

Professional education in Rio Grande do Sul: quantitative analysis under the current National Education Plan

Educação profissional no Rio Grande do Sul: análise quantitativa na vigência do Plano Nacional da Educação

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Abstract

This article discusses Professional Education (EP) in the state of Rio Grande do Sul through the analysis of quantitative data regarding the number of enrollments in municipal, state, federal, and private education networks from 2014 to 2023. This time frame was chosen to relate the observed evolution in this educational modality to the implementation of the National Education Plan (PNE) 2014-2024. The analysis was also extended to the number of PE enrollments by race/color, the number of PE schools by education networks, and their locations. It concludes that the provision and enrollments in PE in the state of Rio Grande do Sul in 2023 are "dominated" by the private education network, with its demand concentrated in certain schools and localities. Regarding PNE goals 10 and 11, related to increasing enrollments in Youth and Adult Education (EJA) and integrated Professional Education at the high school level, these goals were not achieved in the aforementioned Brazilian state.

Keywords: Educational Policy; Professional Education; National Education Plan; Rio Grande do Sul; Public-private.

Resumo

Este artigo problematiza a Educação Profissional (EP) no estado do Rio Grande do Sul (RS), através da análise de dados quantitativos com relação ao número de matrículas nas redes de ensino municipal, estadual, federal e privada, no período de 2014 a 2023. Este recorte temporal foi escolhido para relacionar a evolução observada nesta modalidade educacional com a vigência do Plano Nacional de Educação (PNE) 2014-2024. Também foi estendida a análise para o número de matrículas na EP por cor/raça, o número de escolas de EP por redes de ensino e por localização. Conclui-se que a oferta e matrículas da EP no RS em 2023 está "dominada" pela rede privada de ensino que tem suas demandas concentradas em algumas escolas e localidades do estado. Quanto às metas 10 e 11 do PNE, relacionadas

ao aumento das matrículas da EJA e do Ensino Médio na forma integrada à EP, não foram atingidas no RS.

Palavras-chave: Política Educacional; Educação Profissional; Plano Nacional de Educação; Rio Grande do Sul; público-privado.

1 INTRODUCTION

The theme of Professional Education is not recent. Regarding it, various historians and educators present information and records of this important modality for Brazilian education. This study presents and discusses aspects of Professional Education (EP) in Rio Grande do Sul (RS), a research topic developed by the State Network Working Group, part of the Transformation Research Group — Group of Studies and Research in Professional Education — of the Industrial Technical College of the Federal University of Santa Maria (UFSM).

Thus, the evolution of EP in the State was problematized, with the analysis of quantitative data regarding the number of enrollments in education networks, in general and, mainly, in the state EP network, in an isolated manner or compared with data from municipal, federal, and private education networks, in the period from 2014 to 2023. This timeframe was chosen to relate the observed evolution in the State's EP during the term of the National Education Plan (PNE) 2014–2024 (BRAZIL, 2014).

An analysis was also carried out of the number of EP enrollments by color/race, the number of EP schools by education networks in RS, and where the referred schools were located (location). The data produced originate from reliable sources: the Basic Education School Censuses in Rio Grande do Sul during the period, released by the Anísio Teixeira National Institute of Educational Studies and Research (INEP) and available in the “New Basic Education School Census Statistics Panel” (BRAZIL, 2024). They formed the basis of the discussion regarding the objectives proposed for this work, seeking relationships and answers by analyzing the historical evolution of EP in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, in the period between the years 2014 to 2023.

Therefore, through documentary and bibliographic analysis, it was possible to historicize the period regarding the Professional Education movement existing in Rio Grande do Sul and, for this, it starts from weighted qualitative data in the years 2014 to 2023, related to the current PNE, as well as the legislation that accompanies the period.

The organization of the article consists, initially, of the contextualization of Professional Education legislation over time, followed by the presentation and discussion of quantitative data involving data related to enrollment/school/color/race in the EP of the State of Rio Grande do Sul and, finally, the considerations that permeated the debate on the results found.

2 PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND LEGISLATION IN THE PERIOD

This section aims to discuss the legislation of Professional and Technological Education in Brazil and Rio Grande do Sul, within the timeframe of the period from 2014 to 2023.

In the Brazilian scenario, Professional Education is provided for in the Brazilian Education Guidelines and Bases Law (LDB), Law 9394/96. And by the resolutions that define the guidelines of this modality: the National Council of Education Resolution, Resolution CNE/CEB No. 06/2012, which defines the National Curricular Guidelines for Mid-Level Technical Professional Education and the current Resolution CNE/CP No. 1/2021, which defines the General National Curricular Guidelines for Professional and Technological Education.

In the national context, Law 13.005/2014 also stands out, in which the National Education Plan was sanctioned with validity from 2014 to 2023, which includes the provision to “offer, at a minimum, 25% of youth and adult education enrollments, in elementary and high school, in a form integrated with professional education” (Goal 10), as well as the provision to “triple enrollments in mid-level technical professional education, ensuring the quality of the offer and at least 50% of the expansion in the public segment” (Goal 11) (BRAZIL, 2014).

Law No. 13.415/2017 is also important in the national scenario as it amends Law 9394/96 and includes the “Technical and Professional Training” formative pathway in high school. This presents the criteria chosen by the Education Systems regarding the provision of technical and professional education, which should propose “the inclusion of practical work experiences in the productive sector or in simulation environments, establish partnerships and make use, if applicable, of instruments indicated in the legislation on professional apprenticeship” (BRAZIL, 2017). Regarding this, Ferretti points out the challenge of interests for the effectiveness of this pathway, in which:

The integration between High School and Professional Education in the country represents a challenge that has several facets, whether because it involves different instances of training, each with its own objectives, whether because it entails different conceptions and formative practices, or due to the adoption of different views on the theoretical-epistemological foundations regarding the development of such integration (FERRETTI, 2024, p.11).

In Rio Grande do Sul, there are the Resolutions of the State Council of Education (CEE/RS), No. 364, of December 15, 2021 — which establishes complementary norms to guide the State Education System on Formative Pathways, Partnerships, and Recognized Expertise for Professional Education and, No. 365, approved on December 15, 2021, by the referred Council, which — Establishes complementary norms for the provision of High School and its modalities in the State Education System.

Research conducted by Duarte (2022) records that in the State of Rio Grande do Sul there was no Government Educational Policy for the State Education Network between the years 1971 and 2021. Thus, Ordinary Law No. 16.089, of January 10, 2024, becomes a landmark in the state scenario, as it institutes the State Policy for Professional and Technical Education of the State of Rio Grande do Sul (RIO GRANDE DO SUL, 2024). The legislation brings important changes to Law 11.123/1998. Thus, after 50 years, the state government creates a Policy for Government Professional Education and also brings Youth and Adult Education closer to Technical Education, instituting EJA-TEC.

One cannot ignore, throughout history, that Professional Education integrates work and education (MANFREDI, 2017), providing opportunities for professionalization and/or professional qualification actions.

Thus, it is observed that in the analyzed period, both at national and state levels, Professional Education presented legal modifications and programs linked to governments. Next, quantitative data on its evolution in the state of RS are presented with reflections and relations to legal aspects.

3 EVOLUTION OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION IN RS IN THE PERIOD FROM 2014 TO 2023

The production of the data presented below was carried out through research in online databases, originating from the Basic Education School Census in RS, published on the INEP virtual page (New Basic Education School Census Statistics panel) during the current PNE period (2014 to 2023). The following indicators were analyzed: EP enrollments, enrollments in public networks, enrollments in EJA and EJA-EPT, number of Professional Education schools, location of schools, and declared color/race of EP students in RS.

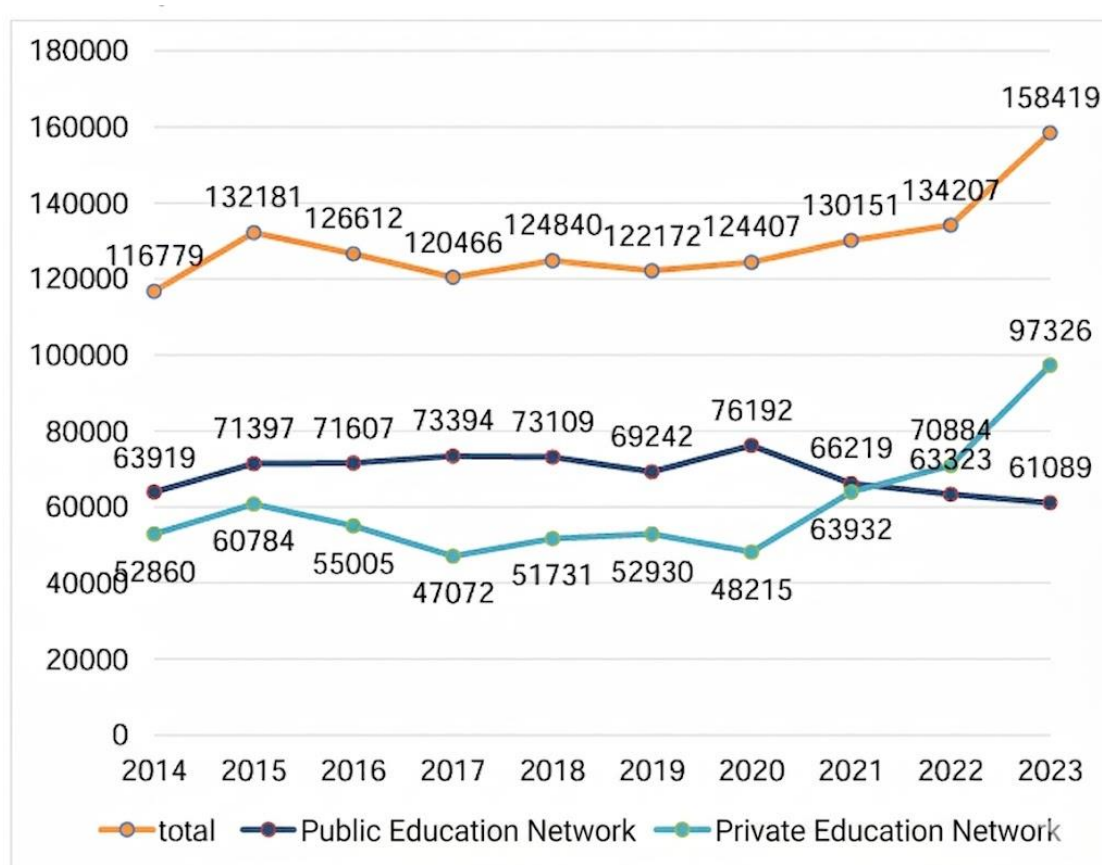
It is observed in Figure 1 that, in the last decade, there was initially a small oscillation in the annual number of EP enrollments in RS, but, from 2019 onwards, there began to be constant annual growth, totaling 158,415 enrollments in the year 2023, a growth of 35.7% since 2014.

It is emphasized, however, that the growth in EP enrollments in RS in the analyzed period was achieved by the increase in EP enrollments in the private education network, mainly from 2020 onwards. It is observed that from 2014 until 2020, EP enrollments in RS were mostly in the public education network; starting in 2020, a sharp growth in EP enrollments in the private network began, alongside a constant drop in EP enrollments in the state's public network, leading to a predominance of EP enrollments in the private network.

The private education network has an enrollment indicator going from 52,860 in 2014 to 97,326 in 2023, which means an 84% increase in the period. Meanwhile, in the public education network of RS, there was a reduction in the number of EP enrollments from 2014 to 2023, respectively from 63,919 to 61,089 enrollments, which means a 4.4% reduction.

The sharp growth in EP enrollments in the private network of RS began during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, while in the public network, the movement was exactly the opposite during this period, initiating a constant drop in enrollments until 2023. Given the reality pointed out by the numbers, it is conjectured that the private education network was more dynamic in its organization and structure for the challenge imposed on education in times of pandemic. In a way, the Brazilian Ministry of Education left it up to educational institutions to implement solutions for the challenge imposed by social isolation. Many schools saw fit to simply “transfer” the educational work carried out in person to virtuality, forcing teachers to “give classes” via digital platforms, to conduct “lives” for students, to send tasks via email and other similar situations.

Figure 1: Enrollments in Professional Education in RS, 2014 to 2023



Source: INEP data, obtained from the “New Basic Education School Census Statistics Panel”.

The situation required schools equipped with both digital technologies and teacher training prepared to work in virtual environments, such as Meet, Google Classroom, etc. In this context, the private education network adapted better and faster to this process, while the state network took time to receive equipment and environment/platform.

Another factor to observe, in the year 2020, due to the pandemic of the new coronavirus (Covid-19), in which several measures were imposed in an attempt to cope, such as guidelines to the state public education network of Rio Grande do Sul for the hybrid teaching model and with that, two important factors to be considered: the digital maturity of teachers in the state network and of students for the perfect understanding of teaching, and the inequality of internet access by students and teachers. Added to these factors are also the factor of dilapidated schools and the lack of human resources and the state's financial crisis, which began in the government of Ivo Sartori, causing negative records for education in RS.

As a direct reflection, EP enrollments migrated from the public network to the private education network in RS from 2020 to 2021, with the latter having a 32.6% increase and the former a 13.1% reduction in enrollments.

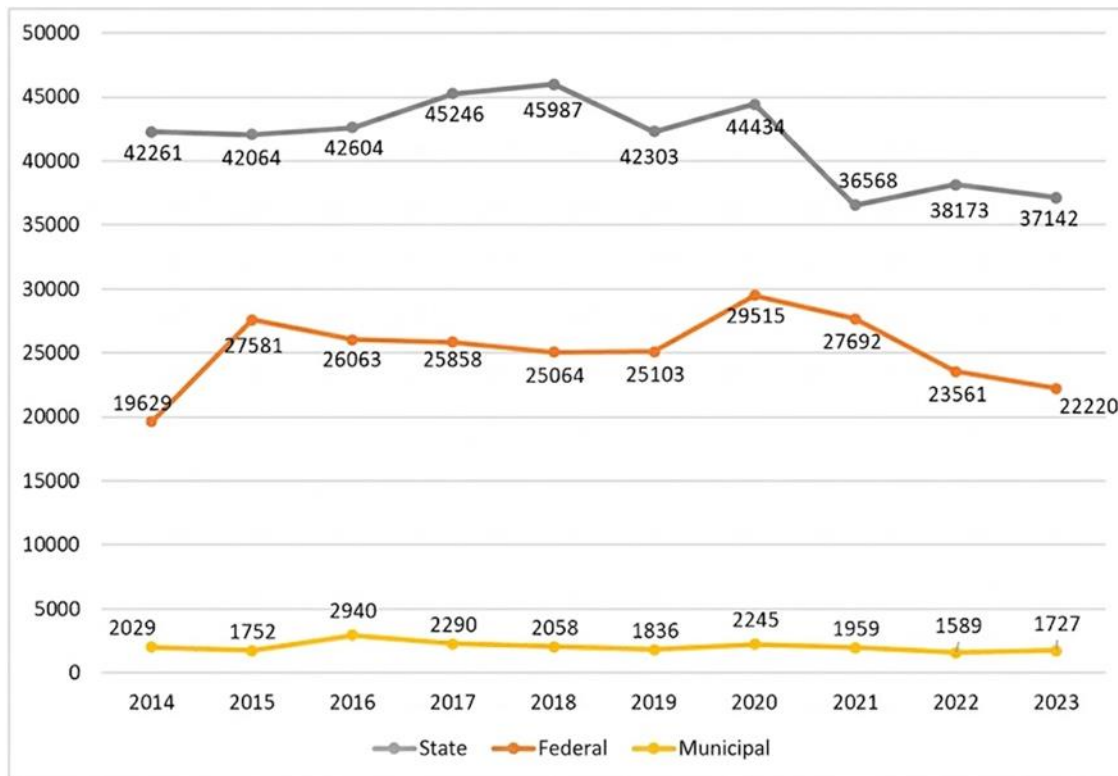
The National Education Plan (PNE 2014–2024) points out as Goal 11 to “triple enrollments in mid-level technical professional education, ensuring the quality of the offer in at least 50% (fifty percent) of the expansion in the public segment.” However, analyzing Figure 2, EP enrollments by public education network, it is observed that there was a 12.1% reduction in enrollments in the state network (42,261 in 2014 to 37,142 in 2023) and 14.9% in the municipal network (2,029 enrollments in 2014 to 1,727 in 2023). Only the federal education network showed an increase in the number of EP enrollments, from 19,629 in 2014 to 22,220 in 2023, totaling an 11.7% increase.

EP in the state network showed growth in enrollments from 2014 until 2018, but from then on, a process of quantitative decline began, becoming sharp and constant since 2020. Thus, strategy 11.2., proposed in the PNE 2014–2024 to achieve Goal 11, which was to “foster the expansion of the offer of mid-level technical professional education in the state public education networks,” was, therefore, neglected by the state public education network in the state of RS.

In the municipal network of RS, EP enrollments showed oscillation in the quantity of enrollments, with 2,000 enrollments in 2014, reaching a peak in 2016 with almost 3,000 enrollments, and falling to just over 1,700 in 2023.

From 2014 to 2015, EP enrollments in the federal network in RS increased sharply by 40.5%, but from then until 2019, enrollments decreased annually. From 2019 to 2020, there was a new significant increase of 17.6% in EP enrollments, but, again, from this point on, the annual drop was increasing and greater than in the previous period. However, even so, the federal public education network met strategy 11.1. of the PNE to reach Goal 11, which was to “expand enrollments in mid-level technical professional education in the Federal Network of Professional, Scientific, and Technological Education, taking into account the responsibility of the Institutes in territorial ordering, their link with local and regional productive, social, and cultural arrangements, as well as the interiorization of professional education”.

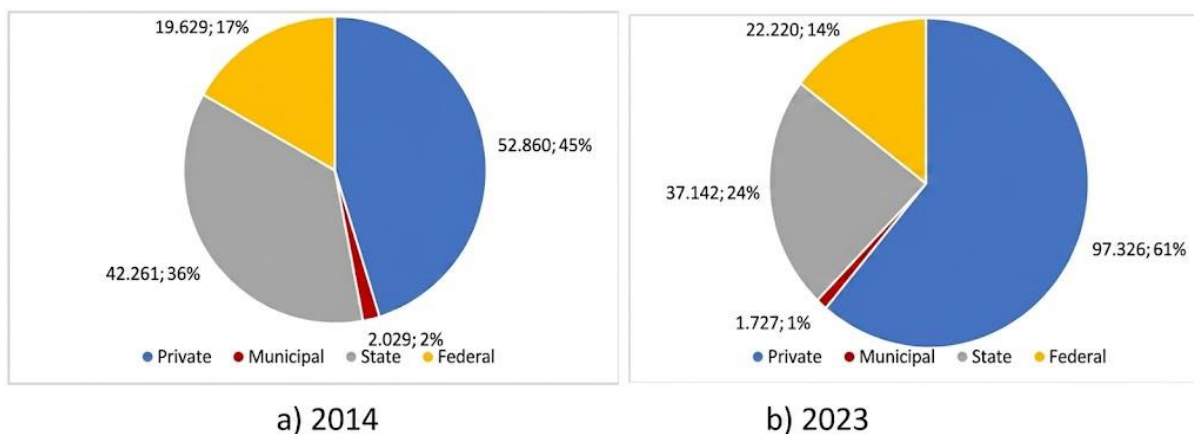
Figure 2: Enrollments in Professional Education in the public education network in RS, 2014 to 2023.



Source: INEP data, obtained from the “New Basic Education School Census Statistics Panel”.

In this way, Figure 3 compares the proportional constitution of EP in the education networks of RS: the private network increased from 45% in 2014 to 61% in 2023 (an increase of 16 p.p.); the state network fell from 36% in 2014 to 23% in 2023 (a reduction of 13 p.p.).

Figure 3: Comparison of the percentage of enrollments in Professional Education in the public education network in RS in 2014 and 2023.



Source: INEP data, obtained from the “New Basic Education School Census Statistics Panel”.

Taking a snapshot to analyze the achievement of Goal 10 of the PNE, to “offer, at a minimum, 25% (twenty-five percent) of youth and adult education enrollments, in elementary and high school, in a form integrated with professional education,” data were sought to demonstrate the situation in RS. The oldest information found regarding enrollments in Youth and Adult Education (EJA) in Professional and Technological Education (EPT) of Basic Education in RS is from 2015, and it was compared with the most recent information from 2023, presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Enrollments in EJA EPT and non-vocational in RS, in the years 2015 and 2023.

EB Level	2015	2023
EJA FIC EM	NI	3.938
EJA EM Integrated Vocational Program	1.201	723
EJA EM Academic/General Track	60.316	40.861
Total High School Enrollment	61.517	45.522
EJA FIC EF	380	225
EJA EF Non-Vocational	87.974	43.425
Total Elementary School Enrollment	88.354	43.650

Notes: EJA = Youth and Adult Education; FIC = Initial and Continuing Training; EM = High School; EF = Elementary School; EPT = Professional and Technological Education; NI = not informed.

Source: INEP data, obtained from the “New Basic Education School Census Statistics Panel”.

It is observed, from the data presented in Table 1, that Goal 10 was not achieved in RS. In the comparison of 2015 with 2023, there was a large drop in the number of EJA enrollments, from 149,871 in 2015 to 89,172 in 2023, a 40.5% decrease in the enrollments of EJA students in RS. In Elementary School, the reduction in enrollments was greater, at 50.6%, while in High School, the reduction in enrollments was 26%. Regarding EJA enrollments integrated with EP in RS, the percentages went from 0.01% in 2015 to 0.05% in 2023, far below the established goal of 25%.

In this period, private institutions such as the Industry Social Service (SESI) reached the point of creating 20 strategic EJA-EPT hubs spread across the state, focusing on workers linked to industry and civil construction. The offer of these courses developed 90% in the Distance Education modality and only 10% in person, becomes an attractive option. According to the institution's website:

[...] The course is designed especially for the worker's life. The student accesses the platform remotely whenever and wherever they want,

and relies on teachers to answer questions and guide studies. Once a week, there is a face-to-face meeting at the hubs, which facilitates access for students from other cities. In the last five years, more than 42 thousand students have passed through EJA Sesi in Rio Grande do Sul (SESI Website).

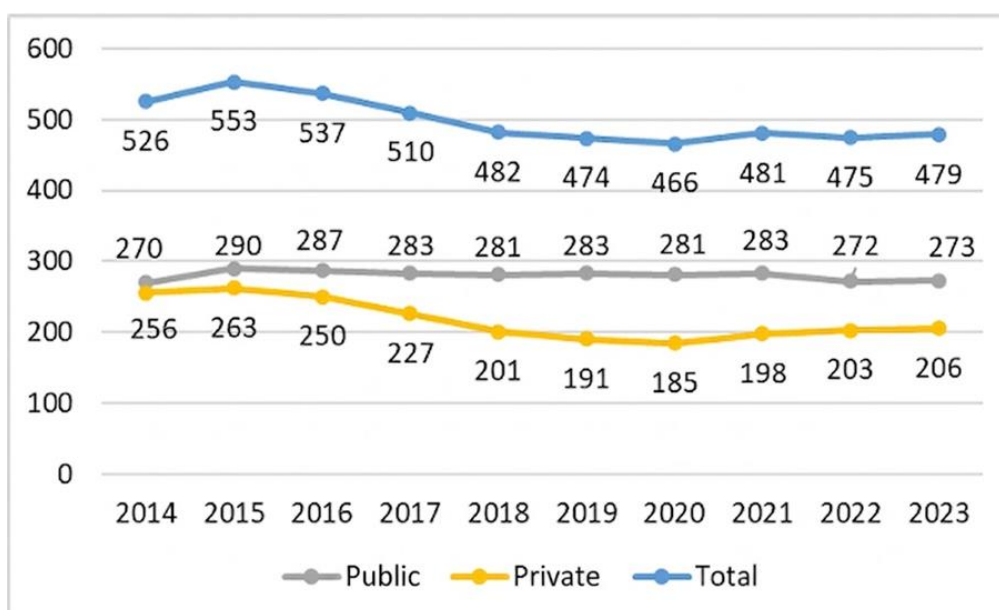
For SESI, offering courses in this modality is an opportunity to develop and qualify its workers, in addition to raising their schooling level, which also contributes to increasing industrial productivity. According to the institution's website:

[...] According to the Annual Social Information Report (RAIS) of 2018, in Rio Grande do Sul, of the more than 762 thousand work links existing in industry, 44.1% (or 336,246 links) do not have Complete High School and 19.3% (146,779) do not have Complete Elementary School (SESI Website).

Another important aspect that needs to be highlighted is the low cost these courses have for the worker, most being at a cost of R\$96.00 (SESI Website). This is a significant difference from the EJA-EPT of the Federal Network, which mostly comes with student assistance funding (permanence and success grants and access to food).

Regarding the total number of schools offering Professional Education in RS, it is observed in Figure 4 that there was a reduction of 8.7% in the analyzed period, from 526 in 2014 to 480 in 2023. However, this reduction in the number of schools was concentrated in the private education network, which reached -19.5%.

Figure 4: Number of schools with Professional Education in RS, 2014 to 2023.

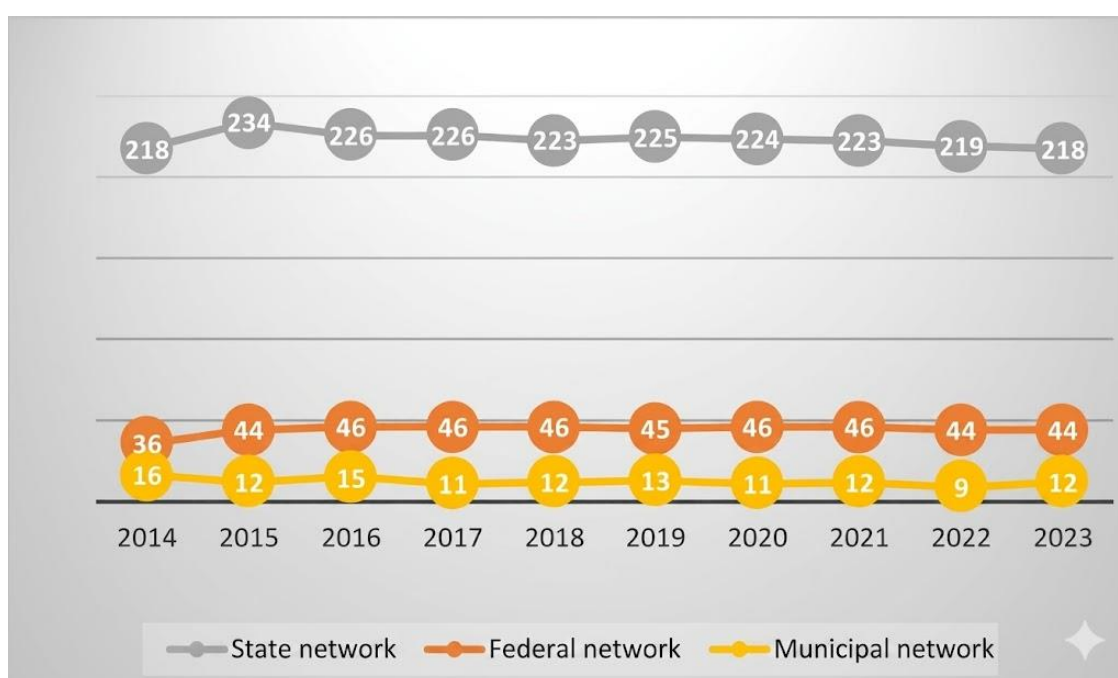


Source: INEP data, obtained from the "New Basic Education School Census Statistics Panel".

Thus, in summary, what was observed in the analyzed period in RS was an increase in EP enrollments and a decrease in the number of schools offering courses in the private education network, which points to a concentration of EP vacancy offers in certain regions or municipalities in this education network.

In the public education network, as shown in Figure 5, the number of schools increased in the federal network (22.2%), remained constant in the state network, and decreased in the municipal network (-25%). In the federal network, there was an increase of 4 schools that offer Professional Education courses in the period.

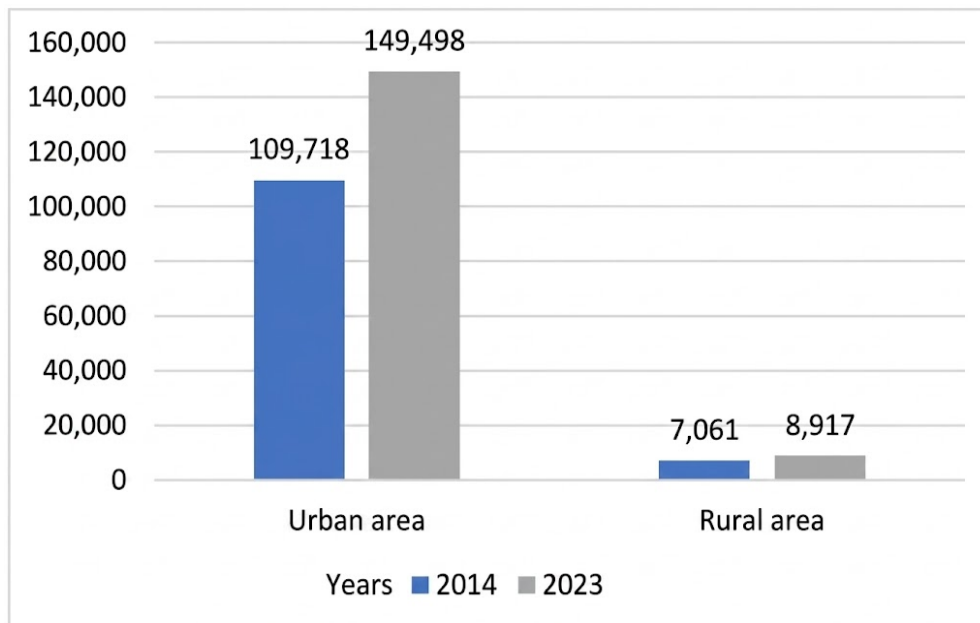
Figure 5: Number of schools in the public education network that offer EP in RS, 2014 to 2023.



Source: INEP data, obtained from the “New Basic Education School Census Statistics Panel”.

Regarding the location of Professional Education Courses in RS, as Figure 6 shows, the number of enrollments increased in both urban and rural areas, 36.3% and 26.3%, respectively, from 2014 to 2023. The percentage of enrollments in urban and rural areas remained constant at 94% and 6%, respectively, in the analyzed period.

Figure 6: Comparison of the number of EP enrollments by location, urban or rural, in RS in 2014 and 2023.



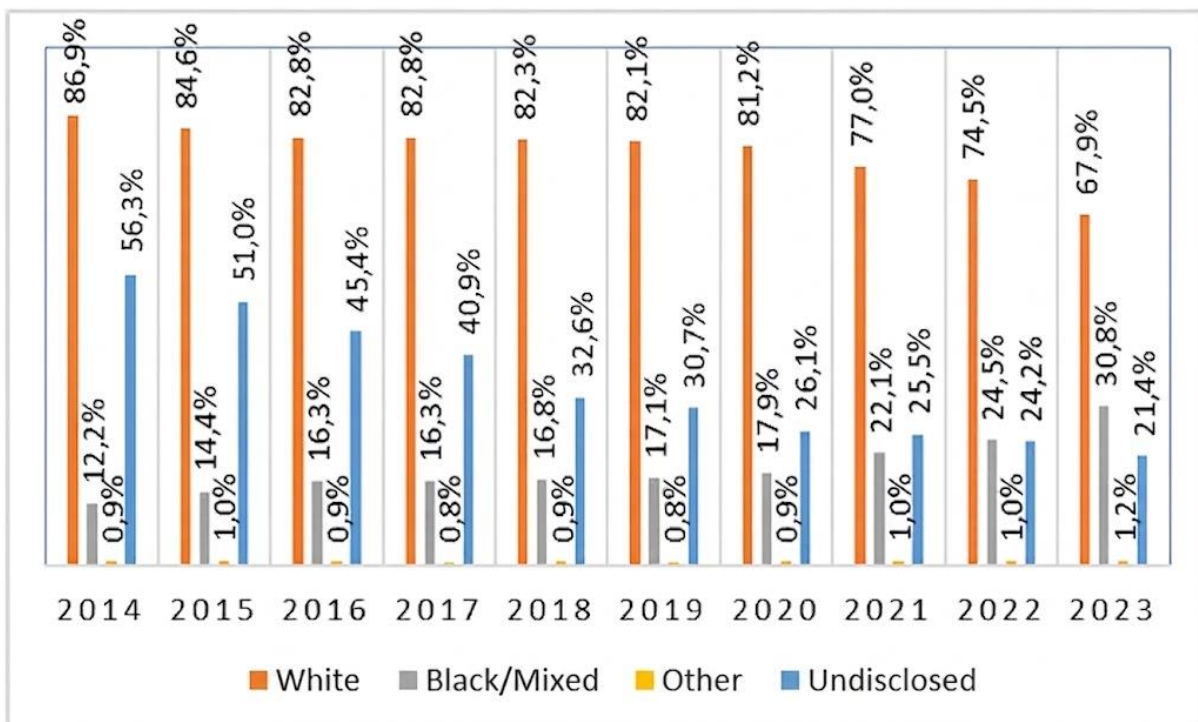
Source: INEP data, obtained from the “New Basic Education School Census Statistics Panel”.

Analyzing the evolution of Professional Education enrollments in RS by the color/race of those enrolled in the period, it is observed in Figure 7 that there was a drop of 34.9 p.p. of enrollees who did not declare information, with 56.3% in 2014 and 21.4% in 2023. With this, the racial constitution of those enrolled in EP in RS becomes closer to reality. Regarding the color/race of those enrolled, it is observed that those declared White decreased by 19 p.p. in the period, being 86.9% in 2014 and 67.9% in 2023; and the color/race of Black/Mixed-race (Pardo) increased by 17.9 p.p., being 12.2% in 2014 and 30.8% in 2023 among the total of those who declared the information.

According to the 2022 census by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), Rio Grande do Sul has the highest percentage of Whites among the units of the federation. Data collected point to a percentage of 78.4% of the population of Rio Grande do Sul. In the same period, those who self-identified as Black present a percentage of 6.54% and Mixed-race (Pardo) of 14.67%. Meanwhile, the percentage for the indigenous population is 0.31% distributed among the Charrua, Kaingang, Mbyá-Guarani, and Xokleng ethnicities, and the percentage for the population that declares itself Yellow (Asian) is 0.07% (IBGE, 2022). Thus, in comparison with the constitution of the population of Rio Grande do Sul¹ (21.2% Black and Mixed-race and 78.4% White), it is observed that the constitution of EP students in RS by race/color in 2023 has a slightly higher proportion of Black and Mixed-race people.

¹ According to the 2022 Demographic Census, the population of the State of Rio Grande do Sul was 10,882,965 people, with 5,627,214 (51.7%) being women and 5,255,751 (48.3%) men, representing a total growth of 1.8% between 2010 and 2022.

Figure 7: EP enrollments by race/color in RS, from 2014 to 2023.



Source: INEP data, obtained from the “New Basic Education School Census Statistics Panel”.

Therefore, the analyzed indicators are considered very significant for understanding the challenges of EP in RS, mainly for revealing the growing increase in enrollments in the private network and the non-compliance with Goals 10 and 11 of the PNE.

3 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study problematized the evolution of EP in the State of RS, using quantitative data in a timeframe from 2014 to 2023 that coincides with the term of the current Brazilian National Education Plan of the period.

As a summary of the conclusions originating from the analyzed data, it can be highlighted:

- 35.7% increase in EP enrollments in RS at the Basic Education level, far below the ambition of goal 11 of the PNE to triple the EP offer (300% increase);
- 84% increase in EP enrollments in the private network, with the increase accentuating after the Pandemic in 2020;
- 4.4% reduction in EP enrollments in the public network: the state reduced by 12.1%; municipalities reduced by 14.9% and the federal network increased by 11.7%;

- the private network went from 45.3% of EP enrollments in RS in 2014 to 61.4% in 2023. The state network, conversely, went from 36.2% of EP enrollments in 2014 to 23.4% in 2023, exactly the inverse of the proposal of goal 11 of the PNE, which would be to expand enrollments in the public network by 50% (it should have gone from 36.2% to 54.3%);
- 8.7% reduction in the number of schools offering EP in RS, mainly in the private network, which reduced the number of schools by 19.5%;
- regarding EJA enrollments integrated with EP in RS, the percentages went from 0.01% in 2015 to 0.05% in 2023, far below Goal 10 of the PNE which established reaching a minimum of 25%.

Thus, it is concluded that the provision and enrollment of EP in RS in 2023 is “dominated” by the private education network, which has its demands concentrated in some schools and locations in the state. Regarding goals 10 and 11 of the PNE, related to the increase in EJA and High School enrollments in integrated form with EP, they were not achieved in RS. And, therefore, there is agreement with Manfredi (2017, p.44) that EP is configured as a “field of dispute and negotiation between different segments and groups that compose a society, revealing the historical-political dimension of teaching reforms, conceptions, projects, and formative practices”.

In this context, despite an expansion effort by the Federal Network, the State Network, which was once the majority, has been significantly decreasing, and the advance of the private network is concerning. It is suggested, then, a careful monitoring of the new PNE, which will establish goals for Brazilian education until 2034, and a demand from the managers of the state of RS, especially from the public education networks.

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