

Educational management mediations through state assessment systems: the CONSED report (2017) as the 'architecture' of building hegemony for State policy

Katia Silva Bufalo* and Maria José Ferreira Ruiz

Universidade Estadual de Londrina, Rod. Celso Garcia Cid, PR-445, Km 380, 86057-970, Londrina, Paraná, Brasil. *Author for correspondence. E-mail: ksbufalo@uel.br

ABSTRACT. The text brings a documentary analysis about the 'CONSED-2017 International Seminar Report' and is part of a broader research that seeks to understand how external evaluations interfere with educational management. Therefore, this work seeks to understand the educational policy agenda of the state systems, through the agreed proposals for the evaluation of education. The aforementioned document was selected with the objective of identifying public information that records the political actions of state evaluation systems. In this sense, the report in question can be considered a reference for understanding the theme, since it compiles the discussions and consensus of the Working Group of representatives of all state education departments in the country. The theoretical-methodological path was carried out in a dialogical perspective with the referenced authors and exploration of the specified document, driven by the problem of identifying what is underlying and not manifest in the proposals of the GT_CONSED Report: Evaluation of Basic Education. It is concluded that the document reflects a thorough diagnosis of state evaluation systems in partnership with private name institutes, highlighting the redefinition of the role of the state. Also, it registers a proposal that allows the integration of the evaluation systems of the federation units through the gradual creation of consortia.

Keywords: educational management; external evaluation; state policy; public-private partnership; state education systems.

Mediações da gestão educacional por meio dos sistemas estaduais de avaliação: o relatório CONSED (2017) como 'arquitetura' da construção de uma hegemonia para uma política de Estado

RESUMO. O texto traz uma análise documental do 'Relatório do Seminário Internacional CONSED-2017' e parte de uma pesquisa de maior abrangência, que busca compreender como as avaliações externas interferem na gestão educacional. Desse modo, neste trabalho busca-se compreender a agenda das políticas educacionais dos sistemas estaduais, por meio das propostas acordadas para avaliação da educação. O documento supracitado foi selecionado com o objetivo de identificar informações públicas que registram as ações políticas dos sistemas estaduais de avaliação. Nesse sentido, o relatório em questão pode ser considerado uma referência para a compreensão da temática, uma vez que compila as discussões e consensos do Grupo de Trabalho dos representantes de todas as secretarias estaduais de educação do país. O percurso teórico-metodológico foi realizado numa perspectiva dialógica com os autores referenciados e exploração do documento especificado, conduzido pela problemática de identificar o que está subjacente e não manifesto nas propostas do Relatório do GT_CONSED: Avaliação da Educação Básica. Conclui-se que o documento reflete a realização de um diagnóstico minucioso dos sistemas de estaduais de avaliação em parceria com Institutos de razão social privada, evidenciando a redefinição do papel do Estado. Registra também uma proposta que possibilita a integração dos sistemas de avaliação das unidades da federação, de forma gradativa, por meio de criação de consórcios.

Palavras-chave: gestão educacional; avaliação externa; política de estado; parceria público-privada; sistemas estaduais de educação.

Mediaciones en la gestión educativa a través de sistemas de evaluación estadística: el Informe CONSED (2017) como ‘arquitectura’ para construir una hegemonía para una política de Estatal

RESUMEN. El texto trae un análisis documental del ‘Informe del Seminario Internacional CONSED-2017’ y parte de una investigación más amplia, que busca comprender cómo las evaluaciones externas interfieren en la gestión educativa. Así, este trabajo busca comprender la agenda de políticas educativas de los sistemas estatales, a través de las propuestas consensuadas para la evaluación de la educación. El documento mencionado anteriormente fue seleccionado con el fin de identificar información pública que registre las acciones políticas de los sistemas de evaluación estatales. En este sentido, el informe en cuestión, puede considerarse un referente para la comprensión del tema, ya que recoge las discusiones y consensos del Grupo de Trabajo de representantes de todas las secretarías estatales de educación del país. El recorrido teórico-metodológico se realizó en una perspectiva dialógica con los autores referenciados y exploración del documento especificado, impulsado por el problema de identificar lo subyacente y no manifiesto en las propuestas del Informe de GT_CONSED: Evaluación de la Educación Básica. Se concluye que el documento refleja la realización de un diagnóstico exhaustivo de los sistemas de evaluación estatal en alianzas con Institutos de razón social privada, mostrando la redefinición del rol del Estado. También registra una propuesta que permite la integración de los sistemas de evaluación de las unidades federativas, de forma paulatina, mediante la creación de consorcios.

Palabras clave: gestión educativa; evaluación externa; política estatal; asociación público-privada; sistemas educativos estatales.

Received on September 8, 2020.
Accepted on November 16, 2020.

Introduction

We start from the assumption that studying educational policies presupposes delimiting the conception of the State on which these analyses are based. We understand the movement of current education policies from the State Reform in the 1990s. For Afonso (2014), the reconfiguration of the role of the state, as an ‘Evaluating State’ can be understood in the historical movement in phases. According to the author, during the first one, there was a relative autonomy of the nation-state when defining policies. The second phase corresponds to the intensification of national assessment agendas, in parallel with the consolidation of the role of international agencies in the articulation of assessment policies. The author infers that there are signs of a third phase, with the insertion of agencies such as the World Trade Organization [*Organização Mundial do Comércio* - OMC], among others, which induce and articulate processes of liberalization and commodification of education¹.

Through a documentary study, from the International Seminar Report on Basic Education Assessment, GT-CONSED, we highlight the main trends defined for the organization of state assessment systems as part of the strategies to implement educational policies, to promote the integration of the evaluation systems of the federation units in a State policy. It is noteworthy that, in our perspective, education is understood as a social policy (Saviani, 2016). This “[...] requires diluting it in its broader insertion: the theoretical-analytical space proper to public policies that represent the materiality of State intervention, or the State in action” (Azevedo, 2004, p. 5).

In this way, we understand the state phenomenon as a social construction in motion, therefore susceptible to transformation. According to Peroni and Lima (2020), concerning educational policies, education is privatized through capitalization. Likewise, “[...] this State, guided by the new principles of public action, is known for defining the great perspectives and evaluating, a posteriori, the results of a more autonomous management, with the help of a rigorous statistical system” (Laval, 2004, p. 13).

During the study of the evolution of State intervention in education through external evaluations in different countries (France, Hungary, Portugal, England, and Belgium), Barroso (2005) reveals that the studied educational policies can be characterized, generally, as policies of an Evaluator-State. However, “[...] the degree of intensity of the policies put into practice and the dosage between the different models are very varied” (Barroso, 2005, p. 740).

¹ ‘Commodification of education’ is understood as an ongoing phenomenon that tends to treat public assets, including education, as if they were goods and, as such, subject to market laws.

Studies by Laval (2004), Barroso (2005), Ravitch (2011), Afonso (2014), Uczack (2014), among others, show the phenomenon described by Ball (2014), a 'Global Education Reform Movement [GERM]' organized by political networks in compliance with a 'Globally Structured Agenda' (Dale, 2004), proposals currently disseminated today as New Public Management [*Nova Gestão Pública* - NGP], that is, the Modernization of Conservative Management.

In Brazil, concomitant with the reform of the State, the Basic Education Assessment System [*Sistema de Avaliação da Educação Básica* - SAEB] was created to present indicators on the quality of education. However, many pieces of research are dedicated to discussing the concept of quality developed by this system. "The evaluations found the obvious, that is, quality problems and, instead of providing public policies to raise it, the government sought the private sector to buy 'quality packages' for basic education" (Peroni, 2016, p. 15).

In this sense, several states in the federation invest in the implementation of state education assessment systems to strengthen management from the perspective of the market. In this perspective, the State "[...] pays the teacher, defines partnerships, purchases packages and the content of education. The private sector, on the other hand, determines teacher training, monitoring, the content worked on in classes, management" (Peroni & Lima, 2020, p. 3). Regarding assessment trends and policies, Afonso (2014) questions and invokes the need to critically address the centrality of student assessment, considering dimensions that coexist in the assessment process, namely: institutional assessment of schools, assessment of teaching performance, and the evaluation of the policy itself. Also for this author, "[...] through the international expansion of franchising systems, the modularization and standardization of curriculum, and the expansion of systems and assessment agencies, whose autonomous control by the national-States is eventually withdrawn in the near future" (Afonso, 2014, p. 499).

Ravitch (2011), in a critical analysis of the effects of the US policy implemented since 2002, based on external state evaluations, highlights the accountability of schools for results below established targets, curricula were reduced to measurable content in tests, and children were no longer educated but trained. The author contributes to the reflection on the intensification of testing and the quality of education: "[t]he lack of attention to history, science, and arts has reduced the quality of education, the quality of children's lives, the quality of daily life at school and even the performance on the tests" (Ravitch, 2011, p. 129).

We note that there is an ongoing trend in Brazil to move closer to these US educational and evaluative policies. However, according to Barroso (2005), it is not possible to transfer the results of the North American experience in a literal way, considering the historicity of each country, as well as the different manifestations of social subjects who experience these realities. As an example, Afonso (2014) when recording the phases and manifestations of the Evaluating State concludes: "[...] considering the analysis of different national and educational realities, all combinations of these three phases are possible, and they may be already occurring, or may yet occur, simultaneously or not, and in varying intensities" (Afonso, 2014, p. 499). Regarding the perspectives of these policies, based on Peroni and Lima (2020, p. 17), we understand that "[...] the international strategy, and particularly that of Brazil, at this moment, involves the alliance between neoconservatism and neoliberalism. This process materializes in different ways".

Therefore, we consider it extremely pertinent to consider the political and social setbacks resulting from the experience reported and disseminate this knowledge to fight for different experiences concerning the implementation of assessment systems. This does not mean that we contest the need to create Basic Education Assessment policies. However, our defense is for assessment policies that consider the real condition of each school and community and that the results of these assessments serve to support educational proposals aimed at complete human development, in opposition to the minimalist and pragmatic proposals that aim to comply with the formation of a competent and skilled human mass that is adaptable to the market.

The qualitative study was carried out using bibliographic research and document analysis, considering the GT-CONSED Report as the primary source and the scientific research already published on the subject as secondary sources. The relevance of research work with documents can be understood from the conceptualization by Evangelista (2012), in relation to the role of the researcher who needs to "[...] find the meaning of documents and with them build knowledge that allows not only the understanding of the source but of the historical projects present there and the perspectives that – often obliterated in the text – are in dispute" (Evangelista, 2012, p. 59).

After demarcating the theoretical-methodological foundations with the authors whom we dialogued with about the changes in the role of the State and the link with the development of evaluation policies, as part of

this process, we divided the article into two moments. First, we map the location of the National Council of Secretaries of Education [*Conselho Nacional de Secretários de Educação* – CONSED], as an element of a complex political network and executor of an international agenda for Educational Reform.

Next, we focus on the process of preparing the GT-CONSED Report document: assessment of basic education and the imbricated public-private partnership category as a constituent of the State. As a highlight of the analysis, we present the dimensions emphasized in the document: content, architecture, uses, budget, and financing, to problematize the explicit proposals and underlying intentions.

Afterwards, what we find below, with emphasis on excerpts from the GT-CONSED Report: Evaluation of Basic Education, is the trend towards the progressive strengthening of state systems of evaluation, with plans for intermediate systems that intend to reach the advanced level for the nationwide creation of Information Banks for the Management and Standardization of Basic Education, a subject that will be further clarified later.

CONSED: integration of state networks and public-private partnerships.

According to the entity's official website, the National Council of Education Secretaries was created in 1986, a period of full movement for the country's re-democratization. It is a private-law institution whose mission is to promote the integration of state education networks through the promotion of a collaborative regime between federal units, to intensify the participation of states in the decision-making processes of national policies for the development of public schools.

Currently, we can identify the following institutional partners on the official CONSED page: Roberto Marinho Foundation; U.S. Embassy; Ministry of Education; Itaú Social Foundation; UNESCO; Unibanco Institute; Victor Civita Foundation; National Union of Municipal Education Directors [*União Nacional dos Dirigentes Municipais de Educação* - UNDIME]; British Council in Brazil; Natura Institute; Santillana Foundation; All for Education [*Todos pela Educação* - TPE]; Itaú Foundation for Education and Culture; Lemann Foundation; Pro-Futuro: Telefônica Vivo Foundation; National Institute of Educational Research Anísio Teixeira [*Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira* - INEP]; Coordination of Higher Education Personnel [*Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior* – CAPES]; Federal Senate; Chamber of Deputies; National Education Development Fund [*Fundo Nacional de Desenvolvimento da Educação* - FNDE]; Ayrton Senna Institute; United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF]; Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science, and Culture [*Organização de Estados Ibero-Americanos* - OEI]; Virtual University of the State of São Paulo [*Universidade do Estado de São Paulo* - UNIVESP]; Bett Educar Brasil and Brazilian support service to micro and small businesses [*Serviço brasileiro de apoio às micro e pequenas empresas* - SEBRAE].

CONSED highlights, among its institutional information, that the entity is composed of members from different political currents, with the plurality of ideas being one of its main characteristics. However, a large part of the institutions that make up CONSED is articulated in 'very diversified and multifaceted' political networks, which have been interfering with the content and form of public education, contributing to the privatization of the public. These hegemonic private institutions and groups "[...] can express themselves through sponsorship, hiring, advisory services, direct and indirect partnerships and have the potential to further blur the boundaries between State and society" (Ruiz & Peroni, 2017, p. 150).

The analyzed document is available on the CONSED Portal, in the *frentes de trabalho* topic, *avaliação* item, identified as '*Relatório do Seminário Internacional de Avaliação*' ('International Evaluation Seminar Report'), an event held on October 10 and 11, 2017, in Recife (PE/Brazil). In addition to academic consultants and representatives of national private institutions mentioned above, according to the schedule available on the CONSED Portal, the event was attended by representatives of international institutions, namely: Catherine Millet, a researcher at the Educational Testing Service-ETS (USA); Manuel Moscoso (Chilean Experience); Paulo Santiago, Head of the Division of Policy Advice and Implementation of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], all linked to the theme: 'International Experiences with Evaluation'. The theme: 'Consortia between US states to carry out evaluations' does not mention the guest who carried out the exhibition. Events of this nature are examples that, currently, "[...] in the globalized world, public policy travels transnationally, spreading policies that naturally connect domestic to international politics" (Oliveira & Clementino, 2020, p. 148).

The presentation of the document 'GT-CONSED Report: Evaluation of Basic Education' is written by the institutional partners: Viviane Senna – President of the Ayrton Senna Institute; Ricardo Henrique – Executive Superintendent of Unibanco Institute and Angela Dannemann - Superintendent of Itaú Social Foundation,

understood, in our theoretical perspective, as political elements of a network of 'Private Devices of Hegemony' that aim to implement articulated actions to define an agenda for continuity of conservative and privatist educational reforms. These subjects, since the creation of the Entrepreneurial Movement 'All for Education', have articulated goals for the consolidation of the managerial State. Thus, by taking on social projects considered, "[...] of relevance to the country [...]" they rely on "[...] the support of the public fund through tax exemptions" (Martins, 2009a, p. 148).

About this relationship of private groups with education policies, Shiroma (2011) reveals the role of intellectuals from private institutions as "[...] opinion-makers, [who] influence decision-makers, consult for UNDIME, CONSED, are linked to multilateral organizations and provide assistance in the training of teachers and managers in several states in Brazil" (Shiroma, 2011, p. 35). In other words, they act to strengthen the hegemony of the business class, propagating their voices, since "[...] the capitalist entrepreneur creates with him the industry technician, the political economy scientist, the organizer of a new culture, of a new type of law" (Gramsci, 1979, p. 3-4).

In the presentation of the Report, there is mobilization for actions that result in the improvement of state assessment systems among all states, in order to reduce efforts and costs for all, taking advantage of synergies and economies of scale, to guarantee the right to education, understood as "[...] the right to learning that is not limited to the appropriation of disinterested and scholarly knowledge understood as an end in itself" (National Council of Education Secretaries [CONSED], 2017, p. 56).

This discourse is recurrent by defenders of neoliberal pragmatism, who relate the right to education to the right to develop skills and abilities to adapt to the market, a motto of those who intend to evade the right of human beings to develop their second nature (Saviani, 2013), to not only assimilating objective knowledge, as a result, but to enable the possibility of appropriating the knowledge production process, as well as the trends for its transformation.

GT Themes and Discussions - Evaluation of Basic Education: CONSED

The document 'Basic Education Evaluation Report GT-CONSED' summarizes the discussions that took place in four technical meetings held in person and online, in five working days, from 06/22/2016 to 05/04/2017. The report was presented at the event 'International Seminar on Basic Education Assessment: The role of assessment systems in learning guidance', organized by CONSED and institutional partners, in October 2017.

The text GT_CONSED (2017) is organized into seven chapters, namely: Ch. 1: The recent experience of the federation units in evaluating Basic Education; Ch. 2: Proposals for the evaluation of Basic Education; Ch. 3: Possible contents for an assessment system for Basic Education; Ch. 4: Purposes, uses, utilities and potential negative consequences of a Basic Education assessment system; Ch. 5: Architecture of the Basic Education Assessment System; Ch. 6: Economies of Scale and Opportunities for Reducing the Costs of Basic Education Assessment; Ch. 7: Summary of Technical Meetings of the CONSED Evaluation Working Group.

In Figure 1, we present the schedule and themes of the discussions systematized from Chapter 7.

In a recent study, Oliveira and Clementino (2020) investigated educational policies aimed at teaching and functional staff, school management, and evaluation in nine states in the northeast region and related these measures as New Public Management practices. The authors identify these processes as constituents of a transnational model of privatization of public services, with an emphasis on the area of education. From this perspective, they conclude that "[o]ur analysis highlights the strong presence of assessment policies in the nine states as a strategy for improving education. Regardless of the political party composition of state governments" (Oliveira & Clementino, 2020, p. 150).

According to Newman and Clarke (2012), the New Public Management, as a cultural formation, can currently be understood as Managerialism. It can manifest itself in different ways, in short, it means a change from a career and professional planning to a managerial one. "[...] [T]he reconstruction of the state involved both managerialism [ideology] and managerialization [establishment of managerial authority]" (Newman & Clarke, 2012, p. 359). In this sense, Ball (2011, p. 25) further clarifies that "[...] in education, the segment of school directors is the main 'career' in which the incorporation of the new managerialism takes place, being crucial for the transformation of organizational regimes in schools". This data concatenates with our analyses presented in the course of time. "Furthermore, it makes it possible to question the thesis of discontinuity of policies and brings elements for us to think about continuity when there is a change of government" (Shiroma, 2011, p. 33).

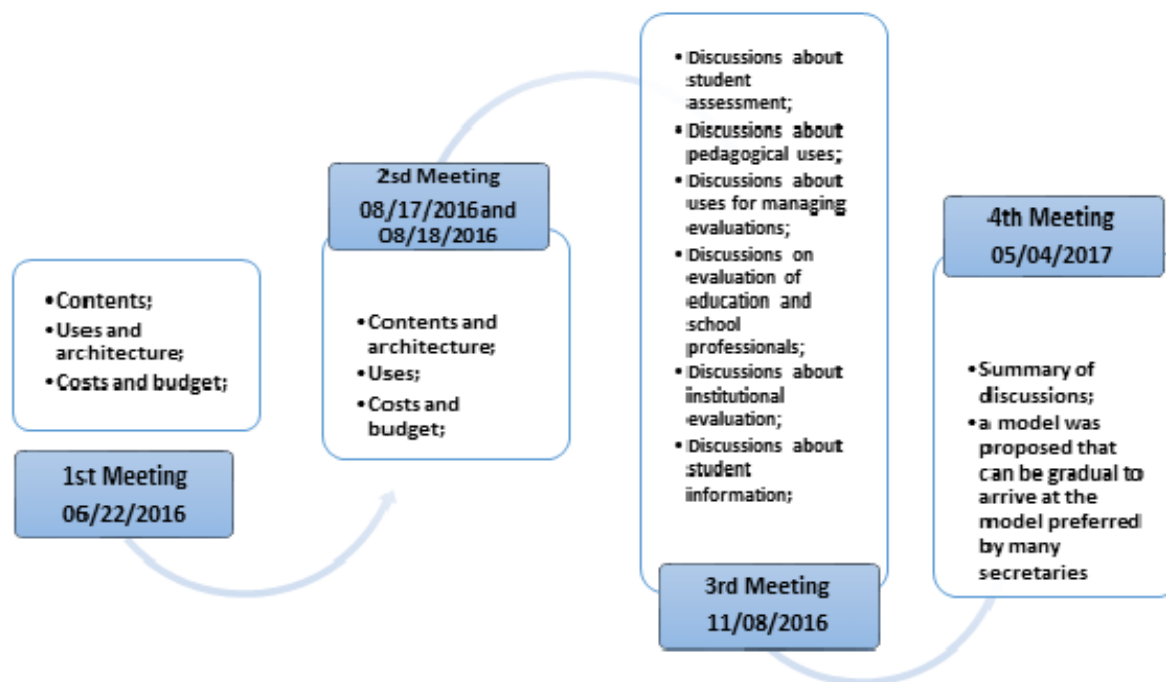


Figure 1. Process of organization of state assessment systems (Adapted by the authors).
Source: CONSED (2017).

In summary, the ‘GT-CONSED: Evaluation of Basic Education’ Report ratifies the reality exposed by Oliveira and Clementino (2020), by presenting a detailed diagnosis of state evaluation systems and formalizing a proposal that enables the integration of evaluation systems of all units of the federation through the creation of Consortia. To translate the meaning of the type of education that the document under analysis and the group linked to it defend, we turn to the work of Martins (2009b), the analysis of the organism called ‘All for Education’. For this author, “[...] the strategies and tactics employed prevent large portions of the population from understanding that the interests defended in the name of ‘all for education’ are not reflected in a single education project for all” (Martins, 2009b, p. 26-27, emphasis in the original). The main objective is to reduce the cost of evaluations and, at the same time, expand the use of results in educational management. The Content and form of this system will be discussed below.

Dimensions of State Assessment Systems, according to the GT-CONSED.

We highlight in Figure 1 our understanding of the planning process of new policies for the assessment of Basic Education, involving the state systems. To facilitate the reading and discussion of the entire process, we subdivided the theme into the following dimensions: i) Content and Architecture (what to evaluate, who, how and when to evaluate?); ii) Uses (who to blame?) and iii) Budget and Financing (How much does it cost and what fund will be used?). Despite the division of dimensions into themes to facilitate the writing and reading of the process, it is worth noting that we understand politics as a system so that everything is integrated into the phenomenon. Thus, “[a]lthough policy research may have different facets, globally several particularities differentiate it from other types of research: it has a multidimensional object” (Deslauriers & Kérisit, 2014, p. 132).

Contents and Architecture

To start the discussion of the Contents and, consequently, the Architecture of the proposed state systems, it is necessary to contextualize that this movement is directly related to the ‘Movement for the National Common Curriculum Base [*Movimento pela Base Nacional Comum Curricular* - MBNCC]’, rather, the need to improve assessment systems it is directly related to the implementation of the National Common Curriculum Base [*Base Nacional Comum Curricular* - BNCC]. In this way, the state assessment systems assume the role of guaranteeing:

[...] the hegemonic power of the common, the national, the universal, established and constantly reinforced by evaluation policies, distribution of teaching materials and teacher training, will tend to promote the hierarchy of knowledge, giving legitimacy to what belongs to all, disappearing with and silencing that which is local and suggested as a diversified part (National Association for Graduate Studies and Research in Education, *Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Educação* [ANPED], 2017, p. 14).

In the text of the GT-CONSED report, the organizational form of the BNCC is described to illustrate how much this curricular reform is aligned with the policies and agendas of hegemonic political networks (Ball, 2014). According to Caetano (2019, p. 131), “[...] with the changes proposed by the ongoing reforms, in particular the BNCC, the content of basic education changes substantially through programs, methodologies, manuals, training of managers and students, whose focus becomes lifelong learning”.

The National Common Curriculum Base (Elementary and High School) is organized into four areas of knowledge: Languages, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and Human Sciences. They are formed by curricular components, associated with specific competencies, each curricular component presents a set of skills, understood as content. However, “[...] there is a need to ‘limit the assessment to just a part of the curriculum’”. It is based on the Reference Matrix that this choice becomes explicit” (CONSED, 2017, p. 55, emphasis added). In other words,

[...] the BNCC is configured as an instrument of silencing, marginalization, and exclusion, since, in the intention of including, it establishes very strict criteria and learning sequences, to be reinforced by assessments that will translate relative numbers out of context into the absolute quality of education (ANPED, 2017, p. 14).

Still in relation to content, the report records the importance of developing ways to assess the socioemotional skills (attitudes, interests, and engagement) of students, the socioeconomic condition of the family, and the interest of parents in their children’s school activities. We agree with Saviani (2011) on the meaning of this policy based on the pedagogy of competencies “[...] whose objective is to provide individuals with flexible behaviors that allow them to adjust to the conditions of a society in which their own survival needs are not guaranteed” (Saviani, 2011, p. 437).

The design of the Architecture of the state assessment system is directly related to who will be assessed and when. Regarding the frequency of assessments, there is a trend towards annual frequency, with a preference for the end of the school year. The most obvious aspects are:

[...] target audience and critical years, frequency, item format, and participation of municipalities under evaluation. Regarding the critical years, there was no consensus on which years and grades should be evaluated, but rather that, if it is too spaced, intervention time is lost, but if it is too short, there is no time to observe a change and to use the high volume of data. It was highlighted that, in order to define the frequency, the use must first be defined, and that it is possible to think of the scope in education networks. Regarding the scope of education networks, there was no consensus in the subgroup whether to focus on the state network only or on the municipalities as well (CONSED, 2017, p. 132).

In addition to the students, the document indicates the intention to progressively develop ways of monitoring the qualification of teachers, school management, and the school climate. “It was highlighted that it is not possible to separate the teaching knowledge from the working conditions of the teachers” (CONSED, 2017, p. 127). However, the insertion of this observation does not diminish the meaning and intention of a test-based assessment system that uses consultants that are external to the schools and even to the Departments of Education, disqualifying a priori all school and school professionals. This is an example of managerialism applied at school. This policy

Designated here as standardized, based on criteria, assessment with the publication of results, this type of assessment makes it possible to highlight, better than any other way, the so-called ‘Neoliberal State paradox’, on the one hand, the State that wants to more closely control school and educational results (thus becoming more State, evaluating State) but, on the other hand, it has to share scrutiny with parents and other ‘clients’ or ‘consumers’ (thereby diluting some traditional borders, and becoming more market and minus State). Thus, a quasi-market mechanism is produced in which the State, not giving up the imposition of certain educational contents and objectives (of which the creation of a national curriculum is just one example), allows, at the same time, that the results/products of the education system are also controlled by the market (Afonso, 2009, p. 122, emphasis in the original).

Thus, although the text of the ‘GT-CONSED: Evaluation of Basic Education’ Report uses a lexicon that appears to involve and present proposals related to the commitment of all to education, nevertheless, despite the principles and words common to all “[...] the marks of their social position and their appropriation of cultural goods are indelible both in the attribution of meaning to language and in its suppression”

(Evangelista, 2012, p. 53). Despite the discussions about awards, bonuses, certifications, among other strategies, all discussions converge to systems, according to Oliveira and Clementino (2020), of high, medium, and low accountability.

Uses: purposes and utilities

The discussion about the uses is quite extensive, and maybe it can be the object of a specific text in future works. In topics, we can list the following purposes expressed in the report: 1) Accountability and goal setting; 2) Incentive system; 3) Diagnosis of the current situation and educational progress; 4) Success factors and resource allocation; 5) Identification of areas in which new educational practices, actions, and programs need to be designed; 6) Ex-ante and ex-post evaluations of the effectiveness of educational actions, practices, and programs; 7) Planning of educational actions, practices, and programs; 8) Adequacy of pedagogical practices. Highlighted,

[...] the ideal scenario for the uses of the assessment should contemplate, according to the subgroup, the following areas: Accountability (informing society on the progress achieved and the achievement or not of the established goals; identification of schools and regions with high performance to share good practices); Planning and management (supporting the central body, the regions and the school community in their self-assessment and diagnosis; planning, resource allocation, identification of corrective actions and change of course); Pedagogical (supporting schools in their search for better pedagogical strategies or plans; subsidizing teachers in such a way that they can better adapt their practices to the needs of students) and Training (giving subsidies to teachers, schools and the Secretariat for the formulation of continuing education plans and providing inputs to the teacher selection process). In an intermediate scenario, they could be suppressed to improve teacher practices and use assessment results for teacher selection (CONSED, 2017, p. 137).

In addition to focusing on the accountability system linked to accountability, these policies, according to Afonso (2009), reveal the tension between the democratic school and the meritocratic and discriminatory one, with a predominance of the needs of the accumulation process, which demands an education system with a more instrumental curriculum and a more 'modernizing' classification evaluation. Saviani (2011) and Freitas (2012) call this phenomenon neotechnicism. For Freitas (2012, p. 383), neotechnicism "[...] is structured around three broad categories: accountability, meritocracy, and privatization. At the center is the idea of process control, to guarantee certain results defined a priori as standards, measured in standardized tests".

In this way, the content of the CONSED report materializes the political option of adopting accountability systems policies, understood, according to Oliveira and Clementino (2020), as a set of practices arising from the movement of contractualization of public education, which use large-scale assessments as the main resource of accountability. For this reason, "[...] we can state that Brazil, in its political-administrative composition of a federative nature, has, to a certain extent, indirectly adopted a policy of accountability over the states" (Oliveira & Clementino, 2020, p. 159).

One of the most striking changes regarding the uses of large-scale assessments in schools are the changes intentionally caused in the forms of management, since "[...] democratic management, in turn, suffers from the tension of the managerial perspective arising from the policies of large-scale evaluation" (Lima, Sandri, & Zanardini, 2020, p. 108).

According to Uczack (2014), evaluation is at the same time an instrument and management and content of educational reforms and policies. The results of the assessments are often associated with the need to modernize the school, that is, to implement the business logic to modernize widespread educational management as an efficient alternative to improve the quality of education.

Such charges tend to modify the actions of professionals involved in the administrative and pedagogical process. With this, we realize that the option between democratic and/or managerial school management is not limited to a purely personal/professional issue of the subjects involved in the pedagogical-school process, but is related to the potential/strength of effecting the evaluation policy in the work and school organization (Lima et al., 2020, p. 104).

Therefore, the impact of assessments on educational management is directly related to the current societal project, conveyed by political groups that occupy public power. Evidence of this assertion is expressed in the GT-CONSED Report, despite the establishment of goals and evaluation systems models. The document highlights the need to create an expanded forum on the topic.

In this way, it would be possible to achieve a state policy, as opposed to unwanted government policies, which change priorities and interests at each electoral cycle, since the expected goals could also be institutionalized through a bill (CONSED, 2017, p. 141).

This would not be unprecedented in the movement of educational policies in Brazil, for a similar action occurred in 2007 (Saviani, 2009), when the Goals Commitment Plan All for Education, of the Brazilian business conglomerate, was enacted as Decree-Law n. 6094, such as the Education Development Plan [*Plano de Desenvolvimento da Educação - PDE*]. It is observed, in this movement of political networks registered in the GT-CONSED Report, the need to create propositional resistances in opposition to the interests of capital to guarantee the possibility of the continuity of the democratization process. This resistance should not properly confront the creation of state policies for education, but rather the privatist forms demonstrated in the architecture of the GT Report - CONSED, which are discussed, planned, and managed without the participation and articulation of the subjects of the school community (teachers, students, and guardians).

Budget and financing

The GT-CONSED Report document can be understood as the materialization of the strategies of the current historical process. Therefore, these strategies are entangled in hybrid formations, that is, the data is diffused as well as the ongoing state reconfiguration. "Here there is no single logic or trend: neither decentralization nor centralization accurately describes the shifting arrangements of power, control, and conditional autonomy that were crafted as a new architecture of governing public services" (Newman & Clarke, 2012, p. 364). What needs to be considered "[...] is that neoliberal reform is both exogenous (privatizing) and endogenous (reformist), the public sector is replaced and reformed at the same time, and things are connected" (Ball, 2014, p. 43).

Regarding costs, the report's records emphasize that the independence of state assessment systems makes standardization difficult and, consequently, also hampers economies of scale.

The annual cost per student assessed varies from R\$25 to R\$30 (considering that the assessment of each student requires only one school day). Given this unit cost and the expected number of students to be assessed each year, we find a cost for the set of assessments between R\$300 and R\$360 million per year (CONSED, 2017, p. 115).

To reduce the cost of the amount spent on assessments, the alternative highlighted in the text is the "[f]ormation of a consortium between states to jointly organize the assessment. The creation of a consortium between states could offer great financial and managerial benefits concerning the assessment that each state promotes individually" (CONSED, 2017, p. 37). In economic terms, this action estimates:

Overall, we estimate that close collaboration across states could reduce assessment costs by 37%. Thus, instead of an aggregate cost of almost 190 million for an uncooperative system, we could, in the situation of a cooperation system, go beyond a cost of 115 million, that is, a saving of R\$75 million per year (CONSED, 2017, p. 119).

We believe that saving the public fund is in everyone's interest, yet, "[i]n a capitalist society, 'public interests' can never exceed certain limits so as not to jeopardize the viability of the system itself" (Martins, 2009a, p. 204, emphasis in the original). In terms of financing public funds, when we say savings of R\$75 million per year, by analogy, this should correspond to an increase of R\$75 million annually allocated to Public Education, however, this discussion is not exclusively state-owned, it is located within the 'non-state public'. This is the location of CONSED and its partners. Thus, when discussing financing, we identify public-private partnerships, in these terms:

Public and private sources of financing were discussed, with the suggestion that the federal government should have an evaluation rubric to finance and transfer resources, in a linked manner, to the National Evaluation System, through a federal evaluation fund. There is the possibility that private partners, such as banks, would allocate resources to the National Assessment System, investing part of the profit as social investment (CONSED, 2017, p. 128).

In this way, "[...] although a Foundation, due to its legal nature, cannot have profit purposes, there is no impediment to increasing its capital" (Ruiz & Peroni, 2017, p. 159). Thus, the participation in Basic Education assessment policies can become a 'big business', in other words, Business Intelligence [B.I.]. At the same time, these policies make it possible to generate a bank of longitudinal information on the mass of people trained by public education, through the induction of the Reference Matrix of competencies and abilities that will be emphasized. It is equivalent to saying that Public Education, as we achieved in the Constitutional Charter of 1988, is threatened because of its principles: gratuity; valuing the education professional; Democratic management; consideration for diversity do not converge with the interests of the power bloc and its hegemonic practices. This is because

[...] the privatization of the public can take place with or without a change of ownership [...] the privatization of education is taken over by companies that do not involve ownership, via a content dispute in a class restoration project (Peroni & Lima, 2020, p. 3).

According to the studies by Caetano (2019) about the public-private relationship in the implementation of the National Common Curriculum Base, which is directly related to the evaluation policy, “[t]he BNCC presents characteristics of a restrictive and standardized curriculum, which should be monitored by indicators of performance and impact [...] [it] is part of a project to scrap education to privatize it” (Caetano, 2019, p. 133). Thus, we found in the study of the GT-CONSED Report that these proposals are not explicit and sometimes the lexicon of the disputed issues appears to be the same, however, the difference in the position and meaning of social class can demarcate and denote antagonistic historical needs.

Final considerations

Our analysis finds that materialized changes in educational assessment policies result from the movement of a network of political subjects, which act to promote the alteration of the role of the State. In this sense, Education is a strategic dimension for promoting this change and evaluation serves both as an instrument for the management of educational policies and their content.

The GT_CONSED Report translates in its chapters the diagnosis of all the state systems in the country and the design of an integrated system that should be implemented progressively, with tendencies to induce educational management towards managerialism, to meet goals for the ongoing accountability system.

Among the contradictions expressed in the Report, the main one is about the conception of the right to education and, certainly, this conception derives from all the others concerning the intentions of these policies, since, although the report associates large-scale evaluations as a resource to ensure the measurement of how much the right to education has been achieved by each student, the report itself states that it is not possible to assess the entire curriculum, so it is necessary to create a Reference Matrix and choose some competencies and skills to be assessed. Based on this data, we observe how biased the current evaluation policy is, representing a real threat to all recent achievements related to the democratization of public education in our country.

We have identified the characteristics of New Public Management in the State’s actions. This is an international trend, but the degree of intensity and dosage of accountability systems implemented by these policies are very varied, therefore, the need for research to reveal the impacts according to the location and historical development.

It is observed that the policies maintain continuity regardless of the party affiliation of the period/government. Regarding the dimensions of the system discussed and put into implementation progressively from the intermediate level to the advanced level, we highlight a design based on assessments with a predominance of annual periodicity. The uses are supported by a broad system of accountability, to provide induction in educational management practices for business management, emphasizing the assessment by the Reference Matrix, therefore reducing the school curriculum, reinforcing a neoliberal worldview, restricting human training to a vision of training polyvalent personnel based on skills and abilities, outraging the principles set out in the Federal Constitution and in the Law of Guidelines and Bases for National Education, which establish the full development of the student as the purpose of education. At this juncture, we ask: ‘What is the meaning of a partial assessment system?’

Our analyses and those of the other authors, with whom we dialogued in this text, indicate that the purpose of these neoconservative policies is to provide the maintenance and continuity of the development of neoliberalism, which at this stage, in particular, uses the non-state public sector to make viable market operations. These statements are implicit in budget and financing discussions. For this reason, the educational sector represents a quantity of product development possibilities for the ‘Customer-State’, which makes it essential to master all information about ‘production’ and develop the rules for the transformation of the commodities.

Because we understand that education cannot be reduced to a commodity, we oppose the continuity of current policies and defend the development of assessments that value knowledge in its more developed forms, which are formative and emancipatory, rather than classifying and meritocratic. Therefore, new researches that meet this need are urgently needed, and this is our commitment.

References

- Afonso, A. J. (2009). *Avaliação educacional: regulação e emancipação*. São Paulo, SP: Cortez.
- Afonso, A. J. (2014). Questões, objetos e perspectivas em avaliação. *Avaliação*, 19(2), 487-507.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1414-40772014000200013>
- Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Educação (ANPED) (2017). *A Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Educação (ANPED) e a Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC)*. São Luís do Maranhão, MA: UFMA.
- Azevedo, J. M. L. (2004). *A educação como política pública*. Campinas, SP: Autores Associados.
- Ball, S. J. (2011). Sociologia das políticas educacionais e pesquisa crítico-social: uma revisão pessoal das políticas educacionais e da pesquisa em política educacional (p. 21-53). In S. J. Ball, & J. Mainardes (Orgs.), *Políticas educacionais: questões e dilemas*. São Paulo, SP: Cortez.
- Ball, S. J. (2014). *Educação Global S. A.: novas redes políticas e o imaginário neoliberal*. Ponta Grossa, PR: UEPG.
- Barroso, J. (2005). O Estado, a educação e a regulação das políticas públicas. *Educação e Sociedade*, 26 (92), 725-751. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0101-73302005000300002>
- Caetano, M. R. (2019). Os sujeitos e a proposta educacional da Base Nacional Comum Curricular: entre o público e o privado. *Teoria e Prática da Educação*, 22(3), 118-136.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25053/10.4025/tpe.v22i3.46916>
- Conselho Nacional de Secretários de Educação [CONSED]. (2017). *GT-CONSED: Avaliação da Educação Básica-Relatório*. Recife. Recuperado de <https://www.consed.org.br/storage/download/relatoriosi.pdf>
- Dale, R. (2004). Globalização e educação: demonstrando a existência de uma 'cultura educacional mundial comum' ou localizando uma 'agenda globalmente estruturada para a educação'? *Educação e Sociedade*, 25(87), 423-460. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0101-73302004000200007>
- Deslauriers, J., & Kérisit, M. (2014). O delineamento de pesquisa qualitativa. In J. Poupart et al. *A pesquisa qualitativa: enfoques epistemológicos e metodológicos* (4a ed., p. 127-153). Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes.
- Evangelista, O. (2012). Apontamentos para o trabalho com documentos de política educacional. In Araújo, R. M. L., & Rodrigues, D. S. *A pesquisa em trabalho, educação e políticas educacionais* (p. 52-71). Campinas, SP: Alínea.
- Freitas, L.C. (2012). Os reformadores empresariais da educação: da desmoralização do magistério à destruição do sistema público de educação. *Educação e Sociedade*, 33(119), 379-404.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0101-73302012000200004>
- Gramsci, A. (1979). *Os intelectuais e a organização da cultura* (3a ed.). Rio de Janeiro, RJ: Civilização Brasileira.
- Laval, C. (2004). *A escola não é uma empresa: o neo-liberalismo em ataque ao ensino público*. Londrina, PR: Planta.
- Lima, J. B. S., Sandri, S., & Zanardinia, I. M. S. (2020). Avaliação em larga escala e seus desdobramentos na gestão escolar: considerações a partir de escolas da rede pública municipal de Cascavel/PR. *Teoria e Prática da Educação*, 23(1), 89-109. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4025/tpe.v23i1.54329>
- Martins. A. S. (2009a). *A direita para o social: a educação da sociabilidade no Brasil contemporâneo*. Juiz de Fora, MG: UFJF.
- Martins. A. S. (2009b). A educação básica no século XXI: o projeto do organismo 'Todos pela Educação'. *Práxis Educativa*, 4(1), 21-28. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5212/PraxEduc.v.4i1.021028>
- Newman, J., & Clarke, J. (2012). Gerencialismo. *Educação e Realidade*, 37(2), 353-381.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S2175-62362012000200003>
- Oliveira, D. A., & Clementino, A. M. (2020). As políticas de avaliação e responsabilização no Brasil: uma análise da Educação Básica nos estados da região Nordeste. *Revista Iberoamericana de Educación*, 83(1), 143-162. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.35362/rie8313877>
- Peroni, V. M. V. (2016). Implicações da relação público-privada para a democratização da educação. In *Anais da Reunião Científica Regional da ANPED* (p. 1-21). Curitiba, PR.
- Peroni, V. M. V., & Lima, P. V. (2020). Políticas conservadoras e gerencialismo. *Práxis Educativa*, 15, 1-20.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5212/PraxEduc.v.15.15344.070>

- Ravitch, D. (2011). *Vida e morte do grande sistema escolar americano: como os testes padronizados e o modelo de mercado ameaçam a educação*. Porto Alegre, RS: Sulina.
- Ruiz, M. J. F., & Peroni, V. M. V. (2017). Relação público-privada e gestão escolar: o caso da Fundação Victor Civita. *Laplage em Revista*, 3(3), 147-163. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24115/S2446-6220201733357p.147-163>
- Saviani, D. (2009). *PDE-Plano de desenvolvimento da educação: análise crítica da política do MEC*. Campinas, SP: Autores Associados.
- Saviani, D. (2011). *História das ideias pedagógicas no Brasil*. Campinas, SP: Autores Associados.
- Saviani, D. (2013). *Pedagogia histórico-crítica: primeiras aproximações*. Campinas, SP: Autores Associados.
- Saviani, D. (2016). *Da LDB (1996) ao novo PNE (2014 -2024): por uma outra política educacional*. Campinas, SP: Autores Associados.
- Shiroma, E. O. (2011). Redes sociais e hegemonia: apontamentos para estudos de política educacional. In M. L. N. Azevedo, & A. M. Lara (Orgs.), *Políticas para a educação: análise e apontamentos* (p. 15-38). Maringá, PR: Eduem.
- Uczack, L. H. (2014). *O PREAL e as políticas de avaliação educacional para a América Latina* (Tese de Doutorado). Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Katia Silva Bufalo: Doctoral student in Education at the State University of Londrina. Master in Education from the State University of Londrina. Specialist in Mental Health – UEL. Graduated in Pedagogy from the State University of Londrina. Member of the State, Public Policy and Education Management Research Group – Collaborating professor in the Pedagogy course at the State University of Londrina.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1706-2454>

E-mail: kdbufalo@uel.br

Maria José Ferreira Ruiz: Post-doctorate in Education from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul. Doctor in Education from the São Paulo State University Júlio de Mesquita Filho/UNESP. Master in Education from the State University of Londrina. Graduated in Pedagogy at UEL. Professor at UEL, working in the Pedagogy course and in the Postgraduate Program in Education – Master and Doctorate.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1904-8878>

E-mail: mjfruiz@gmail.com

Note:

The authors were responsible for designing, analyzing, and interpreting the data; writing and critical review of the manuscript, and approval of the final version to be published.