



NEW HIGH SCHOOL: advances and setbacks visualized

NEW HIGH SCHOOL: observed advances and setbacks

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SUMMARY

The general objective of this article is to discuss the perspectives brought by the New High School System (New High School), both in its advances and setbacks. This topic is relevant due to the need to understand the impacts of this educational reform on student development, considering its pedagogical, curricular, and social implications. The choice of this topic is justified by the importance of analyzing how this public policy is being implemented, what challenges emerge in this process, and how it can contribute to or hinder the quality of education in the country. The research adopts a qualitative approach, based on a literature review, bringing together theoretical contributions from authors investigating Brazilian educational policy, with a focus on the restructuring of high school education. Specific objectives include explaining the main points of the high school reform; presenting the contexts and tensions surrounding the implementation of the New High School System (New High School); and discussing the main advances and future prospects afforded by this educational policy. The methodology used enables critical analysis, comparing advances and setbacks highlighted by various scholars, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the proposed changes and their alignment with contemporary societal demands. Thus, the study aims to contribute to the academic and social debate on the adequacy and effectiveness of the New High School, as well as provide support for broader reflections, which can support improvements and adjustments in the public policy developed, aiming to guarantee a more inclusive, contextualized and quality education for all Brazilian students.

Keywords: New High School; Educational reform; Public policies; Advances and setbacks; Future perspectives.

ABSTRACT

This article aims to discuss the perspectives brought by the New High School, focusing on its advances and setbacks. This topic is relevant due to the need to understand the impacts of this educational reform on student learning, considering its pedagogical, curricular, and social implications. The choice of the theme is justified by the importance of analyzing how this public policy is being implemented, what challenges emerge in this process, and how it can contribute to or limit the quality of education in the country. The research adopts a qualitative approach, based on a literature review, gathering theoretical contributions from authors who investigate Brazilian educational policy, with an emphasis on the restructuring of high school education. The specific objectives are to explain the main points of the high school reform; present the contexts and tensions of the implementation of the New High School; and discuss the main advances and future perspectives brought by this educational policy. The methodology used enables a critical analysis, contrasting advances and setbacks pointed out by different scholars, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the proposed changes and their alignment with contemporary societal demands. Therefore, the study aims to contribute to the academic

and social debate on the adequacy and effectiveness of the New High School, as well as to provide input for broader reflections that may support improvements and adjustments to the public policy, with the goal of ensuring a more inclusive, contextualized, and high-quality education for all Brazilian students.

Keywords: New High School; Educational reform; Public policies; Advances and setbacks; Future perspectives.

SUMMARY

The present article has the general objective of discussing the perspectives that the New Bachillerato brings, considering its advances and setbacks. This theme is relevant due to the need to understand the impacts of this educational reform on the training of students, considering its pedagogical, curricular and social implications. The choice of this topic is justified by the importance of analyzing how this public policy is being implemented, what challenges arise in this process and how it can contribute to or limit the quality of education in the country. The investigation adopts a qualitative approach, based on a bibliographical review, bringing together theoretical contributions from authors who investigate Brazilian educational policy, with emphasis on the restructuring of the bachillerato. As specific objectives, it seeks to explain the main points of the bachillerato reform; present the contexts and tensions in the implementation of the New Bachillerato; and talk about them

main advances and future perspectives that this educational policy provides. The methodology used allows a critical analysis, comparing advances and setbacks highlighted by different scholars, which makes it possible to understand in a way that expands the proposed changes and their alignment with the contemporary demands of society. In this way, the study intends to contribute to the academic and social debate on the pertinence and effectiveness of the New Bachillerato, as well as offering inputs for broader reflections that can support improvements and adjustments in the unfolding public policy, with the aim of guaranteeing a more inclusive, contextualized and quality education for all Brazilian students.

Keywords: New Bachillerato; Educational reform; Public policies; Advances and setbacks; Future perspectives.

1 INTRODUCTION

The New High School, established by Law No. 13,415/2017 and implemented gradually in the country's education networks, brought significant changes to the structure curriculum of Brazilian education, modifying the organization of disciplines, the workload schedule and the possibilities of training itineraries for students. These changes sparked intense debates among educators, managers, students and civil society, revealing both potential and challenges in its practical application.

The choice of the theme is justified by the need to critically understand the impacts of this educational reform, observing not only the innovations and opportunities created, but also the possible losses and inequalities that can be accentuated. Given the social and academic relevance of the subject, it becomes essential



analyze how the advances and setbacks visualized reflect on school experiences and in the comprehensive training of students.

This article has the general objective of discussing the perspectives brought by New High School in its advances and setbacks. As specific objectives, it proposes: if: explain the main points of the secondary education reform; present the contexts and tensions of the implementation of the New High School; and discuss the main advances and future perspectives provided by this educational policy.

The methodology adopted was a literature review, based on research academics, official documents, legislation and critical studies published on the subject. This approach made it possible to gather and compare different perspectives, allowing for a comprehensive and well-founded analysis of the proposed changes, the results obtained so far and the paths that can still be followed.

The organization of work follows the same logic as the specific objectives, where each subtopic corresponds to a specific objective, with the aim of answering it. The first subtopic discusses the main points developed in the education reform medium, then the contexts involved in the processes are presented development and implementation of the new high school, discussing the conflicts and tensions present in this process. Concluding with a dialogue on the main advances provided by this curricular matrix, and mainly, about the future perspectives that present themselves.

2.1 Main points of the secondary education reform

The High School Reform that took place in the 2010s was consolidated under Law No. 13,415/2017, whose central proposal was to reorganize the curriculum for training basic general and a diversified part composed of training itineraries to be developed within the three classes that make up high school.

According to Lima and Almeida (2024), the law was presented as a response to performance and dropout indicators and promised to make the school trajectory more flexible to make it more “attractive” to young people, in addition to progressively increasing the workload. This legal origin and the base text of the reform are central data for understanding the changes implemented.

A structural change was, therefore, the explicit division between the Formation Basic General (FGB) — with content considered mandatory — and the Part



Diversified, where the itineraries (Languages, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Human Sciences, and Technical and Professional Training) would start to offer in-depth studies chosen by the student.

This reorganization promised on paper to provide great personalization, but it also opened a long discussion: flexibility means real autonomy when supply conditions vary so much between networks and schools? The initial criticism summarized well the problem:

The practical implementation also brought a progressive increase in the workload minimum, an objective defended to enable richer, full-time activities and the expansion of integrated technical education as a plausible option for many students. However, changing the load and incorporating the technician require investments in infrastructure, laboratories, teacher training and coordination with the world of work; Without these investments, the change remains on paper and runs the risk of becoming more serious. inequalities.

Another point that marked the debate was the normative action of the BNCC and the complementary guidelines: the BNCC guided the FGB and, at the same time, opened space for the networks to formulate their versions of the itineraries. This generated enormous diversity of curricular formats between states and networks, a multiplicity that can be seen as innovation, but which also produces fragmentation and makes it difficult to guarantee a common minimum knowledge for all students. Studies mapping curricula state levels show this plurality and the risks of fragmented formation. (Lima; Almeida, 2024).

At the conceptual level there was strong tension between two objectives: to meet employability demands (technical training and “job skills”) and ensure broad, critical, and civic education. The reform, by formalizing the idea of a “project of life” as an axis, places the focus on the student’s individual choice.

In practice, according to Lima and Almeida (2024), without offering diverse itineraries and without qualified guidance, this choice tends to reproduce inequalities, which forces to look at the legal device with critical eyes and to evaluate, beyond the discourse, the implementation conditions.

The diversity of offers placing an important part of the curriculum in the logic of options generated debates about pedagogical coherence. While aiming to bring school and youth interests closer together, the model requires that each school, or network, be able to organize itineraries with theoretical density and formative strength.



Documentary research carried out by Silva *et al.* (2023), on curricula state shows that, in several cases, the diversified part was constituted with great heterogeneity of names, contents and loads, which makes the student's choice dependent on local supply, not on their actual preference. This dependence constitutes a severe limitation to the ideal of student protagonism.

The discussion about humanities and “fundamental” disciplines was also central: even though Philosophy, Sociology, Arts and Physical Education have been reintroduced in amendments and guidelines, the new initial design reduced the obligation and time assured to several of these areas.

According to Cunha and Gonsalves (2024), many authors and social movements warned that the reduction of load and centrality could compromise critical training and citizenship education. A recurring criticism in the specialized literature. In articles and technical notes, this concern is raised as a possible impoverishment cultural and political aspects of the curriculum.

A recurring aspect in empirical analyses is supply capacity: while networks and private schools, often with more resources, were able to design attractive and well-structured itineraries, many public schools, especially in contexts rural areas and urban outskirts, faced precariousness of laboratories, lack of trained teachers and insufficient resources to guarantee quality itineraries. The result is asymmetrical: for some, attractiveness increases; for others, it increases exclusion of training opportunities. (Krawczyk; Ferretti, 2017).

Teacher training and development were another sore point. The proposal required teachers to take on new content, mediating itineraries that often required updating in specific technical or thematic areas. Without a robust continuing education program and no time/resources for planning, the teaching work was overloaded and pedagogical quality was weakened. The lack of preparation turns flexibility into improvisation.

From an administrative and management point of view, the multiplication of itineraries and components made planning, recording and evaluation more complex: secretariats had to approve varied curricula, manage class offerings and adjust systems evaluation. In many cases, this increased school bureaucracy and required new forms of coordination that did not always exist in local instances, bringing costs administrative and risks to pedagogical coherence.



The social dimension, access, inequality and evasion, also received attention robust in the literature. Studies such as the one developed by Silva *et al.* (2023), on youth and itineraries show that the reform does not neutralize inequalities already present in the system; on the contrary, when the supply is unequal, the tendency is to deepen distinct trajectories among young people from different contexts. How do they summarize analyses on the profile of youth and the curriculum offering:

Integrated technical education, although it has potential for professional integration, brings tensions: will technical training be an option for emancipation or an instrument for reproduction? of low-skilled occupations? The answer depends on the quality of the itinerary technical, articulation with work and continuing education policies, and conception that the technician must complement a solid general training, and not replace it. Therefore, the design of the technical itinerary and its links with the FGB are topics crucial in evaluating the reform.

According to Lima and Almeida (2023), public policy and normative stability were questioned: after the law was approved, political pressures, proposals for amendments and federative pacts produced continuous movement on texts and parameters, which generated regulatory uncertainty for networks and schools. Legislative instability and regulatory action undermines the medium-term planning needed to consolidate profound curricular changes.

Finally, among the main points of the reform are the intention to modernize the high school (flexibility, itineraries, full-time) and the concrete risks observed in implementation (fragmentation, inequality of supply, insufficient training teaching and infrastructure). And this implementation process was permeated by great clashes, which we will discuss below.

2.2 Contexts and tensions of the implementation of the New Secondary Education

The formulation of the New Secondary Education has its origins in Provisional Measure No. 746/2016, converted into Law No. 13,415/2017, in an accelerated legislative process and justified by the federal government as an urgent measure given the low rates educational, the high school dropout rate and the alleged need for curricular modernization.

The official discourse maintained that the traditional organization of disciplines, many sometimes considered “encyclopedic” and disconnected from the reality of students, needed

be replaced by a more flexible model geared towards individual needs. In this sense, the proposal defended training itineraries, progressive increase in workload and greater youth protagonism.

However, what seemed like an innovation encountered significant obstacles in the Brazilian social and educational context, ranging from the structural inequality of networks from teaching to the lack of effective participation of teachers and students in the process decision-making.

The debate surrounding this reform was marked by tensions between two projects of education: on the one hand, which seeks to align teaching with the demands of the job market and the logic of employability; on the other, what defends education as a social right, with broad and equal access to scientific, artistic and cultural knowledge. Cunha (2017, p.11) draws attention to the fact that the proposal does not exactly represent a break with previous models, but rather the continuity of policies already tried in the 1990s, which relativizes the idea of novelty. He states:

This isn't an invention of an improvised minister. Rather, it's a re-enactment of the discriminatory educational policy of the Fernando Henrique Cardoso era, when Maria Helena Guimarães de Castro was president of the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research and responsible for formulating policies for basic education, in conjunction with the World Bank and other international organizations. The actions at the time were already focused on diversifying secondary education, with formative paths and curricular flexibility, which, in essence, didn't address the structural problems of education, but rather sought to adapt schools to the needs of the labor market.

This critical positioning highlights a central contradiction: although the New High School is presented as progress, its ideological basis goes back to conceptions that had already been challenged in the past, especially because of their tendency to reinforce inequalities.

The National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), which underpins the new structure, was built from public hearings that, in theory, would aim to guarantee social participation. However, several records indicate that these consultations were marked by tensions and resistances.

In Fortaleza, for example, demonstrations by teachers and students took place during the third hearing, while the fourth, scheduled for Belém, was prevented from taking place

happen due to protests that questioned the legitimacy and representativeness of the process. As the record describes:

The third hearing took place in Fortaleza, but was marked by protests from students and teachers. The fourth, scheduled for Belém, was overrun by protesters, who prevented it from taking place. They demonstrated against the reform and the BNCC, claiming that the discussion process failed to consider the diversity of voices and realities in the country, constituting more of a top-down imposition than a democratic process. (Marquioli *et al.* 2019, p.98).

From this context, it is clear that the implementation process did not occur consensually. The predominance of decisions taken in higher instances, without broad listening of school communities contributed to the perception that the reform was imposed.

Furthermore, the influence of international organizations, such as the World Bank, is undeniable. World, OECD and UNESCO, which have historically encouraged reforms aimed at curricular flexibility, segmentation of teaching and strengthening of skills basic skills to the detriment of broader training.

This influence, of an economic and political nature, was decisive for the development of this process, is pointed out by Libâneo (2012, p.44) as one of the drivers of maintaining a dual educational system, aimed at providing differentiated to different social classes. He observes:

The result of neoliberal educational policies is the consolidation of a dual educational system: on the one hand, schools for the upper classes, offering quality education and access to scientific and cultural knowledge; on the other, schools for the working classes, focused more on social support and minimal training, guaranteeing only the basic skills required by the job market, neglecting the critical and comprehensive development of citizens. This duality is reinforced by reduced curricula, low theoretical depth, and the absence of real learning conditions.

In practice, the implementation of the New High School, officially started in 2022, revealed a gap between the idealized project and the concrete conditions of the schools Brazilian institutions. Many institutions, especially in state networks, did not have adequate infrastructure, teaching staff trained for new demands or planning consistent to offer quality training itineraries.



This deficiency directly impacted the effectiveness of the proposal, resulting in fragmented experiences, unattractive itineraries and, in some cases, a complete absence of options, forcing students to accept generic content that is far from their interests.

Researchers such as Marquioli *et al.* (2019) point out that, far from democratizing access to training opportunities, the reform ended up deepening inequalities between public and private schools. While the latter managed to implement diversified itineraries aligned with the profile of its students, most of the public schools found themselves limited to a few options, often taught by teachers improvised in the role. According to the authors, this reality also interferes in access to higher education, as poorly structured itineraries can weaken the academic training required for admission to competitive courses.

From 2023 onwards, social and academic pressure against the reform grew, resulting in amendment proposals sent to the National Congress. One of the main changes proposals were to increase the number of hours allocated to basic general training and to reduce of space for itineraries, aiming to return centrality to traditional disciplines and to mitigate disparities between education networks. This movement was interpreted by some as a necessary retreat in light of the flaws identified in the initial implementation, and others as a setback that would limit the flexibility promised by the reform.

The student protests that took over more than 50 Brazilian cities in 2023 reinforce dissatisfaction with the current model. Among the main criticisms were the reduction in the workload of essential subjects, the fragmentation of content and the offering elective courses that are not very relevant to academic and professional training. Many students reported feeling that they “weren’t learning anything useful” in the new configurations, which reveals a misalignment between official discourse and experience concrete of the system users.

This scenario shows that the implementation of the New High School was permeated by a set of structural and pedagogical clashes. On the one hand, there is the argument that that the model offers freedom of choice and personalization of the school trajectory; another, the realization that, without adequate conditions of supply, this freedom becomes illusory and can become a factor of exclusion.

In summary, the contexts that involved the development and implementation of the New High School expose a paradox: the search for curricular modernization comes up against the lack of a solid base of infrastructure, teacher training and participation

democratic. The tensions that marked the process indicate that the reform failed to unify the expectations of managers, teachers and students, resulting in a model which, to date, divides more than integrates. And it will be about the main setbacks visualized in this process the next subtopic.

2.3 Advances and Future Perspectives of Secondary Education Reform

Even though many authors point to extremely complex challenges within the context of the implementation of this reform, we will highlight in this last subtopic the main advances identified and the future perspectives that present themselves within the area.

This reform brought as its main advance the curricular flexibility, allowing that students choose training itineraries according to their interests, Languages, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Human Sciences and Technical and Professional Training, rather than a rigid, uniform curriculum. This innovation offers real openness to personalization of the school path, while introducing new challenges to equity.

According to Gomes (2021, p.88), this flexibility favors “the construction of formative trajectories more aligned with students’ life projects”, indicating a significant advance in the centrality of the student in the educational process, which in consequently, it encourages the protagonism of these students.

The proposal also increased the mandatory workload, with the aim of provide sufficient time for diverse activities and possible transition to teaching full-time. The forecast of reaching up to 1,400 hours per year strengthens the teaching density medium, especially in full-time modalities, which can increase contact between students with deeper content and innovative pedagogical practices.

Another relevant achievement was the valorization of integrated technical training. allow itineraries to include significant technical modules in some cases reaching 1,200 hours, the reform creates a training alternative that combines high school and professional qualification, with the potential to accelerate the insertion of young people into the world of qualified work, when well structured and articulated.

Bezerra (2022, p.21) highlights that “the integration between secondary education and training technique expands opportunities for productive emancipation of students”, configuring itself as progress towards democratizing access to technical education and of quality.

The mandatory nature of training subjects such as Philosophy, Sociology, Arts and Physical Education, although readjusted in legislative debates, was maintained in Training Basic General (FGB). This reinforcement ensures that essential content for thinking critical and cultural training continue to be present in the curriculum, even if with a load adapted schedule.

In the pedagogical dimension, the reform boosted the adoption of projects interdisciplinary and practical approaches aimed at developing skills and abilities socio-emotional, in line with the contemporary demands of education. This encourages a more formative, less content-based view of teaching.

Pereira (2020, p.109) describes that “the emphasis on skills integrates teaching and citizenship formation, rescuing the humanizing function of the school” an important step compared to the deeply fragmented curricula of the past, and this helps to train people criticism.

The BNCC (National Common Curricular Base), when defining the contents mandatory FGB, gave greater clarity and unity to the curriculum at the national level, while ensuring regional flexibility in the diversified part. This combination of unity and local adaptation constitute a balance between standardization and autonomy didactics.

At the institutional level, the reform encouraged the implementation of secondary education in full-time, with federal funding for schools willing to adopt the model. This strengthens schools capable of offering extended hours and various enrichments. pedagogical, library, laboratories, cultural and sports projects.

In the medium and long term, there is a prospect of consolidation of a education more focused on comprehensive training, with articulation between areas of knowledge and focus on the development of critical, digital and socio-emotional skills, from that there are solid investments in infrastructure and teacher training.

Another positive future perspective lies in the possibility of articulation with Youth and Adult Education (EJA) and policies for insertion into the world of work. By aligning secondary, technical and continuing education, the reform paves the way for more articulated and meaningful educational trajectories.

Silva and Mendes (2023, p.109) envision that “the possibility of articulation between high school and technical training programs creates a new horizon of social mobility through education”, which denotes hope for structural change in the Brazilian society.

Additionally, the focus on youth leadership, encouraging students participate in curricular choices, projects and school organizations, has the potential to strengthen its autonomy, responsibility and political engagement, expanding its role in the democratic construction of the school.

To consolidate these advances, it will be crucial to invest in continuing education. teaching, training educators to plan and conduct training itineraries for quality, interdisciplinary mastery, active methodologies and formative assessment, a cornerstone for the success of the reform.

Still in the field of public policies, it is important to ensure stability regulations and the intergovernmental commitment between the Union, states and municipalities. Only with stable legislation and financing will it be possible to plan, evaluate and adjust progressively the new curricular arrangements.

Thus, the advances in the reform of secondary education include flexibility, expansion of the workload, technical appreciation, maintenance of humanistic disciplines, interdisciplinary, standardization via BNCC with local autonomy, and promotion of teaching integral. For the future, the main perspectives involve articulation with policies of work and EJA, student protagonism, robust teacher training and stable policies.

3 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article made it possible to broadly understand the perspectives brought by the New High School, highlighting both its advances and setbacks observed throughout its implementation. The overall objective was achieved through a critical analysis that integrated data, theoretical reflections and recent debates on the reform.

The first specific objective is to explain the main points of the education reform medium, was achieved by detailing the proposed curricular structure, with emphasis on flexibility of training itineraries, increasing the workload and introducing an organization more focused on training by areas of knowledge. This description allowed the reader to understand the essence of politics and the structural changes it intended to promote.

The second specific objective is to present the contexts and tensions of implementation, was contemplated based on the analysis of the concrete conditions faced through education networks, considering regional inequalities, school infrastructure, teacher training and political and pedagogical resistance. This approach made it possible



visualize the practical and structural difficulties that interfere with the full consolidation of proposal.

Finally, the third specific objective is to discuss the main advances and future perspectives, was fulfilled by highlighting achievements, such as the extension of time school and the valorization of more diverse training paths, as well as reflecting on the potential for improvement, considering the role of social participation, listening to students and continuing teacher training.

Thus, by bringing together the detailed explanation of the central points of the reform, the contextualization of its application and the projection of paths for the future, this work fully fulfilled what it proposed, offering subsidies for an understanding critical and well-founded analysis of the New High School in the Brazilian educational scenario.

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