characterized as an instrument of democracy and is one of the best options for providing the position of school manager. He explains, however, that election is not the solution to all school problems. The participation of the community is one of the indispensable tools for the democratization of management.

Parental observation in managing the municipal public school expresses that management has “[...] difficulty in sharing decisions with the group” (CM). He considered that the influences of political options “[...] partisan ended up dividing the school group” (CM). Dourado (2013) explains that public education management is considered a field in dispute and has historically been linked to political and economic orientations. The exercise of school management is still subject to the interests of classes within the production process, adopting a conception of bureaucratic management, seeking efficiency and productivity.

The dialogues with managers, teachers and parents of the three school institutions reverberated different leadership practices in school management and brought up difficulties

and advances, highlighting guidelines that we consider fundamental for the improvement of school life from the point of view of teaching and learning activities. The non-socialization of the objectives and strategies of the management team with the whole school community is one of the difficulties in achieving the actions - a point that was presented in all dialogues. The group is not strengthened if there is no leadership of the manager in their practices and actions. Therefore, management loses autonomy and participation, making it difficult to implement actions. To address management deficiencies, dialogues with respondents brought key elements to the leadership of the school manager. The democratization of management and its leadership occurs through collective construction and the participation of the entire school community. Listening to teachers, parents and staff, maintaining constant dialogue and making suggestions, is what enables each member of the school community to be a leader, to put the proposed goals into practice collectively. It is not an individualized construction, but the responsibility passed to each subject of the school community, strengthening the practical actions of management and democratic leadership.

Final considerations

Understanding how school management develops democratic leadership practices, building autonomy, obtaining participation and implementing actions is to return to the objective proposed for this investigation, with the purpose of confronting the results achieved. It is unanimous among managers that dialogue between the various school levels becomes a fundamental principle for leadership and management practices to be effective. Democracy strengthens as it is exercised, meaning that everyone is an integral part and participant in collective decision-making actions and decisions, though often not according to some minorities. However, based on the majority, it is about building the autonomy for participation in the implementation of decisions and actions proposed by the management team.

The management of the private school reports that the actions need to go through a rereading process between the various instances of the school. Decisions and actions are made only when everyone participates and understands their importance to the school. Public school managers, on the other hand, explain that periodic meetings are held with school authorities to plan, reflect, and make decisions. However, the management of public schools has made clear that the involvement with administrative issues is greater than with the pedagogical ones, making decision making via the community difficult. Constantly challenging this model of administrative organization in schools is necessary. The managers explain that this is a constant and periodic task, because the decisions taken by the community have been more easily implemented.

Leadership is a process that requires dedication and mobilization to achieve the proposed objectives and the construction of autonomy among the management team. The private school teachers explain that the autonomy of a management group takes place through dialogue, contributing to the student's protagonism and that it is necessary to be close to the teachers, listening, sharing the teaching-learning process, helping in the difficulties,

interacting with the entire school community. The leadership of a manager is to be present in the various spaces of the school, to participate and to position themselves in various contexts. Public school teachers express that management has been more concerned with technical-administrative issues than with pedagogical ones, making it difficult to provide timely help to teachers in the complexity of school daily life.

Teachers of school networks make explicit a close relationship with the practices and actions of their managers. In public schools, managers are dedicated to the processes of school organization, even with such a lack of resources to supply basic things for the school to function. The leadership of management goes through sincerity in sharing with the school community the issues of school organization. This makes teachers become subjects of school actions. Leadership is to be close to the facts, the events of the various realities that are formed in educational practices. In private schools, teachers feel subject to the organization and the teaching-learning process. In the dialogues, the maintainer directs the teaching-learning practices, but the teachers participate in this formulation. They claim that it is a process of joint construction, so the practical application is known to the whole school team, both managers and teachers, as well as the collective unit that forms the school community.

Private school parents explain that leadership and autonomy develop in school management when the management team listens to suggestions or reflections from the school community. They emphasize that management is always attentive to suggestions, constantly listening and inviting more people to participate in the school. Parents need to realize their importance in the teaching-learning process of their children, but also in the functioning and organization of the school. Participating, contributing to the implementation of decisions taken is one of the assumptions of autonomy built by management. In public schools, management exercises leadership without imposing itself. Management takes responsibility, can captivate for participation and involvement in actions and parents have participated. It is in participation that we can identify the functioning of the school organization, important to understand where and how we can best contribute to the school. It is identified that the leadership of the manager condenses to articulating participation and coordinating. When parents understand its importance in school organization, they then feel subject to the process, which makes it easier to implement the proposed actions to improve all school didactic-pedagogical work.

We are aware that we still have a long way to go in understanding this issue of leadership in school management. With the dialogues we heard we can better understand the different perspectives with which leadership is built in the management of different education networks, but some points seem to us to be significant to continue investigating the subject. One of them is the importance of management constituting leadership in a relationship of dialogue, participation and autonomy of the school community for the implementation of the proposed actions. Another point is to identify that the group strengthens management leadership, its practices and actions. The teaching-learning school activity gains significant improvements when managers, teachers and the school community understand that leadership is present in every dialogue, participation and implementation of established actions. In the

democratization of the school, the leadership is not exactly in the management, but in the autonomy, the dialogue and the participation for the accomplishment of the actions.

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Notes

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