

The right to education and the principles of universality, gratuity, and compulsory education in the municipal education plans of the capital Cities of Brazil's Midwest Region¹

O direito à educação e os princípios de universalidade, gratuidade e obrigatoriedade nos planos municipais de educação das capitais da Região Centro-Oeste do Brasil

El derecho a la educación y los principios de universalidad, gratuidad y obligatoriedad en los planes municipales de educación de las capitales de la Región Centro-Oeste de Brasil

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Abstract: In this study, we discuss the right to education in the Municipal Education Plans (PMEs) of the capitals of Brazil's Midwest region, based on an analysis of the principles of universality, gratuity, and compulsory preschool and primary education. Using a qualitative approach, documentary research was carried out, analyzing the educational indicators, the objectives related to the National Education Plan (2014-2024), the PMEs, and their monitoring reports. The study dialogues with the critical literature on the subject and the analyses show that the right to education is present in the plans analyzed. However, the complexity of implementing the PMEs as public policies in the process of materializing the right to education has a direct impact on the fragility of monitoring their implementation.

Keywords: Right to education; Universality; Gratuity; Compulsory; Municipal Education Plan.

Resumo: Neste estudo discutimos o direito à educação nos Planos Municipais de Educação (PMEs) das capitais da Região Centro-Oeste do país a partir da análise dos princípios de universalidade, gratuidade e obrigatoriedade da pré-escola e do ensino fundamental. Em uma abordagem qualitativa, realizou-se pesquisa documental, analisando os indicadores educacionais, as metas relativas ao Plano Nacional de Educação (2014-2024), os PMEs e os respectivos relatórios de monitoramento. O estudo dialoga com a literatura crítica sobre o tema e as análises indicaram que o direito à educação está presente nos planos analisados. Contudo, a complexidade que envolve a implementação dos PMEs como política pública no processo de materialização do direito à educação incide diretamente na fragilidade do monitoramento de sua execução.

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Palavras-chave: Direito à educação; Universalidade; Gratuidade; Obrigatoriedade; Plano Municipal de Educação.

Resumen: En este estudio se discute el derecho a la educación en los Planes Municipales de Educación (PMEs) de las capitales de la Región Centro-Oeste del país, a partir del análisis de los principios de universalidad, gratuidad y obligatoriedad de la educación infantil y primaria. Con un enfoque cualitativo, se realizó una investigación documental, analizando los indicadores educativos, las metas relativas al Plan Nacional de Educación (2014-2024), los PMEs y los respectivos informes de seguimiento. El estudio dialogó con la literatura crítica sobre el tema y los análisis indicaron que el derecho a la educación está presente en los planes analizados. Sin embargo, la complejidad que implica la implementación de los PMEs como política pública en el proceso de materialización del derecho a la educación incide directamente en la fragilidad del monitoreo de su implementación.

Palabras clave: Derecho a la educación; Universalidad; Gratuidad; Obligatoriedad; Plan Municipal de Educación.

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Introduction

The present study aims to analyze the principles of universality, gratuitousness, and obligation, configured as the right to education in the context of elaboration and implementation of Municipal Education Plans (PMEs) of the capitals of the States of the Central West region (Campo Grande, Cuiabá, and Goiânia). A qualitative approach was adopted, and documentary research was carried out, with content analysis (BARDIN, 1977) in the categorization process, with the intention of systematizing knowledge, as well as producing categorical indicators on the topic of the right to education.

The starting point was a systematic review of the literature on the topic of the right to education. Then, the PMEs in force in the capitals of the States of the Central-West region from the year 2015 were read. The study focuses on the principles of universality, obligation and free of charge in pre-school (4 and 5 years old) and in Elementary School (6 to 14 years old). In a complementary way, the Monitoring Reports of PMEs in the capitals were analyzed considering the goals and strategies identified in the previous stage.

The text is structured into four items. It initially seeks to show that there is a historical struggle to expand the right to education in Brazil, which is marked by advances and setbacks.

It then examines the PME's of the Capitals of the States of the Central-West Region (Campo Grande, Cuiabá, and Goiânia) from the perspective of the principles of universality, obligation, and free of charge. The third and fourth topics, analyze the right to education in pre-school (4-5 years old) and elementary school (6 to 14 years old) in the capitals and its relationship with the PNE (2014-2024). In the analysis and exposition process, it seeks to evaluate the indicators and dialogue with critical literature in the area, notably the works of Siqueira (2020), Hofling (2001), Freitas (2018), Dourado (2013; 2019), Cury (2010; 2017) and Assis (2017). In the final considerations, it returns to central aspects, highlighting certain weaknesses in monitoring, as well as reaffirming the centrality of the principles examined in implementing the right to education.

1. The historic struggle for the right to education in Brazil: advances and setbacks

Reality is historical, complex, and contradictory. It is not expressed only or simply through public policy. However, this constitutes a reference that must be considered when seeking to analyze and understand the right to education in the context of educational policy at the local level and its correlation as a State and government policy, taking into account the complexity presents in these relationships, as well as in the vision of the world and society.

In this direction, the field of public policies, given the set of social inequalities, finds itself redesigned in the uneven and combined movement of educational policies that are historically constituted in the sociopolitical dynamics of Brazilian society. Based on this understanding, it appears that education encompasses the processes that take place in the objective conditions themselves, as such issues are constituents and constituted in a broader social movement, unfolding in the conception and implementation of the right to education.

The right to education in the social-historical formation of the nation, and in the current Brazilian scenario, highlights political, economic and social struggles and crises (DOURADO, 2019), based on the understanding that education is not a crisis, but a social project. Thus, education is understood as a social arena, a space for struggle, disputes, changes, and as the basis of broader social relations. To understand the legal and political nuances that define the Brazilian social and educational context, it is necessary to rescue fundamental constitutional and educational principles such as universality, gratuitousness and obligation as guiding elements of the right to education. Policies that regulate education as a social right must also be considered, such as the PNE (2014-2024) and subnational, state or municipal plans. According to Dourado (2013),

In the educational area, these processes gain magnitude in view of the challenges in democratizing access, guaranteeing permanence and quality of education, at its different levels, stages and modalities, giving rise, among others, to the effective regulation of the collaboration regime, plans of education as State policies and the institution of the National Education System (DOURADO, 2013, p. 771).

The right to education demands actions that protect it as a human right and the State's priority duty. However, in the capitalist reality that is founded on social inequality, this right has become a privilege for a few, reaffirmed in the ideologies of neoliberal and conservative groups, with their outlines in the educational field, resulting in processes of conservation and social reproduction. In this sense, Dourado (2017) states that,

the scenario of policy proposition is not the same as materialization or the State in action. Let us understand that in the process of materializing the National Education Plan and other ten-year plans, multiple plans are the variables involved and not always coincident, sometimes ratifying the disputed conceptions (DOURADO, 2017, p. 37).

It is common to observe that educational policies follow the logic of discontinuity rather than continuity. However, PME's, as subnational plans, aim to provide more precise, objective, and universal guidance in the educational field. Consequently, they guarantee the right to education by approaching, diagnosing, and proposing actions regarding the local educational reality.

The State is crossed by economic and ideological interests, taking into account that it is an economic and class project, which seeks to spread an ideology that results in the production of a consensus, which results in social domination. When returning to the question of the expanded State, the human and historical issues that embark on school processes, human activities, extra- and intra-school issues, and localized policies, in the daily life of the school, all of this implies thinking about educational policy from the broader aspect and its presence in the organization of school education.

According to Cara (2019),

In practical terms, the way to confront barbarism in education is through political union around the consecration of the right to education, in the formula of the unequivocal length of the 1988 Federal Constitution. In other words, we cannot allow education to be baptized, as we must use education precisely as an instrument of struggle and freedom against barbarism. To achieve this, the right to education must be our lack of action (CARA, 2019, p. 31).

Thus, when thinking about State reform, public, social, and educational policies, one also thinks about social transformation, the right to education, the conditions and quality of education, as well as political-pedagogical and educational processes (DOURADO, 2019; CURY, 2017). The challenges that arise for the materialization of the PNE and PME's and their centrality as State policies for Brazilian education must be amalgamated with the social struggle for the consolidation of the democratic State of law, of a social nature. This will certainly contribute to combating the exclusionary reality that degrades social rights, which are the objects of historical struggle in Brazil.

1. The Municipal Education Plans of the state capitals of the Central-West Region and the principles of universality, obligation and free of charge.

The theoretical approach chosen in this study involved the analysis of more general data from PME's in the capitals of the Central-West Region, before verifying and analyzing how the guarantee of the right to education was presented concerning universality, free and mandatory pre-schools (4 to 5 years old) and elementary school (6 to 14 years old).

Law No. 5,565 of June 23, 2015, established the PME of Campo Grande, the capital of the State of Mato Grosso do Sul. The Law has 14 articles, 20 goals, and 427 strategies. Law No. 5,949 of June 24, 2015, established the PME in the city of Cuiabá, capital of the State of Mato Grosso. The law has 6 articles, 20 goals, and 133 strategies. Law No. 9,606 of June 24, 2015, established the PME of Goiânia, the capital of the State of Goiás, containing 10 articles, 20 goals, and 250 strategies.

PME's in these capitals establish direct interfaces with the PNE (2014-2024), either due to their number of goals or their content. Similarities were identified between the texts of the articles of the Laws and the goals of PME's with the PNE (2014-2024). The strategies of the respective PME's present differences, signaling specific educational needs and perspectives of these capitals.

1.1 The principle of universality

In the analysis of PME's, the principle of universality was identified in two articles, 10 goals, and eight strategies in total. The PME in the municipality of Campo Grande sought to universalize school attendance in Basic Education (article 2), as well as in the

special education modality (goal 4), highlighting the Basic Education Assessment System – Saeb (strategy 3.6), the National High School Exam – Enem (strategy 3.6 and strategy 7.7) and digital libraries (strategy 7.15).

The PME of Cuiabá also included in goal 4 the universalization of Basic Education, highlighting rural education and its articulation with the PME of Mato Grosso.

In turn, the PME of Goiânia registered the universalization of Basic Education (article 4), specialized educational services (goal 4), Enem (strategy 7.7), access to the internet, libraries, and digital networks (strategy 7.12 and 7.17) and the promotion of school health care (strategy 7.25). In total, the reference to universalization consisted of two articles, 10 goals, and eight strategies.

1.2 The principle of free of charge

Regarding the principle of free education, in the PME of Campo Grande, it was found 11 references to free education, with emphasis on the provision of free education, the reduction and inspection of private agreements in Early Childhood Education; free transport for rural, quilombola and indigenous education in Basic Education; free education in Youth and Adult Education (EJA); free certification for completing Primary and Secondary Education; free expansion of enrollment in Secondary Education integrated with Professional Education for all people in all teaching modalities, in vocational courses, in distance learning; as well as continuing education courses and public Higher Education.

In the PME of Goiânia, we also identified 11 strategies relating to free services, namely: free enrollment in daycare centers; free enrollment in EJA and High Schools integrated with Professional Education for Rural, Indigenous, Quilombola, and People with Disabilities Education; the provision of free glasses for students; the free provision of Technical Professional Education in public and private social service and professional training entities linked to the trade union system; the free offer of secondary-level technical professional education in distance learning; the offer of free Higher Education for the training of Basic Education teachers in the areas of natural science and mathematics; and guidance on the application of gratuity based on art. 13 of Federal Law No. 12,101/2009, which may provide scholarships for certain population groups.

Unlike the PMEs of Campo Grande and Goiânia, we did not identify goals or strategies in the articles with reference to the principle of free of charge in the PME of Cuiabá.

1.3 The principal of obligation

The principle of obligation was present, in total, in 14 strategies, seven of them only in the PME of Goiânia. In Campo Grande, the principle of obligation was related to the compulsory public call for students with disabilities, and global developmental disorders in compulsory education in regular education or in specialized educational services; in the construction of service models that ensure the student's presence in the school space, from the field of public policies to pedagogical aspects; guaranteeing public transport for all students in compulsory school education and EJA; and the mandatory implementation of public and private partnerships for mandatory internships in higher education courses. In Cuiabá, compulsory education was identified for rural students aged 4 to 17; and the mandatory inclusion of Afro-Brazilian and indigenous history and culture content in the school curriculum.

In Goiânia, the principle of obligation is related to the promotion of public policies in health, social assistance, and human rights for EJA students, with disabilities, global disorders, high abilities, or giftedness older than the age group for compulsory schooling; the obligation to include interdisciplinary pedagogical practices in the areas of science, work, languages, technology, culture and sport in the school curriculum; the obligation to discuss EJA in Higher Education degree courses; and ensure mandatory internships and establish partnerships for curricular internships in higher education courses.

2. The right to preschool (4-5 years old) in SMEs in the capitals of the Central-West Region and its relationship with the PNE (2014-2024)

Considering the municipality's competencies in terms of offering preschool and elementary education, we direct our attention to these two initial stages of Basic Education, seeking to understand the principles of universality, free of charge and obligation. In this section, we will analyze what the right to preschool (4-5 years old) refers to.

The principle of universality in preschool could be identified in the three PMEs, which signal the universalization of preschool, assuming in parallel the text of goal 1 of the PNE (2014-2024), as shown in Table 1; Only the PME of Cuiabá defined the year 2025 and not 2016 as the deadline for meeting the goal of universalizing pre-school, which, in turn, goes against Constitutional Amendment no. 59/2009 and the PNE itself (2014-2024).

Table 1 - Comparison between PNE goal 1 and PMEs in the capitals of the Central-West Region, concerning the universalization of preschool (4 and 5 years old)

Goal 1 - PNE	Goal 1 – PMEs	Capital
Goal 1 – PNE 2014/2024: Universalize, by 2016, Early Childhood Education in preschool for children aged 4 (four) to 5 (five) years old.	100% by 2016	Campo Grande Goiânia
	100% by 2025	Cuiabá

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023).

It is important to highlight that the existence of this goal seeks and stresses the right to education to ensure education for children aged 4 to 5 years in preschool. On the other hand, monitoring⁵ reports from PMEs in these capitals, as well as the School Census (2021) indicated a real distance from target 1 of the PNE, as shown in chart 1, below:

Chart1 - Goal 1 – Percentage of Early Childhood Education attendance in 2018 and 2020 by capital

Capital	Percentage of attendance	Year of reference
Campo Grande	80,8%	2018
Cuiabá	79,2%	2018
Goiânia	96,7%	2020

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023).

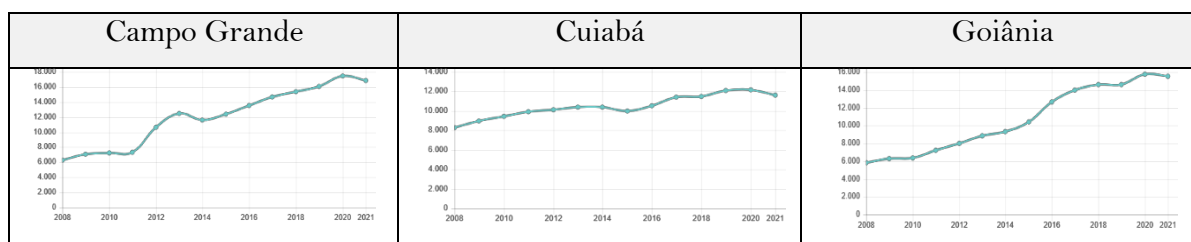
Considering that the PME of Cuiabá predicted the achievement of the goal of universalizing preschool only in the year 2025, it is still within the deadline established in its plan, despite the year established in the PNE (2014-2024). On the other hand, Campo Grande and Goiânia did not reach the percentage established in the PME with regard to this target.

Furthermore, all percentages were below 100% when considering total universalization and the 2016 deadline for target 1 of the PNE (2014-2024). For a better understanding, the Campo Grande and Goiânia Monitoring Reports express the percentages of 87.95% and 96.72% in 2021, respectively. Therefore, four years after the 2016 deadline, none of the capitals have achieved target 1.

Figure 1 and chart 2, below, demonstrate the preschool attendance rate in the capitals under analysis:

⁵ The city of Campo Grande already has two Monitoring Reports, carried out in 2018 and 2020. In contrast, the municipalities of Cuiabá and Goiânia only have one Monitoring Report, with Goiânia being published in 2020.

Figure 1- Graphs on the preschool attendance rate in the capitals Campo Grande, Cuiabá and Goiânia



Source: School Census - IBGE - 2021. Prepared by the authors (2023).

Chart 2 - Enrollment rate in Early Childhood Education in municipal schools in the years 2015/2018/2021

Capitais	2015	2018	2021
Campo Grande	12.444	15.346	16.891
Cuiabá	9.987	11.486	11.622
Goiânia	10.415	14.572	15.947

Source: School Census - IBGE - 2021. Prepared by the authors (2023).

Observa-se que entre o período de 2015 a 2018, as três capitais apresentaram um crescimento na taxa de matrícula, expandindo o atendimento na pré-escola para as crianças de 4 a 5 anos, buscando efetivar a universalização dessa etapa.

In relation to the principle of free education, it was possible to identify that it was guided solely by the PME of Campo Grande with a focus on free education and the reduction of aspects of public and private relations in the face of agreements between management and the business system, as observed in table 2:

Table 2 - Axis of the principle of free education in Early Childhood Education

Capital	Strategy	Content
Campo Grande	20.6	Allocate resources to public Early Childhood Education, monitoring private agreements of this type of partnership, guaranteeing free service, seeking to gradually terminate the agreements, in accordance with their absorption by the public network, during the term of the PME.

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023).

The PME of Campo Grande formalizes in its plan a different path from what has been observed in other plans. According to studies by Siqueira (2020), municipal management carries out contracts with the private sector in a procedural manner in most cities. The complexity of the current panorama requires understanding the path taken to

reduce such privatizations. The Campo Grande PME Monitoring Report (2020) indicates that “Currently 34 NGOs have agreements, serving around 4,367 students. Gradually, municipal Early Childhood Education units have been absorbing this demand” (CAMPO GRANDE, 2020, p. 168). However, none of the evaluation and monitoring documents indicate a reduction in agreements.

The new right argument is common (APPLE, 2003; LIMA; HYPOLITO, 2019)⁶, that the State is unable to sustain the availability of the right to education, stating that,

The transfer, by the State, of the responsibility for implementing social policies to less broad spheres, in addition to contributing to the above objectives, is understood as a way of increasing administrative efficiency and reducing costs (HOFLING, 2001, p. 39).

According to Freitas (2018), these tensions are articulated in the discourse of reducing costs, building a market for outsourcing public schools, and, concomitantly, the precariousness of the public education network in the face of the transfer of public money to the business sphere.

This situation of lack of accountability, underfunding, and outsourcing directly impacts the quality of education, as the idea of transferring education to the private market is the defense of the Minimum State and that the State should not be responsible for this.

For Adrião and Peroni (2009), the educational situation in Brazil has increasingly taken shape in the effects of neoliberalism and the third social way movement regarding State reform, in the face of privatization in public management. Thus, in the educational field, the state apparatus gradually diminished in the face of privatization and the transfer of responsibility for the public good to the economic market and management to business groups.

In this neoliberal conception, public management should not manage, but finance and transfer to the business field so that the market can regulate itself. According to the neoliberal discourse, the quality of education is only effective when there is a shock of competition, causing schools to be governed by economic agents that operate in the market. It is, therefore, about extending the provision of school education as a social and ideological project to the free market society.

It is important to understand that the provision of public services is classified as appropriate or inappropriate. For services considered appropriate, the State can pass on the provision to the private sector. As for the inappropriate, even if there is the possibility

⁶ According to Apple (2003), the new right can be represented by different groups, such as neoconservatives, managerialists, authoritarian populists, and neoliberals.

of delegation, the regulation and supervision of some services are compulsory (ADRIÃO, 2018; DI PIETRO, 2019; CURY, 2010). This ownership shared by the State is configured for both for-profit and non-profit groups and Social Organizations, the latter of which are ratified by the Federal Supreme Court (STF), through the opinion given in 2015, according to the Unconstitutionality Action (ADI) of the Federal Law 9,637, of 1998, by minister Luiz Fux.

In this context, it is observed that education, as a dispute over a social and economic conception, from a neoliberal perspective, enters a spiral of setbacks in the public dimension itself, due to the nature of the relationships between social organizations and outsourcing processes and even of privatization that began to command the reconfiguration of the educational field. In practice, it takes root in different contexts, from the growth of religious agreements, the segment of private daycare centers linked to neo-Pentecostalism, the privatization of training, the privatizing aspects in the curriculum dispute, and the non-compliance with the educational function.

This entire scenario is constituted in a conflicting manner, given that the rooting of the private in the public sphere advances in different social fields (health, housing, security, social assistance, etc.), especially in education.

3. The right to Elementary Education (6 – 14 years old) in PMEs in the capitals of the Central-West Region and its relationship with the PNE (2014-2024)

The right to Elementary Education (6–14 years old) is provided for in the PNE (Goal 2) with the forecast of its universalization within 10 years. It is noted that the three plans indicate the process of universalization of this stage, with only the PME of Cuiabá establishing the year 2024 for its fulfillment, while the PME of Goiânia signaled a percentage of 95% between 2015 and 2025. The Campo Grande PME reached a percentage of 95% between 2015 and 2024, that is, establishing a percentage and a shorter period than indicated in the current PNE.

According to monitoring reports, the percentage of Elementary School attendance in 2018 and 2020 indicates the possibility of meeting this target. Campo Grande, in 2018, recorded 98.0% of Elementary School attendance, and Cuiabá, 95.8%. Goiânia reached 91.85% attendance (chart 3).

Chart 3 - Goal 2 – Percentage of attendance in Elementary Education in 2018 and 2020

Capital	Percentage	Year
Campo Grande	98,0%*	2018
Cuiabá	95,8%*	2018
Goiânia	91,85%**	2020

Source: Data extracted from the PNE Observatory. Prepared by the authors (2023).

* The information was taken from the website: PNE - (<https://pne.mec.gov.br/>)

** Data extracted from the 1st Monitoring Report of the PME of Goiânia – 2021

The percentage of Campo Grande and Cuiabá is above 95% (goal 2 of PNE), with the first capital having already met its target established in the PME, and the second is below the percentage, but still within the validity period as expressed in its flat. The PME in Goiânia has a lower percentage than the others, that is, it is behind, taking into account that this data is from 2020 when compared with the 2018 data from the other capitals.

Despite this, data from the School Census (2021) indicate a general increase in the number of enrollments in Elementary Education. However, the growth in the number of enrollments is only observed in the initial years of Elementary School (charts 4 and 5).

Chart 4 - Number of enrollments in Elementary Education in municipal schools in the cities of Campo Grande, Cuiabá and Goiânia, in the years 2015/2018/2021

Capital	2015	2018	2021
Campo Grande	77.671	73.225	79.266
Cuiabá	29.129	29.283	32.536
Goiânia	68.082	66.149	68.501

Source: School Census - IBGE - 2021. Prepared by the authors (2023).

Chart 5 - Number of enrollments in Elementary Education, by initial and final years, in municipal schools in the capitals of the Central-West Region, in the years 2015 and 2021

Capital	Enrollments Initial years 2015	Enrollments Initial years 2021	Enrollment Final Years 2015	Enrollment Final Years 2021
Campo Grande	46.601	50.329	31.070	28.937
Cuiabá	23.695	27.413	5.434	5.123
Goiânia	42.819	50.566	25.263	17.635

Source: School Census - IBGE - 2021. Prepared by the authors (2023).

Universalization occurs when the entire population of a certain age group is in the schooling process and the increase in school units becomes essential to support the number of students, as well as the entire school organization of education professionals. In this sense, to complement this discussion, below we present the number of school units in the final years of Elementary School. (chart 6):

Chart 6 - Number of elementary school units, initial and final years, in the capitals of the Brazilian Central-West Region, in the years 2015/2018/2021

Capital	Number of educational establishments – initial years		Number of educational establishments – final years	
	2015	2021	2015	2021
Campo Grande	94	97	86	84
Cuiabá	81	82	47	46
Goiânia	168	168	156	83

Source: School Census - IBGE - 2021. Prepared by the Authors (2023).

In the period from 2015 to 2021, there was a small increase in the number of Elementary Education establishments in the initial years, while, for the final years, there was a reduction in all capitals. In Campo Grande and Cuiabá there was an increase in enrollments and units in the initial years and a drop in enrollments and units in the final years. In Goiânia, there was an increase in enrollment and stability in the number of school units in the initial years, as well as a decrease in enrollment and school units in the final years.

Still with regard to the principle of universality, we identified its relationship, in the PMEs of Campo Grande and Goiânia, to the universalization of Saeb in Elementary Education, as can be seen in the table 3.

Table 3 – Relationship between the principle of universality and assessment in Elementary Education

Capital	Strategy	Content
Campo Grande	7.7	Continuously improve instruments for assessing the quality of primary and secondary education, in order to include science teaching in exams administered in the final years of primary education, and incorporate the National Secondary Education Examination, ensuring its universalization, into the assessment system of Basic Education, as well as supporting the use of the results of national assessments by schools and education networks to improve their processes and pedagogical practices.
Goiânia	7.7	Continuously improve quality assessment instruments for primary and secondary education, in order to include science teaching in exams administered in the final years of primary education, as well as incorporating the National Secondary Education Examination, ensuring its universalization within the system assessment of Basic Education, as well as supporting the use of the results of national assessments by schools and education networks with a view to improving their pedagogical processes and practices.

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023).

The two strategies present texts identical to the PNE (2014-2024). The Campo Grande PME Monitoring Report (2021) highlights that strategy 7.7 is under development, with no detailed information regarding its compliance, and the Goiânia Report did not highlight any information about this strategy. However, what can be verified is the information that makes up goal 7, including the achievement of Campo Grande and Goiânia's Ideb scores. The Monitoring Report indicated an Ideb of 6.2 and 5.9 for the initial years of Elementary Education in 2021 and 2019, respectively, considering that the target was 5.7. For the final years of Elementary School, the Ideb target was 4.9, with a score of 5.9 being obtained in 2021 and 5.2 in 2019. In the Goiânia Monitoring Report, the Ideb for the initial years went from 5.3 in 2015 to 6.1 in 2021; and for the final years, it went from 4.1 in 2015 to 4.9 in 2021.

For Assis (2017), this context needs to be analyzed

To better understand the core of this contradiction, it is necessary to go back a little in time when the policy for monitoring and following the quality of Basic Education in Brazil began to be based on the Basic Education Development Index – IDEB. Freitas (2007) said he was surprised, in matters of evaluation in Elementary Education, that during the Lula government he contributed to the deepening of the liberal policies of FHC's time, contrary to what was expected of him, and that, in the field of educational evaluations, he observed- a full conversion of public accountability and privatization proposals. The Brazil test and IDEB are the tip of the iceberg of this same conception (ASSIS, 2017, p. 308).

Furthermore, in the Campo Grande Monitoring Report, it was indicated that, in the space of two years, municipal schools had gone through evaluation periods and that a program called Pedagogical Reflections was established: a dialogue between theory and practice⁷, whose purpose is to build a moment of study and reflection on the teaching and learning process. It is worth noting that this capital presents data that reference the context of social quality, through the inclusion of these programs, but also regulatory forms of evaluation by emphasizing the reach of Ideb.

Taking the principle of free elementary education as a reference, three strategies were highlighted to guarantee the offer of free exam certification to students in Campo Grande and Goiânia (table 4).

Table 4 - The principle of free of charge and its relationship with evaluation

Capital	Strategy	Content
Goiânia	8.2	Guarantee and encourage access and retention, public schooling of social quality and, exceptionally, free certification exams for the completion of primary and secondary education, following the approval of this PME.
Campo Grande	8.3	Continuously publicize and encourage, through advertising campaigns, participation in free certification exams for completion of primary and secondary education.
Campo Grande	8.3.1	Publicize, through the media, the free certification exams for completion of Elementary School, encouraging the participation of young people, adults and elderly people who have not completed this stage.

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023).

All strategies are connected to the thesis of free education linked to the examination system in Elementary Education, as well as the dissemination and publicization of these instruments and their results through articulation between civil and political society. The content of these strategies contrasts with what has been observed in the field of study in the evaluation dimension, as highlighted by Assis (2017):

⁷ It seeks to ensure the group of teachers and other education professionals, librarians, technical pedagogical team, and school managers, among others, continued training in different modalities, face-to-face and virtual, as well as pedagogical monitoring with moments of study and reflection on the demands of the teaching work. The program recommends, through study and reflection, that professionals rethink their actions in the school environment and improve the learning of students in the municipal network (CAMPO GRANDE, 2021, p. 58).

It is not difficult to find reports of school managers creating strategies to select the target audience for exams to prevent low-performing students from appearing on exam days. There are also reports of students being excluded from their schools in the year when the Saeb test is administered so that they do not contribute to lowering the Ideb. What is this if not an explicit form of segregation and exclusion? This scenario of holding those at the forefront of the process responsible has led to deviations from the purposes of large-scale evaluation. (ASSIS, 2017, p. 310).

The Campo Grande Monitoring Report highlights compliance with strategies 8.3 and 8.3.1, as “SEMED and SED have publicized the free certification exams for elementary and secondary education through posts on social media, such as Facebook and Instagram” (CAMPO GRANDE, 2021, p. 83).

In this logic, such strategies reaffirm neoliberal policies, as these exams are imposed on students on a mandatory basis and encourage students to obtain the best results. Furthermore, by signaling the process of publicizing exams and their results, the reproductive and competitive logic is reaffirmed, as well as the naturalization of comparison between students and institutions through rankings. For Assis (2017), this mechanism aims to:

To ensure greater effectiveness of the meritocratic and managerial policy, the results by schools began to be publicized with great repercussion in the various media, holding teachers, managers, and families responsible for the 'success' or 'failure' of students in tests and in Ideb. In this context, the “good school” became the one that best prepares students for national exams, which after all is what will indicate whether or not there has been an “improvement in the quality” of teaching, presented in the form of an index and displayed in graphics on school doors (ASSIS, 2017, p. 319).

This entire system reaffirms the logic highlighted by Luckesi (2011) regarding the pedagogy of the exam that is naturally configured in Basic Education.

Furthermore, this context is simultaneously supported by determinations of the private education system in pedagogical processes when determining the design and curricular contents and, consequently, the effects on the teaching-learning process. Adrião (2018) states that the field of evaluation, under the effects of neoliberal policies, is confirmed by pedagogical and teaching materials, to the increasing reduction of teachers' autonomy in the production of school work. In this sense, aspects were observed in the presence of the

*Center for Curriculum Redesign*⁸ (CCR) and technology through books, digital content, platforms, and standardized information systems.

Roughly speaking, management, evaluation, and didactic-pedagogical work in schools, as well as management guidelines, in general, are supported by the results of large-scale exams, as well as the processes of privatization, meritocracy, and teacher accountability, coordinators, and school managers. The influence of multilateral organizations can also be seen in defining the purposes of education, in curricula, assessment, management, teacher training, and the production of teaching materials. Business logic, neoliberal guidelines, and neoconservative values are increasingly guiding education policies and management (ADRIÃO; PERONI, 2009).

Final considerations

With the approval of the PNE (2014-2024) and PMEs, especially from 2015 onwards, it became essential to monitor education plans, taking into account that their legal existence does not materialize automatically, as they configure different periods between the proposition and its materialization, in different economic, political and social contexts. Furthermore, continuous monitoring and evaluation of all educational plans becomes necessary so that there can be the fulfillment of universality, free and mandatory goals, and strategies toward realizing the right to quality education for all.

The purpose of this study was to analyze how the principles of universality, gratuity, and obligation are implemented in PMEs, in order to give materiality to the right to education in the capitals of the Brazilian Center-West (Campo Grande, Cuiabá, and Goiânia), especially in the expansion and quality of Preschool (4-5 years old) and Elementary Education (6-14 years old)

It is worth noting that the three educational principles are highlighted in the municipal plans of Campo Grande, Cuiabá, and Goiânia. Thus, it confirms the right to education in these policies. However, when municipal competence was included, as a categorical filter in preschool and elementary school, only universality and free provision were present in seven and four devices respectively.

Regarding the principle of universality, it was identified in all plans through goals 1

⁸ An entity made up of international organizations, government spheres, academic institutions, corporations, and non-profit organizations. Among the CCR member institutions, several sell educational products and services to Brazilian governments, such as Google, IBM, Intel, Microsoft, and Pearson, in addition to the World Bank.(ADRIÃO, 2018, p. 21)

and 2 to universalize preschool and Elementary Education. However, goal 1 was not achieved by any of the capitals and goal 2 has so far been achieved only by Campo Grande. Furthermore, it was possible to observe that the principle of universalization was related to the dimension of assessment, especially in the expansion of Elementary Education.

Furthermore, the principle of free education was identified when seeking to reduce business agreements in the public educational sphere through the confirmation of free preschool education in the Campo Grande PME and the reiteration of strategies regarding the free certification of assessment systems.

It is worth highlighting that the right to Early Childhood Education (preschool) and Elementary Education is present in the PMEs analyzed and in the PNE (2014-2024), as confirmed in the respective laws and in the goals and strategies, even if with greater or lower intensity. It was observed that policies differ in PME laws, as they provide for different deadlines and strategies, which should be effectively monitored in each municipality and nationally. Monitoring and evaluation are fundamental for the materialization of policies and for society to effectively participate in discussions and deliberations regarding advances and setbacks regarding the realization of the right to quality education for all, a historic and necessary struggle in Brazil.

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