

CHALLENGES ON IMPLEMENTATION AND REFORM IN HIGH SCHOOL: THE CASE OF CEARÁ

DESAFIOS DE IMPLEMENTAÇÃO E REFORMA NO ENSINO MÉDIO: O CASO DO CEARÁ

DESAFÍOS DE IMPLEMENTACIÓN Y REFORMA EN LA ESCUELA SECUNDARIA: EL CASO DE CEARÁ

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ABSTRACT: The objective of this article is to promote a reflection on the complex articulation between the formulation and implementation of policies in the educational context of Ceará. With a qualitative and quantitative approach and a descriptive and explanatory nature, it is constituted a case study and discusses the three main types of offer – regular secondary education, secondary education integrated with professional education and full-time secondary education – presenting data on the distribution of registrations in the last seven years. It is argued that the implemented model contributes to the maintenance and deepening of educational inequalities within the network, creating sub-networks with different statuses. In addition to these reflections, considerations are made on the challenge of reform this stage of basic education, given a reality in which 74 municipalities in Ceará have only one high school. Five years after the approval of the national law to reform secondary education, its implementation is unlikely in a significant 2233arto f Ceará’s territory.

KEYWORDS: High school. Offer diversification. High School reform. Inequalities of opportunities.

RESUMO: *Este artigo objetiva fomentar uma reflexão acerca da complexa articulação entre a formulação e implementação de políticas no contexto educacional cearense. De abordagem qualitativa e quantitativa e de natureza descritiva e explicativa, constitui-se um estudo de caso e discute os três principais tipos de oferta – ensino médio regular, ensino médio integrado à educação profissional e ensino médio em tempo integral – apresentando dados sobre a distribuição de matrículas nos últimos sete anos. Argumenta-se que o modelo implementado contribui para a manutenção e aprofundamento de desigualdades educacionais no interior da rede, criando subredes com status distintos. Para além dessas reflexões, são feitas considerações sobre o desafio da reforma desta etapa da educação básica, diante de uma*

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realidade de 74 municípios cearenses que possuem apenas uma escola de ensino médio. Passados cinco anos da aprovação da lei nacional de reforma do ensino médio, sua implementação revela-se improvável em parte significativa do território cearense.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Ensino médio. Diversificação da oferta. Reforma do Ensino Médio. Desigualdades de oportunidades.*

RESUMEN: *Este artículo tiene como objetivo promover una reflexión sobre la compleja articulación entre la formulación y la implementación de políticas en el contexto educativo de Ceará. Con un enfoque cualitativo y cuantitativo y de carácter descriptivo y explicativo, se constituye un estudio de caso y discute los tres principales tipos de oferta – educación secundaria regular, educación secundaria integrada a la educación profesional y educación secundaria a tiempo completo- presentando datos sobre la Distribución de matrículas en los últimos siete años. Se argumenta que el modelo implementado contribuye al mantenimiento y profundización de las desigualdades educativas dentro de la red, creando subredes con diferentes status. Además de estas reflexiones, se hacen consideraciones sobre el desafío de reformar esta etapa de la educación básica, frente a una realidad en la que 74 municipios de Ceará tienen una sola escuela secundaria. Cinco años después de la aprobación de la ley nacional de reforma de la educación secundaria, su implementación es poco probable en una parte significativa del territorio de Ceará.*

PALABRAS CLAVES: *Escuela secundaria. Diversificación de la oferta. Reforma de la escuela secundaria. Desigualdades de oportunidades.*

Introduction

About a decade ago, Ceará began to be recognized for the implementation of a literacy policy at the right age (ALFLEN; VIEIRA, 2018; DE GUSMÃO; RIBEIRO, 2011; DE AGUIAR BRAVO; RIBEIRO; CRUZ, 2021; MARQUES; AGUIAR; CAMPOS, 2009) that inspired the formulation of a federal policy (Programa Nacional de Alfabetização na Idade Certa) and came to be adopted as a model by several units of the federation. Besides becoming a national reference, the case of Ceará has encouraged Brazilian states and municipalities to focus on the early years of schooling as a strategic element in improving the quality of education, which has contributed to encouraging advances in national indicators in this segment.

By choosing to focus on secondary education, a lesser-known aspect of educational policies in this state, this article aims to encourage reflection on the complex articulation between policy formulation and implementation in the educational context of Ceará. At the same time, it problematizes some impasses arising from such a situation in the implementation

of policies relevant to this stage of basic education, in order to ensure a quality offer for the entire population in the high school attendance range.

We start from the understanding that, throughout history, Ceará has implemented high school policies that resulted in a model characterized by the diversification of supply with implications on equal opportunities. This theme was initially analyzed in extensive research on the subject (VIDAL; VIEIRA, 2016) and deepened by researchers dedicated to the analysis of the field in later studies (VIEIRA; VIDAL; QUEIROZ, 2021; LIMA, 2020).

As it is now presented, secondary education in Ceará is distributed in differentiated offerings, which can be formally identified as: Regular High School (RE); Full-Time High School (EMTI); and High School Integrated to Professional Education (EEEP). Besides these three offerings, there are two others that are less visible: high school offered in the rural extensions or school annexes, as well as those offered in the evening shift, which house a significant contingent of students. It is worth noting that there are no policies formulated specifically for this target public. Other small offers characterized by different situations are responsible for high school in the public network, such as country schools, military schools and quilombola schools, which represent about 1% of the total high school enrollments, and Centers for Youth and Adult Education (CEJA in the Portuguese acronym), which account for about 10% of the offers, serving those who have had their schooling interrupted in the appropriate period.

In order to analyze the implementation of high school policies in the state of Ceará, this article focuses on this stage of basic education, analyzing the three major types of offerings - Regular High School, Full Time High School and High School Integrated with Vocational Education - in order to better characterize its current configuration, and introducing a discussion on the implications arising from the implementation of the "new high school". It is understood that, given the organization of the network now in place, a significant number of issues deserve further study, some of which are covered here. An example is the distribution of the supply of high school in the territory of Ceará, where, depending on contexts of greater or lesser social and economic vulnerability, certain offers may be absent, adding new contours to the problem of inequalities. Another significant aspect to be examined at this juncture is the existence of 74 municipalities characterized by the presence of only one high school, in the context of the implementation of the high school reform that begins in 2022 in that state.

The work presents a qualitative and quantitative approach, of descriptive and explanatory nature, constituting a case study (YIN, 2001). With regard to the qualitative

approach, it seeks to analyze the relationship of reality with the object of study, enabling interpretations and considering contributions from other studies and research already carried out (DALFOVO; LANA; SILVEIRA, 2008). We resorted to documentary research with a focus on educational legislation, official technical documents, and bibliographic references from scholars on the subject. The quantitative data were obtained from the Secretary of Education of the state of Ceará, from a request to the Coordination of Evaluation and School Development for Learning Results (Coade), and were treated by means of descriptive statistics.

The article is organized in three sections, besides this Introduction and the Final Considerations. The first section discusses high school policies issued by the federal government and the multiple configurations they assume in the process of implementation in subnational units. Next, the process that led to the diversification of high school supply in the public system of Ceará is analyzed, showing the recent historical path of the construction of this model. The third section presents a challenge to the implementation of high school reform, namely the existence of a significant number of municipalities with only one school, a situation that expresses an unknown dimension of inequality within the state education system, where schools with standards of excellence coexist side by side with units where the precariousness of services is visible, as in the case of the extensions of enrollments in the state system.

High school policies in Brazil: federative complexity and implementation challenges

Analyzing the implications of national policies on secondary education is a complex situation because this stage of basic education presents a myriad of diversification in supply. Such offers allow students to attend different types of schools, based on non-universal criteria, which brings in itself situations of inequalities of attendance and opportunities (CRAHAY, 2013), associated with location, selection processes, length of stay in school, curriculum, etc. This context suggests that the selective differentiation of the school system not only reflects social inequalities in education, but also reinforces them, corroborating Schwarcz's (2019, p. 149) statement that "there are many factors that explain our social inequality, but among them, educational policies continue to function as an important trigger for the reproduction of inequalities."

It is important to highlight that access to public high school in Brazil was only assured to all in 2009, with the Constitutional Amendment no. 59 and Law no. 12.061/2009 (BRAZIL, 2009a, 2009b), which changed clauses II of art. 4 and clause VI of art. 10 of Law no. 9.394/96 (LDB, which stands for *Lei de Diretrizes e Bases* - Law of Directives and Bases) (BRAZIL,

1996). Until then, high school or its equivalent (before the LDB) occupied a secondary position in educational policy, since the Brazilian State became responsible for ensuring the universalization of free high school education only at the end of the first decade of the current century.

The complexity of the analysis also derives from structural and functional changes in the educational system, which imply conceptual revisions, with extensive reflections on the objectives and curricular organization of secondary education. In turn, the expansion of the educational system and the absorption of social strata that until then had no access to an educational institution have changed the face of high school and altered the characteristics of its curriculum. Therefore, the changes that have occurred in this stage of education since the end of the last century are more intricate because they are not limited to quantitative aspects, although these are relevant because they reflect the expansion of access and the guarantee of permanence of students in the educational system.

In Ramos' (2001, p. 135, author's emphasis, our translation) perspective, facing the scenario of changes under analysis, the high school:

[...] is called upon to contribute to the learning of general skills, aiming at the constitution of people who are better able to assimilate changes, more autonomous in their choices, and who respect differences. In view of the objective conditions of access to socially produced material and cultural goods, however, inequalities are sublimated in the name of the right to difference. Although we know that educational and professional trajectories are, concretely speaking, also socially determined by class origin, ideologically they are taken as results of choices subjectively made according to *one's own life projects*. [...].

It must also be considered that what happens in school depends on the historical moment in which one lives, on the ideological stance of the system's planners and, therefore, on the social relations established in the broader sociopolitical context. Thus, the extension of compulsory schooling included by the Constitutional Amendment no. 59/2009 (BRAZIL, 2009a) and the coverage of supplementary programs for all stages of basic education represent a turning point in the supply of secondary education, with repercussions to this day.

Thus, the challenges of a high school policy are broad in the perspective of ensuring access to school and providing quality education, which, according to Libâneo, Oliveira and Toschi (2003, p. 117-118, our translation), is understood as that in which the school "[...] promotes, for all, the mastery of knowledge and the development of cognitive and affective skills necessary to meet the individual and social needs of students, as well as the insertion in

the world and the constitution of citizenship [...]". Dayrell (2003, p. 186-187, our translation), in turn, defends an education beyond the instructional dimension, constituting itself as a process "[...] of human formation that leads to social experiences that enable the student to discover and develop all his potentialities, that is, an education that contemplates the totality of the young person and not only the cognitive dimension".

The issues involving high school seem to be generating tensions that are difficult to be solved by the Brazilian educational system, although the diversity of contexts is recognized, based on political, economic and cultural conditions. The various proposals developed at the federal level are faced with a wide range of factors that interfere with implementation at the state level, due to the complexity of the Brazilian federation.

Public policies refer to the actions of the Public Power executed by the different levels of government. In the case of the Brazilian federation, three spheres are responsible to a greater or lesser extent for policy formulation and implementation, with different duties and responsibilities: the federal government (Union), state governments and the Federal District, and municipal governments. The text of the LDB of 1996, Law 9.394/1996 (BRAZIL, 1996) is clear on the competencies of each federate entity. The Union is responsible for formulating and coordinating the national education policy (art. 8 §1) and for elaborating the National Education Plan in collaboration with the States, the Federal District, and the Municipalities (BRAZIL, 1996, LDB, art. 9º I); to the states the elaboration and execution of educational policies and plans, in consonance with the national educational guidelines and plans (BRAZIL, 1996, LDB, art. 10, III) and to the municipalities, to organize and maintain the development of [...] their educational systems, integrating them to the educational policies and plans of the Union and the States (BRAZIL, 1996, LDB, art. 11, I).

In the case of public high school, the priority responsibility for its supply lies with the state federated units, as established in art. 10, item VI (BRAZIL, 1996). Thus, the policies formulated by the Union for this stage of basic education reach the states, which are responsible for elaborating or re-drafting and implementing them⁴ (BALL; MAGUIRE; BRAUN, 2016).

In this perspective, despite the Brazilian government's efforts over the last two decades to balance incentives and inducements for the development of a high school policy - notwithstanding the occasional advances made by some federal entities - an increase in inequalities within the educational system has been observed, resulting, among other factors,

⁴ Here we refer to the theory of policy enactment, which for Ball, Maguire, and Braun (2016) resembles a theatrical performance, in the sense that the actor has a text that can be presented/represented in different ways. For them, policies do not usually tell you what to do, but create circumstances and a range of options to decide what to do.

from disorderly decentralization and limited policy coordination. The political and financial conditions of each state in the federation are also factors that affect the implementation of policies conceived at the central level.

Regarding the aspect of technical and scientific knowledge, for the entire young Brazilian population, it is difficult to think of the educational process in terms of social equity and national technical and scientific autonomy. Therefore, we understand that the democratization of high school education in the country has still been conceived, in the official discourse, in quantitative terms - especially in terms of access to school. From the point of view of the lower classes, access to high school is undoubtedly an achievement, even if we consider that the permanence and progression in the education system are conditioned to the school's effectiveness.⁵

The construction of the diversification of high school supply in the public network of Ceará

Bearing in mind the reflections presented, it is worth noting that, like other federal units and keeping its own peculiarities, Ceará implemented a high school model that, over the last few years, has deepened the diversification of the supply of this stage of basic education. In general, it is possible to state that the predominant offer for many years was the one corresponding to the nomenclature of regular high school. Even though, historically, there have been professional education supply tests, through initiatives such as the professionalization of teaching, resulting from the unsuccessful reform introduced by Law nº 5.692/1971 (BRAZIL, 1971), during the military regime period and in a few years abandoned, and later changed by the "reform of the reform" (Law nº 7.044) (BRAZIL, 1982)⁶, Regular high school was established as the predominant offer of education. In the years corresponding to the redemocratization of national political life, other modalities of supply were limited to institutions with a tradition of performance in this field, such as the old federal technical schools and the so-called S.

In Ceará, the accelerated expansion of secondary education between the last decade of the 20th century and the beginning of the first decade of the 21st century was predominantly a

⁵ The term effectiveness is applied from the understanding of Brooke (2010, p. 262, our translation): "When applied to the school institution, [...] denotes the degree to which the school fulfills its functions by satisfying the objectives and goals set for it". The concept is different from efficiency, which concerns the cost and volume of inputs and outputs.

⁶ For further clarification on the reform formulated with the objective of implementing the professionalization of teaching and the law that amended it, see: VIEIRA, 2008, p. 124 - 128.

single-shift system, with part of the education offered in the evening shift. The challenge of access and the lack of funding for this stage of education dominated high school policies during the first twenty years of the current LDB (BRAZIL, 1996). From the second half of the first decade of the 21st century, however, this situation began to change with the creation of the Fund for Maintenance and Development of Basic Education and the Appreciation of Education Professionals (Fundeb) in 2007 and the stabilization of enrollments from 2006. The Ministry of Education starts to induce new models for high school and, at the state level, this stage of basic education is back on the policy agenda, with or without the variant of technical and/or professional education.

Ceará joins the national policy presented by the *Programa Brasil Profissionalizado* (Brazil Professionalized Program) from 2008 on, creating a significant number of high schools integrated to professional education, which becomes a reference in the supply of high school, assuring nine hours of classes per day, and differentiated attendance of supplementary programs, such as three meals a day and school transportation, besides the internship scholarship for the technical courses. More than this, the so-called "MEC standard schools" have become the "apple of the eye" of Ceará's educational policy. It would not be out of place to say that high schools integrated to professional education are to the high school policy what literacy at the right age is to the elementary school policy. Aspiration of the society and the municipal governments, high schools integrated to professional education, however, do not represent a model that can be generalized to all the clients who seek high school, especially because of its high costs (VIEIRA; VIDAL; QUEIROZ, 2021). Moreover, this initiative presents itself as an offer that establishes access criteria, such as performance results in the final years of elementary school, adequate age to attend high school, indicator of residence in the vicinity of schools and, of course, availability to stay the whole day in the educational establishment⁷. In themselves, these are selection criteria of an eliminatory nature for an expressive portion of the young people who complete the 9th grade in the various municipal networks⁸.

In 2016, once again, Ceará joined the federal government's Program to Promote Full-Time High Schools (EMTI), and began to pursue an alternative offer consisting of full-time high schools, which is a goal of the National Education Plan (PNE), approved in 2014 and, according to state government plans, should be generally available by 2026. In these schools,

⁷ In recent years, about 20% of the places in the first grade at the EEEP have been reserved for students from private schools.

⁸ In the state of Ceará, public elementary school is almost entirely offered by the municipal networks.

the school day is extended and aims to provide a comprehensive and integrated education for students in the public high school network. There is no technical training, and the school day is extended by means of elective courses that seek to value the various spaces and equipment available in the teaching unit, considering the fact that the classroom is not the only place for learning. This offer has been growing rapidly, although its implementation has not yet been evaluated.

The offer of single-shift regular high school, however, still prevails as the one with the largest number of enrollments, in which students attend five hours of classes per day, and whose teaching activities are restricted to the propaedeutic curricular components previously guided by the National Curricular Parameters High School (PCNEM in the Portuguese acronym) (BRAZIL, 2000) and now by the Common National Curricular Base (BNCC) (BRAZIL, 2018a).

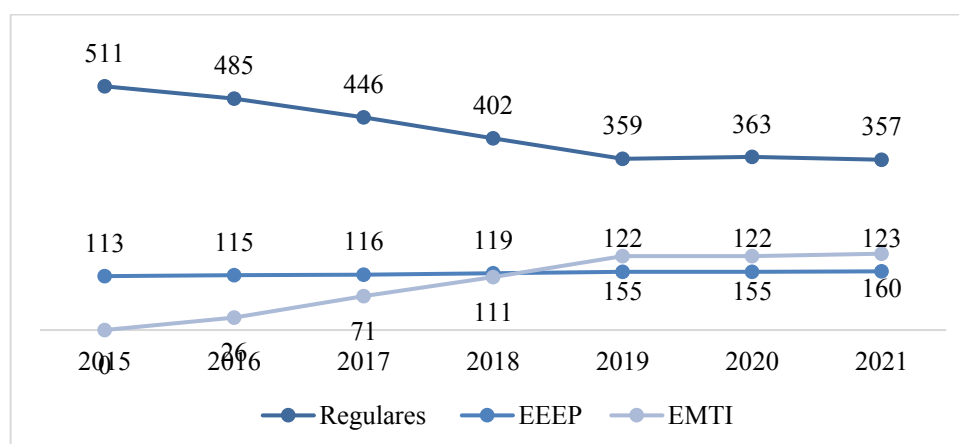
Data from the last seven years (2015 - 2021), shown in Chart 1, indicate how the evolution of enrollments by the three types of high school offerings discussed in this article behaves.

Chart 1 – High school enrollments, by type of offer, state network, Ceará, 2015 – 2021

Enrollments	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
ER	280.075	276.166	244.473	227.038	203.619	207.938	215.572
EEEP	44.192	48.221	49.983	52.140	54.186	55.563	57.258
EMTI	0	8.750	29.925	44.357	59.649	57.144	65.593
TOTAL	324.267	333.137	324.381	323.535	317.454	320.645	338.423

Source: Seduc; CEIPE (2022)

While the enrollments in RE show a decrease of 23%, in EEEP and EMTI, the growths are respectively 29.6% and 649.6%, being the total growth of the three networks of 4.4% in the same period. When we observe the situation in relation to the school units, Chart 1 presents the data referring to the same period.

Graph 1 – High schools, by type of offer, state network, Ceará, 2015 - 2021

Source: Seduc; CEIPE (2021)

It can be seen that there was a 30% reduction in the number of REs, followed by an 8.8% increase in EEEPs, and the number of EMTIs increased sixfold compared to 2016. Considering that the EEEPs start in 2008 and only in 2021 reach 123, it is visible that the EMTI are in a much faster growth process than these, which may have to do with costs and implementation conditions, since this offer demands a reform in school infrastructure of lesser scope than the EEEP offer.

A study conducted by Vieira; Vidal; Queiroz (2021, p. 19, our translation) regarding investments in education by type of school in the state of Ceará in 2019 showed that "the highest student-year value is allocated to EEEP (R\$10,530.48), being 33.3% higher than the student-year value of ER (R\$7,894.95), succeeded by the student-year value of EMTI (R\$8,437.14), which is 7% higher than the student-year value of ER". These values point, at first, to the unequal financial treatment provided to young people in public schools in Ceará and, at the same time, inform the need for greater investment in this stage of education in order to achieve the necessary conditions of equity for all to have access to a school with better quality infrastructure and to enjoy the supplementary programs of the Ministry of Education, as is the case of the EEEP.

With regard to the number of teachers to work in the three types of courses discussed here, two aspects draw attention: the first concerns the teachers of technical courses offered at the EEEP, and the second, the number of teachers with temporary contracts. The Secretary of Education made a management contract with the Center for Technological Education Institute (CENTEC), a social organization (OS) linked to the State Secretariat of Science, Technology and Higher Education to hire the teachers of the technical courses, while part of the elective courses of the EMTI are taught by teachers with temporary contracts. In both cases, these

teachers have precarious work contracts, with few rights in terms of continuing education, discontinuity of teaching hours from one year to another, vacations, etc..

Besides the complexity of the school network mentioned above, alongside these three models of high school in Ceará, there are less visible faces that respond to the demands of different audiences - young people living in places far from the schools in the municipalities and who are served by the so-called enrollment extensions (LIMA, 2020). These units, which operate precariously and with infrastructure conditions that fall short of the quality standards of regular education, house a relatively significant segment of the student body. In 2021, 22,056 high school students were enrolled in the enrollment extensions.

Another inconspicuous aspect of this supply is night schooling, aimed at young people unable to study during the day and, therefore, to be served by the standard of quality offered in day schools. In 2021, there will be 41,430 students attending the night shift, in a clear situation of intra-school inequalities, when in the same state network, young people remain in a school journey of nine hours a day and others do not have even four hours of nighttime offerings.

Such situations create layers of inequalities within the system that contradict the search for a similar standard of quality for all public schools attended by young people from Ceará and puts in check the possibility of implementing the high school reform proposed by Law no. 13,415/2017 (BRAZIL, 2017). Add to such problems, another dimension of supply that will be severely affected by the high school reform and consists of a contingent of Ceará municipalities that have only one high school, as will be analyzed in detail in the next section of this text.

Challenges to the implementation of the high school reform in the Ceará state system

The law establishing the high school reform recently completed five years of approval (Law no. 13.415/2017) (BRAZIL, 2017) and so far it has not been implemented in Ceará. It is a fact that the Covid-19 pandemic has significantly delayed curriculum change initiatives in a portion of Brazilian states. Approaching the deadline for implementation of the high school reform, set for 2022, the state of Ceará faces the challenge of designing a plan that enables the adequacy of this diversity of ongoing high school offerings, to the criteria established by the new legislation. Two aspects with implications for school dynamics as a whole concern the gradual expansion of the teaching load and the establishment of training itineraries.

It is important to note that the schools in the state system of Ceará had already been in a process of expanding their teaching load. This situation applied to regular single-shift schools and totaled 1,000 hours per year, dedicated to the fulfillment of the curricular components of

high school, as guided by the National Curricular Parameters for High School Education (BRASIL, 2000) and 1,400 and 1,800 hours per year for the EMTI and EEEP, respectively. In the EMTIs, besides the curricular components, the number of hours enables the offer of a wide range of elective subjects, and in the EEEPs there is the offer of technical professional training courses.

The high school reform modifies the curricular structure by establishing that "§ 5º The workload destined to the fulfillment of the National Common Curricular Base cannot exceed one thousand and eight hundred hours of the total workload of high school, according to the definition of the education systems" (BRAZIL, 2017, art. 3, our translation), as well as creating the "formative itineraries, which should be organized by offering different curricular arrangements, according to the relevance to the local context and the possibility of the education systems" (BRAZIL, 2017, art. 4) for which 1,200 hours should be allocated. In doing so, it reduces the school time dedicated to the classic curricular components, even ensuring the compulsory nature of only three subjects - Portuguese Language, Mathematics, and English.

Going a little further, Ordinance no 1,432/2018 (BRAZIL, 2018b, p. 2, our translation) clarifies that "the education systems must ensure the offer of **more than one** Formative Itinerary in each municipality, in different areas" and establishes that the formative itineraries are organized from the structuring axes: Scientific Research, Creative Processes, Mediation and Sociocultural Intervention and Entrepreneurship and that "§12 - Schools must guide students in **the process of choosing** the areas of knowledge or professional performance provided in the caput" (BRAZIL, 2018b, art. 4). Moll (2017) already warned that more than 70% of Brazilian municipalities have only one high school and, thus, it is difficult to talk about choice for those students who often do not even have adequately trained teachers.

Data on the state school network in 2021 show that of Ceará's 184 municipalities, 74 (40%) have a single state secondary school and that in 11 (15%) of these municipalities, the state schools are full-time. These schools total 35,793 enrollments, which corresponds to 10% of the total high school offer, and these municipalities together have a population of 1,003,962 inhabitants (11% in relation to the total population).

It is observed that, although these municipalities are distributed all over Ceará, they fit into contexts of greater structural poverty. They have between 4,700 and 23,000 inhabitants, with very low levels of quality of life, employability, and income (IBGE, 2021). With rare exceptions, most families are beneficiaries of the *Bolsa Família* Program/*Auxílio Brasil*, and the economy survives on government aid and pensions. The revenues of the municipalities

depend on external sources for more than 80%, with the Union being the largest provider of these revenues.

If, on the one hand, the creation of educational itineraries for the free choice of young people enrolled in high school is a democratic and attractive option, on the other hand, in municipalities with a reduced number of schools, it is complex to measure the logistics involved in terms of the conditions of attendance in relation to demand, school transportation costs to move young people from their school of origin to another educational establishment, sometimes in another municipality. This situation is particularly challenging in municipalities such as those whose data are presented in Chart 2.

Chart 2 – Municipalities by number of schools and types of offerings, 2021

Municipalities/Schools	Regular schools	Full – time schools	Professional Schools
74 municipalities with 1 school	63	11	0

Source: Prepared by the authors

Of the 74 schools in these municipalities, 19 have school annexes, which means a precarious offer of education, in spaces far from the schools at the municipal headquarters (LIMA, 2020) and in 49 of them there are night school registrations (SEDUC, 2021)⁹. The enrollments in 2021 vary from 154 to 1,002 students, and in some municipalities they have been decreasing in the period 2015-2021, which has made possible the conversion of a RE into an EMTI, but in other municipalities, it has increased or remained stable (SEDUC, 2021). It is noteworthy that in these 74 municipalities there is no EEEP, considered to be the schools with the best conditions for student access and permanence. This points to the lack of priority given by the Secretary of Education to policies that promote equity for young people in these municipalities.

With regard to the Ideb, while 421 (64.3%) of the 655 state schools in Ceará with a grade in 2019 did not reach the projected target for the year, in these municipalities, 55 (73.3%) of the 74 existing schools did not reach the projected target. Such a situation shows that the performance associated with the approval rate in these municipalities is more critical than in the overall context of the state.

When we observe the average proficiency by performance level in the schools of the 74 municipalities, in relation to the statewide average, in the System for Evaluation of Basic Education 2019, we find that most of these municipalities (57% in Portuguese Language and

⁹ Source: SEDUC/SIGE ESCOLA on 26/05/2021 (School Census Cut-Off Date).

68% in Mathematics) have more than 50% of students in levels 0, 1 and 2 of proficiency in Portuguese Language and Mathematics, This shows that the long path of schooling up to the 3rd grade of high school represented little progress in terms of the development of skills and competencies associated with the objects of knowledge of the two curricular components evaluated. Data on the adequacy of teacher training to work in the high school subjects in these municipalities show that 56.7% have a degree compatible with the subject they teach, lower than the state average, which is 62.1%.

In a situation of major learning difficulties indicated by the educational indicators until 2019 and after the experience of two years of pandemic, the purpose of implementing the high school reform in 2022, starting by reducing the workload allocated to curricular components seems, at least, a nonsense. It is in this scenario that these 74 schools will need to offer at least two educational itineraries to give young people the possibility to choose, otherwise we will fall into the reductionism of compulsoriness. We must consider the capacity of qualified human resources in these municipalities to ensure the offer of these formative itineraries, considering that even with the reduction in the number of hours of the curricular components, the existing teaching staff will not be able to supply the qualified demands that such itineraries demand.

Considering the impossibility of assuming the individualization of the formative itineraries for these municipalities, the solution of the Secretariat of Education was for the school to offer a formative itinerary contemplating the four areas of knowledge - mathematics and its technologies and exact sciences, languages and codes, humanities and applied social sciences, and natural sciences -, and from 2023, to offer two formative itineraries, contemplating the four areas, conditions provided in Article 36 §3 of the law of high school reform (BRAZIL, 2017). Given the diversification of high school supply, which in itself already imposes formative itineraries that foster inequalities, the reform as proposed announces the implementation of the expansion of inequalities.

Final remarks

The analysis carried out on Ceará's high school network shows the paths taken over the last twenty years by state policies to improve the conditions of service for students enrolled in this stage of basic education. This path was expressed by a diversification of supply translated into three types of schools: regular high schools; full-time high schools; and, high schools integrated to professional education, not forgetting the high schools offered in the rural areas, as well as those offered in the evening shift. Such diversification has allowed the construction

of situations of acute inequalities of opportunities and treatment of students from Ceará who attend public high schools.

The challenge of equity, which should be the dominant agenda in the public policies in course, is an open agenda, for which the legal imperative of implementing the new high school announces itself as a reform that propels more inequalities. Besides, the situation of the municipalities where there is only one high school adds new tensions and contours to the intricate sub-networks that have been built over the last decades in the territory of Ceará. For these municipalities where regular single-shift high schools are offered, with the advent of the reform, the Secretary of Education has not conceived specific policies, although the poverty conditions of these municipalities point to the urgent need for affirmative action to reduce inequalities.

It is opportune to recognize the achievement represented by the obligation of universal secondary education, as established by the current LDB (BRAZIL, 1996). Ensure the "basic preparation for work and citizenship of the student, to continue learning, so as to be able to adapt flexibly to new conditions of occupation or subsequent improvement" (BRAZIL, 1996, art. 35, II) is essential to the construction of a new profile of citizen and worker. As it is now presented, however, secondary education in Ceará contributes to the strengthening of inequalities within the school network, generating different types of "formative paths", to use the terminology of the new legislation. In practice, the advances in the legislation do not benefit those who most need quality education as a universal right.

Given the above, converting the guidelines of Law No. 13,415/2017 (BRAZIL, 2017) into concrete policies to improve middle school education, in its qualitative and quantitative dimension, remains a challenge. Moreover, it is imperative that the implementation of policies ensures the expansion correcting existing distortions within this level of education. This is not an easy task, especially considering the complexity of the Brazilian political, economic and social framework in which education in Ceará is inserted.

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