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Professional education: progress towards goal 11 at the 9th CREDE-Ceará

ARTICLE

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Abstract
This article analyzes the implementation outcomes of Goal 11 of the National Education Plan (PNE 2014-2024) within the jurisdiction of the 9th Regional Coordination for Educational Development (CREDE) in the state of Ceará, Brazil. Drawing upon the theoretical framework of structural duality, which has historically characterized Brazilian vocational education, the study investigates whether the expansion of this educational modality was carried out equitably. The methodology involved an analysis of School Census data for the six municipalities within the region. The findings reveal a stark inequality in the territorial distribution of State Vocational High Schools, with two municipalities having no provision whatsoever, which constitutes a geographical barrier to access. The study concludes that the decentralization policy, lacking clear guidelines for equity, has reproduced regional inequalities, failing to overcome the historical challenges of democratizing vocational education.
Keywords: Vocational Education. Goal 11. Public Policies. Equity. Regional Inequality.

Educação profissional: avanços da meta 11 na 9ª CREDE-Ceará

Resumo
Este artigo analisa os resultados da implementação da Meta 11 do Plano Nacional de Educação (PNE 2014-2024) no território da 9ª Coordenadoria Regional de Desenvolvimento da Educação (CREDE), no Ceará. Partindo do referencial teórico da dualidade estrutural que historicamente marcou a educação profissional brasileira, o estudo investiga se a expansão da oferta dessa modalidade se deu de forma equitativa. A metodologia consistiu na análise de dados do Censo Escolar para os seis municípios da regional. Os resultados apontam para uma acentuada desigualdade na distribuição territorial das Escolas Estaduais de Educação Profissional, com dois municípios sem qualquer oferta, o que constitui uma barreira geográfica ao acesso. Conclui-se que a política de descentralização, na ausência de diretrizes claras para a equidade, reproduziu desigualdades regionais, não superando os desafios históricos de democratização da educação profissional.
Palavras-chave: Educação Profissional. Meta 11. Políticas Públicas. Equidade. Desigualdade Regional.

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1 Introduction

The *Plano Nacional de Educação* – PNE (National Education Plan) (2014–2024), established by Law No. 13.005/2014, represents a milestone in the formulation of public policies for the Brazilian educational sector. It sets ten-year goals and strategies within a collaborative framework among the Federal Government, States, Federal District, and Municipalities. Among its guidelines, the expansion of *Educação Profissional Técnica de Nível Médio* (Technical and Vocational Secondary Education) emerges as a strategic axis for democratizing opportunities and articulating academic training with entry into the labor market. This scenario has been historically marked by a structural duality that, as noted in the PNE itself, divided *Ensino Médio* (Upper Secondary Education) between an academic formation for the elites and a vocational formation for the working classes (Brasil, 2014).

In this context, Goal 11 of the PNE established the objective of "tripling enrollments in technical and vocational secondary education, ensuring the quality of provision and that at least 50% (fifty percent) of the expansion occurs in the public sector" (Brasil, 2014, p. 71). The final wording of this goal, modified through parliamentary amendments during its legislative process (Fasolo; Castioni, 2016), intensified the public sector's responsibility for leading this expansion. However, the implementation of this goal raises relevant academic debates. Authors such as Moura (2014) warn that, although expanding access is essential, Goal 11's formulation does not explicitly prioritize *Ensino Médio Integrado* (Integrated Secondary Education), potentially favoring concomitant models and public–private partnerships that risk deepening, rather than overcoming, the historical educational duality.

Given the national guidelines and the tensions inherent to their execution, it becomes imperative to analyze how this policy materializes at subnational levels, where local political, social, and economic conditions directly influence outcomes. In this regard, Cury (2010, p. 151) reminds us that Brazil's social complexity, marked by profound inequalities, becomes even more challenging when combined with the federal nature of the State, in which regional diversities intersect with persistent historical disparities.

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The State of Ceará has stood out on the national scene for its educational policies, becoming a relevant case for study. However, while these advances gain visibility, it is important to consider that the state carries a historical burden of socioeconomic inequalities compared to wealthier federative units such as São Paulo and Minas Gerais, where early industrialization favored the consolidation of more robust educational systems. In this sense, analyzing the reach and equity of educational policies across Ceará's microregions is essential to understanding the extent to which such initiatives can address this legacy of inequality. As highlighted in a report by the Institute for Applied Economic Research – IPEA (2025, p. 26), "commitment to inclusive and equitable policies is essential to building a society in which each region can contribute meaningfully to the democratic fabric of the nation."

In light of this context, this article aims to analyze the process of democratization in access to *Escolas Estaduais de Educação Profissional* (State Vocational High Schools – EEEP) as part of the strategy to achieve Goal 11 of the *Plano Nacional de Educação* – PNE (National Education Plan) within the territory of the *9ª Coordenadoria Regional de Desenvolvimento da Educação* (9th Regional Office for Educational Development – 9th CREDE) in the State of Ceará. Specifically, it seeks to investigate the quantitative progress in EEEP enrollment, the decentralization criteria adopted by the *Secretaria de Educação do Estado do Ceará* (Department of Education of the State of Ceará – SEDUC-CE), and the challenges involved in ensuring equitable access to these schools among the municipalities that make up the territory of the 9th CREDE.

2 Methodology

This research adopts a documentary and exploratory nature, with a qualitative–quantitative approach. This choice stems from the need to articulate a critical understanding of educational policies—through their historical and normative foundations—with the empirical analysis of statistical data that allow for assessing the progress and contradictions in the implementation of EEEP within the 9th CREDE as part

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of the strategy to achieve Goal 11 of the *Plano Nacional de Educação* – PNE (National Education Plan, 2014–2024).

The qualitative perspective seeks to interpret how national guidelines are materialized at the regional level, specifically within the territory of the 9th CREDE. The quantitative dimension, in turn, is incorporated through the examination of official indicators, enabling the construction of a more precise understanding of the distribution of supply and access to the EEEPs in this region.

The corpus of this investigation includes normative and statistical documents from different levels, such as microdata from the *Censo Escolar da Educação Básica* (School Census of Basic Education), provided by the *Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira* – INEP (National Institute for Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira), referring to the year 2024. Among the normative documents, the study highlights Law No. 13.005/2014, which establishes the PNE; the *Plano Estadual de Educação do Ceará* (State Education Plan of Ceará, 2016–2024); and official directives issued by the *Secretaria da Educação do Estado do Ceará* – SEDUC (Department of Education of the State of Ceará), such as Ordinance No. 0726/2021, which regulates enrollment criteria for EEEPs. These guiding texts were critically analyzed in dialogue with specialized literature (Saviani, 2019; Kuenzer, 2009; Frigotto; Ciavatta; Ramos, 2012; Xerez; Costa; Santos, 2017), allowing the policy of expanding vocational education to be situated within a broader historical framework marked by the persistence of structural duality in the Brazilian educational system.

The analysis was conducted in two stages. The first consisted of a critical reading of the normative documents, aiming to understand the intentions expressed in the goals and strategies, as well as the limits of their formulation. The second involved the systematization of statistical data into charts and tables, which made it possible to observe both the current distribution of the state network of EEEPs within the 9th CREDE and the inequality in their territorial and enrollment distribution.

The choice of these methodological strategies is based on the understanding that the expansion of vocational education can only be properly investigated when its

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supporting regulations, the data evidencing its materialization, and the social and regional contexts in which it operates are considered in an integrated manner. It is through the articulation of these factors that it becomes possible to understand to what extent the expansion process that has taken place in Ceará contributes to confronting—or reproducing—the historical regional inequality that characterizes Brazilian education.

3 Results and Discussion

The presentation of the research results is organized into sections designed to articulate the historical, political, and empirical analysis of vocational education, situating it first within the Brazilian context and subsequently within the state and microregional scope of the 9th CREDE. The first subsection, “Foundations of Vocational Education: historical duality and structural challenges,” presents the conceptual and historical elements that support the understanding of educational duality in Brazil, highlighting its colonial roots, the historical marginalization of manual labor, and the establishment of unequal educational pathways. This section discusses the theoretical contributions of authors such as Saviani, Cunha, Kuenzer, and Frigotto, who problematize the separation between intellectual and technical training, showing how this division persists as a structural challenge to the implementation of integrative and equitable educational policies.

3.1 Foundations of Vocational Education: historical duality and structural challenges

The analysis of vocational education within the Brazilian context requires overcoming the dichotomy between work and education by investigating its historical and structural roots. For this purpose, the concept of *educational duality* is adopted as the central analytical category—a phenomenon that segments educational pathways based on students’ social origins. This division is a defining feature of the history of education in Brazil, in which, as Dermeval Saviani (2019) points out, a distinction was established between “instruction,” of a practical and vocational nature intended for the common people,

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and “education,” of a humanistic, classical, and academic nature reserved for the ruling classes as a privilege.

This conceptual duality is not an abstraction; it finds its roots in the deep devaluation of manual labor that has marked Brazil’s social formation since the colonial period. The research of Luiz Antônio Cunha (2005) sheds light on how slave-based relations of production marginalized technical and artisanal work by associating it with the condition of the enslaved, leading free workers to reject such activities as a means of asserting social distinction and status. This process consolidated a lasting stigma, as the author summarizes:

> Since the beginning of Brazil’s colonization, slave-based relations of production distanced the free labor force from crafts and manufacturing. The employment of enslaved people as carpenters, blacksmiths, masons, weavers, and in other trades drove free workers away from these activities, as all sought to differentiate themselves from the enslaved. In other words, free men avoided manual labor so as to leave no doubt about their own social condition, striving to eliminate any ambiguities in social classification (Cunha, 2005, p. 02).

It is upon this foundation of social and cultural segregation that vocational education in Brazil was historically built—often as a parallel system of lesser prestige. This historical legacy is theorized by Kuenzer (2009) as a “structural duality,” which she identifies as the “major explanatory category” of national education. According to the author, this structure legitimizes the coexistence of two antagonistic formative projects that reproduce the social division of labor: a preparatory, academic path for the training of leaders and an instrumental path for the preparation of workers (Kuenzer, 2009). The separation between intellectual formation and work-oriented training thus emerges not as a fatality, but as a political project forged within the relations between capital and labor—one that contemporary educational policy is challenged to confront.

As Kuenzer (2009) observes, overcoming this duality is not limited to the numerical expansion of technical courses; it requires an educational conception that integrates work, science, culture, and technology as inseparable dimensions. The *Ensino Médio Integrado* (Integrated Secondary Education) within *Educação Profissional e Tecnológica* (Technical

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and Vocational Education and Training – EPT) and the full-time education policies provided for in the PNE (2014–2024) and incorporated into state plans represent attempts to articulate general and technical training, offering students not only qualifications for the labor market but also access to scientific and cultural heritage.

> Integration means recognizing work as an educational principle and valuing an *omnilateral*, polytechnical, and unified form of education. Integration is the understanding of general and specific knowledge as a totality. Integration is the inseparability of work, culture, science, and technology (Bizerro; Moura, 2023).

Authors such as Frigotto, Ciavatta, and Ramos (2012) emphasize that this process involves recognizing vocational education as part of basic education, rather than as a lower-prestige subsystem. However, Xerez, Costa, and Santos (2017, p. 216) point out that the policy of expanding vocational education in Ceará, although advancing in the increase of enrollment opportunities and the institutionalization of Integrated Secondary Education, carries contradictions between the discourse of comprehensive education and practices that often reinforce an instrumental logic oriented toward the market, since “EEEPs aim at formative actions with an emphasis on business technology, entrepreneurship, and management, thus demonstrating a concern with workforce training to meet market demand.”

3.2 From the National Plan to the state policy for Vocational Education in Ceará

Goal 11 of the *Plano Nacional de Educação* (PNE, 2014–2024), by proposing the tripling of enrollments in vocational education, represents the main driving policy behind the reconfiguration of this educational modality in Brazil. Its strategies, as noted earlier, go beyond quantitative expansion and aim to overcome historical inequalities by establishing specific actions for public networks, rural and *quilombola* populations, people with disabilities, and for the reduction of ethnic–racial and regional disparities (Strategies 11.2, 11.9, 11.10, and 11.13).

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However, national progress toward this goal presents a mixed picture. According to the PNE Monitoring Panel (INEP, 2024), Brazil reached 2,389,454 enrollments, corresponding to only 45.73% of the total projected for the end of the decade. Conversely, regarding the expansion of public provision, the indicator reached 65.6% in 2024, surpassing the objective of ensuring that 50% of the expansion occurred within the public sector. This scenario—of slow overall quantitative progress but with strong leadership from the public network—highlights the importance of state-level analysis, where federal policies are translated into concrete actions.

In this context, the State of Ceará stands out. In alignment with national guidelines, its *Plano Estadual de Educação* (PEE, 2016–2024) established its own goals, adapted to the local political reality, reflecting a strong investment environment in the educational sector. The state goal corresponding to vocational education set out to "[...] ensure that 30% (thirty percent) of secondary school enrollments are linked to Technical and Vocational Education by 2024." This directive spurred the notable expansion of the *Escolas Estaduais de Educação Profissional* (EEEP), which have become a cornerstone of full-time secondary education in the state.

The quantitative results of this policy are significant. According to data from the *Painel de Estatísticas do Censo Escolar da Educação Básica* (School Census Statistics Panel)[1], in 2024 the state network of Ceará already comprised 137 institutions offering upper secondary technical and vocational education, totaling 61,826 enrollments. This number represents a 27.07% increase compared to 2016, the first year of the PEE's implementation, demonstrating a continuous effort to expand both infrastructure and access.

However, when comparing Ceará's implementation with the equity strategies outlined in the PNE, important tensions emerge. Although Strategy 3.27 of the PEE calls for the expansion of integrated provision for rural populations, *quilombolas*, and people with disabilities, 2024 data indicate that none of the 137 vocational education units in Ceará

[1] Available at: https://www.gov.br/inep/pt-br/acesso-a-informacao/dados-abertos/inep-data/estatisticas-censo-escolar

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were located in differentiated areas (settlements, Indigenous lands, or *quilombo* remnants)[2]. Likewise, the public calls for student selection did not include any quota allocation for ethnic–racial groups, in contrast with Strategies 11.9 and 11.13 of the PNE. Inclusion efforts appear more effective regarding people with disabilities, though they have been delayed. Only in 2021, through Enrollment Ordinance No. 0726/2021—which established the norms for the 2022 academic year—was a 5% quota for people with disabilities implemented, as stipulated in Goal 11.10 of the PNE and Goal 4 of the PEE, revealing a belated inclusion process.

The diversity of educational offerings, on the other hand, is a strong point of the state policy. The course catalog is extensive, with 52 options distributed across 12 technological areas, aiming to align students' training with the economic and social potential of the territory in which each school is located, as detailed in Box 1.

Box 1 – Catalog of Courses by Technological Area

Technological Area	Technical Courses
Environment and Health	Nursing, Aesthetics, Massage Therapy, Environmental Management, Dental Hygiene, Nutrition and Dietetics
Control and Industrial Processes	Industrial Automation, Electromechanics, Electrotechnics, Automotive Maintenance, Mechanics
Educational and Social Development	School Secretariat, Translation and Interpretation of Libras, Libras Instruction – Experimental
Management and Business	Administration, Commerce, Accounting, Finance, Logistics, Secretariat, Real Estate Transactions
Information and Communication	Informatics, Computer Networks
Infrastructure	Surveying, Civil Construction Design, Building Construction, Ports
Food Production	Agroindustry
Cultural Production and Design	Interior Design, Cultural Management – Experimental, Garment Modeling, Multimedia, Landscaping, Audio and Video Production, Fashion Production, Music Conducting
Industrial Production	Biotechnology, Mechanical Manufacturing, Furniture, Textiles, Oil and Gas, Chemistry, Apparel
Natural Resources	Agriculture (Floriculture), Agribusiness, Agricultural Production, Aquaculture, Fruit Growing, Mining
Safety	Occupational Safety

[2] Since 2023, the 12 rural schools under the administration of SEDUC-CE have begun offering vocational education integrated with upper secondary education. The *Escolas Estaduais de Ensino Médio Profissional do Campo* (EEMPC) offer courses in Agroecology, Administration, and Informatics. This research draws on data from the EEEP network to discuss issues of equity.

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Technological Area	Technical Courses
Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure	Events, Tour Guiding, Hospitality

Source: Secretaria da Educação do Ceará, Coordenadoria de Educação Profissional.

In the overall framework, it is possible to affirm that although the EEEPs display remarkable curricular diversification, the analysis reveals a gap in affirmative actions and in the application of equity strategies—a central challenge for overcoming the historical duality that this study seeks to investigate at the microregional level of the 9th CREDE.

3.3 Characterization of the 9th CREDE: Context and Educational Network

The *9ª Coordenadoria Regional de Desenvolvimento da Educação* (9th Regional Office for Educational Development – 9th CREDE) constitutes a decentralized management body of the *Secretaria da Educação do Estado do Ceará* (Department of Education of the State of Ceará – SEDUC-CE). Its primary function is to coordinate and articulate the implementation of educational policies within its area of jurisdiction, serving as a link between central management and local school units. Geographically, the territory of the 9th CREDE encompasses six municipalities located in the Metropolitan Region of Fortaleza and the Eastern Coast of the state: Beberibe, Cascavel, Chorozinho, Horizonte, Pacajus, and Pindoretama. This territorial diversity, which includes urban, rural, and coastal areas, poses specific challenges to ensuring equitable access to public education policies.

For the analysis proposed in this article, the configuration of the state public education network is a key element. According to official data from the *Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira* (INEP), based on the 2024 School Census, the school network under the jurisdiction of the 9th CREDE comprises 23 institutions. The distribution by educational modality highlights the predominance of full-time upper secondary education, as detailed below:

- 07 Regular State Secondary Schools (EEM).
- 04 State Vocational High Schools (EEEP).

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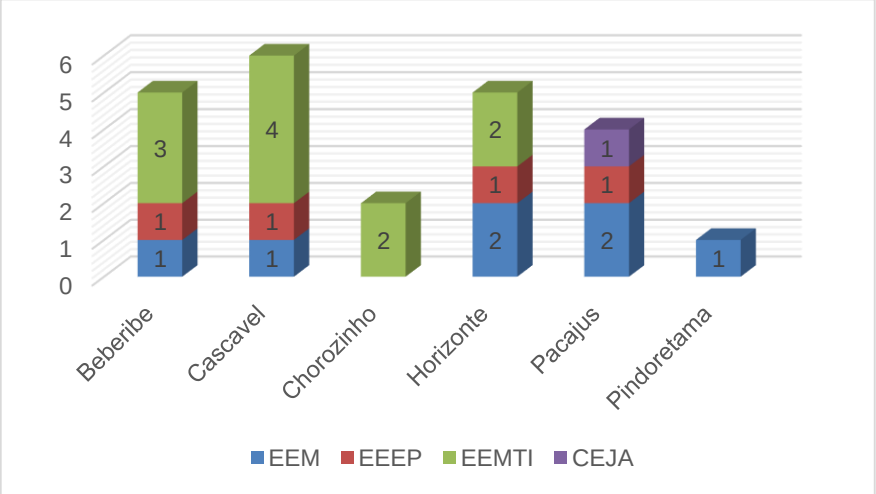
- 11 Full-Time State Secondary Schools (EEMTI).
- 01 Center for Youth and Adult Education (CEJA).

The distribution of these school units across the six municipalities, presented in Graph 1, reveals both the reach and the potential concentrations of educational provision within the territory.

Graph 1 – Distribution of the School Network by Municipality within the 9th CREDE



Source: Prepared by the authors based on data from INEP – School Census 2021.

The analysis of the data presented in the graph above, which details the distribution of the school network, allows for a clearer view of the materialization of the challenges related to equitable access within the territory. It is notable that the distribution of the total number of schools follows, to some extent, the demographic differences among the municipalities. More populous locations, such as Cascavel and Horizonte, have a broader school network than municipalities like Pindoretama and Chorozinho—a correlation that can be expected in the planning of public services.

However, the focus of this study lies in the provision of Vocational Education (EEEP), and it is here that the issue of equity becomes critical. The data reveal that the

policy of expanding this educational modality within the 9th CREDE resulted in a binary distribution: the four most populous municipalities (Beberibe, Cascavel, Horizonte, and Pacajus) each received one EEEP unit, while the two municipalities with smaller populations (Chorozinho and Pindoretama) received none.

Although this configuration may be justified by population-scale criteria, it creates a clear inequality in the diversity of educational opportunities. For young people in Chorozinho and Pindoretama, access to public technical education is not only limited—it is nonexistent. This shows that the policy of regionalization, rather than ensuring proportionality, produced complete territorial exclusion from a strategic educational modality, forcing students either to commute or to forgo this formative option altogether. This empirical finding serves as the starting point for discussing the effectiveness of implementing Goal 11 with respect to promoting equity.

3.4 The Distribution of Vocational Education within the 9th CREDE: Data Analysis

The effectiveness of large-scale educational policies such as the PNE depends intrinsically on their ability to materialize equitably across territories. In this context, decentralization should not merely mean the expansion of service coverage, but the assurance of access under conditions of equality—a principle enshrined in Article 5 of the Federal Constitution (Brasil, 1988). This section analyzes data concerning the provision of *Educação Profissional Técnica de Nível Médio* (Upper Secondary Technical and Vocational Education – EPTNM) within the 9th CREDE, focusing on distribution and access, and investigating the extent to which the regional implementation of Goal 11 fulfills the principle of equity among the municipalities under its jurisdiction.

3.5 Network Configuration and Territorial Distribution

As presented in the characterization of this study, the territory of the 9th CREDE is composed of six municipalities, but the provision of EPTNM in the state public network is

concentrated in only four of them. The network consists of four *Escolas Estaduais de Educação Profissional* (EEEP):

- EEEP José Maria Falcão (Pacajus).
- EEEP Edson Queiroz (Cascavel).
- EEEP Pedro de Queiroz Lima (Beberibe).
- EEEP Lúcia Helena Viana Ribeiro (Horizonte).

The first and most evident finding is the absence of vocational education units in the municipalities of Chorozinho and Pindoretama. This initial observation already points to a structural inequality in access, as the opportunity for technical training becomes conditioned by the student's geographic location. Although this distribution pattern may be understandable within a population-scale rationale, it operates in an exclusionary manner toward students who do not reside in municipalities served by EEEPs. This scenario exposes a contradiction within the decentralization policy: rather than ensuring universal access, it can reproduce exclusion when clear equity guidelines—such as those established in Strategies 11.9 and 11.13 of the PNE—are not effectively implemented.

3.6 Profile of Provision: Access and Enrollment

The analysis of student selection notices for the EEEPs in the region demonstrates the adoption of a unified process based on the annual enrollment ordinance issued by SEDUC-CE. Each EEEP offers 180 vacancies per year for first-year secondary education classes, which indicates that the current provision remains far below the quantitative demand from students transitioning from lower to upper secondary education, as will be shown in the following data. This transforms the enrollment process into a selection process, in which students with higher grades in the final years of elementary school have a significant advantage over those with lower grades. This reality is another indication of the perpetuation of inequalities, as merit-based criteria are used to compensate for the limited availability of places.

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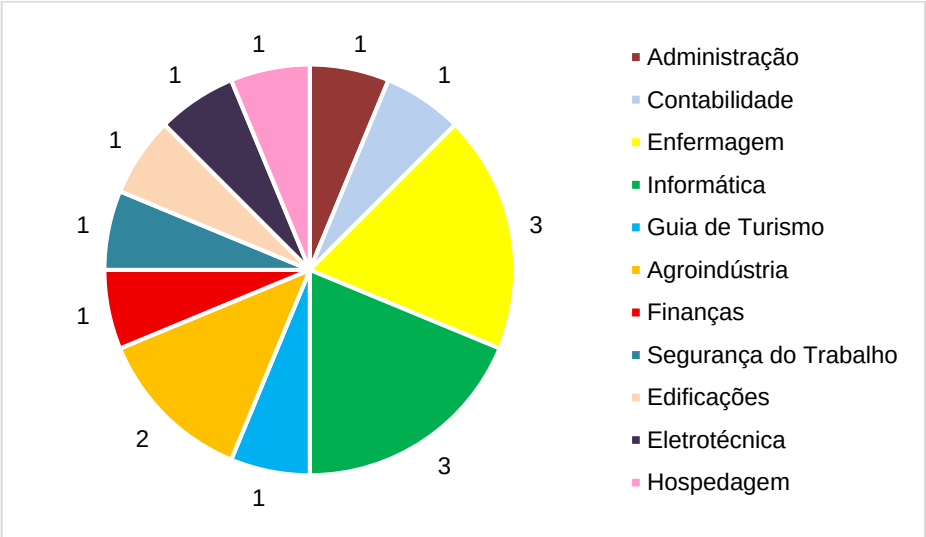
The access criteria establish that 80% of the vacancies are reserved for graduates from public schools and 20% for students from private schools, with 30% of this latter share reserved for students who can prove residence within the school's local territory. This also illustrates the persistence of regional inequalities, since, as previously noted, some municipalities in the region do not have any EPT provision.

On the other hand, there was progress in 2022, when a 5% quota for people with disabilities was established, in alignment with Strategy 11.10 of the PNE and the State Education Plan. However, this progress occurred rather late, further deepening the existing inequalities.

Regarding the course catalog, there is a noticeable concentration of offerings in specific areas. The Nursing and Informatics programs together account for 37.5% of the total, followed by Agroindustry (12.5%). The remaining courses each represent 6.25%. This distribution, presented in Graph 2, raises questions about the diversity of training available in the EEEPs of the region and its alignment with the economic vocations of each municipality.

Graph 2 – Course Offerings in Vocational Education Institutions within the 9th CREDE



Source: Prepared by the authors.

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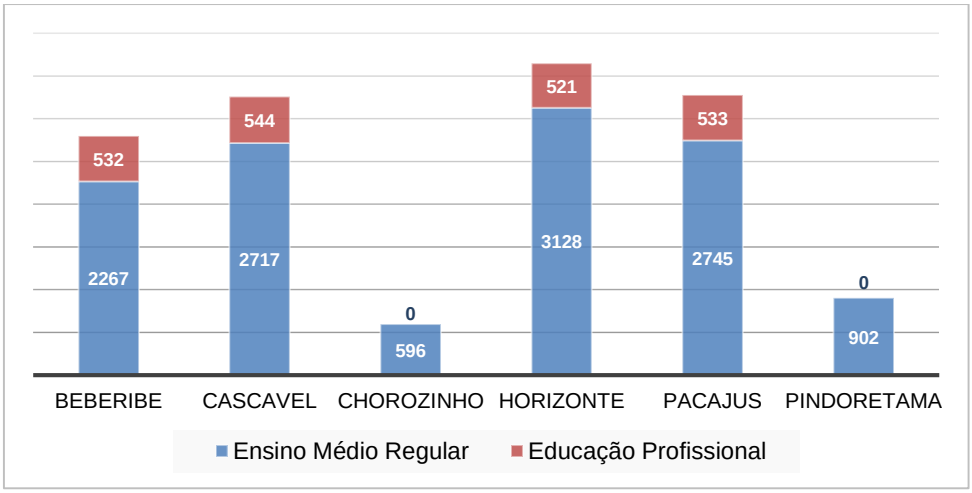
The analysis of enrollment distribution, based on data from the 2024 School Census (Graph 3), deepens the understanding of inequality.

Graph 3 – Enrollment by Educational Modality in 2024 within the 9th CREDE



Source: Prepared by the authors based on data from the 2024 School Census.

When comparing the number of enrollments in EPTNM with the total number of enrollments in other upper secondary modalities, the consolidated percentage for the 9th CREDE is 17.2% of students enrolled in EEEPs. This figure falls significantly short of a commonly used benchmark, such as the 30% target frequently adopted in state planning. A breakdown by municipality reveals that Beberibe, with 23.5% of its upper secondary enrollments in the vocational modality, comes closest to this threshold. It is followed by Cascavel (20.0%), Pacajus (19.4%), and Horizonte (16.7%).

As previously discussed, the absence of provision in Chorozinho and Pindoretama results in a 0% enrollment rate in the local public network, making regional inequality explicit. For students in these municipalities, access to vocational education necessarily requires commuting to other cities, creating logistical and financial barriers that, when combined with the limited number of available spots and the territorialization criteria for enrollment, violate the principle of equitable access. In summary, the regionalization policy in this territory manifests itself in a polarized rather than universalized manner.

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4 Final Considerations

The *Plano Nacional de Educação* (PNE), as an expression of social aspirations, established ambitious goals for overcoming historical inequalities. However, as evidenced in the case study of the 9th CREDE, the translation of these goals into regional policies has produced ambiguous results. The expansion of vocational education through the EEEPs occurred unevenly, favoring some municipalities over others and thus failing to guarantee universal access. The concentration of schools in four out of six municipalities reinforces a pattern of territorial inequality and imposes access barriers on young people from Chorozinho and Pindoretama, reproducing the logic of exclusion that has historically characterized Brazilian vocational education.

This territorial exclusion is aggravated by the limited annual number of available spots compared to the volume of students transitioning from elementary to upper secondary education, transforming the admission process into a highly selective mechanism based on meritocratic criteria. Although the selection notices show some concern with the inclusion of public school graduates and people with disabilities, such measures are insufficient to overcome the main obstacle: residing in a municipality without an EEEP already constitutes, in itself, a criterion of exclusion. In this sense, the decentralization policy proves unable to reverse the “historical debt” toward the education of the popular classes, as discussed by Saviani (2019) and Kuenzer (2009).

The situation in the 9th CREDE reflects, in microcosm, the national challenge highlighted by the PNE’s evaluation: the difficulty of transforming inclusion guidelines into an offer that is materially accessible to all. The absence of an expansion policy that considers the specificities and totality of municipalities within the territory weakens the transformative potential of vocational education. The main conclusion is that, without clear guidelines for the equitable distribution of educational infrastructure, decentralization risks deepening rather than mitigating regional inequalities.

This study does not exhaust the discussion. It points to the need for future qualitative research to investigate the impact of the lack of provision on the educational

trajectories of young people in Chorozinho and Pindoretama, as well as the effectiveness of existing EEEPs in facilitating their graduates' entry into the labor market. Finally, it highlights the fragility of the monitoring mechanisms of the State Education Plan, which must ensure that network expansion adheres to one fundamental principle: no student should be left behind.

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