

ENEM IN THE LAST 10 YEARS: NATIONAL EXAM OF WHICH HIGH SCHOOL?

ENEM NOS ÚLTIMOS 10 ANOS: EXAME NACIONAL DE QUAL ENSINO MÉDIO?

*ENEM EN LOS ÚLTIMOS 10 AÑOS: EXAMEN NACIONAL DE QUÉ ESCUELA SECUNDARIA?*



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**ABSTRACT:** This article aims to study the recent trajectory of Enem (*Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio/ National High School Examination*) based on the Policy Cycle. The historical period analyzed spans from 2021 to 2024, considering that the publication of Ordinance N° 411/2021 of the MEC begins a cycle of discussions about the suitability of Enem for the New High School. The adaptation of Enem to the new legislation exposes historical challenges, from internal issues in the management of Inep to recent concerns about the quality of the New High School. The post-2022 political scenario, marked by the change of government, paused the implementation of Secondary Education, highlighting divergences in the role of Enem concerning to this level of education. The critical analysis of historical events related to the reform of the New High School and the adjustments to Enem highlights the need for a continuous commitment to a fair implementation of the educational changes proposed by the legislation.

**KEYWORDS:** Enem. Policy Cycle. New High School.

**RESUMO:** Este artigo tem como objetivo estudar a trajetória recente do Enem, à luz do Ciclo de Políticas. O período histórico analisado compreende os anos de 2021 a 2024, considerando a publicação da Portaria n.º 411/2021 do MEC como início de um ciclo de discussões sobre a adequação do Enem ao Novo Ensino Médio. A adaptação do Enem à nova legislação expõe desafios históricos, desde questões internas na gestão do Inep até os questionamentos recentes sobre a qualidade do Novo Ensino Médio. O cenário político pós-2022, marcado pela mudança de governo, pausou a implementação do Ensino Médio, evidenciando divergências na função do Enem em relação a esse nível de ensino. A análise crítica dos eventos históricos relacionados à reforma do Novo Ensino Médio e às adequações do Enem evidencia a necessidade de um compromisso contínuo para uma efetivação justa das mudanças educacionais propostas pela legislação.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Enem. Ciclo de Políticas. Novo Ensino Médio.

**RESUMEN:** Este trabajo tiene como objetivo estudiar la trayectoria reciente de Enem (*Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio/ Examen Nacional de la Escuela Secundaria*) a la luz del ciclo de políticas. El período histórico analizado abarca los años 2021 a 2024, considerando que la publicación de la Ley n.º 411/2021 del MEC empieza un ciclo de discusiones sobre la adecuación del Enem para la Nueva Escuela Secundaria. La adaptación del Enem a la nueva legislación expone desafíos históricos, desde cuestiones internas en la gestión del Inep hasta cuestionamientos recientes sobre la calidad de la Nueva Escuela Secundaria. El escenario político posterior a 2022, marcado por el cambio de gobierno, detuvo la implementación de la Escuela Secundaria, destacando divergencias en el papel del Enem en relación a este nivel de educación. El análisis crítico de los acontecimientos históricos relacionados con la reforma de la Nueva Escuela Secundaria y los ajustes del Enem resalta la necesidad de un compromiso continuo para una implementación justa de los cambios educativos propuestos por la legislación.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Enem. Ciclo de Políticas. Nueva Escuela Secundaria.

## **Introduction**

During the 1980s and 1990s, the agenda of large-scale educational assessment became increasingly prominent in a growing number of countries, including Brazil. At that time, we were transitioning from an approach focused on quantity, universality, and democratization of access to education to another, in which quality became the central concern. To achieve this goal, new policies concentrated on altering educational systems' regulatory mechanisms, emphasizing educational management and the numerical results obtained through public policies and large-scale assessments. In Brazil, this shift became evident with the 1995 Managerial Reform and the promulgation of the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (Law No. 9,394/1996) in 1996 (Brasil, 1996). This new legal framework reshaped school education through policies, programs, processes, and practices that intertwine in various aspects and through multiple mechanisms, resulting in a renewed regulation with greater control by managers. This model of public management marked a new paradigm in which efficiency, effectiveness, autonomy, administrative decentralization, merit, performance evaluation, and productivity became concrete parameters guiding public policies.

Regarding educational assessment policies in Brazil, the implementation of the evaluation system gained prominence throughout the 1990s. With the increase in resources allocated to the field of Educational Assessment, the country acquired a comprehensive and complex evaluation system that not only encompasses all educational levels but also plays a crucial role in generating information that guides educational policies at all levels of education. For the final years of Basic Education, assessment is conducted through the National High School Exam (Enem), established in 1998, with the purpose of evaluating students graduating from Basic Education (according to Art. 1 of Ministerial Ordinance No. 438 of May 28 – Brazil, 1998) and guiding discussions on improving the quality of this educational level (in compliance with Art. 9, VI, of the LDB – Brazil, 1996).

Currently, the reform of Secondary Education has sparked intense debates around the evaluation methods employed in university entrance exams and the National High School Exam (Enem). In April 2022, the Ministry of Education presented the “Parameters for Updating the National High School Exam – Enem” (Brasil, 2022), aimed at establishing a new evaluation format for this educational level. Developed by the Working Group established by MEC Ordinance No. 411/2021 (Brasil, 2021a), the Parameters reignited discussions surrounding the Enem and the federal government’s educational policies.

The transition of the federal government in 2023 brought about a profound reconfiguration in the approach to Secondary Education reform. On March 8, 2023, the Ministry of Education published Ordinance No. 399/2023 (Brasil, 2023a), instituting a public consultation to assess and restructure the national Secondary Education policy. Various sectors of civil society, including teachers, students, administrators, researchers, and educational entities, participated, expressing concerns and perspectives regarding Law No. 13,415/2017 (Brasil, 2017) and its impact on Secondary Education. Concerning the Enem, the public consultation resulted in a consolidated report reflecting the positions of various segments of civil society, identifying several proposals for aligning the New Enem with the New Secondary Education.

The year 2024 begins without a clear definition of how the Enem will be conducted this year. The uncertainty extends to the adaptation to the changes brought by Law No. 13,415/2017 (Brasil, 2017), whether it will adhere to the content of the BNCC, whether it will also incorporate the content of the formative itineraries, or whether it will continue to be conducted as it has been since 2009 – after its last major reform. The future of the Enem and its integration with the transformations in Brazilian education continue to be central themes of debates and discussions in the country's educational landscape.

This research is situated within this context, aiming to analyze the recent trajectory of public policies related to the alignment of the Enem with the New Secondary Education, based on the Policy Cycle approach of Ball, Maguire, and Braun (2016). The following sections present the Policy Cycle approach, the methodological basis for analyzing the alignment of the Enem with Law No. 13,415/2017, through a documentary analysis focused on the Enem update Parameters, the reports from the public consultation instituted by Ordinance No. 399/2023, and Bill No. 5,230/2023.

### **Methodological Approach: The Policy Cycle**

The formulation of public policies in the field of education is an intricate and dynamic process, imbued with complexities that extend beyond the educational sphere. These policies do not follow a linear, predictable trajectory. Instead, they are shaped by complex movements within civil society, where disputes between different political actors influence interactions and outcomes over various historical moments. The understanding of public policy development is delineated as a process full of interactions among various sectors that transcend formal actions,

also encompassing the material, cultural, and subjective conditions of those involved, such as values, worldviews, and training (Ball; Maguire; Braun, 2016, p. 17).

This perspective contrasts with analytical models that assume a linear and rational relationship between those who develop and those who implement public policies. Understanding the process of public policy construction as a "Policy Cycle" (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2016) reflects its non-linear nature and can be understood through the interaction of five contexts: influence, text production, practices, outcomes/effects, and political strategy, which are not perceived as sequential stages but as arenas where disputes and conflicts among interest groups occur.

In this perspective, the *influence* of various sectors of civil society is not a starting point. This phase is divided into considering the interests of the groups involved in the formulation, as well as analyzing the levels of influence these groups have on discussions and definitions of policies and pre-existing realities. The interests of various sectors play a crucial role in generating policies, establishing the foundations for the next phases of the cycle. The *formulation of the political* text incorporates the context of influence, carrying it throughout its process, which goes beyond the simple legislative procedure in Congress or other legislative spheres. The power relations present in all policies and their correspondence with reality and context are considered in the writing of the text. Conflicts, agreements, and disagreements among different sectors shape this process, reflecting the ideological conceptions of these groups.

The *context of practice* goes beyond the mere implementation of the approved text. Policies can be interpreted in various ways, distorted, and recreated by the professionals involved in the practice. The diversity of histories, experiences, values, and individual purposes influences the recontextualization of national policies to adapt to local peculiarities. The *effects* of the practices of civil society actors on public policies constitute the space in which the policy will exert its outcomes on the lives of those who depend on them. The interpretation and/or reinterpretation of educational policies depend on the level of understanding of the professionals working in schools. The effects, divided into first and second order, as per Mainardes (2006, p. 55), reveal changes in practice or structure, as well as the results of these changes in patterns of social access, opportunities, and justice. *Political strategy* confers a cyclical character to the policy formulation process. This strategy, indicating essential activities to address the problems identified in the established policy, feeds back into all other contexts, especially the context of influence. The action of the policy on the ideological understanding

of various sectors of reality reconfigures their public actions, thus completing the dynamic cycle of public policies in the field of education (Mainardes, 2006).

In this work, we are particularly interested in understanding the contexts of *influence, text production, and political strategy*, with an emphasis on the individuals involved, the contradictions present in the document regarding the new High School curriculum and the New ENEM, and, finally, the movement within civil society after more than six years since the approval of Law No. 13,415/2017 (Brasil, 2017).

### **First Steps: Influences and Conflicts in the Development of the ENEM Update Parameters**

Ordinance No. 411, published on June 18, 2021 (Brasil, 2021a), established the Working Group linked to the Ministry of Education to update the ENEM and the National Exam for the Certification of Youth and Adult Competencies (ENCCEJA). The meetings for the development of the ENEM Update Parameters began in July 2021, with the preliminary definitions of the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP)'s work proposal and the presence of external consultancies. Notably, these consultancies included organizations associated with private interests, such as the consultancy firm "Vozes da Educação" and "Itaú/Education and Work," an extension of the Itaú Foundation for Education and Culture.

On November 11, 2021, the National Council of Education (CNE) released a public consultation notice (Brasil, 2021b) aimed at receiving recommendations and suggestions to align the ENEM with the BNCC and the New High School, providing greater plurality to the process of formulating the new ENEM. Based on a draft of the "Opinion on the new ENEM" (Brasil, 2021c), members and institutions of civil society were able to express their contributions and criticisms of the project.

After reviewing all contributions from civil society, the Basic Education Secretariat of the Ministry of Education conducted the eighth and final regular meeting on February 23, 2022, to consolidate and approve the new ENEM proposal. This meeting resulted in the drafting of the document "*Parâmetros de atualização do Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio – Enem*<sup>5</sup>", which was published in April 2022 (Brasil, 2022). The political influence of various sectors of civil society, including organizations linked to global private capital, is evident in the process of formulating these Parameters. The participation and input from the following organizations

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<sup>5</sup> Parameters for the Update of the National High School Exam – ENEM.

are particularly noteworthy: the National Federation of Private Schools (FENEP), the NGO *Todos pela Educação*, the Itaú Institute for Education and Work/IET, *Somos Educação* (linked to the parent company *Saber Serviços Educacionais* (S.A.)), and the National Association of Directors of Federal Institutions of Higher Education (Andifes) (Brasil, p. 35-38, 2021c).

The Parameters (Brasil, 2022) redefined the purpose of the ENEM, prioritizing the selection of students for Higher Education and abandoning its original function of analyzing and improving the quality of Basic Education. Regarding the exam's structure, the Parameters indicated that the tests should be aligned with the National High School Curricular Guidelines (DCNEM) (Brasil, 2018). This means the exam should be conducted in two stages: the first aligned with the National Common Curricular Base, and the second with the Reference Frameworks for the Development of the Formative Itineraries. Additionally, the document proposed revising the ENEM skills matrix to “encompass the connections between general competencies and the specific competencies and skills of the knowledge areas” (Brasil, 2022, p. 22, our translation), inspired by the PISA Reading Frameworks. However, the development of these matrices faced delays within INEP, the institution responsible for their creation. INEP's plan foresaw the development of the assessment matrices in 2021, but that year was marked by crises, including the resignation of 37 employees in November of the same year, who cited the technical and administrative fragility of the institute.

It is important to note that this period marks a transition between different management perspectives and the overall direction of the High School reform. Carvalho, Lotta, and Bauer (2023) identify that the conception and implementation of Brazilian High School policies during this period were characterized by a predominance of “an ambiguous context, which gives the High School policy the appearance of being adrift, merely following the resources and direction previously determined by the programs associated with the aforementioned reform” (Carvalho; Lotta; Bauer, p. 565, 2023, our translation). In this context of a lack of coordinated actions by the Ministry of Education (MEC), Consed and the third sector emerged as actors assisting the states in implementing the High School reform more uniformly.

The perception of these authors is confirmed by the opening of an External Education Commission of the Brazilian Congress, which convened a meeting to assess the state of Basic Education. The report highlighted uncertainties, inefficiencies of the Ministry of Education and INEP, a lack of dialogue with civil society, and budget cuts, particularly in relation to the ENEM. The extension of the deadline for publishing the ENEM assessment matrix compromised other public policies, such as the distribution of books by the National Textbook

Program (PNLD), which were not fully aligned with the new matrix — which, to date, still does not exist.

### **Between the Old, the New, and the Brand-New: Dialogue on the ENEM with Civil Society**

The year 2023, marked by the transition of the federal government, signifies a significant readjustment in the approach adopted in the process of discussing and implementing the New High School reform, particularly in response to efforts to meet the demands of civil society sectors. On March 8, 2023, the Ministry of Education issued Ordinance No. 399/2023 (Brasil, 2023a), establishing a public consultation to evaluate and restructure the national High School policy. The consultation, lasting 90 days, aimed to collect input to inform decision-making on regulatory acts related to the New High School and the implementation of the new ENEM.

Less than a month after the publication of Ordinance No. 399/2023 (Brasil, 2023a), the Ministry of Education issued Ordinance No. 627 on April 4, 2023 (Brasil, 2023b), which suspended the deadlines established by the National Implementation Schedule for the New High School. This suspension, valid for 60 days following the conclusion of the Public Consultation, aimed to adjust the existing implementation deadlines for the New High School—and the ENEM itself—and to allow more time for debate regarding the implementation of the Reform.

The public consultation resulted in a report (Brasil, 2023c) that organizes the information into thematic clusters, addressing topics such as workload, curriculum organization, ENEM, educational equity, Distance Education, infrastructure, Vocational and Technological Education, teacher training and appreciation, support for student retention, full-time education, evaluation, and the role of the Ministry of Education (MEC). The public consultation initiated by Ordinance No. 399 (Brasil, 2023a), on March 8, 2023, concluded on July 6, 2023, and the report (Brasil, 2023c) reflecting the contributions from various segments of society, was released by the MEC on August 7, 2023.

The consultation highlighted various concerns from participants—teachers, students, administrators, researchers, and education-related entities—regarding different aspects of Law No. 13.415/2017 (Brasil, 2017) and its effects on High School education. Concerning the ENEM, the focus of this work, discussions and contributions emphasized the need for an assessment aligned with the students' needs, promoting equity in access to Higher Education.



During hearings with the National Education Council (CNE) and the National Forum of State and District Education Councils (FONCEDE), various considerations were raised regarding the modifications to the ENEM and the responsibilities assigned to both INEP and the CNE. The uncertainties and the impending deadline for decision-making concerning the exam, which is to be held at the end of 2024, posed doubts and challenges in a country with continental dimensions and diverse realities. Furthermore, several contributions recognized the impact of the New High School on the ENEM and the Unified Selection System (Sisu), expressing concerns about outdated matrices and item banks, and questioning the feasibility of conducting a second stage focused on the itineraries in 2024, as outlined by the CNE in 2018 (Brasil, 2018).

Subsequently, we will conduct an analysis of the proposals presented during the public consultation, aiming to identify their justifications and how they sought to address the challenges and issues identified in the process of constructing the New High School, and especially in the development of the new ENEM.

### **ENEM 2024: Proposals Extracted from Civil Society in a Scenario of Urgency**

The identification of proposals for adapting the ENEM was carried out through the review of the Public Consultation Report on High School, published by the Ministry of Education on August 7, 2023 (Brasil, 2023c). During this process, three predominant groups of proposals were identified, each with its specific approach.

The first of these groups highlights the importance of effectively aligning the ENEM with the New High School, in accordance with the National High School Curricular Guidelines (Brasil, 2018), starting as early as 2024. It also emphasizes the need to assess both the Basic General Education and the formative itineraries beginning in 2024, as a way to ensure that the ENEM becomes a tool reflecting the New High School's proposal and providing a more comprehensive evaluation of the knowledge acquired by students over their last three years of schooling.

This position is exemplified by the statement of the president of Consed, Vitor de Ângelo (Brasil, 2023d, p. 142), during the hearing held on July 3, 2023, at the Windsor Hotel, and by Marcus Fernandes, representing Senac (Brasil, 2023e, p. 349). According to them, it is necessary to go beyond a simple alignment of the ENEM assessment matrix with the BNCC for Basic General Education. The focus of the restructuring should encompass the formative

itineraries, which are the specific choices made by students within the framework of the New High School (Brasil, 2023d, p. 142) and which account for at least 40% of the students' education and, therefore, should be subject to evaluation (Brasil, 2023e, p. 349).

The specific proposal presented by the president of Consed is that, starting in 2024, the second day of the Enem assessment should follow the principle of eligibility, taking into account the curricular deepening chosen by students in their formative itineraries. Vitor de Ângelo warns of the risk that the 2024 Enem could focus solely on General Basic Education, disregarding one of the fundamental changes introduced by the High School reform, which is its flexibility. This approach aims to ensure that the Enem is a tool that broadly reflects and assesses the knowledge acquired by students in the context of the New High School, considering the different choices and formative paths that the reform proposes.

A second group of civil society actors reinforces the need to implement a transitional phase for the Enem. They emphasize the importance of gradually and smoothly including both General Basic Education and the formative itineraries until the exam is fully adapted to the new educational model—differing from the first group, which advocates for an immediate alignment of the Enem with the New High School. Recognizing the lack of time for full adaptation to the guidelines established in Resolution No. 3 of November 21, 2018 (Brasil, 2018), a transitional phase seeks to avoid detrimental impacts on students who entered High School after 2021<sup>6</sup>, ensuring an assessment more aligned with the transformations in High School and providing sufficient time for effective implementation of the changes.

In this regard, the proposal from the Movimento pela Base includes aligning the 2024 Enem with the BNCC, as provided by the *Lei de Diretrizes e Bases* (LDB), with the revision of reference matrices and the construction of items aligned with it. Therefore, it highlights the urgency of developing and publishing the Enem assessment matrices in accordance with the New High School; otherwise, “the students who will take it will be extremely disadvantaged—being assessed on learning they have not had access to” (Brasil, 2023f, p. 450, our translation). The *Movimento pela Base* emphasizes the importance of creating a base for the itineraries that also guides the Enem after its implementation, but opposes the inclusion of a second stage focused on formative itineraries in 2024, considering the complexity and instability this would bring to the implementation.

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<sup>6</sup> And they studied in a new high school model, without the Enem evaluation matrix, which has not been published to date.

In line with this, the NGO Todos pela Educação proposes, in its technical note published in May 2023, a model for the Enem considering the uncertainties surrounding the exam and the need for alignment with the changes in High School. The suggestion involves adapting the Enem in 2024 to the *Base Nacional Comum Curricular*, “with the 5 tests being the same for all students, organized by areas of knowledge and essay, but with its matrix adapted to the BNCC—which would already be a significant advance” (Brasil, 2023g, p. 261, our translation). In the following years, until 2027, the exam would maintain its current format, with the inclusion of the BNCC, allowing for a smoother transition. It is suggested that in 2025 and 2026, curricula be adjusted to the new regulations, with implementation strategies at the discretion of each education system. In 2027, the application of the New Enem should be fully aligned with the new High School curricular structure. Additionally, it is recommended to revise Article 12, § 6º of the *Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para o Ensino Médio* (DCNEM) (Brasil, 2018) to ensure that education systems offer choice options to all students, without restricting them from possible deepening (Brasil, 2023g, p. 261).

In the webinar organized by the Ayrton Senna Institute on the "New High School in Debate," one of the proposals presented aligns with previous discussions, particularly the suggestion of a transitional Enem. The proposal emphasizes the need to adjust the 2024 Enem reference matrix in accordance with the BNCC, assessing the General Basic Education component of the New High School while introducing an evaluation of the core competencies and skills of the itineraries, to be defined by Inep. Additionally, the proposal suggests the creation of a negotiation committee, led by the MEC and Inep, with representatives from the CNE, Consed, Andifes, and the private Higher Education sector, to define the assessment of the itineraries following the results of the public consultation (Brasil, 2023f, p. 420).

Finally, a third group of proposals focuses on the idea that the New Enem should assess only the content related to General Basic Education, as established by the *Lei de Diretrizes e Bases* (LDB). This approach excludes the introduction of itineraries in the exam, thereby ensuring, in the view of its proponents, a more fair and equitable assessment system, where all students have equal access to Higher Education.

In this regard, the National Council of Institutions of the Federal Network of Professional, Scientific, and Technological Education (CONIF) proposes offering the New Enem in a single stage, based on the BNCC, following Provisional Measure No. 746 of 2016 (Brasil, 2016), que alterou a Lei nº 9.394/1996 (Brasil, 1996). which amended Law No. 9.394/1996 (Brazil, 1996). This proposal aims to consider exclusively the competencies, skills,

and learning expectations of the areas of knowledge defined in the BNCC, aligning with the idea that undergraduate courses should be open to candidates who have completed High School. This conception differs from previous proposals, indicating a concern with the possible overemphasis of High School curricula on performance in large-scale exams (Brasil, 2023e, p. 381 e 382). Conif questions the very nature of the second stage of the New Enem, arguing that the formative itineraries, understood as diversified content that may vary regionally, do not align with the concept of a single national-level exam (Brasil, 2023e, p. 381; 382).

The considerations raised by the Federation of Unions of Technical-Administrative Workers in Public Higher Education Institutions of Brazil (Fasubra) complement this perspective, highlighting that the new Enem, based on formative pathways, may hinder the use of the exam as a national test for the majority of universities, representing a regression and further utilizing access to Higher Education. The Federation stresses the importance of including significant and critical curricular content, going beyond issues of entrepreneurship and life projects that may overlook the reality of the majority of young Brazilians (Brasil, 2023a, p. 400).

The positions of Manoel Palácios, President of Inep, and Monica Ribeiro, a professor at the Federal University of Paraná (UFPR), presented at the public hearing of the Education Committee of the Chamber of Deputies on May 17, 2023, express similar concerns regarding the inclusion of formative itineraries in the Enem assessment. Both emphasize that the Enem, built on references shared by all students, should not incorporate the flexibility of formative itineraries, as it is not feasible to create an exam that accommodates the specific differences of each educational network. Monica Ribeiro further indicates that the most disadvantaged by such changes would be students from state public schools, as the High School reform brought a significant reduction in the hours allocated to the knowledge assessed by the Enem for these students (Brasil, 2023f).

Considering that we are in 2024, without a new matrix for the Enem, with discrepancies in the implementation of formative itineraries among educational networks (Carvalho; Lotta; Bauer, 2023), and the importance of this exam for millions of students who will use it as a tool for access to Higher Education, we believe that the 2024 Enem should maintain its current format, not assess the formative itineraries, but undergo an adjustment of its matrix to align with the BNCC. The current Enem skills matrix needs to be reviewed, retaining only the skills that directly align with the BNCC, ensuring that the Enem matrix includes skills that have been

addressed within the educational systems, regardless of the format and the number of hours the student was exposed to.

### **The Bill No. 5,230/2023 and its Progress in the National Congress**

The sequence of events following the public consultation in September 2023 outlined a response from the federal government in light of the divergent opinions on Law 13,415/2017 (Brasil, 2017). In an attempt to balance the demands for repeal and for maintenance with adjustments, the government presented a bill for approval in Congress, allowing another layer of discussion to take place.

The draft of this bill, produced by the MEC, was sent to the Civil House and became public at the end of September 2023. It presented two main points: the amendment of Law No. 9,394/1996 (Brasil, 1996), which establishes the guidelines and bases of national education, with assumptions for the national High School policy, and the repeal of provisions of Law No. 13,415/2017 (Brasil, 2017). Essentially, it proposed several notable points that directly or indirectly impact the structure of the Enem, such as the reconstitution of the General Basic Education workload, increasing it from 1,800 hours to 2,400 hours; the reinstatement of the mandatory status of all curricular components; and a greater focus on the formative itineraries, with changes to their objectives and name, to be referred to as “Paths for Study Deepening and Integration.” Despite this, the draft did not make any mention of the Enem (Brasil, 2023h).

In light of political disputes between the Executive and Legislative branches that extend beyond educational policies, the Speaker of the House, Arthur Lira, appointed Deputy Mendonça Filho (União-PE) as the rapporteur for the Bill. This decision caused dissatisfaction within the government base, as Mendonça Filho was the Minister of Education in 2017, responsible for the approval of Law No. 13,415/2017 (Brasil, 2017) in the form of Provisional Measure No. 746/2016 (Brasil, 2016). The main amendments made by the rapporteur to the Bill that affect the Enem, directly or indirectly, are: the reduction of the minimum workload for General Basic Education from 2,400 hours to 2,100 hours; the return to the term "formative itineraries," with these having a minimum workload of 900 hours; the reinstatement of the knowledge areas without specifying mandatory curricular components; and the removal of the requirement for Spanish language instruction (raising uncertainty about whether this subject will be included in the Enem). In response to the rapporteur's report, the federal government arranged a meeting between Deputy Mendonça Filho and the Minister of Education Camilo

Santana, during which it was agreed that the Bill would only be voted on in 2024, as the month of December 2023 was impacted by plenary votes in Congress on bills with strong economic appeal, such as the Tax Reform and the 2024 Budget Guidelines Law.

Regarding the preliminary report of the rapporteur (Brasil, 2023j), it is essential to note that the five amendments proposed by legislators concerning the Enem were rejected by rapporteur Mendonça Filho. Among the rejected amendments, Amendments 15 and 19 are notable. These amendments requested a "percentage bonus between 2% and 5% on the overall score obtained in the final score of the National High School Exam (Enem) for students who have completed the General Basic Education of High School with a workload of less than 2,100 hours" (Brasil, 2023k, p. 8, our translation). The goal of these amendments was to mitigate the negative impacts of the implementation of Law No. 13,415/2017 (Brasil, 2017) on students who entered High School in 2021, aiming to compensate for "the challenges faced by students during this critical period of change" (Brasil, 2023l, p. 2, our translation). Additionally, Amendment 30 stipulated that the Enem and other evaluative processes should assess both the General Basic Education and the formative itineraries, as well as be based on the BNCC and the National Base for Deepening and Integration Study Paths—documents still to be produced by the MEC—for the creation of their assessments. Similarly, Amendment 37 also indicated the need to evaluate the General Basic Education and formative itineraries, establishing a start date 2026.

This historical trajectory reveals the complexity, and challenges encountered in the effort to align the Enem with Law No. 13,415/2017 (Brasil, 2017). From instabilities at Inep to the presentation of the bill, through public consultation and its divergent proposals, the landscape of Brazilian High School education has been immersed in uncertainties. The federal government's response, materialized in Bill No. 5,230/2023 (Brasil, 2023i), reflects an attempt to reconcile diverse interests but also highlights significant challenges, such as the lack of reference to the Enem in the bill. The choice of rapporteur Mendonça Filho and his subsequent suggestions for changes to the bill during its analysis in Congress illustrate political tensions and the need for a critical approach to the complex history of High School reform in Brazil. The outcome of this process remains open, suggesting a continued need for dialogue and reflection to achieve an effective and coherent implementation of the changes proposed by current legislation. It is noteworthy that, in interviews with the press, Mendonça Filho indicated that the Enem could be guided by the National Education Plan (PNE), with its reformulation period beginning in 2024. This suggests that changes to the Enem and the publication of a new

matrix may be postponed, awaiting the definitions of the next decadal plan—leaving students currently in High School without clear guidelines.

### **Final considerations**

The analysis of the recent trajectory of the Enem in light of the Policy Cycle reveals a web of events that have shaped the efforts to revise the exam in response to Law No. 13,415/2017. The cycle, composed of the interconnected contexts of influence, text production, practices, results/effects, and political strategy, offers a dynamic perspective for understanding the educational policies at play.

The adaptation of the Enem to Law No. 13,415/2017 reveals historical challenges, from the internal management of Inep to non-compliance with guidelines, such as the failure to publish the matrix in the specified year, creating uncertainties about the effective implementation of the proposed changes. The political landscape post-2022, marked by a change in government, brought a halt to the implementation schedule for High School and the publication of the matrices for SAEB and Enem. The public consultation during this period highlighted disagreements among various groups regarding how the Enem should align with High School, reflecting the complexity and uncertainties that permeate the educational landscape. Meanwhile, the proposal of Bill No. 5,230/2023, produced by the federal government, and its troubled passage through the Federal Congress, reflect the complexities of political negotiations. The choice of rapporteur Mendonça Filho and the changes to the bill during its analysis in Congress underscore the disputes and the need for a careful approach, given the complex history of High School reform in Brazil.

As we enter 2024, the year when the Enem is expected to be administered for the first time to students who began their High School journey after the reform, the competency and skills matrix for this exam has not yet been published, and significant discrepancies remain in the implementation of formative itineraries among educational networks. In light of this reality, it is understood that the Enem for 2024 should maintain its current format, excluding the assessment of formative itineraries, but undergo a meticulous adjustment of its matrix to the BNCC. Aligning the current skills matrix of the Enem with the BNCC could contribute to a transitional implementation. However, the lack of clear guidelines for students currently in High School reinforces the ongoing need for dialogue and reflection to achieve a coherent and effective implementation of educational reforms. Therefore, directing the design of the New

Enem towards discussions in the National Education Plan appears to be a democratic and inclusive measure involving educational stakeholders.

In conclusion, the critical analysis of the Policy Cycle applied to the trajectory of the Enem in the context of Law No. 13,415/2017 highlights not only the challenges faced but also the urgent need for a reflective and dialogical approach to policy-making. The complexity of the process demands a deep understanding of the interconnected contexts, political influences, and implemented practices to achieve effective educational reform. The current scenario, with its uncertainties and divergences, requires a continued commitment to ensuring a coherent and fair implementation of the changes proposed by the existing educational legislation.

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