A STEP FORWARD

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IN MAY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT approved the National Education Plan (PNE), which sets educational strategy and defines 20 goals for the next 10 years. According to Daniel Cara, general coordinator of the National Campaign for the Right to Education, the expectation is that Brazil can reduce the education gap relative to developed countries.

The increase in education funding is noteworthy. The goal is to invest 10% of GDP in education over 10 years. Brazil currently spends 6.4% of GDP (US$122 billion), including scholarships, student loans, and transfers to private educational institutions. Cara points out that establishing a standard cost per student is essential to ensure that education is based on a minimum standard of quality.

To finance these goals, the federal government counts in part on oil royalties and Social Fund of the deep sea oil. However, Henrique Paim, minister of education, said that states and municipalities will also have to contribute to meet the plan's goals, among which are:



NATIONAL EDUCATION PLAN GOALS

- Universal access by 2016 to preschool and expansion of kindergartens.
- Universal access to primary and middle school education for children aged 6 to 14, with at least 95% of students in the appropriate grade .
- Universal access by 2016 to high school for students aged 15 to 17 with net enrollment in high schools increased to 85%.
- Universal access to basic and special education services.
- Adequate reading and writing skills taught to all children no later than the end of the third grade.
- Offer full-day education in at least 50% of public schools.
- Enhance the quality of basic education in all grades and raise the national average on the Basic Education Development Index.
- Raise average years of schooling to 12 years, targeting the poor population.
- Raise the literacy rate of Brazilians aged 15 years and up to 93.5% by 2015; eradicate absolute illiteracy and reduce functional illiteracy.
- Integrate at least 25% of places in the Youths and Adults Education program in primary and secondary education.
- Triple enrollment in high school vocational and technical education.
- Raise higher education enrollment to 50% of the 18-24 year population, while ensuring the quality of education.
- Increase the number of teachers holding master's and doctoral degrees to 75% of total faculty.
- Gradually increase enrollments in graduate studies to 60,000 master's and 25,000 doctoral students.
- Draft a national policy for training teachers.
- Raise the number of basic education teachers who hold master's and doctoral degrees to 50%.
- Value basic education teachers in the public schools and raise their average income to the same level as professionals with equivalent education.
- Ensure career plans for basic and higher education public school teachers.
- Ensure conditions for effective democratic management of education.
- Expand public investment in education to 7% of GDP in five years and 10% in 10 years.

Source: National Education Plan (PNE).