

**EDUCATIONAL POLICIES FOR INTEGRATED HIGH SCHOOL: AN ANALYSIS  
OF THE CURRICULUM CHANGES PROPOSED FROM 2017**

***POLÍTICAS EDUCACIONAIS PARA O ENSINO MÉDIO INTEGRADO: UMA  
ANÁLISE DAS ALTERAÇÕES CURRICULARES PROPOSTAS A PARTIR DE 2017***

***POLÍTICAS EDUCATIVAS PARA LA EDUCACIÓN SECUNDARIA INTEGRADA: UN  
ANÁLISIS DE LOS CAMBIOS CURRICULARES PROPUESTOS A PARTIR DE 2017***



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**ABSTRACT:** This article aims to explore educational policies concerning the curriculum of High School Integrated into Vocational Education, focusing particularly on the significant changes introduced in the Common Core National Curriculum (BNCC), which was approved by Ordinance No. 1.570 on December 21, 2017, as well as the General Curricular Guidelines for Vocational and Technological Education, approved through resolution CNE/CP No. 1 on January 5, 2021. The reflections presented in this study are based on thorough bibliographic research that centers on curriculum regulations and scholars who discuss topics such as Curriculum, Public Policies, Vocational Education, and the Interplay between Work and Education. Through the course of the study, it has become evident that the proposed curricular changes implemented since 2017 demonstrate a sense of urgency in accommodating and succumbing to external pressures, particularly those driven by shifts in the capitalist mode of production, characterized by a utilitarian vision of education and a focus on pragmatic formative approaches.

**KEYWORDS:** Curricular Education Policy. Vocational Education. Work and Education.

**RESUMO:** Este artigo objetiva discutir as políticas educacionais voltadas para o currículo do Ensino Médio Integrado à Educação Profissional, especialmente a partir das principais alterações contidas na Base Nacional Comum Curricular - BNCC, aprovada pela Portaria nº 1.570 em 21/12/2017 e, nas Diretrizes Curriculares Gerais para a Educação Profissional e Tecnológica, aprovadas pela resolução CNE/CP nº 1, em 05 de janeiro de 2021. As reflexões apresentadas neste estudo têm como base uma pesquisa bibliográfica centrada nas regulamentações curriculares e nos estudiosos que discutem Currículo, Políticas Públicas, Educação Profissional e a Relação entre Trabalho e Educação. Com o desenvolvimento do estudo verificou-se que as propostas de alterações curriculares empreendidas a partir de 2017 evidenciam celeridade em contemplar e em ceder às pressões externas, sobretudo as ditadas pelas mudanças no modo de produção capitalista, que tem como marca o pragmatismo formativo e a visão utilitarista da educação.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Política Educacional Curricular. Educação Profissional. Trabalho e Educação.

**RESUMEN:** Este artículo tiene como objetivo discutir las políticas educativas dirigidas al currículo de la Enseñanza Media Integrada a la Educación Profesional, especialmente a partir de los principales cambios contenidos en la Base Común Curricular Nacional - BNCC, aprobada por la Ordenanza nº 1.570 el 21/12/2017 y, en los Lineamientos Curriculares Generales para la Educación Profesional y Tecnológica, aprobados por resolución CNE/CP nº 1, el 5 de enero de 2021. Las reflexiones presentadas en este estudio se basan en una investigación bibliográfica centrada en las normas curriculares y en estudiosos que discuten Currículo, Políticas Públicas, Educación Profesional y la Relación entre Trabajo y Educación. Con el desarrollo del estudio se verificó que las propuestas de cambios curriculares emprendidas a partir de 2017 muestran rapidez en la contemplación y en ceder a las presiones externas, en especial a las dictadas por los cambios en el modo de producción capitalista, marcado por el pragmatismo formativo. y la visión utilitarista de la educación.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Política Educativa Curricular. Educación Profesional. Trabajo y Educación.

## Introduction

All forms of professional education are inherently connected to a curriculum aimed at fulfilling the demands of the workforce as determined by the capitalist mode of production. If we interpret it from this perspective, we will direct our analysis toward a pragmatic and utilitarian understanding of schooling. The significance of this type of analysis lies in discussing factors that contribute to the perpetuation and reproduction of inequalities in the educational conditions of young people, who comprise the high school population. Integrating professional education with the high school should be conceived as a comprehensive synthesis aimed at fostering the development of an emancipated individual rather than a unilateral educational approach primarily focused on meeting the demands of the productive system.

When considering exploring training trajectories implemented in integrated courses, it is imperative to encompass dimensions that incorporate the regulation of the educational curriculum as formalized through public educational policies. Curricular public policies should be comprehended as fundamental and indispensable guidelines within the educational domain, as they govern the processes involved in the structural and conceptual arrangement of courses across all levels and modalities of education. Nevertheless, it is equally crucial to recognize them as a manifestation of conflicting interests, particularly as a tool for power and the perpetuation of dominant agendas.

In this regard, the purpose of this article is to address the following inquiry: do the curricular modifications introduced since 2017 for the High School Integrated to Professional Education - EMIEP entails a focus on enhancing formative processes from an emancipatory perspective, or are they primarily driven by an alignment with the requirements of the labor market?

To address the question above, we aim to analyze the intricacies surrounding the proposals for educational policy changes, specifically focusing on two primary documents: The Common Core National Curriculum (BNCC) and the General Curriculum Guidelines for Professional and Technological Education. The objective is to comprehend how implementing these curricular educational policies may influence the adaptation, preservation, or transformation of integrated education, which is regarded as a pivotal stage in the educational journey of young individuals.

This study aims to initiate a preliminary discussion regarding the alterations that have influenced the High School Integrated into the Professional Education curriculum since 2017. Given that these curricular changes are relatively recent and still undergoing implementation

within institutional spheres, a literature review approach has been chosen. The theoretical and bibliographic framework draws upon references that address topics such as Curriculum, Public Policies, Professional Education, and the relationship between work and education from a critical perspective.

### **Work and Education Relationship and Curricular Public Policies for High School Integrated to Professional Education - EMIEP**

Engaging in the discourse surrounding public policies that shape the curriculum development for Integrated High School with Professional Education necessitates a comprehensive comprehension of the interconnections between work and education, as the curriculum aims to amalgamate vocational training with high school education.

When discussing vocational training integrated into the high school level, we are referring to a modality designed for young individuals who have completed elementary school, with the majority falling within the age range of fourteen to eighteen years. During this phase of basic education, professionalization should be perceived as a component of the "dominant project [...], which constitutes a societal endeavor focused on the supremacy of the market, solely economic principles, and the interests of major industrial and financial conglomerates." (SILVA, 2010, p. 28, our translation). From this standpoint, it can be comprehended that the modifications to the curriculum, which are shaped by curriculum policies, are orchestrated to primarily address the demands of the labor market, which is perpetually evolving and influenced by technological advancements and structural unemployment. As a result, the labor market has become increasingly dynamic and unstable, necessitating a curriculum that adapts to these shifts.

What is expected for the EMIEP is training that relates work and education and considers the emancipation of the subject, thus articulating intellectual, physical, and technological instruction, resulting in a comprehensive formative process (Marx & Engels, 2011). The aim is to provide education that enhances all the individual's skills, enabling them to construct their existence in an emancipated manner, free from alienating limitations (Duarte, Oliveira, & Koga, 2016).

In light of this, public educational policies persist in their trajectory with ongoing modifications that have yet to solidify within the active curriculum, thereby undergoing recurrent reconfigurations, primarily due to the influence of neoliberal rationality itself, which

is characterized by "main characteristic the generalization of competition as a norm of conduct and of the firm as a model of subjectivation" (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016, p. 17, our translation).

Incorporating the business model as a framework for administrative and didactic-pedagogical management, educational institutions perceive students as clients; however, this perspective fails to prioritize providing a comprehensive and liberating education. Instead, the training primarily aims to align with the professional profiles demanded by the labor market, but unfortunately, it does not guarantee the successful integration of these young individuals into the workforce. Consequently, many are compelled to pursue further qualifications or settle for positions that do not fully utilize their acquired skills and knowledge.

In this context, it is crucial to approach the discussions concerning curricular educational policies proposed for primary and vocational education by considering the intricate interconnections between work and education. Such an approach is necessary to fulfill the objectives of an education system that ensures equitable access to the accumulated knowledge throughout history for the descendants of the working class. Moreover, when addressing integrated education, it is essential to recognize labor as an educational principle. Rooted in Marxist theory, labor is understood as a fundamental aspect of human existence and thus forms an integral part of humanization.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the curricular changes that have transpired within the EMIEP, it is pertinent to provide a concise historical overview commencing from the late 1990s. Following the redemocratization process in the country and the enactment of the Federal Constitution of 1988, extensive discussions emerged within the realm of education. During this period, formal education was recognized as a pivotal dimension for advancing employment opportunities, improving health standards, and fostering a more democratic society with enhanced social justice. These developments influenced the perception of educational policies, as education became constitutionally recognized as a fundamental human right.

In this context, the National Education Guidelines and Bases Law - LDBEN no. 9.394 was enacted in 1996. This law introduced dimensions such as work, science, and technology into the framework of professional education (BRASIL, 1996). However, these provisions suggest a divergence between middle-level professional education and high school, contradicting the principles of emancipatory education. Moreover, there is an emerging tendency to expand courses in the concomitant modality, which results in student education fragmentation. This occurs when the student attends regular high school at one institution while

pursuing technical education at a separate institution exclusively dedicated to vocational education.

From the perspective of educational policies, this scenario underwent significant changes following the change of government in 2002. The discussion regarding expanding integrated high school professional education gained renewed momentum. Subsequently, Decree number 5.154/2004 was approved, outlining integrated courses that foster the articulation between high school and technical education within the same institution, utilizing a unified Course Pedagogical Project (BRASIL, 2004).

In this context, federal public professional education gained prominence in the political landscape, leading to the enactment of Law n°. 11.892/2008. This law aimed to restructure and establish a new professional and technological education institution model within the Ministry of Education (MEC) (BRASIL, 2008). Derived from the existing potential within the Federal Centers for Technological Education (CEFETs), Federal Technical Schools (ETFs), Federal Agrotechnical Schools (EAFs), and schools affiliated with Federal Universities (PACHECO; SILVA, 2009, p. 08), the expansion plan of the Federal Network of Vocational and Technological Education encompassed, as one of its main objectives, the prioritized provision of high school professional education through integrated curriculum courses.

In light of these transformations, the need arose to develop and propose new Curricular Guidelines to support the institutions<sup>2</sup> within the Federal Network of Professional and Technological Education. This network comprised the newly established institutions resulting from the implementation of Law n°. 11.892 on December 29, 2008, and other institutions that did not adhere to this Law. The primary objective was to deliberate on the structure of integrated courses, drawing from the provisions outlined in Resolution n°. 06 of 2012. This resolution established the National Curriculum Guidelines for Technical and Vocational Education at the Secondary Level (BRASIL, 2012).

Gimeno Sacristán (2017, p. 107, our translation) defines curriculum policy as a "defining and influential domain, with significant implications for educational practice and the roles and responsibilities of teachers and students within it". As a fundamental framework for designing the curricula of comprehensive, integrated courses, the guidelines, in conjunction with the National Curriculum Parameters - PCNs (BRASIL, 2000) and the National Catalog of

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Technical Courses - CNCTs (BRASIL, 2012), serve as the guiding principles in the process of restructuring the curricula of integrated High School Technical Professional Education courses.

Five years after the approval of the National Curricular Guidelines for Secondary Vocational Technical Education, it is evident that the curricular educational policy has undergone significant modifications. These changes have been prompted by an underlying premise highlighting the significance of flexibility in students' educational journey, the imperative of prolonging their time spent in school to enhance its appeal, and other pertinent considerations.

The initiative, enshrined in Law n°. 13.415 on February 16, 2017, encompasses various provisions, including technical and vocational training as one of the educational pathways within a high school, expressed in article 36 of this law, normalize that:

The high school curriculum will comprise the National Common Core Curriculum and formative itineraries, which should be structured to provide diverse curricular arrangements based on their relevance to the local context and the capabilities of education systems. These itineraries include: I. Languages and their associated technologies; II. Mathematics and their related technologies; III. Natural sciences and their associated technologies; IV. Applied humanities and social sciences; V. Technical and professional training. (BRASIL, 2017, our translation).

Expanding and integrating professional technical training as one of the educational options for high school students contribute to the increased availability of concurrent technical courses, particularly within vocational education institutions. This is because a significant number of public high schools lack the necessary physical and human resources to offer vocational programs. Consequently, the provisions outlined in Law 13,415/2017 necessitate revising and adapting the existing Curricular Guidelines for Vocational Education, as stipulated in Resolution n°. 06 of 2012.

Alongside the alterations introduced to the curricular structure of secondary education, including Secondary Vocational Technical Education (EMIEP), it is crucial to consider the guidelines outlined in the Common Core National Curriculum (BNCC). The discussions regarding a National Curriculum Framework were formalized through Ministerial Ordinance No. 592 on June 17, 2015. This ordinance established the Expert Commission for the Development of the Common Core National Curriculum Proposal, comprising professionals from all states in the federation appointed by the National Council of Education Secretaries (CONSED) and the National Union of Municipal Education Leaders (Undime) (Art 1º e 2º).

According to the historical account published on the official BNCC/MEC website, in 2015, the initial version of the document underwent a public consultation process involving schools from across Brazil to foster discussions on the preliminary draft. Drawing from the analyses conducted during this phase, the second version of the document was subsequently published in 2016. This version was then deliberated in 27 State Seminars, where teachers, administrators, and subject matter experts actively participated in the discussions. In 2017, the proposals were organized and consolidated, resulting in the submission of the third version to the National Education Council (CNE). Subsequently, in December 2017, the BNCC was approved and ratified through Ordinance No. 1570, published in the Official Gazette on December 21, 2017. It is worth noting that the CNE approved the BNCC specifically for high school education on December 4, 2018.

With the ratification of the BNCC and the enactment of Law 13.415, initiatives to modify the National Curriculum Guidelines for Technical and Technological Education have commenced. A portion of the text found in the CNE/CP opinion n°. 17/2020 puts forth the following justifications for the requisite revisions in the curricular guidelines:

The modifications introduced by Law No. 13.415/2017, particularly through Article 36, which stipulates high school curricular organization more flexible "formative itineraries that encompass diverse curricular arrangements relevant to the local context and feasible within the education systems", including a dedicated "Technical and Vocational Training" itinerary, necessitate that the current Curricular Guidelines for Technical Vocational Education at the Secondary Level **align with the requirements of the productive sectors**. These guidelines must adequately address the challenges faced by institutions and education systems in the country. They should focus on offering new avenues for professionalizing emerging workers to expand the formation of training of mid-level technicians. Such initiatives **can contribute to accelerating the country's socioeconomic development and overcome the stagnation that hampers the productivity of Brazilian workers**, especially compared to their counterparts in developed nations (BRASIL, 2017, p. 3, my emphasis, our translation).

The argumentation in the opinion itself highlights that the primary objective, as indicated in the text of the new guidelines, aligns with dimensions associated with the needs of the productive sectors and a liberal agenda. For example, the National General Curricular Guidelines for Vocational and Technological Education were approved using Resolution CNE/CP No. 01, dated January 5, 2021 (BRASIL, 2021).

It is important to highlight that the discussion and approval of the guidelines took place during a period when educational institutions were experiencing disruptions in their didactic, pedagogical, and administrative activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, the



process transpired rapidly and without the comprehensive discussions that would have been deemed necessary. This leads us to infer that the guidelines above signify a regression in pursuing a more equitable educational system, which aims to transcend the prevailing educational dualism.

This concern, prevalent among scholars of vocational education policies, has led to issuing of a Statement of Repudiation by the National Association of Postgraduate Studies and Research in Education (ANPED, 2021). In this statement, they highlight several weaknesses, including the lack of theoretical consistency in the text of the guidelines. The document is characterized by vagueness and inconsistency regarding the presented educational conceptions, placing it within the realm of academic criticism similar to that directed at official documents associated with the reforms of the 1990s, such as Decree 2208/1997, it is important to note that this decree has already been revoked by Decree No. 5.154/2004 (BRASIL, 2004).

Regarding implementing and reorganizing the curriculum for integrated courses, Article 24 of the General National Guidelines for Vocational Technical and Technological Education (Resolution No. 01/2021) provides guidance on the required elements in course planning should include:

I - The alignment and consistency of the course with the PPP and the institutional regulations of the educational institution, particularly with regard to its mission and objectives. II - The integration and synergy with the realm of work, technological advancements, and relevant, productive sectors, aiming to address the professionalization requirements of the labor market. III - The establishment of the professional profile that encompasses the completion of the course, delineated through the identification of the formative itinerary devised by the educational institution. This itinerary should be based on clearly identified professionalization paths within the world of work, indicating the practical possibilities for the continuous and interconnected utilization of acquired knowledge.; IV - Identification of the knowledge encompassed within the professional competencies that delineate the proposed professional profile for the course. V - Curricular organization structured around study areas, projects, thematic nuclei, or other suitable criteria or forms of organization that align with the principles of interdisciplinarity, contextualization, and the continuous integration of theory and practice throughout the teaching and learning process. VI - Establishment of criteria and procedures for evaluating learning outcomes within the course; VII - Identification of the concrete technical, technological, physical, financial, and personnel resources required to implement the proposed course successfully. VIII - Development and preparation of the Educational Project (PPC) to be presented for approval to the relevant authorities within the educational system. IX - Evaluation of the execution and implementation of the respective Educational Project (PPC). X - Encouragement of innovation through the utilization of methodologies that foster student agency and active

participation in their professional field of practice (BRASIL, 2021, p. 9, our translation).

The analysis of the establishment of integrated courses, as outlined in the guidelines, entails prioritizing an education system that emphasizes employability and fosters connections with the productive sectors and labor market requirements.

Nevertheless, the significance of this matter extends beyond a mere public policy proposal, as it encompasses a multifaceted process that involves realizing such policies in practical action. Thus, it is crucial to emphasize that:

The curriculum arrangement is integral to the State's involvement in structuring social existence. The systematic organization of knowledge within the Educational System not only has the power to shape culture but also impacts society's broader social and economic fabric (GIMENO SACRISTÁN, 2017, p. 108, our translation).

In order to deepen our understanding of the curricular changes implemented in Basic Secondary Professional Education (EMIEP) since 2017, it is imperative to revisit the fundamental question: why is there a call for curricular integration within the framework of secondary vocational education?

The matter under consideration compels us to contemplate the intentions and tensions inherent in formulating curriculum policies for vocational education. As asserted within the scope of this article, vocational education is intimately connected to the realms of work and education. However, comprehending this educational trajectory pertaining to work transcends the realm of mere employability or instrumental training. In an analysis conducted by Frigotto and Araújo (2018, p. 249), the formative pathway advocated for integrated education should be rooted in an educational principle that perceives work as a fundamental aspect of schooling. In essence, the education of young individuals should strive towards the establishment of an authentically democratic societal project, which necessitates a pedagogical approach that is devoted to providing students with a comprehensive education and aims to foster individual emancipation.

Nonetheless, a crucial aspect that must be considered when considering the curriculum in all its dimensions - the official curriculum, the prescribed curriculum, and the active curriculum - is the fundamental question: "Whose knowledge is being taught in schools?" This type of inquiry, put forth by the critical curriculum scholar Apple (2006), holds significance as the curriculum is perceived within the social context as a domain in which dominant groups consistently strive to exert ideological influence to uphold their position of power. Public

policies and the relational dynamics that unfold within the educational setting during the discussions and implementation of these policies also serve the interests of these hegemonic groups, as evidenced in the stages of constructing benchmarks as significant as the BNCC.

### **Final considerations**

In order to address the fundamental curricular policies related to vocational education in high school, which are predominantly encompassed by the BNCC-EM ratified in 2018, as well as the Curricular Guidelines for Technical and Technological Education endorsed in 2021, it is imperative to acknowledge that the education of young individuals is a subject of contention. Specifically, high school education, particularly when integrating vocational training, endeavors to equip young people with the necessary skills and knowledge to pursue two immediate paths: entering the workforce directly and pursuing further studies in professional training courses and even higher education.

The establishment of the high school curriculum, both in its regular and integrated forms, as defined by Law 13.415/2017 and subsequently the BNCC/2018, mandates the inclusion of vocational training as one of the educational pathways available to public high school students. As outlined by the law, these educational pathways offer the opportunity to delve deeper into one or more areas of knowledge, such as Mathematics and its Technologies, Languages and its Technologies, Nature Sciences and its Technologies, and Applied Humanities and Social Sciences, alongside Technical and Vocational Training (FTP).

The proposal, in principle, presents itself as "liberating" by granting students the autonomy to select their educational trajectory, particularly regarding professional technical training, enabling them to enter the labor market upon completion of high school. But what kind of training would that be?

When contemplating the principles advocated by education to empower individuals, the choice to provide certain areas of knowledge with greater flexibility, particularly those dedicated to critical education - which represents one of the avenues toward emancipatory education - may result in a superficial form of schooling. This is because all scientific disciplines are essential in fostering the development of a critically engaged individual.

The principles outlined in the guidelines, including the latest one, Resolution 01 of 2021, emphasize prioritizing meeting market demands in terms of formative processes. The central issue is that these courses encompass both vocational and basic education components,

necessitating a sense of urgency in comprehending the true implications and significance of this amalgamation.

The initial problem was to address, through bibliographical research, how the curricular changes proposed in 2017 for High School Integrated to Professional Education (EMIEP) either promote the enhancement of formative processes from an emancipatory perspective for the students or are primarily driven by the imperative of aligning with the demands of the productive world?

Referring to the General Curriculum Guidelines for Technical and Technological Education (Resolution 01/2021) concerning the development and revision of Pedagogical Course Projects, there is an appeal to the need for articulation with the productive sectors in the text. Within this context, basic education is an auxiliary component within the educational framework.

The initiatives undertaken since 2017 in the realm of curriculum policies reflect an inherent urgency to address external pressures, particularly those stemming from the rapid transformations in the mode of production. These changes are characterized by a pragmatic approach that primarily aims to cater to the demands of market-oriented training. Moreover, when critically examining the curriculum as a tool for maintaining hegemonic power, it becomes essential to assert that this analysis necessitates in-depth epistemological research and comprehensive empirical investigation. Such investigations aim to understand and engage in discussions regarding implementing these curricula within institutions that provide Professional Education integrated with Secondary Education.

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