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Principles and general objectives of education

The Constitution enacted in October 1988 is based on the principles of civil rights and dignity of the individual. Article 3, Title I, sets as major goals for the Republic the construction of a free, just and mutually co-operative society, the guarantee of national development, the elimination of poverty and social exclusion, and the reduction of social and regional imbalances.

Education is regarded in the Constitution as “a right that belongs to everybody; the duty of the State and of families, promoted and stimulated with the co-operation of society, with a view to the full development of the individual for the exercise of citizenship and preparation for work”. The Federal Constitution recognizes three educational systems, organized hierarchically, in accordance with the nationally defined bases and guidelines, but with each one maintaining its autonomy within the federal agreement in effect in the country. These systems are: the federal system; the state systems and the federal district system; and the municipal systems.

According to the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação—LDB*) of 1996: “national education, inspired by the principles of freedom and by the ideals of human solidarity, has the purpose of: a) understanding individual rights and responsibilities, as well as those of citizens, the State and other community groups; b) respecting the dignity and fundamental freedoms of human beings; strengthening national unity and international solidarity; c) preparing individuals and the society to master scientific and technological resources which will allow the use of the existing possibilities for common welfare; d) protecting, disseminating and expanding the cultural heritage; and e) condemning any unequal treatment resulting from philosophical, political or religious beliefs, social, class or racial prejudices.”

Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

At the federal level, in addition to the Constitution of 1988, the **National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação—LDB*) No. 9.394**, approved on 20 December 1996, contains new features and a large number of measures that have changed the Brazilian educational panorama. This Law provides for the decentralization and autonomy of schools, which will be responsible for drafting and implementing their pedagogic proposals and managing their personnel and material and financial resources, as well as for universities. The LDB also stipulates that the Union, the states and the municipalities must organize their respective school systems in a collaborative way, and determines their respective administrative responsibilities.

This Law has created mechanisms that are indispensable for improving the quality of teaching, in particular: it requires the curricula in primary and secondary



education to have a common national basis; it increases the length and number of teaching days; it includes the evaluation of courses and institutions, which increases its scope beyond the evaluation of pupils' performance and states that national procedures for assessment at primary, secondary and higher levels shall be guaranteed. The LDB also provides for instruments and mechanisms that give value to the learning process such as: continuous and partial progression; the concepts of classification and re-classification that allow learners to progress in their studies according to their level of achievement and evidence of learning; remedial classes in parallel to the school year for pupils who have unsatisfactory achievement results, and the chance to accelerate study for pupils who are lagging behind.

The LDB organizes school education at two levels: basic education (comprising early childhood, primary and secondary education) and higher education. It allows vocational education to be integrated within these levels and allows for the provision of skill training in secondary schools or in partnership with technical colleges. Other types of education such as special education and indigenous education were also contemplated within the new form of organization.

Law No. 10.861 of 14 April 2004 established the National System of Higher Education Evaluation (SINAES), which aims to ensure the existence of a national process for evaluating higher education courses and the academic performance of students. The law is based on the need to improve the quality of higher education, ensure the increase of places, improve the institutional efficiency and effectiveness both academically and socially, and increase the social commitments and responsibilities of higher education institutions.

Law No. 10.845 of 5 March 2004 created the Programme for Complementation of the Specialized Educational Services for People with Disabilities. **Law n° 11.129** of 30 June 2005 established the National Programme for Youth Inclusion (PROJOVEM), the National Youth Council and the National Youth Secretariat.

Law No. 11.274 of 6 February 2006 provides for the establishment of a nine-year primary education programme, compulsory from 6 years of age, replacing the former eight-year programme (age group 7-14) and to be gradually introduced and fully implemented by 2010. **Law No. 11.738** of 16 July 2008 sets the national minimum wage for basic education teachers in public educational establishments.

Decree No. 2.208, issued on 17 April 1997, created additional opportunities for vocational training and makes the diverse training modalities more flexible. It views vocational training as a process linked to education, work, science and technology in order to promote the continuing development of capacities for a productive life. The Decree establishes three levels of vocational training: i) basic training, provided through non-formal education and designed to prepare or retrain workers according to their level of schooling for the exercise of professions in the labour market; ii) technical training, organized independently from general secondary education and offered sequentially or simultaneously to it; and iii) technological training at the post-secondary level, covering all economic sectors. **Decree No. 5.622** of 20 December 2005 regulates distance education, replacing previous legislation.



Decrees No. 5.773 of 9 May 2006 and **No. 6.303** of 12 December 2007 provide for the functions of regulation, supervision and evaluation of the higher education institutions and higher undergraduate and sequential courses in the federal educational network. **Decree No. 6.571** of 17 September 2008 regulates the technical and financial support for the public educational network of the states, the Federal District and municipalities with the goal of expanding special education services for students with disabilities, global development disorders and special skills/exceptional gifts enrolled in the public education system.

With regard to the resolutions of the National Council for Education, **Resolution CEB No. 2** of 7 April 1998 ratified the National Curricular Parameters for Primary Education (PCN); **Resolution CEB/CNE No. 03** of 26 June 1998 ratified the National Curricular Guidelines for Secondary Education; **Resolution No. 2/2001** ratified the National Guidelines for Special Education in Basic Education; **Resolutions CEB No. 1** of 7 April 1999 and **No. 20/2009** of 11 November 2009 ratified the National Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education; **Resolution No. 1/2002** ratified the National Curricular Parameters for the Training of Basic Education Teachers; **Resolution No. 4/2008** establishes that the nine-year primary education introduced by the Law n° 11.274 of 2006, is a new programme that requires an appropriate pedagogical proposal and an appropriate pedagogical project to be developed by the school.

Two Constitutional Amendments are important for the education sector. **Constitutional Amendment No. 14** of 13 September 1996 created the National Fund for Primary Education Development and for (FUNDEF). FUNDEF has been replaced by the Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Basic Education and for Enhancing the Value of the Teaching Profession (FUNDEB), created by **Constitutional Amendment No. 53** of 19 February 2006, and regulated by **Law No. 11.497/2007** and **Decree No. 6.253/2007**.

The chapter on Education in the Constitution guarantees compulsory and free primary education for all, including those who did not have the opportunity to access school at the proper age. It also guarantees a gradual shift to a free and compulsory secondary education. According to the **Constitutional Amendment No. 59** of 11 November 2009, the duration of compulsory education will increase from 9 to 14 years (from 4 to 17 years of age); the states and municipalities should complete the process of progressive extension of compulsory education by 2016. On the basis of this Amendment, it is now a constitutional obligation to ensure that 18% of the national revenue (after deducting transfers) is invested in education.

It should be noted that in their areas of jurisdiction, the states and the municipalities also legislate on education, respecting the general framework defined by the federal legislation.

Administration and management of the education system

The responsibility for public education is primarily divided as follows: a) pre-primary and primary education: the municipalities, the states and the Federal District; b) secondary education: the states and the Federal District for those matters that lie

within their purview; c) vocational and technical education: the states and the Federal Government; d) higher education: the Federal Government. The private sector can be involved at all educational levels, upon government's approval and evaluation. The education system is financed by funds both from the public sector (through direct and indirect administration agencies at the federal, state and municipal levels of government) and the private sector, which charges tuition fees. The Federal Constitution lays down that states and municipalities are obliged to spend on education at least 25% of income from the tax revenues, 60% of which must go to primary education, the minimum percentage is 18% of tax revenue. The structure of the education system and the related responsibilities are shown in the table below.

Structure of the education system and educational authorities (2008)

General programme	Specific programme	International denomination	Grades/Years	Theoretical age	Authority	
Basic education	Early childhood education	Initial education	4 years	0-3	Municipalities	
		Pre-school	2 years	4-5		
	Primary education (compulsory)	Elementary education	1st grade	6-10	6-10	Municipalities, States
			2nd grade			
			3rd grade			
			4th grade			
			5th grade			
		Lower secondary school	6th grade	11-14		
	7th grade					
	8th grade					
9th grade						
Secondary education	Upper secondary education	1st form	15-17	15-17	States	
		2nd form				
		3rd form				
Vocational and technological education	Upper secondary education	Forms 1-3	15-17	15-17	States	
Higher education	Sequential courses (specific)		1,600 hours	18 or older	Federal Government	
	Complementation courses		Variable			
	Graduate	Bachelor's	2,400 hours			
		Higher Diploma	2,800 hours			
		Technological Diploma	1,600 hours			
	Postgraduate	Master's	2 years			
		PhD	2 years			
		Professional degree	3 years			
Specialization courses (certificate)		360 hours				

Source: Ministry of Education, 2008.

The municipalities must offer free early childhood and primary education in their jurisdictions and must regulate the provision of early childhood education in private



day-care and pre-school institutions. The states must offer free primary and secondary education and regulate the provision of private education. The Federal District is responsible for the provision of early childhood, primary and secondary education. To same extent, the Federal Government must offer free higher education in its institutions and regulate the provision of the private sector.

The Union, represented by the **Ministry of Education** (formerly the Ministry of Education and Sports—MES), with the collaboration of the **National Council for Education** (a consultative and deliberative body), is charged with: the coordination of the drafting of National Education Plans; the provision of technical and financial assistance to the states, the Federal District and the municipalities for the development of their school systems; and the priority attention to be given to compulsory schooling. In addition, the Ministry supports a network of federal schools, including universities, institutions of higher learning, technical and agro-technical schools and technological education centers. It also supervises the private higher education network.

At the level of the Ministry of Education, the main Secretariats (Departments) include: the Secretariat of Basic Education (in charge of early childhood, primary and secondary education); the Secretariat of Continuing Education, Literacy and Diversity; the Secretariat of Distance Education; the Secretariat of Special Education; the Secretariat of Technical and Vocational Education; and the Secretariat of Higher Education. The **General Coordination of Early Childhood Education** (COEDI), under the Department of Basic Education, is responsible for bridging the stages, supporting the national policy for early childhood education and providing technical assistance to the states, the Federal District and municipalities in the field of early childhood education (Nunes *et al.*, 2010).

The **Secretariats of Education** in each state are responsible for administering the network of schools belonging to those states and to the Federal District, as well as for the supervision of the private network. At the state level, standards are set by the State Education Councils.

The administration of schools supported by the municipalities is under the responsibility of the **Secretariat of Municipal Education** or a similar agency. Upon delegation from the state education councils, municipal education councils may take on standard-setting functions.

The administrative, educational and disciplinary organization of each school is regulated by its respective by-laws, approved by each system's standards body. A very important aspect which must be considered within each system is the dynamics of its functioning. Educational activities and units are regulated and coordinated by a standards-setting body and managed by a central executive body. From the legal point of view, there is no distinction regarding the validity and the rights ensuing from studies in public schools, whether federal, state or municipal, and those in the authorized and recognized private schools.

At the federal level, policy decisions are made by the Ministry of Education, assisted by the National Council for Education, which comprises the Basic Education and the Higher Education Chambers, each with twelve counsellors chosen and



appointed by the President of the Republic. The situation in the states and the Federal District is similar. The administration is handled by the state education secretariats and the normative functions by the state education councils and by the education councils of the Federal District. At the municipal level, more and more municipal education secretariats and councils are being created. Overall, the country has twenty-seven state education systems and about 5,600 autonomous municipal education systems.

The **National Institute for Educational Studies and Research (INEP)**, under the Ministry of Education, functions as a reference centre for the collection and dissemination of information and statistics on Brazilian education. It is also in charge of the planning and coordination of the development of systems and projects of educational evaluation. As an agent for promoting change and innovation, the Institute has become a place of permanent interaction and communication between those who produce information and those who are responsible for policy formulation and the administration of education. In 1997, the Secretariat of Evaluation and Educational Information of the Ministry of Education was integrated into INEP.

The National System of Higher Education Evaluation (SINAES), created by Law No. 10.861 of 2004, is under the supervision and coordination of the **National Committee for the Evaluation of Higher Education (CONAES)**. The main functions of CONAES are to: evaluate the dynamics, procedures and mechanisms of institutional evaluation of courses and student performance; establish directives for the organisation and nomination of evaluation committees and make recommendations, formulate proposals for developing higher education institutions based on the results of evaluation; link with state education systems in order to decide on common actions and criteria for the evaluation and supervision of higher education; and submit to the Minister of State for Education every year a report on courses in which students took the National Examination of Student Performance (ENAD). The **Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES)** monitors and evaluates postgraduate courses. Master's and doctoral degree courses are assessed by committees of specialists, on the basis of information contained in standardized forms provided to CAPES by the institutions themselves, as well as in the reports on the consultants' periodic visits. The **National Council for Scientific and Technological Development**, a body connected to the Ministry of Science and Technology, finances research programmes and projects, earmarks scholarships for postgraduate students and grants for scientific initiation for university students and other resources for the development of science and technology.

Other governmental or non-governmental organizations are also involved in education, either through agreements specially signed for this purpose or through joint activities with specific objectives.

The Ministries of **Labour** and **Education** work together to define vocational training policy, which is executed by: the technical and agro-technical schools; the Federal Centers for Technological Education (CEFET); the National Service for Industrial Apprenticeship (SENAI); and agencies in the areas of commerce, transportation and rural apprenticeship (SENAC, SENAT and SENAR, respectively).



The **Ministry of Health** takes part in educational programmes by promoting constant vaccination campaigns, as well as by increasing awareness regarding hygiene and disease prevention in schools. Together with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health promotes human resource development policies for the health sector, to be implemented by the states.

The **military ministries** have their own primary (from grade 5 onwards) and secondary schools. They are open to the general public and are designed to provide proper training for students who, at a more advanced level, might want to follow a military career. The military ministries also support military academies providing higher education for each branch of the armed forces.

The **Ministry of Communications** contributes to educational activities by sponsoring the transmission of educational programmes via radio and television to the remotest areas of the country, in order to increase and improve teachers' professional skills.

Structure and organization of the education system

Brazil: structure of the education system (2008)

General programme	Specific programme	International denomination	Grades/Years	Theoretical age	Authority	
Basic education	Early childhood education	Initial education	4 years	0-3	Municipalities	
		Pre-school	2 years	4-5		
	Primary education (compulsory)	Elementary education	1st grade	6-10	6-10	Municipalities, States
			2nd grade			
			3rd grade			
			4th grade			
			5th grade			
		Lower secondary school	6th grade	11-14		
			7th grade			
			8th grade			
	Secondary education	Upper secondary education	9th grade	15-17	States	
1st form						
2nd form						
Vocational and technological education	Upper secondary education	3rd form	15-17	States		
		Forms 1-3				
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	Complementation courses		Variable			
	Graduate	Bachelor's	2,400 hours			
		Higher Diploma	2,800 hours			
		Technological Diploma	1,600 hours			
	Postgraduate	Master's	2 years			
		PhD	2 years			
		Professional degree	3 years			
Specialization courses (certificate)		360 hours				

Source: Ministry of Education, *The development of education. National Report of Brazil*, 2008.
The new nine-year 'primary education' programme is to be fully implemented in 2010.

Pre-school education

Early childhood education consists of initial and pre-school education. It is not compulsory and is offered in two types of institutions: day-care centres or equivalent institutions for children up to the age of 3; and pre-primary schools (previously for



children aged 4-6 years). Following the adoption of Law No. 11.274 of 2006, pre-primary education is for children aged 4 to 5 years, and 6-year-old children enrol in the first year of the new nine-year 'primary education' programme. The new structure should be fully implemented by 2010.

Primary education

Primary education is compulsory. Before the adoption of Law No. 11.274 of 2006, it was for children between the ages of 7 and 14 years, and lasted eight years divided into two four-year cycles. 'Primary education' (*ensino fundamental*) now lasts nine years and includes elementary education (grades 1-5, age group 6-10) and the lower secondary school (grades 6-9, age group 11-14). The first three years of the new nine-year programme should be considered as a 'cycle' where particular emphasis should be devoted to literacy skills.

Secondary education

Upper (general) secondary education lasts three years, while at the level of technical and vocational secondary education in some cases it can last four years, depending on the programme. Early childhood, primary and secondary education, are considered as part of basic education.

Higher education

Higher education is provided at two levels: graduate and postgraduate studies. The latter may be understood *lato sensu* (refresher courses, further education, or specialization courses) or *stricto sensu* (master's and doctoral programmes). Higher education is provided by higher education institutes and universities. High-level training of professionals for one or more professions or careers is mainly provided by non-university institutions. In addition to the high-level training of professionals, universities must also promote basic and applied research, as well as provide services to the community in the form of courses and other extension activities. Programmes take four to six years of study. At the postgraduate level, studies usually last two years in the case of master's degree courses, and an additional two years in the case of doctoral degree courses. Professional degrees take three years to complete.

According to Law No. 9.394 of 1996, the school year must include 200 days of actual work at all educational levels, excluding periods earmarked for examinations. At the level of primary and secondary education, there should be a minimum of 800 instructional hours per year and a minimum of four hours of instruction per day.

The educational process

Historically the definition of educational programmes has been a duty of the states. In recent years these programmes have taken the form of curricular proposals that were not compulsory but were designed with the aim of helping schools to organize their teaching programmes. Until 1995 there was no national reference framework in Brazil to guide the preparation of curriculum proposals.



In 1995 the Ministry of Education began a broad reform of the curriculum at all levels of education. After wide consultations and debates that involved directors of the education system, teachers and specialists in educational issues, the curriculum of the four first grades of primary school was modified, along with the institution of a large-scale training programme for teachers in order to apply it. The second stage involved creating new parameters for a complete reform of the whole system of teacher training. Currently (2010), national curriculum guidelines/parameters laid down by resolutions of the National Education Council have been approved for early childhood, primary, secondary, indigenous, and adult education, as well as for teacher training.

In the period 1995-1998, one of the Ministry of Education's priorities was to generate reference points for the primary school curriculum, organizing ideas that were already being used in curriculum reforms of the states and municipalities. In elaborating these documents, procedures were followed that sought to guarantee the democratic and participatory spirit that should be characteristic of Brazil's basic education. Teams of educators including university professors, researchers and experienced classroom teachers, wrote preliminary papers. They carried out studies of curricula in other countries, analyzed proposals from the Brazilian states and from some of the municipalities, and studied contemporary theoretical patterns concerning the curriculum, teaching, learning and evaluation. Preliminary papers were sent for appraisal by university lecturers and classroom teachers, researchers and experts working in the pedagogical teams of Secretariats of Education, who provided their opinions and suggestions.

For each area and theme proposed, a special document was written which, starting from an analysis of the teaching in this area or theme and of its importance in the primary school child's learning, presents a proposal set out in terms of objectives, content, evaluation and teaching guidelines. These items are then developed by cycles.

In order to provide for the demands of the different sectors and types of basic education, the following documents were produced: National Curriculum Parameters (PCN) for primary education; National Curricular Guidelines for early childhood education; National Curricular Guidelines for adult education; and National Curriculum Guidelines for indigenous education.

The National Curriculum Parameters can be used by state and municipal secretariats of education in the process of defining or revising their proposals, which are adapted according to the needs and characteristics of their contexts. National curriculum guidelines do not include lists of content to be compulsorily covered. The guidelines present a synthesis of the perspective of each subject/area of knowledge, which allows secretariats of education, schools and teachers to revise the subject content taught, to choose more important topics, etc. Although the introduction of new subjects has not been suggested, the curriculum guidelines include under the heading of "cross-curricular themes", the approach to social problems with regard to ethics, health education, the environment, cultural plurality, sex education, work and consumption. These are not new areas, but rather a group of themes that are crossing over disciplinary area boundaries and permeating the concept of the area itself, its aims, its content and the orientations for the teaching-learning process.



In the context of basic education, the LDB describes the construction of the curricula in primary and secondary education “with a Common National Base which is complemented in each education system and teaching establishment, by a differentiated section answering the regional and local characteristics of the society, culture and economic life of the target group” (Article 26). The Common National Base has two dimensions: (i) preparation for further studies, which means the objective of the learning process must be the construction of basic competencies and abilities, and not the accumulation of pre-established schema with set answers; and (ii) reparation for work, which highlights knowledge as an instrument for solving concrete problems related to various social contexts and practices.

Article 26 of the LDB also stipulates that this Common National Base “must include the study of Portuguese language and mathematics, knowledge of the physical and natural world and the realities of society and politics, especially of Brazil, art education [...] in order to promote pupils’ cultural development, and physical education.” In the organization of the curriculum, the National Common Base comprises 75% of the minimum time of 2,400 hours. The remaining 25% makes up the diversified part, to be defined by the schools on the basis of local and regional socio-economic characteristics or the interests of the school community. The diversified part should be organically integrated with the Common National Base by its context and by complementation, diversification, enrichment and explanation, among other forms of integration.

Subsequent legislation (in particular Law No. 10.639 of 9 January 2003, and Law No. 11.645 of 10 March 2008) ratified this mechanism and made the pertinent programmatic content more specific: “The programmatic content to which this article refers will include diverse aspects of the history and culture that characterize the formation of the Brazilian population, beginning with these two ethnic groups, such as the study of the history of Africa and of Africans, the struggle of blacks and indigenous peoples in Brazil, the Brazilian black and indigenous culture and blacks and Indians in the formation of national society, recovering their contribution in the social, economic and political areas, pertinent to the history of Brazil” (Law n° 11.645 of 2008). According to the Law, this content should be principally distributed between the subjects of art education, literature and history of Brazil. Another obligatory component is physical education, a subject that was regulated after the approval of LDB by Law No. 10.328 of 12 December 2001 and Law No. 10.793 of 1 December 2003.

The Ministry of Education has also defined the new curriculum for secondary education with the aim of eliminating the existing practice of fragmented teaching based on accumulating information. Instead, school knowledge will have to be put into a context and to make sense to pupils. Critical thinking and the ability to understand will be more important than memorization. This curriculum, compulsory for all schools, is described in the National Curriculum Guidelines for Secondary Education, ratified by the National Education Council after consulting the proposal submitted by the Ministry. The Ministry has also produced the National Curriculum Parameters for Secondary Education, together with advice and recommendations to support the work of classroom teachers. The reform of the curriculum of the new secondary education is based on three main principles: i) flexibility in providing for different people and situations and the permanent changes that are typical of the world



of the information society; ii) diversity guaranteeing attention to the needs of different groups in different areas and situations; and iii) contextualization which, guaranteeing a common base, diversifies careers and allows the establishment of meanings that give meaning to learning and what is learned.

Pre-primary education

As mentioned, early childhood education is part of basic education and consists of initial and preschool education. Early childhood education is not compulsory and is offered in: day-care centres or equivalent institutions for children up to the age of 3, and pre-primary schools (previously for children aged 4-6 years). Following the adoption of Law No. 11.274 of 2006, pre-primary education is for children aged 4 to 5 years, and 6-year-old children enrol in the first year of the new nine-year 'primary education' programme.

The National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB) of 1996 defines early childhood education as the first stage of basic education, its goal being the all-round development of the child in its physical, psychological, intellectual and social aspects, complementing the actions of the family and the community. The evaluation of the children should be done by means of follow-up and recording of the child's development, but it will not have any goal connected to the promotion to subsequent grades or levels.

According to the National Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (Resolution of the National Council for Education CNE/CEB No. 20/2009 approved on 11 November 2009), the curriculum is conceived as a set of practices aiming at articulating children's knowledge and experiences with the knowledge which is part of the cultural, artistic, scientific and technological patrimony. These practices must consider as a whole the physical, expressive, affective, cognitive, linguistic, aesthetic, and socio-cultural dimensions of the child. The main goal of the pedagogical proposals of the institutions providing early childhood education must be the promotion of the integral development of children aged 0 to 5 years, facilitating children's access to processes of construction of knowledge and learning of different languages, as well as their rights to care, health, freedom, respect, dignity, play, and interaction with their mates. The guidelines are fully developed and complemented by the states and municipalities, which formulate their own educational and curricular proposals.

Early childhood education guidelines and curricula take into account the child's level of development and the cultural and social diversity of the target population. In 1998 there was an important federal initiative aimed at creating the curricular requirements for early childhood education. The requirements were planned to give guidelines for consideration on a national basis with regard to aims, content and teaching guidance for instructors working with young children, taking into account their teaching styles and the cultural differences within Brazil. This was the result of a wide-ranging national debate involving teachers and members of other professions who deal directly with children.

The pedagogical proposals of early childhood education institutions should respect the following guiding principles: i) ethical principles of autonomy,



responsibility, solidarity and respect for the common good; ii) political principles of the rights and obligations of citizenship, the exercise of critical judgment and respect for the democratic order; iii) aesthetic principles of sensibility, creativity, and diversity of artistic and cultural expressions. The proposals should make explicit the recognition of the importance of the children's personal identity, that of their families, teachers and other professionals, as well as the identity of every educational unit in the various contexts in which they exist. In recognizing the children as integral beings, who are learning to be and co-exist with themselves, with others and the environment itself in an articulated and gradual way, these proposals should seek the interaction between the different areas of knowledge and aspects of life as a citizen, thus contributing with the provision of basic contents for the construction of knowledge and values. The environment of democratic management on the part of the educators, beginning with responsible and quality leadership, should guarantee the basic rights of children and their families to education and to care, in a context of multidisciplinary attention with the professionals necessary for taking care of them.

According to the preliminary results of the 2009 School Census of Basic Education, in 2009 there were about 1,860,000 children enrolled in 41,506 day-care centres (*crèches*), and some 4,809,000 children enrolled in 104,225 preschools, mainly in municipality-run institutions. On the basis of the results of the 2007 School Census of Basic Education, in 2007 there were 95,643 educators in day-care centres, of whom about 82% had the legally required minimum qualifications (but only 12% had received specific training for teaching in *crèches*) and 98% were women; about 61% were employed in municipality-run institutions and 37% in private institutions, and over 90,000 educators were in institutions functioning in urban areas. In the same year, there were about 240,500 teachers in preschools, of whom about 87% had the legally required minimum qualifications (but only about 13% had received specific training for teaching in preschools) and 96% were women; about 69% were employed in municipality-run institutions and 27% in private institutions, and over 199,000 teachers were in preschools functioning in urban areas. (MEC-INEP, 2009).

According to national estimates, in 2005 the national net schooling rate of children aged 4-6 years was 62.9%, although in the North, Center-West and South regions the percentage is close to 50%. As regards the age group 0-3 years (day-care institutions), the national net schooling rate was estimated at 17% in 2007. (MEC, 2008).

Primary education

As mentioned, the new nine-year 'primary education' programme (*ensino fundamental*) is compulsory for all children aged 6-14 and is provided free of charge in public educational establishments. The curriculum is structured around a common core defining nationwide subjects. However, there is also a flexible component that is established by the normative bodies of the educational establishments (according to their needs and possibilities) in order to respond to local peculiarities, to the work plans of the schools and the individual differences of the pupils.

In accordance with the LDB, the *ensino fundamental* in Brazil aims to achieve the basic training of the citizen by means of: i) developing the capacity for learning, having in mind the acquisition of knowledge, abilities and the forming of attitudes and



values; ii) developing the ability to learn, taking as basic means the full mastery of reading, writing and calculating; iii) understanding the natural and social environment, the political system, technology, arts and the values on which society is founded; and iv) strengthening family links and the ties of human solidarity and mutual tolerance on which social life is based. The LDB also defined the following guidelines for the content of basic education: a) to convey the values fundamental to the social interest, the rights and obligations of citizens, respect for the common good and the democratic order; b) to consider the schooling conditions of the students in each establishment; c) to orient education towards work; and d) to stimulate sporting practices (Art. 27). Basic education should be especially concerned with the particularities of rural life in every Brazilian region, therefore defining curricular contents, methodologies, school organization and calendar appropriate to the real needs and interests of this population, such as the agricultural cycle, climatic conditions and the nature of rural work (Art. 28).

The curriculum is established on the basis of subjects determined at the national and regional levels. Each school is responsible for adopting the most appropriate teaching methods (activities, areas of study or subjects), as well as for the arrangements required for their relationship, their order, and the sequence of their respective contents. The common core encompasses: communications and expression (Portuguese); social studies (history and geography); and science (mathematics, physical and biological sciences). Physical education, artistic education, health programmes and preparation for work are compulsory, while religious education is optional. Primary schools should provide a minimum of 800 class hours per year. With the implementation of National Curricular Standards, two new subjects have been introduced: social life and ethics. Through these subjects the education system will systematically address issues such as ethics, sexual education, the environment, health, economic studies and ethnic plurality.

The organization of the curriculum contemplates the inclusion of different options according to the school work plan. The division into semesters is permitted, provided that the relationship, order and sequence of studies are ensured. The provision of remedial studies for pupils with low performance, in order to give them a chance to pass the courses, is mandatory. In order to provide this service, educational establishments may function between regular teaching periods (summer school). In addition to remedial studies, summer programmes may offer intensive courses in areas of studies or activities that would normally require a semester of teaching.

It is also possible for the school to adopt criteria allowing progressive advancements of pupils, taking into account both the age and performance. At the seventh grade, the institution may allow a student to pass on to the next grade, despite one or two incomplete subjects, areas of study or activities carried over from the previous grade, provided that the curricular sequence is preserved and that the school's bylaws are followed.

Some examples of weekly lesson timetables in individual states referring to the former eight-year primary education programme are presented below (reference year: 2002).

Acre. Basic education: weekly lesson timetable

Discipline	Number of weekly hours in each grade							
	First cycle				Second cycle			
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Portuguese language	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4
Mathematics	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4
History and geography	4	4	4	4	–	–	–	–
History	–	–	–	–	3	3	3	3
Geography	–	–	–	–	3	3	3	3
Sciences	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3
Religious education	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Physical education	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Art education	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Foreign language	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2
Total weekly hours	21	21	21	21	22	22	22	22

Source: Information provided to the UNESCO Office in Brazil by the State Education Department of Acre, May 2002.

The school year consists of forty weeks.

Amazonas. Basic education: weekly lesson timetable (day schools)

Curricular component	Number of weekly hours in each grade							
	First cycle				Second cycle			
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
<u>National component:</u>								
Portuguese language	10	10	9	9	5	5	5	5
Geography	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	3
History	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	3
Mathematics	5	5	6	6	5	5	5	5
Natural sciences	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	3
Religious education (*)	–	–	–	–	1	1	1	1
Art education (*)	–	–	–	–	1	1	1	1
Physical education	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
<u>Diversified component:</u>								
Modern foreign language	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2
Total weekly hours	20	20	20	20	25	25	25	25

Source: Information provided to the UNESCO Office in Brazil by the State Department for Education and

Educational Quality of Amazonas, May 2002. The school year consists of forty weeks.

(*) In Grades I–IV, religious education (optional) and art education are taught using an interdisciplinary approach.

History and geography of Amazonas, as well as basic knowledge of the regional economy, are integrated into history and geography.

Espírito Santo. Basic education: typical weekly lesson timetable

Knowledge area	Number of weekly hours in each grade							
	First cycle				Second cycle			
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Portuguese language	*	*	5	5	5	5	5	5
Mathematics			5	5	5	5	5	5
Sciences			3	3	3	3	3	3
Geography			3	3	2	2	2	2
History			2	2	2	2	2	2
Art education			1	1	1	1	1	1
Physical education			1	1	1	1	1	1
Religious education			1	1	1	1	1	1
Foreign language			–	–	1	1	1	1
Total weekly hours	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21

Source: Information provided to the UNESCO Office in Brazil by the State Education Department of Espírito Santo,

May 2002. The school year consists of forty weeks.

(*) In the first two grades an inter-disciplinary approach is applied. Cross-curricular themes are integrated into

the knowledge areas and include: health; sexuality, social and family life; environment; work; science and technology, culture; and languages.

Federal District. Basic education: weekly lesson timetable (day schools)

Curricular component	Number of weekly periods in each grade							
	First cycle				Second cycle			
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
<u>National component:</u>								
Portuguese language	*	*	*	*	5	5	5	5
Mathematics					5	5	5	5
Geography					3	3	3	3
History					3	3	3	3
Natural sciences					4	4	4	4
Art education					2	2	2	2
Physical education					3	3	3	3
<u>Diversified component:</u>								
Modern foreign language					2	2	2	2
Religious education					1	1	1	1
Option decided by the school					1	1	1	1
Option decided by the school					1	1	1	1
Total weekly periods					30	30	30	30

Source: Information provided to the UNESCO Office in Brazil by the State Education Department of the Federal District,

May 2002. Each teaching period lasts 50 minutes. The school year consists of forty weeks.

(*) In the first cycle of basic education an inter-disciplinary approach is applied. Pupils receive twenty-five hours of instruction per week.

Goiás. Basic education: weekly lesson timetable

Curricular component	Number of weekly periods in each grade							
	First cycle				Second cycle			
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
<u>National component:</u>								
Portuguese language	*	*	*	*	5	5	5	5
Mathematics					5	5	5	5
Sciences					3	3	3	3
Geography					3	3	3	3
History					3	3	3	3
Art education					2	2	2	2
Physical education					2	2	2	2
<u>Diversified component:</u>								
Modern foreign language					2	2	2	2
Religious education					1	1	1	1
Total weekly periods					26	26	26	26

Source: Information provided to the UNESCO Office in Brazil by the State Education Department of Goiás, May 2002.

Each teaching period lasts 50 minutes. The school year consists of forty weeks.

(*) In the first cycle of basic education an inter-disciplinary approach is applied. Pupils receive a minimum of 800 hours of instruction per year, which can increase to 840–880 hours if the school offers religious education and foreign language teaching (forty hours per year each).

Cross-curricular themes are integrated into the curricular components and include: ethics; health; environment; sexuality, work and consumption; cultural plurality, and local themes.

Maranhão. Basic education: weekly lesson timetable (urban schools)

Curricular component	Number of weekly periods in each grade							
	First cycle				Second cycle			
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
<u>National component:</u>								
Portuguese language	6	6	6	6	5	5	5	5
Mathematics	6	6	6	6	4	4	4	4
Sciences	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3
Geography	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
History	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Art education	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Physical education	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Religious education	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<u>Diversified component:</u>								
Modern foreign language					2	2	2	2
Ethics and civics					2	2	2	2
Total weekly periods	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25

Source: Information provided to the UNESCO Office in Brazil by the State Department of Human Development of Maranhão,

May 2002. Each teaching period lasts 48 minutes in Grades I–IV and 50 minutes in Grades V–VIII. The school year consists of forty weeks.

Note: Urban schools equipped with computer laboratories can offer ‘introduction to informatics’ instead of ‘ethics and civics’ in Grades VII and VIII.

Rural schools offer ‘economy of the primary sector’ instead of ‘ethics and civics’ in Grades VII and VIII.

Mato Grosso do Sul. Basic education: weekly lesson timetable (day schools)

Knowledge area	Number of weekly periods in each grade							
	First cycle				Second cycle			
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Portuguese language	*	*	*	*	5	5	5	5
Mathematics					4	4	4	4
Sciences					3	3	3	3
History					3	3	3	3
Geography					3	3	3	3
Art education					2	2	2	2
Religious education					1	1	1	1
Physical education					2	2	2	2
Modern foreign language	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2
Total weekly periods					25	25	25	25

Source: Information provided to the UNESCO Office in Brazil by the State Education Department of Mato Grosso do Sul, May 2002.

The school year consists of forty weeks. Each teaching period lasts 50 minutes.

(*) In the first cycle of basic education an inter-disciplinary approach is applied; pupils receive a minimum of 800 hours of instruction per year.

Paraíba. Basic education: weekly lesson timetable (day schools)

Knowledge area	Number of weekly periods in each grade							
	First cycle				Second cycle			
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
<u>National component:</u>								
Portuguese language	*	*	*	*	5	5	5	5
Mother language (for indigenous groups)				
Art education					2	2	2	2
Physical education					3	3	3	3
Mathematics					5	5	5	5
Sciences					3	3	3	3
Geography					4	4	4	4
History					4	4	4	4
<u>Diversified component:</u>								
Foreign language					2	2	2	2
Option decided by the school					1	1	1	1
Total weekly periods					29	29	29	29
Religious education (optional)					1	1	1	1

Source: Information provided to the UNESCO Office in Brazil by the State Department for Education and Culture of Paraíba, May 2002.

Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes. The school year consists of forty-one weeks.

(*) In the first cycle of basic education an inter-disciplinary approach is applied. Pupils receive a minimum of 800 hours of instruction per year.

Cross-curricular themes are integrated into the knowledge areas and include: health; environment; ethics; cultural plurality, and sexuality.

Paraná. Basic education: typical weekly lesson timetable (day schools)

Curricular component	Number of weekly periods in each grade							
	First cycle				Second cycle			
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
<u>National component:</u>								
Portuguese language	*	*	*	*	4	4	4	4
Art education					1	1	1	1
Physical education					2	2	2	2
Mathematics					5	5	5	5
Sciences					2	2	2	2
History					2	2	2	2
Geography					2	2	2	2
<u>Diversified component:</u>								
Modern foreign language					2	2	2	2
Options decided by the school (**)					4	4	4	4
Total weekly periods					24	24	24	24

Source: Information provided to the UNESCO Office in Brazil by the State Education Department of Paraná, May 2002.

The school year consists of forty weeks. Each teaching period lasts 50 minutes.

(*) In the first cycle of basic education an inter-disciplinary approach is applied and pupils receive 800 hours of instruction per year.

(**) Options offered by schools are aimed at complementing core subjects according to local and regional conditions.

Rondônia. Basic education: weekly lesson timetable (day schools)

Curricular component	Number of weekly hours in each grade							
	First cycle				Second cycle			
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
<u>National component:</u>								
Portuguese language	*	*	*	*	4	4	4	4
Mathematics					4	4	4	4
Sciences					3	3	3	3
Geography					2	2	2	2
History					2	2	2	2
Art education					1	1	1	1
Religious education					1	1	1	1
Physical education					1	1	1	1
<u>Diversified component:</u>								
Modern foreign language					1	1	1	1
Option decided by the school					1	1	1	1
Total weekly hours					20	20	20	20

Source: Information provided to the UNESCO Office in Brazil by the State Education Department of Rondônia, May 2002.

The school year consists of forty weeks.

(*) In the first cycle of basic education an inter-disciplinary approach is applied. Pupils receive a minimum of 800 hours of instruction per year.

Santa Catarina. Basic education: weekly lesson timetable (day schools)

Curricular component	Number of weekly periods in each grade							
	First cycle				Second cycle			
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
<u>National component:</u>								
Portuguese language	*	*	*	*	4	4	4	4
Mathematics					4	4	4	4
Sciences					3	3	3	3
History					3	3	3	3
Geography					3	3	3	3
Physical education					3	3	3	3
Art education					2	2	2	2
Religious education					1	1	1	1
<u>Diversified component:</u>								
Modern foreign language					3	3	3	3
Total weekly periods					26	26	26	26

Source: Information provided to the UNESCO Office in Brazil by the State Department for Education and Sports of Santa Catarina, May 2002.

The school year consists of forty weeks. Each teaching period lasts 48 minutes.

(*) In the first cycle of basic education an inter-disciplinary approach is applied and pupils receive 800 hours of instruction per year. Religious education is not compulsory.

São Paulo. Basic education: weekly lesson timetable (day schools)

Curricular component	Recommended time allocation (in %)				Number of weekly hours in each grade			
	First cycle (*)				Second cycle			
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
<u>National component:</u>								
Portuguese language	35	35	30	30	5	5	5	5
Mathematics	30	30	35	35	5	5	5	5
History and geography	10	10	10	10	3	3	3	3
Sciences	10	10	10	10	2	2	2	2
Art education and physical education	15	15	15	15	3	3	3	3
<u>Diversified component:</u>								
Modern foreign language					2	2	2	2
Total weekly hours					20	20	20	20

Source: Information provided to the UNESCO Office in Brazil by the State Education Department of São Paulo, May 2002.

The school year consists of forty weeks.

(*) In the first cycle of basic education pupils receive a minimum of 800 hours of instruction per year.

Tocantins. Basic education: weekly lesson timetable (day schools)

Curricular component	Number of weekly periods in each grade							
	First cycle				Second cycle (**)			
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
<u>National component:</u>								
Portuguese language	*	*	*	*	5	5	5	5
Mathematics					5	5	5	5
Social studies					–	–	–	–
Sciences					–	–	–	–
Physical & biological sciences	–	–	–	–	3	3	3	3
History	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2
Geography	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2
Art education					1	1	1	1
Religious education					1	1	1	1
Physical education					3	3	3	3
<u>Diversified component:</u>								
Modern foreign language	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2
Option decided by the school	–	–	–	–	1	1	1	1
Total weekly periods					25	25	25	25

Source: Information provided to the UNESCO Office in Brazil by the State Department for Education and Culture, May 2002.

The school year consists of forty weeks. Each teaching period lasts 48 minutes.

(*) In the first cycle of basic education an inter-disciplinary approach is applied and pupils receive 800 hours of instruction per year. Health education and environmental education are included under sciences. History of Tocantins, geography of Tocantins and citizenship education are included under social studies. Religious education is optional. Cross-curricular themes include among others road safety education, consumer education, drug abuse prevention, accident prevention and work safety education.

(**) In the second cycle of basic education, history includes history of Tocantins and citizenship education, which can also be taught under Portuguese language. Geography includes geography of Tocantins. Physical and biological sciences also include health education. Environmental education is integrated into geography and physical & biological sciences.

According to the preliminary results of the 2009 School Census of Basic Education, in 2009 there were about 17,139,000 pupils enrolled in the first years of *ensino fundamental* (grades 1 to 4 or 5) and around 14,351,000 pupils enrolled in the final years (grades 5 to 8 or 6 to 9); the total number of educational establishments was 197,953—mainly run by the municipalities. On the basis of the results of the 2007 School Census, in 2007 there were about 685,000 teachers in the first years of *ensino fundamental*, of whom about 87% had the legally required minimum qualifications (some 50% holding a higher education qualification with specialization in pedagogy) and 91% were women; over 73% of the teachers taught five or more teaching subjects/learning areas and 81% were teaching in urban areas. In the final years of *ensino fundamental* there were about 736,500 teachers, of whom about 73% had the legally required minimum qualifications and some 60% taught only one discipline. (MEC & INEP, 2009).

According to national estimates, in 2008 the national net schooling rate for the age group 7-14 years was 96.5%, although there are still disparities among and within



the main regions of the country. There has been a noticeable progress in the process of overcoming age-grade distortion, which nation-wide decreased from 41.7% in 2000 to 28.6% in 2006, even if the rate still remains high in the North (41.4%) and North-East (41.2%) regions. The average drop-out rate decreased from 12% in 2000 to 7.5% in 2005 nation-wide, but despite the improvements over the period 2000-2005 the rate is considerably higher in the North (11.1%) and North-East (12.3%) regions. In 2005, the overall failure rate in the *ensino fundamental* was estimated at 13%, a figure that is a matter of concern.

In accordance with the LDB (Articles 78 and 79) and the Resolution No. 03/1999 of the National Council for Education, indigenous schools should offer bilingual intercultural education as a way for promoting the cultures of indigenous populations as well as preserving their ethnic diversity. In Brazil there are some 220 different indigenous peoples speaking about 180 languages, and estimates concerning the total indigenous population range from 500,000 to 750,000. Among the objectives and goals defined for indigenous education, the National Educational Plan (Law No. 10.172 of 9 January 2001), introduced the following: i) attribute to the states the legal responsibility for indigenous education, whether directly or through the delegation of their responsibilities to municipalities, under the general coordination and with the financial support of the Ministry of Education; ii) universalize, in ten years, the supply to the indigenous communities of educational programmes equivalent to the first four grades of primary education (*ensino fundamental*), respecting their ways of life, their visions of the world and their specific sociolinguistic situations; iii) gradually expand the offer of education from the fifth to the eighth grade to the indigenous peoples, whether in the indigenous school itself, or by integrating the students into ordinary classes in the nearby schools, at the same time as they are offered additional support necessary for their adaptation, with the aim of guaranteeing the complete access to *ensino fundamental*.

The 2005 School Census showed that there were 2,323 indigenous schools in Brazil mainly maintained by municipalities (52.4%) and the states (46.6%). The total number of teachers was 8,431 of whom 90% were indigenous; about 65% of the teachers had secondary-level qualifications and 13% had tertiary-level qualifications. The total number of pupils was 163,773, of whom 81.2% enrolled in *ensino fundamental*, about 11% in early childhood education, and 2.6% in (upper) secondary education. (MEC & INEP, 2006).

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of activities within the sphere of national policies for special education. Such policies address the needs of persons with disabilities, with specific behaviour patterns (problem behaviour) and special skills (gifted persons). All these people are, as a group, generically named persons with special needs. The services range from nursery-level programmes to those at the highest educational levels. They are conceived and developed in line with general principles that provide guidelines for educational activities. According the 2000 Demographic Census carried out by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), disabled people make up 14.5% of the Brazilian population. That is, about 24.6 million people in the country have at least one of the handicaps listed in the Census questionnaire. More than two million of those with at least one handicap are in the age group 12-20 years.



Special education is handled in a decentralized and co-participatory way, in conjunction with state and municipal authorities, as well as non-governmental organizations. Federal activities are supplementary in nature. There are, however, two institutions at the federal level: the Benjamin Constant Institute (for the blind) and the National Institute for the Education of the Hearing Impaired. These institutions offer educational services and training for the labour market; they also provide technical assistance to the state education systems and organizations that are active in such areas, particularly human resources training programmes. At the state level, the secretariats of education have programmes designed specifically to promote educational opportunities tailored for students with special needs. Co-operative arrangements involving establishments that offer higher education are being developed at all three levels of government in order to provide for the integration of special-education students or to provide the proper training for professionals.

Special educational services are available in every state in Brazil, but especially in the state capitals and the largest municipalities. Traditionally, special education was organized as a parallel system to regular education, with a strong presence of private institutions and an absence of incentives for the regular schools. In recent years, with the implementation of a public policy of inclusive education, significant advances were achieved with regard to the access to regular public education, as the School Census records show. The indicators show an evolution in enrolments from 882,215 in 2000 to 700,624 in 2006; of these, 47% were enrolments in ordinary schools (only 21% in the year 2000). In 2006, enrolments by educational level were distributed as follows: 112,988 (16%) in early childhood education, 466,155 (66.5%) in primary education (*ensino fundamental*), 14,150 (2%) in secondary education, 58,420 (8.3%) in youth and adult education, and 48,911 (6.3%) in vocational education. With relation to the initial training of special education teachers, the 2007 Census showed that, of the 66,529 teachers, 77.8% declared having taken a specific special education course.

The basic curriculum draws on the primary education syllabus and is structured around a common core of courses determined at the national level. The content is adapted and adjusted in accordance with the requirements of the students, and is also partially diversified to reflect local possibilities and needs. The care provided is offered on a preferential basis (depending on the needs of each student) in schools that form part of the ordinary education system or in specialized institutions, both public and private. Educational programmes vary after the student reaches the age of 14, depending on educational attainments and his/her potential. When students are not in a position to continue their primary education, they enrol into educational workshops offering pre-vocational activities complemented by other academic, sports and social activities. Many students, however, do participate in internships or courses offered by public or private companies in their communities.

Secondary education

While not yet compulsory, (upper) secondary education is also provided free of charge in public schools. A student who has completed the 'primary education' programme (*ensino fundamental*) can access secondary education without sitting an entrance examination. According to the LDB (Art. 35), secondary education has three main objectives: i) academic preparation, building upon the foundation of

mathematics, Portuguese and science acquired in lower grades; ii) acquisition of tools for citizenship, including critical thinking skills, ethical sensibilities, and social skills; and iii) preparing youth for employment, with the goal of producing flexible learners, capable of adapting to changes in the labor market in an increasingly global economy.

Vocational technical education is offered simultaneously and in conjunction with general secondary education. In order to respond to the need for vocational training in the areas of services, industry and agriculture, the Ministry of Education supports a network of vocational education schools having accumulated great expertise in the field of vocational training.

The curriculum is organized into year-long grades, but the schools can choose a system of organization by semester and enrolment by subjects. Portuguese and Brazilian literature, social studies (history and geography), sciences (physics, chemistry and biology), mathematics, one foreign language, arts, health programmes, and physical education are the subjects in the core curricula for secondary schools.

Subjects in the optional differentiated curricula correspond to the technical courses to which they belong, and which are divided (in accordance with the economy sectors) into primary, secondary and tertiary studies, in addition to the teacher training courses. Some examples of weekly lesson timetables in individual states (around 2002) are shown below.

Paraíba. General secondary education: weekly lesson timetable (day schools)

Knowledge area	Number of weekly periods in each form		
	I	II	III
National component:			
Portuguese language	5	5	5
Art education	1	–	–
Physical education	2	2	2
Biology	3	3	3
Physics	3	3	3
Chemistry	3	3	3
Mathematics	4	5	5
Geography	3	3	3
History	3	3	3
Diversified component:			
Foreign language	2	2	2
Option decided by the school	1	1	1
Total weekly periods	30	30	30

Source: Information provided to the UNESCO Office in Brazil by the State Department for Education and Culture of Paraíba, May 2002.

Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes. The school year consists of forty-one weeks.

Santa Catarina. General secondary education: weekly lesson timetable for day schools

Discipline	Number of weekly periods in each form		
	I	II	III
<u>National component:</u>			
Portuguese language and literature	3	4	3
Foreign language	2	2	2
Mathematics	3	4	3
Art education	1	1	1
Physical education	2	2	2
Chemistry	2	2	3
Physics	2	2	3
Biology	2	2	2
History	2	2	2
Geography	2	2	2
<u>Diversified component:</u>			
Philosophy	2	1	1
Sociology	2	1	1
Total weekly periods	25	25	25

Source: Information provided to the UNESCO Office in Brazil by the State Department for Education and Sports of Santa Catarina, May 2002.

The school year consists of forty weeks. Each teaching period lasts 48 minutes. Schools may offer a second foreign language as an optional, extra-curricular subject.

General (upper) secondary education usually requires 2,200 hours of actual school work during the three-year course of studies. The technical branch of secondary education comprises three or four grades lasting one year each (depending on the technical-vocational programme considered) including a minimum course load of effective school work: a) primary sector technicians: a minimum of 2,900 hours, of which at least 1,200 must be vocational courses, to be complemented by practical skills work (curricular training); b) secondary sector technicians: a minimum of 2,900 hours, of which at least 1,200 must be vocational courses, to be complemented by professional practice work; c) tertiary sector technicians: a minimum of 2,200 hours, of which at least 900 must be vocational courses.

In addition to courses and subjects, technical and teacher training courses include a compulsory supervised internship. Class hours/credits correspond to no less than one school semester, and comprise social, professional and cultural learning activities. These are taught by involving the student in real-life domestic and workplace scenarios, under the school's responsibility.

Vocational schools establish partnerships with business, which in turn create opportunities for students to develop practical professional skills in the workplace as a part of their training. In turn, the schools offer refresher courses and further education to the employees of these businesses.

The schools are responsible for the evaluation system, structured on basic principles which are mandatory for all levels of education, and which comprise performance assessments expressed in grades in which quantitative aspects have a



greater importance than those which are qualitative. At the end of the technical and teacher training programmes, students may take the university entrance examination to enrol into colleges. Schools are responsible for issuing the secondary education certificates (secondary school level) and the diplomas of technical courses.

The first Vocational Education Census was carried out in 1999. The majority of the institutions were private (67%) and among the public bodies, most were state-run (20%). The municipal system was responsible for 9% of the institutions, and 4% were federal. The technical and technological levels accounted for 25.1% and 3.4% of enrolments, respectively. By sector of activity, it was found that courses in the service sector have the greatest number of enrolments. About a third of enrolments were concentrated in Information Technology and business courses.

The Secretariat for Secondary Education and Technology (SEMTEC) which includes the Directorate for Vocational and Technological Education is in charge of co-ordinating, guiding and supervising activities concerning the development and improvement of vocational and technological education, organized in a network including: secondary and vocational classes, including federal, state-level municipal and private systems; *System S*, which includes National Services for Apprenticeship and Social Service maintained by *parafiscal* [a type of taxation parallel to the normal tax system] contributions from the private sector Senai/Sesi (industry), Senac/Sesc (business and service, except for banking); Senar (agriculture); Senat/Sest (wheeled transport); Sebrae (all sectors dealing with provision for micro and small firms; Senacoop (including co-operatives providing services); public and private universities that offer extension and community services as well as undergraduate and postgraduate courses; schools and centres maintained by trades unions; schools and foundations maintained by business groups (in addition to contributions to System S or using exemptions from part of the contribution to the System); religious, community and educational NGOs; normal or free vocational courses concentrated in urban centres and those that are starting up distance learning (by mail, Internet or satellite). SEMTEC is also responsible for supervising federal institutions for educational technology.

Vocational courses provide training for middle-level technical workers in production industries who are relatively autonomous, usually needing supervision from a higher-level colleague. About 65% of the courses are offered by private establishments. According to the replies of these institutions to the 2003 School Census, there were more than 900 different names of courses. Of all of the courses offered, 86% were concentrated in the southeast and southern regions. Of the 589,383 students enrolled in vocational education, 174,073 (29.5%) attended vocational courses in the area of health (2003 School Census). Of the overall total of students in the 20 areas of vocational education, 324,985 studied in private institutions, 165,266 in state institutions; 79,484 in federal colleges and 19,648 in municipal ones. The other areas with large numbers of students were industry (109,559), management (87,407), computing (82,969) and agriculture (39,135).

According to the 2005 School Census, there were 3,294 educational establishments offering technical-vocational secondary education with a total enrolment of 747,892 students. Of these, 427,433 or 57.2% were enrolled in private establishments (2,350 establishments), 206,317 or 27.6% were in state-run institutions



(659 establishments), 89,114 or 11.9% were in federal institutions (147 establishments), and 25,028 or 3.3% were in institutions administered by municipalities (138 establishments). In terms of the 20 technical-vocational fields, enrolments concentrated on health courses (29.5% of total enrolments), industry (18.6%), management (14.8%), and informatics (14.1%).

According to the 2006 School Census, the total number of enrolments in (upper) secondary education reached approximately nine million of students, mainly enrolled in state-run institutions (85% of the students). An important feature of secondary education in Brazil is the predominance of evening schools, which accounted for about 48% of enrolments 2006. In 2005, the average net schooling rate at the secondary level was estimated at 45.3%, but there were regions well below the national average (about 30% in the North and Northwest regions). The average drop-out rate was estimated at 15.3% in 2005 (over 20% in the North and Northwest regions), and it is estimated that only 66.6% of the students complete their secondary education.

In 2006, about 49% of public secondary schools had no science laboratories, some 35% had no computer laboratories, and about 30% had no libraries, although the situation improved in the more recent period. About 11.7% of teachers were not holders of the required tertiary-level qualifications. As regards some specific subjects, the percentage of teachers with the required qualifications was considerably low: 20.4% in the case of mathematics; 44.4% in biology; 22.2% in chemistry; and 10% in physics.

Assessing learning achievement nationwide

The Ministry of Education is doing its utmost to ensure a process of global evaluation of the education system, thus providing greater guidance in terms of the objectives, the performance, and, above all, the quality of the system.

A National System for the Evaluation of Basic Education (SAEB) has been created, and several national surveys have been carried out since 1990. The objectives of the original proposal were broadened in 1995 to include secondary education and the private education system. More accurate techniques to measure performance and students' proficiency levels were adopted, making it possible for skills scales to be built. New tools for data surveys on socioeconomic, cultural traits and students' study habits were incorporated. All the twenty-seven units of the Brazilian Federation participated in the 1995 survey. A total of six surveys have been carried out during 1995-2005.

The SAEB, one of the principal sources of producing information concerning primary education across the country, provides data on the level of performance and the acquisition of skills by the pupil (on the basis of the school, the socioeconomic and the cultural context) in terms of the skills in reading and interpretation of texts, problem-solving and the use of mathematical concepts.

In 1995, tests were administered to a selected sample of 95,000 pupils of public and private schools in grades 4 and 8 of primary education, and in Forms II and III of secondary education. The research had different focal points, such as: structural



and sociopolitical aspects of the school and the school organization; psychological, pedagogical, and technical aspects, including the instruments for the evaluation of pupils; teacher-student relations; class dynamics; and the resources used in the learning process. In addition to the pupils, 3,400 directors, 7,000 teachers and 3,600 schools were also evaluated.

In the case of the 2001 survey, over 287,000 students, 11,700 classes, 6,935 schools and 6,820 directors were evaluated from state, municipal and private schools in every Brazilian state and the Federal District. The 2005 survey involved over 194,000 students (fourth and eighth grades of primary education) in some 5,940 schools.

Another survey (*Prova Brasil*), not conducted on the basis of samples like SAEB, was carried out in November 2005 and evaluated Portuguese language (focus on reading) and mathematics (focus on problem solving) in the fourth and eighth grades of primary education (or the fifth and ninth grades in the case of nine-year primary education programme). Overall, over 3.3 million students were evaluated in some 41,000 schools of 5,398 municipalities.

“The 2003 SAEB shows that student abilities in grades four and eight are far below what is expected based on the intended curriculum. For example, the average of 177.1 in grade four mathematics is significantly under the 200-point level that is considered an acceptable level of knowledge. [...] The language proficiency results in Portuguese and for grade eight are also considerably below expected achievement levels.” (World Bank, 2008, p. 181).

“Brazil’s participation in the 2000 and 2003 PISA international achievement study provides still more dramatic evidence of the work that remains in improving quality. In both years Brazilian eighth-grade students scored at the bottom of the distribution in mathematics, below countries such as Indonesia and Mexico and far below high scorers like Korea. In terms of proficiency, the results showed that more than half of Brazilian students fell below even Level 1 on a six-level ascending scale (1–6). In other words, the PISA results largely confirm the low proficiency attainments demonstrated by SAEB, but on an international scale.” (*Ibid.*, p. 182).

Teaching staff

In accordance with the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB) of 1996, the training of teachers for early childhood education and *ensino fundamental* (grades 1-8/9) must be organized at the tertiary level (programmes at *licensure* level offered by universities and higher education institutions). Qualifications attained at the secondary level (e.g. teacher education programmes or *normal courses* offered by secondary schools and usually lasting four years) are permitted for early childhood education and the initial years of *ensino fundamental* (grades 1-4). The LDB also established that, excepting higher education, teacher training must include teaching practice for at least 300 hours, and that the training of (upper) secondary school teachers must be at the tertiary education level (programmes at *licensure* level offered by universities and higher education institutions).



An exploratory study conducted on the basis of the results of the 2007 School Census of Basic Education (MEC & INEP, 2009), shows that there were 1,882,961 teachers at the basic education level (early childhood to upper secondary education) in 2007. Overall, 81.6% of the teachers were women, with higher percentages particularly in day-care centres (98%), preschools (96%), and the initial years of *ensino fundamental* (91%). As regards their qualifications, the percentage of teachers with tertiary-level education was 68.4% (or about 1.288 million teachers), of whom about 90% with a *licensure*, mainly in the fields of pedagogy (29.2%), language and literature (11.9%), mathematics (7.4%), and history (6.4%). Concerning the teachers with secondary-level qualifications, 82.1% were graduated of *normal courses* offered by secondary schools. A total of 119,323 teachers (or 6.3% of the total number) still had not the required minimum qualifications.

In 2007 there were 95,643 educators in day-care centres, of whom about 82% had the legally required minimum qualifications (but only 12% had received specific training for teaching in crèches); about 61% were employed in municipality-run institutions and 37% in private institutions, and over 90,000 educators were in institutions functioning in urban areas. In the same year, there were 240,543 teachers in preschools, of whom about 87% had the legally required minimum qualifications (but only about 13% had received specific training for teaching in preschools); about 69% were employed in municipality-run institutions and 27% in private institutions, and 199,028 teachers were in preschools functioning in urban areas.

There were 685,025 teachers in the first years of *ensino fundamental*, of whom about 87% had the legally required minimum qualifications (some 50% holding a higher education qualification with specialization in pedagogy); over 73% of the teachers taught five or more teaching subjects/learning areas and 81% were teaching in urban areas. In the final years of *ensino fundamental* there were 736,502 teachers, of whom about 73% had the legally required minimum qualifications (*licensure*) and some 60% taught only one discipline.

At the upper secondary level (*ensino médio*) there were 414,555 teachers, of whom 87% with the required minimum tertiary-level qualifications (*licensure*); over 74% of the teachers taught only one discipline, about 87% were teaching in one school only, and some 95% were in schools functioning in urban areas. (MEC & INEP, 2009).

The training of basic education teachers at the tertiary level in the field of pedagogy (presential courses leading to a *licensure*) follows the National Curriculum Guidelines approved by the National Council for Education in 2006 (Resolution CNE/CP No. 1 of 15 May 2006). According to the Guidelines, *licensure* courses in pedagogy should comprise a minimum of 3,200 hours, including 2,800 hours of academic training, 300 hours of supervised teaching practice, and 100 hours of theoretical-practical activities. Courses should be organized around three broad areas: core/basic studies, further and diversified studies, and enriching studies.

A study focusing on *licensure* courses in pedagogy for teachers of early childhood education and the first five years of *ensino fundamental* (Gatti & Nunes, 2008), shows that in the country there was a total of 1,562 tertiary-level courses in pedagogy with some 281,000 students enrolled in 2006. Some 56% of the courses



were offered by private institutions (catering for 62% of total enrolments), 32% by state-run institutions, and 10% by federal institutions. Most of the courses (71%) were offered by higher education institutions, mainly universities (63% of the courses) and university centres. An analysis of a sample of courses offered by 71 higher education institutions, showed that a total of 3,107 compulsory and 406 optional subjects were offered (which seems to suggest a high degree of fragmentation), with a clear predominance of theory over practice also in the case of subjects in the areas of specific professional training and specialization by educational level/modality. Contents related to the core subjects to be taught at the basic education level (e.g. literacy, Portuguese, mathematics, history, geography, sciences, physical education) are not explicitly considered within the subjects offered and are referred to mainly under subjects dealing with methodological issues, thus indicating that the training of prospective teachers about 'what' and 'how' to teach is quite reduced.

According to Law No. 11.738 of 16 July 2008, basic education teachers in the public sector benefit from the entering into effect of the teachers' national minimum wage, amounting to R\$950 per month for a regime of 40 working hours per week. The Law also states that a maximum of two thirds of the timetabled hours should be reserved for activities in interaction with the pupils (Art. 2, § 4), thus making clear that at least one third of the teachers' working day should be allocated to class preparation and pedagogical training.

With the creation of the Open University of Brazil (UAB), the Federal Government is implementing a national network for distance higher education with the participation of public higher education institutions and in partnership with states and municipalities. The main objective of the UAB is to offer initial training to in-service teachers in public basic education that still have not attained the required minimum qualifications. Presidential Decree No. 6.755 of 29 January 2009 established the National Policy for the Training of Basic Education Teachers, and a National Plan for the Training of Basic Education Teachers (PARFOR) was defined accordingly. Launched in May 2009, PARFOR aims at providing training to some 330,000 teachers in public basic education that still lack the *licensure* on the basis of a coordinated effort involving the Ministry of Education, states, municipalities, and higher education institutions.

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Conselho de Reitores das Universidades Brasileiras [Council of Rectors of Brazilian Universities]: <http://www.crub.org.br/> [In Portuguese. Last checked: April 2010.]

Conselho Nacional de Secretários de Educação [National Council of State Ministers of Education]: <http://www.consed.org.br/> [In Portuguese. Last checked: April 2010.]

Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior–CAPES [Co-ordination of the Enhancement of Higher Education Staff]: <http://www.capes.gov.br/> [In Portuguese. Last checked: April 2010.]

Education Portal of the Ministry of Education: <http://webeduc.mec.gov.br/> [In Portuguese. Last checked: April 2010.]

Links to State Education Portals: <http://webeduc.mec.gov.br/educacionais.php> [In Portuguese. Last checked: April 2010.]

National Council for Education: <http://portal.mec.gov.br/cne/> [In Portuguese. Last checked: April 2010.]

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National Institute for Educational Studies and Research: <http://www.inep.gov.br/> [In Portuguese; some information in English and Spanish. Last checked: April 2010.]

União Nacional dos Dirigentes Municipais de Educação [National Union of Municipal Directors of Education]: <http://www.undime.org.br/> [In Portuguese. Last checked: April 2010.]

Sistema de Información de Tendencias Educativas en América Latina – SITEAL (IPE-UNESCO Buenos Aires y Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura): <http://www.siteal.iipe-oei.org/> [In Spanish. Last checked: April 2010.]

Sistemas Educativos Nacionales (Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura): <http://www.oei.es/infibero.htm> [In Spanish. Last checked: April 2010.]

For updated links, consult the Web page of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/links.htm>