



**FAILURES OF LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS
IN PERFORMING THEIR ROLES AS SOCIETY'S
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONTROLLING PUBLIC
SCHOOLS IN *WAITING FOR SUPERMAN* FILM**

A THESIS

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PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer truthfully states that this thesis is originally compiled without duplication of another existed thesis or research project in S-1, S-2, S-3 and in Diploma degree. In addition, the writer ascertains that this thesis contains neither publications nor one's work but several one listed on references.

Semarang, 25 July 2013

Farizza Noor Amalia

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

*Kalau hati dan pikiran manusia sudah tak mampu mencapai lagi,
bukankah hanya pada Tuhan juga orang berseru*
-Pramoedya A. Toer-

To feel good is as simple as having a good intention
-De journal-

Lulus sekolah ternyata hanya makin membikin orang tahu tentang ketidaktahuan sendiri
-Pramoedya A. Toer-

**This thesis is dedicated to
Him, me, my advisor,
my helpful friends, and my annoying yet nice family.**

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I realize that this thesis is not perfect. I will be glad to receive helpful corrections and guidance to make this thesis better. Lastly, I hope that this thesis will give help for readers in need.

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ABSTRACT

Pendidikan adalah sarana untuk mengembangkan diri dan masyarakat. Warga negara yang berpendidikan dan berdaya saing global merupakan aset berharga bagi negara. Pentingnya pendidikan membuat Amerika Serikat, yang juga dikenal sebagai negara adikuasa, mewajibkan seluruh warganya untuk menempuh pendidikan formal. Dan oleh karenanya pemerintah menyediakan pendidikan gratis untuk masyarakat di seluruh penjuru Amerika. Namun, kualitas pendidikan di sekolah publik ini masih dipertanyakan dan diperdebatkan. Dewan pengurus sekolah publik, *Board of Education*, tengah mengalami krisis yang hingga saat ini belum terselesaikan masalahnya. Keadaan ini digambarkan secara nyata melalui film dokumenter *Waiting for Superman*, yang memaparkan kegagalan lembaga penyedia pendidikan publik di Amerika dalam memenuhi kebutuhan akan pendidikan yang berkualitas. Hal ini dikisahkan melalui pengalaman dan sudut pandang siswa serta orang tua yang berjuang untuk mendapatkan pendidikan yang lebih baik.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami sistem pendidikan publik di Amerika Serikat yang dikelola secara mandiri oleh *Board of Education* dalam film *Waiting for Superman*. Lebih lanjut lagi, mempelajari peran lembaga pendidikan ini dalam mengontrol kebijakan dan pelaksanaannya untuk menciptakan sekolah publik yang bermutu baik.

Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah studi kepustakaan dengan pendekatan sosiologi sastra. Data yang diteliti adalah film *Waiting for Superman*. Penulis menggunakan *Role Theory* untuk mempelajari peran penting *Board of Education* dalam menciptakan sekolah publik dengan kualitas mutu optimal.

Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa lembaga pendidikan di Amerika Serikat berperan penting dalam menciptakan pendidikan yang bermutu untuk masyarakatnya. Lembaga ini bertanggung jawab dalam merancang dan menyusun kebijakan serta mengawasi pelaksanaan pendidikan publik. Kelalaian akan tanggung jawab ini dan juga penyelesaian masalah yang berlarut mengakibatkan sekolah publik dalam krisis dan akhirnya mengakibatkan kegagalan bagi siswanya. Lembaga yang seharusnya menjamin hak para siswa untuk mendapatkan pendidikan bermutu, berbuat sebaliknya. Hal ini memicu timbulnya ketidakpercayaan dan ketidakpuasan dari masyarakat, sehingga mereka berusaha untuk lepas dari sekolah publik di lingkungan mereka dan berjuang mendapatkan pendidikan yang lebih baik.

Kata kunci: sekolah publik, Waiting for Superman, Board of Education, peran

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Education is an instrument to advance life of individuals and society. It provides knowledge, value, and skill. It is education which helps people build a bright future and a better living. Some express that education will get one a good career, not merely a job. Further, to have a good education means having good and well-educated citizens, those who are able to compete in global economy. This is an absolute necessity to build a powerful country. It can be said that education serves the needs of society.

For those reasons, United States of America, which is recognized as a powerful country puts a great concern toward education. This can be seen from the way government provides free public education for its citizens. The education system applied is a decentralized one. This means each state has an authority to govern its public education. Consequently, there are fifty separate systems of public education through the states which are controlled by a board of education. Members of the board are either elected or appointed and responsible to create a good education for students.

The quality of public schools depends on the leadership of the board of education. The board, responsible for providing good education, is also responding to community wishes for educational betterment. If not, there will be

problems which lead to failing public schools. This eventually brings failures to students. Such existing situation in American public schools can be seen through literary works, film is one in case. *Waiting for Superman* is one showing it.

Waiting for Superman is a film depicting the failing of public schools in American society. It is a documentary film which tries to present factual information about what happens in American public schools. The film presents several problems faced by American public schools, for instances, lacking qualified teachers, growing students spending, producing static achievement, and conflicting regulations. These are results of wrong implementation of the systems. The public schools require up-to-date policies that accommodate the needs for recent education. Therefore, it is essential to regulate the educational policies, and above all, to uphold the role of local school board of education in safeguarding the educational rights of American children.

The study of American public schools is undertaken because it is different. Comparing to other education systems which emphasize on centralized system, the United States of America indeed applies democracy in all aspects of life, and education is one of them. This is implemented through local governing of public schools by board of education in each state. However, the systems relating to board of education's control face several challenges. Therefore, the writer aims to comprehend the systems of public schools, and study the role of local school board of education in controlling public schools through a documentary film *Waiting for Superman*.

1.2 Scope of the Study

In this thesis, the writer applies several limits of studies. She studies the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of the film. The intrinsic covers the elements of narrative and documentary film. Furthermore, in the extrinsic aspects, the writer focuses on analyzing the American public schools systems and comprehending the role of society in controlling American public schools. Society here is local school board of education in the *Waiting for Superman* film.

1.3 Purposes of the Study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To understand American's public education system, its public schools, in *Waiting for Superman* film.
2. To comprehend the role of society, local school board of education, in controlling public schools in *Waiting for Superman* film.

1.4 Methods of the Study

1.4.1 Method of Research

The writer applies library research in conducting the research. It is to take advantage from the information provided in a library. "Library research involves identifying and locating sources that provide factual information or personal/expert opinion on a research question ..." (George, 2008:6). The writer uses the film as main data; she also refers to other supporting data, e.g., books,

articles, and journals taken from the library and internet to collect information of the object studied.

1.4.2 Method of Approach

In analyzing the film, the writer applies exponential approach. It is to analyze the narrative elements of the film, character, setting, plot, and conflict. In a book entitled *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, Guerin et al. explains “exponents, in the sense that they are signs or symbols of patterns of meaning. The word *exponent*, in fact, derives from the Latin *exponere*, “to put forth,” with the extended meaning of explanation (cf. “expound”)” (2005:143). It means to consider the most meaningful images and patterns to understand the intrinsic of literary work. The intrinsic aspect of the film consists of narrative and documentary film elements. The narrative involves character, plot, setting, and conflict. Meanwhile, the cinematographic documentary film contains narration, interview, archive footage, animation, cinema verite, music and sound, and graphics.

Furthermore, the writer applies sociology of literature approach to examine the extrinsic aspects of the film. Rene Wellek and Austin Warren in their books *Theory of Literature* divide matters of sociology of literature into three, they are “the sociology of writer, the social contents of the works themselves, and the influence of literature on society” (1976:96). The second classification will be applied to study the object researched.

In addition to that, sociology of literature approach is also discussed in *Pedoman Penelitian Sosiologi Sastra*. It is written that method used in sociology

of literature is “*analisis teks untuk mengetahui strukturnya, untuk kemudian dipergunakan memahami lebih dalam lagi gejala sosial yang di luar sastra*” (Damono, 2002:3). This means to study the work itself, the separate parts that make it up, to furthermore comprehend social tendency outside the literary work. Further, he argues “*sosiologi sastra tidak hanya memfokuskan penelitian pada teks sebagai benda budaya yang otonom, sumber-sumber yang di luar teks sastra itu pun merupakan bahan penting*” (Damono, 2002:39). He adds that since sociology of literature not only focuses on a literary work as an autonomous work of art, sources outside the literary work itself are important and considered.

Based on those explanations, role theory is applied in analyzing extrinsic aspects of *Waiting for Superman* film. Role theory proposed by Parsons, as cited in Bailey and Yost, claims that societies have different parts and function, in which each carries out defined responsibilities that reflect the priorities of that society (Bailey and Yost in Borgatta and Montgomery, 2000:2421).

1.5 Organization of the Writing

From analysis with methods of study above, the thesis will be arranged in chapters and sub-chapters as follows:

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

It is the introduction of the thesis which covers Background of Study, Scope of the Study, Purposes of the Study, Methods of the Study, and Organization of the Writing.

CHAPTER 2: SYNOPSIS

It provides synopsis of *Waiting for Superman* film. This part will help readers to understand story line of the film.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

It covers theoretical framework of intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of the film. This section provides explanations on each term used in narrative and documentary cinematic elements. Besides, it contains social theory which deals with the issue of the study.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS

It is analysis of the film. This is the significant part of the study which elaborates the applied theory to content of the film.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

It provides conclusion of the thesis. This section delivers the result of analysis from previous chapters.

CHAPTER 2

SYNOPSIS

Waiting for Superman is a documentary film released in 2010 about public schools in the United States of America. This film, which aims to present factual information about the American public schools, is directed by Davis Guggenheim. The filmmaker supplies charts, maps, footages, and other visual aids. In addition, it stages certain events for camera to record and holds interviews also.

This film tells a story of five students with a hope for higher and better education. They are Anthony, Daisy, Bianca, Francisco, and Emily. These five students represent children living across America with various backgrounds, who strive for a great education. Four students, Anthony, Daisy, Francisco, and Emily study in public schools in the neighborhood. Bianca is the one who studies in a private school, parochial school.

Parents are worried about sending their children off to a public school in the neighborhood. It is because they do not feel good toward the public school. They thought that the public schools cannot provide a good education for their children. Yet they do not have options, because better schools like private schools cost them unaffordable tuition fee.

The story begins with Anthony, a sixth grader living in Washington D.C., capital of the United States of America. The public schools there are on the spotlight, because it is in the central of nation's governance. Besides, D.C public

schools have everything wrong, bad, with it; one of those is the worst score in reading. Furthermore, the new chancellor of D.C public schools, Michelle Rhee, is a controversial figure. She carries on courageous act to change the face of D.C public schools. This inevitably attracts pros and contras in society.

The next student living in California, Daisy is a sixth grader and well-prepared student. Unfortunately, her school environment is opposing her, as she cannot get a better learning to enter higher education. Public school in the neighborhood, where she is supposed to continue her study, is a high dropout-student school. In addition to that, her financial difficulties do not get her any choices except to study in a public school.

Another student is Francisco, a second grader student in Bronx, New York. He is having a hard time in his school. He cannot get along well with his teacher at school. As a result, he has difficulty in reading. But his mother insists that Francisco indeed can read appropriately at home. This situation worries her. She starts looking for an alternative school with qualified teachers to teach her son properly.

Still from New York, at Harlem, Bianca, an elementary school student is forced not to participate in her graduation ceremony. She is staying home and is feeling sad because unable to join the graduation. Her school does not allow her because her mother cannot settle down her tuition fees yet. Nevertheless, Bianca is fortunate to have a mother who is completely aware of good education; even though her mother has to struggle hard for it.

Redwood City, located near Silicon Valley in California, is a nice environment with good neighborhood. Yet, this is not a guarantee that it is also provided good schools. The public school in this neighborhood is managed in a system that let their students fail. This is not what people expect from a fine environment with high-priced houses. Emily and her family experience it.

The stories of those five students give description on what is going on in American public schools. They are example of Americans students with a high hope for a better future. But the public school systems are working against them. The failing schools force those children to find the way out, solution, on their own. This should be the duties of board of education to solve the matters and fix the situation.

Lacking of qualified teachers is one of several problems faced by public schools. This leads to high rate of dropout students. Public schools produce more dropout students rather than college-enter students. Further, there is a decline in students' testing scores and academic achievements. Even though American students have confidence in solving test questions, like Mathematics, in reality they lack ability to do it.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To analyze a literary work means to identify the separate parts that make it up. Therefore, the writer analyzes the film through its basic elements. It is to explain what a work of literature means, an audiovisual medium, through its intrinsic and extrinsic aspects. The intrinsic is parts existing within the literary work itself, rather than coming from outside. Extrinsic aspect, in contrast, is parts coming from the outside the literary work. The aspects of the work and the social contents of the work will be studied in this thesis.

A film, as a work of art, communicates ideas and entertains people. It is both entertaining and educating. It amuses viewers with visual and audio quality. Besides, it also conveys life of people and their surroundings. This is in line with statement of Aristotle saying that art is a form of reality's imitation which is expressed through a medium (Monaco, 2000:28). Further, as an audio visual medium, film's correlation with surrounding is best described by James Monaco, who says that "the "filmic" is that aspect of the art that concerns its relationship with the world around it" (2000:228). Therefore, sometimes it can be seen a film with a caption "based on a true story"; this also means its story relates with real circumstances on real world.

Further, Monaco in his book *How to Read a Film* explains that based on its abstraction, film can be included into several ranges; it belongs to practical,

environmental, dramatic, musical, and narrative. Film has stronger narrative aspects compare to drama has; this is recognized by filmmakers (2000:29). In addition to that, it is written, “the novel, short story, and often nonfiction as well are situated squarely in the narrative range” (Monaco, 2000:28-29). Therefore, a film also involves characters, plot, setting, and conflict.

3.1 Intrinsic Aspects

Starting point in appreciating the researched film entitled *Waiting for Superman* is to analyze the work itself. The writer studies two elements that make it up; they are narrative and documentary cinematic elements. The narrative aspects involve character, plot, setting, and conflict. The documentary cinematic aspects consist of narration, interview, archive footage, animation, cinema verite, music and sound, and graphics.

3.1.1 Narrative Elements

3.1.1.1 Character

Character usually associates with person involved in a story. Some express character as “a brief descriptive sketch of a personage who typifies some definite quality” (Holman, 1960:79). Character indicates features that stick with oneself, consequently one to another person can be differentiated. This variance of each person leads to one’s reputation in others’ value; it is also known as labeling. Since there are various qualities to be defined and a fact that people’s behaviors are complex, it needs a thorough examination to address one’s personality.

3.1.1.2 Plot

Plot designates the outline of actions occur in the story. Plot is “the sequence of incidents or events of which a story is composed” (Perrine, 1988:41). There are various approaches to explore plot. In this study, the writer agrees with Aristotle’s statement that every story must have a beginning, middle, and an end. The traditional plot has this structure:

1. Exposition (setting forth of the beginning)
2. Conflict (a complication that moves to a climax)
3. Denouement (literally, “unknotting,” the outcome of the conflict; the resolution). (Barnet, Berman, and Burto, 1967:13-14)

Plot shows the relationship and pattern of events in the story. All stories have a beginning, middle, and end. Typically, beginning is used to introduce the story, to give general description of a story. In this part, it also presents the problems faced by characters. In conflict part, the problems are reached its peak. It shows crisis encountered by the characters. The end part is used to resolve the problems in the conflict section.

3.1.1.3 Setting

The term “setting” refers to “the point in time and space at which the events of the plot occur” (Kenney, 1966:38). In other words, it discusses where and when events occurred. The term “where” are the places of certain actions taken place, it may indicate the authentic place as in reality. It also explains the social and moral qualities of surrounding. The term “when” points to the time

those events happen in the places. Furthermore, the elements of setting may be listed under four headings:

- (1) The actual geographical location, including topography, scenery, even the details of a room's interior;
- (2) The occupations and modes of day-to-day existence of characters;
- (3) The time in which the action takes place, e.g., historical period, season of the year;
- (4) The religious, moral, intellectual, social, and emotional environment of the characters. (Kenney, 1966:40)

Among those elements of setting, the writer excludes the second, the occupations, because this analysis will be explained under the character section.

3.1.1.4 Conflict

Perrine views conflict as “a clash of actions, ideas, desires, or wills” (Perrine, 1988:42). The types of conflict are various. There is person versus person conflict. Besides, conflict occurs between person and society or nature. Also, there is an internal conflict; it is a self-conflict within oneself. In his book *Literature Structure, Sound, and Sense*, it is explained:

The main character may be pitted against some other person or group of persons (man against man); he may be in conflict with some external force – physical nature, society, or “fate” (man against environment); or he may be in conflict with some element in his own nature (man against himself). The conflict may be physical, mental, emotional, or moral. A person may be in conflict with other persons, with society or nature, and with himself. (Perrine, 1988:42)

3.1.2 Documentary Cinematic Elements

In a documentary film, a filmmaker tries to present facts about an issue using real materials, places, and people; while fictional filmmakers use fictional actors and settings. It is explained in *Nonfiction Film Theory and Criticism* that the core method of a documentary is in its dramatization of the real material (Barsam, 1976:53). It is also discussed that:

When John Grierson first defined the word documentary, he called it “the creative interpretation of actuality.” In other words, the only vital difference between making a documentary and making a fiction film is that in documentary you are using “actual” material, not invented situations and actors playing parts. (Barsam, 1976:72-73)

To advance his/her ideas, a documentary filmmaker carefully selects the real casts and locations. In addition, to convince viewers about the facts he/she reveals, a filmmaker arranges the story in a way to grab viewers’ attention and understanding. Therefore, a documentary film is organized the same with those of a fictional film. Documentary also involves characters, settings, and conflicts, but it is filmed using actual person and material. This is also expressed by Bordwell and Thompson, “many, perhaps most, documentaries are organized as narratives, just as fiction films are” (2008:342). Furthermore, it is also discussed that:

The documentary is a complex genre containing aspects of many others. It has some features of the report genre, with its relationship to news reporting. It also shares some of the characteristics of the narrative genre, particularly its heightened sense of drama and conflict. In addition, the documentary shares with the narrative an involvement with characters, events and settings. (“Television and Film Documentaries”, 2)

Below are several elements of documentary film analyzed in this study; they are narration, interview, archive footage, animation, cinema verite, music and sound, and graphics.

3.1.2.1 Narration

One contributor in www.ehow.com stated that narration is “verbal description of what is happening in a documentary film ... can be delivered through a voice over, by a narrator visible on-screen or some combination of both” (James, “Elements of a Documentary Film”). The narrator may give comments on events happen to characters or story showed in screen. He may also interpret characters’ behavior and express his ideas toward the story he tells.

3.1.2.2 Interview

Interview is an element commonly used in documentary film. By having interview, it is expected to have factual information from the first-hand subjects. Their experience of dealing with certain circumstances will be a significant material in making a documentary film. It is written in www.ehow.com that:

Interviews are used to provide context, eyewitness statements and expert knowledge to the documentary. In documentary films, they usually consist of the interviewee visible on-screen answering questions delivered by an off-screen interviewer, who may also be the narrator of the documentary. Interviewees are often depicted sitting in their offices or homes, looking into negative space and not directly at the camera. (James, “Elements of a Documentary Film”)

3.1.2.3 Archive Footage

In Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary it is stated that footage is a "length of film made for the cinema or television". Archive footage or stock footage is "film shot for purposes other than the particular documentary film in which it is shown" (James, "Elements of a Documentary Film"). The films which can be taken from other production are inserted into a documentary to add the detail. This method can lessen the cost of film production.

3.1.2.4 Animation

A writer states in www.ymln.org that animation is "an ever expanding range of illustrations, cartoons, and a wide variety of graphic moving images" (Rossi, "Elements of Documentary Filmmaking"). This illustration is helpful in giving additional information relates to film. The appearance of animation is basically to ease viewers in understanding the message delivered; as it tries to supply evidences in an entertaining and simple way.

3.1.2.5 Cinema Verite

Cinema verite is also known as live footage, in other words, scenes that intentionally filmed in real time. "Cinema verite is live action footage that is not staged i.e. footage that captures real life" (Rossi, "Elements of Documentary Filmmaking"). This means to follow the subjects of the film around with camera and not to interfere or make interaction with the subjects. The subjects are asked

to pretend that they are not followed around by cameras. In other words, the filmmakers ask the subjects to act based on director said.

3.1.2.6 Music and Sound

The filmmakers can take advantage of the widely different kinds of sounds available. Music and sounds are used to give impression of dramatic and other emotional feelings. It usually emphasizes moments to attract viewers' attention and gives them same emotional feeling as characters feel. It is written:

Music can be used to add drama and emotional tone to documentary films ... Music can also be used to generate sense of irony. Sound is an integral part of many sections of a documentary film. It is the important that the narrator's and interviewee's voice levels are at an appropriate level and quality. (James, "Elements of a Documentary Film")

3.1.2.7 Graphics

Documentary usually provides aids, such as, graphs, charts, lines, and other graphic elements on the screen. These are called graphics. It consists of "anything that appears on the screen that was not actually filmed ... The opening titles and credits will make use of graphics, as well as subtitles and translated text. Graphics are also used to explain complex ideas in a visual diagrammatic form" (James, "Elements of a Documentary Film"). Graphics are used to convince that documentary films real subjects, places, and times. Those aids, charts and graphs, are also useful to present statistics or significant data.

3.2 Extrinsic Aspects

The extrinsic aspect studies the parts which come from the outside of a literary work. Wellek and Warren statement in their book *Theory of Literature* claim that extrinsic study intends to understand a literature through its social perspective (1976:73). Then the study of this research is to dig out the meaning of intrinsic parts and relate it with the social context attached in the object researched.

3.2.1 Role Theory

The term ‘role’ usually links to positions/statuses belong to one in society. It deals with functions of the person who occupies certain positions in society. Actually, the idea of ‘role’ originated from role which relates to actor’s part in a play. William Shakespeare once said that this world is like a theater where each actor has his/her own roles to play. To put this scene into a social scheme, it means each person must understand his place/position in society and carry out his role properly.

Society consists of numerous social statuses, such as student, teacher, parents, mayor, etc. Each social status has its own expected behavior attached. In *Sociology: The Key Concepts*, it is written that:

Roles exist where social groups have established norms that are valid only for certain categories of individual. They imply or create social differentiation of individuals according to the particular part that they are expected to play in the life of the group. (Scott, 2006:144)

The expected behaviors from people who occupy social positions are called role. In *Understanding Modern Sociology*, it is written that a role is a “set

of expectations for behavior standardly associated with a status, and expectations are, of course, people's beliefs about what behavior is right and proper to the occupant of a given status" (Sharrock, Hughes, and Martin, 2003:29). It can be said that everyone must understand his role within a certain social context. Also, one must carries out his role properly, because people have expectations toward one's behavior, considering his social position in a society. Sharrock, Hughes, and Martin claim that the expected behavior means how people should behave according to their occupations (2003:30). For example, people with social statuses as teachers must understand their role, what they should do as teachers also what are their duties, and perform the roles appropriately. People put concern on what others, with particular roles, do to accomplish their duties.

Parsons concludes that roles are "templates for behavior through which people learn *who* they are in the eyes of others and *how* they should act towards them" (Scott, 2006:144-145). Everyone in a society has its own part and function. With roles attached to one, there are defined responsibilities which must be accomplished to reach society's goals or priorities. Moreover, the particular contexts of interactions within societies shape people's actions or treatments toward each other. Further, it is also explained by Parsons that individuals are responsible to accomplish their purposes in a social system by enacting and understanding their own role. Institutions are responsible for socializing the responsibility, expected behaviors attached to a given status (Bailey and Yost in Borgatta and Montgomery, 2000:2421).

To perform the role properly, one must really understand his duties. Also, he must know job description of his occupation accurately. Bailey and Yost in Borgatta and Montgomery view that:

Roles provide behavioral guidelines, prescriptions, or boundaries in the form of *expectations*. These expectations can be formally assigned and explicitly stated—as in the case of occupational job descriptions—or informally assumed and tacit—as in the case of one who plays the “facilitator” role in a friendship clique. (2000:2421)

Following the explanation above, Bailey and Yost argue that job description is a “detailed documentation of all duties and responsibilities ... effectively posits expectations and sets strict behavioral boundaries” (2000:2422). This job description is a written and official expectation in which one must fulfill to reach goals. It provides rules, things which should be done, things that are right or wrong to conduct. It can be said that job description is a guideline or procedures to carry out responsibilities.

Each individual has expectation toward each other’s performances relate to social statuses in society. How one should behave and how other expects them to behave. It is discussed that if the expectations match, then the interaction can run appropriately. On the contrary, if the social transaction fails, the expectations don’t match, Parson called this a ‘sick role’ (Sharrock, Hughes, and Martin, 2003:29). How one behaves with the sick role and how others react to one’s sick role influence the interactions in societies. There may appear dissatisfaction toward occupants of sick role. Further, it is explained:

Those who occupy the ‘sick role’ but do not visibly make efforts to get themselves cured will be subjected to negative sanctions, to disapproving and punitive response. It will, further, be part of the physician’s role to act

as a representative of the society's interest in the patient's recovery, and to demand the patient's cooperation in whatever treatments are deemed most effective in producing that recovery. (Sharrock, Hughes, and Martin, 2003:41)

Once occur problems relate to status-role, all parties involved in the social context must cooperate to solve it. It needs collaborative action to achieve society's priorities. In addition, in fixing the sick role in society, it needs an authority whose competency is unquestionable to recover the sick role. So that the person occupy the sick role will obey the authority and make progress in his charge to carry out responsibilities.

3.2.2 American Public Education Systems

In the United States of America, education system applied is a decentralized one. This means each state has an authority to govern its public education, public schools, within the state's borders. State's government delegates this educational concern to a board of education, the one that runs the public schools. It is explained:

In practice, legislatures generally prefer to exercise very little actual control over the schools. They delegate this responsibility, instead, either to state-wide boards and agencies or to local boards. To be sure, legislatures often pass laws that affect curriculum requirements, pensions, teacher certification, and choice of textbooks, teaching salaries, and the like. They may establish boards of education, independent school districts, colleges, and special schools. (Hillway, 1961:111)

According to Harlow Unger, board of education is a council consists of individuals, either elected or appointed, with responsibilities to set up policies and control schools in its region (2007:155). The board's members, elected or

appointed, are in charge of providing good public schools. It is described by Hillway that the principal duty of the board is to safeguard children's educational rights; it must also react to society's aspirations relate to education (1961:115). In order to create good public schools, the board must work properly and respond to people's demands for school's improvement.

3.2.2.1 Boards of Education

Most states have two types of board of education, namely: state school board and local school board of education. Unger argues that state school board of education may be responsible for all public schools in the state; it may be in charge of partial or total policy making, depends on state's constitution. Meanwhile, local school board of education has the authority delegates from state school board of education to determine educational policies within the state's framework authority; it is the agents of the state (2007:155-156). In other words, local school board is responsible to carry out state's laws locally and apply in its jurisdictional region.

Authority of local school board of education depends on the state constitution and power delegated to them by state school board of education. Hillway states that members of local school boards are responsible to apply state's laws relating to education in their own districts (1961:116). They set up educational policies within the boundaries of state's educational regulations. Local school board decides plans for its districts; as it is written in *Encyclopedia of American Education*:

In general, however, local school boards are the agents of the state in their district and they determine educational policies and budgets for their districts within the framework of state education policies. They also establish the school calendar and hire and fire and set salary schedules for the school district superintendent, school administrators, teachers and school staffs. In some states, they have the power to impose taxes on district residents to raise funds for schools. More than 95% of the school boards in the United States are elected by local residents. (Unger, 2007:156)

In implementing its policies, local school board employs superintendent. It directly manages day-to-day operations of public schools district. Unger explains that superintendent is a chief administrative officer hired by school board. It is in charge of executing board's educational strategies and programs in public schools district (Unger, 2007:1088). Because of his knowledge through daily actions, superintendent may recommend addition or change on educational plans, which advocate students' interests. The board then will review and approve or disapprove it.

Local school board of education has important functions. As middleman, agent of the state, it takes the most actual control. It determines policies for its district and responds to society's wishes for schools betterment. Besides, according to National School Boards Association, the focus of local school board for public education is raising student achievement. Its key work is to support every child to achieve his potential by performing excellent governance and strong leadership ("Beliefs & Policies", 14). Local school board should adjust or change the educational strategies when it is necessary, in order to produce good results in student achievement.

It is already described above several responsibilities of local school board of education. In general, the main duties or functions of the school board are as follows:

1. Choosing a superintendent of schools and other personnel
2. Deciding on general school policies for the district
3. Approving and supervising an annual budget for the operation of the schools
4. Securing funds for school costs through the local tax levy
5. Providing adequate school buildings, grounds, and equipment. (Hillway, 1961:119)

In addition to that, local school board must be accountable. It has direct accountability to society, as it is the educational policy makers for public schools in neighborhood. Hillway explains that school board is expected to make detailed documentation of what actions the board has taken. This information should always be available to public knowledge. Because keeping the society informed is an obligation to community (1961:118).

3.2.2.2 Local School Boards of Education

The Boards of Education vary in their method of selecting members and their duties. Below are explanations of local school boards of education in California, New York, and District of Columbia:

1. California

Taken from “School Board Leadership” provided as public service by the California School Boards Association, it is described that in California,

local school board members are elected (“School Board Leadership”, 1-7). The role of the board is to be responsive to its community’s priorities. The board fulfills this role by performing five major responsibilities:

- Setting the direction for the community’s schools

The board must ensure that directions, clear programs, are established properly. It also provides what students need to reach their full potentials.

- Establishing an effective and efficient structure for the school district

It means to set well-organized structure and employ superintendent and staff that advocate school district programs. It also supervises progress of policies, including matters of curriculum, school programs, budget priorities, and facilities issues, and adopts changes if required.

- Providing support

The board must support superintendent and staff for implementing the policies. This can be done by maintaining school district policies. Besides, the board must be well-informed in explaining to public regarding actions taken to reach community’s goals.

- Ensuring accountability to the public

As society’s representatives, the board must establish policies, evaluate its progress through student achievement, and report to public. In addition, the board evaluates its work through board self-evaluation.

- Acting as community leaders

It is to involve the community and communicate the school district programs and its advancement. The board also speaks on behalf of the

children in advocating their educational needs to build support within communities, state, and national level.

2. New York

Taken from “All in Favor”, information provided by New York State School Boards Association, local school board members in New York are elected (“All in Favor”, 1). The decisions made by the school board will bring significant result for the students. Therefore, school boards must be responsible for every direction taken. Following are the responsibility of school board:

- The school board employs the superintendent, daily manager responsible for managing schools operations.
- The school board sets the budget priorities.
- The school board prioritizes student achievement and evaluates progress.
- The school board decides whether schools are constructed or closed.
- The school board establishes policies determining what kinds of educational programs and technologies are best for students.
- The school board ensures that district education programs agree with the New York State laws and regulations.

3. District of Columbia

In District of Columbia, board of education is under direct mayoral control. Mayor of the D.C. orders establishment of state board of education by laws. The function of the state board is advising state superintendent in educational policies, goals, and rules, and is approving by authority of Mayor.

(“Government of the District of Columbia”, 3-9). Further, according to Administrative Issuance System issued by Government of the District of Columbia, several duties of state board of education relate to public schools are:

- Approve state academic standards, ensuring that the standards recommended by the state superintendent dig out students’ potentials and to advance teaching skills.
- Approve standards to measure student achievement and teacher’s quality.
- Approve the state accountability plan which ensures progress of student achievement based on applied academic standards.
- Approve state policies for additional education programs that encourage student academic achievement.

The local school board is a public agency with proportionate responsibilities and power. Hillway emphasized that appointed and elected school boards members, especially the elected board which represents society more directly than appointed boards, should behave what they are expected to do (1961:122). Therefore, anyone elected or appointed to membership on the school board should be able to lead his fellow citizens and fulfill children’s educational rights.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

4.1 Characters Dealing with the Issue of Local School Board of Education's Role

4.1.1 Anthony

Anthony is a student who wants to go to a great school. He is last year student of Kimball Elementary School in Washington, D.C. His father passed away, and he never knew his mother; his grandparents raise him. Anthony is clever, diligent, and active student. Pictures below show interview with Anthony. The pictures display graphics in form of subtitle mentions name and origin, and in that session, interviewer ask mathematics question and Anthony answers it.

Interviewer : If I have four cookies and I ate two of them, what portion did I eat?

Anthony : You had four cookies, and you ate two, and then you got to cross-multiply that. Four, two, wait, four, two. Four, 20 ... You ate f ... you ate 50 percent of your cookie. (Waiting for Superman, 00:00:47 – 00:01:10)



Picture 4.1 (00:00:49)



Picture 4.2 (00:00:59)



Picture 4.3 (00:01:09)

Anthony stayed back a year at second grade because his father passed away; afterward, he started studying diligently and passed. He is mature in his early age, saying that he wants to raise his children in a better environment than he has. From scripted interview below, it can be inferred that Anthony's surrounding shaped his perspective. A thought of raising his kids in a good neighborhood is a strong reason for him to get a good education until college. The visual display of the scenes is presented with audio quality of Anthony's wish through interview below:

Anthony : I wanna go to college and get an education.
 Interviewer : Why?
 Anthony : Because I... if I have kids, I don't want kids to be in this environment.
 Interviewer : What?
 Anthony : Like around here. I mean, I want my kids to have better than what I had.
 Interviewer : You're already thinking about your kids?
 Anthony : No, I'm just saying. I wanna go to school. (Waiting for Superman, 01:21:47 – 01:22:15)

Once, Anthony's class makes a visit to middle school nearby. Pictures below shows Anthony, his friends, and teacher walk along street, taken using cinema verite technique. They are heading to John Philip Sousa Junior High School, where Anthony supposed to continue his study. He will automatically enter this school after graduating. But his future will be at risk if he enters this public school in neighborhood as expresses in narration below:



Picture 4.4 (00:27:53)



Picture 4.5 (00:28:03)



Picture 4.6 (00:28:12)

Anthony's teacher : This is Sousa. It's a middle school. This is basically our neighborhood school. So when our children leave Kimball, they would automatically be enrolled in Sousa. And we're gonna try to also...

Narrator : Most will go to John Philip Sousa, which the Washington Post called "an academic sinkhole." If Anthony goes to Sousa, odds are, he will enter high school three to five grade levels behind. (Waiting for Superman, 00:27:57 - 00:28:25)

The existence of school which makes its students left behind does not fit the NCLB (No Child Left Behind) Act. This shows that the board cannot carry out its responsibility as it should be. Instead of raising student achievement, the boards are bringing failure by failing public schools they lead. These kinds of public education do leave students behind.

The board's responsibility is well documented and it must be understood and implemented. In fact, the responsibility is not properly done. It can be seen in Anthony's case. Applied curriculum in Sousa Junior High is leaving its students behind. It is interesting to look at statement in narration above "he will enter high school three to five grade levels behind". Then the question is what do the students do or learn at school? This implies that something is wrong with curriculum or teacher, or both, which rooted from the leadership of education provider, local school boards. This is a proof that the schools cause student fails

by either not forming proper curriculum or not providing well-qualified teacher; as it is expected. Otherwise, if it lets students fail and inhibit them to dig out their potentials, it should be reformed. And for those who do not carry out the responsibility as board's members properly should be evaluated. Board should provide appropriate curriculum to encourage students' potentials. It is the board responsibility to ensure that superintendent applies an accurate measure of student achievement and apply standards for qualified teachers. By realizing this, an excellent outcome will be attained.

4.1.2 Daisy

Daisy is a sixth grade student who exactly knows what she wants for her future. She wants to be a surgeon. Below is the scripted interview:

Daisy : I want to go to a medical college or a veterinarian college to study about people and animals, because I really want to become a surgeon. (Waiting for Superman, 00:20:23 – 00:20:33)

Daisy studies at Lorena Street School in Los Angeles, California. She loves to read and she studies diligently every day; and so she has a good observation toward several course's problems. Her teacher praised her for it (picture 4.7). The scene in picture is staged using cinema verite. She even creates a fun learning to avoid boredom when learning at school. This can be known from the interview as portrayed in pictures 4.8 and 4.9 below:



Picture 4.7 (00:08:03)



Picture 4.8 (00:08:22)



Picture 4.9 (00:08:32)

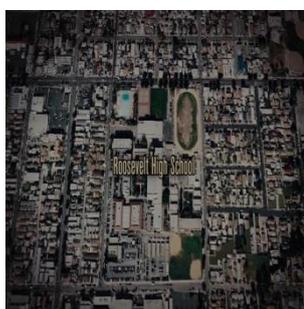
Further, Daisy is well-prepared for her future education. She is eager and enthusiastic to reach the highest level of education for realizing her dream. It can be said that her early preparation for a college admission shows her desire in achieving high education, a great one. This can be identified through an interview with Daisy's teacher, Celeste Bell, as written below:

- Celeste Bell : She chose her college and she wrote a letter to the admissions and asking them to allow her to attend their college.
- Interviewer : Already?
- Celeste Bell : Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. She's already ... she knows what she's gonna do. (Waiting for Superman, 00:08:06 – 00:08:19)

Daisy is cheated by the public education; her school lets her fail. Daisy herself through interview expresses that she would like to study in a school that won't let her fail. She adds that KIPP, public charter school where she finally apply in, is a better school that they won't let her fail. How come a student judges her own school for bringing a failure instead of success? Daisy's feeling toward public school indicates the failure of local school board in maintaining the policies which eventually leads to be executed wrongly.

Daisy is supposed to continue her study in public school neighborhood, Robert Louis Stevenson Middle School (picture 4.10); this picture is taken using

cinema verite. Then Daisy will continue to study in Roosevelt High School, one of the worst-performing schools in Los Angeles (picture 4.11). The scene portrayed below is an animation showing location of the school. If she enters that school, she may be one of the dropout students and not graduate. Then she will lose a chance to compete with other students to enter college as she wants. This can be inferred from narration as follow:



Picture 4.10 (00:20:46) Picture 4.11 (00:21:05) Picture 4.12 (00:21:22)

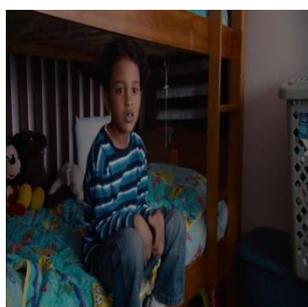
Narration : Daisy's path to medical school begins with eighth grade algebra, which she'll need to take when she moves up to Stevenson Middle School. By the time she leaves Stevenson, only 13 percent of her classmates will be proficient in math. Stevenson feeds into Roosevelt, one of the worst performing high schools in Los Angeles. Only three out of a hundred students at Roosevelt will graduate with the classes necessary for admission to a four-year university. And 57 percent of Daisy's classmates won't graduate. (Waiting for Superman, 00:20:36 – 00:21:32)

Daisy's case is similar to Anthony. They both are supposed to go to worst-performing school in neighborhood. In dealing with this matter, local school boards must control the development of policies, including matters of curriculum deliver to students. This will decide students' academic result, thus the board must make sure that school programs are meeting the academic standard. In addition to that, local school board of education is responsible for evaluating and reviewing progress made by students, if there is a decline, change is necessary. With the

existed statistic as written above; it indicates local school board does not carry the duty well. The board does not do any plans to change the policies; the result is like what Daisy experiences. Her future for entering college is at risk because her school makes her fails. Her future school is left her behind, not graduate.

4.1.3 Francisco

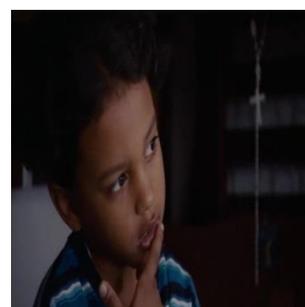
Francisco is a second grader student who likes Math. He lives in Bronx, New York. Pictures below show interview with Francisco in his room. From its subtitles, it can be known his name and where he lives. Once in interview, he said interesting thing, saying that he wants to be a recorder. Unknowingly, he reveals his charm and innocent side of a little boy. Below is scripted conversation of his interview:



Picture 4.13 (00:12:14)



Picture 4.14 (00:12:28)

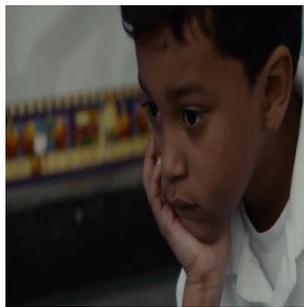


Picture 4.15 (00:12:39)

- Interviewer : Do you like school?
 Francisco : No.
 Interviewer : No?
 Francisco : 'cause sometimes Math is too hard for kids, so kids say, "I don't like Math! I don't like Math!" and I say, "I like Math."
 Interviewer : So you do kind of like school?
 Francisco : Everybody says they don't like math. And I ... I'm the only one who says, "I like math."
 Interviewer : What do you want to be when you grow up?

Francisco : A recorder... like you guys. (Waiting for Superman, 00:12:11 – 00:12:43)

Francisco does not like attending school; this may because he has not been fortunate with his teacher at school. Pictures below, filmed with cinema verite, shows Francisco's activity in class. It can be seen that he sat on the back and bowed his head down (picture 4.16). Some of his friends raised their hands, and it seemed that Francisco was not responsive to the class situation (picture 4.17). Yet, he is a motivated learner at home, he learns to read at school too (picture 4.18). These scenes are filled with narration of his mother, Maria Regalado, who expresses the cause of Francisco's behavior for disliking school:



Picture 4.16 (00:32:36) Picture 4.17 (00:32:40) Picture 4.18 (00:33:06)

Maria : This is only his second year there. You know, first grade for him has been very horrible. Francisco hasn't had... He hasn't been that fortunate with teachers. Maybe that attitude of him not liking school comes from that, I think. His teacher is telling me that he has difficulty in reading. The teacher said he wasn't being focused and this and that. That he's at risk of staying behind, repeating first grade, which I don't understand, because I do work with him at home. (Waiting for Superman, 00:32:33 – 00:33:13)

As it is stated above, Francisco doesn't like attending school. Her mother claims it is because he has not been fortunate with his teacher. From Maria's statement above, it can be said that teachers are not doing their jobs well.

Consequently, Francisco is not interested to study at school and stay quiet. His teacher interprets this as a shortage of focus which can cause him staying in the same class next year. Meanwhile, a reading lecturer, in a college nearby, to whom Maria asks whether Francisco comprehends or not, suggests Maria to handle this matter seriously beyond school. This means to take care of the matter to higher level, to school board of education. Below is conversation between Maria and the lecturer:

- Narrator : Maria takes Francisco to a reading class at a nearby college.
- Lecturer : Teachers are really overwhelmed, 'cause it's really hard to give each one that, you know, individualized attention. So it's more work for them to have these kinds of meetings. If they can avoid them, unfortunately, you have some teachers that will avoid them if they can.
- Maria : Well, he's already been in two reading programs and teachers are telling me that he knows how to read, he's comprehending, and the teachers keep telling me that there's something with his comprehension.
- Lecturer : Have you taken it beyond the school?
- Maria : No.
- Lecturer : You should. (Waiting for Superman, 00:54:33 – 00:55:02)

Local school board should replace the kinds of teachers; those who are not aware of their responsibilities, and fail in performing their duties. In fact, the board does not do anything to fix this teacher matter. The board must evaluate properly school districts under its leadership. So that, there will be competent and cooperative teachers. Local school board must hire qualified teachers to teach students. Besides, it also must respond citizens' wishes for parental involvement.

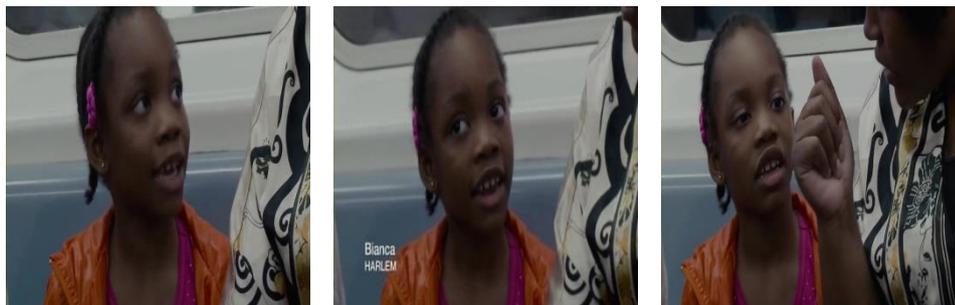
Once, it is shown in the film that Maria asks for Francisco's folder, to know his progress at school, his teacher said to him that they don't need it. Maria

even calls school to have a teacher-parent conference with Francisco's teacher, to know how he is doing at school. Yet, there is a limited parental involvement. By having this kind of circumstances in public school, it shows a form of failure performed by local school boards. Boards must be accountable to society. One of the ways is to keep parents informed by having parental involvement relates to students' activities and their progress. Board must make sure that school districts run this teacher-parent interaction.

More importantly, one of the local school board duties in New York is to prioritize student achievement and evaluate progress. The board must also set a target for how many books students learn, and what kind of books they are. By putting attention to it, the school board will know which textbooks are appropriate and what courses are needed to be provided. Board must ensure that all students are meeting the standards approved. So that, there will not be other Francisco who dislikes going to school and is given early judge for deficient focus.

4.1.4 Bianca

Bianca is first year student of a parochial school. Her school is located directly across her home. She lives in Harlem only with her mother. Bianca is bright and active. She actively learns everywhere, even at subway with her mother. Pictures below are filmed using cinema verite technique, showing Bianca learns alphabet. The subtitles shows name Bianca, and her domicile, Harlem, New York.



Picture 4.19 (00:14:46) Picture 4.20 (00:14:48) Picture 4.21 (00:14:52)

In addition to that, Bianca always tells her mother activities at school and shares her feeling toward it. At home, after coming back from school; she told her mother what she does at school today. She handed over a song from her teacher which had to be performed by herself. She is open to her mother.

Bianca's mother, Nakia, experienced public education, how bad it is. And so she does not want her daughter to feel the same as she had. It is a form of distrust from society to public school's quality. Bianca herself does not experience the education in public schools. Her mother does not agree with public schools at all, she does not even take her child to public school; even though private school tuition is hard for her. Below is the scripted interview:

Nakia : I grew up in the public school system. I had an economics teacher, and that teacher refused to teach. When you hear, "Well, I get paid whether or not you learn or not," it sticks with you. And that's something that no parent wants their child to ever be a witness to or to hear when they're going to school. If I'm trusting you with my child and teaching my child, I expect you to do the same job that you would want for your ... for your own children. And I just knew that I wanted her in parochial school. (Waiting for Superman, 00:49:04 - 00:49:41)

The lack of trust from society to public schools must be paid attention, because this is a proof that local board fails to do its job. Basically, to solve this problem, to gain society's trust, is showing that public school is working. It is by performing and implementing accurately the responsibilities of the local school boards. When the board is already acted as it is expected with the status as school board members, the society will be please to send their children to public schools in neighborhood and believe that they will get a great education. In this case, Nakia believes that great education means great teachers, thing that public schools do not own. Then, it is clear that the board must hire well-qualified teachers to improve public school qualities. The board must proof that public school is trustable to be a great education for American children by providing great teachers.

4.1.5 Emily

Emily is an eighth grade student at Roy Cloud Middle School. She lives in a decent neighborhood in Redwood City, California. She also does have a nice family. By interviewing Emily about her school matters in her room, it can be known that in future, she wants to be a teacher. Below are the conversations:

Interviewer : What's your favorite subject?
 Emily : I'm not very good at math, but I think I'd say it's my favorite subject. Math and Science. I don't know what college I want to go to, but I know I wanna be a teacher.
 (Waiting for Superman, 01:02:55 – 01:03:10)

In addition to that, Emily always does her homework. She does studies hard, as her test scores are low. Pictures below are staged using cinema verite,

which portray Emily's daily activity when she does her homework accompanied by her mother. Picture 4.22 show graphics of name and domicile of Emily. She asked her mother a science question related to chemical substance on periodic table. Her mother replied that she couldn't answer that.



Picture 4.22 (01:02:14)



Picture 4.23 (01:02:25)

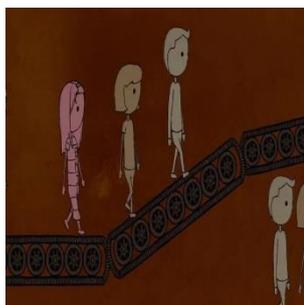


Picture 4.24 (01:02:33)

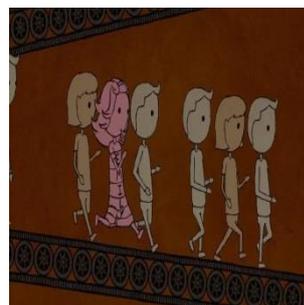
Emily is in a situation where she faces an unfair system of public school called tracking. It is a system which groups students based on their score, an outdated system which best applied fifty years ago. Pictures below explain tracking system in animation.



Picture 4.25 (01:04:24)



Picture 4.26 (01:04:28)



Picture 4.27 (01:04:40)

Narration : Many families and their children are unaware that their academic future will be decided by a school official who will place them on a track. Tracking is often determined by test results, but research shows that students are also tracked by arbitrary or subjective factors like neatness, politeness and obedience to authority. Lower tracks have lower expectations, and often worse teachers. So students placed on lower tracks often find they are running fast, but falling behind. As the years progress, it becomes

increasingly difficult for those kids to ever catch up.
(Waiting for Superman, 01:04:14 – 01:04:51)

Woodside High, where Emily is supposed to continue her study, is still applying it. This can be identified from the interview with Todd Dickinson, spokesperson from Summit Prep Public Charter School, as follows:

- Todd Dickinson : They all take the same courses through their four years, which means we don't have tracking, so ... yeah, so we don't track the students.
- Interviewer : So the school over there tracks and you don't. Why?
- Todd Dickinson : Because we think every kid should be able to get to the highest level of curriculum, so we want to hold them all to the same high standard. (Waiting for Superman, 01:03:43 – 01:04:00)

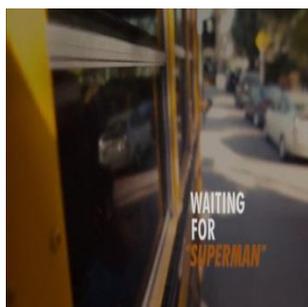
It is clear that local school board should set the direction for the community's schools and perform suitably. This is the basic thing, to safeguard children educational right by setting a clear plan for what should school and students reach. As a result, school district will have a clear guideline to conduct the programs approved by the board. Looking at the existence of the outdated system like tracking in this era is a proof that the local school board does not provide or maintain school's direction to reach students' full potentials.

Woodside High must be evaluated as this system is unfair and does not fit anymore with the recent education. An early judgment from school officials to place students wherever they deem appropriate means they do not safeguard students' educational rights. They limit students' ability; and this also means they put down student's hopes. It is a form of cheating done by adults to innocent children.

4.2 Plot Dealing with the Organization of American Public Education

1. Exposition

The story begins with introduction of students involved in the film, Anthony, Daisy, Francisco, Bianca, and Emily. The title of this film was inspired by a power, like Superman had, to save them from the failing school and neighborhood (picture 4.28). This picture shows an opening title; and it is shot using cinema verite, showing a boy inside a bus looked out the view on the street he passed. This illustrated a desperate feeling from parents for sending children to a public school which strengthen with back sound of sad piano playing. The reasons should be examined and to fix the situation and make a betterment for public schools. Filming with cinema verite, picture 4.29 exhibits footsteps on a street, a morning ritual, going to school which accompanied with an uneasy feeling (picture 4.30). It is because parents do not believe in public school quality.



Picture 4.28 (00:02:04)



Picture 4.29 (00:02:34)



Picture 4.30 (00:02:40)

Further, it presented the goal of No Child Left Behind Act, to produce good results in student academic achievement. Former President, George Bush promised to fix education. This objective could not yet be accomplished, as there were problems faced by American education. The initial problem is

introduced by educator Geoffrey Canada saying that something is wrong with the education system.

Board of education fails in carrying out its chief duty, to safeguarding children's educational by raising their achievement and dig out their potentials. It can be seen through narration below which visualizes in animation describing the failure of reaching NCLB Act, 100 % proficiency in Mathematics and reading.



Picture 4.31 (00:18:24)



Picture 4.32 (00:18:28)



Picture 4.33 (00:18:33)

Narration : So now it's eight years later, and we have four years left to reach our goal: 100 percent proficiency in math and reading. In Alabama, only 18 percent of eighth graders are proficient in math, and next door in Mississippi, it's only 14 %. And it's not just Southern states. New Jersey 40 %, Connecticut 35 %, New York 30 %, Arizona 26 %. And in California, just 24 % of eighth graders are proficient in math. When eighth graders across the country were tested for reading, most scored between 20 and 35 % of grade level. The worst scores for reading are in Washington, D.C., our nation's capital. (Waiting for Superman, 00:17:39 – 00:18:32)

2. Conflict

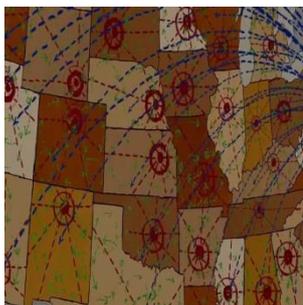
Conflict contains further explanation of education system in American public schools as experienced by those five students and other students across the United States of America. This also relates to boards of education's

responsibility in providing great public education for the students across the United States of America. Below is the narration which visualized in animation:

Narration : The federal government passes laws and sends money to the states, but the states fund schools, too, and set their own, often-conflicting standards. And there are more than 14,000 autonomous school boards, making school governance a tangled mess of conflicting regulations and mixed agendas. You've got local school boards, people from the State Departments of Education, Federal Department of Education, district superintendents and their huge staffs. (Waiting for Superman, 00:30:38 – 00:31:10)



Picture 4.34 (00:30:45)



Picture 4.35 (00:30:53)



Picture 4.36 (00:31:06)

From the narration above, it can be inferred that the central or federal government delegates authority to state and local governance (picture 4.34). National, state, and local level, each has its own responsibility that relates to education. The central government passes law and funds states. In the state level, it also funds education from public taxes and decides policy framework delegated to local school board. Local agency decides the policies and maintains it.

Thing that makes school governance a mess is those who do not perform its role properly in each level. If every party does the duties as it should be, teacher will focus to teach and follow superintendent advice

approved by local school board, as long as in compliance with state's constitution. Therefore, local school board is obliged to review its plans and direct teachers to focus on students. Those people who fill the posts in board of education should not make intervention to school districts with confusing instructions. This happens because the board's policies are not implemented properly. It does not uphold its responsibility and authority as education provider in the districts. In dealing this matter, the local school board must maintain and uphold the approved policies and it must support superintendent to execute the plans properly.

In addition to that, American public school is designed to serve surrounding society where it is constructed. Therefore, it makes one enroll in a public school in his/her neighborhood automatically. Thus, if a person does not have enough sources to send children to a private school, the neighborhood school is the only option they have. This can be inferred from narration below:

Narration : If you want a better school for your kid, it's all about options. But the system is confusing. Let's say you live in a district with a hundred public schools. Most are like Francisco's, not terrible, but not great. A fifth will be failing, and more will be hovering between mediocre and failing. There's usually one mainstream school that's defying the odds. With great principal and outstanding teachers, it can produce amazing results, but you can't go there unless you live in that neighborhood. So, for years, unless you could afford a private school, you were stuck with your neighborhood school. (Waiting for Superman, 00:55:06 – 00:55:43)

It can be said that good public schools are not vastly available. There are indeed a few. Those who stuck in failing public schools neighborhood must struggle hard to get a better education.

3. Denouement

In the end of the story, it can be concluded that problems in public schools remain unresolved. This is a timeless matter. Michelle Rhee, D.C. public schools superintendent claims that problems will be resolved when related people, members of boards of education, who have interest in this matter, want to solve it. From the audio quality, it can be heard Rhee's statement, "Now I see in a lot more coherent ways why things are the way they are. It all becomes about the adults". It can be said that even a very brave educator and visionary reformist cannot change a thing to improve public schools without boards of education consent. It is because these agencies are responsible for public education. And so, unless boards of education take actions and cooperate amongst them, the situation will remain the same.

So people are using an alternative option, applying for public charter schools which its quality is considered better than public school in neighborhood. The narration is as followed:

Narration : Charter schools were a controversial experiment: public schools with public money, but independently run. When there's limited space, by law the school must hold a lottery. (Waiting for Superman, 00:47:39 – 00:47:53)



Picture 4.37 (01:30:47)



Picture 4.38 (01:31:08)



Picture 4.39 (01:32:17)

However, when there is a great school, there will be a lot of applicants. The fair thing that can be done is to select students through a hands of luck, lottery. Pictures above, filmed using cinema verite, show three methods used in selecting students, they are a bouncing ball with number, a hand pulling a card, and a computer generating number. These are the fair and legal methods, and really depend on luck. From the five students, only two are accepted, Emily and Anthony. In spite of all those impressive opinion on public charter schools, the film implies that great school won't come from winning the lottery. They won't come from "Superman". They will come from thoughtful citizens.

4.3 Settings Relating to Students Educational Achievement

The public education system makes one enrolls public school in neighborhood automatically. If he does not afford the private school tuition, public school in neighborhood is the only option. The bad news is this school cannot provide a good education for children.

The film shows several actual geographical locations, states, in which the stories occurred, and where the characters live. They are Washington D.C., Redwood City in California, and Harlem in New York. The first is District of Columbia, nation's capital where Anthony lives. District of Columbia public schools seem has everything wrong with it; it has the worst reading score in nation. Besides, there is a school which Washington Post labels as academic

sinkhole. It means the school is very bad which makes students three grade levels behind.

Exploring D.C. through Anthony's daily life, it can be seen in film that Anthony's lives in disadvantaged environment, wrong neighborhood. His grandmother is also aware of this and is afraid; because Anthony is easily influenced to do things he supposed not to do. His surrounding may shape his behavior. Fortunately, Anthony himself is aware of his surrounding, and so he determines to aim for a better education in order to live better in future.

The board council in Washington, D.C. must be aware of this situation. The boards still oblige to provide a great education for children there. It must make sure that students' activities and their progress are not influenced by the surroundings.



Picture 4.40 (01:01:50)



Picture 4.41 (01:01:57)

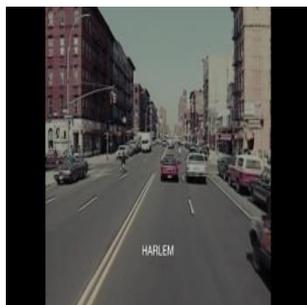


Picture 4.42 (01:02:01)

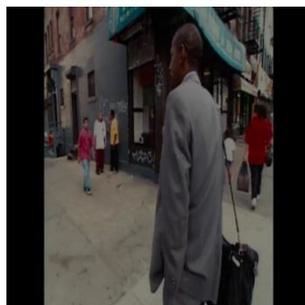
Pictures above portray Redwood City, located 30 minutes south of San Francisco, in the heart of Silicon Valley, California. These scenes filmed with cinema verite technique. It shows the view surrounding. From pictures below it can be seen that Emily lives in a decent neighborhood in Redwood City, California. There are no inner problems. The home price is expensive; almost a million dollar. People assume that the public educations are as nice as the homes.

Yet, the public school in neighborhood applies a conservative system, tracking system, which limits one's potentials.

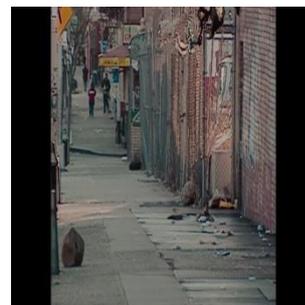
As it is stated above, those who do not afford to study in a private school, will stuck in public school neighborhood. Decent neighborhood cannot assure that it also provides good public school. Taking for an example, the decent and elite neighborhood in Redwood City does not guarantee that its public school is as nice as its house. This is experienced by Emily. She lives in decent neighborhood with fancy facilities and fully equipped public school, yet poor education system. The system called tracking does not encourage students; it even limits students to improve their potentials. Then student's achievement has nothing to do with certain geographical location, it is a matter of local school board's leadership. Regarding this matter, the board must monitor and evaluate the school districts system under its governing region.



Picture 4.43 (01:12:40)



Picture 4.44 (01:12:42)



Picture 4.45 (01:12:56)

The last location is Harlem, New York which is shown through archive footage with subtitle of the city's name (picture 4.43). Picture 4.44 above staged with cinema verite shows Geoffrey Canada, an educator in his neighborhood, Harlem. He said that Harlem is the worst educational outcomes for children. It has the highest rate of foster care, twice unemployment in the rest of New York; even

experts believe that most motivated educator could not overcome the problems that these children brought from home, like poverty, juvenile delinquency, or troubled households. Therefore, experts tend to blame failing public schools to failing neighborhood.

Further, mostly public schools available are horrible, in a state that makes students fail or leave behind like what happen in Washington, D.C. A statement saying that that failure public schools are because of its environment needed to be questioned again. As it can be the reverse, failing neighborhood is because of failing schools. This can be seen in Harlem, New York. An educator Geoffrey Canada succeeds in proving that children can learn in disadvantaged environment, and make achievements, as expressed below:

Narrator : In Geoffrey Canada's program, there are 8,000 students. In a neighborhood where less than one out of ten residents have a college degree, nine out of ten are proficient in math and are on track to go to a four-year college. (Waiting for Superman, 01:18:33 – 01:18:44)

Environment is not responsible for providing great school for students; on the contrary, local school boards are the one responsible. They are responsible for creating a good school environment and a proper system. Besides, to have thoughtful and well-educated citizens in disadvantaged environment will help changing the failing neighborhood to be better.

4.4 Conflicts Arising between Educators in Controlling Public Schools

a. Conflict between Michelle Rhee and Policy Makers

Michelle Rhee, superintendent directly appointed by D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty claims that D.C. Board of Education does not apply the right accountability standards; as a result children are getting crappy education and they cannot get excellent results.

Narration : I mean, this district did not become the way that it is by accident. There's a complete and utter lack of accountability for the job that we're supposed to be doing, which is producing results for kids. (Waiting for Superman, 00:32:02 – 00:32:16)

The case is there is a lack of accountability of the board which leads to a failing public school. Rhee thinks that students are victims of adults' interest. Board members are not doing their job, and do not make any efforts to do so. One of the consequences is nation's capital has the worst scores for reading.

Further, considering her chief duty to produce and raise student achievement; she does everything possible to accomplish the goal. Yet, the more she tries to change for advancement, the more she runs against the system, the policy makers, state. Fundamental things she recommends to alter are not approved, for instances, extending the school day, effectively evaluating teachers or altering the terms of tenure, as it can be seen below:



Picture 4.46 (01:23:31)



Picture 4.47 (01:23:34)

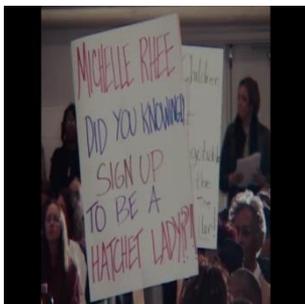


Picture 4.48 (01:23:37)

The scenes above are staged using cinema verite. This portrays Rhee's supervising a school. Because of lacking audio clarity, there is subtitle to make clear the conversation. Rhee is asking, "What do you think about your teacher?" The students replied that the teacher is okay. Rhee seems not satisfied with his answer, as she feels that this student lies.

b. Conflict between Michelle Rhee and Teachers Union

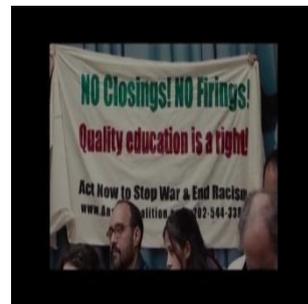
In the beginning of her leadership, Michelle Rhee fires several principals, including her own children school. Further, she closes down 23 public schools that she deem inappropriate. This causes rage from teacher union. Teachers are losing their jobs. Demonstrations are everywhere as a result of Rhee's actions. Pictures below is an archival footage of several protests occurred against D.C. superintendent:



Picture 4.49 (00:51:18)



Picture 4.50 (00:51:18)



Picture 4.51 (00:51:24)

As a result of her actions, Rhee has to face the rage of teachers union. It is hard to fire incompetent public school teachers and replace with the qualify ones because teachers are automatically engaged in contract. This is a difficult matter to solve. Therefore, Rhee proposed a deal with unions, because the teachers' matters are the basic thing to change in order to make betterment of public education in the country. She argues:

Rhee : The mentality is that they have a right to that job. I believe that the mindset has to be completely flipped on its head, and unless you can show that you're bringing positive results for kids, then you cannot have the privilege of teaching in our schools and teaching our children. We ultimately wanna have the most highly effective and highly compensated educator force in the country. We wanna make sure that we recognize and reward our effective teachers, and I think this proposal will go a long way to doing that. (Waiting for Superman, 01:24:50 – 01:25:19)

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Waiting for superman is a documentary film tries to depict face of American public education system. This film records school life of five students living in California, New York, and Washington, D.C. They represent public school students across the United States of America who has been cheated by its system. The promising No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act is left only a promise without any significant changes. This even worsens with incompetence leadership of local school boards of education. Dissatisfaction, distrust, worry are what parents feel toward public schools. Problem appears and remains unresolved. Conflicts exist among educators. Still, there isn't answer to fix education problems in the country. But, people are still believing and hoping to get better education. A reveal of true face of public education of a superpower country with reliable interview of educators and real life of characters, this film is deserved to watch and appreciate.

Several scenes of the film show that education providers, board of education, deserve to dismiss from their duties. It is because the law has been broken and society's demand has been neglected. It can be seen that failing public school is factual result of sick role occupied by board of education members. Indeed, education is a timeless problem which causes debates and conflicts amongst educators and society up to now.

In conclusion, roles performed by the Board of Education are not appropriate. It does not carry out the job described in the detail documentation of board's role. Board has made delinquencies toward its roles regarding its duties. These wrongly executed plans bring down students. This is in compliance with the title of the film; the students across the country are still waiting for a super power, superman, to save them from failing public schools. They wait for solutions, waiting for the adults to cooperate and fix education in country. Then the question is what if superman never came to save them? Should they wait forever? What should they do?

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