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AN ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE ON PUPIL  
PARTICIPATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GOVERNMENT, 1930-1943

by

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3966

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Origin of the Problem

When the forefathers of our country enacted the Constitution and set up a new form of government they founded, not only a new nation, but a new concept of a method of existence for that nation:

A way of life based on self-respect and respect for others; a belief that individuals are incommensurate, unique and precious. It is a way of living followed by a people that have four traits: respect for the individual, independence, cooperation and pragmatic thinking.<sup>1</sup>

This is a democracy upon whose principles America has been built. The forefathers of the American nation

. . . tried to apply the Judean Christian ethics literally: They insisted that while men might differ in industry and ability they were all entitled to certain basic rights, which could not be taken away by the whim either of a powerful minority or even of a bare majority . . . . They did not, of course, always live up to their ideal, but on the whole they developed a system of fair play and respect for the rights of others which produced some amazing results.<sup>2</sup>

The eyes of the world have been focused on America for over one hundred years; few believed that this democratic adventure in government would endure, but despite wars and depressions and unemployment, the

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1. Franklin H. McNutt, Democracy in the Schools. Class Lecture. Greensboro, North Carolina: Woman's College of the University of North Carolina. November, 1942.

2. John F. Wharton, "Democracy Is Your Job," Coronet Magazine, 19:24, February, 1946.

Democratic government of the United States has progressed with steady advancement. This idea of democracy has become so dear to the American people that twice within the last two decades they have taken up arms against foreign ideologies which have threatened to destroy the American way of life. They have launched and executed a national defense program hitherto unknown in world history. American men have been armed and sent into battle; industry has provided materials for use by all armed forces on land, sea, and in the air. All national efforts have been successfully directed to the task of preserving America's democratic way of life. Now that the war is over Americans must continue to defend and preserve their national status, not only through military preparedness, but they must build within the people a firmer reliance in democracy.

Education is the agency through which this can best be achieved. World events of the last thirty years, both at home and abroad, have emphasized the importance of education in its relationship to the welfare of all the people of all the nations. Education alone is not enough; it must be the kind suited to life in a democracy. Any kind of education is considered good in so far as it accomplishes the desired goal. If an autocratic type of government and the social order which grows out of this type of government is sought, unfaltering obedience to authority must be stressed. If a people wish to establish and perpetuate a democratic government and a democratic society, they must educate for democracy. Just as the foreign ideologies were implanted in the people through propaganda and a rigid training in obedience to authority at a time when youth was susceptible and attitudes were easily moulded, so must the American schools dedicate themselves to the task of establishing in American youth the ideals and fundamentals of democracy.

Romer and others say:

If democracy is to live and flourish; if our present form of government shall continue to progress toward the ideal imagined by our American Forefathers, the boys and girls of each succeeding generation must be actively trained to participate, not passively, but actively and genuinely in democracy.<sup>3</sup>

The increased emphasis on democratic living must not be confined to the schools alone. Hockett and Jacobsen say:

It is a living expression of the most cherished of ideals; that a richer and nobler life should be opened to the common man. It is the significant phase of James Truslow Adams's the American dream.<sup>4</sup>

The American dream - that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer for every man with opportunity for each according to his ability and achievement . . . a dream of a social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable and be recognized by others for what they are regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position.<sup>5</sup>

Since the perpetuation of democracy will depend to a large extent upon the traits and attitudes which are inculcated into the boys and girls of each generation, the schools must be vitally concerned with the type of training these children are given. The formation of attitudes is never direct, is always indirect, and is related to method. Traits grow out of the concomitant or marginal learnings. Methods stressing compulsion and competition will not produce the traits necessary for life in a democracy.

For the development of these traits an environment must be created in which children will have an opportunity, or many opportunities

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3. J. Allen Roemer and others, Basic Student Activities. Chicago: Silver, 1935. p. 117.

4. John A. Hockett and E. W. Jacobsen, Modern Practices in the Elementary School. New York: Ginn, 1938. p. 13.

5. James Truslow Adams, The Epic of America. New York: Triangle Books, 1931. p. 404.



to develop and practice the four traits: respect for the individual, independence, cooperation, and pragmatic thinking. These traits cannot be learned from books or by conversations relating to these traits; the stage must be set and children encouraged to live the part, for in order to understand and appreciate democratic processes children should live them instead of discussing them theoretically. Mme. Sun Yat Sen, widow of the founder of the Chinese Republic, expressed this thought well when she said, "Progress toward democracy is like learning to swim - one learns, not by talking about it, but by getting into the water."<sup>6</sup>

Pupil participation in elementary school government amply provides that setting, out of which the traits of democracy tend to grow. Harold D. Myer says:

The idea of student participation is a process - a device. The educator sees it as a tool for furthering the cardinal principles of education and not as an end within itself. The student should be the chief thought . . . . It is, conceived in the broadest sense, the purposeful and aggressive assistance in solving the problem of group living in the school environment . . . . It is all the opportunities offered by the school for developing pupil initiative and intelligent thinking.<sup>7</sup>

#### Statement of the Problem

The title of this thesis is: An Analysis and Evaluation of the Professional Literature on Pupil Participation in Elementary School Government, 1930-1943. Expressed in the form of questions, it becomes:

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6. Quoted by Rose Schneideman, Democratic Education in Practice. New York: Harper, 1945. p. 30.

7. Harold D. Myer, "Paragraphs on Student Participation in School Government," School Activities, 3:3, February, 1932.

What does the professional literature say about pupil participation in elementary school government, in what school experiences can it function, and of what value is it in the life of a child?

In making the study an attempt has been made to answer five specific questions. They are:

1. What are the purposes of pupil participation in elementary school government?
2. What types of organization are described in the professional literature?
3. What powers are delegated to the pupils and what are reserved to the faculty?
4. What specific functions can be assumed by the pupils?
5. What recommendations are possible in the light of the survey?

#### Delimitation of the Problem

The first delimiting factor is that the study be confined to the professional literature from 1930-1943. Before 1930 very little had been written on pupil participation in elementary school government. Work had been done in the secondary schools, and Thomas Arnold of Rugby School in England, and William George, in the George Junior Republic in New York, had experimented with the idea; but not much had been done in the elementary schools. Since 1943 little has been written on the subject.

The second delimiting factor is that the study be confined to the public elementary school in America.

Dr. Franklin H. McNutt gives a clear idea as to what constitutes the elementary school.

The elementary school is concerned with a period of the child's development, namely, that between infancy and adolescence . . . . The elementary school is, in the large, the undifferentiated school concerned primarily with the development deemed desirable for all children irrespective of sex, color, or economic condition . . . . The elementary school has ends of its own. It is not to be considered as merely pre-high school preparation.<sup>8</sup>

For the purpose of this study the elementary school shall be defined as the first six grades.

#### Method Used

The library research method has been used in gathering data for the analysis of the study, and criteria have been constructed and submitted to a group of experts in the field of pupil participation in elementary school government for use in evaluating the projects and devices described in the literature.

To avoid duplicating previous work and to secure help for this study, the following sources have been carefully checked:

- Palfrey, Thomas R. and Coleman, Henry E.  
 Guide to Bibliographies of Theses - United States and Canada.  
 2nd edition. Chicago: American Library Association, 1940. 54 pp.
- United States. Library of Congress. Catalogue Division.  
 List of American Doctoral Dissertations.  
 Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913-1938.
- Doctoral Dissertations Accepted by American Universities.  
 New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1933/34-1943.
- United States. Office of Education Library.  
 Bibliography of Research Studies in Education.  
 Washington: Government Printing Office, 1929-1943.

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8. Franklin H. McNutt, General Provisions of the State Elementary Curriculum, Bulletin, No. 1. Columbus Ohio: Department of Education, 1939. 5 pp. Mimeographed.

Good, Carter, Victor, editor.

Doctor's Theses Under Way in Education, Journal of Educational Research, January Issue, 1930-1943.

Gray, Ruth A., editor.

Doctor's Theses in Education: A list of 797 Theses Deposited with the Office of Education and Available for Loan. Office of Education Bulletin, 1935, No. 60. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1935. 69 pp.

Monroe, Walter Scott and Shores, Louis.

Bibliographies and Summaries in Education. New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1936. 470 pp.

Barstad, Anvor and others.

Register of Doctoral Dissertations Accepted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Vol. 1, 1899-1936. Teachers College Bulletin, 28th Series, No. 4, February 1937. New York: Teachers College, 1937. 136 pp.

New York University. Washington Square Library.

List of Doctors' and Masters' Theses in Education. New York University, 1890-June, 1936. New York: New York University, School of Education, 1937. 117 pp.

Northwestern University.

List of Doctoral Dissertations . . . 1896-1934. Evanston, Illinois: The University, 1935.

Education Index: A Cumulative Author and Subject Index to a Selected List of Educational Periodicals, Books and Pamphlets. New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1930-1943.

The Bibliographic Index: A Cumulative Bibliography of Bibliographies, New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1938-1943.

Educational Abstracts. Albany, New York: 1936-1943.

Selected References in Education. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1933-1938.

#### Related Studies

A survey of the literature checked revealed many studies relating to pupil participation in elementary school government. None was found, however, which duplicated this study - An Analysis and Evaluation of the

Professional Literature on Pupil Participation in Elementary School Government, 1930-1943.

Cecil Andrew Singleton in 1938, at the University of Texas, made an excellent report: Pupil Participation in Management and Control in the Fort Worth Elementary Schools.<sup>9</sup> The study gives descriptions and discussions of Boy's Safety Patrols, Girl's Safety Patrols, Homeroom Organizations, Assembly Programs, and the Central Council, and shows how pupils participate in management and control through these activities. In answer to questionnaires sent to thirty principals in the Fort Worth Elementary Schools, Singleton constructed tables showing the desirable outcomes of the Boys' Safety Patrols and the Central Council and how much importance the principals attached to clubs and other organizations. The study shows how the Fort Worth curriculum sets the stage for pupil participation in management and control through its philosophy, objectives, activities and class-room methods as set forth in the course of study and through the activities growing out of the curriculum. Recommendations are made for a suggested organization for pupil participation in management and control in the Fort Worth elementary schools.

There is no similarity to the present study except as it describes pupil participation in school government in one school system, Fort Worth, Texas.

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9. Cecil Andrew Singleton, Pupil Participation in Management and Control in the Fort Worth Elementary Schools. Master's Thesis, Austin, Texas: University of Texas, 1938.

In 1936, at the Indiana State Teachers' College, Hosea R. Russell made an appraisal of the movement in a thesis entitled, History and Present Status of Pupil Participation in School Government.<sup>10</sup> In this study Russell undertook to trace the history of pupil participation in school government, to make an accurate appraisal of the present status of pupil participation, and to trace the trends in pupil participation in school government and thus learn what changes or new developments may be expected in the future. Russell used the library research method in solving the first part of his problem and the questionnaire method in finding the present status and trends in pupil participation in school government. His study ends with the year 1936 and does not duplicate this study which is An Evaluation and Analysis of the Professional Literature on Pupil Participation in Elementary School Government, 1930-1943.

At Western Reserve University in 1938, Hugh Victor Perkins analyzed and evaluated pupil participation in his dissertation, Pupil Participation in Elementary School Control.<sup>11</sup> Perkins gives a short history of the movement in Europe and America. He points out the values, the outcomes, the weaknesses, the objectives, and the conditions essential to success of pupil participation in elementary school government. He describes many service groups which aid in pupil participation and class-room organizations as a means of promoting pupil participation. His study does not duplicate this study which is An Evaluation and Analysis of the Professional Literature on Pupil Participation in Elementary School Government, 1930-1943.

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10. Hosea R. Russell, History and Present Status of Pupil Participation in School Government. Master's Thesis, Terre Haute, Indiana: Indiana State Teachers' College, 1936. 115 pp.

11. Hugh Victor Perkins, Pupil Participation in Elementary School Control. Doctor's Dissertation, Cleveland, Ohio: Western Reserve University, 1938.

Florence Duvall Mount made a careful survey in 1931 at the University of Southern California, the results of which are recorded in An Evaluation of Pupil Participation in School Government in the Elementary Schools of the United States.<sup>12</sup>

Using the method of interviews and questionnaires Mount assembled and described those practices in student participation in elementary school government then in use. She listed the aims of pupil participation; described the Safety Committee plan; showed how eligibility is determined; listed the benefits attributed to pupil participation; pointed out the chief problems and difficulties encountered; and gave four final conclusions arrived at from the study. Her work in no way duplicates this study, which is an Analysis and Evaluation of the Professional Literature on Pupil Participation in Elementary School Government 1930-1943.

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12. Florence Duvall Mount, An Evaluation of Pupil Participation in School Government in the Elementary Schools of the United States. Master's Thesis, University Park, Los Angeles: University of Southern California, 1931. 150 pp.

## CHAPTER II

### PURPOSES OF PUPIL PARTICIPATION

The term "pupil participation in school government" is a familiar one. However, the movement has often been referred to as "student government" and has been erroneously interpreted to mean the complete shifting of authority and responsibility from faculty to children. The term "student government" is a misnomer and should not be used because it implies that children actually run the school; whereas, "pupil participation" indicates a state of cooperation between pupils and faculty in the actual operation of the school.

McKown says:

It is to be regretted that the idealistic but inaccurate expression student government is still commonly used. Student government is impossible because of students' lack of maturity and judgment which must go with legislative, executive and judicial powers, and also because the school authorities, and not the students are officially charged with the responsibility for all phases of school life and activity.<sup>1</sup>

Starr asserts:

Student government smacks too much of students actually running the schools; places too much emphasis on discipline by students, which is only a minor part in the plan; and last but not least, fails to emphasize the necessary cooperation of students and teachers in running the schools.<sup>2</sup>

In this study "pupil participation in school government" is always indicated.

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1. Harry C. McKown, Activities in the Elementary School. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1938. p. 79.

2. G. G. Starr, "Preparation Precedes Participation," School Activities, 10:243, February, 1939.



A review of the literature revealed that nearly all writers on the subject have set up purposes or objectives, some of which emphasize the direct benefits to the pupils as individuals or as groups, while others stress the indirect benefits relating to the improvement of organization and administration of school activities. All seem to agree on one objective - training for democratic citizenship.

William Dodge Lewis expresses the opinion that:

The only sound reason for student participation is the development of social attitudes and skills appropriate to citizens of a democracy, rather than the docile and long suffering obedience appropriate to subjects of a disposition.<sup>3</sup>

Allen and others assert that "the chief purpose from the standpoint of the local authorities should be to inspire a high type of service and an intelligent form of followership."<sup>4</sup>

The summary of purposes here presented has been culled from the expressed purposes found in the literature. They have been listed under two heads: (a) those which emphasize the direct benefits to the pupils, and (b) those which stress the indirect benefits relating to administration and organization of school activities.

Purposes Which Emphasize the Direct Benefits to the Pupils

Some purposes given by Myer are:

To substitute real democracy as a form of social and self-control in place of teacher domination.

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3. William Dodge Lewis, "The School as a Democratic Institution," Socializing Experiences in the Elementary School. Fourteenth Yearbook of the Department of Elementary School Principals. Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1935. p. 415.

4. Allen and others, Extra-Curricular Activities in the Elementary School. St. Louis, Missouri: Webster, 1937. p. 159.

To acquaint pupils with the machinery, duties, and responsibilities of the individual in a democracy.

To develop a respect in the group for group-made regulations.

To develop a spirit of willing cooperation between pupil and pupil and to encourage a better relationship between faculty and pupil.

To secure, by wise teacher guidance, the elimination of those corrupt practices which have worked into the scheme of democracy.

To afford pupils, here and now, the opportunity to live in a democratic organization, thus giving them an opportunity to practice with satisfaction the life of a good citizen.<sup>5</sup>

Some purposes given by Smith are:

To educate students to take an intelligent and responsible part in managing the agencies of social control.

To develop a large group consciousness and a sense of proprietorship in school life.

To give boys and girls training in the spirit and mechanics of social organization with laboratory practice in leadership and followership.

To bring into the realm of school control certain phases of youthful group life which the teacher might overlook.<sup>6</sup>

Some purposes given by Loomis are:

To train for leadership by providing situations demanding it.

To provide for expression and independent thought and action on the part of the pupils in so far as it promotes the well-being of all.

To establish in the pupils respect for laws which they make themselves and for the authority vested in their office.

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5. Meyer, op. cit., p. 6.

6. Walter R. Smith, "Educational Basis for Student Participation in School Control," School Activities, 5:4, February, 1934.

To give pupils practice in self-government that they may learn to know and use wisely the democratic processes of government.

To build up a spirit of cooperation whereby each pupil within the group contributes toward the well-being of all.

To give training in parliamentary procedure.<sup>7</sup>

Some purposes given by Altschul are:

To help children become better citizens of school, home, and community.

To help children understand that government is for our own protection and that we should cooperate with each other as much as possible.

To improve conditions in the school.<sup>8</sup>

Some purposes given by Eller are:

To provide pupils an opportunity to practice initiative.

To provide responsibilities for all children.

To develop school spirit.<sup>9</sup>

Some purposes given by Otto and Hamrin are:

To provide character training.

To develop the ability to select worthwhile representatives.

To give experience in meeting and solving problems.

To give more extensive opportunities for worthwhile experiences of educational value.<sup>10</sup>

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7. Arthur K. Loomis, "Working Plan for Student Government in the Elementary School," Elementary School Journal, 38:646, May, 1938.

8. H. Altschul, "Citizenship Council as a Means of Character Building," Educational Method, 20: 191-195, January, 1941.

9. Lola S. Eller, "Some Results of Planned Pupil Participation," Socializing Experiences in the Elementary School. Fourteenth Yearbook of the Department of Elementary School Principals. Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1935. p. 424.

10. Henry J. Otto and Shirley Hamrin, Co-Curricular Activities in the Elementary School. New York: Appleton-Century, 1937. p. 280.

Some purposes given by McKown are:

To further the complete and wholesome development of the individual rather than society.

To teach respect, tolerance, loyalty, reliability, industry, one's own special abilities, and other sets of positive habits which foster the development of law and order, group morale and spirit.

To develop self-control.

To develop social adjustment and cooperation.<sup>11</sup>

Some purposes given by Fretwell are:

To provide a favorable opportunity for the pupil to have a definite purpose of his own.

To create a friendly feeling between teachers and pupils.

To provide for emotional satisfaction.

To provide for intelligent obedience to authority.<sup>12</sup>

The purpose given by Pulliam is:

To send out into the world well-mannered, orderly responsible citizens.<sup>13</sup>

Purposes Which Stress the Indirect Benefits Relating to  
Organization and Administration of School Activities

Purposes given by Otto and Hamrin are the following:

To aid in the administration of the school.

To make the government of the school more democratic.

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11. McKown, op. cit., p. 81.

12. Elbert K. Fretwell, "Seven Purposes of Pupil Participation in Government," Abstract. Proceedings of the National Education Association, Washington, D. C.: The Association, 1931. pp. 599-601.

13. Roscoe Pulliam, Extra-Instructional Activities of the Teacher. New York: Doubleday-Doran. 1930. p. 69.

To provide a tool for the education of children.

To make the school a community.

To provide monitors.

To cooperate with the city plan for Junior Red Cross.

To provide student activities.

To control student sentiment.

To develop unified purposes in the school.<sup>14</sup>

The purpose given by Altschul is:

To improve conditions in the school.<sup>15</sup>

Some purposes given by Mount are:

To aid in the teaching of safety.

To prepare for junior and senior high school.<sup>16</sup>

The purpose given by Ringdahl is:

To make the school a better place in which to live and work.<sup>17</sup>

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14. Otto and Hamrin, op. cit., p. 280.

15. Altschul, loc. cit.

16. Florence Duvall Mount, An Evaluation of Pupil Participation in School Government in the Elementary Schools of the United States. Master's Thesis. University Park, Los Angeles: University of Southern California, 1931. p. 16.

17. N. Robert Ringdahl, "Outcomes of Pupil Participation," Socializing Experiences in the Elementary School. Fourteenth Yearbook of the Department of Elementary School Principals. Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1935. p. 418.

## CHAPTER III

### HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT

#### Early Trends

The history of pupil participation in school government cannot be traced in unbroken line from an obscure beginning to the well developed system now in use in universities, colleges, secondary and elementary schools. However, it is not a new idea. Allen and others say, "The use of students as aids in the administration of school affairs is by no means a new procedure, for it dates back to Plato's Academy."<sup>1</sup>

During the Middle Ages in Europe a few of the universities practiced some form of student government. Begun as an economy measure, because of a large student body and a small teaching force, it was used to aid in school administration. The exacting discipline of the late mediæval universities caused the practice and spread of a system of spies called lupi,<sup>2</sup> who were secretly appointed by the masters to report the vulgarisants, or offenders, who persisted in the use of their mother tongue.

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1. C. F. Allen and others, Extra-Curricular Activities in the Elementary School. St. Louis, Missouri: Webster, 1937. p. 172.

2. Edgar Wallace Knight, Twenty Centuries of Education. New York: Ginn, 1940. p. 128.

Prefects, supposed to have originated in the schools of India, were in use at Eton and Winchester. Later, in 1274, they were appointed to assist the Masters at Merton College, Oxford and in 1309 they were being used at St. Alban's School, England.<sup>3</sup>

In 1531 Trotzendorf reorganized the School in Goldberg, Silesia, and installed a form of student participation based upon that of the Roman Republic. The students elected their own officers. Trotzendorf used a form of monitorial teaching in which the students of higher classes instructed the younger children.<sup>4</sup>

In England, Thomas Arnold,<sup>5</sup> the Master of Rugby, introduced the system of trust in the boy and had a form of pupil participation about the year 1825. Thomas Hill<sup>6</sup> conducted his school in like manner. Andrew Bell<sup>7</sup> ran his school on the basis of mutual instruction among the pupils; later this famous schoolmaster was associated with Joseph Lancaster<sup>8</sup> in the monitorial system of teaching.

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3. Frank Pierrepont Graves. A History of Education During the Middle Ages. New York: Macmillan, 1910. p. 211.

4. Ibid., p. 188.

5. Paul Monroe, "Thomas Arnold," Cyclopedia of Education, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1912. V, 218-220.

6. Paul Monroe, "Thomas Hill," Cyclopedia of Education, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1912. III-IV, 270-279.

7. Paul Monroe, "Andrew Bell," Cyclopedia of Education, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1912. I, 365.

8. Paul Monroe, "Joseph Lancaster," Cyclopedia of Education, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1912. III-IV, 621.

Thus, it is seen that the roots of pupil participation in school government were sown in the universities and schools of the Middle Ages. Such educational leaders as Plato, Vittorino da Feltra, Pestalazzi, Frobel and Rousseau gave impetus to the movement.<sup>9</sup> However, the form of pupil participation used then, with the possible exception of Trotzendorf's "Roman Republic," which elected its own officers, was autocratic in nature, not democratic.

In America, by 1779 the movement had reached Penn Charter School in Philadelphia.<sup>10</sup> At the University of Virginia in 1779 Thomas Jefferson through his influence and wealth, made student participation in school government an integral part of its program.<sup>11</sup> In the same year the Honor System was introduced at the College of William and Mary.<sup>12</sup> Attempts at student participation were made at Amherst College, Yale University, and Union College, New York.<sup>13</sup> In 1870 at the University of Illinois, the first regent of the University, John Milton Gregory, initiated a form of federal government copied from the Consitution of the United States which ended, however,

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9. Graves, op. cit., p. 172.

10. Hugh Victor Perkins, Pupil Participation in School Control. Unpublished Doctor's Dissertation. Western Reserve University. May, 1938. p. 4.

11. Ibid.

12. A. O. Bowden and Ida Clyde Clarke, Tomorrow's Americans. New York: Putnam, 1930. p. 25.

13. Ibid., pp. 76-77.



with the next regent, Peabody, because of his hostile attitude.<sup>14</sup>

The University of Maine in 1873 formulated a council of students which acted as intermediary between faculty and students.<sup>15</sup>

By the early nineteenth century the high schools of the United States were experimenting with the system in Chicago,<sup>16</sup> and William McAndrew, principal of Pratt High School in Brooklyn during the same period initiated the system in his school.<sup>17</sup>

#### The George Junior Republic

An outstanding example of a successful experiment in pupil participation in government was carried out late in the nineteenth century by William Reuben George, a social worker of New York City, and is known as The George Junior Republic.<sup>18</sup> With the financial aid of the Tribune's Fresh Air Fund, which furnished free transportation for thirty boys to a camp near Freeville, New York, George supervised the boys for a two week's stay at the camp. They were housed in a farm house and food was furnished by friends. Training consisted chiefly of military drills, and the learning of religious and patriotic hymns.

The second year the number of campers increased to 125 and included girls. The project was again financed through gifts of food

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14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. William R. George, The Adult Minor. New York: Appleton-Century, 1937. 192 pp.

and clothing from friends and churches. Children were eager to receive the gifts of clothing and sometimes mutilated their own garments so as to receive another suit when the "gift box" was opened.

At this point George began to question the ultimate good of the plan. Through free gifts and free maintenance, children were becoming pauperized and were losing self-respect. The answer to the problem seemed to be in work. George decided everyone must work for what he received. At first a howl of protest went up but soon one daring lad took up the challenge and when the suit which he had earned was delivered to him, other children followed his example and the campers adopted the slogan, "Nothing Without Work."

Other problems arose. The boys, many of whom had never learned to respect another's property, began to ravage the adjacent farms. Some form of discipline was necessary. The morning "whipping bees" had accomplished nothing; every morning the line was longer than before. One morning George announced there would be no more whippings but each offender should pick up stones for a period of time which seemed commensurate with the offense. Seeking a way to instill a conscience in the minds of the youngsters, he decided to have the offenders judged and sentenced by their own companions. And, thus, trial by jury came to be a part of camp life.

The next question of major importance was that of wages. Should all receive the same wages and what should be used for money? Token money was decided upon, and by mutual consent, good wages were to be paid for good work and poor wages for poor work.

The money was applied to furnish food. Sometimes extra food came in small quantities not large enough to furnish the entire camp;

so individuals who had earned money were allowed to purchase these items. Often large boxes of apples or other commodities came in and pupils were allowed to purchase these wholesale and sell retail to their companions.

Money was becoming important and the necessity for a place of safe-keeping arose. To fill this need a bank was established whereby the earnings might be secured against thieves. The bank also provided a means whereby one might borrow funds with which to start an enterprise.

Since thieves were becoming rampant the need for some way of dealing with them arose. A law-enforcing body, consisting of a police force, a criminal and civil court, judge and jury, and other agents of the law was established. A jail was constructed wherein offenders might be placed. Rules and regulations were made by a law-making body with its legislative, executive, and judiciary department.

Provision for religious worship was provided by the erection of a non-denominational chapel. Here Protestant and Catholic met; Jews attended a near-by synagogue.

Educational facilities were limited in the Republic. High school students attended the school at near-by Dryden but the Junior Republic had to provide schooling for the elementary children. High school students assisted with this, teaching the younger children.

In the George Junior Republic each child was given his share in the opportunities and responsibilities of community life; each had opportunity for character development and expression; each was given opportunity for religious, educative, and recreational experiences.

Each one received a genuine business education and ability to produce determined one's economic status. Through participation in well-rounded community living, each young citizen of the Junior Republic had strengthened within him the sense of moral obligation and learned the rights and duties of citizenship.

From the standpoint of participation, education for full-living, and character development the George Junior Republic was a decided success. Many of its citizens became prominent in civic life in the outside world. As an evaluation for the experiment, the comments of several men of national prominence are here quoted.

Dr. Charles W. Elliot, former President of Harvard College said:

The George Junior Republic conformed to three of the most fundamental principles of education principles too often neglected, even by persons whose lives are devoted to educational science. The first of the three fundamental principles is that the real object in education, so far as the development of character is concerned, is to cultivate in the child a capacity for self-control or self-government, not a habit of submission to an over-whelming, arbitrary, external power, but a habit of obeying the dictates of honor and duty as enforced by active will-power within the child.

The second fundamental principle to which the George Junior Republic seems to conform is that in childhood and youth it is of the utmost importance to appeal steadily, almost exclusively, to motives which will be operative in after life. In too much of our systematic education we appeal to motives which may answer to little children of six, ten, or twelve but which are entirely inapplicable to boys and girls fourteen, sixteen, and eighteen. Thus the motive of fear is one of these transitory motives on which original education in the past has almost exclusively relied; yet it is well determined by the history of the race that fear of punishment, whether in this world or the next, is a very ineffective method with adults.

The third fundamental principle in education is Froebel's doctrine that children are best developed through productive activities, that is, through positive achievement in doing, making, or producing something.

The George Junior Republic enforces producing activity; it appeals steadily to motives in boys which will serve them when they become men. And it is constantly trying to develop in a boyish community the capacity of self-government. Therefore - I say it is based on sound educational principles.<sup>19</sup>

Theodore Roosevelt said:

You are doing the very things I am trying to uphold; the dignity of labor, the principles of right and wrong, and the splendid, energetic way in which you set about it has won my respect and esteem. This makes for what we are trying to do in teaching each self-support and to work for decent government.<sup>20</sup>

William T. Blackman, a former professor of Yale University said:

It must be said that this is a social experiment of extraordinary interest. The pedagogical and industrial principles on which it is founded are in the main correct. The scene is not socialistic or otherwise utopian; it rests on a frank acceptance of present conditions. It is an attempt to develop in boys and girls the sense of individual responsibility, industrial independence, thrift, business sagacity, respect for law acquaintance with forms and values of civil government, sympathy and patriotism . . . . It is likely to prove the most notable effort to prevent vice and crime and to fashion good citizens out of the most unpromising materials yet tried among us.<sup>21</sup>

#### Development of Pupil Participation in Public Schools

To John Dewey, more than to any other man, is attributed the educational philosophy which has made possible pupil participation in school government. He formulated and stated the educational theory

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19. Quoted from William R. George. The Adult Minor. pp. 57-58.

20. Ibid., p. 56.

21. Ibid., p. 57.

which seems best suited to the needs of a changed and changing society.

In stating his belief Dewey said:

I may have exaggerated somewhat in order to make plain the typical points of the old education; its passivity of attitude, its mechanical massing of children, its uniformity of curriculum and method. It may be summed up by stating that the center of gravity is outside the child. It is in the teacher, the text-book, anywhere and everywhere you please, except in the immediate instincts and activities of the child himself. On this basis there is not much to be said about the life of the child. A good deal might be said about studying the child, but the school is not the place where the child lives. Now the change which is coming into our education is the shifting of the center of gravity. It is a change, a revolution not unlike that produced by Capernius when the astronomical center shifted from the earth to the sun. In that case the child becomes the sun about which the appliances of education revolve; he is the center about which they are organized.<sup>22</sup>

Dewey conducted an experimental elementary school at the University of Chicago from 1896 to 1903 in which he sought to carry out the educational maxim in which he so thoroughly believed, namely, that one learns to do by doing; to think by solving real problems.

In this experiment, Dewey made an effort to put into practice certain principles of education:

That the primary business of school is to train children in cooperative and mutually helpful living . . . . That the primary root of all educative activity is in the instinctive, impulsive attitudes and activities of the child, and not in the presentation and application of external material . . . . That these individual tendencies and activities are organized and directed through the use of them in keeping up cooperative living already spoken of, taking advantage of them to reproduce on the child's plane the typical doings and occupations of the larger, maturer society into which he is finally to go forth; and it is through production and creative use that valuable knowledge is secured and clinched.<sup>23</sup>

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22. Graves, op. cit., pp. 470-471.

23. Ibid., p. 172.

Pupil participation was slow finding its place in the elementary school. This was due largely to the fact that the curriculum centered around books instead of the child; that children of the elementary school age level were in general considered too immature in judgment and experience to assume the responsibilities connected with it; and that teachers were not prepared to assume their part of the responsibilities. It is true that elementary teachers, to a greater extent than secondary school teachers, had used in the classroom simple forms of pupil participation, such as book and material monitors and other duties which make for economy in the classroom, and therefore did not feel so keenly the need of full student participation in government as did the teachers of the secondary school.

#### Types of Organization Found in the Literature

The literature of the subject is replete with descriptions; and judged by the number and variety of types of organizations described in print, it would appear that the core of pupil participation is in the organization itself.

#### Student Council

Of all the forms of pupil participation which appear in the literature, the Student Council is most frequently mentioned. Allen and others define the Student Council as "that type of organization the school fosters for general control through pupil participation."<sup>24</sup>

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24. Allen and others, op. cit., p. 154.

McKown states that the size of the council is important; it should be large enough to provide a full representation of the student body; it should include a variety of interests and abilities; and it should be small enough to handle its business effectively. The faculty, as well as the pupils, should be represented.<sup>25</sup>

McKown further states:

The source of membership of a pupil council is more important than the organization because, if the methods by which pupils are selected do not reflect accepted democratic principles, the whole foundation of the participation plan will be false and insecure.<sup>26</sup>

A review of the literature reveals two main plans of securing council members: (1) by classes, clubs, or other specialized interest groups, and (2) by the school as a whole. The first plan is considered less desirable than the second because, (1) children are prone to elect members from their own organizations rather than those who would represent the school at large; (2) some children do not belong to any of the specialized groups and will not be represented on the council; (3) pupils in lower grades are often considered too immature to be included in the specialized groups and would have no representation on the council.

McKown lists and evaluates eight ways by which council members are secured. They are:

1. Appointment by Principal or Teacher.

Since this plan violates the principles of democratic government which the schools are trying to teach, there is nothing in it to recommend.

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25. McKown, op. cit., p. 84.

26. Ibid., p. 88.



## 2. Appointment by Heads of Pupil Organizations.

In this plan those pupils who are presidents of a homeroom, class, club, or other organizations, are appointed to serve as council members. Representative government is based on the elected rather than the appointed officers; therefore the plan is not justifiable.

## 3. Automatic Election on Basis of Position Held.

In this plan the presidents of the various classes, homerooms, clubs or associations automatically become members of the council. This plan is considered inadvisable because the officers already have important offices to fill; it limits the official positions which are open to pupils; and it brings in the dangers of representation of special interests.

## 4. Automatic Election on Basis of Records.

This plan provides council membership for those pupils who have the highest standing in scholarship, honors, or citizenship. It is not considered advisable for the council is not designed simply to honor pupils; it would exclude the younger pupils who have as yet made no records, it would exclude those pupils who have missed election in other organizations by narrow margins; and it would not embrace those pupils who give promise of developing into good officers were they given the opportunity.

## 5. Election by Specialized Interest, Clubs, Organizations, Associations, or Activities.

This is considered a weak plan because the representation will feel a loyalty to the group that elected them; the groups are not all of the same size and importance; a group, while demanding assistance from the council, may resent other attention; and those pupils who are not members of these organizations will have no representation on the council.

#### 6. Election by the School at Large.

This method of obtaining council members has the advantage that members will be likely to be interested in the school as a whole; yet the upper grade pupils who are better known and more popular will probably be elected leaving no representatives for the lower grades.

#### 7. Election by Classes.

In the smaller schools this plan is popular because it is easy to administer and all the pupils will feel they are represented. It is not so valuable because in such schools where classes are apt to be large, the pupils will feel that they are not represented; and owing to the difference in the size of the various classes they will not feel equally represented.

#### 8. Election by Homerooms.

McKown considers this plan "the most logical and justifiable procedure that has yet been devised," and gives as his reasons the following points:

1. The groups are small enough for the pupil to feel his representation.
2. The rooms represent a cross-section of school interests.
3. The election is easily organized and administered.
4. Regular and frequent homeroom meetings represent a fine setting in which to discuss and promote council affairs.
5. Homeroom organizations, purposes and activities are quite similar to those of the council.<sup>27</sup>

This plan is not the same as election by classes because the homerooms are usually a section of classes and the pupils represent the homeroom and not the class. The council will be large but in a school large enough to have homerooms, if there is a real representative government, the council would be large whatever the source of its membership might be.

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27. Ibid., pp. 88-90.

### Other Forms of Student Organization

Other types of student participation in school government are based on the form of organization. Seven of these basic types are described below.

The Service Point System.—This appears to be the simplest organized form of participation. "Doing for others" is the objective and many opportunities for practicing it are provided. A "service booklet" marked off into small squares, each of which represents a half-hour of service for which the pupil receives ten points, is given to the child at the beginning of the school year. A child whose school standing is satisfactory and who has given free time may apply to any teacher for an opportunity of serving. Upon a satisfactory completion of the task, the teacher initials one of the squares. Late in the year at an assembly program appropriate service letters are awarded. Service records are cumulative and a child who does not win an award in one year may carry over his points to the next year and begin where he left off. This plan provides profitable pupil participation, yet it does not incorporate the idea of participation through representation.

School Monitor.— This is a loose organization wherein the administrative officers or teachers appoint, or the classes or rooms elect pupils to serve as Monitors, Civic Guards, Prefects, Patrolmen, or Volunteers. The responsibilities are simple; such as, building and ground inspections, corridor and street traffic, messenger service, fire drills, lost and found service, library and office pages, visitor's guides, and safety and welfare activities. This plan has lack of organization, continuity,

and permanence and the duties are in the nature of assigned responsibilities.<sup>28</sup>

Single Committee.—This is in the nature of a council, a simply organized single committee which promotes general school improvement and welfare. It is suitable only for a small school.<sup>29</sup>

Specialized Committee.—This plan is a development of the single-committee type. It consists of a number of committees, such as assembly, welfare, athletic, playground, housekeeping, finance, competitions, and social, each of which is charged with responsibilities for the promotion of activities which lie within its particular area. This appears to be the most commonly found form of council. In the basic type, council members are chosen from the different committees; in a variation, one or two members of the committee, (including the chairman) come from the council and other members are elected from the school at large by the chairman and are approved by the chairman and also by the council. In the variation type the number of direct participants is increased and those promising pupils who are not council members are incorporated.<sup>30</sup>

Grade Congress.—Under this type each grade elects its own congress, which promotes the main interest of the group and indirectly, those of the

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28. F. D. Henderson, "Pupil Morale and the Service Point System," The Principal and Administration. Ninth Yearbook of the Department of Elementary School Principals. Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1930. pp. 504-506.

29. McKown, op. cit., p. 91.

30. Ibid.

school at large. Usually a school council to coordinate these various class groups evolves. This plan has desirable features, yet the machinery is cumbersome and the effects are remote.<sup>31</sup>

Junior City.—This type of council is patterned after a city; imitating the different phases of municipal organization - precincts or wards, aldermen, mayor, manager, clerk and such different departments as fire, police, health, finance, welfare, and parks and recreation. The Junior City is popular and has many desirable features; it is easily adapted to any school and furnishes functional education for children as they study the organization and administration of the local community. It has the disadvantage of being too complicated for successful operation by children of the lower grades. A simpler form might be adopted for them.<sup>32</sup>

Federal Government Type.—As the name indicates, this type is a replica of some phase or phases of the national government. The pupils of the school become the national electorate. The pupil population is sometimes divided into state and congressional districts. Each state elects two senators and a proportionate number of representatives. There is sometime a president, with his cabinet, to represent the executive function. There is frequently the judiciary, with **courts**, attorneys, and other officers. This plan is educative, but it is complicated and is not so suitable for the elementary school as some of the simpler forms.<sup>33</sup>

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31. Ibid., pp. 91-92.

32. Ibid., p. 92.

33. Ibid.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS AS REVEALED BY THE STUDY

A great deal of confusion concerning the amount of power granted the council, and children in general, has arisen in the minds of those who have experimented with the idea of pupil participation in school government. Many, maintaining that the organization belongs to the children, have granted powers which children were not prepared to discharge; and others, feeling that children are too young and inexperienced to assume the responsibilities which are a part of pupil participation, have swung far in the opposite direction. Both groups appear to have fallen into error.

An investigation of the literature reveals three facts of paramount importance: (1) there are specific powers which well-educated children might use alone; (2) certain powers must continue to remain in the hands of adults; (3) and there are powers which well-educated children might share with adults. Thus, the literature makes it plain that it is equally necessary to set limitations of powers as to grant powers and privileges. Pupils must stay within the boundaries of their own realm which must be well defined, sometimes in the form of a simple constitution, properly adopted and authorized. It appears, then, that power should be vested in the total group, both teachers and pupils working together, each assuming the responsibilities for which they are fitted.

#### Preliminary Education Needed

Education for pupil participation involves pre-planning. Before

any attempt is made to organize a student council or any other phase of pupil participation, a period of preliminary training is necessary for faculty as well as pupils - a participation readiness must exist if the venture is to be a success.

McKown states:

. . . a most serious and discriminating preparation should be made before any attempt at actual introduction is undertaken. Such preparation will, of necessity, include the educating of the faculty pupils and parents in the ideals, purposes, implications, activities, and other important related elements.<sup>1</sup>

A study of the literature on failures in pupil participation in school government verifies the fact that a large number of failures might have been avoided had proper attention been given to preliminary education for pupil participation.

The findings in regard to pre-education of staff and pupils follow:

The administrative staff of the school should thoroughly understand any plan undertaken. It is a mistake for a principal to become enamoured with the idea and force it upon faculty and students. To do so is to invite failure. The staff should become acquainted with the purposes of student participation and should possess or cultivate certain essential qualities of attitude and temperament, namely: (a) the ability to lead and suggest without dictating, (b) sympathy with the child's point of view, and faith in the ability of children to help in school management.<sup>2</sup>

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1. McKown, op. cit., p. 82.

2. The Graduate Center of the University of North Carolina at Woman's College, Greensboro. Pupil Participation in Elementary and Secondary School Government: A Seminar in School Organization and Administration. Report of a Study Made by Education 690. Greensboro, North Carolina: The Graduate Center, Summer, 1944. p. 23. Mimeographed.

For the faculty representative a still more exacting set of qualifications has been found essential, namely: the ability to (a) advise without preaching, (b) avoid conspicuousness in meetings, (c) value pupil's opinions, (d) let pupils make mistakes, (e) keep faculty and principal informed, and (f) remember that building personality is one of the most difficult tasks of education and results are slow.<sup>3</sup>

As for the pupils themselves, it has been found indispensable that ample time be given to preliminary education. Most authorities recommend that this education take place in the homeroom through a study of available literature, discussions, conferences, and interviews with leaders of other schools who have been successful with the plan; in assembly where the principal introduces the subject and explains the objectives; and through visits to other schools where students are participating in school government. This education will, of course, be a slow process.<sup>4</sup>

### Powers of the Student Council

#### Powers Delegated to Well-Educated Pupils

Elective powers.---Throughout the literature it was found that elective powers have been freely granted and, provided children had been well educated, they have successfully assumed this responsibility. Teacher guidance is necessary in setting up criteria by which candidates are measured for proper qualifications for the various offices, but the elections themselves should be free and uninfluenced.

Allen and others<sup>5</sup> recommend the following method of building criteria for the selection of candidates: (1) In the homeroom, teacher

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3. Ibid., p. 6.

4. Ibid.

5. Allen and others, op. cit., pp. 157-159.



and pupils discuss the desirable qualifications that pupils should possess in order to be successful in performing their respective duties; (2) these qualifications should be listed, arranged, classified, and discussed; (3) the fact should be made clear that a public servant should be selected for the service he may render the school and the value the officer may secure from the experience he has in performing his service; and (4) the officer should not be selected on the basis of friendship.

#### Powers Shared by Well-Educated Children and Faculty

Legislative powers.--The legislative body of the school is usually the council who represents the school at large. It has been generally discovered that self-imposed rules or codes are more easily enforced than others, and are usually sufficient to meet the needs. In the literature legislative powers have been freely granted. Here, again, the guidance of the teachers is needed for children do not always know what is best for them. They are not always able to foretell the consequences of their acts and where large groups of children live together it is often necessary, for the safety and welfare of the group, that they be restrained from certain types of conduct which might prove detrimental to the group.<sup>6</sup>

Judicial powers.--Very few schools grant judicial powers to pupils except in limited degree. It has become widely recognized that the administrative authorities of the school, because they are legally responsible to society for the operation of the school must and should make the final

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6. McKown, op. cit., p. 84.

decisions over all problems of school administration relating to pupil welfare. Therefore, councils commonly call offenders up for reprimand but in most cases do not impose punishments. Most councils that sit in judgment have become forums, spending the greatest portion of their time debating ways and means of securing more desirable attitudes and actions.<sup>7</sup>

Executive powers.--Executive powers have been freely granted, but not always successfully assumed. Limitations of children; their youth, immaturity, lack of balance, and inexperience call for some adult supervision in the planning and carrying out of projects. However, it is well known that pupils like to carry out self-made plans and to be more than figure heads in their own organizations.<sup>8</sup>

#### Powers Reserved to Faculty

Veto power.--Since the final authority rests in the administration and since the principal is responsible for the efficient running of the school, then, the authorities agree that the principal should hold ultimate veto power over all decisions made by pupils.<sup>9</sup>

Letting and terminating the contract.--A widening realm of experiment is with the contract as an instrument of delegation of authority. Under the contract system all delegated powers are granted with the clear understanding that unless the contract is fulfilled, the responsibility discharged, there is no power; the grant is voided.<sup>10</sup>

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7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Graduate Center, op. cit., p. 23.

The contract is indigenous to Western culture. It is not found in autocracies where commands are given and obeyed without question; where men are not respected for their own worth and where the right and ability of men to rule themselves is not recognized. Democracy early asserted itself, and from the days of the Magna Charter until now discussion and agreement through law has been fundamental to the western world.

The contract contributes to a man's sense of personal dignity and worth. It is expressed in constitutions, business agreements, marriage ceremonies, and treaties.

A contract is not a command imposed under compulsion upon an uninformed individual; it is an agreement arrived at through free discussion with all the parties concerned; it binds all parties to the agreement and, thus, is a protection for the weak against the strong. It is a record which shows the agreement made between the parties and is preserved in order that reference may be made to it at any time either party breaks the contract.

While the contract is made without compulsion on the part of either party, it carries with it an impersonal compulsion - an article of good faith and integrity - between persons making the contract. It is basic to many important human relations and children should have many experiences with it.

A contract issued a child should be on a child's level of understanding - a simple bargain - carrying with it no long time promise which children cannot and will not keep. The nature of it should be such as would come up from day to day, thus giving many opportunities for the practice of keeping faith with one's self and one's fellows. When either party, administrator or child, breaks the bargain, then the contract should be withdrawn.

To the principal and faculty should be given the power of issuing and voiding contracts.

### Functions of the Council

The main work of the council, according to most authorities, is to coordinate and unify the entire participation program. McKown says that the development of committees to handle the particular interests and areas is desirable and that the council should act as coordinator and supervisor of the committees.<sup>11</sup>

A review of the literature revealed that councils have formed and supervised many committees. Since the problems of group living are very much the same in most schools, the need for similar committees has arisen in practically all schools so that the committees reported by different authors have been very much the same. A list of suggested activities which the council might sponsor has been taken from every available source of literature covering the period 1930-1943 and is here described. This list, with broad activities ranging from mere routine to real executive responsibility is a fairly comprehensive catalogue of what the literature has revealed. These activities have been drawn from grade levels 1-6. Each school will need to select and adapt them to local needs. For convenience and clarity, these activities have been grouped as they might be grouped for consideration by supposed committees.

#### Common Specifics

Building and Ground Committee.--This committee would bear a large responsibility and it would not be advisable to attack all the problems at once. Some of their duties would be:

1. Conduct drives for school ground beautification and maintain the attractiveness and cleanliness of the school grounds.

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<sup>11</sup>. McKown, op. cit., p. 95.

2. Plan and execute the creation of "beauty spots" in entrance halls or at other dramatic points.
3. Draw up rules for the care of clothing and books.
4. Keep bulletin boards, display and storage cabinets in order.
5. Wash blackboards, walls, windows, and scrub floors.
6. Care for visual aid equipment, plants in the corridors, shrubbery and flowers.
7. Attend to ventilation and keep the school clock wound and set.
8. Make regular inspection of desks, lockers, toilets, text-books, library books, and stage properties.
9. Organize, equip, and maintain on regular duty the paint and touch-up squad and the construction squad.<sup>12</sup>

Traffic and Safety Committee.--The work of this committee is often done by the Safety Patrol where girls can be used as well as boys. Their duties, in the main would be:

1. Plan and manage traffic in the corridors, on the stairways, at the entrances, in the cafeterias, during fire drills, and ushering for assemblies and other pupil occasions.
2. Plan and supervise traffic at street and highway crossings and supervise bicycle parking.
3. Supervise the conduct in the cafeteria.
4. Arrange for and preside at talks on fire prevention and safety.
5. Make regular inspection of playground apparatus, bicycles, and outside trash cans.

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12. Allen and others, op. cit., p. 165.

6. Care for the school flag.<sup>13</sup>

Health and Recreation Committee.--Due to the present emphasis on health and recreation this committee has an important place in school activities. Their duties, as revealed by the literature, are:

1. Plan and conduct campaigns for good diet, good posture, cleanliness, and proper care of the teeth.
2. Organize and supervise the care of playground equipment.
3. Keep scores at games.
4. Help at school clinics, such as pre-school clinics.
5. Encourage the selecting and eating of right foods in the cafeteria.
6. Help plan and manage home or inter-school games, Play Day, afternoon games, Field Day, Hobby Shows, Stunt Night, School Circus, Hallowe'en Carnival, Pet Shows, Harvest Festival, May Day, Child Health Day, and Community Sings.<sup>14</sup>

Citizenship Committee.--The Citizenship Committee, through the media of talks, assemblies, posters, and contests can:

1. Plan and conduct campaigns for courtesy, honesty, thrift, tolerance, patriotism, sportsmanship, orderly assemblies, and orderly corridors.
2. Devise and execute ways and means of raising money for room pictures, library books, and playground equipment.
3. Plan and operate the lost and found department and the suggestion box (for general improvement of the school).

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13. Ibid., p. 164.

14. Schnacke, M. A. "Self-Government For Grade School," School Executive, 3:110, November, 1932.

4. Encourage by propaganda contests, such as bird-house building, marble and kite tournaments, Audubon Clubs, "kind deeds" by rooms, songs, slogans, pledges, and yells.<sup>15</sup>

Public Relations Committee.--There has been an ever increasing need for a committee of this kind. Since the school belongs to the public, the community needs to know what is going on in the schools. The work of this committee can do much to enlighten the public as to needs of the school and to establish a feeling of goodwill between the schools and the community. Its work might be:

1. Acquaint the incoming pupils with the school.
2. Welcome strangers.
3. Write letters to patrons.
4. Arrange "goodwill visits" to other schools.
5. Organize and cooperate with community groups, such as, Red Cross, Community Chest, community drives of various kinds.
6. Plan and execute a visiting day for parents.
7. Invite experts from specialized fields to come in and talk to student groups.
8. Prepare a roster of persons in the community who, through interest or experience, could contribute to the enrichment of the school's program.
9. Plan and conduct publicity programs such as "Know Your School," "Know Your Community".
10. Publish a school newspaper.
11. Report school events for the local press.

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15. Ibid., p. 110.

12. Discuss ways and means of interpreting the Student Council to the school.
13. Organize the exchange of pupils with other schools for a day or several days (to bring back ideas for improvement in certain phases of school life).<sup>16</sup>

Service Committee.--The Service Committee or Teacher's Aid Committee has proved to be one of the most commonly used of any found in the literature; however, it is more in the nature of routine duties than of executive responsibilities. The majority of teachers have always used these helpers to aid in the economy of classroom management. Some of the services have been to:

1. Keep a calendar of school events.
2. Answer the telephone.
3. Post attendance records.
4. Operate the mimeograph machine.
5. Meet the postman.
6. Sell postage stamps and school supplies.
7. Run errands and take messages.
8. Ring the bell.
9. Help the young groups on the playground.
10. Help at the charging desk in the library.
11. Conduct story hour in the library and in the classrooms.
12. Hear oral book reports.<sup>17</sup>

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16. Graduate Center, op. cit., p. 20.

17. Ibid., p. 21.



## Added Specifics

Courtesy Guides.--Courtesy Guides, found only once in the literature, appear to have much in common with the Personal Relations Committee used in some secondary schools. It is reported by J. S. Hudson as follows:

A number of children called courtesy guides are assigned duties in the halls and on the playgrounds. These guides automatically become members of the student council. Their duties consist of reminding children about certain regulations which they may be overlooking. This entire plan of pupil participation in school government is operated on the idea that each child and each class must be responsible for its own conduct, but occasionally some children need a reminder. The guides only remind, and never touch another child. However, they do report any child who does not cooperate immediately. The child is reported not for disobeying a guide, but for failure to cooperate for the general good. In the course of four years an attitude of respect has been created toward the guides. They are not looked upon as "bosses", and the children generally respect a reminder or a request from them as much as if it came from a teacher.<sup>18</sup>

Council Committee.--One elementary school met the problem of acquainting pupils with the nature of the council by inviting a teacher to bring a committee of children each week to visit the council while in session. By the end of the year all the children had been given an opportunity to visit the council and understand how the business was conducted.<sup>19</sup>

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18. J. S. Hudson, "School Citizenship Through Pupil Participation," Socializing Experiences In The Elementary School. Fourteenth Yearbook of the Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1935. p. 430.

19. Ruth Strobel. "Living Democracy; Practical Civics in Elementary Grades," Grade Teacher, 58:14, September, 1940.

## CHAPTER V

### SYNTHESIS OF THE FINDINGS

#### Introduction

This study has thus far been concerned with the common practices of schools in the area of pupil participation in school government. In order to survey the professional literature in an orderly and systematic way, five questions were used as guides. These were:

1. What are the purposes of pupil participation in elementary school government?
2. What types of organizations are described in the literature?
3. What powers are delegated to the pupils and what are reserved to the faculty?
4. What specific functions can be assumed by children?
5. What recommendations are possible in light of the survey?

It now becomes necessary to evaluate the many specifics found and recommend those of greatest value. In order to do this with some measure of objectivity, criteria must be established to govern the selection.

The American philosophy of education is based on democracy: a belief in the ability and right of men to rule themselves; a belief that men's actions must be governed in terms of the good of both the individual and the society in which they live, even to the extent of sacrificing their own good for the welfare of the group; a belief that men should develop through practice the ability and habit of working

together; a willingness to tolerate opposition, whether majority or minority. The four traits upon which democracy is based: namely, respect for the individual, independence, cooperation, and pragmatic thinking, may be used as the basis or fundamental criteria in evaluating the various devices. Phrased as questions they are:

1. Will this specific device lead to the development in children of the democratic trait, respect for the individual?

2. Will this specific device present opportunities for the development in children of the democratic trait, independence?

3. Will this specific device contribute to the growth of the democratic trait, cooperation, through the provision of opportunities wherein children may practice the art of living together?

4. Will this specific device encourage the development of the democratic trait, pragmatic, or practical thinking?

These criteria, approved by the committee of experts in the field of pupil participation in school government, have been applied to the activities found in the professional related literature. The procedures that indicate the greatest possibilities for the development of the four traits of democracy have been selected and arranged in organized form and are here presented for use by elementary school administrators and teachers.

### Recommendations

#### Preparation for the Project

Before the launching of the program a program of preliminary education is absolutely necessary. The importance of this period of pre-education cannot be too strongly stressed. It is quite as necessary that the faculty be educated as the pupils. Therefore, the following recommendations are made:

Preparation of the staff.---The first step in the preparation of the staff should be the preparation of the principal, who, through the study of the best literature on the subject; conferences with those who have had successful experiences with pupil participation; and visits to other schools where the project is being successfully operated, should become thoroughly acquainted with the philosophy underlying the movement and the types of organizations, schemes, and devices which have been used to good advantage.

The next step in the staff's preparation is that the principal and teachers together study the different phases of the movement. They should discuss the need for the organization, the possibilities, the advantages and disadvantages. A decision to accept or reject the idea should be made by the entire faculty; never should the principal impose his opinion on the faculty. If pupil participation in school government is to succeed, there must be a felt need, a whole-hearted desire to participate and a willingness to assume the added responsibilities on the part of the staff.

As a means of testing readiness for the program, principal and teachers should ask themselves the following questions:

Do we understand the philosophy underlying pupil participation in school government?

Have we made an honest appraisal of our own personal ability and willingness to undertake the responsibilities involved?

Are we prepared to remain in the background, giving guidance and help only when needed?

Are we willing to show the same respect for the child's personality that we expect the child to show for our own personalities?

Have we faith in the ability of children to help in school management?

Are we sympathetic toward the child's point of view?

Are we familiar with the different types of organizations and activities which have been successfully used in other schools?

Are we willing to allow children to make mistakes?

Do we know the needs of the school so that we may intelligently guide the planning of the program?

Have we presented the program to our children in an unbiased manner so that the decision they make, to accept or reject participation in school government, is really their own?

Are our pupils sufficiently educated to assume the responsibilities involved?

If the faculty can answer these questions in the affirmative, then it is time to begin pupil preparation.

Preparation of the Pupils.--The approach to the pupils must be gradual. Through informal conversations relating to pupil participation, teachers should familiarize the children with the types of organizations, schemes, and devices which have been used successfully in other schools. An exchange of visits between the local school and other schools where pupil participation is in progress should be arranged. This visiting program, because of the pupil-to-pupil contacts, is recommended as being one of the best means of preparing pupils for the project. If the children are interested to the extent that they express a desire to have a similar organization, then the staff and pupils should consult together.

As a means of testing their readiness for the program children should ask themselves the following questions:

Do I really want to enter into pupil participation in school government?

Am I willing to work with my classmates and teachers for the good of the school?

Am I prepared to assume and discharge my responsibilities willingly and cheerfully?

Am I ready to keep the contract?

Preparation of the staff and pupils.---Pupils and staff should make a joint survey of the practical needs of the school or areas of the school's life which might be improved. Following this, discussions should be held between staff and pupils relating to the ways in which pupil participation might help to meet these needs. Here again the staff should make sure that its will is not autocratically imposed upon the group. As a result of intelligent, unbiased guidance, the pupils should make their own decision.

Prior to the actual organization, even before the details are discussed with pupils, the idea of the contract should be presented and thoroughly understood by the pupils. They should know that the contract should be carefully weighed in advance of agreement; that objections should be offered in advance; that a contract, once agreed on, is a thing inviolate and binding; and that a breach of promise voids the contract for both parties.

#### Type of Organization

A plan of pupil participation in school government cannot be bodily transplanted from one school to another, or from a book to a school. In deciding upon the type of organization to be used, a staff should consider the needs and possibilities of the local school, the interests of the school, and the potentialities of the staff and pupils.

In view of the findings in the professional literature as measured by the criteria already presented, the following is offered as a sound plan to be used in the elementary schools:

A simple, flexible council type organization is preferable to a psuedo-federal or city-type plan.

Before the council is organized each class or homeroom should have an organization of its own, consisting of officers and committees which choose duties within the room. Thus all pupils will be given opportunities to practice the four democratic traits before the council is organized. Just how long these homeroom or class clubs should operate alone, without the council to unify them, will be determined by the readiness of the pupils and the needs of the school. Perhaps a year's experience is not too long a time.

Membership.--Council membership from the classes or homerooms is recommended, with two members from each class of grades 1-6, or of whatever elementary grades are housed within the building and a faculty representative.

The pupil council members should be elected by the respective class members according to criteria which have been selected for use by all grades. The following criteria are suggested:

The council member should be trustworthy, dependable, and energetic.

His scholastic grades should be as high as the average, with no failures in any essential subject.

His conduct should be acceptable to his classmates and the teacher, with no major infraction.

He should have been a member of his class long enough to have proved his worth as a council member.

Faculty representative.--The faculty representative of the council should be elected by the staff according to criteria which have been proposed and studied. Because the principal is responsible to the public and the superintendent for the efficient operation of the school, the final authority in all matters of school administration rests in him; and for this reason he seldom, if ever, should represent the faculty in the council. Criteria for the election of the faculty representative are suggested below:

The faculty representative should believe whole-heartedly in pupil participation in school government.

She should have a spirit of service and a willingness to work over and above the minimum requirement; to go the second mile.

She should be a student of the needs of the school and should be in close contact with school activities.

She should be able to advise, not preach.

She should respect pupils' choices when they have been made after deliberation, even though she thinks they have made unwise choices.

She should be willing to allow pupils to make mistakes in order that they might learn.

She should be able to cultivate in the pupils an attitude of mind and a point of view which will bring about significant results rather than mere routinism.

She should merit the respect and affection of the pupils.

Officers.--The officers of the council should consist of a president, a vice-president, and a secretary elected from the council membership by the council members. Criteria for the specified office should be proposed, studied, discussed, and used jointly by the pupils and faculty



representative. Criteria will vary with the responsibilities to be discharged. The minimum criteria offered here are the same as the criteria submitted for council membership except that a year's residence in the school and the pupil's fitness for his particular office be considered.

The council should meet once a week at a regularly scheduled time. This period should be scheduled in the morning before the primary children are dismissed.

Activities.--It is urged that activities begin immediately after organization. Too many projects should not be undertaken at first; it is better to begin work on a small scale and gradually expand. Committee organizations within the council appear to be the simplest and most effective channel through which the council can function. The committees should be chosen in view of the needs of the local school. The following committees are recommended as being the ones which would likely fill the needs of the average elementary school. These committees should be composed of a chairman and two or three members from the council; elected members from each classroom, not council members; and a teacher representative. Committee chairman, as a rule, should be pupils, but on committees where maturity of leadership is absolutely essential a teacher chairman is justifiable.

The committees recommended are:

Building and Grounds Committee

Traffic and Safety Committee

Health and Recreation Committee

Citizenship Committee

Service Committee

Public Relations Committee

Personal Relations Committee

These committees should meet once a week at a regularly scheduled time.

Powers.---There are powers which well-educated children must assume alone; powers which pupils share with the faculty; and powers which pupils should share with the faculty; and powers which must be reserved to the faculty: in other words:

1. Pupils may elect their own representatives in terms of criteria set up.
2. They should share with the faculty legislative, judicial, and executive powers.
3. They should reserve to the faculty the power of veto.

Special features of primary school participation.---There has been a reluctance on the part of some school administrators and teachers to admit primary children to the council as members. They give age and immaturity as the reasons for excluding the younger children from the council. If the main purpose of pupil participation in school government is to give children opportunities to practice democratic living, then in terms of the criteria used for evaluating activities, it appears that primary children should be active members of the council. The primary children should be made to feel that they are important members of the school family, not pupils set off by themselves. They should be led to accept responsibilities and obligations which are appropriate for their level of maturity and to discharge them to the best of their ability. They will not be capable of as great participation upon their own initiative as the older children, but, through the faithful performance of the tasks which they, by age and experience, are fitted to do, they can

contribute to the life of the school and to their own development. The tasks chosen by them should be vital and necessary to the school life, not mere "busy work".

It is recommended that they be placed on such committees as the Building and Grounds Committee and the Service Committee. Here they will find many tasks of a routine nature which they can perform well, such as:

Checking corridors for paper.

Assuming responsibility for the cleanliness of a portion of the playground.

Watering flowers.

Arranging flowers for the lunch and corridor tables.

Planting and raising flowers.

Serving as messengers from classroom to office.

Helping the teacher with classroom routine, such as distributing books, pencils, and supplies.

Many other duties of this nature which would be needed in the local school.



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