

# **SUPERVISING A STUDENT COUNCIL AS AN AREA OF DIDACTIC AND UPBRINGING SUPPORT FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

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**Abstract.** Student council is considered to be an educational method used in work with children and youth. Self-government activity shapes pro-social attitudes, teaches independence and empathy, uses the abilities possessed by students and is based on their interests. However, the effectiveness of this method depends on the person who is the supervisor of the student council. The presented text provides insights into the scope of possibilities and activities of the student council supervisor as well as the determinants of their effectiveness. In 16 Warsaw high schools assessments of the supervisors of student councils activities were made by the school directors, students - representatives of the council and the supervisors themselves.

**Keywords:** student council; pro-social attitudes; youth development

## **Introduction**

School is an institution in which, apart from educational activities, a number of activities aimed at raising and shaping the world of values of young people are also undertaken. Mirosław J. Szymański notes that the school's property is analogous to the factory: quality control and standardization. Its property is also the massiveness, and hence, the limitation of direct interaction to a small group of people with simultaneous anonymity in the crowd of other people. In addition, the school enforces some formal relationships: teacher - student and student - student, often creating a hierarchy, subject to also regulations and information that are not transmitted directly. However, the school is characterized by regularity and planning, under the guidance of professionals, which is important for the quality of educational and upbringing interactions (Szymański, 2013). Education is important when it comes to forming individuals and social groups (Szymański, 2013).

Student council has permanent roots in Polish schools. During the Second Polish Republic there were different student councils: elementary one in which participated children from grades 1-3 and development one formed by children from classes 4-7. In addition, children could work in parallel student council, bringing together children from parallel classes (i.e. all fourths). In addition, it was possible to

distinguish internally integrated student council including boards of all classes and a comprehensive integrated program covering both local governments and other organizations operating at school (Kozmian, 1991).

The student council is convened on the basis of the existing educational law. Its members are elected in democratic elections and should represent the interests of all students. Student council protects students' rights, petition for educational and didactic matters. The provisions guaranteeing the existence and regulating the functioning of student council are the Act of 14 December 2016 Educational Law, and specifically its Article 85. It establishes a student council, to which all students belong, and its organs, elected in an equal, secret and common elections by students, which are representatives of all pupils.

The student councils' rights include presenting the school authorities (director, pedagogical council) with conclusions and opinions on all school matters, in particular those concerning the implementation of the basic rights of students. These include, for example, the right to organize cultural, educational, sports or entertainment activities, the right to choose a teacher who is the student council supervisor, the right to write and publish a school newspaper or to organize of school life in such a way as to ensure proper proportions between learning and the ability to develop and satisfy pupil's interests. The student council can also organize volunteering activities in agreement with the school's director (Educational Law Act, 2016). There are schools and facilities where student council is not established due to the need to use a special organization of learning and working methods or for educational, caring and re-socializing reasons. The list includes, among others, kindergartens, schools at correctional or penal institutions, schools at medical facilities and rehabilitation centers educational. (Regulation of the Minister of National Education, 2018)

The scope of tasks of the student council and the rules of its functioning are regulated by the legal acts cited. Moreover, in schools these aspects are described in the school statutes and in the regulations of the student council. They clarify, among others the manner of choosing a representative of the council, its supervisor or the spokesperson of students' rights. In addition to the rights indicated in the Act, the statute specifies the student council as the school authority and gives it the right to request and give opinions on all matters of the school. Some decisions are taken after taking into account the student council's position. The more important issues in which the student council takes the floor is to set a higher grade for behavior, to file complaints in case of violation of the student's rights, to participate in the student awards committee and if the student is transferred to another school.

The rules of student council are set out in the regulations, specifying the objectives of its activities, regulating the issue of the supervisor, specifying his competences, tasks and structure, and describing the electoral law. The regulations are set by the management board of the council, which includes the chairman, vice-chairman, treasurer and board members, directing the relevant sections. The chairman supervises the work of student council represents the council before the headmaster, the pedagogical council and the parent's council and outside the school.

He creates a work plan and reports on its implementation and manages meetings of the board with representatives of other groups operating at the school. The vice-chairman replaces the chairman in his absence, assists him in his duties, acts as spokesperson for the student council board, prepares meetings and may act as chairman of the class boards council. The tasks of the treasurer include supervision over the finances of the council and the creation of financial statements. Members of the board manage the work of their sections, involve pupils, actively participate in the work and meetings of the council, co-create work programs of the section and initiate activities conducted within them. Sections deal with strictly defined activities, which means that students can deal with matters that interest them. These are, for example, the cultural section, the sports section, the decoration section, etc. Janusz Korczak was already drawing attention to the educational role of student council, recognizing it as the body through which children and teenagers take care of each other, cooperate with each other, help each other and strive for order and lawfulness (Korczak, 1978).

The student council undertakes activities for a specific community, is a way to prepare for life, it serves to shape pro-social attitudes of young people. Making decisions helps to build responsibility for one's actions, fosters relationship building inside the group and favors identifying with its goals. Permitting young people to experience the consequences of decisions has an invaluable educational merit (see Popławska, 2001).

The council becomes an "incubator of citizenship" (Cierzniewska, Gackowska, Lewicka, 2017), because it allows young people to be involved in solving matters important to them. The council also serves to shape the sense of community, which is a contribution to the dialogue between students, expressing respect for themselves and their opinions.

### **The research on student councils**

The effectiveness of the educational impact of the school is greater when the cooperation between teachers and the student council is strict and the communication is at a high level. Relations between students and teaching staff should be based on agreement and constitute a kind of social contract. Thanks to the science of self-governance at the school stage, the students' social awareness grows and prepares them for an active life in society (Goriszowski, 2010). Active participation in the activity of student council shapes key civic competences, and in particular teaches decision-making in the group and enables the enrichment of school life. Student council is also becoming an educational method (Ziółkowski, 2014, pp. 77-86). Despite all the positive aspects of student self-governance, it is struggling with real problems.

Research shows that schools are quite neglected in the sphere of material functioning of student council - in many institutions, students do not have a place for themselves, and not all of them have letter boxes to correspond with the student council. Despite such shortcomings, the assessment of the student councils' activities is high, which may indicate that material shortcomings do not affect the effectiveness

of students' actions. The problem may be the communication and providing information about the activities of the student council - a significant number of students do not know how to communicate with student council and how to forward their demands and matters to the council. In addition, the fact is revealed that in a few schools the basis for the selection of student council are its achievements and actually their evaluation. Lack of settlement of students' representatives from their declarations, there is no discussion "about their successes, difficulties and plans" (Cierzniwska, Gackowska, Lewicka, 2017, p. 293). This can be important in adulthood and electoral decisions. Students' representatives should also be able to receive feedback, be appreciated or receive constructive criticism (Cierzniwska, Gackowska, Lewicka, 2017).

Many schools have problems like the choice of representatives of the student council by the management or teachers and imposing opinions and decisions on them, manipulating them, making it impossible for students to defend the interests of their group. Therefore, it is desirable in the eyes of students that their colleagues' courage to defend their affairs, as well as trust in the supervisor (Cierzniwska, Gackowska, Lewicka, 2017).

Studies show that student councils rarely have the opportunity to interact with parents. Only a small part of them participate in parental meetings, which may affect the possibility of developing common goals, tasks and "negotiating the interests of individual entities" (Cierzniwska, Gackowska, Lewicka, 2017, p. 296).

The students notice and appreciate activities such as participation in the evaluation and awarding of prizes, protecting students or the student community, initiating actions, competitions and school events and in the local environment, participation in the work on the statute, assessment criteria and legal acts regulating the life of the school, or speaking on behalf of students (Cierzniwska, Gackowska, Lewicka, 2017). At the same time, however, the range of students' influence on the school's activity is small and largely dependent on the school's climate and institutional requirements of the school, which are found by pupils and to which they must assimilate. Hence, many aspects of student council work are incidental, with no real impact on school life (Cierzniwska, Gackowska, Lewicka, 2017).

### **The supervisor of student council**

Analyzing the importance of the student council supervisor, students pay attention to the importance of his or her authority, the ability to represent students' needs, readiness to initiate events, competitions, actions at school and local environment, active participation in awarding or protecting students' interests (Cierzniwska, Gackowska, Lewicka, 2017).

It is advisable that the supervisor of the student council should possess certain personal predispositions, which include: sense of humor, serenity, justice, kindness and care, enthusiasm, self-denial and understanding of the mechanism of action and the essence of self-government (Kamiński, 1985).

The tasks of the supervisor are to advise and assist students in organizing activities, but not to implement those activities for the students, mediating in contacts

with teachers, management, parents or the local community. It is crucial to establish the rules of cooperation between the student council and the supervisor, in order to clarify the scope of duties in good time. The supervisor should strive to make the students take on their own responsibilities and be aware of the responsibility for their implementation. He or she is to advise, inspire and check, to mobilize for action (Ziółkowski, 2014, pp.101-108).

The problem is the appointment of a supervisor by the management, which may result in the fact that he is not supported by students, nor is respected by the students (Cierzniwska, Gackowska, Lewicka, 2017).

A threat to the activities of the student council are also lazy, negligent and disrespectful supervisors who succumb to youth in everything that leads to the loss of educational opportunities. Another issue concerns the lack of coherence in the message from the supervisor - on the one hand, the activities of the student council are required, on the other - students are blocked and so is their independence, showing a lack of trust. This leads to decision-making and even the performance of the tasks of the student council by the supervisor, which accustoms the supervisor to meddling and the student council to passivity. Then the efficiency of student council is the merit of adults and not of students. The board which is self-governing like this, does not carry out educational tasks (Kamiński, 1985).

### **The method**

The aim of the research is to get to know the scope of the possibilities and duties of the teacher - the supervisor of the student council and to assess the effectiveness of his activities.

Three research questions were formulated, with the following content: What possibilities and responsibilities does the teacher have - the supervisor of the student council? What factors are important for its didactic and educational impact on students? How are the activities of the school council supervisor assessed?

The interview method was selected for the study, which enables direct contact with the respondent and deepening the answers to the bothering questions. The research covered representatives of 16 high schools in Warsaw<sup>1</sup>:

- Directors or deputy directors; these people perform this function from 9 months to 20 years. Only two people from the respondents in the space of their professional experience acted as a supervisor of student council.
- Representatives of student councils, boys and girls aged between 16 and 19, with diverse work experience in student council (from several months to four

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<sup>1</sup> The research was carried out in cooperation with the Social Communication Center in Warsaw. It is an institution which activities also include self-management of Warsaw schools. SCC representative, Mrs. Dorota Kapuścińska, mediated in establishing contact with respondents and indicated the range of problems that are of interest to the institution's research. The students of the specialization "pedagogy and pedagogy of abilities" of the Academy of Special Education in Warsaw within the framework of the subject "Specialist research project" helped in the implementation of the research. The research was directed by Joanna Łukasiewicz-Wieleba, PhD.

years, a few who declared that they were representatives of student councils also at an earlier stage of education) and

- Teachers - supervisors of student councils. The surveyed teachers are most often pedagogues with extensive experience - their seniority is from 7 to 39 years (average 18.41), although their role as a supervisor of student councils was much shorter: from 1 year to 25 years (average 6.13). They were both men and women. Among the surveyed student council supervisors there is a large diversity in terms of subject competences - they teach one or two subjects and they are: history, Polish, English, German, French, knowledge of society, mathematics, physical education, biology, chemistry, knowledge about culture, ethics, geography, nature, logistic subjects, basics of entrepreneurship. These are active people who, apart from caring for the student council, also perform other functions at the school.

The respondents represent the following Warsaw schools: LIX LO Mistrzostwa Sportowego im. J. Kusocińskiego, Zespół Szkół nr 35, Zespół Szkół Elektronicznych i Licealnych, Zespół Szkół nr 36, Zespół Szkół Gastronomicznych im. E. Pijanowskiego, XV LO z Oddz. Dwujęzyczne im. N. Żmichowskiej, VII LO im. J. Słowackiego, Zespół Szkół im. Bohaterów Narwiku, Zespół Szkół nr 42, XXVIII LO im. J. Kochanowskiego, LXIII Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. Lajosa Kossutha, XXXVIII Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. St. Kostki Potockiego, LI LO im. T. Kościuszki, Zespół Szkół nr 33, CV Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. Z. Herberta. The research was conducted from February to June 2018. In the first place, interviews were conducted according to the prepared guide (most interviews were recorded - if the respondent did not agree for the recording, notes were made), then they were transcribed. The presented article presents the part of the results that allows to solve the research questions.

### **The results**

In the first place, respondents sought information about the duties and abilities of the student council supervisor.

The surveyed directors assign a special role to the supervisor of the student council. It is, in their opinion, a person who contributes to the dissemination of knowledge about the operation of student council at school, but also motivates and supports student council representatives in self-reliance and independence and in seeking ways to solve the identified problems. In the opinion of the directors, it is important that the student councils' supervisor should have the trust of the youth, because he is a person whose students tell about their matters. The supervisor represents pupils' affairs in the school forum, looks after them, advises them, guides them. He must be involved and accepted by students, have good contact with them and be (daily) at school. It's good that he is young, but also experienced, so that he can persuade students of ideas that are unrealistic and help them to assess the situation adequately.

In the opinion of the student councils' representatives, the role of the supervisor is to help solve problems and to activate students to act for the benefit of the council.

The supervisor is also the person who influences the effectiveness of the student council.

According to the surveyed teachers, the student council needs the help of a supervisor. In their opinion, the main tasks include: being a mediator, mentor, manager and supporting student councils' ideas, assisting during meetings with the director. The role of the supervisor is also to a certain extent control of student councils' activities: the initiative itself should belong to the youth, but it is not always possible - sometimes the supervisor gives an impulse to work. This role is also a link between the expectations and desires of the students and what can be accepted by the management and the pedagogical council. This function is identified with the "spokesperson", adding to it the consent for the activities of the local government and clarifying the details of each project and event. The student council needs knowledge (including about education law), which is provided by supervisors, motivation to act, help in accounting for finances and documenting activities. Hence, supervisors help to plan, set a timetable, establish cooperation with external institutions, often also represent the interests of student council outside by being more credible than students.

The student council consists of people who initially know each other only a little, are individuals, and not always are able to cooperate with each other. That is why the important role of the supervisor is the ability to cooperate with new people. Therefore, he must be flexible and adapt to the individuality of each composition of the student council representatives. The task of supervisor is to create conditions for cooperation, not individual work. He must listen, see, help, encourage - this function is perceived as advisory, directing, inspiring ("to search for and to discover on their own"). It is also planning, defining the scope of activities, consulting. The teacher assists in technical matters, states whether something is possible to do. He helps to modify the idea and realize it in school conditions. In other words, his task is to show students the way to achieve their goals by finding people to achieve specific goals and projects. The supervisor must have the ability to adapt to those students who are more active at a time and those who leave the council for various reasons. It is important to include all school pupils who are willing to work in the student council activities. In addition, supervisors should deal with solving problems in a democratic manner, respecting the opinions and opinions of young people and maintaining good contact with students. In this regard, it is important to encourage students to take responsibility and make decisions. The supervisor is the one who looks at it, but also expresses his support. He must create an atmosphere for dialogue. He must also be hard-working person and be ready to carry out various tasks. What is important is own ingenuity, but also perseverance, not discouragement (i.e.g. by passivity or pupils' stagnation), the ability to find among students those who are active and willing to act. The supervisor helps to organize the council, frees students out of the lessons if necessary, supports the elections to the student council (for example, he announces the election, draws up a list of candidates etc.). He is also a link between students and the management, relieves the management from dealing with student council issues, "filters" information that reaches the authorities.

Examples of the supervisor's activities include help in developing an action plan, asking students for ideas and suggestions, inspiring, suggesting what students are doing in other schools. In a situation where young people are reluctant to work, it happens that a supervisor takes care of them by taking over a significant part of their duties. Hence, an important part of the supervisor's work is coping with student passivity ("they answer that they do not want to do anything, that they need nothing"), their lack of faith in themselves and their abilities, and even the belief that they can do nothing at school or they cannot change anything.

As part of their rights, supervisors can object if they think that the student will not be a representative of the student council. It also happens that teachers, seeing the social predispositions of students, themselves persuade them to participate in the elections of student councils. Therefore, in the supervisor's work one needs the ability to recognize the possibilities and motivation of students, which are necessary in the activities of the student council. The supervisor has the responsibility to select appropriate people for the tasks that will meet the requirements and lead the project to the end.

The respondents' answers were also searched for those factors which, in their opinion, are important in didactic and educational work with youth.

In the opinion of the surveyed directors, the important factor for the quality of supervisors' interactions is the fact that they are usually chosen by students themselves. How often the supervisor changes is determined in the regulations of the student council - it can be chosen i.e.g. once a year or once every several years. In some schools, candidates for supervisors are reported by the students themselves, but the teacher must agree to perform this function. The opinions of the directors under review reflect the following comments: "It would be unwise if we - teachers - would make this choice" and "students have and should have influence on such decisions" and "the students always choose a supervisor by voting, this is the law of education and common sense." If the teacher does not agree to act as a student councils' supervisor, then the director sometimes offers other candidates. One of the respondents notices that students are not always entitled to the right to choose a student council supervisor - they sometimes need encouragement and also need to be directed by the school management (i.e.g. when they are satisfied with the supervisor, but the law provides for re-election after one year of performing this function). Especially in a situation where "the teacher is so liked by the students that it is difficult to imagine another person who would have such good contact with the youth". Most respondents in their statements emphasize that students are best able to choose their supervisor, adequately to their expectations.

Students - representatives of the council indicate that in their schools the choice of the student councils' supervisor is diverse. In some schools, students claim that they did not have any influence on it, i.e.g. when the supervisor already held the position ("the supervisor influences the choice of student council more, than the student council for the choice of the supervisor"). In other descriptions, there are statements that the students did not want the previous supervisor and they got to know the current one when the results of the elections to the student council were



announced. But although they did not have direct influence on the choice of the supervisor, they are aware that if there was no good cooperation, the director would change the supervisor. One of the student council's leader indicated that she herself had proposed a supervisor who had been accepted by the management and that cooperation with him was very good. Rarely the students talked about the direct impact on the choice of the supervisor. In a situation where no one at school wants to be a student councils' supervisor, it is a teacher pointed out by the management. Then the student council agrees to the proposal of the management.

A similar issue is described by the student council supervisors. According to their statements, they were either elected by the students or by the school management ("I was commissioned"), although they are aware that they should be chosen by the students. Their choice to perform this function was justified by good contact that they have with students, diligence, readiness to perform tasks, empathy, commitment. For supervisors it is also important to be able to interact with students, help them to solve problems, and the time which they spend to get to know their problems itself. Hence, their competences and personal predispositions are crucial in this choice.

The time they spend on this type of activity is important for the quality of supervisors' activities. Teachers in their relations emphasize that they devote to the student council an average of about 2-3 hours a week in these periods when little is happening. However, while important events are being carried out, this extra work time increases up to 20-30 hours per week.

Systematic meetings with representatives of the student council are another element. They take place as needed, depending on the tasks, projects and emerging problems being carried out. This frequency varies from school to school, but it depends mainly on the period - these meetings are held more intensively on the occasion of the preparation of specific actions or events - then such a necessity forces even daily meetings. Some have indicated that they have a fixed frequency of meetings (once a month, once a week, three times a year, etc.), but with specific representatives of the student council (their "core") they talk daily (and even every break). In some cases, the frequency of the meetings is included in the regulations. Most often, the first meeting takes place at the beginning of September, and further ones depend on the needs and on the situation. Meeting in crisis and problem situations is especially important in order to create a climate for solving them.

Being in constant contact with students is now easier due to widespread media access, speeding up the transfer of information. Despite this, it is easier to coordinate the work of the student council, including teachers who teach subjects available for all classes - then they can get the information they need to the whole student community through frequent meetings during classes.

The initiators of the meetings are both members of the student council and the supervisors. During the meetings, tasks are discussed and assigned for a limited time. One of the teachers notices that together with the student council they have set strategic goals and try to stick to them, and it is important to work systematically, which is facilitated by the division of student council into thematic sections (e.g.

caring for a board of student council, dealing with a school radio etc.). It should be recognized that the knowledge and skills that pupils have, and the sense of a supervisor who can choose tasks adequately to the competences of their pupils, are important.

The next element is the activity and involvement of the student council representatives. If the student council does not want to act, it resists, then the supervisor's work is very difficult. If the students are active - it brings a lot of satisfaction. When students are passive or indifferent, the supervisor has no influence on their actions or these actions are enforced. This is a difference in the quality of the supervisor's work. In some schools, volunteers or students chosen by the supervisor are involved in particular actions, often in return for a higher grade in the subject or behavior. It can be seen that work in student council can contribute to higher school achievements, while teachers who can promise better assessments influence student behavior, have wider possibilities of external motivating students to be active.

In the opinion of the interviewed supervisors, the majority of students do not want to get involved in initiatives. Only a few take part in general actions undertaken at school. The problem is to organize such an action that would activate the whole school. Some pupils will not be wanting to get involved. Especially if students recognize that something does not make sense, they will not do it. The example is described by one of the respondents: "We tried to get the Varsavianistic School badge, but we failed, because 15 students who would prepare the materials entitled "My meetings with Warsaw" were to be gathered, and only two came prepared. Even if raising the grade from Polish was an additional motivation." In the opinion of one of the respondents, the specificity of contemporary youth is that they are reluctant to work and are reluctant to learn. It is difficult to encourage them to go to external meetings, even if they are held during the lesson. This may be due to the critical attitude of teachers who claim that student council representatives always come out of the same lessons, which is why young people have withdrawn from these activities. In this case, it is visible that actions for the benefit of student council may have a negative impact on the results of learning by the youth, because it is associated with a lack of attendance at the lessons.

According to the surveyed supervisors, it is easier to act when there are two of them ("one will come up with something, the other will add something and thanks to this we complement each other"; "we share responsibilities, I am more practical, my friend is better when it comes to bureaucracy"). That's why teachers do not feel alone in their work. However, only in a few schools this solution is used. Training is also helpful, for which they attend both to deepen their knowledge, but also to be able to compare experiences with other schools. Caring for student council requires constant improvement and seeking inspiration among solutions used in other schools.

It is also important to gain support from other members of the pedagogical council, as many activities require the support of a larger number of adults. In schools, the willingness of teachers to cooperate is different. As one of the student

says "There is a group of teachers who always support and can count on them. There are people who will ask you whether to help you in something, and there are those who you have to go to yourself. There are no such teachers who are explicitly against helping students. "Although the teaching staff is able to block different ideas, it also motivates, pushes for something to happen at school, without the help of counsellors, many actions would not be possible. At the same time, the task of supervisors would be to increase the involvement of the teaching staff, especially in the area of identifying and encouraging the participation of pupils with appropriate predispositions in the work of the student council, which the supervisors do not have classes with. A special role in this regard could be provided by class counsellors who could refer the students to the student council supervisor. Meanwhile, this issue meets with teachers' indifference.

As the directors notice, it happens that students want to carry out events under the care of a different teacher than the student council supervisor. In such a situation, they must indicate the teacher and if he or she agrees, cooperate with him. Thus, it can be assumed that the pupils themselves can see the possibilities of teachers and choose their supervisors which they trust and recognize that their actions will be effective under their guardianship. Thus, the role of the student council supervisor is also transferred to other teachers who have not been formally elected to perform this function.

The respondents' opinions were also analyzed in terms of assessing the activities of the student council supervisor. In the statements of the directors all the praise is addressed to the supervisors working with young people, appreciating their commitment, tact, ability to set boundaries as well as the trust they give their pupils and the ability to solve problems. Directors notice and appreciate the commitment and effectiveness of the activities of the supervisors of student councils.

Supervisors are also praised by the students. Their knowledge, competences, openness, effectiveness, experience, but also being nice and helpful, the ability to cooperate is appreciated. Supervisors are, in the students' opinion, the "pillar and the soul of student council"; without them, nobody would do anything, because "the supervisor is the council, and we are her tools."

According to the surveyed supervisors, this function is difficult, especially because it requires reconciliation with other tasks at school, such as education, and does not bring any financial benefits. A sense of loneliness and sometimes disappointment is also a problem. At the same time, this function is a kind of test - it verifies the effectiveness of the teacher and the opinions of students about him.

Speaking of their role as a student council supervisor, the respondents express themselves either with a certain distance or with satisfaction. Although, as one of the supervisors stated, this is "very hard work", for many respondents it brings a lot of pleasure and satisfaction - these teachers are recognizable in their environment. This function allows you to develop, teach new things, feel useful and helpful, and build the belief that something useful is being done for yourself and the school. There is a lot of pleasure in feeling that you are needed young people, that students also come out with a problem or share their own problems. Some supervisors see their function

as a duty, but they do like it. This function allows to get to know the youth better, thanks to which the supervisors know the students better than the teachers who have contact with them "only from behind the desk".

Although most teachers declare their willingness to perform this function in the following years, there are also those who think that they are no longer fit for it, they have fizzled out. Especially those who perform this function for a very long time would like to pass it on to other people.

### **The summary of the results**

The presented research shows what role in the reception of three education entities: directors, pupils and supervisors of student council perform the last mentioned. Recognizing student council as an instrument of educational activities, as a method that teachers can use in didactic and educational work with children and young people, it should be recognized that research has shown the special importance of the supervisor. It is a teacher who can activate, guide, strengthen socially desirable attitudes of young people. It includes not only formal and decorative student council activities, but rather strengthening the independence of young people in the implementation of self-government tasks (see Kamiński, 1985).

A supervisor is a person endowed with trust, able to support and guide youth, without depriving them of their independence. The supervisor cannot be a dictator, an autocrat who does not sense the principles of care for students, who creates under his rule "director's self-management" (Kamiński, 1985, p. 53). Based on the research, it can be stated that supervisors, both chosen by the students and the school management, are trusted, have communication skills, are able to recognize the predispositions of the students and, depending on them, choose tasks. They are good organizers, activating young people and supporting them in setting and achieving goals. They are people who support students in the implementation of their ideas, and at the same time willingly share their knowledge and experience. In this respect, teachers implement the demands of the Warsaw Charter of Student Council (see Kapuścińska, Rawska, 2017) and also meet the criteria of a good supervisor formulated by Aleksander Kamiński. This author emphasized that an appropriate student council supervisor should understand the educational role of self-government, should be a partner for young people, should be among students, be a co-director of their activities, an adviser who inspires and checks, but does not perform work for students (see Kamiński, 1985).

The difficulty for the effectiveness of student council activities is when, despite the good intentions and sense of the supervisor, he meets the opposition of the pedagogical group (Kamiński, 1985). Therefore, it is not only the contacts that the teacher maintains with the students, but also with the pedagogical group. And the research presented here also shows that teachers value contacts and support of the pedagogical council, educators, and in particular the possibility of sharing the role of the student council supervisor with other teachers.

An important statement of the research is that teachers' work is conducive to caring for student council. Teachers who have frequent contact with young people,

are in school every day, teach in many classes are performing better. Thanks to intense contacts, they know their students better and are able to better encourage them to student council activities. In addition, it increases their availability for students, which at the same time builds mutual trust.

Research has also shown that today's youth are assessed by supervisors and school principals as passive, less active, reluctant. Despite this, among pupils you can find those who have the appropriate predispositions and those with whom you can awaken the love for pro-social activities. In this respect, the role of the student council supervisor is inestimable. Student council activities contribute to arousing empathy, social involvement and civic activity. They shape the attitude of responsibility, strengthen the sense of self-control and self-discipline as well as planning skills. The student council contributes to the integration of the school community: students and the pedagogical group.

Summing up the conducted research, one should recognize the supervisor of student council as indispensable person for the effective operation of student council within the existing legal regulations and adequately to the needs of the school community. Supervisors who have been described in the research have many possibilities and are able to use it during work with youth. Despite the difficulties and the multiplicity of duties, it is a work that brings satisfaction and confirms the competences and trust of young people. High grades of supervisors formulated by directors and students prove the accuracy of selection of teachers to act as the supervisor and guardian of student council in particular institutions. In the context of the conducted research, therefore, teachers should be considered as those who use student council as an educational method - shaping youth attitudes, and didactic - teaching the principles of social functioning and based on students' knowledge, which can be used in practical activities.

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