

## **School Electronic Ballot Box: An application created to assist democratic management**

**Augusto Schwager de Carvalho<sup>1</sup>, Adriana da Silva Lisboa Tomaz<sup>2</sup>.**

### **ABSTRACT**

The text addresses implementing democratic management in schools, highlighting its legal importance and the challenges faced in holding student elections. An exploratory study in a municipal school in São Gonçalo revealed the absence of class representative elections due to the lack of time of the management team. Because of this, the project proposes to facilitate such processes through a Digital Electronic Voting Machine, aiming to promote student participation democratically and efficiently.

**Keywords:** School Electronic Voting Machine Application, Citizenship, Democratic management.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Over time, democratic school management has been improved by different government agencies, through increasing legal support. We have, for example, the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (1996) that points to the importance of democratic management in school units. According to Leite, Souza and Amorim (2022), the school is responsible for exchanging knowledge and socializing knowledge based on democratic management.

The democratic management of public schools is ensured by different constitutional and legal provisions and, through the participation of the school community in the elaboration of pedagogical proposals and articulation with the community and families (Oliveira, 2023).

Corroborating Oliveira's propositions, we emphasize that the electoral process is a practice that must be inserted in the democratic school unit, through the holding of different elections, such as election for school council, principal, teachers and student class representative.

Through an exploratory research, carried out in September 2023, it was found that in a Municipal School in São Gonçalo – RJ, elections were not held for students representing the class because the management team responsible for the election claimed not to have had enough time. According to Moreira (2021), encouraging student participation in the different types of elections that take place within the school unit is the way to have a democratic end with a reformist bias.

In this context, the problem presented was the difficulty encountered by the management team in carrying out the various electoral processes that occur within the school unit, motivated by the lack of

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<sup>1</sup> UniCarioca University Center – Rio de Janeiro

<sup>2</sup> UniCarioca University Center – Rio de Janeiro



time, or of people who can carry them out, and the main objective of this project is to facilitate such elections through the use of a Digital Electronic Voting Machine. The Ballot Box is available at the electronic address: <https://proximal.unicarioca.edu.br/portal/urna-eletronica-escolarapp/>.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

We initially identified, through an exploratory research, the electoral processes that occur within the school unit and the main difficulties encountered.

We presented to the management team, the Didactic Sequence, available in <https://acesse.one/ydfNw>, in order to minimize such difficulties.

To reinforce this learning, the instructions website was developed, available at the electronic address: <https://urnaeletronicaescolar.blogspot.com/> and the manual for using the Electronic Voting Machine in PDF, which is available in a *Google Drive folder*, at the electronic address: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HH3k6NarpjUIbeJ5C4mkp7baOCRvcQSD/view?usp=sharing>.

The elections for student class representative took place on February 29, 2024 and on March 7, 2024, a semi-structured interview was held with the management team responsible for holding the elections in order to have an evaluation of the use of the School Electronic Voting Machine.

## **RESULTS**

The Didactic Sequence was applied to present the Electronic Voting Machine to the director and the advisor without any mishap. Both the advisor and the principal were able to learn how to use the application without difficulties, which was verified from the simulation of the election proposed in the Didactic Sequence.

Voters were students who were able to choose their class representatives using the application. The process took place on February 29, 2024, in eight classes of the second segment of Elementary School. A total of 178 students participated in the elections, choosing their class representative, and in no room were there problems with the electoral process. The ballot box was positioned inside a cardboard box adapted so that the secrecy of the vote was maintained (Figure 1).

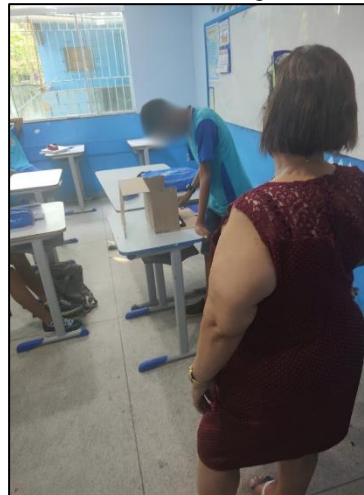
Figure 1. Student making his vote.



Source: The authors (2024)

The principal of the school unit followed the entire electoral process of choosing the students representing the class (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Director following the elections.



Source: The authors (2024)

On March 7, 2024, after the elections, an interview was held with the principal and the advisor responsible for the elections and both stated that the School Electronic Voting Machine facilitated the process of choosing a student class representative and that they will certainly use the application in the coming years.

Every proposal developed and thought out was made from the observation of the need for school management to hold the elections. We emphasize that there was a whole preparation before the elections, with students and professors for the construction of candidacies, conversation circles about citizenship, democracy and the importance of representation.



## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

We conclude that it is possible to carry out management practices that cooperate with the exercise of citizenship and that the objective of this project was achieved because the elections, which were not held in 2023, due to lack of time and people to promote it, were held in 2024 in just one day without presenting difficulty.

We hope that the proposal to use the School Electronic Voting Machine can occur in other schools in the municipality of São Gonçalo – RJ and perhaps in other school units, public or private, throughout Brazil, so that in this way we can strengthen democracy with actions and reflections within the school units.



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