

**EDUCATIONAL POLICY FOR HIGH SCHOOL: THE PROJECT "ESCOLA PLENA" IN THE CONTEXT OF MATO-GROSSO STATE**

***POLÍTICA EDUCACIONAL PARA O ENSINO MÉDIO: O PROJETO "ESCOLA PLENA" NO CONTEXTO MATO-GROSSENSE***

***POLÍTICA EDUCATIVA PARA LA ENSEÑANZA SECUNDARIA: EL PROYECTO "ESCOLA PLENA" EN EL CONTEXTO DEL ESTADO DE MATO-GROSSO***

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**ABSTRACT:** The educational policies aimed at secondary education have incorporated full-time education as a way of aligning it with contemporary trends. Therefore, the configuration of this teaching stage is constituted as an ideological dispute for dichotomous political agendas: meeting the productive demand and omnilateral training of young people. In this context, the State of Mato Grosso implemented its full-time High School project with the "Full Schools", bringing organizational, methodological and curricular singularities. In this work, we sought to analyze its configurations in the educational policy dimension and in the materialized pedagogical project. Methodologically, a qualitative research was carried out, through a case study, in a school of this nature in Cuiabá. The results revealed a managerial perspective, which is based on the defense of a nebulous role in the face of the notion of self-entrepreneurship and the student's self-responsibility for his path, in an erasure of the extra-school conditions involved.

**KEYWORDS:** Educational politics. High school. Full-time. Full School.

**RESUMO:** *As políticas educacionais direcionadas ao Ensino Médio têm incorporado a educação em tempo integral como forma de alinhá-la às tendências contemporâneas. Logo, a configuração desta etapa de ensino se constitui como disputa ideológica por agendas políticas dicotômicas: demanda produtiva versus formação omnilateral dos jovens. O Estado do Mato Grosso implantou seu projeto de Ensino Médio em tempo integral em "Escolas Plenas", trazendo singularidades organizacionais, metodológicas e curriculares. Neste trabalho, buscou-se analisar suas configurações na dimensão da política educacional e do projeto pedagógico materializado. Metodologicamente, foi realizado um estudo de caso em uma escola pública de Cuiabá, que revelou uma perspectiva gerencialista, assentada na defesa de um protagonismo nebuloso em face da noção de empresariamento de si mesmo e auto responsabilização do estudante sobre seu percurso, apagando as condições extraescolares*

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*implicadas. De maneira que se questiona essa reestruturação do Ensino Médio frente à efetiva materialização da democratização da Educação.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Política educacional. Ensino médio. Tempo integral. Escola plena.*

**RESUMEN:** *Las políticas educativas dirigidas a la educación secundaria han incorporado la educación a tiempo completo como una forma de alinearla con las tendencias contemporáneas. Por tanto, la configuración de esta etapa docente se constituye como una disputa ideológica por agendas políticas dicotómicas: atención a la demanda productiva y formación omnilateral de los jóvenes. En ese contexto, el Estado de Mato Grosso implementó su proyecto de Enseñanza Media de tiempo completo con las "Escuelas Plenas", trayendo singularidades organizativas, metodológicas y curriculares. En este trabajo buscamos analizar sus configuraciones en la dimensión política educativa y en el proyecto pedagógico materializado. Metodológicamente, se realizó una investigación cualitativa, a través de un estudio de caso, en una escuela de esta naturaleza en Cuiabá. Los resultados revelaron una perspectiva gerencial, que se basa en la defensa de un papel nebuloso frente a la noción de autoemprendimiento y la autorresponsabilidad del estudiante por su camino, en un borrado de las condiciones extraescolares involucradas.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Política educativa. Escuela secundaria. Tiempo integral. Escuela plena*

## Introduction

The central objective of this paper is to understand the configurations given to the *Escola Plena* Project, implemented as a full-time high school educational policy in the State of Mato Grosso/Brazil. The data presented here are part of a doctoral research developed in the Postgraduate Program in Education at the Federal University of Mato Grosso (UFMT), which is motivated by the contemporary changes proposed for this stage in the Brazilian territory.

Taking into account the legal aspects, the Full School Project (2017) was approved by State Law No. 10,622, dated October 24, 2017 (MATO GROSSO, 2017)<sup>4</sup>, being in alignment with the procedures for the transfer of resources to foster the implementation of full-time high schools, instituted through Resolution No. 16 of December 7, 2017 (BRAZIL, 2017b). The Project in question was prepared in accordance with the Common National Curricular Base (BNCC in the Portuguese acronym) and approved in the same year (BRAZIL, 2017a). Later, it underwent changes resulting from Law No. 13.415/2017 (BRAZIL, 2017a), which established new national guidelines for the New High School. Thus, it is stated that the object under analysis - the configuration of the *Escola Plena* Project - is a current and powerful theme.

<sup>4</sup> Law 10.622, of October 24, 2017 (MATO GROSSO, 2017), establishes the *Escola Plena* Project, linked to the Pro-Schools program, in the state of Mato Grosso, 2017.

The educational policy aimed at extending the school day in high school, through the institution of full-time education in the state of Mato Grosso, should not be understood in isolation, since it was designed from the political and economic context of the reforms of the Brazilian state, especially from the 1990s. Such reforms have generated long and heated debates. In this way, the curriculum and the configuration of high school continue to be motives of political-ideological and cultural dispute between different antagonistic groups, including the business sector, which has been represented, among others, by the non-governmental organizationl *Todos pela Educação*<sup>5</sup>.

The "*Escolas Plenas*" as a state project were implemented in Mato Grosso under the Pro-Schools Program, under the administration of Governor Pedro Taques (2015-2019). When announcing the sanction of the law that instituted them, the coordinator of High School at the time, from the State Secretariat of Education, Sports and Leisure (Seduc), pointed out as the focus of *Escolas Plenas*: "placing the student as the protagonist of his own history" (RAMIRES, 2017).

However, to understand vis-à-vis the new configuration that has been given to High School in the State of Mato Grosso/Brazil, an exploratory research supported by the qualitative approach was conducted. Methodologically, it is a case study carried out in one of the state public schools that implemented the "*Escola Plena*" project, located on the outskirts of the city of Cuiabá, the state capital.<sup>6</sup> For data collection purposes, a methodological bricolage was used, articulating a set of research techniques and instruments that provided diverse dimensions of the same experience, including: participant observation<sup>7</sup>, which lasted more than five months in the school context; application of structured questionnaires with students; semi-structured interviews with teachers, managers, employees, and the documentary analysis of the curriculum guidelines.

Thus, this paper presents the results of this research, revealing the description and analysis of the pedagogical project of the "*Escola Plena*", in which there was intense participation in the school context, aiming to escape from the limited specificities inherent to the case study. The article is structured in this introduction, in an initial section that presents the panorama and characteristics of High School in Brazil, as well as considerations about

<sup>5</sup> *Todos pela Educação* is a non-governmental organization founded in 2006, declared a non-profit organization led by businessmen, to ensure the right to quality basic education for all citizens.

<sup>6</sup> The research was authorized by the Ethics Committee of CEP under Consubstantiated Opinion no. 3.378.915.

<sup>7</sup> The participant observation included the presence of the researcher in all the school times and spaces provided by the professionals: welcome, break, classroom, teachers' room, principal's room, CDCE meeting, Spring Party, Fraternization at the union club, teacher training with the management, lunch with teachers in the cafeteria, corridor conversations, among others.

youth, part of which constitutes its target audience. Next, the foundations of the Escola Plena Project are indicated, in order to get to the analysis of the pedagogical project of the investigated school. Finally, the final considerations are made.

### **High School in Mato Grosso, purposes and its audience: initial remarks**

High School consists of the final stage of Basic Education in Brazil, with a minimum duration of 3 years, and congregates a set of four very broad purposes that can be understood under the various theoretical perspectives, attending both the appeals of the progressive sectors, as well as the appeals of the liberals who expect the training for the labor market, as stated in Article 35 of the Law of guidelines and bases of national education, LDB n° 9.394/1996:

I - the consolidation and deepening of the knowledge acquired in elementary school, enabling the continuation of studies; II - basic preparation of the student for work and citizenship, to continue learning, so as to be able to adapt flexibly to new conditions of occupation or subsequent improvement; III - the improvement of the student as a human being, including ethical training and the development of intellectual autonomy and critical thinking; IV - understanding the scientific-technological foundations of the productive processes, relating theory to practice, in the teaching of each subject. (BRAZIL, 1996, art. 35, our translation).

High School is aimed at young people, aged between 15 and 17 years old, at the ideal flow age; however, it can vary depending on the age/grade distortion, which is a reality identified at this stage. According to data from the 2021 School Census, the Mato Grosso state system enrolled around 127,628 students in part-time and 5,768 in full-time high schools, that is, full-time schools attended less than 5% of the young people enrolled in the final stage of Basic Education when compared to part-time schools. However, the state network accounts for more than 85.4% of the enrollments, while the private network attends 8.6%. Regarding location, 87.3% of these enrollments are located in urban schools and the rest in rural areas (BRAZIL, 2021a).

In Mato Grosso High School, the age/series distortion is still quite high, reaching the percentage of almost 30%, while nationally the percentage index of enrollments with age/series distortion is 25.3% of the high school enrollments (BRAZIL, 2021a; BRAZIL, 2021b), but to understand it, it is necessary to encompass the analysis of the public beyond designating it as an age group, a homogeneous identity and/or identity in transition between adolescence and adulthood. In this work, we understand youth, the public of High School, in accordance with the National Curriculum Guidelines for High School (BRAZIL, 2011), as a:

[...] socio-historical and cultural condition of a category of subjects that needs to be considered in its multiple dimensions, with its own specificities that are not restricted to the biological and age dimensions, but that are articulated with a multiplicity of social cultural crossings, producing multiple youth cultures or many youths (BRAZIL, 2011, p. 12-13, our translation).

Some narratives consider youth as characterized by the anxiety of ascending to adulthood in order to work and have a source of income of their own, but many young people belonging to the working classes are already precariously inserted in jobs during their high school years. Such subjects, when they belong to the working class, are already born under pressure to fight, compete, and resist in unequal conditions to contribute to the household expenses, for example, and, possibly, to conquer the conditions for economic emancipation that were not given to them *a priori*. On the other side, there is a harassment from the labor market for the potential labor force to be qualified to fill job openings, to be filled by subjects aligned and adapted to the demands and competencies needed for the required functions, according to the changes in the labor market and the conditions for employability, in the wake of the flexibility so dear to fickle economies.

Regarding the changes proposed for the education of these diversified youths, the Curricular Reference Document of Mato Grosso - High School Stage (DRC/MT-EM) states that it does not refer only to a full-time high school project, but that it intends to forge a full-time education that encompasses a diversified part, with curricular components, elective subjects, life project, guided study, experimental practice, and evaluation (SEDUC-MT, 2021).

As these are contemporary changes, it is worth questioning whether the Escola Plena Project moves toward an expansion of the workload that subsidizes a full-time education only or that incorporates an effective full-time education. An important distinction, as Jeffrey and Silva (2019, p. 43, our translation) define: "the Integral Education is based on integrality that brings together all the elements of education, because to occur full time is not only extending the class hours and thus get more knowledge".

The BNCC – Common National Curricular Base - (BRAZIL, 2017a), document that guides the construction of the High School curricula, indicates the Comprehensive Education as a formative proposal, it becomes essential, in this sense, to understand that concept. It is believed that Integral Education needs to break with intellectualist, pragmatic, and market perspectives in order to move towards conceiving the human being as a historical subject in the process of political, ethical, humanistic, and multidimensional formation.

Kuenzer (2017, p. 341, our translation) understands that the curriculum reform that aims

to build a New High School moves in the opposite direction to a comprehensive training, defining it as integral to the "pedagogy of flexible accumulation and aims to train workers with flexible subjectivities, through a general education base complemented by training itineraries by area of knowledge, including technical and vocational education."

Adding to the debate, the authors Casagrande and Alonso (2022), identify as common points between the national document of the BNCC (BRAZIL, 2017a) and the Curricular Reference Document for Mato Grosso - High School Stage (MATO GROSSO, 2021), the principles of encouraging comprehensive education, curricular flexibility through formative itineraries and discourse on the development of youth protagonism: "Approved by the CEE, in 2021, the Mato Grosso State Secretary of Education homologated the Mato Grosso Curriculum Reference Document - High School Stage (DRC/MT-EM), Ordinance nº 356/2021" (CASAGRANDE; ALONSO, 2022, p. 196, our translation).

In the context of the debate of antagonistic political-ideological interests, it is worth questioning how the configuration of full-time high school that is carried out in the *Escola Plena* Project in Mato Grosso can be understood. But to understand it, it is necessary to take up again the historical and political context of its emergence, and then, to get closer to the conception stated in its guiding documents.

### **The historical-political context in which the *Escola Plena* Project is inserted**

With the 1988 Constitution (BRAZIL, 1988), high school became "progressively compulsory" for young people between 15 and 17 years of age, and the obligation of states to offer it was ensured. However, this obligation was confronted with the socio-political-economic context that began in the 1970s with the oil crisis (HARVEY, 2005). Following the trend of capitalist countries, in the late 1980s and during the 1990s Brazilian governments aligned themselves with the neoliberal economic rationality, understood as "the set of discourses, practices and devices that determine a new way of governing men according to the universal principle of competition" (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016, p. 23, our translation).

As Freitas and Figueira (2020) show, in the 1990s, during the governments of Collor de Mello and Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the Brazilian educational policy was designed under neoliberal assumptions, fulfilling the political agenda of international organizations, among which we highlight the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).



In the direction of disengaging the State, governments have started to create the legal apparatus for the realization of public-private partnerships, as well as privatization and outsourcing actions. Soon the know-how of private administration would be the model to be followed. The private sector is gaining space in public administration, through these partnerships with private and non-governmental institutions, so that these institutions participate in the planning, execution, monitoring and control of public education, with public funding.

This context is brought to explain the emergence of the Escola Plena Project, initially idealized by businessman Norberto Odebrecht and managed by the Educational Co-responsibility Institute (ICE in the Portuguese acronym), a foundation also created by initiative of the Odebrecht business group. It is understood that public education is the responsibility of the public administration, which has effective responsibility for guaranteeing the rights of citizens.

ICE pioneered the implementation of its full-time education model in the state of Pernambuco, and was considered a successful experience. Later, the project was taken to the states of São Paulo, Goiás, Mato Grosso, among others. Each state made adaptations, but following a similar configuration, under the same manual - the School of Choice, the name given in Pernambuco. In this way, we bring data from a case study conducted in a high school, located on the outskirts of the capital of Mato Grosso, in the municipality of Cuiabá, as it is considered the model experience of the state network, justified by a history of remarkable social and educational transformation that will be characterized as follows.

### **The school *locus* of the research**

In 2019, the *Escola Plena* Project operated in 39 schools, so it was necessary to choose one of these experiences to monitor more closely. The criteria established for this were: the socio-economic context of social vulnerability; pioneerism of the project's implementation, with a consolidated model; and finally, for being considered a successful experience pointed out by Seduc-MT's own technicians.

The "Restructured State High School" was built in the 1990s, under the pattern of the "Centers for Integral Attention to Children" (CAIC). Located in the main square of the neighborhood Pedra 90, the school was previously referenced for the problems faced, with constant reports of indiscipline, violence and vandalism by students.

In 2016, the school had 913 students and, upon announcing the change to Full School (2017), the "restructured State High School" lost more than 600 students, leaving it with approximately 271 enrollments. The following year (2018), it lost another 54 enrollments, staying with 217. In 2019, it started the year with 174 students, faced a 75-day strike, and ended the year with 145 enrolled. Despite the dropout rate considered high, the speech of teachers, managers, and technicians report a very noticeable qualitative change in the students' commitment, a merit attributed to the *Escola Plena* Project (and its philosophical contribution).

On the other hand, in becoming a full-time high school, one cannot ignore the fact that the "restructured State High School" saw the departure of 600 students, who could not dedicate themselves to full-time studies. This is an important point that allows us to problematize the extension of the school day for all young people in the country, through the New High School, which foresees the progressive expansion of the minimum annual workload at this stage to 1,400 hours (BRAZIL, 2017a, art. 1°).

In relation to the teachers who work at the school, of the 15 teachers, only two are permanent. The principal, pedagogical coordinator, and school secretary are permanent employees, but the rest are temporary employees. The school day at Escola Plena starts at 7am and ends at 4:30pm. The curriculum activities were divided into 1,200 hours for the Basic General Education and 400 hours for the Diversified Part, in each year of high school, before the approval of the New High School, Law No. 13,415/2017 (BRAZIL, 2017a). In the Diversified Part of the curriculum, there were the Elective Subjects, the Life Project subject, and the Integrative Activities.

Having minimally located the characteristics of the school, next, the path taken by the research is presented, taking into account the observation, interviews, questionnaires, readings, and analysis performed.

### **The methodological path: the possible way**

The exploratory research conducted is characterized as a case study, situated in the scope of the qualitative approach. As for the methods and techniques used, a methodological bricolage was carried out (DENZIN; LINCOLN, 2006), configured by the diversity of instruments and research techniques: 1. participant observation; 2. analysis of the teaching material used; 3. structured questionnaire and semi-structured interview, among other fragments of reality sensitive only to the *hic nunc*.



In an intense experience of 5 months in alternate shifts of routine observation, break, lunch, class observation, interviews, parties, confraternizations, questionnaires and reading of the materials posted in the hallways, bathrooms and teachers' room of the "Restructured State High School" (fictitious name to preserve the identification of the investigated school), the research provided an immersion of the school routine, resulting in the data and reflections that will be presented below.

### **Pedagogical Project and guiding principles of the *Escola Plena* Project: foundation on the *Escola da Escolha***

Along the lines of the Pedagogical Project, the principles of *Escola da Escolha*<sup>8</sup>, brought by the ICE are: protagonism, the 4 Pillars of Education, Interdimensional Education, and the Pedagogy of Presence. Besides making reference to integral formation, which would occur as a consequence of a curriculum guided and supported by social and emotional learning (ICE, 2022). Its pedagogical material is organized in a collection of 8 booklets that define from the theoretical and methodological basis, pedagogical model, educational practices, learning environments, instruments, routines and even a model of educational management, initially implemented in Ginásio Pernambucano in 2003, later spreading to several Brazilian states, as indicated earlier in this text.

ICE identifies a youth-related context of: low levels of learning; low levels of ambition for the future; low levels of self-esteem, self-concept and self-confidence; limited cultural repertoire; moral repertoire permeated by the imposition of physical survival, which, according to the Institute, requires strategic policies. In this sense, it would be up to ICE (2022, p. 17, our translation): "influence the public sector to act strategically in public policies, in order to design them, expand them and ensure their quality, perennializing it and definitely acting effectively in confronting this framework".

As a result of the problems identified, the Institutional Brochure states that the young person idealized by the *Escola da Escolha* is the one who, by the end of Elementary Education, is able to build and consolidate a strong foundation of knowledge and values; develop the ability to identify real problems of their surroundings and present themselves as part of the solution to them; add skills that allow them to keep learning in the various dimensions of their lives, making their Life Project effective (ICE, 2022, p. 18).

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<sup>8</sup> This nomenclature refers to the original name of the project implanted in Pernambuco. When transplanted to other states, the name may vary or remain the same, but the material used by the states is the same and can be accessed at: <https://icebrasil.org.br/escola-da-escolha/>. Access on: 29 Apr. 2022.

When we talk about "developing essential skills to meet the challenges of the 21st century" (ICE, 2022, p. 10, our translation) and that "education is confirmed as a factor in the economic and social development of a country" (ICE, 2022, p. 06, our translation), we can establish a functional relationship. In this sense, it refers to the issue of adaptability of young people and individual accountability under their failure, in a process of uberization, a term inspired by the entry of the Uber company in the market, which "refers to processes that are not restricted to that company nor start with it, and that culminate in a new form of control, management and organization of work" (ABÍLIO, 2020, p. 111, our translation), comes in the wake of the flexibilization of work and the notion of adaptability of workers.

The competencies linked to adaptability, flexibilization, and entrepreneurship confront the thinking of a youth that reproduces the capitalist *modus operandi*, that inculcates notions of personal qualification directed to the capacity of decision, of adaptation to new situations (imposed by the metamorphoses of the neoliberal system), among others.

In short, the political-philosophical discourse of the *Escola da Escolha* would be grounded in ICE's mission (2022, p. 15, our translation) of: "To contribute objectively to the improvement of the quality of Public Basic Education, through the application of innovations in content, method and management, aiming at the comprehensive formation of the youth in the personal, social and productive dimensions".

The insertion of private management in public education occurs "from the privatization of the state by organized capitalism, [...] a process that is accelerated by the concentration of capital," as Souza (2019, p. 130, our translation) warned. The interest of ICE in promoting a quality Public Basic Education imposes that we think about the role of public power and the commitment to its constitutional obligation, as well as what lies behind the interests of a private institution in this demand, that is, the unspoken.

### **The education policy axis**

The ICE plays a central role in the implementation of the *Escola Plena* Project, with the Institute determining the management of public affairs from a private perspective. While the discourse in defense of quality Basic Education as a development of the country is assumed, more inequality can be produced by removing the obligation of the public power to provide exclusively public services. Besides, there is the dimension of education as a market niche, which will involve everything from the sale of courses, textbooks, consultancies, and even training for managers, under the logic of the private sector, which has become a reference for

efficiency and effectiveness. This is a moment in which the question of public and private gained new contours.

In this reconfiguration, the State becomes hostage of the private partner sector, giving up investing in the improvement of its own operationalization, supply, and principles, which are distinct from the private sector's own notion of profitability, articulated with the promotion of citizenship, emancipation, quality of life, and against social, ethno-racial, and gender inequalities. As the data collected show, young working-class children are not even able to stay in full-time high school, because when they reach the final stage of basic education, they lack the means to generate income, leaving only a period for dedication to their studies at the high school level.

The experience of the extended day in Mato Grosso revealed that there are no investments in infrastructure, leisure and real conditions for the institutionalization of the policy to promote full time education. The discourse and ideology are not linked to the corresponding resources. This is the case of the "restructured State High School", in the experience considered successful in the public network of Mato Grosso, which did not even receive lockers for the students to keep their books and materials.

We cannot fail to highlight some of the results achieved in terms of improvement in the teaching and learning process, which are credited to the teaching staff of the school unit, who do their best, working even on weekends and paying for materials to enable classes with innovative methodologies with their own resources.

### **The teaching work: the axis that turns to music**

The interviews conducted with the teachers <sup>9</sup> revealed that they started life in socioeconomic and cultural contexts (class, race and geographic location) similar to those experienced by the students, which is a factor that brings them closer together. In most cases, the teachers graduated from private colleges without high costs, but which were attended with a lot of effort, compromising even their personal lives.

Out of the 12 interviewed teachers <sup>10</sup>, only two were permanent and none of them declared that there were economic advantages to working in the *Escola Plena* Project, because they would earn more if they worked second shift at another school or in another branch.

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<sup>9</sup> All of them signed the Free and Informed Consent (FIC) document.

<sup>10</sup> The interviews were conducted at opportune moments, including breaks and spaces in which they were available to talk to the researcher.

Despite this, all the teachers responded that they believed in the results that this school could produce in the lives of the students. It is noticeable that most of the interviewees report results that involve more subjective aspects, such as improvement in interest, commitment, behavior, and respect for people.

These reports are permeated by what was observed in loco: insecure labor relations, hierarchical functions, and a process of subordination on the part of temporary professionals, which contributes to the tacit acceptance by the professionals of what can be considered the philosophy of the project, as verified in the continuing education meetings.

When asked if they considered it difficult to perform their attributions, all, without exception, declared that the *Escola Plena* requires much more of their time, more than they could give. Even if they meticulously kept to the time allotted for each task, they couldn't keep up and took their work home with them.

In the process of analyzing the *Escola Plena* Project, teachers occupy a central place in two ways: in making it work even in precarious conditions, taking into account the absence of material and human resources necessary; and, on the other hand, being victims of a process of wage devaluation and even more intensified exploitation, taking into account a set of factors that include: the exhausting workday (at school and at home); low salaries; absence of a job and career plan; lack of continuing education; lack of stability.

About their work and their condition as workers, according to the analysis of the answers, all of the teachers recognized the excessive workload and demands, as well as the low pay and the lack of material conditions for working two shifts. However, only two teachers said they would leave in the following year, one of them because of graduate studies (Master's degree). It can be inferred that the sample in this study feels precarious, but is limited in demanding better conditions, due to the lack of economic stability and employment status.

Despite this, most of the participants say they believe in the philosophy of the *Escola Plena* and report an adaptation to it in their way of looking at the student. We realize that the weekly training filled with optimism, conformism, faith, and resilience obviously showed its effectiveness in defending the model, vision, and mission.

In some cases, it seems that the pride of having arrived there (as a hired teacher in the public network) causes a certain dazzle, which prevents him from manifesting the conditions of exploitation. For this reason, he prefers to compare himself with other members of his own family, thinking that he is privileged to have reached higher education and, in a way, civil service. Such pride, although fair, impacts the obfuscation of necessary criticism.

At the same time, there are some teachers who are aware of the gaps, but accept them out of necessity and try to do their best without adequate conditions.

The effective teachers of the school, because they are permanent employees, have a different perspective, concentrating their activities in management and pedagogical coordination functions. They show a very critical perspective about the development of the project by governmental agencies. There is a certain dissatisfaction with the lack of conditions to carry out their work, but they continue to do it with seriousness.

For the positions of coordinator and principal, permanent teachers are chosen as a priority, according to one of the managers, leaving the allocation of classroom positions to temporary contracts. Systematic observation of the principal's office revealed that contract teachers did not frequent it during their time at the school, while regular teachers visited it more often.

The responsibility falls on the teacher to present results of a highly visible project, so the philosophy of the *Escola Plena* Project is aligned in weekly pedagogical meetings, which rely on an adaptive discourse of resilience to all daily difficulties.

### **The student at a crossroads**

High school students are subjects of rights immersed in unique socio-historical-cultural conditions, so they need to be considered in their multiple dimensions and specificities. In the case of the investigated school, its public predominantly self-declares to be black or brown, belonging to the working class, with family income between 1 and 3 minimum wages, ages ranging from 15 to 19 years old, professing the Christian faith/belief, heterosexual and living in the suburbs, as revealed by the questionnaires applied to the students<sup>11</sup>.

Of the total of 100 students interviewed, half revealed that they did not choose to study in a full-time school, but they accepted because of the decision of someone in their family or because they were already studying there before the implementation of the *Escola Plena* Project. However, 68 of them say they are satisfied (even if partially) to study in the unit. More than 70% of the interviewees believe that they should be in the labor market during the day and attend high school at night.

This brings clues as to why the *Escola Plena* has an enrollment of 146 young people when it would have the physical capacity for approximately 400 students. This data is added to

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<sup>11</sup> The students' legal guardians signed the Free and Informed Consent (FIC) document. The questionnaires were applied to the students at the school itself, at specific times for the research.

a relevant fact: the school located in the back of the school has more than 1100 students, while the *Escola Plena* "Restructured State High School" continues to face an evasion rate of more than 10% per year.

As for the changes in the sense of constituting a new model for the formation of young people, the students who are in the 1st year of high school, apparently (based on their facial expressions) see the principles/values as a tiresome litany that goes against their own way of knowing the world and their social relations, so they show resistance and a certain lack of interest in many classes.

In the 2nd and 3rd grades we notice a more effective incorporation of the project's philosophy in their discourse, more markedly in the group of students called "protagonists". The students seem more used to the established educational dynamic. The interviews with teachers confirmed the answers given by the students in the questionnaires about what their families expect from them: that, after 9th grade, they should look for a job and study at night..

The systematic observation of daily life at *Escola Plena* revealed an aspect of the school environment that makes many students want to stay there: the welcome from the teachers, managers, and some employees. In the experiences of daily school life, it was evident in the hallways, classrooms, teachers' room, courtyard, and at the entrance of the school an affectionate proximity to the students. For example, at the entrance, the managers waited for the students at the school gate and greeted them individually. When a student was late, the yard agent would grant exceptions and talk to the student about the delay.

Some situations that occurred in the principal's office showed a detailed and individualized level of attention, in the sense of building relationships and agreements. However, there are some school food service employees who did not align themselves to such a welcome. The principal had already identified this and reported that they lacked the profile to work in the *Escola Plena* Project.

### **The school curriculum: a fundamental dimension**

Considering the curriculum as a structural axis of the pedagogical project of a school unit, it was considered in three dimensions: political, pedagogical, and structural. The subject Life Project was the target of the analysis because it is part of the central objective directed at restructuring the High School in the Full School: "ICE has conceived and implemented for over ten years a Model of full-time school where all efforts converge on the development of the Youth's Life Project" (ICE, 2022, p. 09, our translation).



In the political dimension, considering the discipline, one notices a perspective of adaptation and conservation of social structures, which does not give room for criticism directed at social structures. Considering the themes that are suggested in the teacher's material: "Identity, Values, Social Responsibility and Skills for the 21st Century" (1st year of High School) and "Dreaming about the future; Planning the future; Defining actions and Reviewing the Life Project" (2nd year of High School). The adaptive character is clearly defined. The political perspective of the material is quite conservative, and the perspective of criticism or social transformation is absent.

The teachers' work follows the proposed methodological guidelines. However, each teacher does the work in his or her own way, but the subject does not penetrate into polemical themes. Despite this limitation, one of the teachers revealed to the principal that the subject had more to do with "diversity", his speech evidenced more a perspective of coexistence, acceptance of the other, and conflict resolution.

Taking into account the pedagogical dimension, the proposal is guided by the so-called Pedagogy of Presence, which proposes an empathetic, receptive, and welcoming contact with the student. The premise is that teachers should mobilize attitudes linked to proximity with students, allowing the establishment of bonds of consideration, affection, respect, and reciprocity. Furthermore, the orientation is for teachers to act in a collective planning, along the lines of interdisciplinarity and Project Pedagogy.

Taking into account the questionnaire filled out by the students, in a general assessment, the answers showed that most of them recognize the importance of the subject in their lives, even though they often don't enjoy the classes or find them tiring. Most students said that the professors do a good job, but the proportion decreases when they evaluate the applicability of the classes to their personal lives.

As for the structural dimension, the curriculum of the subject Life Project was filled with discussions about the subjectivity of the subjects, such as choosing a possible career and adapting to the demands of the labor market.

In the Life Project course there is no defined didactic material, nor is there systematic evaluation or failure. Thus, each teacher produced a different framework. In the case of the absence of material, the teacher's autonomy to plan the contents, according to his or her understanding and referential, becomes greater. For this reason, there is a difference in tolerance for students' relaxed attitudes, jokes, and out-of-context speeches. In general, a strong feature of the pedagogical practice at *Escola Plena* is the space for students to dialogue with teachers.

## Final remarks

Educational policy has an important dimension in the operationalization of education, precisely because it provides a mold for its organization and subsidizes the initiatives of the federated entities. The *Escola Plena* Project presents a complex and multifaceted panorama, which, in part, has been addressed in this work.

The concern with the construction of a life project for young people is, at first sight, quite seductive, and it is even believed that there is a need to dispute this concept of life project from the perspective of socially referenced education, but as it materializes, it is more articulated to the notion of adaptation of young people to the demands of the labor market in the 21st century, related to the accountability for their path and labor self-management, in an erasure of the obstacles that the youth (in the plural) face to achieve their goals, which are not for all that are long term, sometimes, the goal of some (or many) may be to survive in the immediate reality.

The data collected revealed the desire to establish a dynamic of extension of the school day articulated to a managerial logic adopted by the partnership with ICE for the management of public high schools. In a clear movement of re-signification of the public thing and the place of the State in its administration and financing.

Another aspect that draws attention is the dropout that occurred when the school started to provide only high school education and to operate under the Full School Full-Time Project. This leaves us with the question: isn't this school for young workers? At the same time that we noticed the demand for high school in the evening, absorbed by the public school located in the background of the investigated school and discussed in this text, which began to serve more than 300 high school students in this shift in 2019.

The experience of the *Escola Plena* Project confronts to think the objective limits of the current reform directed to High School and ideological contribution of the BNCC (BRAZIL, 2017a) when they sustain that, with the curriculum restructuring (overcoming the radically disciplinary fragmentation of knowledge and stimulating the application in real life), it will allow young students to take a leading role in their personal lives and in their studies. One cannot disregard the concrete reality, whose case study in a peripheral school brought some warnings of obstacles.

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