

**THE CHALLENGE OF DEMOCRATIC CONSTRUCTION OF THE CURRICULUM:
EXPERIENCE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ALMIRANTE TAMANDARÉ/PR**

***O DESAFIO DA CONSTRUÇÃO DEMOCRÁTICA DO CURRÍCULO: EXPERIÊNCIA
DO MUNICÍPIO DE ALMIRANTE TAMANDARÉ/PR***

***EL DESAFÍO DE LA CONSTRUCCIÓN DEMOCRÁTICA DEL CURRÍCULO:
EXPERIENCIA EM EL MUNICIPIO DE ALMIRANTE TAMANDARÉ/PR***

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ABSTRACT: The objective of the article is to present an initiative for the democratic construction of the curriculum by a public municipal education network, in the city of Almirante Tamandaré/ PR, Brazil. The qualitative research brings reflections that are based on participatory research associated with a document analysis based on a document from the municipal administration. The stages implemented in the “Caravana da Educação” program are described, involving more than 519 people from different segments of the school community in the reflection and collective construction of the curriculum, for the municipal school system, from a perspective of integral education. Constant challenges are faced by the municipal public school system and require planning and collective decisions for the formation of critical and participative citizens. The democratically constructed curriculum, like in Almirante Tamandaré, becomes an important instrument in facing such a challenge.

KEYWORDS: Curriculum. Democratic construction. Education. Territory.

RESUMO: O objetivo do artigo é apresentar uma iniciativa de construção democrática do currículo por uma rede pública municipal de educação, na cidade de Almirante Tamandaré/PR, Brasil. A pesquisa de natureza qualitativa traz reflexões que se pautam em uma pesquisa participante associada a uma análise documental baseada em documento da administração municipal. São descritas as etapas implementadas do programa “Caravana da Educação”, envolvendo mais de 519 pessoas de diferentes segmentos da comunidade escolar na reflexão e construção coletiva do currículo, para a rede municipal de ensino, em uma perspectiva de educação integral. Desafios constantes são enfrentados pela rede pública municipal de ensino e exigem planejamento e decisões coletivas para a formação de cidadãos

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críticos e participativos. O currículo construído democraticamente, a exemplo de Almirante Tamandaré, torna-se um instrumento importante no enfrentamento de tal desafio.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Currículo. Construção democrática. Educação. Território.*

RESUMEN: *El objetivo del artículo es presentar una iniciativa para la construcción democrática del currículo por una red pública de educación municipal, en la ciudad de Almirante Tamandaré/ PR, Brasil. La investigación cualitativa trae reflexiones que parten de una investigación participativa asociada a un análisis documental a partir de un documento de la administración municipal. Se describen las etapas implementadas en el programa “Caravana da Educação”, involucrando a más de 519 personas de diferentes segmentos de la comunidad escolar en la reflexión y construcción colectiva del currículo, para el sistema escolar municipal, en una perspectiva de educación integral. Los desafíos constantes que enfrenta el sistema de escuelas públicas municipales requieren de planificación y decisiones colectivas para la formación de ciudadanos críticos y participativos. El currículo construido democraticamente, como el de Almirante Tamandaré, se convierte en un instrumento importante para afrontar ese desafío.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Plan de estudios. Construcción democrática. Educación. Territorio.*

Introduction

The collective construction of the curriculum in the context of public basic education is the central theme of this article. Therefore, our main objective is to present the processes that make up a democratic curriculum construction initiative, developed by a public municipal education network. It is worth noting, initially, that this work is configured in a revised and expanded version of a study developed by Santos, Souza and Carvalho (2020), entitled “*O desafio da construção democrática do currículo: experiência do município de Almirante Tamandaré, Paraná*” (The challenge of democratic construction of the curriculum: experience of the municipality of Almirante Tamandaré, Paraná), presented at the I Education Policy and Management Colloquia, organized by UFSCAR/Sorocaba, in 2020, and published in the annals of the event.

The methodological choice is based on the qualitative approach and is based on a case study that seeks to analyze the practices experienced in the context of the municipal public education network in the municipality of Almirante Tamandaré, State of Paraná, Brazil. This institution is developing the program entitled “Education Caravan”, which promotes the critical collective participation of different actors in the construction of a new curriculum that will be implemented in its education network. The documentary research, based on a specific document from the analyzed Municipal Secretariat for Education and Culture, is combined

with participatory research through observations and considerations arising from the performance of one of the authors in the studied context.

This study is justified by the theoretical contributory character from the perspective of demonstrating the importance of the participation of the different actors involved in the educational process, in the reflection and construction of the school curriculum in order to guarantee the quality of the teaching and learning process. Its practical contribution lies in providing elements about the practical experience of Almirante Tamandaré, which can contribute with other institutions in the perspective of promoting collective reflection in the construction of the curriculum.

The article was organized in four sections, in addition to the introduction. The next section discusses the characteristics of public schools today. Then, the specificities and the importance of democratic management in the educational process are presented. Subsequently, the practical experience of the municipality of Almirante Tamandaré is presented in the collective construction of the curriculum, through the “Education Caravan” program. Finally, the last section will discuss the final considerations of the research.

Public school today

The current Brazilian public school is characterized by its dualism, as a school of social reception for the poor and of knowledge for the rich. The worsening of this dualism in recent years, reproducing and maintaining social inequalities, has links with the educational reforms promoted through neoliberal policies, initiated in the 1980s. This context represents substantial explanations for the incessant decline of the Brazilian public school in the past 30 years. (LIBÂNEO, 2012).

After 1990, with the restructuring of capitalism, there is a correlation between the interests of public educational policies in Brazil and the interests of capital, now globalized and represented by international agencies. These start to guide the political reforms adopted by the peripheral countries, among them the educational reforms. Thus, despite the existence of collegiate bodies and the mandatory democratic management, it is observed that the interests of the school are still linked to capitalist needs and not to the real interests of society (BOGATSCHOV *et al.*, 2012).

Inserted in this context, the current society presents different positions on the objectives and functions of the school in Brazil. In addition, official policies demonstrate an almost hegemonic thinking about the functions of public schools, based on the World Bank's

educational policies aimed at developing countries. With this commodification of education, some aspects linked to intra-school factors, and which directly affect the quality of learning, are not prioritized, characterizing the current bleak picture of public schools (LIBÂNEO, 2012).

According to Frigotto *et al.* (2019), the subordination of these policies to the determinations of international organizations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), leaves in the background the specificities of Brazilian history in the proposition of public education policies.

Faced with this reality, in a context of subordination of education to the logic of the market and capital, new proposals are needed that aim at change. It becomes necessary to think and build educational policies that have their basis in school and focus on student learning, thus guaranteeing the best quality of teaching. According to Mészáros (2008), for the creation of a different educational alternative, it is necessary to break with this logic of capital.

The organization of school education in Brazil from a democratic perspective

The school is a social institution that can be considered a privileged locus of systematized production of knowledge. Its main purpose is the formation of concrete subjects: participatory, critical and creative, through the appropriation of the historically produced knowledge. For this, the school needs to be organized in a way that allows its educational actions (OLIVEIRA; MORAES; DOURADO, 2008).

The concept of democratic management of education, a constitutional principle established from the Federal Constitution of 1988, represents an important normative advance for the democratization of Brazilian society and education (ALVES; ALVES; VIEGAS, 2020). It determined a reorganization of public education, aiming at a cooperative and collaborative model that enables social participation in decisions, promoting a decentralization of powers. In addition, the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education No. 9394/1996, regulated and strengthened the mechanisms for the effective participation of the community in the school (BRASIL, 1996).

Unlike administration aimed at a company, which works with tangible means, school administration has as its object a human element and, therefore, needs to use different means to achieve its purpose. Thus, school administration, in a democratic conception, takes effect through the participation of the various social actors in the management of the school and in

the struggle to overcome the way society is organized, in opposition to the centralization of power (OLIVEIRA; MORAES; DOURADO, 2008).

Taking on democratic management is a challenge, since Brazil is building its democracy in a continuous and not yet finished movement. Despite the legislation ensuring the existence of collegiate instances for the participation of the school community, this has not yet materialized in many schools (BOGATSCHOV et al., 2012). The school manager has the role of promoting this pedagogical synergy in his team to meet the educational demands of the dynamic society in which they are inserted, understanding the role of the school as a social institution in a constant integrated relationship with the community (LUCK, 1997).

An example of the experiences promoted by democratic management is the elaboration of the Pedagogical Political Project (PPP) and the curriculum in the school units. According to Veiga (2002), the construction of a school's PPP can be understood as the very organization of pedagogical work and has to do with the organization of society as a whole. The curriculum involves the interaction between subjects with the same objective and with a basic theoretical framework. It refers to the organization and collective construction of school knowledge and involves the processes of production, transmission and assimilation of knowledge (VEIGA, 2002).

The case study: Situating the context of Almirante Tamandaré's public school system

Before discussing the empirical object of this study, for a better understanding, it is necessary to situate the context of the current organization of the municipal public school system of Almirante Tamandaré. It is noteworthy that the entire process that will be described next was designed by the managers who took over the Municipal Education and Culture Secretariat (SMEC) of the municipality in January 2017, and who remain in this charge until now.

Almirante Tamandaré is located in the Metropolitan Region of Curitiba, at a distance of 15 km from the capital. A large part of its inhabitants exercise their productive activities in Curitiba, only residing in the city, which disfavors the circulation of local income. The construction of a scenario of inequalities can be noted, with a significant portion of the population in a situation of social vulnerability. The inclusion of the municipality in the metropolitan region, despite favoring greater economic dynamism, has not reduced the qualitative socioeconomic distance that separates it from the pole (KORNIN; CARMO,

2013). Expecting an increase in their quality of life, many Tamandare citizens live the dream of living in the neighboring capital.

According to Oliveira (2015), the municipalities have the task of social ordering and development, as well as providing the well-being of their population, promoting public policies aimed at the democratic realization of public power. The current administration of Almirante Tamandaré understands the need to formulate public policies that dialogue with the local reality in order to promote the improvement of the population's quality of life and sustainable local development. It also defends the fundamental role of education in the development of a sense of belonging of young people to the municipality.

To this end, educational policies in the municipality, since 2017, have been planned in a territorial perspective to promote integral education. Promoted by the current managers of SMEC, with extensive discussion and collective construction among the various actors involved, articulating the whole society in this process, which culminated in the implementation of the five Knowledge Territories.

Thus, the municipal educational policies in Almirante Tamandaré were reorganized in a new territorial perspective. These territories were organized in order to identify similarities between the population groups of the municipality that allowed the grouping in different territories according to their specificities. As criteria, in addition to geographical aspects, were also used cultural, historical, migratory, economic and urban mobility aspects, as well as the organization of the different powers that influence these territories.

According to Arruda and Goulart (2017), the educational potential of the territory is related to the concept of the Educating City. The territorialization of education occurs with the opening of the school to the community, which begins to understand the territory as a place of life relationships and not just a physical structure. New pacts are established, between society and school, of accountability for education.

This reorganization of the municipality's educational policies promoted a greater integration of the school with the territory in which it is located. By understanding that the student is also formed outside of school, new pedagogical opportunities were provided that consider the existence, in addition to scientific knowledge, also of these new knowledges of the community. Because, according to Libâneo (2012), it is necessary to bet on a school that articulates the differences, values and forms of local and daily knowledge with cultural and scientific formation. It is necessary to welcome cultural diversity in a school for all.

In this plural context, the proposal of integral education seeks to connect the school to its surroundings, expanding times, spaces, subjects and educational opportunities, considering

popular knowledge in the pedagogical project (ARRUDA; GOULART, 2017). Thus, when understanding the subject as a rights holder and linked to the territory he experiences, there was no other possibility for the municipality, besides planning its educational policies respecting the spatial and territorial issue.

The strategy of the Territories of Knowledge makes it possible to guarantee the promotion of the integral development of the student, when considering the territory as a privileged space for learning. In this dynamic, integral education considers the importance of the dialogue between educational units and the territory in order to generate, in the long term, a relationship of identity and local belonging to the citizen of the city, thus breaking with the drama of the capital's dream.

To make this possible, the municipality argues that the curriculum needs to be built collectively, democratically, and aligned with the territory and the local community. This is one of the purposes of the current phase of the municipality's educational policies, the implementation of the "Education Caravan" program. This purpose corroborates with Veiga (2002), who argues that the curriculum is an important constitutive element of the organization and collective social construction of school knowledge. As such, it cannot be considered a neutral instrument and cannot be separated from the social context, as it is historically situated and culturally determined.

The "Education Caravan" program: A proposal for the collective construction of the municipal curriculum

This section will present the challenge of the process of reflection and democratic construction of the new curriculum of the municipal public education network of Almirante Tamandaré. For this purpose, the main points observed and experienced in such dynamics will be described, as a public servant active in the studied context, added to the information contained in the document Report of Memory Program "Education Caravan".

The "Education Caravan" program has a democratic perspective as a principle. It represents an initiative idealized by the current managers of SMEC (Portuguese initials for Municipal Secretary of Education) in partnership with the other civil servants, aiming to stimulate the debates around the collective construction of the new curriculum of the municipal school system, which will have Integral Education as its conception. It is argued that it is only through democratic bias that it is possible to build a curriculum from the perspective of integral education, articulated with the territory and that is capable of

materializing the practical proposal. The existence of the Knowledge Territories in Almirante Tamandaré potentiates this program, as it constitutes a local educational plan with the intention of operationalizing the comprehensive education policy in the territory, articulating the entire society.

Integral Education considers education, as a socializing tool, indispensable for community and personal cohesion. He argues that we are all responsible for education, which is no longer limited to formal school education and understands the territory as a privileged space for learning. It presupposes the construction of networks for the integral human development of the subjects (ARRUDA; GOULART, 2017).

With the “Education Caravan”, the municipality intends to “listen/talk to every” different actor involved with the educational process in each territory. This seeks to share different knowledge between education professionals and civil society in order to broaden the understanding of public education and the possibility of intervening over it, in the search to make students' learning rights effective.

Admiral Tamandaré currently understands that it is not only the school that “teaches” and that the content proposed in this perspective is meaningless and does not mobilize students. Arguing that the construction of the new curriculum will only make sense if it is democratically conceived so that it becomes capable of responding to the demands of the 21st century. This is essential for it to become an instrument capable of the formation of humanized, critical, autonomous and responsible individuals with themselves and with the world (PMAT, 2019).

For the construction of the new curriculum of the network, the methodology used was the holding of conversations about education, based on Freire's pedagogy. We sought to use reflective and diverse methods according to each segment heard: education professionals, families, religious leaders, local merchants, students and neighborhood leaders. The main intention was to promote reflection on education and raise subsidies and proposals to be considered in the construction of the new curriculum of the municipal school system, articulated with the reality of the city (PMAT, 2019).

In view of the great exchange of knowledge promoted, the need for re-planning has become constant. Thus, through the “reflection-action-reflection” triad, the methodology used was redefined over the course of the experiences, always aiming at the expansion of quality and participation, with a view to democratic bias (PMAT, 2019). Given the inability to execute this program in all territories at the same time, it was decided to gradually go through

the municipality, starting with Territory 01. This study will cover the process that took place in the implementation of the program in this territory.

For the alignment of the conceptions and concepts that will permeate the new curriculum, four meetings were held with the internal team of SMEC, between the months of February to June 2019. However, in daily life the exchange of experiences and reflections remains constant between all team. Then, two general alignment meetings were held, with the 14 professionals who make up the management teams of the educational units in Territory 1, in May 2019. An alignment meeting was also held in June 2019 involving the other professionals of the education of this territory, totaling 83 professionals (PMAT, 2019).

At these meetings, we sought to enable everyone to receive the information necessary for active participation in the construction of the new curriculum, as well as to present and define how the “Education Caravan” would be developed. After this stage, the diverse moments of dialogue with different segments involved in the educational process of the seven educational units of the Territory began.

A first dialogue action that stood out involved the students of these units, through children's assemblies. This dialogue was divided into three moments: a) Dialogue with students selected by sampling, in a class from each educational unit in Territory 1; b) Dialogue with all classes in each educational unit provided by the managing partners; c) Dialogue of students, selected by sampling, with the Municipal Secretary of Education and Culture (PMAT, 2019).

We highlight the importance of the manifestation of these actors, who, throughout history, rarely have spaces for listening, always centered on adults. Also of great importance was the intensive participation of the Municipal Secretary of Education, directly involved in the experience of the dialogue with the students, as well as in the vast majority of the other dialogues proposed. This aspect emphasizes the choice of the municipality due to the democratic bias that permeates all instances of the Program.

A second action was the dialogue with 98 education professionals from Territory 1, added to 57 professionals who make up SMEC. The meetings took place in the educational units themselves and at two different times, totaling 14 meetings. In a first meeting, all professionals were democratically invited to share their experiences, professional trajectories and vision of the territory where they are inserted, in order to articulate the practice to the reality of each student (PMAT, 2019).

The second moment involved the application of the F.O.F.A. Analysis: Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Threats of the educational unit and territory as a whole,

making it possible to look at the Territory in the four dimensions analyzed. The choice of this technique was justified by the expansion of the range of possibilities for analysis from the context in which the professionals are inserted. As a result of this stage, it was observed the collective construction of a great panorama of the local reality that will contribute to future decision-making by everyone, both from the educational unit itself and from SMEC (PMAT, 2019).

A third proposal for dialogue was carried out with the families of students of the seven educational units in territory 1, involving a total of 270 participants distributed in seven different meetings that took place in each educational unit. The meetings took place between the months of July to August 2019 and involved reflections, mainly regarding the management of students' learning. To conclude the stage of dialogue with family members, an assembly took place with all families of students in Territory 1, in September 2019, involving 128 participants. This collective meeting was designed from the experiences of the previous stage (PMAT, 2019).

A fourth moment of promoted dialogue had an interreligious character, involving several religious representations of Territory 1. A reflection on public education and the role of sacred spaces in articulation with city education was proposed. This meeting involved 22 participants and took place in September 2019. The importance of listening to this segment is because Almirante Tamandaré understands that students must live in a space that guarantees the right to religious freedom. That is why there is a need for this dialogue to generate proposals relevant to the construction of the new curriculum of the network and, at the same time, to invite religious leaders to strengthen themselves as educators and become partners of educational units (PMAT, 2019).

A fifth promoted dialogue took place with 34 representatives of the Associations of Parents and Teachers (APMFs) of the educational units of the territory, in October 2019. This meeting was also decisive for clarifications pertinent to the role of the APMF and the importance of this collegiate in relation to the democratic management of learners' learning. Understanding that the involvement of the school community is essential in the perspective of the collective and democratic construction of the new curriculum of the network, in addition to the dialogue with the APMFs, a sixth moment of dialogue was also promoted, involving 25 representatives of the School Councils of the units of the Territory 1, also in October 2019. Understanding their importance as maximum instances of decision-making carried out within the educational unit, their importance in relation to the approval of the PPPs of the educational units was highlighted (PMAT, 2019).

A seventh proposed dialogue was with the small entrepreneurs of Territory 01, formalizing two meetings, which had four local traders each. The proposal was to invite them to be part of the construction of the new curriculum of the network, making them aware of their role as educational spaces and not just service providers. Despite the small number of participants, the meeting became very significant (PMAT, 2019).

At the end of the cycle of the “Education Caravan” in Territory 1, at the end of October 2019, a Cycle of Dialogues with 110 education professionals, active in this Territory, was made in order to foster new debates around the construction of the new curriculum from the Web. To finalize the proposal to build this new curriculum, we intend to collectively write curricular notebooks that contemplate the reflections generated in each educational unit and by all the actors involved (PMAT, 2019).

The process is still under elaboration, but the current suggestion is organized in these nine notebooks: a) Educational Conceptions from the Perspective of Integral Education; b) Commented Legislation; c) Curriculum and Comprehensive Education linked to the territories - Dialogue with the city; d) The uniqueness of each Territory; e) Educational Management - A look at Integral Education; f) Learning management based on multiple knowledge; g) Evaluation of the curriculum in all dimensions of the educational context; h) Production of spaces and mood in Integral Education; and i) Knowledge Matrices - based on legislation (PMAT, 2019). The table below briefly presents the main results found in the case studied.

Table 1 – Main results of the case study

FACTOR	DEFINITION	AUTHORS	CASE STUDY FINDINGS
Territories	Territory as a privileged space for learning.	(ARRUDA; GOULART, 2017)	Division of the municipality into five territories according to their specificities.
Integral Education	Education as everyone's responsibility, promoted with the valuation of different knowledge, not limited to formal school education. It presupposes the construction of networks for the integral human development of the subjects.	(ARRUDA; GOULART, 2017)	Construction of the school curriculum in the perspective of integral education with formation of networks, for the integral human development of the subjects, which involve several actors in the territory.
Democratic management	It takes effect through the participation of the various social actors in the management of the school and in the struggle to overcome the way society is organized, in opposition to the centralization of power.	(OLIVEIRA; MORAES; DOURADO, 2008)	Decentralization of public power, involving the participation of various social actors in the construction of the municipal public school curriculum and school management.
Democratization of public power	The role of the municipality in promoting public policies with a view to the democratic realization of public	(OLIVEIRA, 2015)	Public educational policy that dialogues with reality, aiming to promote the improvement of the

	power in order to provide for the well-being of its population.		population's quality of life and sustainable local development.
School curriculum	Instrument of organization and collective construction of school knowledge, historically situated and culturally determined.	(VEIGA, 2002)	Critical-reflexive construction of the curriculum, respecting cultural diversity by involving various actors in the territory.

Source: Research data (2019)

The task of rethinking and valuing the roles of the different actors in the democratic process is fundamental to the changes that are necessary in the current school scenario, where fragmented curricula are often observed (DALLA CORTE; MACHADO, 2020) and not consistent with the reality in which the school is inserted. It is known that the final elaboration of the curriculum poses an even greater challenge to be faced: aligning the national curricular bases standardized by the national education system to these different realities, respecting the specificities diagnosed in each one of them. But aiming at the democratic construction and linked to the local reality of the curriculum, this program proposes to face this challenge (PMAT, 2019).

Final considerations

Considering that education has in its effect the character of a demand that is public, it is inferred that the responsibility of the State, both as a regulator and as a propeller of this policy, needs to be claimed. From this reality emerges the discussion about the importance of public policies aimed at education, especially when we consider the tendency that international organizations have to determine conditionalities that are accepted by dependent countries. Thus, what is observed in the Brazilian educational reality is a decline in the public school, oriented towards the interests of capital, disconnected from the reality and demands of the school routine.

As part of this dynamic, the need for new ways of organizing pedagogical work, school management and participation is justified, aiming at the democratization of the school space. Process that will collaborate so that the school fulfills its social function in the production and dissemination of the historically produced knowledge (OLIVEIRA; MORAES; DOURADO, 2008).

It is clear that the processes of democratic management and collective participation depend on the different profiles of managers who are involved with lesser or greater effectiveness in these processes. Thus, the notion of more rights, also brings changes in the

modes of organization and educational management in the different state spheres that perceive in the new public management a more democratic response to society (OLIVEIRA, 2015).

In this context, Almirante Tamandaré has as potential, managers of the municipal educational policy engaged in the proposal of democratic management and who consider education as having a strategic role to rethink public policies, while provoking a new policy and a new society project. The municipality believes that democratic management is in fact the way for the collective construction of the curriculum. This curriculum must not only be built collectively, but must be articulated with the diverse knowledge of the territory in a perspective of promoting integral education.

The “Education Caravan”, developed in the municipality of Almirante Tamandaré/PR, can be considered an instrument for democratizing community participation in public management. In this opening of the school to the school community, the joint search for new strategies for the strengthening of the public school is favored through the new curriculum to be built in a large network of articulation. The citizen becomes a joint author of the construction of the curriculum, since it is possible, with this program, to give a voice to the citizen.

The municipal public school system throughout Brazil faces constant challenges that require planning and collective decisions for the formation of critical and participative citizens. A democratically constructed curriculum, following the example of the detailed process of the municipality of Almirante Tamandaré, becomes an important instrument in facing such a challenge.

It is noteworthy that during the period of materialization of the “Education Caravan” in Territory 01, without counting the numbers of experiences with students, 519 people from different segments of society were involved, in 35 meetings held between the months of February to November 2019, for critical reflection in favor of the construction of the new curriculum for the municipal public school system. In this way, the “Education Caravan” provides the opportunity for the materialization of democratic management in the municipality. Emphasizes the exercise of democratization of curriculum construction with the intention that these actions become routine in the routine of integral education and in the territory. Finally, this whole process requires great commitment and social responsibility from the managers in favor of citizenship.

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How to reference this article

SANTOS, T. T. B.; SOUZA, R. E.; CARVALHO, H. A. The challenge of democratic construction of the curriculum: experience in the municipality of Almirante Tamandaré/PR. **Revista on line de Política e Gestão Educacional**, Araraquara, v. 25, n. 1, p. 123-137, Jan./Apr. 2021. e-ISSN:1519-9029. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22633/rpge.v25i1.14028>

Submitted: 20/04/2020

Required revisions: 30/06/2020

Accepted: 09/11/2020

Published: 02/01/2021