

Opinions from the Children- **How We've been Encroach on Our Rights at School**

The Disproportional Allocation of Learning and Rest Time

Taiwan's students spend a longer amount of time at school compared to their peers in other nations. In addition to having 7 to 9 class periods in a day, they also need to arrive at school early for "Morning Self Study." This often cause students to have insufficient time for resting, as well as being a major reason for low learning efficiencies. Some schools even have classes on weekends and holidays, or hold long-term remedial courses during summer and winter vacations and forcing students to attend. This greatly reduce the student's time for resting, as well as denying students many opportunities to explore issues of personal interest.

Elementary schools usually require students to carry out morning readings during their morning self study. However, for middle schools and high schools, this time is usually devoted to test-taking or for class progress catch-ups. From our day-to-day experience, having students who are sleep-deprived conduct such intensive work require high concentration in the morning when most of them are barely awake will only make learning efficiency take a nosedive – even to the point of affecting students' health.

Some schools force students to "stay in the classroom" or "remain in their seats" during noon breaks, or even "put your head down and sleep." Students who do not comply may suffer penalties such as grade reduction or ordered to stand at the corner. We believe that students have the right to choose how they spend their break periods and select their own means of resting (sports, chatting, or practicing). There is no point in attempting to control student behaviors and activities, other than making it easier for the school to implement collective management. By law, the additional remedial class held on regular school days (eighth period) and remedial courses organized during summer or winter breaks cannot be used for achieving additional progress for subject classes or require mandatory attendance. However, most middle schools will not offer students the option of choosing whether to attend class or not. They often employ semi-forced methods such as arranging one-on-one talks, persuading the parents, or using the "carrot and stick" approach. Furthermore, almost all additional courses will result in students who didn't attend to be severely left behind in terms of progress. The student's right to choose has been completely undermined.

After spending a minimal of 9 hours a day learning at school, students often have to attend cram schools after the end of school. It's fair to say that their life is completely engulfed by school work. We believe that the reasons why cram schools are so popular include: There are some teachers at school who show poor performance in teaching, cannot cater to the needs of different students, and unable to let students fully understand the materials taught in class. Therefore, students can only seek help from channels outside of school to make up for this learning gap. We believe that a standard for evaluating teachers should be established to ensure that the teaching by teachers can achieve an acceptable level of effectiveness, thereby

saving the students from having to spend a lot of time for ineffective classes and forced to seek remedies in other ways.

There is no need to go into details on the negative impact of students spending excessively long hours on their studies. We believe that the roots of the problems lie with the following: Too much content in the curriculum. By putting in too much knowledge which is hard to digest over a given amount of time, it will likely result in students "inability to learn" or "having too much to learn," as well as making the learning experience extremely stilted.

[Diversified Learning]

(1) Borrowing Class Time

Implementing the normalization of teaching has been an important administrative goal for the Ministry of Education in recent years. The practice of "borrowing class time" still remains commonplace for many schools. By diverting the time for art classes or extracurricular activities to teaching subject classes or taking tests. Some even go as far as using classes with titles such as "Thought Exploration" and "Drama Appreciation" as a disguise for holding addition class sessions to teach subjects such as Chinese, English, or math.

Such disproportional class arrangement not only increases schoolwork pressure for students, but also denies students the opportunities to learn skills related to day-to-day living or diversified knowledge. It also diminishes the time students have for leisure activities and hobbies. The purpose of this is simply to ensure that students get higher grades on their exams, thereby helping schools achieve higher university enrollment rate and admission rate. The function of schools should not only be limited to improving the performance of students in subject areas; it should allow students to learn based on their dispositions and to help students identify their strengths and interests. Today, the trend of "academics first" and abundance of disproportionate curriculum arrangement has helped to achieve the opposite. We hope that the government can implement to normalization of teaching in a concrete way, providing students with a diverse learning environment to allow them to develop based on their dispositions and allowing schools to perform as they were meant to.

(2) National Defense Class

Currently, the high school curriculum includes the class on national defense. However, the purpose of the current national defense class is ambiguous, while the content of the course comprises and promotes international views characterized by sectionalism. Among these, information on weaponry and military strategies should not be something emphasized in national education, which makes the program rather controversial.

The biased aspect of the international view presented by the textbook could be seen from the heavy emphasis on the political situation among Taiwan, China, and the United States. Furthermore, the material on Taiwan and its relationship to other nations is full of wishful thinking and completely unrealistic. Among

these, there are also parts that seeks to infuse students with nationalistic thinking. The chapters on the government administration and foreign relations tend to “only discuss achievement and avoid mentioning failures.”

In addition, another point of emphasis for national defense class is providing information on the types, builds, and performance of guns, artilleries, and other weapons. There are even cases where we must take part in target practices organized by the school. In other words, we have to practice using a gun. However, we believe that rather than reciting the specs of weapons, the emphasis of national defense class should be placed on applied knowledge such as disaster prevention, rather than learning about combat actions.

(3) Mother Language

In the interest of preserving the roots of ethnicity and its respective cultural heritage, all nations should work hard to protect and revitalize all disadvantaged languages and cultures, promote the use of the mother tongue, and preserve the diversity of languages and cultures. Therefore, in the interest of promoting teaching in the mother language, the government implemented the “Directions for Establishing Native Language Elective Classes at Middle and Elementary Schools” to safeguard the continuity of mother language courses.

However, when schools survey the interest of students in taking such courses based on this guideline, most schools only list options such as the majority dialects such as Taiwanese (Minnan dialect), Hakka, and Amis from among the languages of indigenous people, thereby drastically limiting the choices for students. Likewise, with the growing number of new immigrants in recent years, the mother language of second-generation new immigrants are languages from Southeast Asian nations. Yet, the current curriculum have yet to incorporate plans for implementing the courses for teaching the languages of new immigrants, completely ignoring the rights of second-generation new immigrants to learn their mother languages.

However, the scope of this guideline only applies to middle and elementary schools. It does not require high schools to set up language elective classes, thereby damaging the comprehensiveness and continuity of mother language education.

Even if the schools implement mother language education, it is often limited to within the parameters of the classroom. It is unable to really incorporate mother languages into people’s daily life. The application of mother languages should be as close to daily life as possible, and not to make it something like “foreign language” classes which are subjects that are out of touch with students. Therefore, we believe that the fundamental and practical approach should be “ethnicity schools,” which conducts classes and daily conversation through the language of the respective ethnicities. Furthermore, themes such as craftwork, art, customs, belief, environmental ethics, and historical relations of ethnicity should also be incorporated into the curriculum to truly preserve and encourage the growth of Taiwan’s ethnic diversity.

(4) Gender

The formation of gender consciousness is a continual process. Despite being unable to quantify the superiority of thoughts or determine what's missing through the use of a single index, but regarding gender determination, the challenges derived from gender structure, or issues in this area which is in need for discussions, the current implementation of sex education at schools is probably unable to allow the majority of students to develop a comprehensive knowledge basis which is sufficient for them to free themselves from the chain of traditional values and clearly sense the gender-based pressure and discrimination which permeates our daily life and even life experience.

The Gender Equity Education Act stipulates that "Elementary and junior high schools, in addition to integrating gender equity education into their curriculum, shall provide at least four hours of courses or activities on gender equity education each semester. Senior high schools shall integrate gender equity education in their curriculum, the same as the five-year junior colleges in the first three years of their curriculum." Yet, during the process of schooling in the past, no matter whether elementary or middle schools which are required to organize gender equity education spanning a given amount of time, or high schools which are forced to integrate these classes into their curriculum, there is never a lack of phenomenon such as schools using "uniform" approaches (pink-color-based uniform vs. blue-color-based uniform, or skirts vs. pants) as ways of classifying the student's biological gender, using gender aura or secondary sexual characteristics as basis for jokes among students, or preferences among teachers in assigning more labor-intensive chores to (biological) guys when distributing tasks.

On one part, the aforementioned experiences from day-to-day life identifies the inefficiency of sex education to implement sufficient changes to the conservative values present at school campuses. Likewise, it also exposes the conflicts between certain implementation of education policies and gender equity thinking. Even with the growing support for women's right and gender equity in recent years, LGBT or the other gender minority groups still face a challenging environment. Especially for those finding themselves in comparatively isolated environment such as schools, we hope to implement sex education that is truly ample, ensuring the equality for individuals of all genders and sexual orientations, allowing everyone to share a comfortable living space.

(5) Religious Activity

There might be nothing inappropriate at first glance when holding classes on religious knowledge as the core beliefs, rituals, and history from the standpoint of learning about diversified culture. However, the presence of religious groups on school campus might become controversial due to the different perspectives involved. The Educational Fundamental Act stipulates that "Education shall be based on the principle of impartiality. Public schools may not engage in promotional or other activities for any specific religion or belief. Neither the competent education administrative authority nor any public school may force school administrative personnel, teachers, or students to participate in any

religious activity.” While the classical beliefs of many religion might appear benign, seeking to infuse a positive and forward-looking into people, but the conveyance of religious rules to the young children on campus, who have yet to mature in terms of developing an analytic and critical mind, may bring more than the simple belief of doing good. There are much more attempts to convince youngsters to accept a set of values related to the religious idea, which may involve doctrines presented in a mythical style which may not comply with universal values – or even systematic brainwashing through propaganda and marketing groups.

In the past, there are cases such as a group who spoke from a religious standpoint about the importance of one-man-with-one-woman, and one-husband-with-one-wife when they were holding an activity at school, or in punishing students through methods such as punitive copying of scriptures. It is the duty of education to remain impartial on the issue of religion. Even though much effort has been invested into dereligionization, there is still the possibility where latent religious mentality or religious terminology which slipped out due to carelessness might silently create an impact upon the learner’s values or his or her understanding of religion. While it is nearly impossible to keep track of the religious disposition of all educators, but perhaps we can minimize the marketing benefits affiliated with religious groups or their attempts to instill students with doctrines by starting with denying religious groups access to the school campus

[Psychological Health]

(1) Bullying

When a suspected bullying incident takes place at the school campus, current channels often fail to win the trust of students or uncover the truth. Also, the passive attitude of the school in dealing with the case cannot solve the problems created by the incident or provide the victim with effective protection, and in some cases cause the personal information of students related with the incident to leak out and causing repeated damage. During each semester, the school usually hands out surveys to students, hoping to learn if any students were the target of bullying or having witness the occurrence of such events. However, such survey may not always be anonymous. Teachers also have the tendency to ask students to fill out the form in class, which makes them awfully uncomfortable due to fear of their peers or pressure from the faculty. In our day-to-day life, we’ve actually witnessed quite a number of bullying. However, we rarely see the school react to them, or even remain total oblivious to such incidents. Therefore, we believe that the results acquired from such surveys have no credibility.

If we take it one step further, even if the school knows that incidents of bullying have taken place, they often choose to keep things quiet. All aftermath dealings often end up going nowhere and leaving the matter unsolved. This in turn makes the student even more distrustful of school and even more reluctant to tell the truth. Many of the bullying incidents involves long periods of collective exclusion and verbal abuse, and in some cases even the teachers are bullies themselves,

using guidance or discipline as a pretext to humiliate the student in question and turning a blind eye to the actions of the bullies as well. The victims lack effective channels to seek assistance and do not receive enough physiological help.

(2) Guidance Resources

Article 24 of the UN's Convention on the Rights of Children noted that: "States Parties shall strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services." However, more emphasis is placed on physical health, while the need for care and medical assistance of children's psychological health is ignored.

Mental illness such as depression has seen a decline in the age of patients over the years. The need of children and youths in mental healthcare has seen a rise as well. However, with the exception of empty words and pointless slogans, we do not feel any efforts in this area from the government, judging from the related policies currently in place and actual deployment of resources.

Among these, the most accessible resources for students at school is "guidance room." However, in middle school where students must confront pressures from area spanning schoolwork pressure to peer relations and comprehensive care should be provided to ensure healthy development of the heart and mind, the counseling services provided by the guidance room is totally dysfunctional. The biggest reason is that the resources provided by the guidance room primarily focus on helping students securing admission to higher educational institutions. Furthermore, there is a lack of qualified faculty, where the teacher hired might not possess professional training in student counseling. All the aforementioned reasons prevent students from getting the help they need in time when they need help.

In the face of these challenges, we hope that the government can expand the training programs of student counselors, as well as strengthening the promotion and dissemination of related information to help improve the mental health of children and youths.

(3) Students' Rights to Privacy

Schools have an obligation to ensure the confidentiality of student information such as personal contact information; the student's physical and mental health, status of the family, and living conditions. Such information shall not put to non-essential use. However, from our real-life experiences, it is quite common for the student's private information to be leaked. For example, cram schools can get their hands on a large amount of student's contact information and grades, where it could be applied to sales purposes. For students who are from less well-off families, descendent of new immigrants, or from families with special problems, such information about his or her family may be disclosed to their peers without the student's consent. As for students who suffer from depression or other form of mental illness, their peers might learn about their conditions due to slips by the teachers. The leaking of personal privacy information is the cause for many cases of traumatization. It is important to immediately

implement measures to safeguard student's rights to privacy.

[Subjectivity of Students]

(1) Dress Code

In Taiwan, most schools under the level of universities and colleges all have dress codes. The contents of these dress codes spell out the style of school uniform and sportswear. For some schools, it even includes specific rules such as: unified date for seasonal uniform changes, banning of certain shoes, banning of certain socks, limiting the time allowing sportswear (can't wear sportswear outside of physical education classes, can't wear uniform when entering or leaving school) and uniform restriction based on gender (there are different uniform styles for boys and girls).

The "Constitution" of Taiwan, as well as the UN's "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights," and "International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights" all uphold the people's rights to freedom. When one of the rights is being restricted, there must be reasonable grounds justifying the action. Otherwise it would be an infringement of human rights. Based on this position, the students from every school initiated the dress code campaign last year. The participants hope that the schools will loosen up related regulations eventually. Faced with the increasing number of people in favor of lifting the dress code, the Ministry of Education issued an official response halfway through the year. The agency demanded all high schools to lift the restrictions and allow students in school uniform, sportswear, class uniform, or extracurricular activity uniform to enter or leave via the school gate, as well as banning the use of one's outfit as a basis for punishment (receiving a demerit). Despite the show of sympathy by the Ministry of Education, in terms of practice, the majority of schools either do not comply with the guidelines or uses the "positive disciplining (such as community service at school)" approach as a pretext to punish students in other ways (students who don't turn up for the community service at school receives a warning).

Regarding the students' effort to have the dress code lifted, schools which are more conservative issues responses such as "students should look like students," "protect the student's safety," "reduce differences," "nurture one's sense of honor for the school." Without even getting into why such arguments are flawed and full of contradictions, it is clear that the reasoning behind them is to raze the subjectivity of students through the approach of implementing unified supervision over students. We believe such values contradicts the right for personality development emphasized in the Conventions on the Rights of a Child. We hope that the government can adjust its policies step-by-step to achieve the final goal of scrapping the dress codes completely, as well as raising the awareness among educators about children's right. Only by doing so can negotiations proceed under the basis of mutual trust when we encounter similar problems in the future,

(2) Inappropriate Disciplining

To safeguard the autonomy of the student's body and the right to personality development, Taiwan has passed the amendment to the Educational Fundamental Act through three readings in 2006. The act specifically prohibits inappropriate disciplining methods such as corporal punishment and public humiliation in the hopes of reverting contemporary status of education where "corporal punishment is the norm." From this point onward, the official education system has officially heralded in the age of "zero corporal punishment."

Supposedly, the opinions of society should change accordingly with the transformation of the system. However, despite the backing of the law and establishing a legal basis, inappropriate disciplining still remains a commonplace phenomenon in Taiwan's education scene. Even if there's been significantly less corporal punishment and verbal humiliation going on under the table, there has been no significant improvement at the frontline venues of education resulting from regulation changes. The culture of violence in traditional education still remains rampant even today. The problem is especially serious in primary education. Even today, there are still many teachers who employ punishments based on violence, such as "caning the student's palm" and "jump squats," as threats for achieving management goals. Repeated offenses by teachers in using dirty words to curse students are quite commonplace. Facing such pressure over long periods of time will result in severe damages to the body and mind of students. The majority of Taiwanese children are exposed to such environment, growing up under this system.

Taiwan's education still retains strong "punishment-oriented" characteristics. Ideas such as "Spare the rod and spoil the child" and "wishing iron can be transformed into steel" are something which families and the official education system still believe. In traditional society, the approach of "countering violence with violence" is accepted as a legit way of teaching, while flexible persuasion gets blamed for being inefficient. Retributive punishment is regarded as a kind of warning, a "necessary evil" in the process of rectifying students' behavior. Verbal humiliation and corporal punishment are commonplace discipline methods seen at both schools and homes, making this a "landscape" unique to Taiwan. Even though the government has been trying to downplay the image of "authoritarian education" by working on the legislative end, under the mainstream culture of punitive education, parents and teachers arrive at the conclusion of "corporal punishment is necessary" in private. The problem of inappropriate discipline cannot be uprooted from culture within a short period. Taking the example of private schools where inappropriate discipline is a serious problem, the school may even ink a "corporal punishment contract" with parents, jointly "authorizing" the school to punish their kids. The best evidence for determining a culture of violence can be seen here, which publically integrates the means of inappropriate discipline into the routine of official education.

(3) Student's Morning Assembly

The majority of Taiwan's elementary and middle schools will hold student's morning assembly during the morning self-study period on set days during the

week. Aside from the controversy over the existence of morning self-study which already forces students to sacrifice their sleeping time (see the part on “Disproportional Allocation of Learning and Rest Time”), the act of forcing students to listen to speeches by administrators at the venue during the period for morning self-study not only goes against the purpose of “self-study,” it is also an approach which is characterized by high cost and low efficiency in the technology-oriented world of nowadays.

If we examine the contents of these morning assemblies, we notice that the majority of schools include rituals such as flag-raising, singing the national anthem, and bowing to the portrait of the founding father. For a Taiwan which is haunted by differences over national identity, there is no room for ambiguity that arrange such activities at a place for education is to consolidate a selected political mindset, which goes against the principle of impartialness in education. Also, the school requires that students don the complete set of uniform during the morning assembly and order the students to arrange themselves in tidy formation, as well as lecturing students with a commanding overtone. Such military-like behaviors are usually adopted by the armed forces in the interest of suppressing individuality to facilitate the management of soldiers. But to adopt such approach in education will infringe upon personality development of students.

We believe that the timing, contents, and disciplining methods of the morning assemblies are inappropriate. We hope that methods which offers better efficiency and stirs up less controversy can be implemented, in line with the trend of modern times.

(4) Privacy

The majority of elementary and middle schools in Taiwan either lack any sign of respect for the students’ privacy, or they see this issue as less important than other rights. For example, the school often believes that once a student violates school regulations (or class regulations) or comes under suspicion for violating school rules, the privacy of the student in question can be disregarded.

The most commonly see behavior falling under this category involves the military training instructor rummaging through the student’s backpack, desk, and locker either without the student’s consent or forcing him or her to agree to being searched. This kind of search action not only violates procedural requirements, but are often times lacking justifiable reasons – the military training instructor has the right to demand searching through the personal belongings of students without even having to produce legitimate reasons why the student is under suspicion for violating school regulations.

In addition, some of the schools also prohibit students from bringing mobile phones. If the student’s mobile phone has been confiscated, the teachers may look through its contents, including SMS and photos. This is a severe violation of student’s privacy. It is also quite common to see teachers intercepting and reading slips passed among students out loud.

[Self-governing of Students]

(1) Speech Censorship

At the campus of Taiwanese schools, speech censorship is a tool which the school frequently utilize to limit the spread of thoughts among students. Despite the fact that such approach is prohibited by law, the school often uses tactics such as concerned military training instructor or teachers to give students pressure, forcing them to shut up. Some even use different kinds of excuses to demand examining fliers, survey forms, and similar documents, limiting the students' freedom of speech.

The exchange with peers at schools is an important channel for developing their own thoughts. We believe that not only should the school stop interfering with students in the expression of their individual opinions; it should encourage students to carry out more discussions on different topics, thereby nurturing the student's critical thinking capabilities and the civic consciousness needed for democratic societies. The school should establish public hearing sessions regarding important issues such as education rights and school affairs, allowing students to express their own opinions. They should also open up selected spaces to allow students to post fliers and posters freely, to encourage students to take part in public affairs and discussions.

However, even if the Ministry of Education seek to promote the democratization of school campuses through its policies, there are still blatant examples of restricting student's free speech taking place quite often. To avoid controversies, the majority of schools today no longer implement speech censorships. Instead, they create regulations which require all fliers and posters must bear the stamp of the Academic Affairs Office before the documents can be posted or distributed, on the basis of keeping the campus clean. Even if the school sets up some kind of "Freedom of Speech Plaza" to provide students a place to post fliers, oftentimes the students can only do so if they leave their name on the material which must also undergo review by the military training instructor. This puts unseen pressure on the students and prevents the majority of the student body to become involved in public discussions.

In addition to actual fliers, military training instructors and teachers often express concern for students who's speech expresses dissatisfaction toward the school. Especially cases where the students have a habit to voice their opinion through platform such as Facebook, military training instructors and teachers often persuade or force the student to delete their posts using reasons such as "speech is too radical" and "hoping the student will not create unnecessary opposition."

Also, short talks are often used as a way to propose or suggest issues. However, the school often uses the pretext of not to disturb other students to ban students from giving short talks on campus. Or they might require students to apply for the venue beforehand and use administrative procedures to make life

harder for the applicant.

Such actions not only target individual students – even student clubs and self-rule organizations have to observe related regulations. Whenever the student self-rule organization distributes surveys, these materials must first undergo review by the Academic Affairs Office. Short talk events by these organizations often encounter difficulties, so it is not hard to imagine what individual students have to face when they try to raise an issue or proposal.

All these actions which hinders the student's freedom of speech are the unseen hands which obstructs the progress of campus democratization and prevent students from learning about how to become a member of a democratic society.

(2) School Rules and Regulations

The school regulations of many schools in Taiwan are relics from the era of Martial Law. While minor adjustments have been made, many of the contents of these rules are incompatible with the modern times. But the Ministry of Education has not been active in demanding schools to make corrections.

For example, today there are many schools, especially private middle schools, which continues to maintain the hairstyle ban. Even though the Ministry of Education has officially banned the practice in 2005, it did nothing to stop the old regulation from taking effect. Some middle schools even retain “romantic relation ban” which outlaws overly intimate interactions between members of “the opposite sex,” such as holding hands or hugging.

There are still numerous examples of school regulations that does not fit today's conditions. We believe that the reason why little improvement has been made to correct such situations is in addition for the Ministry of Education not doing its job to supervise schools, the major reason is that student cannot become involved in the process of amending school rules and voice their opinions about the unfair system of rewards and punishments.

For senior high schools, amendments to school regulations must first be approved by the school affairs meeting. Since the members of the school affairs meeting include student representatives, the school claims that any changes made to school regulations have included the opinions of the student body. However, the ratio of student representatives at the school affairs meeting is relatively small – something like over 100 teachers and faculty to 5 or fewer students. Therefore, the student representatives rarely have a chance to voice their opinion during votes, or discuss details of rule specifics. What ends up happening is that votes become bundled voting, which makes amending the outdated school regulations even more difficult.

We believe that school regulations should be jointly discussed by staff of the school affairs office and students, which should be conducted in a similar fashion as the Ministry of the Interior's Commission on Dress Code. It should be submitted for votes at the school affairs meeting after receiving the green light

from School Regulation Amendment Committee, rather than being proposed at the school affairs meeting directly. Furthermore, the number of seats occupied by student representatives at both the committee and at the school affairs meeting should be boosted. This is the only way to bring the real voices of students into the system, taking part in the establishment of regulations.

(3) Student Self-governing Organization

According to the regulations of the Ministry of Education, schools above the level of senior high schools are required to assist students in setting up a student self-rule organization, such as joint-class committees and student government. However, even if we were to establish a large number of student self-rule organizations, inside the majority of high school campuses, students still lack effective channels for communicating with school, participating in school affairs, or defending students' rights and benefits. We hope to discuss the ineffectiveness of student's self-rule capabilities through the different aspects below:

The first problem is the ambiguity of the charter and the structure. For the majority of high schools, the only student self-rule organizations which operates as a permanent establishment is the joint-class committee which serves as the executive agency, with class representative meeting being called on a regular basis to review budgets and final accounts. Under such circumstances, with the exception of financial matters, the joint-class committee is not subjected to supervision by the entire student body. For some of the schools, their student self-rule organizations to comprise both executive and legislative departments. Yet, the charter and structure do not have clearly written rules, causing ambiguities regarding the power and duties among the student self-rule organizations. The legislative department's supervision of the executive department also lacks any legal basis. Another point is that the students and school often find themselves in situation characterized by power inequality. Taiwan's education tendencies of dealing with students with an authoritarian attitude can be seen through the self-rule of students. Despite the title of "student self-rule organization," in reality there still exists situations that exposes unequal power basis. Even if students form the majority of the school in terms of sheer number, they are the ones who are being regulated. For any meetings, the Ministry of Education sets forth the guideline that the minimum number of seats for student representatives will not exceed one-fifth of people attending the meeting. So even if a consensus is reached during the meeting, the school can still overturn the decision singlehandedly. Also, the students lack remediation channels from within the system.

The inequality of power can also surface in the form of constraints by the school administration upon the student self-rule organization. For example, the school can pointedly delay the application for leasing venue or the processing of official leaves. To avoid trouble, the student self-rule organization usually don't want to get into direct confrontation with the school. Also, using the excuse of maintaining the cleanliness of school campus, the school will also review the contents of fliers and posters which the student self-rule organization plans to post. Likewise, surveys carried out by the student self-rule organization must also receive the green light

from school.

Faced with so many obstacles, the student self-rule organization ends up as a tool for organizing fun and leisure activities for students. The organization is unable to exercise its function of defending the rights of students.

Another major problem is the low degree of student involvement. For standard student self-rule organizations, the executive department consists of a chairman and a deputy chairman/president who are elected by the entire student body. The remaining staff members are decided through interviews conducted by the previous executive department. Student officers are decided upon from within by the previous executive department as well. A student self-rule organization which is determined through the aforementioned process lacks the involvement of the majority of students. This results in the distancing of regular students from the concept of student self-rule, making the road to the implementation of democracy at schools even further.