

iJEResearch

International Journal of Education and Research Vol. 1, Number 1, March - 2025 | Peer-Reviewed Journal ISSN 2764-9733 | ijeresearch.org DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15131125

MUNICIPAL EDUCATION COUNCIL (CME): CHALLENGES AND REFLECTIONS ON POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN THE CITY OF MAUÁ-SP

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ABSTRACT

This article is based on a qualitative study, supported by bibliographic and documentary research on the Municipal Education Council (CME) of the municipality of Mauá-SP and its contribution to the public authorities in decision-making in the educational sphere. The objective is to discuss aspects of the constitution and functioning of the Municipal Education Council (CME) of the municipality of Mauá-SP, a city that is part of the ABC region of São Paulo, metropolitan region of São Paulo-SP, and its role in municipal decisions about public education, as an important collegiate body, representing the democratization of educational management. The emphasis of the study is on the challenges faced by the CME of Mauá-SP in breaking the formal structure of collegiate bodies and expanding popular participation in decision-making together with the public authorities. Results: the city, like other Brazilian municipalities, faces the challenge of expanding the participation of popular segments in the elaboration of public educational policies and planning of goals that allow qualifying municipal educational systems. Democratic management, even though decreed in official documents, is still not effectively experienced in the municipality of Mauá-SP, as it is observed that civil participation happens in a timid way and needs to be continually encouraged by the Public Authorities.

Keywords: Municipal Education Council. Education. Democratic Management.

iJEResearch - Vol. 1, Number 1 - 2025 - ISSN 2764-9733 - DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15131644

INTRODUCTION

This article analyzes the performance of the Municipal Education Council (CME) of Mauá-SP and its contribution to the democratic management of local education. The CME, established by Law No. 2,784/1997, performs normative, consultative, deliberative: 10.3281/zen supervisory functions, representing civil society in the formulation of educational policies. However, effective popular participation is still a challenge, demanding greater community involvement in decision-making (MAUÁ, 2024).

The 1988 Federal Constitution consolidated education as a social right, reinforcing the need for participatory management (BRASIL, CF, 1998). Despite the advances, it is observed that democratic management does not always translate into effective practice, as citizen participation still occurs in a limited manner. Saviani (2013) argues that social citizenship, which includes the right to education, is essential for human and social development.

The history of the democratization of education in Brazil shows the importance of social movements in the achievement of rights. Cury (2008) highlights that basic education as a subjective public right must guarantee universal access and quality of education. However, the centralization of power and the lack of critical mobilization of society still hinder the realization of this right.

The Mauá CME faces the challenge of expanding the participation of different social segments in the formulation of educational policies. The lack of knowledge about the council's function and the low participation of the population reflect the need for more effective strategies to involve civil society (FARIAS; VIEIRA, 2022). Consolidating a strong council requires a joint effort between managers, educators, and citizens.

The democratization of education requires effective social participation in collegiate bodies. For this to become a reality, it is essential that there be greater transparency in the actions of the CME, as well as incentives for different social groups to actively engage in decision-making, strengthening the collective commitment to educational quality.

Thus, this study seeks to discuss the challenges and possibilities for improving participatory educational management in Mauá-SP, highlighting the importance of education as an instrument of citizenship and social transformation. Reflection on the role of the CME can contribute to strengthening the democratic management of municipal education, ensuring greater engagement of society in the planning and implementation of more inclusive and effective educational policies.

The municipal council of education of Mauá - SP: Structure, functions and challenges

The construction of scientific knowledge about the Municipal Education Council (CME) city of Mauá-SP the requires of а methodological approach that includes both the of existing literature review and the documentary analysis of regulations and official records. In order to understand the challenges and possibilities of popular participation in this area, a qualitative study was chosen, which allows an in-depth investigation of the dynamics permeate participatory that educational management in the municipality.

This chapter presents the paths taken in the research. justifying the theoretical and methodological choices adopted. To this end, aspects related to data collection techniques, the documentary sources analyzed and the criteria used in the selection and interpretation of the information obtained will be addressed. The qualitative approach is justified by the desire to understand the perceptions, experiences and of democratic management impacts in municipal education, from a critical and reflective perspective.

Data about the city were collected from municipal publications on the website of the city hall and the IBGE. The municipality of Mauá-SP is part of the ABCDMRR Region

iJEResearch - Vol. 1, Number 1 - 2025 - ISSN 2764-9733 - DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15131644

(Santo André, São Bernado do Campo, São Caetano do Sul, Diadema, Ribeirão Pires and Rio Grande da Serra, borders Ferraz de Vasconcellos to the northeast. São Paulo to the north, Santo André to the west, Ribeirão Pires to the east and south, with an area of 61,937km², population of 418,261 (2022), population density 6,753.01 inhab./km² (2022) and schooling according to IBGE data from 2010 is 97.4% (IBGE, 2024).

The municipality has a wide social, cultural and natural diversity, with 13 km² of spring areas, within the 61 km² of territorial extension, it is about 70 km from the Port of Santos, holds the 11th position among the largest cities in the State, however it is the 10th poorest in budget per capita. The Human Development Index (HDI) is 0.781, ranking second to last among the cities that make up the ABCDMRR (MAUÁ, 2024).

The municipality grew in a disorderly manner between the 1960s and 1980s, without adequate planning on the part of the public authorities, so the low-income population began to occupy peripheral areas, in areas of risk and environmental protection, on hillsides and on the banks of streams and rivers, according to data available on the city hall website, more than 78 subdivisions were installed (MAUÁ, 2024).

The city has 36 municipal schools and 61 state schools, a College of Technology (FATEC), a private college and a distance learning campus, 21 health units, 3 emergency care units, 3 private hospitals and only 1 public hospital. The city has 5 Social Assistance Reference Centers (CRAS), 1 Specialized Social Assistance Reference Center (CREAS) and 5 Socio-Educational Action Centers, aimed at families at social risk. A total of 12 thousand families benefit from the Bolsa Família Program. Mauá is recognized for two important centers of economic development: the Capuava Petrochemical Complex and the Sertãozinho Industrial Complex, with large companies and a prominent position in the industrial scenario (MAUÁ, 2024).

After selecting and organizing the data collected, content analysis was performed with the aim of describing the city and the organization of the CME. Then, the articles found on the web were organized to compose discussion on the challenges the and possibilities of social participation in decisionmaking regarding the educational organization of the municipality of Mauá. The study was organized into a summary, introduction, material and methods, and presentation and discussion of the results, finally bringing the conclusion about the research.

Analysis of the impacts and prospects of popular participation in CME, Mauá -SP

Initially, it is necessary to understand the definition and characterization of the councils through their regulations, describing how the rules are approved and how the electoral process for the inauguration of the electoral councilor takes place. The CME is relevant because it establishes an order in municipal education, defines rights and duties, and enables the participation of civil society in decisionmaking in actions involving the educational sphere of each municipality. It is linked to the Municipal Department of Education (SME), acting to advise the Municipal Executive in both the formulation and implementation and evaluation of public policies in the educational sphere.

The CME's role consists of developing complementary standards to the national and state Education guidelines, issuing opinions regarding the current interpretation and proposing solutions and approaches to the issues that underpin the educational system of each municipality (SÃO PAULO, 2024). In this way, councilors need to qualify themselves in the face of the various variables that arise from their work.

Every four years the municipal government is changed, in the years of acting as a councilor, it was possible to observe that the issue of quality in education was strongly present in the speeches, thus bringing the council's actions closer to the neoliberal conception of State, Power and Politics, as Nez (2022) points out in his study in the educational field, the problems consist of associating "education and quality" and the different visions of each conception, which in practice generate different projects from one government to another that generate conflicts and setbacks and cites Nagel (2001):

The State is the vital energy that sustains the system, originating from the social relationship itself that supports it and offers the justification for its existence. By expressing the organization of society, its social practices capture and expose the transformations that occur in work. In addition, it enables the legitimacy of economic relations, commanding a harmonization between the diverse interests of different classes (NAGEL, 2001 apud NEZ, 2022).

Popular participation in decision-making still occurs in a subtle way in municipal public policies. The selection process is a peer-to-peer vote, and after the appointment, work begins with the CME. Council members carry out ongoing studies and research to implement changes in the municipality of Mauá that are in line with the legislation and that meet the diversity of the city's population. Each term in office restarts projects that should emphasize the "redistribution of social benefits" (NEZ, 2018), as the socioeconomic inequality of the city's population is moving towards more inclusive and egalitarian education.

The Council performs normative, consultative and propositional functions, as well as being responsible for developing and monitoring the goals contained in the Municipal Education Plan - PME. It is necessary to emphasize here the relevance of the creation of the CME for the democratic participation of civil society in the educational direction of each municipality and to enable everyone to have access to this democratic tool for social participation in the development of public policies.

The CME differs from other Popular Councils, it is institutional, which are collegiate bodies that do not require regulation by public authorities and act directly with the community, organizing itself autonomously, the CME has its own legislation and a set of specificities linked to its own sphere of action and attributions.

Regarding their organization, the Councils consultative. be deliberative can or participatory: the consultative, as the name itself highlights, has an opinion-giving nature, and is therefore heard by the government, however, they may or may not act in accordance with the proposals; the deliberative acts in partnership with the government and demands broad and organized participation of members of civil society and public authorities, as it acts directly in the formulation and implementation of public authority actions and the Participatory Council has the function of monitoring public actions and spending and acts by suggesting actions and public policies, exercising and fostering social control in a broad and participatory way (SÃO PAULO, 2025).

The municipality of Mauá-SP, a city that is part of the ABC region of São Paulo, metropolitan region of São Paulo-SP, has the CME regulated in municipal legislation through Law No. 2,784, of November 24, 1997, signed by Mayor Oswaldo Dias, which creates the Municipal Education Council, thus beginning the challenge of fostering social participation in decisions about education in the city.

Since then, the city of Mauá has been mobilizing civil society to participate and expand knowledge about new forms of participatory educational management, based on Law No. 5,683, which approves the Municipal Education Plan, institutionalizing participation decision-making in and restructuring the Municipal Council for Monitoring and Social Control of the Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Basic Education Professionals Education for (FUNDEB) (MAUÁ, Law No. 5,719/2011), in accordance with Federal Law 14,113 of 2020.

Still on the aforementioned legislation, the role of the CME is set out in the Organic Law of the municipality of Mauá, in articles 180, 184, 185, 187, 188, 189 and 243 of the State

Constitution. It is a consultative, normative, deliberative and supervisory body (Art. 2) whose objectives are:

I - Present diagnoses and define priorities to, together with the Executive Branch, prepare the Municipal Education Plan, which should include elementary and secondary education, regular and supplementary, early childhood education, education for work and special education at different levels;

II - To reconcile federal, state and municipal, public, autonomous and private actions in the area of education and teaching;

III - Compatibilize educational actions with other areas;

IV - Monitor and supervise the municipality's budget execution;

V - Make a diagnosis and propose a general policy to combat illiteracy;

VI - Promote debate with society in order to allow the school to continually renew itself;

VII - The CME will have as its basic objective to expand the political space for discussion on education and citizenship, contributing to improving the quality of educational services. (MAUÁ, Law No. 2,784/1997).

CME members need to know the objectives of their work in order to participate effectively and critically, considering that educational institutions are living and dynamic organisms and as such must be characterized by a network of relationships between all the elements that interfere in it directly or indirectly. Thus, counselors are expected to actively participate in meetings and assemblies, paying attention to the rules, guidelines, organizational structure, actions and procedures that ensure the rationalization of the use of human, material, financial and intellectual resources (LIBÂNEO et al., 2012).

It is important to highlight that the municipality of Mauá guarantees parity in the choice of representatives between government and society, thus enabling opinions from different perspectives and, effectively, exercising citizenship and respecting the democratization of access. According to art. 4, the organization of the CME, which must be made up of 16 (sixteen) members, elected by direct and universal vote, follows the guidelines mentioned below:

I - 4 (four) representatives of public authorities, 2 (two) from the Municipal executive and 2 (two) appointed by the Legislative;

II - 4 (four) teachers from the municipality's education system, with professionals from the municipal, state and private networks being present;

III - 2 (two) representatives of students from the municipality, 2 (two) parents of students, also from the municipality;

IV - 4 (four) representatives of civil society entities, duly registered (MAUÁ, Law No. 2,784/1997).

The law also provides that each representative will have a substitute and that a Councilor who is absent four times in a row will lose his or her mandate, which lasts for two years, with reelection permitted only once. This is an unpaid position, but one of great public interest. Every two years, an Electoral Commission is established to be responsible for the election, by means of an ordinance, which can be found on the city hall website.

The CME meetings are held monthly, open to social participation, although they still occur timidly by the population. It has been possible to follow in recent decades the strengthening of the democratization of access to decisions related to education in the municipality, thus favoring the processes of exercising citizenship.

The close examination of the material researched in municipal records and in the literature review allowed us to verify that the population is unaware of the role of the CME and participation has been one of the challenges of management in fulfilling democratic management, which still comes up against the centralization of power, revealing the need to break down the barriers that prevent people from actively participating, as well as create mechanisms so that different social agents can participate regarding in decisions the educational policy of their city (FARIAS and VIEIRA, 2022).

It is worth noting that Brazil is a country with some of the greatest social inequalities on the planet, where until a few decades ago public education was precarious. Since 1932, with the publication of the "Manifesto of the Pioneers of New Education", secular, compulsory and free schools have been advocated, highlighting the urgency of restructuring the Brazilian education system. It was after the Federal Constitution of 1988 that popular participation was expanded, a historic moment of great achievements in guaranteeing rights, including education, an essential among fundamental human rights.

that preceded The moments the promulgation of the Federal Constitution of 1988 were marked by a broad political and social mobilization, it was a historic period after direct elections of the rulers in 1982, in which the broad campaign of "Direct Elections Now" managed to mobilize civil society, unions, political parties and was called by Ulysses Guimarães as "Citizen Constitution", in which more than one hundred popular amendments containing 15 million signatures were presented (RODRIGUES, 2018).

This popular participation coincides with the end of the civil-military dictatorship, a time when the country was seeking a new form of intervention in decision-making regarding educational policies. Institutionalized channels organized into councils, committees, among others, were then created. However, as Cury (2006) highlights, a municipal education councilor has to play the role of "defender of citizenship" and this requires studies on the exercise of their function together, which implies knowing the legal and legal aspects that underpin participation and decision-making (CURY, 2006 apud (FARIAS and VIEIRA, 2022).

Cury (2008) and Saviani (2013) highlight the importance of the struggles and movements before the 1988 constitution, in which the divergence between the old and the new showed that a new democratic public sphere was needed both to combat dictatorial government power and to claim the various faces of democracy. In this context, new political subjects emerged in defense of different projects for the future, as they argued that Brazil could have a democratic organization and that democracy could coexist with social justice, thus breaking with the political scenario in which the dictatorship was responsible for stealing the possibility of doing politics under different expressions and sharing privileges with society.

After redemocratization, education took a leap in quality, however, even though the right to education is guaranteed in laws, decrees and regulations in Brazil, there are discrepant inequalities and civil society is unaware of its rights and the forms of demand regarding the guarantee of access, permanence and quality preached in laws and statutes (RODRIGUES, 2018).

The relationship between law and education always needs to be revisited, as it is necessary to understand the historical and social relationships faced by societies. Thus, there is no linearity, but rather advances and setbacks, depending on the moment experienced. Thus, the right to education is not a finished process, considered a dialectical as it is and contradictory movement, which is in constant transformation (FLACH, 2009).

Understanding the different nuances of the historical and social moments of each period allows us to reflect in greater depth on the relevance of protecting social rights, thus allowing all subjects access to the minimum level of well-being possible according to the current standard of civilization (MARSHALL, 1967 apud SAVIANI, 2013).

Society considers schools to be the main way to universalize knowledge, as they are the ideal exercise citizenship, place to helping individuals to understand their rights and duties. As an educator, manager and municipal councilor, I have been able to see the efforts made in defense of different social movements, and today there is a significant set of norms and policies focused on the protection and promotion of human rights. However, we also live with "systematic violations, impunity, multiple forms of violence, social inequality, corruption, discrimination and weaknesses in the enforcement of rights" (CANDAU, 2012).

According to Cury (2008), the expression

"basic education" in the text of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (BRAZIL, LDBEN, 1996) is a new concept and a right, and it is also a form of organization of national education, which presents itself as a set of new realities brought about by the search for a public space. As a conceptual, generic and abstract principle, basic education helps to organize what is real on new bases and administers them through political action that aims to be democratic and fair.

In the study by Nez (2018), he defends education as a humanizing space, and highlights that "quality in education" needs to be in the sense of giving human beings the conditions to emancipate themselves and participate, as a democratic right. In the contemporary context, school is even more necessary, because in the face of technological transformations we are the experiencing moment called the "knowledge society", or as Saviani (2013) highlights: "information society", since knowledge implies the ability to understand the connections between phenomena and capture the meaning of everything that is present in the world, which goes against the circulation of information in fragmented forms, which do not allow access to knowledge capable of leading individuals to understand the situation in which they live.

In the contemporary scenario, education has been undergoing profound transformations, both in the federative spheres and in the pedagogical organization of school institutions. It is understood as a pillar of citizenship and its innovative character is due to the fact that it enables everyone the right to participate in decisions about educational policies, a right that was denied for centuries to Brazilians, however, despite the democratization of access, it is still a challenge.

The school still functions as a space intended for restricted schooling activities and cultural reproduction of the ruling class, as Santos (2019) warns, social exclusion reveals the multiple ways of depriving citizens of basic rights and is characterized by a complex and multifaceted process. As Flach (2009) states,

with mandatory education, historically only offered to the Brazilian elite, it is always a cause for concern for the ruling classes that do not defend a more democratic and fair management model.

Access to education is a crucial right, but it is not enough. It is necessary to take care of the content, methods, assessment, among others, since democratization requires democratic public policies in the economy, work, health and housing. and social security. Otherwise, equality of opportunities will come up against inequality of starting conditions, widely used by the new middle classes to continue to have both educational social and advantages, and municipal councilors need to be vigilant.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The article on the study of the Municipal Education Council of Mauá-SP revealed the importance of the body in building a more and participatory democratic educational management. Throughout the research, it was found that, despite its relevance, there are still significant challenges to increasing the involvement of civil society in decisions about municipal education. The analysis allowed us to understand that the lack of knowledge of the population about the functioning and role of the CME directly impacts the effectiveness of its work, making it essential to implement strategies to strengthen social participation.

The organizational structure and responsibilities of the CME demonstrate its potential to positively influence the formulation of educational policies, ensuring that education management meets the real needs of the community. However, the study identified that the periodic renewal of council members and the alternation of municipal governments can generate instability in educational guidelines, making it difficult to continue long-term planned actions. In this sense, it is essential that mechanisms be established to ensure the continuity of public educational policies, regardless of political changes.

Furthermore, the research showed that iJEResearch - Vol. 1. Number 1 - 2025 - ISSN 2764-9733 - DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15131644 25 popular participation in decision-making still occurs discreetly, without much effective participation, reinforcing the need for greater dissemination and encouragement of citizen participation in the CME. Democratizing access to information about the council, as well as promoting spaces for debate and training, can help the population better understand its importance and actively engage in educational discussions in the municipality. Strengthening the CME's actions therefore depends on the joint engagement of managers, educators and civil society.

In view of the reflections presented, it is concluded that the Municipal Education Council of Mauá-SP plays an essential role in the democratic management of education, but faces challenges that need to be overcome in order for its performance to be even more effective. The expansion of social participation, the continuity of educational policies and the strengthening of the council as a deliberative are central aspects for municipal body education to advance towards a more inclusive and efficient model. Thus, it is expected that this study will contribute to future discussions and initiatives aimed at improving educational management in the municipality.

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