

THE IMPACT OF THE MANAGEMENT TEAM ON THE SCHOOL INCLUSION PROCESS: OBSTACLES AND PERSPECTIVES

O IMPACTO DA EQUIPE GESTORA NO PROCESSO DE INCLUSÃO ESCOLAR: ENTRAVES E PERSPECTIVAS

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RESUMO: A educação inclusiva constitui um princípio fundamental para a garantia do direito à educação e para a construção de uma escola comprometida com a diversidade humana. Nesse contexto, a equipe gestora exerce papel estratégico na implementação de políticas e práticas inclusivas, uma vez que suas decisões interferem diretamente na organização escolar, no planejamento pedagógico, na formação dos profissionais, na acessibilidade, na articulação com as famílias e na construção de uma cultura institucional baseada na participação e na aprendizagem de todos os estudantes. O presente artigo tem como objetivo analisar o impacto da equipe gestora no processo de inclusão escolar, identificando os principais entraves que dificultam sua efetivação e discutindo perspectivas para o fortalecimento de uma gestão educacional inclusiva. Trata-se de uma pesquisa de abordagem qualitativa, de natureza bibliográfica e documental, fundamentada em autores nacionais e internacionais que discutem gestão escolar, educação inclusiva, educação especial, gestão democrática e formação docente, além de documentos legais brasileiros e internacionais. A análise evidencia que a atuação da equipe gestora ultrapassa as dimensões administrativas e burocráticas, assumindo caráter essencialmente pedagógico e político. Entre os principais entraves identificados encontram-se a insuficiência de formação continuada, a precariedade de recursos e infraestrutura, as barreiras arquitetônicas, comunicacionais e atitudinais, a fragmentação do trabalho pedagógico, a sobrecarga dos profissionais, a resistência às mudanças e a distância existente entre as políticas públicas e sua efetivação no cotidiano escolar. Como perspectivas, destacam-se a gestão democrática, a formação continuada em serviço, o planejamento colaborativo, a articulação entre ensino comum e Atendimento Educacional Especializado, a participação das famílias e estudantes, a utilização de tecnologias assistivas, a avaliação institucional e a construção de uma cultura escolar fundamentada no respeito às diferenças. Conclui-se que a equipe gestora constitui elemento mediador fundamental para transformar o direito formal à inclusão em práticas concretas de acesso, permanência, participação, aprendizagem e pertencimento.

Palavras-chave: Gestão escolar. Educação inclusiva. Inclusão escolar. Gestão democrática. Educação especial. Equipe gestora.

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ABSTRACT: Inclusive education is a fundamental principle for guaranteeing the right to education and building schools committed to human diversity. In this context, the school management team plays a strategic role in implementing inclusive policies and practices, since its decisions directly affect school organization, pedagogical planning, professional development, accessibility, relationships with families, and the construction of an institutional culture based on participation and learning for all students. This article aims to analyze the impact of school management teams on the inclusion process, identifying the main barriers that hinder its implementation and discussing perspectives for strengthening inclusive educational management. This is a qualitative bibliographic and documentary study based on national and international authors addressing school management, inclusive education, special education, democratic management and teacher education, as well as Brazilian and international legal documents. The analysis shows that the management team's role goes beyond administrative and bureaucratic dimensions, assuming an essentially pedagogical and political character. The main barriers identified include insufficient continuing education, limited resources and infrastructure, architectural, communicational and attitudinal barriers, fragmentation of pedagogical work, professional overload, resistance to change, and the gap between public policies and their implementation in everyday school life. Perspectives include democratic management, in-service professional development, collaborative planning, articulation between regular education and Specialized Educational Assistance, participation of families and students, use of assistive technologies, institutional assessment and construction of a school culture based on respect for differences. It is concluded that the school management team is a fundamental mediator in transforming the formal right to inclusion into concrete practices of access, permanence, participation, learning and belonging.

Keywords: School management. Inclusive education. School inclusion. Democratic management. Special education. Management team.

I INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the main instruments of social transformation and guarantee of citizenship. Through it, subjects have the possibility of developing knowledge, skills, values and competencies necessary for participation in society. However, for a large part of the history of education, certain social groups were subjected to processes of exclusion, segregation or partial integration, especially people with disabilities, students with specific educational needs and other subjects who did not fit the standards traditionally established by the school institution.

The contemporary perspective of inclusive education represents a significant change in this reality. Instead of a school structured to serve a student considered "standard", a school capable of recognizing and valuing the diversity that exists within it is defended.

The Salamanca Declaration (UNESCO, 1994) was an important international milestone in arguing that schools should welcome all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This conception influenced

educational policies in several countries and contributed to the consolidation of inclusion as a guiding principle of educational systems.

In Brazil, the Federal Constitution of 1988 establishes education as a right for all and determines principles related to equal conditions for access and permanence in school. Subsequently, Law No. 9,394/1996, which establishes the Guidelines and Bases of National Education, strengthened the organization of special education and the guarantee of educational assistance to students who need specific services.

Another key milestone was the National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education, published by the Ministry of Education in 2008, which began to guide the organization of inclusive educational systems, defending the transversality of special education and the articulation between special education and regular education.

Law No. 13,146/2015, known as the Brazilian Law for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, deepened this process by establishing that education is a right of people with disabilities and that an inclusive educational system must be ensured at all levels.

More recently, Decree No. 12,686/2025 instituted the National Policy for Inclusive Special Education, reaffirming principles related to equity, accessibility, combating ableism, student and family participation, continuing education, and intersectoral articulation.

In this scenario, it is necessary to discuss the role of the management team. School inclusion cannot be understood as the exclusive responsibility of the teacher who works directly with the student. Although the teacher plays an essential role, the construction of an inclusive school depends on a set of institutional decisions. The school board, the pedagogical coordination, teachers, professionals of the Specialized Educational Service, employees, families and students need to participate in a collective process of construction of educational responses.

The management team therefore assumes a strategic role. It is responsible for organizing resources, promoting training spaces, stimulating collective work, monitoring the development of students, articulating professionals, dialoguing with families and establishing relationships with education systems.

According to Lück (2009), school management involves different dimensions that need to be articulated to ensure the functioning and development of the institution. In the field of inclusion, this articulation becomes even more important. Management can both contribute to removing barriers and, involuntarily, reproduce them. When the management team considers

inclusion a collective responsibility, it creates conditions for the development of collaborative practices. However, when the process is understood only as a bureaucratic obligation, there is a risk of merely formal inclusion occurring. In view of this, the following research question is presented: How does the management team impact the school inclusion process and what are the main obstacles and perspectives related to its performance?

The general objective of this article is to analyze the impact of the management team on the process of school inclusion, considering the main obstacles and perspectives for the implementation of inclusive educational practices. As specific objectives, it is intended to: a) discuss the foundations of inclusive education; b) analyze the role of the management team in the construction of an inclusive school; c) identify the main obstacles faced by school institutions; d) discuss management strategies capable of strengthening inclusion; e) present perspectives for democratic and inclusive school management.

The relevance of this research is related to the need to understand that school inclusion depends not only on public policies, but also on the way these policies are interpreted and implemented in the daily life of schools.

2 METHODOLOGY

The present study is characterized as a qualitative research, of a bibliographic and documentary nature. According to Gil (2019), bibliographic research is developed from materials already prepared, especially books, scientific articles, dissertations, theses, and other academic productions. Documentary research, in turn, uses documents that present relevant information for the understanding of the investigated object. The choice of the qualitative approach is justified by the interest in understanding meanings, conceptions, relationships, and processes associated with the performance of the management team in the context of school inclusion.

Studies related to the following categories were considered: school management; democratic management; educational leadership; inclusive education; special education; specialized educational service; continuing education; accessibility; educational barriers; family participation; school culture; public inclusion policies. Brazilian and international normative documents related to the right to inclusive education were also analyzed, including the Federal Constitution of 1988, the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education, the Declaration of Salamanca, the National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive

Education, the Brazilian Law of Inclusion and the most recent federal legislation related to the National Policy on Inclusive Special Education. The analysis was organized into thematic categories, allowing the discussion of the role of the management team, the institutional obstacles and the possibilities of transforming the school.

3 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES

Inclusive education is related to the construction of educational systems capable of meeting the diversity of their students. Booth and Ainscow (2011) argue that inclusion should be understood from the identification and reduction of barriers that hinder learning and participation. This perspective represents an important change because it shifts the individual's gaze to the relationship between the individual and the context. In a traditional model, when a student has difficulties, the tendency may be to attribute the problem exclusively to his or her personal characteristics. In the inclusive perspective, however, the school organization itself is also questioned. It is necessary to ask: Is the curriculum accessible? Are the materials adequate? Do the assessments allow different forms of expression? Does the physical environment allow circulation? Is communication accessible? Do the teachers have training? Are there assistive technology resources? Does the student participate in the activities? Does the school have positive expectations regarding their learning?

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Mantoan (2003) argues that inclusion requires transformation of the school and not just the insertion of certain students in structures that remain unchanged. Inclusion, therefore, does not simply mean enrolling the student in regular school. It means ensuring conditions for him to participate effectively in the educational process. Carvalho (2004) highlights that an inclusive school needs to develop a culture of respect for diversity and combat practices that produce exclusion.

In this sense, inclusion has dimensions: political, because it is related to rights; pedagogical, because it interferes with teaching practices; social, because it promotes participation and citizenship; cultural, because it modifies conceptions of difference; administrative, because it requires resources and institutional organization. All these dimensions directly involve the management team.

4 SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT

School management cannot be reduced to the bureaucratic administration of the institution. Libâneo (2015) highlights that school organization must be articulated with educational purposes. This means that administrative decisions need to contribute to the school's pedagogical objectives. Paro (2010) understands school administration as a mediation for the achievement of educational purposes. Thus, managing an inclusive school means organizing people, resources, and processes to guarantee everyone's right to learning. Democratic management occupies a central role in this process. The Federal Constitution and Brazilian educational legislation establish democratic management as a principle of public education. In the inclusive context, democratic management means ensuring spaces for different subjects to participate in school decisions. This includes: teachers; students; families; SEA professionals; employees; school council; community.

Democratic management does not mean the absence of leadership. On the contrary, it requires leadership capable of coordinating different interests around common educational objectives. Lück (2014) highlights the importance of school leadership to mobilize people and resources. In the inclusion process, this leadership needs to be oriented towards the elimination of barriers. The management team must be able to ask: What prevents this student from participating? What changes does the school need to make? What resources are needed? Which professionals need to work together? These questions shift the inclusion from individual responsibility to institutional responsibility.

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5 THE ROLE OF THE MANAGEMENT TEAM IN SCHOOL INCLUSION

The management team has several responsibilities related to the inclusive process. One of the main functions of management is to build an institutional culture based on respect for differences. The way managers position themselves in the face of disability influences teachers, students, and employees. If management shows low expectations in relation to students with disabilities, this attitude can be reproduced by other members of the community. On the other hand, when it demonstrates confidence in students' ability to learn, it encourages more inclusive practices.

Management must ensure conditions for collective planning. Teachers need to have opportunities to discuss: pedagogical strategies; resources; evaluation; accessibility;

participation; difficulties; student progress. The absence of collective planning can lead to fragmentation.

The training of professionals is one of the main instruments to strengthen inclusion. Imbernón (2011) defends teacher training linked to the real needs of the professional context. In this sense, the management team should promote training related to the concrete challenges of the school.

Management should promote articulation between common room teachers and SEA professionals. SEA should not be understood as a replacement for regular education. Its function is to offer resources and strategies that favor participation and learning.

The participation of the family is fundamental. Management must establish permanent channels of communication, avoiding a relationship based exclusively on complaints or referrals. The family must be understood as a partner.

The management team needs to identify barriers: architectural; communicational; pedagogical; technological; attitudinal. Even when the school does not have the financial autonomy to solve a certain problem, it is up to the management to register the demand and forward it to the responsible body.

Inclusion should not be evaluated only by the number of enrollments. It is necessary to monitor: attendance; participation; learning; development; social interaction; autonomy; access to the curriculum.

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One of the main obstacles is the insufficient training of professionals. Many teachers report difficulties in working with students who have different educational needs. However, it is important to avoid individual responsibility. Training needs to be a responsibility of the education networks and the institutions themselves. The management team can contribute by creating spaces for study and reflection. Another obstacle refers to the insufficiency of resources. Some schools have: inadequate classrooms; absence of accessible materials; little equipment; insufficient professionals; transportation difficulties; absence of assistive technologies. Management needs to act as a mediator between the needs of the school and the bodies responsible for offering resources. Physical accessibility is a basic condition for inclusion. Ramps, handrails, accessible bathrooms, signage and adequate circulation are important elements. However, accessibility cannot be reduced to architecture. Deaf students, students with communication difficulties and other subjects may encounter obstacles when the

school does not provide adequate resources. Communication accessibility needs to be considered in school planning.

Attitudinal barriers are perhaps some of the most difficult to overcome. Prejudices, stereotypes, infantilization, overprotection, and low expectations can compromise student development. The management team needs to combat these practices through training and dialogue.

Ableism corresponds to practices and conceptions that inferiorize people with disabilities. In the school environment, it can appear in different ways. An example is considering that a certain student will not be able to learn certain content simply because of his or her disability. Another example is offering permanently simplified activities, without considering their potential. School management plays a fundamental role in confronting these practices. It is necessary to build a culture based on the idea that differences do not mean lack of capacity. Inclusion presupposes high expectations, adequate support, and opportunities for participation.

Another challenge is the excessive centrality of the diagnosis. Diagnosis can contribute to understanding needs, but it should not define in advance what the student can or cannot learn. Medeiros et al. (2024) highlight the importance of problematizing the meanings attributed to diagnoses and understanding the relationship between school management, special education, and schooling. The central question of the school should not only be: "What is the student's diagnosis?" It should also be: "What barriers hinder their learning and what support can be offered?" This change in perspective has a great impact on management.

Inclusion depends on collaboration. The teacher needs to feel supported by the management team. A management that only forwards demands, without creating conditions for collective discussion, tends to increase the feeling of professional isolation. The management team must create moments for: planning; study; exchange of experiences; case analysis; elaboration of strategies; evaluation of results.

Fullan (2007) emphasizes that educational change processes depend on collaboration and institutional development. Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018) also highlight the importance of collaborative professionalism for the improvement of education. Thus, inclusion must be built as a collective project.

The participation of the family represents another fundamental component. In some situations, the relationship between school and family can be marked by conflicts. The school

can hold the family responsible for the student's difficulties, while the family can consider that the institution does not offer enough support. Democratic management must seek to overcome this logic. The family needs to be heard. The information brought by the parents or guardians can help the school understand the student's characteristics, interests, forms of communication and needs. However, the school also needs to maintain its pedagogical responsibility.

An inclusive school needs to listen to students. Booth and Ainscow (2011) defend the importance of participation in the construction of inclusive cultures. Students can contribute by indicating: difficulties; situations of exclusion; accessibility problems; coexistence relationships; strategies that facilitate learning

The management team can create: assemblies; conversation circles; questionnaires; student councils; listening spaces. Student participation strengthens democratic management. The curriculum constitutes a central dimension. An inclusive school needs to enable different students to have access to school knowledge. This does not mean offering a completely different curriculum for each student. It means making strategies, resources, and forms of participation more flexible when necessary. Universal Design for Learning makes important contributions by advocating multiple forms of representation, action, expression, and involvement. Management should encourage teachers to use different resources and strategies.

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The analysis carried out demonstrates that the management team occupies a strategic position in the process of school inclusion. However, it is necessary to avoid a simplistic interpretation that attributes exclusively to managers the responsibility for the success or failure of inclusion. The school is inserted in a broader educational system.

The conditions offered by the departments of education, public policies, financing, professional training, transportation, infrastructure, and availability of professionals directly interfere with the possibilities of action. Thus, management has responsibility, but it also needs conditions. Paro (2010) contributes to understanding this issue by stating that school administration needs to be related to the purposes of education. When the purpose is to guarantee education for all, administrative processes must be subordinated to this objective. The management team needs to transform inclusion into an institutional priority. This implies modifying schedules, organizing meetings, distributing resources, promoting training, accompanying teachers, and establishing dialogue with families. Medeiros et al. (2024) demonstrate that school management plays an important role in the inclusion of public students in special education, especially in the articulation between common education and

special education. This aspect is fundamental. An inclusive school cannot function through isolated sectors. Common room teacher, SEA teacher, coordination, direction and other professionals need to build a collaboration network. Management acts as an articulator of this network. The Brazilian regulatory update reinforces this responsibility. The National Policy on Inclusive Special Education establishes principles related to equity, accessibility, participation, training and combating ableism. Consequently, management teams need to develop new skills. It is not enough to manage schedules, documents and resources. It is necessary to exercise pedagogical leadership.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article aimed to analyze the impact of the management team on the school inclusion process, considering its main obstacles and perspectives. The bibliographic and documentary analysis showed that the management team plays a fundamental role in the construction of an inclusive school. Its performance directly interferes in the institutional culture, in the organization of pedagogical work, in the training of professionals, in accessibility, in the articulation with the SEA, in the participation of families and students and in the monitoring of learning. Among the main obstacles were identified: insufficient training; lack of resources; architectural barriers; communication barriers; attitudinal barriers; ableism; medicalization; fragmentation of work; overload of professionals; difficulties in articulation; distance between legislation and school reality. These problems demonstrate that inclusion cannot be understood as an individual responsibility. It is an institutional and systemic responsibility.

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The management team has a strategic role because it can organize internal processes and mobilize different actors. Inclusive management needs to be democratic, participatory, pedagogical, and collaborative. It needs to listen to teachers, students, and families. It needs to encourage permanent training. It needs to monitor results. It needs to identify barriers. It needs to seek solutions. It also needs to recognize that it does not have control over all structural conditions and, therefore, needs public policies that offer adequate support. The perspectives for strengthening inclusion are related to the construction of a school culture based on human rights, equity, and the recognition of diversity. Inclusion cannot be reduced to enrollment. A student can be enrolled and still encounter barriers to participating, learning, and developing

their autonomy. For this reason, true inclusion needs to involve access, permanence, participation, learning, and belonging.

It is concluded, therefore, that the management team is one of the main mediating elements between public policies and the daily reality of the school. When it exercises democratic leadership, promotes collaboration, training and participation, it can contribute significantly to institutional transformation.

When management is limited to bureaucratic dimensions, inclusive policies run the risk of remaining only at the formal level. In this way, strengthening the management team means strengthening the school's own capacity to respond to diversity. The construction of an inclusive school requires collective commitment, consistent public policies, adequate resources, professional training and, above all, a change in conception: it is not the student who needs to adapt to the school; it is the school that needs to transform itself to guarantee everyone's right to education.

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