

Novos (antigos) formatos de privatização da educação básica: o sistema apostilado¹

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Resumo

Este estudo lança reflexões acerca das relações entre as esferas públicas e privadas na educação brasileira. O propósito é analisar novos formatos de privatização da Educação Básica, a partir da utilização de Sistemas de Ensino Apostilado (SA). Destarte, inquere-se acerca dos espaços de autonomia docente ou de padronização pedagógica que essa oferta possibilita. Pergunta-se se há indícios de evolução nos indicadores do IDEB aferidos, tendo em vista ser uma das justificativas para acolher tais modelos. Nesta direção, analisa-se o caso de um município do interior do Rio Grande do Sul, que aderiu ao Sistema de Ensino Apostilado (SA) em sua Rede. Realizou-se a pesquisa em cinco escolas municipais, elegendo como principal critério a utilização do SA em todas as etapas do Ensino Fundamental, bem como a experiência desenvolvida, na perspectiva de atender aos propósitos do estudo, tais como a autonomia docente, a padronização pedagógica e a elevação dos escores.

Palavras-chave: Sistema Apostilado. Autonomia docente. Padronização pedagógica. Avaliação.

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New (old) privatization formats of basic education: the booklet system

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Abstract

This study launches reflections on the relationship between the public and private spheres in Brazilian education. The purpose is to analyze new privatization formats of basic education, based on the use of booklet education systems (SA). Thus, questions about the spaces of teaching autonomy or pedagogical standardization that this offer makes possible are raised. It is questioned whether there are signs of evolution in the measured IDEB indicators, considering that this is one of the justifications for adopting such models. In this direction, it analyzes the case of a municipality in the interior of Rio Grande do Sul that adhered to the Booklet Education System (SA). The research was conducted in five municipal schools, choosing as the main criterion the use of SA in all stages of Elementary Education, as well as the experience developed, with a view to meeting the purposes of the study, such as teaching autonomy, pedagogical standardization, and the elevation of scores.

Keywords: Booklet system. Teaching autonomy. Pedagogical standardization. Assessment.

Nuevos (viejos) formatos de privatización de la educación básica: el sistema de cuadernillos

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Resumen

Este estudio lanza reflexiones sobre la relación entre las esferas pública y privada en la educación brasileña. El objetivo es analizar nuevos formatos de privatización de la educación básica, basados en el uso de sistemas de enseñanza de cuadernillo (SA). Así, se cuestionan los espacios de autonomía docente o de normalización pedagógica que esta oferta posibilita. Se cuestiona si hay signos de evolución en los indicadores IDEB medidos, considerando que esa es una de las justificaciones para adoptar dichos modelos. En esa dirección, analiza el caso de un municipio del interior de Rio Grande do Sul que se adhirió al Sistema de Enseñanza de Apostilla (SA) en su Red. La investigación se realizó en cinco escuelas municipales, eligiendo principal criterio el uso de la SA en todas las etapas de la Educación Básica, así como la experiencia desarrollada, con miras a cumplir con los propósitos del estudio, como la autonomía docente, pedagógica normalización y la elevación de puntuaciones.

Palabras clave: Sistema de apostilla. Enseñanza de la autonomía. Normalización pedagógica. Evaluación.

Introduction

This qualitative and descriptive study reflects on the mechanisms of private influence in public education. The article analyzes the new (and old) modes of appropriating the meaning of public schools through the balkanization of education according to corporate models. Drawing on authors from the field, it highlights some historical elements that have always been present in the arena of educational policy struggles, without the intention of exhausting the subject.

The purpose of this work is to analyze the spaces of teacher autonomy or pedagogical standardization that this model offers, verifying whether there are indications of improvement in the Basic Education Development Index (IDEB) indicators measured through external evaluations. To this end, the study examines the case of a municipality in the interior of Rio Grande do Sul (RS), which adopted a Private System of Teaching Materials (*Sistema de Ensino Apostilado* or SA).

The relevance and justification of the study are grounded in the fact that the public-private relationship constitutes an important milestone in the historical process of Brazilian education. Notably, it emphasizes the *Movimento dos Pioneiros da Educação Nova* (New Education Pioneers Movement), which aimed to strengthen the vision of an intellectual elite, involving 26 thinkers, including Anísio Teixeira, Afrânio Peixoto, Lourenço Filho, Roquette Pinto, Delgado de Carvalho, Hermes de Lima, and Cecília Meireles. The *Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Educação Nova* marked the beginning of an educational reform project in the country, criticizing the misalignment of the system and proposing to the State an educational plan that defended public, secular, mandatory, and free education for all. The ideas contained in this manifesto remain relevant today, highlighting the foresight of its authors and the lack of effective policies to achieve the desired improvements. This movement clearly favored the public sphere.

The public-private relationship gained new dimensions with the approval of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education (LDB) and the regulation of the National Education Council (CNE), which enshrined the mandatory nature of Basic Education and public provision by the State. At the same time, these developments expanded the scope of private education at the Basic Education level and, subsequently, in Higher Education with greater emphasis. Today, this situation is evident through the commodification of education at all levels, with education now being traded on the Stock Exchange by large groups.

In 2016, the movement *Todos Pela Educação* (All for Education) emerged, with massive representation from business interests, aiming to ensure that the country guarantees all children and young people the right to quality Basic Education. Freitas (2012) asserts that the Department of Basic

Education, part of the Ministry of Education (MEC), remains under the influence of this group of business leaders, supported by business groups from Latin America, to ensure the continuity of this movement.

This same movement contributed to the organization, monitoring, and analysis of official educational indicators to support national assessments, meeting the targets for tracking the implementation of these policies (PERONI; ROSSI, 2011). Authors such as Uczak, Bernardi, and Rossi (2020) add to this discussion by addressing the concept of democratization, which is based on the definition of democracy as the realization of rights and social equality, involving the collectivization of decision-making and participation in policy development grounded in critical and self-critical social practice throughout its development. Thus, when discussing the democratization of education, it is essential to consider the processes, the agents involved in policy formulation, and the various democratic stages that arise from these interactions.

Moreover, it is noteworthy that business leaders have absorbed the demands of social movements, giving them new political significance, particularly in the context of democratizing education. They proposed a new management approach influenced by managerialism, in the name of improving educational quality. Their proposals included extending the school day, universalizing access to education, implementing large-scale assessments, and seeking external partnerships to support educational activities, among other initiatives (Uczak; Bernardi; Rossi, 2020).

Under this logic, society was influenced by the discourses and narratives disseminated, appearing receptive to the historical causes of social movements and the need to democratize Brazilian education, albeit with a different political purpose. This way of thinking took hold and gained supporters, such as the *Todos Pela Educação* movement, which supported the *Conference on Social Responsibility Actions in Education: Best Practices for Latin America*, through the document *Commitment All for Education*, in an attempt to advance the quality of Brazilian education. In this document, the combination of the public sphere and the private sector is prominently featured.

Another significant development in the relationship between the public and private sectors in Brazil occurred with the creation of the *Plano de Metas Compromisso Todos Pela Educação* (Commitment to All for Education Target Plan), issued in 2007. This agreement with the Ministry of Education (MEC) represented an effort made between the federal government, the Federal District, states, and municipalities, in collaboration with families and the community, to promote improvements in Basic Education.

New (old) privatization formats of basic education: the booklet system

A prominent feature of the interaction between public and private sectors in Brazilian education is found in the *Plano de Desenvolvimento da Educação* (PDE, or Education Development Plan). This plan has emerged as a managerial tool, establishing ways to organize school work to achieve common objectives across various spheres, which are assessed through evaluations (Brasil, 2006).

According to Uczak, Bernardi, and Rossi (2020), it is important to emphasize that the prominence of the Brazilian business class in the formulation of educational policies is not a recent phenomenon, though it became more pronounced during the Temer government. The authors cite the PDE as an example, which originated under the Lula administration and had *Todos pela Educação* as its main partner from the definition of goals and strategies to its launch. Within this context, the PDE stands out as a milestone in the relationship between the public and private sectors. It was established as a managerial tool and a central strategy for improving education, recognizing that the State alone cannot fulfill its responsibility in building a quality educational system. This led to the necessity of partnership initiatives between the public and private sectors to achieve this shared goal.

Similarly, another historical initiative in the public-private relationship in Brazilian education is the *Plano de Ações Articuladas* (PAR, or Articulated Actions Plan), introduced by the MEC in 2007, which made available to states, municipalities, and the Federal District tools to assess the quality of education in its various modalities.

Two key indicators have emerged as determinants for Brazilian education over the last decade: the PDE and the *Plano Nacional de Educação* (PNE 2014-2024, or National Education Plan). Both were conceived and developed to enhance the fight for quality in Basic Education, with the goal of establishing guidelines for educational policy. It is evident that both plans include the incorporation of private institutions into the public network, while maintaining the requirement for the provision of free education at all stages and modalities, mandatorily covering children aged four to seventeen. As previously advocated by the *Manifesto dos Pioneiros*, education is now offered in both public and private schools.

The research findings were guided by document analysis, based on Bardin (2015), and semi-structured questionnaires. Supported by legal precedents, the analysis explores the dynamics of public-private relationships in education.

Public vs. Private: Preliminary Notes

In a brief historical overview, the increasing involvement of the private sector in Brazilian education is evident, with a growing attempt to exert influence across a broad spectrum. This is

achieved through decisions within planning processes, interference in the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education (LDB), the National Education Plan (PNE), and more recently, in the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC). These processes not only clash but also intersect. The private sector has recognized collective interests, yet there are also private groups that appropriate public mechanisms for their own benefit.

The phenomenon of the privatization of the public sphere is becoming increasingly pronounced, as the public sector transforms into a privatized entity. In this context, alongside the ramifications of viewing *res publica* as a private enterprise, traces of entrenched populist and clientelist practices emerge. The public and private sectors become intertwined, and this process, within the economicistic framework of public policies, assumes a business-oriented configuration of service exchange. This dynamic, expressed in managerial language focused on efficiency, effectiveness, and the pursuit of total quality, fosters the rise of privatization models within the public sector, such as paid public schools, autonomous institutions, contracted or partnered schools, among others (Dourado; Bueno, 2018).

According to Dourado and Bueno (2018), in the Brazilian context, the conflict between the public and private sectors highlights the emphasis on the discourse of quality in service provision, aimed at addressing the national educational deficit. These initiatives remain in constant conflict, moving between different educational scenarios, with some projects aligning with public principles and others adhering to private values.

This demand is advocated as a solution to educational challenges, but it ultimately leads to disputes between the two sectors, creating distance between them and shaping a new format of public system management, known as managerialism.

With the door opened to private sectors, the State diminishes its role, and responsibilities are shifted to society, which, in turn, seeks support from private systems, as public systems appear weakened. The logic of this process is grounded in capitalism, as many private institutions base their actions on preparing individuals for success in the labor market.

Peroni's (2015) writings highlight the transfer of educational responsibilities from the public to the private sector, particularly regarding policy decisions. The author emphasizes that "[...] in a democratic society, public institutions must operate in a process of collective decision-making, with participation spaces that should be increasingly expanded" (Peroni, 2015, p. 22). This points to the need for reflection on social participation in state actions, suggesting that the goal is not to shift

New (old) privatization formats of basic education: the booklet system responsibilities onto society but rather to create opportunities for joint work and social participation, while maintaining accountability.

The privatization of education also materializes through public-private partnerships, known as the Third Way. The Third Way represents a political path that refuses to be exclusively categorized as either right or left. Its commitment to maintaining a communitarian approach as an independent Third Way, separate from both the right and the left, does not detract from its support for progressive causes, ranging from the pursuit of peace and environmental preservation to promoting social inclusion, respect for cultural diversity, and fostering international unity (Etzioni, 2019).

Authors who do not align strictly with any particular political ideology have created this approach, which, depending on the circumstances, may lean more toward one side or the other. Peroni and Rossi (2011, p. 28) assert that the Third Way “[...] operates with the concept of a modernized civil society, which means one that is successful in the market, entrepreneurial.” This perspective seeks to establish a division between the economic and political spheres. The authors also note that the Third Way addresses the private sector differently from neoliberalism, recognizing the role of the State, private companies, and non-profit organizations in jointly organizing the planning of educational policies. However, this educational partnership is not always respected. There is a capital-driven agenda surrounding educational issues, and the involvement of these three sectors State, private enterprises, and non-profit organizations is not balanced.

Similarly, Peroni and Rossi (2011) problematize the functioning of the Third Sector, which claims to advocate for society but is primarily represented by individuals connected to the private sector. According to both authors, this representation should be coordinated by individuals associated with social organizations, as they speak on behalf of the collective. The State, which is deficient in meeting the existing educational demands in the country, creates space for the establishment of a market-driven logic, allowing for privatization either entirely or through collaboration between the public and private sectors.

Ramos and Dri (2012, p. 73) argue that, in the educational sphere, “[...] the process of commodification is linked to the municipalization of Elementary Education, which enabled municipalities to create an educational system that previously did not exist.” This educational system has relative autonomy in drafting legislation related to the education offered by the municipality; however, it is regulated by the State, which requires quality to be verified through performance indices.

Such indicators are measured by broad evaluations designed by entities external to the federal system, which develop assessments considering specific competencies and skills for each educational modality. The municipalities, in turn, find themselves pressured to meet scores that approach a minimum threshold to be achieved in external evaluations. To address this, they seek support through the consolidation of partnerships with the private sector. This combination leads to educational disputes, capturing the attention of education entrepreneurs, who envision the opportunity to turn education into a highly profitable market.

Indeed, the private sector has its norms established by the market and would require “[...] networked work, which can become the key to social capital” (Peroni, 2015, p. 25). This synergistic web may be formed by many individuals who have no interest in advocating for social issues but rather for private ones, as is the case with the ‘Everyone for Education Movement,’ which, as previously described, appears to advocate for the privatization of education.

It should be noted that the expansion of privatization is not a policy being implemented solely in Brazil; it is spreading strongly across various countries under the pretext of attempting to control the damage caused by educational chaos and is often associated with low performance levels in assessments. Furthermore, Lima (2016) asserts that, in Brazil, a strong discourse has emerged claiming that private education in Basic Education is superior to public education; thus, private institutions are considered more effective than public ones. This situation, coupled with the economic crisis of the State, seems to provide justification for a minimalist State, triggering private influence in public institutions.

In line with this primacy, Managerial and Societal public management are two distinct management models currently utilized in the political and educational spheres of Brazil. Both emerged following the financial crises faced by the country; however, each advocates different administrative approaches.

The principle of Managerialism emphasizes the adaptation of managerial recommendations for the public sector, while the second model focuses on social management, highlighting management experiences centered on the demands of the target audience, without neglecting cultural and participatory issues (Medeiros; Rodrigues, 2014). For better understanding, the two management models will be described separately, as briefly outlined below.

Managerial public administration, referred to as Managerialism, arises from the crisis of capitalism, which resulted in the dismantling of the type of State that had predominated in advanced

New (old) privatization formats of basic education: the booklet system capitalist countries since the end of World War II. This crisis directly impacted the economic, social, political, and administrative dimensions of these countries, generating the need for a new form of management (Medeiros; Rodrigues, 2014). Thus, in the 1970s and 1980s, in England and the United States, during the administrations of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, a new form of management emerged, known as the managerial model or New Public Management, which spread throughout Latin America in the 1990s. Medeiros and Rodrigues (2014) also emphasize that the managerial model is the result of a long process of study and maturation of ideas, which originated in academic circles in the 1950s, inherited from new institutional economics and Public Choice. However, it became prevalent in capitalist countries after World War II as a strategy to address the capital crisis.

Brazilian public administration, since the arrival of the Portuguese Crown in Brazil, initiated a system of patrimonialism. In 1936, the first Federal Council of Public Services was created in Brazil, which in 1938 transformed into the Administrative Department of Public Services (DASP). The types of public management adopted in Brazil can be categorized as patrimonialist, bureaucratic, and managerial, the latter also known as the new public management. Over the years, these models have been refined and adapted to emerging trends. However, there has not been a complete break; instead, practices from previous models are still employed alongside the new administrative approaches (Santos, 2017).

Bureaucratic public administration is viewed as a means to achieve results and aims to eradicate patrimonialism. However, due to its excess, it ultimately leads to wear and tear, necessitating a new model. This new model emerged in 1995 and is referred to as the Managerial Reform. For the purposes of this study, we will emphasize the managerial model, as we believe it has guided the interactions between the public and private sectors through the use of contractual agreements. Among the emerging developments of the Managerial Reform, we can highlight pure managerialism, the pursuit of efficiency, privatization, consumerism, and accountability (Santos, 2017).

In public administration, there is a shift from state bureaucracy to the managerial model through the introduction of market-oriented practices. This new management concept guided the Reform of the State Apparatus, whose proposed changes were part of a set of actions directed by international organizations (IDB, World Bank, among others), directly interfering with and impacting the administration of educational systems at the federal, state, and municipal levels, which consequently resulted in modifications to school management. The main objective of the Master Plan for the Reform of the State Apparatus was to introduce the managerial model into Brazilian public

administration. This project was based on several pillars: the establishment of a sustainable fiscal adjustment; the implementation of market-oriented economic reforms; a review of the social security system; and the restructuring of the state apparatus to increase its 'governance,' that is, its capacity to efficiently implement public policies (Santos, 2017). This ideology, brought forth during Fernando Henrique Cardoso's first administration, aimed to address issues in public administration.

Reaffirming what Peroni and Rossi (2011) elucidate, the introduction of managerial public administration was sought directly in the Master Plan for the Reform of the State Apparatus, which defines society as being clients of the services provided by the State: "Managerial public administration views the citizen as a taxpayer and as a client of its services" (Brazil, 1995, p. 17). Thus, State services are not constituted as rights of the population; at the same time that citizens are in need, they become financiers of the service itself.

In Brazil, Managerial Public Administration was implemented in the 1990s. During President Fernando Collor's term (1990-1991), neoliberal measures were adopted that sought to reduce the size of the State and public spending. This resulted in the elimination of public positions, the dismissal of civil servants, and increased control over state-owned enterprises (Santos, 2017).

The paradigm of the Social State as a provider is replaced by the Social State as a regulator, guarantor, and facilitator, which begins to promote and encourage the collaboration of social and economic agents in achieving the public interest. With the prioritization of a model focused on greater efficiency and effectiveness, the significant challenge becomes the improvement of public resource management, aiming to enhance the achievement of results (Vitalis, 2016). It is believed that with the effective participation of society in defining actions, interactive processes multiply, becoming increasingly institutionalized, involving various levels and dimensions. To this end, there is a redefinition of the role of the State in Managerial Public Administration, where it no longer takes responsibility for economic and social development but strengthens its regulatory character (Brazil, 1995).

In fact, the main objective of managerialism lies in the efficiency of meeting government goals, with the Federal Constitution serving as the principle of efficiency, through Constitutional Amendment No. 19, dated June 4, 1998. It is also noteworthy that managerialism encouraged the establishment of partnerships with civil society and administrative entities, making them more autonomous. The State aims to reduce costs and increase the quality of services provided to citizens, thus becoming a beneficiary of these resources. To achieve these goals, the State accepts the

New (old) privatization formats of basic education: the booklet system participation of private agents and civil society organizations, also referred to as the Third Sector or Parastatal Entities, as they work together with the State. However, to control the unchecked participation of private agents and defend what remains of the public sector, the State sought to expand civil society's involvement.

The effectiveness of an educational policy based on public-private partnerships, chosen for analysis in this study, refers to the Apostilated Teaching System (SA), as previously mentioned, in a municipality in the interior of the State of Rio Grande do Sul, which will now be analyzed.

Methodological Approach

The study examines the relationships between the public and private sectors, focusing on the documents selected for this analysis. Additionally, it investigates the perceptions of managers, teachers, and pedagogical coordinators in a specific municipality in the Celeiro Region of Rio Grande do Sul, which adopted the Assessment System (SA) within its municipal public network. To achieve this, a semi-structured questionnaire and content analysis were employed.

The participants were asked about their opinions regarding the Assessment System (SA) used in the Municipal Education Network. The research was conducted in five municipal schools selected based on their use of the SA across all stages of Elementary Education, their experience with this model, and their geographical proximity to the municipality under study. The questionnaires included multiple-choice and open-ended questions, aligned with the research objectives and problem. The distribution and completion of the questionnaires took place without the presence of the researchers.

The goal was to gather the participants' perceptions on the studied topic. In each school, efforts were made to obtain responses from three to seven teachers who taught in Elementary Education, as well as from managers and pedagogical coordinators directly involved with the SA. The response rate for the questionnaires from managers and pedagogical coordinators was 100%, while for teachers, it was 90%, which was considered satisfactory for the research objective.

Research Findings and Main Results

This section of the text reflects on the theses that motivated the researched municipality to adopt an Assessment System (SA) for the schools in its network. To this end, theoretical positions were first explored before delving into the contributions of managers, pedagogical coordinators, and teachers regarding the arguments that led to the choice of a prescribed teaching system.

Revisiting the theoretical concepts surrounding this category of analysis, Furtuoso (2014) highlights the divergences among researchers regarding municipalities' decisions to adopt prescribed teaching systems. One group of researchers argues that the involvement of private companies has been steadily increasing since the 1990s, as a consequence of the educational reforms that took place during that period. This includes the municipalization of education and the creation of FUNDEF (now FUNDEB⁴) which propelled this involvement. The other group is grounded in the idea that the choice of the Assessment System (SA) in the public network is linked to the improvement of educational quality that this system promises, noting that initial and ongoing teacher training must be reconsidered to ensure quality education.

According to Cária and Andrade (2011), the pursuit of quality in public education has driven education networks to adopt educational policies and programs, in accordance with each network's policies and proposals. The first schools to implement the SA were those in the private sector, followed later by its use in public schools. Society, aided by the media, has praised the standards of private basic education schools, positioning them as synonymous with quality teaching, thereby undermining the educational quality of public schools and asserting that the operational methods employed by private institutions are more effective than those used by public ones.

The quality of education referred to is measured by the Basic Education Development Index (IDEB). The IDEB⁵ combines school flow rates and average performance scores obtained from the Prova Brasil assessments (now known as SAEB). It is important to note that comparing the quality of public schools with private schools is a fragile process, as there is no way to verify the differences in economic and cultural levels, as well as access to information that promote learning development among the two groups served.

According to Adrião et al. (2009), the purchase of the Assessment System (SA) represents more than just a simple acquisition of materials; it is considered a “[...] strategy through which the private sector expands its market by encroaching on the public space to the same extent that the public sector transfers part of its responsibilities for education to private initiatives” (Adrião et al., 2009, p. 801). Indeed, it is evident that the private sector is increasing its interference in the public sector. Often, there is an attempt to adopt a specific SA to address weaknesses in the educational system, while at

⁴ FUNDEB was approved in 2020, as outlined in Constitutional Amendment No. 108/2020 (PEC No. 15/2015 in the Chamber of Deputies; and PEC No. 26/2020 in the Senate).

⁵ For more information about the Basic Education Development Index, consult Decree No. 6,094, dated April 24, 2007.

New (old) privatization formats of basic education: the booklet system other times, schools feel pressured by the demands of public policies implemented at the national level, such as external assessments.

To understand whether the adoption of the SA in the researched public network contributed to the improvement of external evaluation scores, managers, pedagogical coordinators, and teachers were asked about what motivated the adoption of the SA in the educational network. In light of this, the following responses were obtained:

Table 01 - Perceptions of Managers and Pedagogical Coordinators Regarding the Adoption of the Assessment System (SA).

Identificação	Resposta
G1	Busca por alternativas que elevassem o Ideb. Criar uma linha de ação, ou seja, “criar um norte”.
G2	Melhorar o Ideb e corrigir as dificuldades de aprendizagem apresentadas pelos alunos.
G3	Auxiliar no planejamento do professor.
G4	Elevar os índices do Ideb e demais provas externas. Corrigir as dificuldades de aprendizagem apresentadas pelos alunos.
G5	Auxiliar no planejamento do professor. Distorção idade/série.
CP1	Complementar o trabalho do professor por meio da determinação de objetivos claros e precisos de cada aula e da obtenção de sequência lógica.
CP2	Complementar o trabalho pedagógico efetivado nas ações cotidianas dos docentes, visando a estruturá-lo e aprimorá-lo.

Source: Prepared by the authors (2017).

It is evident from the responses previously described that the main reason cited by managers and pedagogical coordinators for the municipality's adoption of an Assessment System (SA) in the public network is related to the development of pedagogical work and external evaluation, an idea supported by the authors underpinning this study.

As shown in Table 01, the primary reason for adopting the SA in the schools under analysis is linked to teaching planning, specifically relating to the pedagogical dimension. Approximately 44% of those responsible for school management highlighted this response. Another factor contributing to this mode of operation is the IDEB, as 26% of respondents expressed concern about this quality indicator. The focus on External Evaluation Indices is understandable, given the national goals established.

In a different context, according to Adrião et al. (2009), the main reasons that led municipalities in São Paulo to adopt this mode of operation are related to pedagogical issues and the need for an

alternative that demonstrates positive results in education in the short term, particularly concerning pedagogical work. This narrative also seems to be supported by the managers involved in the study.

Such practice should be viewed as a process that aids decision-making, in alignment with the reality of each school, rather than as something externally imposed in a standardized manner. Indeed, it is not feasible to transfer the management of the pedagogical process for the entire education network by adhering to a "quality standard" established within the market (Adrião et al., 2009). By opting for an SA, the management of pedagogical work is also influenced by the content and methodologies of the provided materials, adhering to the principles of the company that produced the materials, thus constituting a form of privatization of public education.

Another point raised by Amorim (2012) refers to the significant industry that is mobilized to establish partnerships between SAs and educational networks. The sale of educational materials has proven to be a lucrative business. Such materials have become profitable editorial products, yet their pedagogical advantages remain questionable.

To understand teachers' perspectives on the reasons behind the adoption of an SA in their network, the same questions posed to managers and pedagogical coordinators were asked, yielding the following responses:

Table 02 - Teachers' Perceptions Regarding the Adoption of the Assessment System (SA).

Identificação	Respostas
P1	Busca melhorar a aprendizagem dos alunos.
P2	Uma busca na melhoria do IDEB de nosso município.
P3	Índices de aprovações dos alunos- IDEB, qualidade de ensino.
P4	Por interesse dos governantes municipais e da SMECD.
P5	O uso do Sistema de Ensino no meu entendimento favorece o aprendizado, os conteúdos são concentrados e as atividades são diversificadas. Isto proporciona um melhor aprendizado. Corrigir as dificuldades de aprendizagem e auxiliar no planejamento.
P6	Para reduzir o gasto com cópias de xerox e estimular o aluno com material colorido e de fácil manuseio. Auxiliar no planejamento do professor.
P7	Corrigir as dificuldades de aprendizagem dos alunos e auxiliar no planejamento do professor. Acredito que foi a nova metodologia que o Sistema oferece.
P8	Elevar o índice do Ideb.
P9	Elevar o Ideb.
P10	Elevar o Ideb e corrigir a distorção idade-série.
P11	A expectativa é elevar os índices também, mas primeiramente melhorar, envolver, comprometer mais os educandos, visando aprendizagem, que acarretará, influenciará as avaliações externas.
P12	Corrigir as dificuldades de aprendizagem dos alunos.
P13	Acredito que foi uma soma de fatores, dentre eles, corrigir as dificuldades de aprendizagem dos alunos.
P14	Acredito que seja em virtude de melhorar o Ideb e possibilitar aos educandos melhorar sua aprendizagem, pois eles têm em mãos o material de estudo o que facilita o estudo extraclasse.

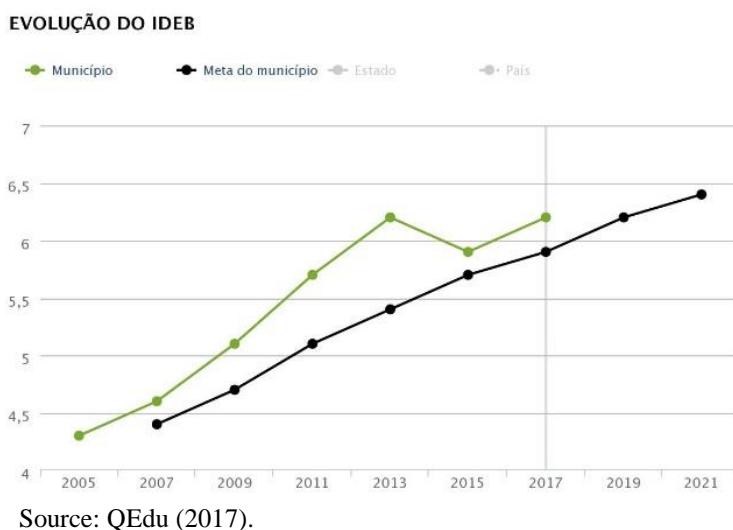
Source: Prepared by the authors (2017).

In the teachers' responses, the primary factor that led schools to adopt the Assessment System (SA) is related to the IDEB, with 37% of respondents citing this as one of the reasons for adopting the SA. The second justification provided by those involved in the research indicates that the choice of the SA in the public network is associated with students' learning difficulties, as approximately 21% of teachers identified this as one of the challenges faced by the network.

Contrasting the responses from managers with those from teachers reveals contradictions. For the managers, the factors that led the researched municipality to adopt the SA in the public network are related to pedagogical issues, particularly teacher planning. In contrast, the teachers indicated that the adoption was associated with improving the External Evaluation scores, specifically the IDEB. These circumstances suggest that there were two primary reasons driving schools to adopt the SA: the need to raise the municipality's IDEB and the challenge for professionals to reflect on their pedagogical practices.

With the main objective of investigating whether the adoption of the SA in the public network contributed to the improvement of External Evaluation scores, managers, pedagogical coordinators, and teachers were asked whether the work developed using the SA aids in elevating the Basic Education Development Index (IDEB). Nearly all responses were affirmative, with research participants indicating that the SA provides benefits for improving the IDEB. The support from INEP illustrates this situation.

Graph 01 - Evolution of the IDEB in the Early Years

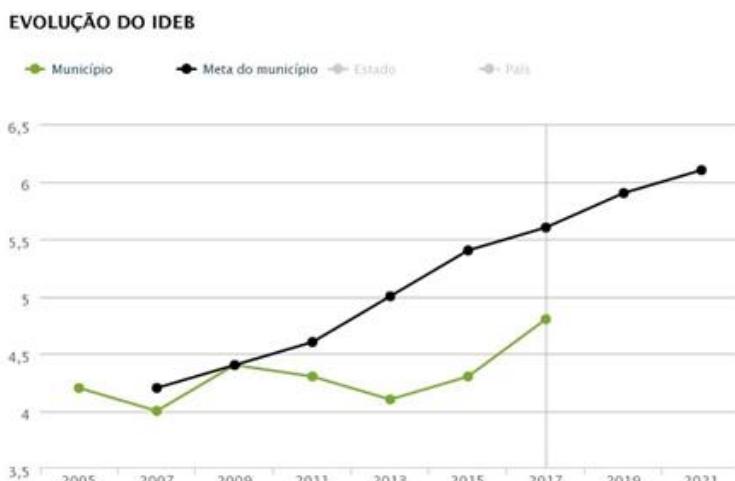


According to Graph 01, it is evident that the IDEB has shown a steady increase from 2005 to 2013. However, in 2015, despite being above the target set for the municipality, there was a significant decline. It is important to note that in 2017, the index did improve, but it did not surpass the evaluation scores of the previous years when the Assessment System (SA) was not in place.

Notably, the adoption of the SA in the researched municipality occurred in 2014. According to the graph, in 2013 (the last year of IDEB evaluation before the adoption of the teaching system), the municipality achieved an average score of 6.20. In 2015, the average dropped to 5.3, a decrease of 1.11 points in performance. In the following evaluation, the score rose again, reaching the established target; however, as previously mentioned, the average achieved did not exceed the highest IDEB score that the municipality had attained prior to adopting the SA.

Similarly to the Early Years of Elementary Education, the graph presents data on the IDEB for the Final Years of Elementary Education, allowing for an analysis of whether there has been an increase in the Basic Education Development Index during this stage of education.

Graph 02 - Evolution of the IDEB in the Final Years



Source: QEdu (2017).

Considering Graph 02, the IDEB of the educational network in question experienced moments of discontinuity from 2005 to 2011, with the latter year achieving an average of 4.6. However, this dropped to 4.3 in 2015, before rising again in 2017 to an average of 4.8. Despite the increase in IDEB in 2017, the municipality failed to meet the nationally established target for that year.

Analyzing the IDEB data, it can be stated that in 2015, both the Early Years and the Final Years of Elementary Education experienced a general decline in the average scores of the researched schools

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The weaknesses of the IDEB indicators are revealed by not considering the entire sociocultural context experienced by the school or educational network and by not providing year-by-year data. This gap was addressed by examining student learning as reported in the School Census (2018). Since this goes beyond the scope of the investigation, the mention of the Census does not delve deeply into the analysis.

According to the available data, there was a 4.0% failure rate in the Early Years of Elementary Education and a 13.6% failure rate in the Final Years, totaling a 17.6% failure rate across the stages of Elementary Education (Census, 2018). This snapshot deserves reflection from managers regarding the adoption of the SA in the public network: what are the causes of failure after the adoption of the SA? Is there actual learning occurring, or is it merely training to adequately respond to an evaluative process?

Information regarding the Basic Education Development Index (IDEB) data for 2023 was sought; however, unfortunately, such data is not yet available. The most recent update pertains to the year 2021.

The categories of Pedagogical Standardization and Teacher Autonomy, analyzed in this study, are reflected in the statements of the participants presented below.

Autonomy or Standardization

Among the categories chosen for analyzing the research problem, pedagogical standardization and teacher autonomy were selected. To this end, teachers and managers were asked how the choice of the adopted Assessment System (SA) occurred, whether they participated in the selection process, which SA the municipality is using, and how the material is being employed.

Analyzing the responses from managers and teachers, it is evident that there is an emphasis on stating that, even with the Assessment System (SA), there is autonomy for complementary actions in planning pedagogical activities. Regarding the applicability of the teaching materials and the execution of other initiatives, Tormes and Oliveira (2016, p. 72) assert: “With the adoption of this ‘teaching system,’ the teacher does not fully exercise their autonomy, has lost their freedom, and, in a way, the use of the teaching material can intensify their workload, as the teacher must address both the content outlined in the material and the local reality.”

Indeed, the participants in the study describe carrying out some activities not included in the SA materials; however, as Tormes and Oliveira (2016) note, with the prescribed materials, the teacher has reduced freedom to plan their actions, as they must cover the content proposed in the materials. P6 clearly articulates this sentiment by stating that “working with the SA restricts pedagogical activities”.

The pedagogical standardization is also evident in the response from a participant who stated: “[...] the system of prescribed materials leads us to a certain uniformity across the entire education network” (P2). This standardization is viewed positively by the participants who responded to the questionnaire, as it ensures that all students are working on specific content. However, the question arises: are they truly learning? It is not only the creativity of the teacher that is being diminished with the SA, but that of the entire Education Network, which is compelled to learn in the same way, using the same materials. Furthermore, it is important to note that this response implicitly reflects a lack of confidence in teachers' abilities and training to carry out appropriate planning, as well as in the organization of pedagogical work.

According to Furtuoso (2014), the issue is not with the content of the materials offered when public networks adopt the Assessment System (SA); rather, it is related to how teachers operate. It is worth noting that when teachers are induced to perform only what is prescribed, they may become complacent. However, upon recognizing this situation, they should resist and seek collective solutions.

Adrião et al. (2009, p. 802) assert that private companies supplying SAs to public networks are not merely providers of materials, training, and equipment; they “[...] begin to influence the design of local educational policy, the organization of teaching and administrative work developed in each public network unit, which is why they become partners of municipal governments.” Thus, they reveal themselves as drivers of the Curricular Policies of Educational Networks.

From this perspective, the contracted 'Systems' convey a false sense of partnership, disseminating a distorted image to public institutions to influence educational decisions. They sell professionals a pseudo-teacher autonomy by emphasizing that teachers can develop some activities not covered by the prescribed materials.

In this context, Furtuoso (2014, p. 140) further explains that, under this logic, “[...] the role assigned to the teacher differs from that of the questioning teacher, who seeks to deepen their knowledge and promotes changes in their practice through access to knowledge.” The fact that

New (old) privatization formats of basic education: the booklet system teachers are limited to applying the already established materials tends to foster passivity, reducing their interest in pursuing knowledge and distancing them from being critical-reflective professionals. Consequently, this weakens spaces for collective deliberation and group planning, in accordance with the context of the educational network or school.

Collective Approaches

The studies and reflections indicate that it is not only the materials used that, in themselves, impart quality to the teaching and learning process. According to Adrião et al. (2009), the purchase of prescribed materials is part of a strategy devised by the private sector to expand its market, encroaching on public space and assuming certain responsibilities that allow it to exert influence over the public, in light of a commercialized view of education.

In this perspective, the organization of the SA materials is linked to the manner in which the private system has found ways to insert itself into public institutions. Peroni and Rossi (2011) describe this relationship as profitable for the private system, in that it transforms public education into a product and generates profits from the sale of materials.

Similarly, Tormes and Oliveira (2016) warn that education is situated within a context marked by the global expansion of capitalist society, whose goal is market enlargement.

These elements resonate in the study presented here. The argument for improving IDEB indicators is not substantiated. Meanwhile, teachers perceive their autonomy as weakened by the pedagogical standardization imposed by the prescribed materials contracted by municipal managers.

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