

School as State: A Simulated Democratic State

Name of organization:
Agency for Civic Education Baden-Württemberg
(Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Baden-Württemberg)

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Basic considerations for the project

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1. Introduction

If a school has decided on carrying out the project "School as a State", some basic considerations must be made first of all and then taken forward. Firstly, it is necessary to clarify with what kind of structures one wishes to endow the state which is to be set up.: What kind of state it is supposed to be, what kind of economic system, what political and legal guidelines should be allocated to this state?

. Lively discussion about the project might inevitably be part of this process. So, for instance it is debatable whether one creates in miniature a relatively faithful copy of the political economic and social structures surrounding us, or whether one also wishes to use the freedom that the simulation game offers, attempts thus creating completely different kinds of state. One could consider whether "School as state" must of necessity be based on the model of western democracies and legitimise state power through elections or a constitution etc. Maybe quite different state and social structures would also be conceivable and worth trying.

Furthermore, consideration should be given, as to the extent one wishes to accommodate in the simulation exercise the downside of what is going on around us: unemployment, poverty, wealth and criminality for example. . Should one perhaps create an ideal utopian state in which financial ruin or unemployment do not represent any danger for its citizens?

Also the decision as to the economic system raises fundamental questions. 1) Is it educationally sound to establish a "capitalist" Market Economy and prioritise the acquisition of money and the making of profit by the individual and companies in this way? Or is it desirable to establish an economic system which strives for a just and equitable distribution of profit for all citizens,

but possibly leaves the individual with the feeling that either his own effort is not worthwhile or that he does not need to work to receive a reward?

Finally all these considerations have to be weighed up against the background of the aims of political education. If the simulation exercise is supposed to help to teach the basic rules of our democracy and living in a community, whilst educating the pupils to become "mature citizens", the world of the simulated state should show clear analogies with economic and political activities in the real world which would then not deviate greatly from the parameters of the pupils' own experience.¹

Beyond the questions about state structures it is important to understand the procedures implicit in planning and carrying out the project: "School as state": it is a dynamic project in which numerous persons, groups, interests and aims mutually motivate, develop and change each other. Traditional role models and hierarchies are transformed, decision making processes differ from established practice. At the same time the project goes beyond the scope of usual projects which are familiar to us from educational project days with regard to its size and duration.

Some of the sticking points are indicated below but only briefly:

- Do pupils and teachers work together on the project?
- Who should take the initiatives?
- Who finally makes the decisions?
- How should one react to undesirable developments?²

¹ I refer to the considerations by Martin Wedel in his "didactic fundamentals" in this documentation.

² I refer to a short example from our experience in the state of Elexia: At the parliamentary elections the party whose candidates had committed themselves to the student council and to the preparation team from the beginning, and had been tipped to win, lost, but the party won that had led the most extensive election campaign (Music, printed T-shirts, enticement to vote etc.), but until then it did not have any insight into the planning aspect of the project. It was necessary therefore, on the one

hand, to counter the frustration felt by the 'faithful' of party workers, and on the other hand, to enable the new government to drive forward the project responsibly and as quickly as possible.

- How can one integrate unmotivated pupils or teachers into the project?
- What role do the parents have?
- To what extent can and should Senior Management control or intervene?

2. Comment on the materials

Below material can be found that should help to simplify the initial phase of the "School as state" project and to make this mammoth project more transparent. Firstly there are a few tips (M 1 - M 2) to summarise the basic decisions and steps at the start of the project which can be used as a sort of "checklist". For this purpose another short comment from our own experience: the political processes (e.g. voting and forming a government), also discussion about the economic and financial aspects of the state, (setting up the tax system, calculation of Government expenditures etc.) are extremely complex matters. It is therefore (in fact) advisable in this case, that the students are not left 'alone' without teachers or parents, but should become the actual engine of the project. At the same time, the integration of colleagues from various subjects is recommended (e.g. mathematics, social studies etc.)

In the real world, states are normally based on a (written) constitution. Therefore, drawing up a constitution is of necessity the first operational step which the preparation team has to address. In this process the basic structures of the state are defined and discussions take place concerning the basic principles already mentioned. The attached constitution proposal (M 3) is based on a presentation by the Gymnasium in Neckartenzlingen³. It was revised several times and adapted to the needs of our school. The constitution was voted in by both the preparation team and also later by the Parliament and has remained in place for the duration of the project.

It is also of basic importance to assign a time line to the project (M 4). The project titled "School as state" is so extensive in its organisation that a complete school year should be scheduled for it. This ample time frame makes it possible to stagger the different stages, thus making it easier for students and teachers to participate in the project when they are burdened with corrections, tests and excursions.

On the other hand this schedule facilitates a continuous presence of the project in the school day and thus makes one conscious of working together on something large... Maybe some schools

will consider not carrying out the project at the end of the school year in the general euphoric atmosphere or party mood preceding the school holidays, but rather at the beginning or in the middle of a school year. In this way the project is guaranteed the necessary seriousness on the part of the participants and can be followed by a phase of critical reflection. In this case the schedule would have to be revised correspondingly, under no circumstances, however, should one reduce the preparatory phase.

The suggested distribution of the persons responsible into different teams (M 5) has definitely been proven. The project is too complex, for individual teachers or pupils to organise in it entirely. It is much more a collaborative process; the groups meet at regular intervals and work independently in their field. In this case it is crucial whether and how the flow of information functions between the teams. Here regular meetings of a total working group and minutes of the individual meetings etc. are conceivable. The success of the project entitled "School as state" greatly depends on, whether the 'citizens within the state' will accept and support the state to be set up, with its constitution, and its particular features. Also this poses the question about how the project can be made clear to the younger pupils and how it can be sensibly integrated. M 6 shows an attempt to make the project understandable to pupils using simple words. At this late stage it should become clear however, that the preparation team is dependent upon the help of all class teachers and the parents.

for the organisation (initiatives, motivation) and also the execution (assembling and disassembling, and procurement of material).

After the state structures are defined through a constitution, work on the project is divided into the three main fields: politics, economy, society / culture.

These are described extensively in the following chapters.

³ Taken from: Oberschulamt Stuttgart (ed.) (1998), Handlungsorientierter Unterricht als fächerübergreifende Projektarbeit. „Schule als Staat“ - Ein Großprojekt am Gymnasium Neckartenzlingen Stuttgart 1998, Anlage 1.

3. Index of materials

- M 1 basic decision about modes of co-operation
- M 2 List of groups participating.
- M 3 Constitution proposal
- M 4 Schedules
- M 5 Proposal for the setting up of teams
- M 6 What I always wanted to know about "School as state"...

4. Materials

MI

Basic decisions

- Accept a “grass-roots” democratic approach (pupil-oriented) or practice “guidance” (teacher in control)?
- Leave apparent undesirable developments to self-regulation or subject to appropriate measures?
- Who should take the initiative (pupils or teachers)?
- Which political, economical, social structures is the state to receive?

M2

Participating groups

- Update continuously and/or ask for agreement: Student council; teacher’s conference(staff meetings) and senior management; parents’ advisory board; school council
- Assign responsibility and divide work as soon as possible amongst different people;
- Integrate pupils and teachers;
- Ask for support through parents;
- Contact potential sponsors and supporters in parent and school environment;
- Integrate and inform the janitor early into the project

M 3

Proposal for a constitution for the project "School as state"**I. Basic rights**

- Every human being in our state holds the unalienable right to live in dignity, peace and freedom.
- The freedom of the individual ends, where the freedom of another begins.
- The government and courts are responsible for guaranteeing internal peace.
- All persons from the body of pupils and teaching staff have equal rights. They are equal before the law.
- Attention is to be paid particularly to the fact that no group should be preferred or put at a disadvantage. Mutual respect and mutual tolerance are basic assumptions for a smooth coexistence in our state.

The state guarantees its citizens the following:

- The right of physical integrity;
- To declare the right to own an opinion and also express it in public;
- The right of freedom of publication and information. There shall be no censorship whatsoever
- The right of free assembly and gathering
- The right to register a party. Further details shall be regulated by laws
- The right to belief and religious freedom
- The right of free profession. Restrictions shall be regulated by the Department of Trade and Industry

II. The duties of a citizen

- The public life of our state community happens during the official opening times. For each individual citizen there is a duty to be present for 6 hours, of which they must pursue their work for 4 hours. Special laws cover any deviations (e.g., in the field of culture)
- Citizens are obliged to show their identity card on entering the state. Foreign visitors need a visa application. This visa entails an obligatory exchange of money. Exchanged currencies are not returned. In addition every citizen must be able to identify himself on the request of the security personnel. Persons in public life must always have their credentials to hand.
- Decisions made in the Parliament. must be complied with.
- It is the objective of every enterprise to work economically and to pay a wage as high as possible for the employees and to satisfy the needs of the population.
- A sales tax for every enterprise (approx. 20 - 25 %) is set by the state. Tax increases or decreases shall be regulated by the Parliament in accordance with the Departments of Trade and the Treasury.

III. The parties

- Internal order and political aims of parties must correspond to basic democratic principles.
- A party must contain at least 8 members and pupils in all sections of the school must be represented.
- Every party must put up at least 5 of their members for election to Parliament representing different sections of the school. The top candidate automatically holds the chair of the party. From every elected party a person must stand for election as President.
- Every party must publish a party manifesto.

IV. The voting system

- Every citizen has to vote for a party.
- The allocation of the parliamentary seats is by proportional representation, that is the parliamentary seats are distributed according to the percentage quota of the parties during the election.
- If a party wins more seats during the election than it has places, it must recruit additional candidates who enter Parliament for this party. These must be acknowledged by the Parliament.
- The strongest party is commissioned to form a government. The top candidate leads the coalition talks. If these negotiations fail within 8 school days, the other parties represented in the Parliament have the task of finding a majority to form a government. If a party receives more than 50 % of the seats, it can form the government alone.
- The election of the Parliament and the premiership election take place at the same time.
- Each citizen has one vote in a presidential election This head of state is elected with a relative majority (most votes). The person who receives the second most votes is elected deputy premier

V. The Parliament

- The Parliament is representative of the nation. It has the task of deciding on laws and checking the government. It exercises this particularly through its approval of the budget. The budget determines how much money the Government receives through duties and taxes and how much money it can spend. The national budget must show a balance in income and expenditure. The budget shall be proposed by the financial group of the preparation team in accordance with the Chancellor of the Exchequer / Treasury Secretary.
- The Members of Parliament are elected by the citizens and selected by the parties.
- The Parliament has 32 seats.
- A Speaker of Parliament is proposed by the Parliament and voted by a majority (=most number of votes). The Speaker leads the meetings and is not committed to any party policy. The person who receives the second-largest number of votes is elected deputy.

- The recording clerk is elected by the Parliament and can also be held by a non-party member.
- The Parliament must assemble immediately after the election. The preparation group defines the date of the first meeting
- The Parliament itself determines the end and restart of the meetings. The speaker can convene the Parliament earlier and is obliged to do that if a third of the members of the Parliament demand this. During the project days they assemble daily at certain times.
- Every Member of Parliament is obliged to be present at the sittings, otherwise a fine can be levied which Parliament can determine by a simple majority. The Parliament can demand the presence of every member of Government.
- All meetings of Parliament are public.

VI. The Head of State (President)

- The President holds a representative function.
- The President receives state visits, gives interviews and holds speeches on the state of the nation, and represents the state abroad.
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- The Head of State must not belong to either the Government or the Parliament or take over any other paid function (neutrality).
- The Head of State is elected directly by the people with a relative majority (= most votes). The Head is represented by the person who unites the second-highest number of votes.

VII. The Government

- The Government is the leadership of the state. There is the head of government and ministers. These officers must not carry out any further paid function
- If a party receives more than 50 % of the mandates at the parliamentary elections, they can only form the Government; otherwise several parties must join a coalition.
- The Head of Government is elected as soon as possible by the Parliament with a relative majority and appointed by the President.
- Every citizen can apply for a public office. The candidate is proposed to the parliament by the Head of the Government and also elected by him. If there is only one candidate for the election, at least 50 % of the votes must be reviewed, with more candidates the principle of relative majority is applicable.
- Every Minister receives a teacher as Secretary of State. The decisions of the ministers are made in agreement with the Secretary of States.
- If somebody does not carry out his function as a minister satisfactorily, the Parliament can express its disapproval by a 2/3 majority and release the person from office. Immediately afterwards, somebody else must be elected as a successor. .
- The Government has the following tasks.
The Head of the Government announces in front of the Parliament the Government's programme at the beginning of the session. The Head has responsibility for the political development of the state at home and abroad.
- The following ministries are set up for support.¹
Foreign Office, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry for Employment, Economic Ministry, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Culture and Ministry for Sport. These are supported in their work by the respective working groups of the preparation team.

VIII. Legislation

- A bill can be introduced in by arrangement with the respective ministries, by the Government or by the members of Parliament or by the preparation group. The Parliament discusses it and can pass the bill with a simple majority.
- The budget may be presented only by the Ministry of Finance in agreement with the finance preparation group.

IX. Jurisdiction

- The court consists of four judges, one each, from the lower, middle and upper school and from the staff.
- The State President proposes a sufficient number of candidates. The Parliament elects the candidates in four different ballots and confirms the Judges with a simple majority.
- The Judicial Office is a full time post and shall be remunerated according to the guidelines for civil servants.
- Every state citizen has the right to report an offence of other citizens, including Members of Parliament and Government
- There is no penal code. The judges set up a schedule of laws and come to decisions using their own discretion in accordance with the constitution.

X. Emergency Act

The preparation team shall delegate its competences to Parliament and Government on the first meeting. It continues to co-operate, however, in the organisation of the project and reserve the right in emergencies, to support Parliament and Government in the organisation of the state and to take suitable measures where appropriate for the realisation of the project.



M4

Project schedule

From the first meeting to the beginning of the presentation

November to December

- Approval by pupil council plenum, staff meeting, school conference
- Advertising competition for state names, hymn, flag & money
- First information for pupils, parents etc.
- Generating a constitution
- Allocating teams
- Determination of the exchange course (Proposal 1:1)
- Talk to banks about sponsoring money
- Evaluation of the competitions for flag, money and state names

January

- Evaluation of the hymn competition
- Announcement of state names, flag, currency, first presentation of the hymn
- Start to form parties

February

- Announcement of the party programmes
- Putting forward candidates for election
- Preparation of the elections

March

- Election campaign
- Parliament and premiership elections
- First references to the company foundation
- Money presentation by the banks, printing of money
- Organisation of passport and visa, printing and possibly laminating
- Suggestions for cultural contributions

April

- Collecting money and opening account
- Company start ups
- Consideration of health regulations, calculating electricity and water consumption
- Forming the Government, distribution of ministries

May

- Meeting of Parliament
- Publication of the enrolled companies and number of jobs

June

- Detailed information for parents
- Job hunting
- Division of jobs and company locations
- Guaranteeing electricity supply
- Calculating national budget

July

- Briefing Civil servants and advice sessions for company founders
- Issuing forms
- Calculating credits for companies / credit payments to company managers.
- Determining culture and sport programme
- Distributing state money
- Planning opening ceremony, state acts etc.

M 5

Teams

- Parties / voting
- Companies / finance
- Culture / sport
- Public relations
- Documentation / Website
- Foreign trade/ customs

- ⇒ regular meetings, minutes for all of them;
- ⇒ central documentation department (responsible pupil);
- ⇒ monthly meeting of the complete working group.



Act of state in Elvira:

The members of government are singing the national anthem.



M 6

FAQ: What I always wanted to know about "School as state"...
(20 questions and answers)

Introduction

1. Do I have to participate in the project "School as state"?

Yes, participation is mandatory. If we did not carry out the project, normal lessons would happen on these days. You would surely not prefer that.

2. Why must I come into school for the project on a Saturday?

Your parents are also supposed to have the opportunity to visit our state, and most parents have time just on Saturdays. In compensation for Saturday there are no lessons on Monday, but a general clear up and the money exchange.

3. Must I work or can I be an unemployed person?

Every citizen has the duty to work 4 hours every day. That seems to be a lot, however it is necessary so that the companies can work economically during the project and achieve profits.

4. How to monitor whether every teacher and student is really working?

A state economic monitoring service will monitor the companies and the presence of the employees twice a day.

5. c 20 DM is to be collected from each citizen Is

that not too much?

Of the 20 DM collected at the beginning of the project each receives the equivalent of 18 DM in our state currency. Therefore only 2 DM is retained as a kind of start up fee for the project.

6. Must I pay tax?

Citizens do not have to pay any tax, only the companies are taxed.

7. Can I change my money back at the end into DM?

Yes, at the end of the project the remaining money held by individual citizens and the companies (after the deduction of tax) can be exchanged back into DM

8. What happens if I do not stick to the constitution?

School rules still apply independently from the constitution during the project. Violations of the constitution and school rules are punishable by the state, or depending on the severity of the misdemeanour, by Senior Management.

9. Will there be police and other state controls?

Yes, there will be some police and a jurisdiction that watches over compliance with the law.



Company

10. What must I pay attention to if I want to found a company?

Every company founder bears a risk; he can either make a profit or a loss. You should know that! The group „Company founding / finances“. will explain. When starting a company many think of the food sector (pizzeria, café, juice bar etc.)

11. Which companies are likely to make a profit?

But here the competition will already be very great, in addition the visitors cannot eat and drink all day all Therefore other companies, such as cultural organisations and service providers (flower shop, car maintenance, hair stylist, theatre, etc.) have very good prospects for making a profit.

12. Why are the companies taxed?

The state is liable for some costs (e.g. material and electricity costs); in addition the civil servants must be paid. The state needs taxes for that.

13. What happens if a company makes losses?

Every company fundamentally runs the risk of making losses. In order to be able to calculate this risk a little, every company manager draws up a budget for his company and discusses it in a consultative meeting. If a company should still go bankrupt or experience losses, at the end of the project it will be decided whether the state should compensate for the losses.

14. How do I found a company?



The following steps are necessary:

- -Talk to the team called „Company founding / finances“
- In any case go to the class on company start ups.
- There or at the pupil council you will receive a form “company registration” on which all further information is given.
- Attend the consultation hour for company founders.

15. How can I find any work?

There are various possibilities:

- You found a company
- You become employed in a company
- You become a civil servant (police, customs, ministries etc.)

There will also be an Employment Office which deals with those who do not find any work.

Politics

16. At this time advertisements appear to start up parties. Why should I found a party or become a party member? Surely this work is unnecessary?

Only a party member offering himself for election can be elected into the Parliament. In the Parliament all important decisions of State are made. Anybody who therefore wants to have a say in the project should attempt to become a Member of Parliament.

17. What must I pay attention to when starting a party?

Parties must respect the state constitution and the school rules. Parties which work against the constitution in their objectives or endanger the success of the project are not eligible for election.

18. Why should I become a Member of Parliament? In a company I can earn much more.

Only the ministers, the Head of the Government and the President of the State work full time. Being a Member of Parliament and working in a company are not mutually exclusive. . You can do both and in so doing earn twice as much.



Culture

19. Our class teacher asked us whether we want to perform something with the project, such as dancing or a sketch. What for?

The more cultural input there is in our state, the more interesting and more varied the state becomes. Culture also makes the state more attractive for visitors from abroad.

20. Can one also work full time in the cultural sphere, e.g. as a painter or actor?

Yes, that is possible. In this case the 4 hours working time per person per day are treated a little more flexibly.

Any questions? Contact the pupil council!