

Practice and Reflection on the Involvement of Parents in Daily Management of Senior High Schools

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Abstract

As education is receiving more and more attention as well as extensive participation in today's society, parents have increasingly become an indispensable part of education. It is legally necessary for parents to be involved in daily management of senior high schools, which is of positive significance. Specifically, they can help to improve the decision-making of schools, coordinate the relationship between the school and parents, and increase their own recognition and understanding of the school, thus contributing to the construction of a harmonious educational environment. There are many challenges and problems for parents to be involved in the daily management of senior high schools, including, the excessive participation in school management by parents, the irrational structure of school management staff with the participation of parents, contradictions caused by different subjects concerned by the parent committee, and the superficial and passive characteristics of parents' involvement in school management. On this basis, the following improvement measures are specially put forward: establishing a sound system to guarantee the implementation of measures, ensuring the participation of all levels of parents, and giving parents the right to speak, setting up and improving the training system targeted at parents, and enhancing the media platform that allows public opinions to be expressed freely.

Keywords: Educational management, involvement of parents, practice, and reflection

In terms of the three main factors of school education, parents belong to the category of education influence. However, regarding family education, parents are the first teachers of their children, and they also play the key role as educators. Such dual identity results in the absolutely indispensable influence of parents on children's education. In modern society, education has receiving more and more concern by parents. They expect to be involved in the daily management of school, and they are eager to understand the performance of their children in school in various aspects. At present, many schools have started to realize the role parents play in monitoring, understanding, propagandizing and coordinating with the daily management of schools. Therefore, they tend to meet parents' demands by capitalizing on the trend, encouraging, and welcoming the involvement of parents to school education.

1. The positive meaning and legal basis of parents 'involvement in daily management of schools

It is necessary for parents to be involved in daily management of schools and offer advice and suggestions for school construction, which can also promote the development and advance of schools.

(A) It is conducive to the perfection of decision-making by schools. Since schools provide a learning platform and occasion for students, they tend to reflect on problems and make decisions in accordance with their own development, the satisfaction of society and parents, the maintenance of teachers' rights and interests, and the guarantee of students' academic performance. While taking so many different roles into account, it is inevitable that they may still miss some points or be unthoughtful in making decisions.

At this time, the wisdom of parents shall be collected, which is especially important. Parents are willing to devote everything for the happiness of their children, and they are especially paying much attention and exploring actively to educational problems about their children. In case the vital interests of their children may be harmed potentially due to the policies and schemes enacted by the school, parents would make their utmost efforts to fight for their point of views. They will also try to learn about the daily management system of the school their children learn in and other relevant schools via a variety of channels.

After that, they will make selections and contrasts, provide feedback information for the teacher in charge of their children's class or other teachers teaching their children, or involve in the school management directly or indirectly. At the same time, parents' educational level has clearly been improved compared to that in the past, and the knowledge level they receive has been improved dramatically. Instead of ignoring their children's study, they are always passionate and enthusiastic in children's education by making close contact with schools positively, so as to ensure the all-around development of their children.

(B) It can facilitate the coordinative relationship between schools and parents and increase the cognition and understanding of schools by parents. Since parents spend money in sending children to schools to receive education, the relationship between parents and schools is interest-driven essentially. Parents share common interests with schools. For this, parents are glad to be involved in school management, and schools would like to open the gate and encourage parents to participate in the children's education. In this way, a positive interaction relationship can be formed between schools and parents, which is the critical premise and guarantee for the democratic development and harmonious development of school teaching. With the establishment of strong and positive relationship between parents and schools, parents will care about the school construction more and take the initiative to publicize achievements obtained by the school, thus boosting the school reputation and popularity. By understanding parents' thought timely, schools can make adjustment to their own work in time, eliminate the misunderstanding of parents about them, and guide parents to make positive evaluation on the school.

(C) It is conducive to the construction of a harmonious educational environment. Schools are just like a big subsystem of the great environment. They care everything about students, attempt to construct a harmonious educational environment actively, and enable students to present their natural instincts and grow up freely, healthily and harmoniously, thereby realizing the consistency of human and environment. Nonetheless, the creation of a harmonious educational environment shall not be dependent merely on the school efforts, it also requires the collaboration of parents and various circles in society. Only with the mutual guarantee and mutual cooperation of environmental factors can the educational environment reach a dynamic balance. As we all know, Chinese parents always provide strong supports to children's education, but not everything they do can get the cognition from their children. This is because parents usually neglect about what their children actually need while making great efforts, and they do this only from the perspective of their own. Therefore, only when parents realize different demands and performance of children at school and at home and communicate with teachers actively, can a close information network be formed in the educational environment and can the demands of students and children be met from the overall perspective.

In addition, the involvement in daily management of schools is a key manifestation of maintaining their own rights and obligations by parents

(A) As guardians of their minor children, parents have the right and obligation to be involved in the daily management of children in school. In modern society, public education power has become increasingly strong, which makes the family education power relatively weakened. However, there is absolutely strong and natural relationship between children and parents... So, the family education power would never fade away due to the growing power of national and social education. As a kind of natural education power, it cannot be blotted out by any time or society.

(B) Parents are contributors who purchase education commodities, and school education is related to immediate interests and investment benefits of every parent. Parents contribute to allow children to go to school, so they are entitled to know where the money is used and how it is used. Students are indirect consumers and direct beneficiaries of school education, and the results of teaching effect, no matter positive or negative, will directly be reflected on students. Students are minor children, so their right to speak and evaluation on the school can be expressed by parents.

(C) Relevant laws and policies can ensure the involvement of parents in daily management of schools. According to the "Education Objective Method in 2000" of the US, the involvement of parents in educational management is taken as a national goal, and it is pointed out that "By 2000, each school will allow parents to be involved in school management, so as to improve the relationship between schools and parents, and prompt the social, emotional and academic development of children". According to Article 77 of "Constitution" of Portugal, "the ways for parents, teachers, and students to be involved in educational decision-making should be regulated by relevant laws."

In “Planning Outline of Long-Term and Middle-Term Educational Reform and Development (2010-2012)” enacted by China, it is clearly proposed that “parent committees in middle schools and primary schools should be established”, and the goal of “improving the school management system in middle schools and primary schools” and final goal of “constructing the modern school system” should be realized.

II. Problems and challenges for parents to be involved in daily management of schools

The establishment of parent committees is a reflection of the school openness and democracy, which changes the traditionally closed school running state. Through the establishment and improvement of the participation in school management and evaluation systems by the whole society and parents, community organizations and students’ parents can be guided to participate in the school management and monitoring actively and effectively, thus realizing the positive interaction between schools and society. Parent committees can reflect the consultative and democratic superiority with Chinese characteristics. In the construction process of parents committees, schools should construct a consultative and democratic system between parents and schools with rational processes and complete sections on the premise of adherence to independent school running. Moreover, schools should safeguard the vital interests of students, teachers, and parents. However, seen from the real situation of the parent committee construction, great progress has been achieved for the parent committee construction in China, but there’s still much to do to meet the standard and requirements of modern school system construction. Through the survey and analysis of the parent committee construction by schools, it is found that there are usually four problems existed in the parents’ involvement in school management.

(A) Parents are too involved in school management. Currently, students’ academic performance is still most concerned by parents. As parents attach too much importance to their children’s academic performance, they would contact with school teachers or leaders in case of any slight fluctuation of the performance, or they would post messages online and complain to superiors to intervene teachers’ teaching. They may even intervene excessively or conduct false publicity. The execution of education right by schools is relatively independent, and excessive intervention will seriously affect the daily management and education and teaching work implementation of schools, which may result in negative impact on the school, students, and teachers.

(B) The structure of school management staff with parents’ participation is irrational. In many schools, the parent committee is established by the school, and staffs are selected by the school. Members of many Chinese committee parents are basically parents whose children perform excellent in school, business owners, departmental leaders, and educators with a lack of autonomy and comprehensiveness. Containing excellent students ‘parents shows the support and affirmation of the school work, which is also a kind of “preference” to outstanding students. Business owners can bring sponsorship and economic benefits to the school. Department leaders will bring the reputation, opportunities, and propaganda to the school, and educational workers can be used and transformed into education resources of the school. However, the voice of these people cannot represent the aspirations and wishes of all parents, especially students having problems in learning or living in poor family conditions. They need support and care most, and if they do not receive much concern, it’s likely for them to be marginalized.

(C) Contradictions caused by different subjects concerned by parent committees. “Many parents tend to be shirking, laissez-faire, and distraught about the parental education right, which makes the right to participate in education by parents more and more weakened.” As parents generally focus only on their children, but the interest background of their children differs, so the interest subject they concern differs as well. Most parents consider only the aspects that are beneficial to their children, but rarely think from a comprehensive and macro perspective or from the perspective of overall development of all students. As a result, it is hard for them to work together for the school.

(D) The superficial and passive characteristics of parents’ involvement in school management. The position of parents and schools in practical operation is not the same, but the former subjects to the latter. Parents often blindly conform to school requirements. Many parents subject to their usual work and daily chores, and they rarely do not have time to carry out the work of parent committees in school, nor can they actually be involved in the school management and decision-making. Parent committees are in a lack of real power, and they do not have effective power to support the decision-making of schools. Parental involvement can often only act as a one-way superficial information flow. For example, in many parent meetings, parents can only participate as listeners.

Teachers issue requests and parents rush to record something. There's little time for parents to exchange with each other and provide feedbacks, and not all students and parents can be taken into account.

III. Suggestions for improving the involvement in daily management of schools by parents

How to mobilize the broad participation of all parents and realize effective and substantive interaction between parents and schools has become an imminent task. I think the following four aspects can be stressed when carrying out work.

(A) Establish a sound system for the guarantee purpose. Duties and status of parents should be clarified. The right and obligation relationship of the parents should be regulated and the participation of parent committees should be ensured. "According to the actual operation needs, parent representative meetings should be held. On the premise of giving full play to the role of the committee, a new type of dialogue and interaction relationship should be built." Whether the parent committee should be independent at the school level or subordinate to some school department, and whether its duty execution should be restricted by the school or not, can directly influence the decision-making strength and quality. The parent committee should not only be invited when they are "in need", instead, it should be involved in the daily management of the school with the setting of fixed offices, arbitration, teaching and evaluation branches. Parents should regularly participate in school administrative meetings as well as school policy development. Schools should also strengthen the publicity, so that each parent has the right to be informed and involved in meetings. According to the social constructivist view, a public dialogue mechanism should be constructed for the school council system, and the blame-based system should be transferred to taking responsibility respectively. It is an important system guarantee for the construction of parent committees to get cognition in the school development process and coordinate acts.

(B) Ensure the participation of all levels of parents and give play to the right of speak by parents. Schools should expand the involvement channels and enthusiasm of parents. Parents with different education levels, family backgrounds, and levels should have extensive and equal right of speak. Not only the participation enthusiasm of parents whose children perform excellently should be mobilized, but also parents of weak groups should express their wishes freely. Rather than limit to a small part of parents and students' interests, the vast students' wishes should be reflected on the basis of educational fairness and justice from an overall perspective. In terms of the parents' involvement in school management, schools should be clear about the management aspects and provide the right to know, monitor, participate, and evaluate for parents. Parents should be the auxiliary boost in the school development process as well as the assistant in the school management process, so that they can work with the school to deal with children's education work properly.

(C) Establish and improve the parent training system. Parents are fully passionate about participating in the school management, but they usually lack relevant theoretical supports and long-term eyesight, so it's inevitable that they may miss some points in the school management process. Schools can make use of relevant counseling agencies, civil society organizations, university professors, school backbone teachers, parent schools, and even well-organized teaching and research staffs to provide appropriate trainings for parents, thus improving the decision-making in the future. Educational administrative departments should actively cooperate with each other, carry out training exchanges regularly, and form the long-term effective training norms, thus resolving the needs of parents and schools actually.

(D) Improve the media platform for public opinions. Education has been a hot topic nowadays, and media is an important part in practical propaganda of education. How to give full play to the good public opinions of media can lead to the active guiding effect on parents' participation in educational management. It is a main problem that needs to be resolved urgently by us. The importance and urgency of parents' participation in education management should be actively publicized by the media with the popularization of relevant knowledge and typical successful cases. Media should also work with parents and play the role in monitoring and publicizing decision-making of schools.

With the development of modern society, education has been receiving more and more concern. It is not just a duty of one department anymore; instead, it's a tough task of all social members. As persons who understand their children most, parents have the right and obligation to be involved in the school construction and management, thus contributing to the educational development.

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