

Educational regulation and teaching work in Minas Gerais: the obligation of results

Maria Helena Oliveira Gonçalves Augusto

Federal University of Minas Gerais

Abstract

This article presents the description and analysis of the education policies developed in Minas Gerais state education system. It aims to identify their effects on teachers' labor relations. Such education policies fit the modality of education regulation called *obligation of results*, which comprises a set of interventions characterized as control measures aimed at achieving greater school effectiveness. The documentary survey and empirical data analysis have indicated that the measures taken by the government focus on teachers' accountability for student success or failure in large-scale assessment systems and regular school assessments. Teacher performance assessment and school institutional assessment are linked to educational attainment. The percentage of pupils to be promoted and the efficiency levels to be achieved are defined centrally, without the participation of teachers. In such context of demanding results, teachers' work conditions in Minas Gerais state schools are not taken into account. Based on the authors studied, this article discusses new more horizontal and less hierarchical modes of education regulation in the definition of public education policies.

Keywords

Educational regulation – Obligation of results – Teaching

Contact:

Maria Helena Oliveira Gonçalves Augusto
malenaoga20@gmail.com

Regulação educativa e trabalho docente em Minas Gerais: a obrigação de resultados

Maria Helena Oliveira Gonçalves Augusto

Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais

Resumo

Este artigo apresenta a descrição e a análise das políticas educacionais em desenvolvimento no sistema estadual de ensino em Minas Gerais, tendo por objetivo identificar seus efeitos sobre as relações de trabalho docente. Tais políticas educacionais enquadram-se na modalidade de regulação educativa denominada obrigação de resultados, que compreende um conjunto de intervenções caracterizadas como medidas de controle com o propósito de obter maior eficácia escolar. O levantamento documental e a análise dos dados empíricos indicaram que as medidas empreendidas pelo governo concentram sobre os professores a responsabilização pelo êxito ou pelo fracasso dos alunos nos sistemas de avaliação em larga escala e nas avaliações regulares das escolas. A avaliação de desempenho dos professores e a avaliação institucional das escolas são vinculadas aos resultados escolares, sendo definidos centralmente, sem a participação dos professores, os percentuais de alunos que devem ser promovidos e os índices de proficiência a serem alcançados. Em tal contexto de cobrança de resultados, não são levadas em consideração as condições de trabalho docente na rede estadual de ensino em Minas Gerais. O artigo discute, com base nos autores pesquisados, novos modos de regulação educativa – mais horizontais e menos hierárquicos – na definição das políticas públicas de educação.

Palavras-chave

Regulação educativa – Obrigação de resultados – Trabalho docente.

Correspondência:

Maria Helena Oliveira Gonçalves Augusto
malenaoga20@gmail.com

In Minas Gerais state, the traditional organization of the education system has been replaced by a new management model, which expands the use of school performance indicators in large-scale assessment systems, with an emphasis on teacher accountability for student outcomes. These measures fall into the modality of regulation called *obligation of results*, as defined by Demailly (2001, 2004) and Lessard (2004, 2009). Such modality comprises a set of interventions aiming to increase school performance indicators, reflected in the improvement of the academic proficiency of students and schools in Minas Gerais Public Education Assessment System Evaluation (SIMAVE/PROEB). The state government proposes changes aiming at administrative modernization and the adoption of business management models. Leaders identify such measures as the solution to the problems of school education, in order to tackle inefficiency. This regulation modality seeks to reduce costs and signal to users the often distant from social reality intention of improving public education.

This article expresses the findings of a study that identified and analyzed the education policies in Minas Gerais state education system from 2003 to 2010. The study methodology consisted of the survey and study of documents of a Minas Gerais government program called *Choque de Gestão* (management shock) and field research conducted at School Inspection Centers in three Education Regional Superintendencies of the capital, Belo Horizonte, and other 36 municipalities near it. The School Inspection Centers are located in public schools of their jurisdiction, where school inspectors assemble once a week, in shifts, to meet the school principals, secretaries and teachers who integrate them. I followed the meetings with the principals for guidance on the measures in force, which depict the government education policy and the teachers' questions. The Centers turned out to be adequate space to observe the interpretation of legal measures, since the

guidelines on such measures are conveyed there. In addition, teachers usually go to those centers to look for guidance from the School Inspectors on their employment statuses, labor relations and performance evaluation. The meetings with teachers were observed and recorded after consent throughout the first half of 2009. The document survey data, together with a specific theoretical framework, data analysis and fieldwork allowed examining the education policy in force in Minas Gerais and its impact on teaching.

Thus, using the theoretical framework on the theme, this article conceptualizes educational regulation and the obligation of results, and seeks to describe and analyze the government program *Choque de Gestão* (management shock). In addition, it discusses the educational regulation in force in Minas Gerais state from the perspective of the obligation of results, and its effects on teachers' work. As final thoughts, it outlines thoughts on a new perspective of expanding the participation of social actors in the educational regulation process.

Education policies and educational regulation

Regulation is a polysemic concept of Latin etymology, defined in dictionaries *as the act or effect of regulating, establishing rules, facilitating the execution of the law*. It also means adjusting the action (mechanical, biological or social) for certain purposes, comparing and also representing the modes of constant adjustments of actions and their effects in order to achieve systems' proper functioning and balance. The term *regulation* has been used in bio physiology, thermodynamics, cybernetics, economics and social systems.

To understand the concept of regulation as applied in education in the context a demand of results, it is necessary to insert it in the theoretical framework on the theme, based on the authors who make it explicit. The concept of regulation can be understood from two aspects:

- The first one is how the measure that guides the actions of those involved is produced and applied; it represents the action control and coordination devices (rules, norms, injunctions, legislative measures);

- the second aspect represents local actions, the ways actors do or do not appropriate control devices and how they transform them, which might lead to ways of adjusting or (re) adjusting measures.

In the first case lies *institutional regulation*, as defined by Maroy and Dupriez (2000). The concept highlights the dimensions of coordination, control and influence of an authority, i.e., the set of measures of intervention in local action. It also refers to the concept of *control regulation* (REYNAUD, 1997, 2003), whose source is the institutional authority establishing the rules, norms and injunctions which guide the actions of local actors.

The second aspect comprises *situational regulation*, also defined by Reynaud (1997, 2003). The concept of *situational regulation* covers the actions and strategies of the various local actors in relation to the intervention of authorities and superior hierarchical instances, considering that there may be not only the due appropriation of interventions but also disagreements and divergences of ideas as to their application. Regulation is a process which therefore covers not only the production of rules (norms, constraints and injunctions) which serve to guide the actions of subjects in social systems, but also the action of these local actors and the (re) adjustment of actions in relation to the constraints, since the rules can be appropriate (or not) to the local context. Therefore, regulation results from the articulation between one or more control devices and *horizontal* processes of norm production in the organization and can be understood as an active social process of rule production, allowing to solve interdependence and coordination problems. It includes a plurality of sources, elements and actors who, in different actions, contribute to its production

in different modes of operation, with an adjustment process between these elements, which are not simply juxtaposed. The actors have relative autonomy, their actions being framed because of the complexity of social facts and the possibility of their appropriating (or not) the injunctions (DELVAUX, 2008).

According to Barroso (2003), regulation is a constitutive process of all social systems and is associated with their operation to ensure not only their balance and consistency, but also their transformation. Thus, the meaning of the term *regulation* is broad, encompassing also the (re) adjustment of interventions, due to the diversity of actors' actions and in function of them. Many researchers who examine the effects of regulation in social systems use thoughts and principles that fall into a political approach to social action. In this case, regulation means multiple contradictory and sometimes conflicting processes of guidance of actors' behavior. Thus, in social systems, the notion of balance is questioned given that in the process of social action tensions and conflicts may arise. Reynaud (1997, 2003), Maroy & Dupriez (2000), Delvaux (2008), Crozier and Friedberg (1977), and also Barroso (2003, 2006), Barroso et al. (2008), among others, are representatives of this line of thought.

Maroy (2008) discusses the dialectics between control regulation (by authority) and situational regulation (by local actors) in social systems. According to the author, the integration of the set of regulations does not occur *a priori*. Due to the unpredictability of actions, there may be cases of tension, conflict, and permanent negotiations. Therefore, regulation does not fit in a functionalist approach of social action, because it is a plural, continuous, conflictive and often-contradictory process.

In the education area, according to Barroso (2006), the term *regulation* is related to the state's role in conducting public policies, the set of proposed interventions aimed at better, more effective results. The regulation of education systems is a unique, automatic,

predictable process. The control of a rule application does not guarantee the action of social actors as defined in the intervening measures. The coordination of actions or the transformation of the system results more from the interaction of several regulative devices than from applying linear and hierarchical rules. Therefore, under the stigma of tension and confrontation, there are two forms of regulation in action in education systems: the institutional and control one, concerned with the results and with the improvement in the system's performance indicators, and a local micro regulation one, characterized by actions and interactions of different local actors in function of the interventions.

According to Demailly (2004), the obligation of results in education arises in France in the 1980s, linked to the *New Public Management*, and can be found under other names, such as *accountability*. It represents a set of global strategies of educational services in view of the need to adjust them to the requirements of international financial organizations of more effectiveness and suitability to the economic demands of capitalism. It is part of a context of change in education systems and in the rhetoric of management administration, predicting its success and effectiveness. In this case, the educational regulation for results is more flexible as to the processes and enhances autonomy in action execution, but it is rigid as to control through outcome evaluation. It comprises a set of compulsory measures aiming to produce goals and it relies on evaluation systems and indicators established to measure performance, as well as ranking lists of schools as Lessard (2009) points out. This is a common policy in the United States (government-based-accountability), with standardized programs and external certification exams putting pressure on the performance of students and schools. According to Maroy (2010), in regulation by results the tools of action coordination and evaluation are defined centrally, with the goals and outcomes established in advance. In such context, there is a clear

influence of the measures taken in international circumstances, representing a modality called *transnational* regulation, i.e., the set of tools (procedures, techniques, different materials) that are produced and circulate in international forums, in the field of education, and that being considered legitimate, are adopted by politicians in various countries in their educational systems (BARROSO, 2006). One example of such tools is the *Programme for International Students Assessment* (PISA), conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which serves as a tool to compare the equity and efficiency of education systems. According to Lessard (2009), it is possible to talk about the instrumentalization of political action to characterize the set of measures which allow operationalizing changes in education systems under this approach. In a sense, education policies are subordinate to the economic logic, with the implementation of models of control and effectiveness of education systems.

The obligation of results, as a way of regulating public action means an action imposed on schools in the logic of productivity and efficiency, generally operating in an imperative way, like an institutionalized obligation (Demailly, 2004). According to the author, the obligation of results should help foster the achievement of better outcomes at school. It should not be an imperative in which decisions are made without the involvement and participation of local actors in the process. Lessard (2009) questions the imperative mode of the obligation of results, as there is a contradiction between the benefits promised to the schools with improved performance and the overall efficiency of the education system. According to the author, the contradiction can be explained by the fact that schools with the best results are always the same – those located in more socially advantaged urban areas – which have a greater power of attraction on teachers and students. According to the author, schools located in disadvantaged popular areas are

at disadvantage in relation to achieving the goals established.

Choque de Gestão (management shock) and the obligation of results in Minas Gerais: 2003 – 2010

During Aécio Neves' management, Minas Gerais state government claimed to have found a serious administrative and fiscal crisis inherited from the previous administration of Itamar Franco (1998-2002). It then proposed a government program called *Choque de Gestão* (shock management), which consisted of actions to streamline procedures, modernize its systems, restructure the state apparatus and evaluate institutional and individual performance, aiming to improve the quality and reduce the cost of public services. According to the documents that describe this state reform, it was held to reorganize the finances and promote better public services. At the beginning of the program, the government stated the intention to resume the contacts with international financing agents (World Bank – WB – and InterAmerican Development Bank – IDB). To do so, according to the documents examined, Minas Gerais government proposed the necessary public expenditure balance, as well as spending cuts. The government actions and strategies in the first period of administration (2003-2006) consisted of expanding revenue, reducing expenses, budget and financial impoundment, surveying information on the potential for rationalizing public expenditures, prioritizing resource allocation, integrating and improving business systems, increasing control of payroll and its vegetative growth (VILHENA et al., 2006).

During the period, Minas Gerais kept the partnership with the World Bank and received funds for both investing in urban infrastructure and in social projects. According to an interview given to the newspaper *Gazeta Mercantil* on August 26, 2008, by John Briscoe, a World Bank director at the time, experts of the Bank

worked with the Minas Gerais government team on a project of state restructuring. According to data obtained in the research, the result of such partnership was a loan of \$ 976 million to Minas Gerais state.

The government considered *Choque de Gestão* (management shock) program “not a mere administrative reform, due to its uniqueness”. For this reason, it was characterized as a second-generation reform and defined in large guidelines, as Vilhena et al. (2006) indicated:

- From provider state to regulatory and promoter state
- From bureaucratic public administration to public management administration
- From people management by control to the commitment and alignment

The basis of this new model is aligning managers' to the objectives and priorities of *Choque de Gestão* (management shock) program. According to the government's assumptions, the commitment and alignment planned would be obtained through an *Agreement of results*, a management tool that seeks to align the institutions using a pact of results to achieve the goals and objectives of the government's agenda.

To analyze *Choque de Gestão* (management shock) program, it is important to understand the role played by Minas Gerais State Legislative Assembly (MGSLA) in approving the measures which represented government policies. According to government documents, the proposals in the reform program had been extensively discussed with the unions and people's representatives, a statement that opposed to the declarations of the MGSLA minority bloc (Worker's Party – PT / Communist Party of Brazil – PC do B), which at the time consisted of sixteen members according to an interview on June 24, 2004 with the bloc's leader. The fieldwork carried out with Inspection Centers revealed that the measures were put into effect vertically by the government, without the knowledge or the participation of those concerned – in

the case of education, teachers. Actually, the government counted – and still counts – on the support of the majority of the members of Minas Gerais Legislative Assembly. What one understands when examining the range of government measures passed in the period is that it was a package negotiated between the Planning and Management Department (SEPLAG) and the ruling bloc at MGSAL, chaired at the time by the Member Alberto Pinto Coelho. Prof. Antônio Anastasia, the Secretary of Planning in the first period of government, was the mentor and promoter of the state reform. When he left SEPLAG, he was replaced by Renata Vilhena, a sub secretary who had been in his team.

Among the government measures, there were constitutional amendments, delegated laws and supplementary laws that enabled the adoption of a highly managerial program with a meritocratic logic. Constitutional Amendment No. 57/2003 and Supplementary Law No. 71/2003 provided a series of changes in public management that made it similar to private management. They also profoundly altered labor relations within the State, established institutional and individual performance appraisals, disciplined the loss of public office and allowed the government to use management tools such as the *Agreement of Results*.

The *Agreement of Results* in force in the state is a management contract that represents a form of control regulation, with the purpose of obtaining more effective and efficient public services. The law governing the *Agreement of Results* is Law No. 17,600, July 2008, regulated by Decree No. 44873, August 2008. The management contract is constitutionally disciplined (Article 37, paragraph 8 of the Federal Constitution of 1988), not a new tool in public administration in Brazil, having been used nationwide in the 1990s. Minas Gerais state *Agreement of Results* began in 2008 and was planned in two stages: the first one comprises a commitment of State Departments with the Governor and the second is the commitment

of the State Departments with their component bodies – in the case of education, Education Regional Superintendencies, intermediary bodies of the system, and the state's public schools.

The rationalization of administrative measures and the media coverage of government actions in Minas Gerais led to a high social acceptance of that government during its two terms, both among the state's population and nationwide. Consequently, the governor elected for the period 2011-2014 was the deputy governor of the previous period, Professor Antônio Anastasia, who has proceeded with the intervening measures and has called the current program *State for Results*.

When one analyzes the nature of the state government actions since 2003, one notices a technocratic profile with the adoption of management strategies typical of *New Public Management*, as pointed out by Lessard (2009) when talking about the instrumentalization of political action. The influence of new modes of governing typical of countries like the United States and England is noticeable when one analyzes Minas Gerais government policies.

The effects of educational regulation policies on teaching labor relations

When starting its management in 2003, Minas Gerais Education Department (SEEMG) revealed sensitive concern with the academic outcomes of the state's public schools in previous years. Based on the analysis of schools' productivity results, during its two terms (2003-2006 and 2007-2010) the government took measures that reflect the political decision to change the situation, reversing the state's position in the national ranking. According to the government, the justification for such measures is the evidence of the ineffectiveness of public education, considering the studies on the drop in school results and on financial resources. Leaders pointed out the planned changes as the solution to the problems of school education,

and they aimed to signal to users the intention to improve public education. The analysis of such regulation leads to understanding it as a set of cost reduction measures that have often been distant from social reality.

Maroy (2010) considers the model of regulation by results post-bureaucratic, because the primacy of valuing efficiency is increasingly instrumental, superseding strictly educational concerns. Systems also produce a huge number of laws, decrees and circulars, and it turns out that in applying these more and more conflicts arise, causing the demand for solutions. *Choque de Gestão* (management shock) can be classified as a post-bureaucratic program, once the final results are defined *a priori* and prevail over the processes. It envisages managerial autonomy in action development, and what matters to the government is the achievement of stipulated indices, without taking into account the precarious conditions of teachers' work organization.

The *Agreement of results*, extended in a second stage to the schools which integrate the Education Regional Superintendencies since June 2008, has set targets to expand student academic proficiency outcomes in Math and in Portuguese in SIMAVE / PROEB assessments. This *Agreement* of the educational area concentrates the accountability for student success or failure on schools and teachers, by establishing the percentages of students who must be promoted and academic proficiency rates to be obtained per school and phase of basic education. In an interview shown on Minas Gerais Education Department website in the section *Banco de Notícias* on May 5, 2011, when asked about the importance of the *Agreement of Results* for the evaluation of teachers' work, a director of evaluation of the education system of Minas Gerais State Education Department declared:

In the *Agreement of results*, external evaluation (Proalfa - PROEB) has a significant weight because that's the

strategy that assesses the outcome and quality of teachers' work with students. It is through external evaluation that I know student X has learned what s/he has learned, and the result of our work from the central body is that the child learns. With our effort in Minas Gerais Education Department, through the Superintendencies and in schools, what we are concerned with is that students get quality education. And the evaluation is a thermometer of the learning process in the school.¹

The state government instituted a bonus called *Productivity Award* through the Law of the Agreement, which conditions the performance evaluation of individual teachers to the improvement of school results, as shown in Table 1. The institutional evaluation system of schools establishes mechanisms awarding for team productivity and requires scores equal to or greater than 70% of the total for the award. If it fails to meet the goals, the body in question loses the prerogatives of autonomy and the right to the award². Called a *14th salary* by teachers, the award is a mechanism of competition among schools and teachers in a meritocratic logic distanced from the principles of equity and social justice.

As Afonso (2009) points out, a system of assessment and accountability cannot exhaust itself in the mere collection and publicity of information based on tests, even though they are standardized. According to the author, the situation becomes more severe if student academic outcomes are a key criterion for evaluating schools and teachers and if they are associated with the awards.

The analysis of educational reality revealed that the situation described by

1- Available at: <<http://www.educacao.mg.gov.br>>. Accessed on May 12, 2011.

2- The data survey showed that in three Education Regional Superintendencies - Metropolitan A, B, and C - 73.2% out of 480 state schools in the municipalities of Great Belo Horizonte achieved the score required in the institutional assessment. Data available at: <<http://www.educacao.mg.gov.br>>. Accessed on 13 December 2010.

Afonso (2009), in which control of the results is done using the indexes established, is occurring in Minas Gerais. The terms of the *Agreement of results* of schools, in its second clause, express the aforementioned

accountability, containing the indicators to be achieved in SIMAVE / PROEB³. Table 1 below shows the measures in force in the schools of Minas Gerais education system, as the law defines them:

Table 1 – Effects of obligation of results on education (Minas Gerais State Education Department)

Schools	Teachers
Institutional Development Assessment (Law 17.600/2008)	Individual Development Assessment (Joint Resolution of Planning Department and Education Department, No 7.110/2009)
Linking the Productivity Award, autonomy and other prerogatives of school management to final performance in SIMAVE / PROEB:	The performance evaluation of teachers and teaching careers is linked to SIMAVE / PROEB results. IDA score defines the occurrence of three cases, according to Supplementary Law No. 71/03:
a) above 70%: entitled to the Award, expansion of school autonomy as well as resources for operating expenses.	a) Above 70%: career development and the right to Productivity Award;
	b) From 50% to 70%: career stagnation and loss of the right to the Award.
b) Less than 70%: loss of the prerogatives established in the Agreement and the right to the Award.	c) Less than 50%: in case of recidivism, one could lose public office

Source: <<http://www.planejamento.mg.gov.br>>. Accessed on 13 May 2011.

Constitutional Amendment No. 57/2003 changed teachers' labor relations in state schools. The careers of those who have entered the state's public service since 2003 are governed solely by performance, they lose prerogatives such as the grant of some benefits deriving of working time and are subject to situations of precariousness and more flexibility at work. Teachers have three different employment statuses: *efetivos* (entry by public tender), *efetivados* (Constitutional Amendment No. 49/2001 and Supplementary Law No. 100/2007) and appointed (hired temporarily). Their job duties are different, and *efetivados* and appointed ones are not part of career plans and do not have constitutional stability. The difference between them is that *efetivados* have a guaranteed vacancy in state public schools until it is filled by an *efetivo*.

In Inspection Center meetings, teachers declared that they are aware of their school classification and of the fact that they are held responsible for their student outcomes. They know that their work has undergone transformations due to the policies in force and that the demands on their tasks have broadened.

They declare that they are demanded to achieve the indicators defined *a priori*, without their participation, by their schools' principals.

Accountability is understood as the obligation to answer for student outcomes without considering other wider factors involved, as if student academic performance depended exclusively on teachers, who should, according to this logic, monitor results and achieve cost savings, always in line with the government's broader objectives. Sousa and Lopes (2010) assert:

Very objective elements are decisive for student performance: their social background and conditions for the provision of teaching – be they physical, such as infrastructure, equipment and teaching materials available, be they human, such as initial and continuing training of school workers. Highly differentiated objective conditions conflict with the establishment of external standards and supposed quality levels. (p. 58)

3 - The *Agreements of Results* of education in Minas Gerais are available for consultation at <<http://www.planejamento.mg.gov.br>> portal. Accessed on 13 February 2011.

In Minas Gerais current education policy, the reference to the market economy logic, in a meritocratic management view, is present in planning the adjustment of institutions and individuals, which is called *alignment with government objectives*, in the legislation that defines the *Agreement*. In this context of mandatory demand of results of downsizing of expenses as a result of wage restraint⁴, the inadequate teaching conditions found in Minas Gerais state education system are not taken into account. In this article, the term *working condition* is understood as the organization of schoolwork, a category derived of the economy, according to Oliveira (2002). The concept refers to the division of labor, tasks and competencies established, to salaries, hierarchies, controls, performance assessment and management of teaching careers.

Teaching work is part of the totality constituted by labor in capitalism, and is therefore subjected to its logic and its contradictions. Capitalist society is cut by multiple dynamics specific of productive organization, of political and social systems, knowledge, technology, gender etc. From this perspective, the social dynamics built are forms of social organization, particular structures of more general processes. Many of these dynamics intertwine in school and become embodied in institutions, in concrete subjects and stories. As Duarte and Augusto (2008) consider, the analysis of teaching must consider it a way / place of social regulation.

Therefore, there is a paradox. On the one hand, the policy of results designed in Minas Gerais makes the responsibility for student success or failure lay on the shoulders of teachers, as though student academic performance depended solely on the teachers' pedagogical work. On the other hand, a government that is very far from recognizing the importance of teaching and of promoting

more decent working conditions. The state government does not comply with Law No. 11.738/2008, which establishes a national minimum wage for basic education teaching professionals. Conversely, through Law No. 18975 of June 29, 2010, it was created a form of payment called *subsidy*, a single payment of compensation that incorporates the benefits of career to wages. In January 2011, the subsidy started in a compulsory way. A deadline was established for professionals to return to the previous payment form by choice, and the percentage of choosers for a return to the prior form of pay was high. However, despite the disagreement on the part of education professionals, on December 2, 2011, with the support of most of the Assembly's members, the government managed to pass Law No. 19.837/2011, which maintains the subsidy as a compensation policy as well as a new career proposal that keeps the mechanisms of merit pay. These proposals reveal the ideological arguments of competitiveness, sustained *a priori* by the government that establishes them.

This study's theoretical framework contributes to understanding what has happened in Minas Gerais: the use of assessment procedures to control the content and quality of teaching, i.e., the use of assessment as an accountability tool, employing control mechanisms to reduce the distances between goals and results. In Minas Gerais, teachers are expected to promote the improvement in student outcomes and to achieve cost savings, always in tune with the government's broader objectives. However, due to the several factors inherent to the educational process in public schools, improving education quality goes beyond the promotion of mechanisms for assessing the education system. It also goes beyond new modes of educational regulation, such as those currently in force in the state. According to Sousa (2003), "one can not understand assessments as technicist processes disconnected from values; assessments can not aim solely at comparing predetermined,

4- The legislation that defines the measures of *Choque de Gestão* (management shock) program conditions twage increases to civil servants' performance and to the increase in tax revenue.

observable and measurable results". For the author, the function of evaluations is to stimulate the advancement of knowledge, and there are other factors in the process of institutional and individual performance evaluation that can become works that diagnose and correct deviations, without penalties or sanctions.

Above all, the state's management model aims at efficiency, and the central axis on which the system is structured is economic calculation, based on the cost of the results to be obtained, as Vilhena et al. (2006) pointed. In the case of education, the ultimate goal is to make the pedagogical process more productive from a quantitative point of view, less costly to the State, because that implies a reduction in labor costs. It is a dimension oriented to a new management model, which emphasizes the subordination of education policies to economic rationality criteria.

The current scenario of education in Brazil is characterized by a debate on improving teachers' working conditions, expanding income and ensuring career plans for teaching professionals. Minas Gerais government seems to ignore the political moment and the debate in question, keeping teachers in extremely precarious working conditions in the public school system.

In this study's fieldwork, it was possible to identify the following situations:

- School professionals are not informed about policy measures before their publication in the state official gazette. They report that they become aware of the education policy measures only when they are already defined and ready for execution. Teachers do not participate in the development process and are not consulted on aspects of school contexts which, according to them, could contribute for better adequacy of working conditions in schools.

- Teachers feel dissatisfied with their work situation. Their main dissatisfaction factor is salary, considered very low in comparison to that of other professionals with the same education.

- They feel they are held responsible by the Education Department for school outcomes in SIMAVE / PROEB. They feel dissatisfied and thus conflicts and tensions at the workplace are common, caused by lack of proper working conditions. Some teachers reported having resistance to the demand of results. But, fearful of sanctions, they seek to act sparingly to avoid direct confrontations.

- According to the record of meetings, many appointed teachers (temporary contract) are dismissed throughout the year. This fact causes a constant *coming and going* of temporary staff, who need to look for schools with vacancies and replacements.

- Many of the teachers who attend the Centers work in more than one school or work two shifts in the same school. For this reason, they have a large number of students and more duties. They find it difficult to participate in all school activities and are questioned for not doing it.

It can be argued that in Minas Gerais, first of all, it is necessary to create and develop ways to organize work in schools to counter the precarious ones that exist currently in the state system. Moreover, it is also necessary to provide professionals and students involved in the learning process with adequate working conditions.

Final thoughts

The premise adopted here is that the state is an instance of regulation of legitimate forms of political action, but that this mode of regulation acts on the dispositions, sensitivity and awareness of the people involved, who react to such intervention measures (MEURET, 2002). My assumption is that, on the basis of social coexistence, people play roles, mediate relations in social changes and use different strategies in the process. They are not only subjected to state actions, to game forces but also intervene as actors and subjects of their conduct, since the measures may be appropriate

(or not) the context to which they are intended. It is in this sense that I state that a new modality of regulation of education policies is needed. Such modality should provide more horizontal processes of decision-making, in which the social and political participation of school social actors occurs. The question under consideration is the current model of regulation, which does not allow the social participation of those involved - teachers. With regard to Minas Gerais education system, the article questions the verticality of the measures and the linear intervention in the design of education policies as well as the restricted participation of school actors in the decisions about policies.

According to the theoretical framework used, regulation represents a composite process (BARROSO et al., 2008), and actors must be included in the interactive process of designing measures and in their practice because public action is not limited to the definition of a law. This reason justifies the need for a regulation process that not only comprises the planning of interventions but also considers the interests and demands of the teachers to whom such measures are intended. The documentary analysis of devices of design of legal measures and also the data obtained in fieldwork indicated that, in Minas Gerais, decisions on education fall only in the control regulation category.

Such assessment forms lead to reflection on the assumptions of a state public action sustained on democratic values that would, if adopted, meet or at least consider the local needs of the sources from which policies originate. There needs to be a new mode of regulation of education policies, called *situational* by the authors, which provides more horizontal processes of decision-making and promotes proper working conditions for teachers. If pedagogic assistance were performed as planned, it would involve greater care, new knowledge and skills, requiring a working time longer than the current number of weekly hours paid, which are dedicated exclusively to teaching. The analysis of Minas Gerais school

context allows understanding that teaching work, covering a pedagogical practice that provides students with adequate care, depends on political decisions, working conditions at school and new forms of educational regulation.

The norms on labor relations state that professional responsibility is an essential prerequisite to the performance of all the tasks and activities inherent to a job. Like the other workers, teachers are responsible professionals to their peers, their students, the school community, the government that pays them, the students' families who wish their success in learning; they are responsible for the exercise of teaching practices that contribute to the learning process. However, in Minas Gerais, for teachers to exercise them as required by law, it is necessary to promote changes in the organization of their work, allowing more time for student care and guidance, increasing opportunities for professional development as well as hours available for extra classroom activities.

There are numerous other factors that interfere with academic achievement and over which the school rarely has control. As Demailly (2004) interrogates, "could an imperative obligation of results apply to teachers?" (P. 109). For the author, teachers are responsible for the educational process, and so is the State. They are not the only ones responsible. As social actors and subjects of their teaching practices, they need to be politically involved and participate in educational interventions. Their interests, limits and challenges are at stake and cannot be ignored.

In schools there are interactions, but also confrontations and tensions that cannot be concealed. These are sometimes latent, and it becomes difficult to recognize them or deal with them. The constant changes education systems have undergone require analysis of teachers' work and consideration of the school routine as a field of study. The demands of school effectiveness, *obligation of results* or accountability often ignore the contradictions

inherent to the school context. Accepting such situation without a critical stance can lead to its worsening and the mismatch of solutions. It is not possible to shut one's eyes to these issues,

ignoring them. In doing so, one runs the risk of legitimizing policies which are contrary to democratic interests and do not contribute to public education of social quality.

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Maria Helena Oliveira Gonçalves Augusto holds a PhD degree in Education from *Faculdade de Educação da Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (FAE/UFMG)* and CNPq post-doctorate fellowship in the same college.