

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION PLAN (2024-2034) AS A PUBLIC POLICY FOR
IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

*O PLANO NACIONAL DE EDUCAÇÃO (2024-2034) COMO POLÍTICA PÚBLICA PARA
A MELHORIA DA QUALIDADE DO ENSINO*

*EL PLAN NACIONAL DE EDUCACIÓN (2024-2034) COMO POLÍTICA PÚBLICA
PARA MEJORAR LA CALIDAD DE LA EDUCACIÓN*



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ABSTRACT: This article analyzes the National Education Plan (PNE) 2024-2034 as an educational public policy, examining its structure based on the stages of the public policy cycle: agenda setting, formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The objective is to understand how the normative construction of the plan and its implementation and monitoring mechanisms can contribute to promoting educational quality and reducing inequalities in the education system. This is a qualitative, exploratory research based on bibliographic and documentary analysis. The results show that the PNE constitutes an important instrument of educational planning, articulating objectives, goals, and strategies aimed at guaranteeing the right to education, promoting equity, and improving the quality of teaching. It concludes that its effectiveness will depend on the commitment of the federative entities, social participation, and permanent monitoring and evaluation processes.

KEYWORDS: National Education Plan. Educational Public Policies. Quality of Education. Educational Planning. Evaluation.

RESUMO: O presente artigo analisa o Plano Nacional de Educação (PNE) 2024-2034 como política pública educacional, examinando sua estrutura a partir das etapas do ciclo de políticas públicas: agenda, formulação, implementação, monitoramento e avaliação. O objetivo consiste em compreender como a construção normativa do plano e seus mecanismos de implementação e acompanhamento podem contribuir para a promoção da qualidade educacional e para a redução das desigualdades no sistema de ensino. Trata-se de uma pesquisa qualitativa, de natureza exploratória, fundamentada em análise bibliográfica e documental. Os resultados evidenciam que o PNE se constitui como importante instrumento de planejamento educacional, articulando objetivos, metas e estratégias voltados à garantia do direito à educação, à promoção da equidade e à melhoria da qualidade do ensino. Conclui-se que sua efetividade dependerá do compromisso dos entes federativos, da participação social e de processos permanentes de monitoramento e avaliação.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Plano Nacional de Educação. Políticas Públicas Educacionais. Qualidade da Educação. Planejamento Educacional. Avaliação.

RESUMEN: Este artículo analiza el Plan Nacional de Educación (PNE) 2024-2034 como política pública educativa, examinando su estructura según las etapas del ciclo de políticas públicas: definición de la agenda, formulación, implementación, seguimiento y evaluación. El objetivo es comprender cómo la construcción normativa del plan y sus mecanismos de implementación y seguimiento pueden contribuir a promover la calidad educativa y reducir las desigualdades en el sistema educativo. Se trata de una investigación cualitativa y exploratoria basada en el análisis bibliográfico y documental. Los resultados muestran que el PNE constituye un instrumento importante de planificación educativa, que articula objetivos, metas y estrategias orientadas a garantizar el derecho a la educación, promover la equidad y mejorar la calidad de la enseñanza. Se concluye que su efectividad dependerá del compromiso de las entidades federativas, la participación social y los procesos permanentes de seguimiento y evaluación.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Plan Nacional de Educación. Políticas de Educación Pública. Calidad de la Educación. Planificación Educativa. Evaluación.

INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on Brazil's National Education Plan (NEP) 2024–2034. The choice of this plan is justified by its significance and impact on the educational landscape. The document aims to improve the quality of education by highlighting eighteen objectives that encompass the different levels, stages, and modalities of education. In this way, the NEP envisions an education system grounded in the principle of equity by committing to reducing educational inequalities and universalizing access to schooling.

From this perspective, this study seeks to understand how the 2024–2034 NEP, as an educational public policy, is structured according to the stages of the public policy cycle—agenda setting, policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation—and addresses the following research question: What contributions and challenges does the NEP present for its effective implementation as an instrument to improve the quality of Brazilian education?

Based on this question, the objective of this article is to analyze the 2024–2034 NEP in light of the public policy cycle, seeking to understand how its normative framework and its implementation and monitoring mechanisms can contribute to improving educational quality and reducing inequalities within the Brazilian education system.

This study adopts a qualitative, exploratory, and documentary-analytical approach. The methodological framework is based on bibliographic and documentary research. The bibliographic review focused on scholars in the fields of public policy and policy implementation analysis, including Souza (2003), Lotta (2019), and Hill and Varone (2016), among others. The documentary research was primarily based on Bill No. 2,614/2024 and the National Education Plan (2024–2034), as well as related legal and policy documents, including the 1988 Federal Constitution, the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (Law No. 9,394/1996), the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), and the Child and Adolescent Statute (ECA).

The documents were analyzed according to the categories of the public policy cycle—agenda setting, policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation—with the aim of identifying how these stages are reflected in the normative structure of the new NEP. The analysis was conducted through an interpretative reading of legal documents and specialized literature, establishing connections between the legal provisions and the theoretical frameworks of educational public policy studies.

The authors selected are well-established references in studies on public policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation and are widely cited in both national and

international literature. Their selection was based on their thematic relevance and theoretical contributions to understanding the public policy cycle.

These studies converge on the understanding that public policies are implemented with the aim of promoting educational equity. In the field of education, public policies are intended to promote rights that ensure students' holistic development and the exercise of citizenship.

In light of these considerations, this study seeks to systematize the stages of the public policy cycle in the development of the National Education Plan (NEP). Agenda setting constitutes the initial stage, mobilizing the school community and civil society to propose relevant issues that may be incorporated into the new legislation. The next stage is policy formulation, which focuses on structuring the legal framework of the plan. The third stage is implementation, which depends on the collaborative efforts of the Federal Government, the Federal District, the states, and the municipalities to ensure the execution of the policy.

The final stages consist of monitoring and evaluation. From this perspective, the implementation of the law is continuously assessed throughout its period of validity in order to identify the need for adjustments and redirections. In the final stage, the achievements attained and the remaining challenges are evaluated. This evaluative process is essential for informing future decision-making.

The article then examines the relationship between the NEP and the educational legislation that governs students' learning rights, which are fundamental to the development of critical thinking and active citizenship.

Finally, the concluding remarks highlight the need for public authorities to invest in public policies that ensure students' access to and retention in education. In this regard, the NEP aligns with this objective by establishing a ten-year framework (2024–2034) aimed at expanding rights and improving the quality of teaching and learning. It also underscores the importance of continuously monitoring the NEP as a public policy in order to ensure that its objectives—centered on students' holistic development throughout their educational trajectories—remain at the forefront of its implementation.

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION PLAN AS A PUBLIC POLICY

Initially, this section presents some of the main concepts underlying the notion of public policy. According to Mead (1995), public policy belongs to a field of study that examines government in light of major public issues. The author emphasizes the importance that public

policy must have within society in order to be effectively implemented.

Lynn (1980) defines public policy as a set of governmental actions that produce specific outcomes. In dialogue with this perspective, the document analyzed in this article—the National Education Plan (NEP)—is understood as legislation designed to achieve specific objectives. The Plan establishes eighteen objectives covering the different levels, stages, and modalities of Basic Education. These objectives, supported by specific targets and strategies, are intended to improve the quality of education. To this end, the policy is expected to produce measurable outcomes that will be assessed throughout its implementation period, particularly in its final year, when a comprehensive evaluation will measure the extent to which the proposed legislation has achieved its intended objectives.

Peters (1986) conceptualizes public policy as the sum of governmental activities that influence citizens' lives. From this perspective, the effectiveness of a public policy results from the set of actions that culminate in its implementation. These actions produce impacts on society, highlighting the positive outcomes that citizens may experience through the implementation of policies that guarantee greater dignity and the effective exercise of citizenship.

Dye (1984) defines public policy as whatever governments choose to do—or not to do. This analytical perspective highlights governmental inaction as a possible response to a social problem. When governmental actions are not undertaken to address a particular demand, such inaction itself constitutes a policy choice and, therefore, can also be understood as a form of public policy. Although this idea may appear paradoxical, since choosing not to respond to societal demands may seem authoritarian and dismissive of public interests, governments often justify such decisions by citing factors such as limited financial resources, the need for further legal regulation, or bureaucratic obstacles that require resolution and are often time-consuming.

These conceptions of public policy point to the need to translate public policies into concrete actions capable of transforming society. Within this framework, the National Education Plan (NEP) serves as a key policy instrument. This article therefore examines the process through which this legislation was developed into the legal framework that will guide Brazilian education through 2034.

Understanding public policies requires both temporal and contextual analysis. Examining them in light of the period in which they were enacted means considering the social, economic, and political circumstances of a particular historical moment. Moreover, such an analysis requires attention to the context in which a public policy is implemented, since its

successful implementation depends on understanding the socioeconomic conditions and local culture of the communities in which it operates. The NEP is a document prepared every ten years. Its development is mandated by Article 214 of the 1988 Federal Constitution:

Article 214. The law shall establish the National Education Plan, with a duration of ten years, for the purpose of articulating the national education system under a collaborative framework and defining guidelines, objectives, targets, and implementation strategies to ensure the maintenance and development of education at its various levels, stages, and modalities. (Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil, 1988, art. 214)

The aforementioned constitutional provision establishes a collaborative framework involving the Federal Government, the states, the Federal District, and the municipalities for defining guidelines, objectives, targets, and strategies aimed at improving the quality of education. The NEP, in force from 2024 to 2034, establishes eighteen objectives to be achieved throughout this ten-year period. Each objective addresses specific stages, levels, and modalities of education.

The Table 1 below summarizes this framework.

Table 1.
Themes of the NEP Objectives

Objectives	Themes
Objective 1	Access to Early Childhood Education
Objective 2	Quality of Early Childhood Education
Objective 3	Literacy
Objective 4	Access, Educational Progression, and Completion in Primary and Secondary Education
Objective 5	Learning Outcomes in Primary and Secondary Education
Objective 6	Full-Time Comprehensive Education
Objective 7	Connectivity, Technology Education, and Digital Citizenship
Objective 8	Indigenous School Education, Rural Education, and Quilombola School Education
Objective 9	Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education and Bilingual Education for Deaf Students
Objective 10	Youth, Adult, and Older Adult Education

Objective 11	Access, Retention, and Completion in Vocational and Technological Education
Objective 12	Quality of Vocational and Technological Education
Objective 13	Access, Retention, and Completion in Undergraduate Education
Objective 14	Quality of Undergraduate Education
Objective 15	<i>Stricto Sensu</i> Graduate Education
Objective 16	Basic Education Professionals
Objective 17	Social Participation and Democratic Governance
Objective 18	Funding and Infrastructure for Basic Education

Note. Prepared by the author.

Underlying each objective are the targets and strategies designed to translate the Plan into concrete actions. To bring the document closer to local realities and address the specific needs of each region, two key measures are established. The first is the development of State, Municipal, and Federal District Education Plans, granting these entities the autonomy to adapt their plans to the general objectives of the NEP while taking local specificities into account.

Article 6. The States, the Federal District, and the Municipalities shall prepare or revise their ten-year education plans in accordance with the provisions of the National Education Plan (NEP) within one year from the date of publication of this Law. Sole Paragraph. The preparation of the ten-year education plans of the States, the Federal District, and the Municipalities shall ensure the participation of representatives of the educational community and civil society, taking into account the outcomes of the National Education Conferences. (Brazil, 2024, p. 2)

The second measure is the collaborative framework, which seeks to put the provisions of the law into practice within the educational system:

Article 7. The Federal Government, the States, the Federal District, and the Municipalities shall act under a collaborative framework with a view to achieving the targets and implementing the strategies established by the NEP. Sole Paragraph. Federal, state, district, and municipal authorities shall adopt the governmental measures necessary to achieve the targets established in the NEP. (Brazil, 2024, p. 2)

Based on this overview of the NEP, the following sections examine its stages,

considering the Plan as a public policy aimed at promoting the maintenance and development of education and the democratization of access to schooling, thereby reducing social inequalities and educational exclusion, both of which remain deeply rooted in the Brazilian educational system.

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION PLAN: STAGES OF ITS DEVELOPMENT

Within the public policy cycle, agenda setting and policy formulation constitute complementary and interdependent stages. Agenda setting refers to the process through which certain social issues come to be recognized by the State as priorities requiring governmental intervention (Souza, 2003). Policy formulation, in turn, consists of developing alternative courses of action, defining objectives, and drafting the legal and policy instruments that will guide policy implementation.

In the case of Brazil's 2024–2034 National Education Plan (NEP), the policy agenda was shaped primarily through the National Conference on Education (CONAE), a democratic forum for social participation that brings together representatives from different educational sectors, public officials, researchers, students, and members of civil society. The discussions held within this forum made it possible to identify the country's main educational challenges and to collectively develop proposals aimed at addressing them.

Building on the contributions systematized during the National Conference on Education (CONAE), the policy formulation stage began under the leadership of the Ministry of Education through Bill No. 2,614. During this process, the demands presented by the various social actors were translated into objectives, targets, and strategies that came to form the structure of the new National Education Plan (NEP). One of the Plan's main innovations lies in the reorganization of its normative framework. Unlike the previous NEP (2014–2024), which was structured around twenty targets, the current Plan emphasizes eighteen thematic objectives, each accompanied by specific targets and strategies. This change reflects an effort to strengthen the alignment between the problems identified, the expected outcomes, and the actions required to achieve them.

Thus, agenda setting and policy formulation are fundamental stages for understanding the origins of the NEP, as they reflect both the incorporation of social demands into the

educational debate and the institutional processes through which these demands are transformed into official public policy guidelines.

Indeed, agenda setting and policy formulation establish the conditions necessary for the implementation and evaluation of the NEP.

The third stage of the public policy cycle is policy implementation, during which the plans formulated are translated into concrete actions. This stage depends heavily on the work of public bureaucrats and the policy instruments employed by the State. Consequently, it has become the focus of studies that seek to understand the differences between what was planned and what was actually implemented, as well as the role played by the various actors involved in transforming public policies into practice (Hill & Varone, 2016).

In the case of the National Education Plan (NEP), it is the responsibility of the Federal Government, the States, the Federal District, and the Municipalities, acting under a collaborative framework, to ensure its implementation and thereby achieve its established objectives. To this end, the federative entities are granted the autonomy to adapt their respective education plans to the national guidelines while taking local specificities and needs into account. This collaborative framework is directly related to the legal definition of objectives established by the legislation:

Article 2. For the purposes of this Law, the following definitions shall apply:

II – Objectives: the expected changes regarding the identified problems resulting from the implementation of educational policies by the governments of the different federative levels. (Brazil, 2024, p. 1)

Thus, the implementation of the National Education Plan (NEP) seeks to promote meaningful transformations in Brazilian education, requiring mechanisms capable of monitoring and assessing the progress of the planned actions. In this context, monitoring and evaluation play a strategic role not only as instruments for verifying the results achieved but also as integral components of the implementation process itself.

The evaluation stage of the public policy cycle corresponds to the phase in which policy outcomes are analyzed and assessed. According to Lotta (2019), studies focusing on this stage seek to examine the evaluation instruments employed, the results achieved in terms of efficiency, efficacy, and effectiveness, the actors involved, and the policy feedback mechanisms. However, within the framework of the NEP, evaluation is not limited to a

procedure conducted at the end of the Plan's implementation period. On the contrary, it constitutes a permanent guideline:

Article 3. The following are NEP guidelines to be observed in the ten-year education plans of the States, the Federal District, and the Municipalities for the 2024–2034 decade:

IX – the integration of monitoring and evaluation into the planning and implementation processes of educational policies. (Brazil, 2024, p. 1)

This guideline makes clear that evaluation should continuously accompany the planning and implementation of educational policies, allowing for adjustments and course corrections whenever necessary. It therefore reflects a formative approach aimed at the continuous improvement of educational actions and the enhancement of educational quality.

The governance of monitoring and evaluation within the NEP is coordinated by the Ministry of Education but also involves the participation of various institutional bodies and civil society. As established in Article 8 of the Law, this process includes the Ministry of Education, the National Education Council (CNE), the Education Committees of the Chamber of Deputies and the Federal Senate, and the National Education Forum (FNE). Among these institutions, the FNE plays a particularly important role by monitoring the implementation of the Plan's targets and coordinating the National Conferences on Education with the corresponding state, Federal District, and municipal conferences, thereby strengthening social participation and democratic accountability.

Another important monitoring mechanism is the work carried out by the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP), which is responsible for the biennial monitoring of the NEP targets and for the periodic publication of indicators measuring the achievement of the Plan's objectives. In addition, the Ministry of Education relies on national assessment systems, such as the Basic Education Assessment System (SAEB) and the National Higher Education Assessment System (SINAES), which provide key indicators for monitoring educational quality and tracking progress toward the targets established by the legislation.

Finally, the systematic evaluation of the implementation of the NEP and of its interim results, conducted by the Ministry of Education in the years preceding the end of the Plan's implementation period, provides an essential basis for the development of the subsequent National Education Plan. Thus, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation constitute

inseparable processes whose integration makes it possible to monitor progress toward the established targets, make course corrections, and improve educational policies, thereby enabling the NEP to respond more effectively to the demands and challenges of contemporary Brazilian education.

THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL PLAN IN LIGHT OF BRAZILIAN EDUCATIONAL LEGISLATION

Education is a fundamental right guaranteed by the 1988 Federal Constitution and is understood as a shared responsibility of the State, the family, and society. By establishing that education should promote the full development of the individual, the exercise of citizenship, and preparation for the world of work, the Constitution assigns schools a role that extends beyond the mere transmission of knowledge, entrusting them with the responsibility of contributing to the holistic development of learners (Brazil, 1988).

From this perspective, guaranteeing the right to education goes beyond ensuring access to school; it also requires effective conditions for students' retention, learning, and human development. It is therefore an ethical, social, and political commitment that demands the development of educational practices capable of responding to student diversity while promoting inclusion, equity, and social justice.

This understanding is supported by the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), which conceives Basic Education as a process aimed at the holistic development of learners. The document recognizes that human development encompasses cognitive, social, emotional, cultural, and ethical dimensions, moving beyond reductionist views of learning and reaffirming the need for an education committed to respect for differences, diversity, and human rights (Brazil, 2018).

In line with these principles, the 2024–2034 National Education Plan (NEP) establishes guidelines and objectives aimed at consolidating a democratic and inclusive educational policy. Among its main purposes are guaranteeing the right to education, reducing educational inequalities, universalizing access to schooling, improving educational quality, and enhancing the status of education professionals. These objectives demonstrate the Plan's commitment to expanding educational opportunities and promoting conditions that foster the full development of learners.

The pursuit of educational quality, as established by the NEP, is closely associated with the concept of comprehensive education. In this context, expanding educational opportunities requires pedagogical practices that integrate different dimensions of human development and foster meaningful learning. Consequently, schooling is no longer centered exclusively on the acquisition of curricular content but instead embraces aspects related to citizenship, social interaction, culture, work, and democratic participation.

This perspective is further reinforced by the targets and strategies aimed at expanding comprehensive education throughout the public education system. By proposing longer school days and more diverse learning experiences, the NEP seeks to create conditions that enable students to participate in academic, cultural, sports, and recreational activities that contribute to their holistic development. From this perspective, extending students' time at school represents not merely an increase in instructional hours but also an opportunity to enrich educational processes and expand learning opportunities.

The implementation of these proposals is closely linked to the principles established by the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB). This legislation reaffirms equal opportunities for access to and retention in school, pluralism of ideas and pedagogical approaches, democratic governance, the recognition and appreciation of education professionals, and the guarantee of quality standards in education. These principles are closely aligned with the objectives of the NEP in recognizing that the democratization of education requires not only the expansion of school enrollment but also the creation of conditions that ensure successful educational trajectories for all learners (Brazil, 1996).

In this regard, expanding comprehensive education requires addressing the social and educational inequalities that have historically limited access to educational rights for a significant portion of the population. The NEP itself identifies the reduction of inequalities and the promotion of inclusion as priorities, recognizing that ensuring students complete Basic Education at the appropriate age depends on the implementation of public policies capable of responding to their diverse social and cultural realities.

Against this backdrop, schools are called upon to adopt more flexible, participatory, and context-sensitive pedagogical practices. Placing learners at the center of the educational process requires valuing their prior knowledge, interests, and sociocultural experiences. Consequently, the organization of pedagogical work demands new approaches to the management of time, learning spaces, and teaching practices, fostering more meaningful and inclusive learning processes.

Achieving these objectives also requires sustained investment in the education, professional development, and recognition of education professionals. The NEP acknowledges that the quality of education is directly linked to teachers' working conditions and professional qualifications. Accordingly, it establishes targets aimed at strengthening both initial teacher education and continuing professional development. In this context, continuing professional development should be understood as a permanent public policy, capable of providing teachers with the theoretical and methodological support needed to address contemporary educational challenges and to develop practices aligned with the principles of holistic education.

The importance attributed to holistic human development is also reflected in the very concept of education established by the LDB. By recognizing that educational processes take place in different social settings—including the family, the workplace, educational institutions, social movements, and cultural practices—the legislation broadens the understanding of learning and reinforces the need for an education that embraces the complexity of human experience.

This perspective is likewise reaffirmed by the BNCC through its emphasis on competencies related to empathy, dialogue, cooperation, respect for diversity, and the promotion of human rights. These competencies demonstrate that holistic education involves not only the acquisition of academic knowledge but also the development of attitudes, values, and skills that are essential for democratic coexistence and active citizenship.

Finally, the principle of comprehensive education is also supported by the Child and Adolescent Statute (ECA), which guarantees children and adolescents the conditions necessary for their physical, mental, moral, spiritual, and social development. Accordingly, promoting educational opportunities that foster learners' holistic development is not merely an objective of contemporary educational policies but also the realization of a fundamental right guaranteed under Brazilian legislation.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article aimed to analyze Brazil's 2024–2034 National Education Plan (NEP) as an educational public policy by examining its development process and its main normative foundations in light of the public policy cycle. Based on the bibliographic and documentary analysis conducted, it was possible to understand the stages involved in the formulation of this

policy, as well as to identify its objectives, guidelines, and strategies aimed at promoting educational quality, reducing educational inequalities, and guaranteeing the right to education.

The findings indicate that the NEP constitutes an important instrument for planning educational actions in Brazil, guiding the actions of the federative entities and establishing commitments aimed at strengthening public education. Furthermore, the Plan reaffirms principles enshrined in the Federal Constitution, the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB), the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), and the Child and Adolescent Statute (ECA), reinforcing the understanding of education as a fundamental social right and an essential condition for building a more just, democratic, and inclusive society.

The analysis also demonstrated that the effectiveness of the National Education Plan depends not only on the definition of objectives, targets, and strategies but also on the capacity of education systems to implement, monitor, and evaluate them continuously throughout the Plan's implementation period. In this regard, the systematic monitoring of the actions established in the Plan is essential to ensuring that its objectives produce tangible impacts on Brazilian education.

This study presents limitations inherent to its methodological design. As it is based on bibliographic and documentary research conducted during the initial stage of implementation of the 2024–2034 National Education Plan, it was not possible to empirically analyze the outcomes of its implementation. Moreover, the reflections presented here focused primarily on the normative and institutional dimensions of the Plan and did not include empirical investigations involving the education systems responsible for its implementation.

Future research may therefore broaden our understanding of the concrete effects of the NEP through empirical studies that examine the development of its objectives, targets, and strategies throughout its implementation period. Studies focusing on the implementation of educational policies across different state and municipal contexts may contribute to identifying the challenges, potential, and impacts of the Plan on educational quality and on guaranteeing the right to learning.

In conclusion, the National Education Plan represents an important milestone in the planning of Brazilian educational policies. However, its effectiveness will depend on the political and institutional commitment of the different federative entities, the active participation of civil society, and the existence of permanent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms capable of ensuring the achievement of the objectives established for the 2024–2034 decade.

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