

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS OF THEIR SCHOOL CAREER: PROPOSITION OF AN INDICATOR AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE EXERCISE OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

EXPECTATIVA DA TRAJETÓRIA ESCOLAR DE ALUNOS DO ENSINO MÉDIO: PROPOSIÇÃO DE INDICADOR E APORTES PARA O EXERCÍCIO DA LIDERANÇA ESCOLAR

EXPECTATIVAS DE LOS ESTUDIANTES DE EDUCACIÓN SECUNDARIA SOBRE SU TRAYECTORIA ESCOLAR: PROPUESTA DE UN INDICADOR Y APORTACIONES AL EJERCICIO DEL LIDERAZGO ESCOLAR



Nelson GIMENES 1
e-mail: ngimenes@fcc.org.br



Rodrigo TOLEDO 2
e-mail: toledordg@gmail.com

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1Carlos Chagas Foundation (FCC), São Paulo – SP – Brazil. Senior Researcher; Department of Educational Research.

2Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC SP) and Municipal University of São Caetano do Sul (USCS), São Paulo – SP – Brazil. Professor and Coordinator of the Laboratory of Educational and Community Practices of the Psychology course

RESUMO: O artigo analisa as expectativas de diferentes atores escolares em relação às trajetórias escolares dos estudantes do ensino médio. A partir dos microdados do SAEB 2017 e 2019, do ENEM 2017 a 2019, bem como dos dados obtidos em uma pesquisa sobre liderança escolar em dois estados brasileiros, com aproximadamente 1.500 respondentes, propôs-se um indicador de expectativas das trajetórias dos alunos. Os resultados apontam para uma baixa expectativa da equipe escolar, embora tenham sido identificadas escolas com diferentes graus de expectativas. O referencial teórico baseou-se no papel da liderança escolar e suas relações com as crenças dos atores escolares sobre os estudantes. Os resultados permitiram destacar a importância de um indicador de expectativas sobre trajetórias escolares como meio para o planejamento de intervenções mais efetivas dos gestores que, sendo passíveis de monitoramento e acompanhamento, podem contribuir para a aprendizagem efetiva dos discentes.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Ensino Médio. Expectativas Educacionais. Liderança Escolar. Rendimento Escolar. Trajetória Escolar.

RESUMEN: El artículo analiza las expectativas de diferentes actores escolares en relación con las trayectorias escolares de los estudiantes de secundaria. A partir de microdatos de SAEB 2017 y 2019, ENEM 2017 a 2019, así como de datos obtenidos de una encuesta sobre liderazgo escolar en dos estados brasileños, con aproximadamente 1.500 encuestados, se propuso un indicador de expectativas sobre las trayectorias de los estudiantes. Los resultados apuntan a bajas expectativas entre el personal escolar, aunque se identificaron escuelas con diversos grados de expectativas. El marco teórico se basó en el papel del liderazgo escolar y su relación con las creencias de los actores escolares sobre los alumnos. Los resultados permitieron destacar la importancia de un indicador de expectativas sobre las trayectorias escolares como medio para planificar intervenciones más eficaces por parte de los directivos que, si pueden ser monitoreadas y seguidas, pueden contribuir al aprendizaje efectivo de los estudiantes.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Educación secundaria. Expectativas educativas. Liderazgo educativo. Rendimiento escolar. Carrera escolar.

ABSTRACT: The article analyzes the expectations of different school actors in relation to the school trajectories of high school students. Based on microdata from SAEB 2017 and 2019, ENEM 2017 to 2019, as well as data obtained from a survey on school leadership in two Brazilian states, with approximately 1,500 respondents, an indicator of expectations of students' trajectories was proposed. The results point to low expectations on the part of school staff, although schools with varying degrees of expectations were identified. The theoretical framework was based on the role of school leadership and its relationship with school actors' beliefs about students. The results made it possible to highlight the importance of an indicator of expectations about school trajectories as a means of planning more effective interventions by managers which, if they can be monitored and followed up, can contribute to effective student learning.

KEYWORDS: High School. Educational expectations. School Leadership. School performance. School trajectory.

Introduction

This article proposes the development of an indicator of expectations regarding students' educational trajectories as perceived by teachers, coordinators, and school principals. It stems from a set of information produced in the research "Management Practices, Leadership, and Quality in High Schools" (Oliveira; Pereira; Pato; Santos, forthcoming), conducted in state schools in Espírito Santo and Piauí. Additionally, it seeks to analyze the indicator results by school, relating them to some of the other information contained in the database of the aforementioned research and other data available through the School Census, as well as other databases such as the Basic Education Assessment System (SAEB) 2017 and 2019, all under the responsibility of the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP, 2018, 2020).

The presented analysis addresses the relationship between the school principal's leadership and the expectations of teachers, coordinators, and the principals themselves, referred to in this text as "students' educational trajectory expectations by school teams." We concur, therefore, with previous studies that consider student learning as an intra-school variable (Oliveira; Carvalho, 2018; Leithwood *et al.*, 2010), which constitutes the leadership of the principal, understanding such a concept as the ability of this professional to mobilize school teams to achieve the schools' purposes.

We start from the premise, in this perspective, that school leadership is an important factor for school effectiveness. The school principal is responsible for leading the team and ensuring that all students receive a socially referenced quality education, which means accessing, remaining, and learning as provided by Brazilian educational laws.

The effective leadership of the principal can have a significant impact on student learning. A literature review conducted by Robinson and Gray (2022) establishes some leadership practices associated with improvements in student learning. These practices include setting clear and challenging goals, promoting a culture of collaboration, and developing a positive school climate. Additionally, Leithwood *et al.* (2006) suggest that the principal's leadership can directly impact student learning. They found that effective principal leadership is associated with significant improvements in student learning.

Oliveira and Carvalho (2018) argue that the principal's leadership can influence teacher motivation and engagement. This guidance from the principal is correlated with higher levels of teacher engagement and greater job satisfaction, which, in turn, can result in improvements in student learning. In summary, school leadership plays a critical role in the success of

education, establishing achievable goals for teaching, fostering a culture of collaboration, and creating a positive climate in the school.

Theoretical Framework

Regarding the influence of intra-school factors on learning, in addition to the principal's leadership, it is essential to consider the importance of teachers' practices, the availability of educational resources, and the school's infrastructure. Teachers' practices are fundamental to students' success. According to Darling-Hammond (2010), well-trained teachers have a positive impact on student performance. Teacher training is crucial for them to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to teach effectively.

Continuing teacher education plays a fundamental role in promoting student learning. When teachers have opportunities for professional development and enhance their practices, they can improve the quality of their teaching, directly impacting learning outcomes. Although scarce in Brazil, studies correlating teachers' practices with students' learning outcomes indicate that chronic problems such as dropout rates and age-grade disparity in high school tend to worsen when teachers teach subjects for which they are not properly trained (Müller; Quartieri, 2021). Furthermore, continuing education can empower teachers to adopt new teaching strategies and enhance their assessment skills, consequently improving the quality of teaching and enhancing learning (Guskey; Sparks, 1996).

Investing in teachers' ongoing training to enhance their practices also keeps them updated on the latest advances and research in the field of education. This includes knowledge of new educational technologies, innovative teaching methods, and strategies to engage students in their learning process. In this context, the belief in students' ability to learn is a central element in teachers' work.

Teachers' belief in all students' capacity to learn and develop thus emerges as a factor that needs to be considered in training processes (initial and in-service). Some studies conducted in previous years have shown that when teachers believe that all students can learn, they are more likely to use practical teaching strategies and engage in their students' education (INEP, 2020). Additionally, research by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) showed that teachers tend to perform better academically when they have high expectations for students. This relationship is known as the Pygmalion effect.

In Brazil, research has also been conducted to demonstrate the importance of teachers' belief in all students' capacity to learn and develop. An example is the study conducted by Iaochite *et al.* (2016), with teachers from Brazilian public schools, which identified a strong association between teachers' belief in students' abilities and students' satisfaction with school.

In order to contribute to the production of knowledge about the expectations of different educational actors regarding students' school trajectories, this article proposes an indicator that not only relies on teachers' opinions but also incorporates the perspectives of pedagogical coordinators and school principals. This enables the creation of an indicator with the potential to provide information about the expectations of school teams in each institution, useful for both the formulation of comprehensive public policies that serve state or municipal public networks, and for specific internal actions of a particular school. The analysis of this indicator is complemented by other data obtained through databases such as the School Census, SAEB 2017, and 2019, all maintained by the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP).

These theoretical foundations guided the decision-making process for data treatment, as detailed below.

Brief description of the indicator of student school trajectory expectations by school teams

The indicator of student school trajectory expectations for high school by school was developed based on data from the survey of the Research Practices of Management, Educational Leadership, and Quality of Education in High Schools in Brazil. This indicator considered the responses of teachers, coordinators, and school principals to a set of items related to their opinions on the number of students in the school who completed high school and continued their studies (technical or academic).

After analyzing the items present in the different surveys, we sought to verify the feasibility of developing a single index considering the common items³. For this purpose, the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) technique was used to investigate the dimensionality and cohesion of the construct. It was found that item 1 (completing high school) showed a low correlation with the other items, indicating a low proportion of shared variance and low factor

3 Survey question - "From your point of view, how many students at this school do you believe will be able to: 1) complete high school; 2) Enter Public Higher Education; 3) Enter Private Higher Education; 4) Enter technical courses before completing high school. The response categories used were: 1. Up to 25%; 2. From 26% to 50%; 3. From 51% to 75%; 4. More than 75%.

loading compared to the other items. Therefore, item 1 was excluded from subsequent steps in the construction of the indicator.

After selecting the items for the construction of the indicator of school team expectations regarding students' school trajectories, the next step was to create a summary measure per individual (teacher, coordinator, and principal). The calculation of the average expectation per individual was chosen, from which three categories of individual expectations were established: low expectation, medium expectation, and high expectation.

The next step was to develop a synthesis indicator representing the school team's expectations regarding students' school trajectories instead of providing information per individual. It was decided not to assign distinct weights to the responses of principals, coordinators, and teachers, since the latter (actors closest to the students) would naturally have a greater weight due to the higher number of teachers compared to coordinators and principals who responded to the surveys⁴. This allowed for the calculation of the distribution of individuals in each school in low, medium, and high expectation categories.

Based on this data distribution, each school was classified according to the category containing the highest number of individuals. In a hypothetical tie, the classification would be assigned to the higher category. The results will be presented below.

Student Trajectories Expectations: What School Teams and Students Declare

The tabulation of data regarding the indicator of school teams' expectations regarding students' school trajectories allows us to observe that, in the set of participating units in the research, over 70% of them had low expectations, while 26% had medium expectations, and only 3% expressed high expectations, corresponding to just four schools (see Table 1). No significant differences were identified when comparing the expectations of school units in the states of Piauí and Espírito Santo, although the latter encompasses three out of the four schools with the highest expectations.

⁴ In approximately 95% of schools, 10 to 13 individuals were evaluated, including 1 or 2 pedagogical coordinators, 1 director, and several teachers. It is noteworthy that in a PI school, there were 2 directors, which was disregarded in the analysis proposed in this article.

Table 1 - Expectations of student school trajectories by school teams, according to the participating states in the research

	ES		PI		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Low	48	69%	51	74%	99	71%
Medium	19	27%	17	25%	36	26%
High	3	4%	1	1%	4	3%
Total	70	100%	69	100%	139	100%

Source: Authors' elaboration (2023).

These data seem to corroborate what was already possible to verify from the responses of teachers from different states, from the 5th and 9th grades of elementary school to the 3rd year of high school, to the 2017 SAEB questionnaire, where percentages of 36% or more of responding teachers stated that just under half or few students would enter university. These percentages were 48.4% in the state of Piauí and 52.6% in Espírito Santo.

It is worth noting that, in these two states, there was a tendency for teachers' expectations regarding the proportion of students entering university to decrease when comparing the stages where teachers teach. While 46% of responding teachers from the 5th grade of elementary school stated that few or just under half of students would enter university, this percentage increased to almost 60% of teachers from the 3rd year of high school, indicating an increase in distrust or disbelief regarding students' school future.

Therefore, it is possible to assert that teachers' low expectations seem to be a national concern, since the percentage of total responding teachers in Brazil who stated that just under half or few students would enter university was 55.4%, with emphasis on the states of Rio de Janeiro and Sergipe, where the percentages reached 66.7% and 60% of responses, respectively. Despite being concerning, such expectations can be considered pragmatic or realistic, as in Brazil in 2022, only 20.2% of the population aged 18 to 24 were attending higher education, as pointed out in the presentation⁵ of the results of the Higher Education Census by INEP in October 2023.

The high percentages of teachers with low expectations regarding students' entry into university, according to the previously announced data, contrast with the information from the 2019 SAEB questionnaire answered by students in the 3rd year of high school in public schools

⁵ Access the presentation file via the link:

https://download.inep.gov.br/educacao_superior/censo_superior/documentos/2022/apresentacao_censo_da_educacao_superior_2022.pdf.

in Piauí, Espírito Santo, and Brazil, as can be seen in Table 2 below. Although, in all cases, it is noted that only about 7% of them stated they intended to continue studying, practically another 2/3 of them declared they planned to work and continue studying, meaning about 85% of respondents from the two states intended to continue their studies, even while working.

Table 2 - Distribution of responses from 3rd-year high school students regarding their intentions upon completing high school, according to the set of teachers from public schools in Piauí, Espírito Santo, and Brazil (SAEB 2019)

	Piauí	Espírito Santo	Brazil
Only continue studying	7%	7%	6%
Only work	8%	7%	8%
Continue studying and working	74%	77%	77%
Don't know yet	11%	9%	10%

Source: qedu.org.br (2023).

Another piece of information that may also corroborate the understanding of the expectations of high school students in the states of Piauí and Espírito Santo regarding their educational trajectories relates to the number of students enrolled and present on the days of the Enem⁶ (Brazilian National High School Exam). According to data from the 2019 Enem, among the state schools in these two states, it was found that in approximately 2/3 of them, the percentages of participation in the exam were higher than 80% of the enrolled students, which may indicate a high expectation among students for the continuation of their studies, as the Enem is currently one of the main ways to access higher education in Brazil, whether public or private⁷.

That being said, the comparison of the analyzed data, including the expectations of school teams regarding students' educational trajectories in the participating research units in 2021 and 2022, the information presented from questionnaires answered by teachers and students in the SAEB in the years 2017 and 2019 respectively, allows for signaling the existence of a concerning scenario and expectations about students' educational trajectories that are very

⁶ Thanks to the team responsible for the Qedu Platform, which provided the data on the numbers of registered participants in the ENEM editions from 2017 to 2019 in state schools in Piauí and Espírito Santo.

⁷ Although it is admitted in this study that presenting the proportion of students enrolled in each school who were present in the different editions of ENEM would allow an even more consistent analysis, the information available for this study was the number of registered and present, a fact that limits the analysis, as it disregards the group of students who did not enroll in ENEM.

distinct and varied. In other words, although the vast majority of students expressed a desire and intention to continue studying, teachers and school teams, through various sources of information, show low prospects regarding the educational path of these students.

The diversity of expectations about students' trajectories: challenges for the principal's leadership

Despite the identification, as previously presented, that in Brazil and the states participating in the research, there is a low expectation from the school team and teachers regarding their students' trajectories, it is noteworthy that, when analyzing the data by school, it is possible to observe different scenarios and contexts, depending on the expectations that the different school actors (principals, coordinators, and teachers) have about the students. In one school, for example, there may be a large majority of teachers with low expectations, but the coordinator and principal have high expectations, or in another unit where both teachers and other members of the school team have low expectations.

Given the different possible contexts, the following data seek to indicate the diversity of situations in the surveyed school units. In this sense, as can be seen in Table 3 below, in 47% of the participating school units, both the team's and teachers' expectations are low. In 14% of schools, the team's expectation was considered average, but the principal's was low, and in another 19%, the principal had an average expectation, and the school team had low expectations.

It is worth noting that the percentage of principals with high expectations totals 9%, although there is a predominance of principals with low expectations (63% of them). It should also be highlighted that, in only one school, the school team's and the principal's expectations were high. In three other cases where the team's expectation was high, in two of them, the expectation of the unit's principal was low, and in another, it was classified as average. On the other hand, in seven schools (5% of them), although it is noted that the principal's expectation was high, that of the team was low.

Table 3 - Distribution of school teams' and principals' expectations regarding students' educational trajectories

		Individual expectation Director							
		Low		Medium		High		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
School team expectation	Low	65	47%	27	19%	7	5%	99	71%
	Medium	20	14%	12	9%	4	3%	36	26%
	High	2	1%	1	1%	1	1%	4	3%
	Total	87	63%	40	29%	12	9%	139	100%

Source: Authors' elaboration (2023).

This set of data suggests that for the development of public policies aimed at increasing school teams' expectations regarding students' educational trajectories, it is imperative to consider that, although the role of school leadership is evident, proposed measures should take into account that the lack of expectations often extends beyond just teachers but encompasses the entire or part of the management team. On the other hand, it is also observed that in some educational institutions, even if teachers have high or moderate expectations for their students, the management team, especially the principal, demonstrates low expectations.

These scenarios and contexts, therefore, make it even more challenging to formulate policies and actions to deal with issues related to students' expectations by the school team, especially when considering, as indicated by the consulted literature, the importance of the principal's leadership in motivating teachers and coordinators to improve student learning and achieve school goals.

Therefore, it can be stated that, depending on the school context, especially in cases where principals and pedagogical coordinators have low expectations, mid or high-level power agents (acting in regional bodies and/or education departments) should implement specific strategies. However, this does not imply that such agents should remain inert in situations where principals and coordinators, for example, demonstrate low expectations. On the contrary, the aim is to highlight the need for school leadership training programs and policies to be designed and implemented based on actions specifically aimed at improving professionals' expectations regarding students' educational trajectories, encompassing adapted strategies according to the level of expectation of the professionals involved in the school, regardless of whether they are compatible with each other or not, as this constitutes quite distinct management scenarios.

About schools with high expectations

One of the objectives of presenting the indicator of students' educational trajectories in the public schools of Piauí and Espírito Santo participating in the research was to analyze the characteristics of schools with high and low expectations. However, due to the high concentration of schools classified as having low expectations (71%) and the small number of those considered to have high expectations, only four out of 139 schools, it was decided to analyze some characteristics of these schools classified as having high expectations.

Educational Trajectories and Students' Expectations in Public Schools in Piauí and Espírito Santo

In this section of the text, some information is presented that may contribute to the analysis of educational trajectories and students' expectations in public schools in Piauí and Espírito Santo. One of them derives from the questionnaire directed to 3rd-year students in the SAEB 2019, about their intentions after completing high school, while another refers to the participation of students from schools in the 2019 edition of the Enem, as well as the rates of approval, failure, dropout, and age-grade distortion.

I - Students' Intentions upon Completion of High School

As mentioned earlier, based on data from the SAEB 2019 questionnaire, the significant majority of 3rd-year students enrolled in public school networks in Brazil, as well as in the state networks of Espírito Santo and Piauí, expressed the intention to continue their studies, even while balancing with work.

According to the data presented in Table 4, this trend was also observed among the four selected schools, with two-thirds or more of the students from these schools stating their intention to continue studying and working. The percentages of student responses indicating that they would only continue studying were less than 10%, except for School C, which recorded 13% of respondents. No significant differences were identified regarding the distribution among the schools and the totals of schools in the state networks participating in the research.

Table 4 - Students' Intentions upon Completion of High School, according to student responses from selected schools and the total of state schools in Piauí and Espírito Santo (SAEB, 2019)

	Only continue studying	Only work	Continue studying and work	Don't know yet
School A PI	7%	8%	77%	8%
PI	7%	8%	74%	11%
School A ES	8%	2%	83%	6%
School B ES	13%	9%	78%	0%
School C ES	2%	12%	79%	7%
ES	9%	7%	76%	9%

Source: INEP (2019).

This information demonstrates that students had the expectation of continuing their studies; however, the desire to study was linked to the intention of balancing their studies with work. To some extent, this choice may be aligned with the need to ensure their own subsistence and/or contribute to the support of their families. This situation, to some extent, may contribute to understanding the low expectations of school teams regarding the educational trajectories of their students, since, in the view of the school teams, working could hinder or make it difficult to continue studying and enter and complete an undergraduate course at a higher education institution.

II Student Participation in the Enem

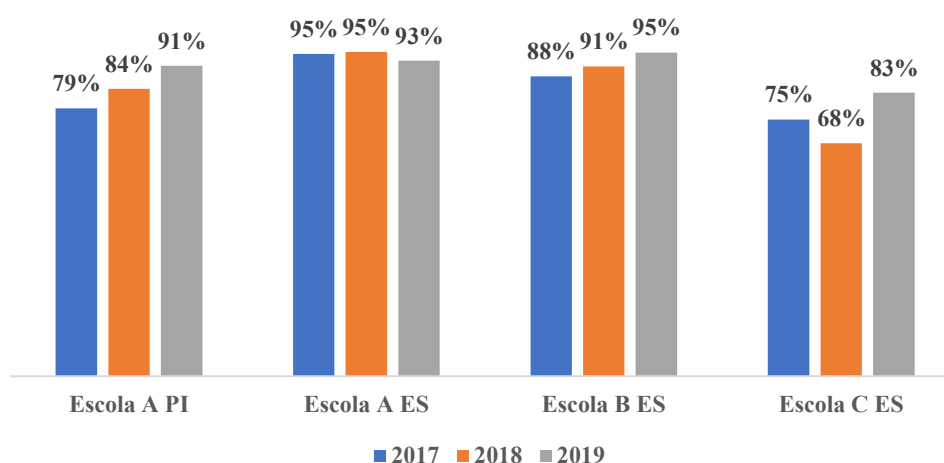
Another aspect to be considered is the proportion of students from state high schools in different editions of the National High School Exam (Enem). This information can assist in analyzing the interest of students from each school in continuing their studies, especially in pursuing entry into higher education. Therefore, the participation rate of each school was calculated considering the number of participants present in the exam editions in 2017, 2018, and 2019 in relation to the total number of students enrolled from each school in the exam.

It is understood that the higher the percentage of students from a school taking the Enem, the greater the engagement and motivation of students to continue their studies, as the exam is currently one of the main ways to access higher education, whether public or private.

In this sense, when analyzing the participation rates of 3rd-year students from the four schools with high expectations in the Enem in the editions of 2019, 2018, and 2017, an increase

or certain stability in the participation rates over the years was observed. All schools had participation rates in 2019 exceeding 83%, with three of them totaling more than 90% (Graph 1).

Graph 1 - Percentage of student participation in the 2019 Enem, according to the schools selected in the study



Source: Authors' elaboration (2023).

When proposing the analysis of information related to the percentage of students participating in the Enem, it is assumed that schools play a crucial role in shaping students' future expectations, especially in more vulnerable regions. In this context, it is expected that the more vulnerable the students of an educational institution are, the greater the commitment and engagement of teachers and school leadership in the development of student learning. As a result, an increase in students' confidence in their educational future is expected, which could be reflected by the high percentage of participation in the Enem, aiming for a spot in undergraduate courses at higher education institutions.

III - Academic Performance of Students

In this study, it is recognized that information about student flow and performance is crucial for the analysis of their academic trajectories. This data can be obtained through the Academic Performance indicator, produced by INEP and made available annually, providing information on student approval, failure, and dropout rates in each school, network, municipality, state, and nationally.

As demonstrated in the subsequent table (Table 5), in the four schools classified with high expectations by the school staff regarding the students' academic trajectories, the approval rates in high school between the years 2020 and 2022 were close to or above 90%, all exceeding the approval rates of state schools in the networks to which these units were linked. As for dropout and failure rates, little variation was observed.

Table 5 - Percentage of approval, failure, and dropout rates of high school students enrolled in selected schools and total state schools in Piauí and Espírito Santo from 2020 to 2022

	School A PI	Piauí	School A ES	School B ES	School C ES	Espírito Santo	
2022	approval	89,7	89,6	91,5	94	94,3	91,4
	disapproval	0,0	1,2	8,4	6,0	0,4	6,6
	abandonment	10,3	9,2	0,1	0,0	5,3	2,0
2021	approval	99,2	94,6	95,7	96,4	95,7	90,9
	disapproval	0,0	0,2	4,3	1,8	0,0	6,6
	abandonment	0,8	5,2	0,0	1,8	4,3	2,5
2020	approval	100	93,6	98,2	99,2	99,8	97,5
	disapproval	0,0	0,4	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
	abandonment	0,0	6,0	1,8	0,8	0,2	2,5

Source: Authors' elaboration (2023).

IV - Grade-level distortion

As mentioned earlier, school performance data can offer valuable insights into students' educational trajectories, allowing for the tracking of dropout and failure rates, which are fundamental aspects when it comes to academic paths. When analyzed together with information on students' grade-level distortion⁸, these data can provide a broader understanding of such expectations.

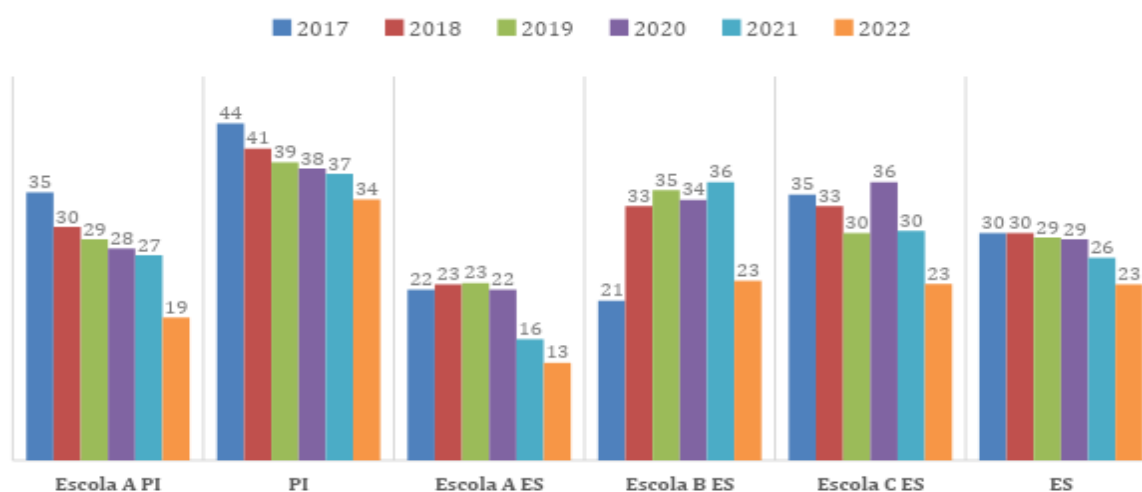
As illustrated in Graph 2, it can be observed that in all selected schools and across the units of the two researched networks, the percentage of grade-level distortion decreased between the years 2017 and 2022, indicating a positive trend. However, it is relevant to highlight that, despite this decrease, such proportions are still significant. For example, among the total number of high schools in the state of Piauí, the percentage was 34% in 2022, meaning

⁸ Age-grade distortion rate – Percentage of students with a delay of two years or more in their schooling. Data available at: <https://www.gov.br/inep/pt-br/acesso-a-informacao/dados-abertos/indicadores-educacionais/taxas-de-distorcao-idade-serie>.

more than one-third of the total number of students enrolled in high school in the state network. In Espírito Santo, although slightly lower, this percentage was 23%, representing almost a quarter of the students, which is also a considerable proportion of the total.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that in the selected schools, in all of them, the percentages of students with grade-level distortion were decreasing, although in two out of the three schools in Espírito Santo, fluctuations were observed, requiring a more detailed analysis.

Graph 2 - Grade-level distortion rate of high school students enrolled in selected schools and total state schools in Piauí and Espírito Santo from 2020 to 2022



Source: Authors' elaboration (2024).

It is understood that the higher the rates of failure and dropout, the higher the rates of grade-level distortion will be, meaning there will be more students with a delay of two or more years in their schooling. This situation may represent a potential element to decrease both the expectations of school teams and the students themselves regarding their educational trajectories. On the other hand, the lower the rates of failure, dropout, and grade-level distortion in a school unit, the more positive the expectations should be. In this sense, it is understood that in order to raise such expectations, all policies and actions must consider these two elements indispensably.

Final considerations

The aim of this article was to analyze the expectations regarding students' educational trajectories, considering the different school actors, including teachers, pedagogical coordinators, principals, and the students themselves. Additionally, efforts were made to identify already available information that could be used by school leaders to monitor and manage different expectations. In this research, the fundamental role of school leadership in motivating and engaging their teams for the success of all school activities, especially in ensuring the learning of all enrolled students, is recognized.

For this purpose, as previously presented, information obtained from various sources was used, including the "Management Practices, Leadership, and Quality in High School" survey, the School Census, and the SAEB. Based on the proposition of a school team expectation indicator, using data produced by the survey conducted in 2021 and 2022 in about 140 state schools in the networks of Piauí and Espírito Santo, and with the participation of over 1,500 participants, including teachers, pedagogical coordinators, and principals, the intention was to provide information about the expectations of the school team, not just the teachers.

The results of this indicator are not particularly encouraging. Out of a total of 139 schools, only four of them can be classified as maintaining high expectations from the school team regarding students' educational trajectories, indicating that the vast majority of schools hold low expectations (71% of the total).

Furthermore, it was observed that among the surveyed schools, there is a variety of scenarios and configurations of expectations regarding students' educational trajectories when analyzing the opinions of different members of the school teams. This suggests that there are various challenges for school leadership, which must be attentive to the context and expectations in a particular school unit. Therefore, the formulation of public policies and the implementation of actions by the school itself to improve expectations regarding students' trajectories deserve special attention, and should be adapted to multiple contexts and scenarios, especially in units where all school actors share low expectations.

These conclusions aim to contribute to the debate on the role of the school principal and the pedagogical coordinator regarding transformational leadership (Macías; Ramírez, 2015). Once the type and degree of expectation that school professionals have regarding students' trajectories are identified, it is possible to implement different strategies: establish goals and objectives based on expectations, define guidelines for action and curricular prioritization,

promote awareness of the importance of academic results, and involve the entire school team in a project to improve expectations regarding students.

This is essential to establish a shared vision of academic success, which is strongly associated with a climate of positive interpersonal relationships. Changing beliefs about students requires school professionals to feel convinced and engaged with the necessary changes in their conceptions. For this, school leadership needs to encourage teachers to adopt different practices and offer professional development opportunities focused on everyday classroom life. Sustaining such a level of change, especially in contexts where expectations are low, is a major challenge. Therefore, school leaders need support, including recognizing and valuing the effort of their team, as well as involving the school community in such a project, which also implies gaining the engagement of students.

Another essential element to highlight is the presentation of additional information available from various sources that assist in recognizing the challenges faced by school leadership in steering a school towards more positive convictions regarding students' educational trajectories. Through these data, it was possible to identify that low expectations do not appear to be a new or particular phenomenon to the group of schools from the states of Piauí and Espírito Santo participating in the research, as evidenced by the analysis of information from teachers' and students' responses in the SAEB questionnaires of 2017 and 2019, respectively. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the expectations of school teams, when compared to those of the students, seem to be quite antagonistic, being more positive for the students, which makes the phenomenon even more complex. Moreover, it is considered that the data evidenced in this study can be used to monitor and track the actions to be developed both in the education secretariats and in the school units.

Given the fact that only four out of the 139 participating schools in the research were classified as "high expectation," it was not feasible to make comparisons between characteristics of schools with different classifications, which could offer important insights for identifying elements or characteristics that corroborate with a more positive perspective regarding students' educational trajectories. Therefore, it was chosen to present data from the four schools classified as "high expectations" that could illustrate possible analyses and approaches to issues related to these expectations, both from the school teams and the students themselves. The information used for this included: [1] Students' intentions upon completing high school, [2] students' participation in the Enem, [3] School Performance and grade-level distortion, and [4] Teaching effort.

Finally, it is essential to emphasize that, in addition to considering the fundamental role of school leadership in developing actions aimed at greater engagement of teachers in school activities, this study recognizes that the analysis of expectations regarding students' educational trajectories requires a robust set of data. This allows for the planning of more effective interventions that are subject to monitoring and tracking, taking into account each school actor involved. This approach ultimately contributes to the development of actions that promote better learning for all students.

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