

Laws and Public Policies for Inclusive Education in the city of Rio de Janeiro: perspectives and dialogues¹

*Leis e Políticas Públicas para a Educação Inclusiva no município do Rio de Janeiro:
perspectivas e diálogos.*

*Leyes y Políticas Públicas para la Educación Inclusiva en la ciudad de Río de Janeiro:
perspectivas y diálogos*

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Abstract: This research intends, from a perspective of inclusive school education for people with disabilities, to provide an overview of the main initiatives that the management of the city of Rio de Janeiro has proposed as a response to federal demands regarding inclusion, highlighting the role of public policies in relation to the inequalities that people with disabilities face in municipal schools. To this, throughout the work, the main legislation that emerged in the trajectory of special education will be listed, seeking to create an understanding of the vision of inclusion, proposed as national policy. It is also intended to relate them to a survey of the main municipal actions undertaken in parallel, monitoring advances, setbacks, interpretations of public inclusion policies, as well as the alignment between them in the scope of their application.

Keywords: Public Policy; Inclusion; Inclusive education; Municipal schools of the Rio de Janeiro city.

Resumo: Esta pesquisa pretende, a partir de uma perspectiva de educação escolar inclusiva para pessoas com deficiência, trazer um apanhado das principais iniciativas que a gestão do município do Rio de Janeiro tem proposto como resposta às demandas federais, acerca da inclusão, evidenciando o papel das políticas públicas com relação às desigualdades que as pessoas com deficiência enfrentam nas escolas municipais. Para isso, ao longo do trabalho, serão elencadas as principais legislações que surgiram na trajetória da educação especial, buscando tecer um entendimento da visão de inclusão, proposta como política nacional. Também pretende-se relacioná-las com um levantamento das principais ações municipais empreendidas paralelamente, acompanhando avanços, retrocessos, interpretações das políticas públicas de inclusão, bem como o alinhamento entre elas no âmbito de sua aplicação.

Palavras-chave: Políticas Públicas; Inclusão; Educação Inclusiva; Escolas municipais da cidade do Rio de Janeiro.

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Resumen: Esta investigación pretende, desde una perspectiva de educación escolar inclusiva para personas con discapacidad, brindar un panorama de las principales iniciativas que la gestión de la ciudad de Río de Janeiro ha propuesto como respuesta a las demandas federales en materia de inclusión, destacando el papel de las políticas públicas en relación a las desigualdades que enfrentan las personas con discapacidad en las escuelas municipales. Para ello, a lo largo del trabajo, se enumerarán las principales leyes que han surgido en la trayectoria de la educación especial, buscando comprender la visión de inclusión propuesta como política nacional. También se pretende relacionarlas con un relevamiento de las principales acciones municipales llevadas a cabo simultáneamente, siguiendo los avances, retrocesos e interpretaciones de las políticas públicas de inclusión, así como la alineación entre ellas en cuanto a su aplicación.

Palabras clave: Políticas Publicas; Inclusión; Educación Inclusiva; Escuelas municipales en la ciudad de Río de Janeiro.

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Introduction

One of the most debated topics in Brazilian education is the process of including people with disabilities in school systems. Historically, the reception of these individuals has been marked by prejudice and exclusion from an autonomous and socialized life. However, there is an increasing demand across various sectors for these groups to achieve equity within society.

To make this a reality, public policies proposed by federal, state, and municipal authorities play a fundamental role. While they do not instantly transform reality, they encourage changes in the systems and, together with legislation, work toward instilling certain habits in different segments of society. In this context, education is a key focus, ensuring access and permanence in schools with attention to the specific needs of students while providing them with the same opportunities as their peers.

Many public policies in Brazil are of a social nature and aim to improve the quality of life and access to essential services for their beneficiaries. These policies are understood as “a set of socially established social and political needs within a given society” (Deitos, p. 211, 2010); in other words, they are implemented to achieve specific objectives and address existing social problems. They seek to meet the demands of marginalized groups and are conceived from a “clash of interests: they are developed, expressed, and understood within conflictual relationships. They are selectively assimilated by different groups” (Garcia, p. 9, 2004).

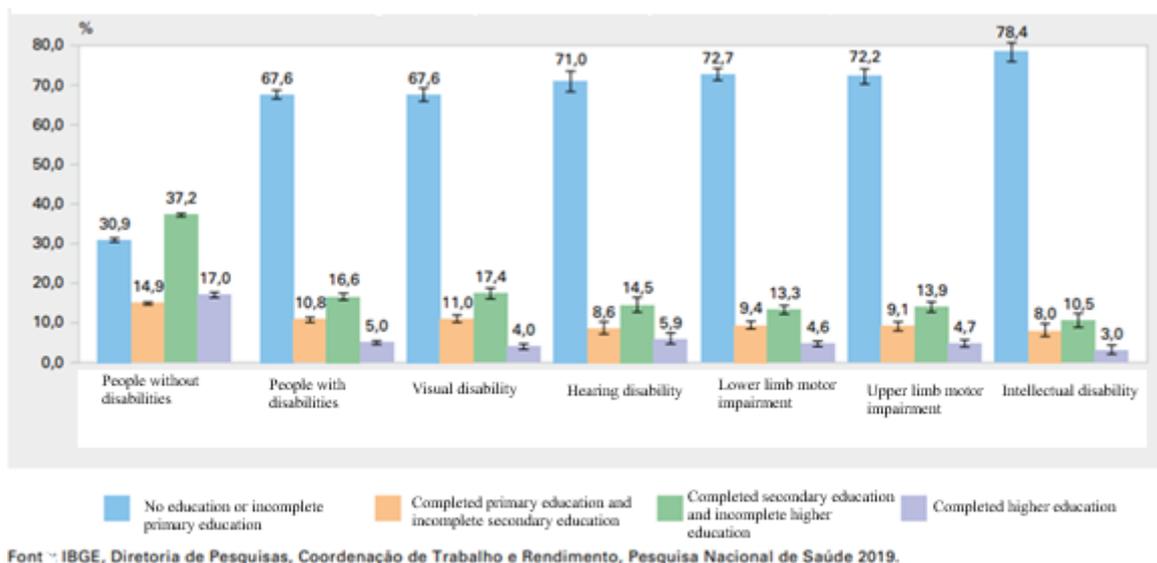
Thus, educational policies and legislation are not only responsible for seeking solutions to emerging problems but also align with the existing Educational Policy, as pointed out by Vieira (2007). These policies arise from the demands of affected groups and from the interests of sectors that encourage the development of an agenda for their formulation and implementation. Therefore, we must also consider changes or continuities based on the policies adopted, as well as setbacks when certain positions fail to benefit the target groups of these policies.

These complexities arise because the promulgation of public policies is a field of disputes. "Policy represents the space where the inherent politicization of education is manifested" (Vieira, 2007, p. 56), where different demands and perspectives intersect and clash concerning societal goals—whether as a reflection of ongoing transformations or as a vision for the future. In this sense, there is no neutrality in these processes, as Paulo Freire asserts in most of his works, such as *Pedagogy of Autonomy* (1996). Just as pedagogical proposals are not neutral, since they are driven by ideological choices, the very notion of neutrality is a political stance in itself.

Likewise, the actions taken by municipal education departments and schools to promote inclusive education are not neutral. The choice of one resolution over another reflects a particular understanding and approach to integrating these groups into the school environment, especially under the guidance of federal policies. This can serve as an important parameter to determine whether inclusion is being implemented merely as compliance with legislation or as a genuine part of municipal policies. If the latter, the approach matters: does it integrate individuals into institutions while continuing to segregate them from their peers, or does it respect their constitutional rights? Policies that fail to address the root causes of exclusion in daily life risk reinforcing the notion that differences should merely be tolerated rather than encouraging society to embrace diversity equitably, ensuring free access for all.

In this regard, data from the 2019 National Health Survey, published by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, provide valuable insights into the relationship between people with disabilities and education. According to the data, there are disparities in educational attainment and levels of schooling between individuals with and without disabilities.

Graph 1 – Percentage distribution of people aged 18 and over, with and without disabilities, by type of disability and level of education – Brazil, 2019.



According to the aforementioned data, it is evident that the group of people with disabilities who have no formal education or have not completed elementary school is 36.6%, larger than that of people without disabilities. This is a concerning statistic, given the goal of universal education. Additionally, people without disabilities are more likely to complete high school (37.2%) or higher education (17%), whereas only 16.6% of people with disabilities complete high school and just 5% attain higher education, once again highlighting significant disparities.

These data reinforce the central concern of this study regarding the actions taken by cities, especially in light of the still alarming figures presented. Considering that part of the surveyed population should have benefited from the expansion of inclusion policies implemented since the 1990s—since they would have already reached adulthood—it becomes evident that special attention is needed on this issue. If the expected outcomes are not being achieved, it indicates that much remains to be done by public authorities to reverse this situation, making inclusion policies even more relevant.

The general objective of this research is to analyze the initiatives undertaken by the city of Rio de Janeiro for the inclusion of people with disabilities within the context of Inclusive Education. The study aims to assess whether these initiatives align with the guidelines established by federal authorities and current policies, as well as to identify potential progress or setbacks in this process through documentary research and engagement with theoretical perspectives in the field.

Thus, the study will first present the main national legislations related to Inclusive Education. Based on this broader understanding, it will then examine the situation in the city of Rio de Janeiro, highlighting the most recent initiatives, which will be discussed in the third section. This analysis will help determine whether the city's actions align with federal guidelines and existing policies, while also identifying any advancements or regressions in this process.

To achieve this, the guiding research questions are: What actions is the municipality implementing to include people with disabilities? Do these actions follow an equitable approach? Are they aligned with other ongoing initiatives? The research will be conducted using a documentary research methodology, which will involve analyzing official documents and engaging with specialized theorists in the field of Inclusive Education, aiming to provide a deeper and more critical understanding of the studied context.

A Brief Overview of National Legislation and Policies

In this brief overview, it is essential to highlight the main national policies that guide discussions on Inclusive Education. We begin with the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB) No. 9,394/1996, which establishes the principles and guidelines for Brazilian education, including Special Education as a teaching modality. Before this, the National Policy on Special Education (1994) advocated for special education in separate schools and classrooms, adopting a more segregated approach. In contrast, the National Policy on Inclusive Education (2008) marked progress by promoting the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular schools, ensuring adaptations and Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE). The National Education Plan (PNE), in effect until 2024, reinforces this perspective in its Goal No. 4, which calls for the universalization of basic education for people with disabilities, prioritizing the regular school network. Additionally, the Brazilian Law for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (Statute of Persons with Disabilities) No. 13,146/2015 ensures an inclusive educational system at all levels. However, Decree No. 10,502/2020, which proposed the segregation of students with disabilities into special classes or schools, was considered a setback and was revoked in 2023. These policies reflect the evolution of educational inclusion in Brazil, highlighting both progress and ongoing challenges. Therefore, let us examine each policy in greater detail and its role.

Several authors, such as Deitos (2010) and Garcia (2004), point to the 1990s as a period when various educational policies emerged in the country. This coincides with Brazil's re-

democratization and the recent enactment of a new Constitution, bringing new perspectives on the future of national education, including the promulgation of the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB) No. 9,394 in 1996. This legislation serves as the foundation for education in Brazil. Consequently, discussions regarding the education of students with disabilities gained prominence during this period.

Although the LDB does not explicitly use the term "inclusion," it establishes Special Education as a specific modality with a dedicated section in Chapter V, outlining commitments that represented progress on the subject. In Article 58, Paragraph 1, the law states that Special Education should preferably be provided within the regular education system, emphasizing in Paragraph 3 that it is the duty of the State. In the following article, the law outlines the obligations of the education system, among which the following stand out:

- I – Specific curricula, methods, techniques, educational resources, and organization to meet their needs; (...)
- IV – Special Education for work, aiming at their effective integration into society. (Brazil, 1996)

It is evident that the guidelines for educational networks and schools emphasize that pedagogical organization should be designed to reach this group of students and also consider the professional sphere. The term "integration" is used to refer to providing equitable access to the same opportunities as other students. However, before the enactment of this law, the National Policy on Special Education was launched in 1994, focusing on providing special education as a separate service for people with disabilities, based on special schools and classes. This segregated approach impacted issues of inclusion and specialized support, as these services were offered in separate spaces from students without disabilities. Despite this, its importance lay in guaranteeing these students the right to access education.

In 2008, the National Policy on Inclusive Education was published, promoting, unlike the previous policy, the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular schools. It encouraged curricular, methodological, and physical adaptations to ensure that these students could fully participate in school activities. Additionally, it recognized the importance of Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE) as a collaborative activity with regular teachers, acting as a facilitator for students' development.

Moving on to more contemporary legislation, the National Education Plan (PNE), in effect until 2024, establishes in its Goal No. 4 the universalization of basic education for people with disabilities. It specifies that this process should take place "preferably in the regular education network, ensuring an inclusive educational system, multifunctional resource rooms,

classes, schools, or specialized services, whether public or partnered" (Brazil, 2014). This underscores that promoting inclusive education for these students across Brazil is a priority, explicitly stated within the goal itself, demonstrating the commitment of policymakers and their sensitivity to the needs of students with disabilities.

The PNE goes even further, making it clear in its list of strategies that it is mandatory to "ensure the provision of inclusive education, prohibiting exclusion from regular education on the grounds of disability" (Brazil, 2014). Failure to comply with this provision may lead to measures preventing institutions from rejecting these students. Furthermore, Strategy 9 emphasizes strengthening "monitoring and tracking of school access, specialized educational services, as well as the school retention and academic progress of students with disabilities" (Brazil, 2014). These points highlight important nationwide proposals for schools, positioning inclusive education as one of the highest priorities to improve its availability and quality.

In line with the PNE, the Brazilian Law for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities No. 13,146, enacted on July 6, 2015, represents a significant milestone in advancing inclusion policies in Brazil. Article 27 of the law establishes that:

"Education is a right of persons with disabilities, ensuring an inclusive educational system at all levels and lifelong learning, enabling them to achieve the fullest possible development of their talents and physical, sensory, intellectual, and social abilities, according to their characteristics, interests, and learning needs." (Brazil, 2015)

The law continues in Article 28, outlining the primary responsibilities of the public authorities in promoting, implementing, and overseeing the inclusion process. It establishes a series of guidelines and measures to ensure the full participation of people with disabilities in educational settings, including eliminating physical and attitudinal barriers, curricular adaptations, investment in teacher training, and improving the quality of Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE).

In 2020, the Federal Government enacted Decree No. 10,502, which was widely regarded as a setback in inclusion policies. Shortly after its promulgation, the Supreme Federal Court suspended the decree through Direct Action of Unconstitutionality (ADI) 6590, arguing that its content contradicted the Federal Constitution and "fundamental principles of education, the rights of persons with disabilities, human dignity, non-discrimination, and the prohibition of regression in human rights." Ultimately, the decree was revoked on January 1, 2023.

Opposition to this policy stemmed from its proposal to reinstate special schools or separate regular classes within institutions designated for students with disabilities. This contradicted their inalienable right to education.

This case exemplifies a government policy that emerged to serve the ideological interests of specific societal groups, breaking away from established frameworks and discontinuing state policies that had been planned up to 2024 under the PNE—regardless of any ruling party's ideology. From a national perspective, it is evident that policy proposals in recent years have largely favored the rights of students with disabilities. When they have not, other responsible entities have acted to safeguard the needs of these groups.

Despite these laws and policies, the realities and possibilities for implementation vary. As Garcia (2004, p. 6) points out, what exists is "a national policy that regulates the coexistence of different projects" because, in practice, the process unfolds in different ways. Given the potential variations in implementation, the next section will present the main specific policies of the municipality of Rio de Janeiro to initiate a more detailed analysis of how these policies are being applied.

Laws and Policies for Inclusion in the Municipality of Rio de Janeiro

The municipality of Rio de Janeiro, which has historically played a significant role in the country, including serving as the capital, encompasses one of the largest public education networks in Latin America. Regarding inclusion, the city has been a pioneer in some aspects, as it was home to the first educational institutes for the blind, the Benjamin Constant Institute, and for the deaf, the National Institute for Deaf Education, both founded by Emperor Dom Pedro II. Given these historical factors, the following sections will present the main actions undertaken by the city in recent years to promote inclusion in education, as a first step in understanding how legislation is being interpreted and implemented.

To obtain a comprehensive overview, it is essential to examine what Organic Law No. 1 of April 5, 1990, which governs the municipality of Rio de Janeiro, states regarding individuals with disabilities. A reference appears early in Article 13, which states that the municipality will ensure their inclusion in society in accordance with human dignity, specifically mentioning specialized education. In the section dedicated to education, Article 232, item VII, explicitly addresses Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE), explaining in its subparagraphs how it should be provided:

VII - Specialized educational assistance for individuals with disabilities by a multidisciplinary team of special education professionals, through:

- a) Enrollment in the nearest municipal school to their residence, in regular classes, or, when necessary, in special classes according to criteria established for each type of disability;
- b) Integration, whenever possible, into common school activities;
- c) Provision of equipment, human resources, and materials in municipal schools, always adapting them to the type of disability; (Rio de Janeiro, 1990).

We can observe a concern for ensuring that institutions are close to students' homes, facilitating their access and retention. There are also guarantees for necessary materials and professionals and for students to participate in the same activities as their peers, indicating an inclusive perspective as an intrinsic part of the school environment.

In 2013, the enactment of Ordinary Law No. 5.554 established guidelines for the educational inclusion of students with disabilities, reinforcing what was already outlined in the 1990 law. However, in its Article 2, it specifies that the municipality will develop “updated and compatible pedagogical resources for the proper support of students with different disabilities” (Rio de Janeiro, 2013). It also provides for specific strategic planning tailored to each student's needs, multidisciplinary support with cooperation among various professionals, and the continuous fight against prejudice and exclusion within schools.

The following year, Complementary Law No. 136 was approved, requiring educational institutions to prioritize modifications to their structures to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities. It goes further by listing required changes to furniture, classroom and bathroom access, and specifying the notifications and penalties for non-compliance.

As an addition to these guidelines, in 2014, the municipality also approved specific policies for the inclusion of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) through Law No. 5.749. The law explicitly emphasizes the term ‘inclusion’ and highlights, in Article 1, the importance of early intervention in child development. Subparagraph V further states that “the education network is responsible for creating mechanisms to meet the needs of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, respecting their differences and adhering to education guidelines” (Rio de Janeiro, 2014).

Continuing the discussions and initiatives on inclusion, Ordinary Law No. 6.432 of December 20, 2018, established the Special Education Policy from the Perspective of Inclusive Education for students with disabilities in Rio de Janeiro. Its main goal, outlined in Article 2, is to “ensure access, retention, participation, and learning of students who are the target audience of Special Education in regular classrooms of the Municipal Public Education Network” (Rio de Janeiro, 2018). The principles listed in Article 3 include:

- I – Inclusion in education is a fundamental human right and the foundation for building a more just, equal, and supportive society;
- II – Inclusion in education must be guaranteed in the Municipal Public Education Network, ensuring access, participation, retention, and learning for all children, youth, and adults as unique individuals, with equal opportunities within their communities;
- III – Students who are the target audience of Special Education cannot be excluded from the Municipal Public Education Network under any circumstances, especially based on disability (Rio de Janeiro, 2018).

Furthermore, Article 4 emphasizes that Special Education is transversal across all levels of education, ensuring that students receive specific educational support while also participating in regular classes with teachers and peers who may not necessarily have disabilities, preventing segregation.

In this context, Article 5 establishes that Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE) should “aim to eliminate barriers that may hinder the schooling process for the target audience” (Rio de Janeiro, 2018), and it should be provided at the student’s own school during complementary hours, aligned with the institution's Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP). Article 6 also includes provisions for the expansion of bilingual education in municipal schools through the promotion of Brazilian Sign Language (LIBRAS), allowing deaf and/or hearing-impaired students to use LIBRAS as their primary language in the school environment, including for instructional purposes.

Additionally, in 2018, the Municipal Education Plan was enacted, which remains in effect until 2028. The document emphasizes educational inclusion as a key factor in societal improvement and defines individuals as “unique subjects, with equal opportunities as other members of their community” (Rio de Janeiro, 2018). Article 3, subparagraph III, explicitly prohibits educational institutions from refusing to accept students with disabilities, ensuring their right to education. Other provisions reinforce accessibility in various aspects, specifying the role of AEE within the municipal education network and requiring that inclusion be incorporated into all dimensions of school planning. The plan also proposes important goals, such as ensuring student access and retention, expanding LIBRAS instruction, and implementing bilingual education in Rio de Janeiro.

From 2019 onward, several smaller but still significant actions were undertaken, including: The establishment of Student Games for people with disabilities, through Ordinary Law No. 6.673 of December 11, 2019. The prohibition of additional fees charged by private institutions to families of students with disabilities, ensuring they are accepted without discrimination and that institutions develop an inclusive PPP, through Ordinary Law No. 7.517 of September 12, 2022. The creation of the ‘Blue Week’ permanent awareness campaign,

aimed at promoting the inclusion of individuals with ASD and multiple disabilities in the public education system, through Ordinary Law No. 7.557 of September 23, 2022.

Finally, at the end of 2023, the city's Master Plan was updated through Complementary Law No. 270 of 2024. Among its guiding principles, Article 3, subparagraph XXV, states that people with disabilities must have their rights assured, equal to all others. Additionally, subparagraph XXIII emphasizes the provision of necessary support in a non-segregated, inclusive manner. Taken together, these initiatives demonstrate a growing commitment by Rio de Janeiro's leadership to promoting inclusion in schools. The approved policies, action plans, and legislative measures over the years reveal the city's approach to addressing the educational needs of students with disabilities.

The Perspective of Inclusive Education in the Municipality of Rio de Janeiro

Analyzing the most impactful actions taken by the municipality of Rio de Janeiro to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities, it is possible to observe that the objectives align with the national proposal, as its legislation runs parallel to national regulations, with similar texts. In the Organic Law No. 1, which predates the LDB (Law of Directives and Bases of National Education), although the term "inclusion" is not explicitly used, the proposed actions go further by aiming to stimulate all the potentialities of these students for their full development as individuals. The text, when addressing Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE), highlights its importance in the educational process, a concept that would later gain greater prominence at the national level with the National Policy on Inclusive Education in 2008. In this sense, it already emphasized the need for adapting specific materials to meet the needs of different disabilities, as stated in Article 322. These points were reinforced and further detailed by Ordinary Law No. 5.554 of 2013, which was enacted after the National Policy but before the promulgation of the National Education Plan (PNE).

The 2014 PNE emphasized the importance of inclusion throughout the country as one of the goals to be achieved, placing responsibilities on states and municipalities. In Rio de Janeiro, various complementary laws emerged during this period in line with national discussions, aiming to ensure that institutions adapted to students' needs. One notable example is Law No. 5.749, which, in the same year, provided specific guidelines for the inclusion of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in municipal schools. This legislation represents a significant advancement compared to many other texts, not only by

addressing the specific needs of children on the autism spectrum but also by encouraging early diagnosis and intervention. The focus is truly on meeting these children's needs to ensure their full development.

In 2018, Ordinary Law No. 6.432 brought essential points to discussions on inclusion, as it highlights that these actions are not only relevant for ensuring the basic rights of people with disabilities but also represent a benefit to society as a whole, making it "more just, equal, and supportive," as stated in the first item of Article 3. It also emphasizes the need to consider the permanence of students in school after they have been enrolled, ensuring they have "equal opportunities with other people in the community in which they live" (Rio de Janeiro, 2018). Additionally, the law reinforces that schools must accept students and adapt to accommodate them, something already established in national legislation, such as the Brazilian Inclusion Law of 2015 and the 2014 PNE. This alignment combats segregation and discriminatory practices by school administrators who may refuse to accept students due to their disabilities, ensuring the necessary measures can be taken to address such exclusion from education.

This legislation also emphasizes that Special Education operates as a transversal aspect of all educational levels and/or modalities. Therefore, it assumes that children should preferably be included in regular schools with all necessary support for their learning. The law aligns with the Federal Law of 2015, which, in Article 28, mandates that the school's Pedagogical Political Project (PPP) must include AEE to ensure "full access to the curriculum on equal terms, promoting the achievement and exercise of autonomy" (Brazil, 2015). Similarly, the 2018 municipal legislation stipulates that AEE must be incorporated into the school's pedagogical project and provided within the school itself during complementary hours, ensuring that students receive the necessary support.

It is evident that the legal and political proposals for Special Education in Rio de Janeiro align with federal policies while contradicting measures that represent setbacks, such as Decree No. 10.502 of 2020. This shows that the city follows national agendas consistent with the Constitution and the LDB, as well as the current PNE. However, the Municipal Education Plan also foresees collaboration with the state and federal governments to achieve its objectives, including inclusion.

As Deitos (2010) and Garcia (2004) point out, legal frameworks are essential for guaranteeing the right to inclusive education. The policies and legislation in Rio de Janeiro generally align with the federal texts currently in effect, as long as they promote inclusion. They have been working toward the full integration of people with disabilities into education. However, legal norms alone cannot eliminate the historical barriers to

exclusion. They must be reinterpreted in pedagogical practice through the collective knowledge of educators and the school community.

Vieira (2007) and Freire (1996) emphasize that education—analyzed here from an inclusive perspective—is a space for debate and the construction of meaning, where neutrality is itself a political and pedagogical choice. Therefore, the promotion of inclusion, whether through student games, awareness campaigns such as the "Blue Week," or other initiatives, demonstrates an interest in ensuring that children with disabilities have access to what is their fundamental right. These policies seek to equalize opportunities and resources, fostering a deeper connection between legal frameworks and educational practices.

Legally, the actions taken by the municipal government over the past years to ensure equity for people with disabilities, as identified and analyzed in this research, suggest that efforts are being made to transform school conditions for these students. However, it is important to consider how these actions are interpreted by the school community in the context of everyday institutional realities. Legal frameworks serve as guidelines for building a more critical and reflective educational practice that effectively translates the right to inclusion into concrete and transformative actions. These policies and plans are in force, with specific goals in this area, demonstrating that even if these actions are not fully implemented in practice, the most affected groups have a legal basis to demand their rights from schools and the municipality itself.

Conclusions

In recent years, the municipal government of Rio de Janeiro has demonstrated a commitment to promoting an inclusive education policy, striving to ensure, through legal mechanisms, that students with disabilities have access to quality education and can remain in the school environment. Although these legislations do not necessarily indicate whether students are effectively securing their educational rights, the established mechanisms already serve as influential tools for gradually transforming society and enabling a more equitable educational experience for students with disabilities.

From the perspective of critical thinkers, it has become evident how essential it is for education professionals to engage in critical reflection that allows them to identify and overcome exclusionary practices, abandoning neutrality. Ensuring rights through legislation is fundamental for these students to increasingly benefit from concrete transformative actions within the educational space and process.

This study provided an overview of what has been planned for the city of Rio de Janeiro based on the enacted legislation and policies adopted by educational institutions. It became clear that inclusion, as a principle of human dignity, serves as a guiding perspective for discourse, as well as an acknowledgment of the overall benefits these measures bring to the city. This perspective demonstrates that ensuring these rights for students with disabilities transcends any political ideology; regardless of the government in power, it is a fundamental requirement to guarantee that these individuals are fully supported in their rights.

To confirm the impacts of these propositions, further research within schools—examining how these policies are being implemented and monitored, along with the specific outcomes in educational institutions—could provide insights from those directly involved in the process. This would allow for an assessment of the effectiveness of the legislation and policies. The present study aimed to highlight the alignment of government actions in promoting inclusion.

It is important to emphasize that the policies and laws implemented in the city of Rio de Janeiro sometimes lead the way and at other times align with federal initiatives. There is a continuous effort to update regulations or introduce complementary laws to detail specific actions needed to mitigate the challenges faced by students with disabilities. This ongoing movement establishes inclusion as an inalienable right for these individuals, striving for equity in opportunities and reinforcing that educational institutions cannot refuse to accept these students. The right to enrollment, access to necessary materials, and support for academic retention and completion are becoming increasingly safeguarded by law. The existence and continuous updating of legislation, plans, and projects that address the needs of these individuals represent a significant step toward reducing their invisibility and ensuring they fully enjoy their rights.

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