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THE ESSENCE AND FEATURES OF MECHANISMS OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE MANAGEMENT OF GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN UKRAINE IN THE CONTEXT OF DECENTRALIZATION

The essence and features of mechanisms of public involvement in the management of general secondary education institutions in Ukraine are analyzed. It has been established that in connection with the implementation of sectoral decentralization, elements of democratic (participatory) governance are being introduced, including in general secondary education institutions. It has been proven that public involvement takes place at all levels of public participation, such as information, consultation, dialogue and partnership.

Key words: *state policy in the field of education, public participation in decision-making, state-public education management, decentralization.*

Formulation of the problem. In April 2014, the Government of Ukraine approved the Concept of Reforming Local Self-Government and Territorial Organization of Power in Ukraine. One of the tasks of this Concept was to achieve the optimal distribution of powers between local governments and executive bodies at different levels of administrative-territorial organization on the principles of subsidiarity and decentralization.

As part of the implementation of sectoral decentralization, the Ukrainian Parliament approved the Laws of Ukraine “On Education” (2017) and “On Complete General Secondary Education” (2020), which defined new principles for the functioning and development of the education system in Ukraine.

At the same time, in the process of implementation of these regulations, the implementation of mechanisms for public involvement in the management of general secondary education remains an important issue.

Empowerment of stakeholders, both public and non-governmental sector, their involvement in organizational and managerial decision-making processes is a necessary prerequisite for improving the effectiveness of public education policy.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The works of Ukrainian scientists D. Dzvinchuk, Yu. Konarzhevsky, I. Lopushinsky, V. Luhovy, T. Lukina, V. Maslov and others are devoted to the issue of reforming public education management. Involvement of the public in the processes of education management and public administration in the field of education was studied by: M. Komarnytsky, S. Krysiuk, G. Todosova, V. Grabovsky, I. Dovbyshch, S. Korolyuk, A. Seitosmanov and others.

The purpose of the article is to determine the nature, mechanisms and features of public involvement in the management of general secondary education in Ukraine.

Presenting main material. As is known, researchers distinguish three types of decentralization: fiscal decentralization, deconcentration (or administrative decentralization), devolution (or democratic decentralization) [1, p. 5]. It is the last type of decentralization, which involves the transfer of significant powers and resources to the level of local government to provide public services in various fields (education, health, social protection) is implemented in Ukraine since 2014.

The results of sociological research testify to the importance for the Ukrainian society of the reform of the administrative-territorial system and sectoral reforms aimed at decentralization of power. Thus, in 2021, the number of citizens who consider decentralization reform necessary increased by 4% and this figure was 63%. And the level

of awareness of the process of administrative-territorial reform is declared by 83% of respondents [5].

Such a high level of public support is very important. For example, in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 69% of respondents are satisfied with local public services (such as policing or education), while only 43% trust the national government. Therefore, it is safe to say that there is a strong correlation between the quality of public services and trust in local authorities [6, p. 228].

The effectiveness of reforms and transformations taking place in the field of public education management is an important area of public administration, as the quality of secondary education is the basic indicator on which depends the formation of future human resources of communities and the state as a whole. The quality of educational services depends, *inter alia*, on the effectiveness of the public education management system.

Ukrainian researchers interpret public education management as "power-organizing and regulating the influence of public authorities and other entities to which public authority is delegated on the field of education in order to organize, operate, preserve and develop, limited by effective public control" [7].

For its part, the National Strategy for Education Development in Ukraine until 2021 provided that education management should be based on the development of a model of public administration in education, in which the individual, society and the state become equal actors and partners [8]. Similar provisions are contained in the Concept of implementation of state policy in the field of reforming general secondary education "New Ukrainian School" for the period up to 2029, which provides "creating conditions for expanding public-public partnership on the basis of co-financing and joint management of schools" [9].

Thus, regulations define the importance and necessity of cooperation between public authorities and the public to reform the management system of general secondary education.

The provisions of the Law of Ukraine “On Education” (2017) and the Law of Ukraine “On Complete General Secondary Education” (2020) use two concepts related to public involvement in education management: “public self-government” and “state-public management”.

In the scientific literature there are different definitions of the term "public administration", so Ukrainian researcher V. Grabovsky gives a broad interpretation of this term - the process of combining the activities of state and public actors in the interests of man, society, government, which includes: democratization activities of public authorities and education management, development of self-governing participants in educational activities (associations of teachers, student and parent self-government bodies at all levels); creation of public education management bodies "[10].

In the context of management, public involvement in the development and decision-making allows to take into account social, political, economic factors and involve various social groups in the implementation of state and regional policy.

We propose to consider the content and mechanisms of public involvement in the decision-making process in the context of public administration of general secondary education in Ukraine.

Currently, there are several common classifications of typologies of tools for involving citizens in decision-making. In the field of education, the most successful, in our opinion, is the "Code of Recommended Practices for Civic Participation in Decision-Making" of the Council of Europe [11]. According to this classification, four levels of civic participation in the decision-making process (from the weakest to the strongest) are proposed: information, consultation, dialogue, partnership.

1. Informing. According to Article 30 of the Law of Ukraine "On Education", educational institutions (including general secondary education institutions) are obliged to provide open access on their official website to documents and information on: - the charter of the educational institution:

- licenses for educational activities;
- structures and governing bodies, staff;

- educational programs implemented in the educational institution;
- service area assigned to the educational institution by its founder;
- the licensed volume and the actual number of persons studying at the educational institution;
- languages of the educational process;
- availability of vacant positions, the procedure and conditions of the competition for their replacement;
- annual report on the activities of the educational institution.

In turn, according to Article 66 of the Law of Ukraine "On Education", the founder of an educational institution (the founders of the vast majority of general secondary education institutions are local governments) is obliged to publish official reports on all funds received and used, as well as the list and value of goods, works, services aimed at the needs of each of the educational institutions founded by them, and other expenditures in the field of education.

In 2020, the State Service for the Quality of Education of Ukraine presented the results of monitoring the websites of general secondary education institutions in Ukraine. The monitoring, which covered 51.4% of schools in Ukraine, found that despite a significant period of time (over 2 years) since the entry into force of the Law of Ukraine "On Education", there are a number of problems in ensuring transparency and openness of secondary education. Thus, 20% of schools do not have websites at all, more than 33% of educational institutions do not have information on their staff, and 60% of websites do not have information on the availability of vacancies.

Documents on educational programs are available on 50% of school websites, information on the school territory assigned to the school - on 46% of sites, data on the actual number of students are posted on 55% of sites [12].

2. Counselling. This direction of interaction between the government and the public is extremely important, because consultations usually allow to involve all stakeholders in the decision-making process. Consultations allow all participants in a public discussion to

comment on, respond to, and make suggestions for a particular draft document or issue to be discussed.

According to Article 32 of the Law of Ukraine "On Complete General Secondary Education" reorganization, change of type, liquidation of general secondary education in rural areas is allowed only after public discussion of the draft decision of the founder of general secondary education, which is published at least one year before adoption. appropriate decision.

Over the past 15 years, the number of schools in rural areas in Ukraine has decreased from 14.2 thousand to 8.8 thousand institutions [2]. The optimization, reorganization and transformation of a general secondary education institution is a long and complex process that is usually not supported by local residents. The importance of involving the public in this process reduces the likelihood of a social explosion. The founder of an educational institution needs to take measures to hold public consultations with the maximum involvement of all stakeholders.

Another example of public involvement that almost all local communities in Ukraine turn to is public discussions during the development of a community education strategy.

Experts of the Swiss-Ukrainian project "DECIDE - Decentralization for the Development of Democratic Education" have developed practical recommendations and sample documents for heads of local governments (founders of secondary education), including public involvement in various stages of community education strategy. As the authors of the practical manual rightly point out, "in the absence of public opinion and without the help of experts, the document can become a" set of management wishes "or a" stereotypical strategy "without taking into account local specifics" [3].

3. Dialogue and partnership are the highest levels of public involvement in the management of general secondary education. These include the possibility of communicating the positions of stakeholders (teachers, students, parents) and delegating certain functions in the management of general education institutions to public authorities.

Article 27 of the Law of Ukraine “On Complete General Secondary Education” stipulates that the following institutions may operate in an educational institution: self-governing bodies of employees of the educational institution; student self-government bodies; parental self-government bodies.

Along with pedagogical self-government (methodological associations) there are student self-government (school council) and parent self-government (parent council or parent committee). The peculiarity of the self-government bodies of educational institutions is that they operate independently of each other, but form a single system of school self-government, the purpose of which is to realize the legitimate rights and interests of all participants in the educational process. However, at the present stage, these self-governing bodies of educational institutions, for the most part, do not perform the functions and opportunities provided to them by law.

In our opinion, one of the main reasons for this is the insufficiently formed regulatory framework. Thus, there is currently no Standard Regulation on Student Self-Government in Ukraine, and the Model Regulation on Parent Committees (Councils) has been repealed due to the adoption of the Law of Ukraine "On Education" in 2017. Of course, this is not an obstacle to the establishment of self-government bodies in general secondary education institutions, but the basic principles of these bodies would allow to regulate their work.

In turn, despite these problems, the parties involved in the management of general secondary education (heads of educational institutions, teachers and parents) point to the high level of democratic governance in Ukrainian schools.

Thus, according to the results of the all-Ukrainian sociological survey "Decentralization of education management in territorial communities of Ukraine", conducted in May-September 2021 by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology within the Swiss-Ukrainian project "Decentralization - for democratic education" heads of secondary schools (93% respondents), teachers (76% of respondents) and parents (64% of respondents) confirm the possibility of introducing democratic governance in their educational institution. In addition, only 3% of leaders and teachers, 26% of parents

believe that the current level of democratic governance in their educational institution is low [4].

Conclusions from this study and prospects for further exploration in this direction. A study to determine the nature, mechanisms and features of public involvement in the management of secondary education in Ukraine shows that the principles of public administration and public self-government in educational institutions can be properly used in the formation and implementation of state and regional education policy. In addition, the analysis leads to the following conclusions:

First, the sectoral decentralization reforms under way in Ukraine lead to the introduction of elements of democratic (participatory) governance, including for the management of general secondary education institutions.

Secondly, public involvement takes place at all levels of public participation, such as information, consultation, dialogue and partnership.

Third, the information openness of general secondary education is not fully realized by the founders and management of educational institutions, which in turn restricts the rights of stakeholders to access information, but stakeholders in the educational process believe that the current level of democratic governance in general education secondary education is not low.

Fourth, the imperfection of the regulatory framework does not allow public self-government bodies of general secondary education institutions to use in full the powers provided by the Law of Ukraine "On Education".

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