

THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL AND TEACHERS IN SCHOOL PROMOTION

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Abstract: Every school must have a working concept. However, it is different in practice. Some schools prepare a long-term document at the meetings of the pedagogical council. Others adopt the Principal's competition concept, which becomes the school's work concept. The idea of how the school would work is then created in the mind of the candidate for a principal. He develops a vision of the school's operation on the basis of his own ideas and presents this concept at the competition with the hope of achieving his five-year term. This idea shall be made public and modified as necessary.

Keywords: principal, school, teachers, promotion, persons, organisation

Introduction

Having a concept is important for the principal and the pedagogical council as it allows for a holistic view of the school. Since it is important for every principal to work with the local community, the concept should include actions to be taken together with parents and in accordance with their expectations. The environment challenges the school and teachers and inspires them to modify the concept. Cooperation with the environment affects the image of the school in the surroundings. It allowed preparing a marketing strategy taking into account the character of the school and relations with the environment. It is the principal who is the innovator, inspirer and creator, but the prerequisite is that ideas are accepted by the school community, helping all members of the school community to act in a conceptual, coherent way. The image of the school consists of many factors, including also the principal's image. The school management system requires a person who will combine the qualities of a leader and a manager in order to be efficient. The principal must, therefore, choose a style of management that ensures that teamwork prevails and that decision making creates a sense of shared responsibility among teachers.

1. Principal's competencies

The principal must boldly delegate powers and cooperate, taking into account the needs of pupils, parents and teachers. The principal's competencies must be very broad. By limiting themselves to the promotion of the school, a few necessary competencies can be identified [Kwiatkowski ao., 2014].

Communication competence is necessary to present the school's offer, including interviews with representatives of the school environment, with representatives of the leading and supervising authority. The principal should be able to:

- engage in dialogue with the parents of students,
- present the school's offer in direct meetings,
- inspire trust during interviews with the parents of the candidates for students,
- skilfully build and create a climate of trust between interlocutors, actively listen.

Technical competence is necessary for efficient preparation of the promotional campaign. The principal should be able to:

- develop and verify the promotion schedule, organise the work of the promotion group,
- assign tasks according to teachers' predispositions,
- assess the technical possibilities of preparing brochures, posters.

Social competence is manifested in situations of entering into relationships with the school environment. In this respect, the principal should be distinguished by his skills:

- creating a friendly atmosphere,
- motivating people to work,
- cooperation with parents,
- leading a group of teachers.
- Conceptual competence is very much needed for creative and innovative work.

The principal should have abilities:

- identifying the needs of the environment,
- creating and implementing a concept related to the promotion of the school,
- inventing interesting solutions presenting the school's offer,
- planning marketing activities.

2. Teachers' tasks

The promotion of the school is not an act of the principal himself. His role is very important but without exaggeration. As a representative of the school, he meets the parents of the candidates for students and gives first information. He contacts local lower-level educational institutions, determining the ways and circumstances of providing information to parents and students (depending on the educational stage). As a leader and manager of the school, he inspires and encourages the group of teachers to jointly plan activities related to the promotion of the school.

However, teachers are the most important group in school promotion. It is they who mainly carry out the tasks related to promotion, they talk to parents and should take actions which influence the positive reception of educational and pedagogical activities in the local environment. Unfortunately, teachers do not always understand and accept this challenge. Although the principal provides tools or an idea for new tasks, the teaching staff is sceptical about this idea. It is not always possible to find fault in long work experience, sometimes the image of a teacher's work is so far different from the school reality that young teachers surprised by the requirements cannot find themselves at school. It happens that staff who have worked for many years in a period that does not require additional conceptual effort, time and the need to cooperate with parents - are reluctant to take actions resulting from an area they do not know very well. Often teachers "know in advance" that certain activities are unprofitable, and if they have succeeded elsewhere, they will certainly fail in this school and this environment [Oczkowska, Bukowska, 2014, p. 49].

All additional activities, which are strongly criticised by teachers, should be carried out beyond the hours of direct classroom activities. These additional statutory classes are allocated the hours that remain after classes with students, as stipulated in Article 42 of the Act of 26 January 1982 - Teacher's Charter (uniform text: Journal of Laws of 2014, item 191 as amended).

Many of the activities that influence the school's assessment by the environment result from the daily work of the teachers, their commitment, the organisation of interesting lessons and an appropriate attitude towards the students. In this regard, mistakes are most often made. A promotional campaign related to recruitment can be great. So what? If the entire marketing process, which is systematic and daily, is not carried out properly, it may result in poor interest in the school.

The teachers' council must be trained in the functioning of the school in today's competitive market. The involvement of teachers and their motivation for new tasks partly depends on the social skills of the principal but depends mainly on the knowledge and awareness of teachers about the functioning of an educational institution on the free market. The opinion about the school depends on the preparation and committed attitude of the teachers. Teachers in recent years have improved their qualifications, mainly because without higher education they could not work at school (except for the expiring Teacher's Study), but also

because of the decreasing number of teaching hours in order not to lose their jobs. Neither bachelor's nor master's nor postgraduate studies include marketing in their plans. Meanwhile, the lack of such training causes the subject to be underestimated by an unprepared teacher. If a teacher is finishing studies - postgraduate or other pedagogical - he thinks that if the problem was important for work in a modern school, it would certainly be taken up and included in the curriculum by the university. For many decades, the educational model did not require such activity (creativity) on the part of teachers, and the costs resulting from the functioning of the institution were covered entirely by the budget and were not dependent on the undertakings adopted by teachers. The change in the conditions of functioning caused the school to enter the 21st century with much higher expectations towards the teaching community. Although the Teacher's Charter has remained unchanged in this direction for years, the discussion on some records has revealed many weaknesses on the part of teachers and school management. This awareness has resulted in partial care for the future - principals are increasingly undergoing marketing training and, as candidates for principals, they are obligatorily completing postgraduate studies in educational management. Unfortunately, the teachers are not involved in this improvement [Fazlagić, 2011, p. 23].

3. Teacher training

The fundamental assumption of the pedagogical supervision carried out by the principal is, among other things, to support teachers in their didactic, educational and caring activities and the implementation of other statutory tasks (Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 7 October 2009 on pedagogical supervision; Journal of Laws of 2009 No. 168, item 1324 as amended). The principal is responsible for the training of teachers in this area, so he should conduct a training pedagogical council. Teachers need to be familiarised with the problem; they also need to be persuaded to introduce promotional activities [Herbst, 2012].

The first pedagogical council in this area could have the following course:

- learning the basics of school marketing and promotion,
- assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the school,
- identifying the needs and expectations of current students and their parents,
- analysis of potential clients' expectations,
- establishing a group for school promotion,
- development of a project for the course of the promotion, including deadlines,
- learning the basics of school marketing and promotion.

The principal of the school, a designated teacher or an invited trainer shall acquaint the teachers' council with the following:

- the market for educational services,
- the essence of school marketing,

- marketing communication models,
- the essence of public relations, about forms of school promotion,
- the importance of the image of the principal and the school,
- assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

SWOT analysis is one of many available techniques that take into account relations with the external environment and internal conditions in their analysis.

This technique is well known to teachers, although it is not used often enough; it is simple and undemanding in its implementation. The main aim of the analysis is to determine the current position of the examined object and its perspectives, and together with that to develop the best strategy of conduct. In the case of school, we will try to check the links between the internal capabilities of the school and the opportunities and threats resulting from the external environment. This technique can be carried out by dividing the teachers' council team into smaller groups and by selecting a limited number of key factors. In the last phase, the most important factors will be re-selected according to their hierarchy of importance.

The strengths of the school are what depends on us and can have a positive impact on the realisation of goals (intentions), the weaknesses of the school are all the barriers that do not allow the realisation of the decisions.

We can give examples of factors - they may turn out to be our advantages or, as their negation, show the weakness of the school:

- well-prepared teaching staff,
- competent teachers,
- strong commitment,
- ability to make decisions under time pressure,
- entering EU projects,
- implementation of grants from the city, from the district governor, etc.,
- implementing of own programme for capable students,
- the organisation of activities to even educational opportunities,
- conducting specialist classes (speech therapy, movement, speech and music therapy, biofeedback, pedagogical therapy, etc.),
- clear rules and procedures,
- traditional environmental meetings (e.g. carol singing, meetings with poetry),
- regular sponsor acquisition,
- the organisation of competitions.

The second group of factors is due to external conditions. Opportunities are factors that can have a positive impact on the functioning of the school coming from the environment. The development of the school will be threatened by those changes which are beyond our control and may endanger the achievement of goals and inhibit the development of the school.

These external factors include:

- competition from other schools,
- high results from tests, exams, matura,
- high aspirations of parents,
- the economic situation of students' families,
- innovative ideas from nearby schools to cooperate with other schools,
- acquiring sponsors, with legal restrictions,
- no investment in base development,
- volunteer engagement.

4. Identification of the needs and expectations of current students and their parents

The identification of the needs and expectations of current students and their parents can also be achieved using SWOT analysis. Looking for strengths and weaknesses should give us an image of the school not only from the teacher's point of view but also the image seen through the eyes of students and parents should be taken as more important. One may be tempted so that such analyses conducted at parents' meetings and in classes are already prepared for this advice by the student council, except that in primary schools with the support of teachers.

We can also prepare surveys for parents as a technique to gather opinions about the school and the work of teachers. Another way is to write down among the groups of expectations, needs and proposals of changes in the school, which will influence the quality of educational service. The effect is important, so we can look for other techniques that will allow us to gather fairly objective information about what is expected of the school and evaluate the existing offer [Blanchard, 2010, p. 114].

Another way is to divide the council into groups and adopt the roles of students, parents and teachers. Developed in the groups, the expectations and needs of each group after writing them down are sent to the next group for verification. Each group must remember in whose name the demands were made and choose the most important ones. After this verification, the entire pedagogical council reads the written ideas and rejects those that cannot be realised for reasons beyond our control or those that are not interesting and necessary.

We have to remember that what seems appropriate or sufficient for teachers does not have to be the same for parents. Parents expect exceptional attention to their children and a guarantee of the highest quality of education [Kawecki, 2012].

5. Analysis of potential clients' expectations

Analysis of potential clients' expectations requires teachers to make an assessment among candidates for students or their parents. This environment is difficult to reach, but some of it can be found in nearby nurseries and lower secondary education schools. And here we do

not have to organise any special assessment actions. Using the cooperation with institutions, we can use the information that the teachers will gather in conversations with parents; we can also prepare a survey or just 2-3 open questions.

It is good as if this information has already been gathered on this first council. It is also possible to move this point to the next council to give time to prepare the tool to collect the necessary data.

If this happens for the first time, a promotion group may be appointed at the first teachers' council, while the annual promotion group should be appointed at the first teachers' council in August together with the adoption of other additional activities and the composition of task committees. It is important that the group is constituted and the chairperson should proceed to establish a promotion plan. The role of this group is very important, but it is a group that coordinates activities and organises the selection of forms of promotion or presents various examples of promotion proposals for discussion. The school's promotion tasks are performed by all teachers without exception, leaving the monitoring process to the promotion group.

The development of the project concerning the course of the promotion is an important element, as it combines all the previous activities. In the selection of the elements to be promoted, depending on the school, different items worth promoting may come to the fore. Schools choose various elements from the educational offer for promotion, e.g.:

- quality of education,
- high scores for tests, exams,
- extracurricular activities,
- successes in competitions and sports events,
- safety assurance,
- implementation of ecological projects.

The objective is important because it simultaneously defines the addressee and determines the taking of specific actions. If the aim is to increase the number of enrolled students, the promotional plan requires systematic, continuous work throughout the year, ending with a promotional campaign that targets the local environment and potential students. The promotional campaign advertising specific undertakings is addressed to current students and takes the form of intra-school activities. It often becomes an element of school promotion in the local environment by providing information about school activity, interesting projects, students' successes, a wide range of extracurricular activities, etc. The project must include analyses of the data we mentioned in the previous points. We need to know exactly what the recipients expect.

Another important point will be the forms of communication. During the council meeting, the promotion group should gather suggestions for ways and decide on the tools to be chosen in order to prepare a precise plan for the promotion schedule.

At subsequent meetings of the teachers' council, the group should prepare a plan of its activities, a promotion plan taking into account all the information collected, examples of promotional activities with specific objectives, concrete actions to implement this plan, results and monitoring methods.

A new phenomenon was (is) the emerging competition between schools and school rankings, which was not well received by teachers, especially weak schools. Surprisingly, the energy of teachers did not go in the direction of creating new solutions that would improve the opinion about the school, but criticism of the necessity of having a concept of the school's work, fighting for the student and undertaking marketing activities.

Some teachers want to work with parents - some just have to. This cooperation is unavoidable - it must be learnt. In the past, there was no such practice in our schools; there is no such tradition now. Therefore, cooperation is a mutual need and a necessity to get to know also for parents who have not yet taken and still do not take additional actions. Of course, the lack of time and willingness are the main reasons for parents to refrain from contacting the school except for necessary meetings.

There's something to be envied when we look at the functioning of schools across the ocean. We quickly realise that when a child goes to school, the parents' rhythm of life changes. Devote time to a child, especially for contacts with the school, is part of this stage of life.

Looking at parents - from the manual worker to the businessman - the duty to contact the school is evident. Parents participate in trainings, share their knowledge with other parents and present interesting issues to other children. There are many possible areas of cooperation. Unfortunately, our parents do not feel connected to the school, and teachers cannot change that. This is something both sides must learn. Cooperation with parents should be multi-directional.

The most important is the interest in educating and upbringing the child. This area is considered by many parents to be well known only because they and their child have lived together for 5-6 years. Therefore, the success of supporting parents (so as not to offend them) depends on the teacher's tact and intuition. Care should be taken to systematically raise parents' knowledge of pedagogy and psychology during meetings with parents, taking into account the issues related to the development and upbringing of children at a particular age. From the point of view of the school's duty, but also for the benefit of the children, it is important to acquaint parents with the principles of intra-school rules, educational requirements for particular subjects and procedures applicable at school. Unfortunately, these activities are not very popular. It is easier to convince parents of tasks for children.

The main areas where there should be cooperation between teachers and parents:

- individual and collective expert meetings conducted in a friendly atmosphere,
- the organisation of workshop meetings on current educational needs, including educational issues,
- joint development of intra-school and class documents,
- establishing procedures to deal with specific situations at home and school,

- involving parents to help in preparing intra-class meetings, such as Saint Andrew's Day meeting, Saint Nicholas Day meeting, Christmas Eve meeting, carnival ball, Family Day,
- help with care during trips and systematic exits, e.g. to the swimming pool,
- creating a group of active parents willing to cooperate on a permanent basis not only for the class but also for the school,
- encouraging parents to promotional activities.

This last point is very important because the parents of current students are a treasury of information about the school and the teaching staff. They are often the first source, and certainly the most important one, from which information about the school in private contacts is shared by other members of the local community - other parents.

Conclusion

Having a concept is one of the conditions for effectiveness. It sets the course for the whole school community. This ensures that all groups will carry out the agreed tasks and that the principal will facilitate decision making. He indicates the importance of issues and tasks and helps to choose solutions. He enables rational management, taking into account different resources, including human, financial, time and base. It is important to develop a schedule of activities related to the implementation of the concept for each year. It is good when the whole school community knows the tasks of the current school year and how they relate to the whole educational program and other school tasks.

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