

## THE INCLUSION THAT EXCLUDES: STRUCTURAL LIMITATIONS OF PUBLIC POLICIES FOR STUDENTS WITH AUTISM IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### A INCLUSÃO QUE EXCLUI: LIMITES ESTRUTURAIS DAS POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS PARA ESTUDANTES COM AUTISMO EM ESCOLAS PÚBLICAS

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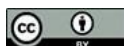
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#### **Abstract**

This article critically analyzes the effectiveness of public policies for the inclusion of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in schools, focusing on the context of public schools in the state of Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil). It begins with the recognition that the Brazilian legal system, especially the 1988 Federal Constitution, the National Education Guidelines and Bases Law, Law No. 12.764/2012, and Law No. 13.146/2015, establishes a robust model of

#### **Resumo**

*O presente artigo analisa criticamente a efetividade das políticas públicas de inclusão escolar de estudantes com Transtorno do Espectro Autista (TEA), com foco no contexto das escolas públicas do Estado do Rio Grande do Sul (Brasil). Parte-se do reconhecimento de que o ordenamento jurídico brasileiro, especialmente a Constituição Federal de 1988, a Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional, a Lei nº 12.764/2012 e a Lei nº*



inclusive education, based on the right to access, permanence, and learning. However, using a qualitative approach, with document analysis and critical bibliographic review, a significant dissociation between the normative plan and school reality is evident. The results indicate that inclusion has frequently been reduced to the formal insertion of students with ASD into regular classes, without guaranteeing pedagogical support, specialized educational services, or adequate structural conditions. This scenario constitutes what is called "false inclusion," characterized by the maintenance of inclusive discourse without its material implementation. It is concluded that the realization of the right to inclusive education depends on structural transformations in the educational system, involving public investment, teacher training, and pedagogical reorganization, otherwise contemporary forms of exclusion within the school will be perpetuated.

**Keywords:** Educational Policies. Inclusive Education. Pedagogical Support.

*13.146/2015, estabelece um modelo robusto de educação inclusiva, fundamentado no direito ao acesso, à permanência e à aprendizagem. Contudo, a partir de abordagem qualitativa, com análise documental e revisão bibliográfica crítica, evidencia-se uma dissociação significativa entre o plano normativo e a realidade escolar. Os resultados indicam que a inclusão tem sido frequentemente reduzida à inserção formal de estudantes com TEA em turmas regulares, sem a garantia de suporte pedagógico, atendimento educacional especializado ou condições estruturais adequadas. Tal cenário configura o que se denomina "falsa inclusão", caracterizada pela manutenção do discurso inclusivo sem sua efetivação material. Conclui-se que a concretização do direito à educação inclusiva depende de transformações estruturais no sistema educacional, envolvendo investimento público, formação docente e reorganização pedagógica, sob pena de perpetuar formas contemporâneas de exclusão no interior da escola.*

**Palavras-chave:** Políticas Educacionais. Educação Inclusiva. Suporte Pedagógico.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The inclusion of students with disabilities in schools, in this research, with the emphasis on those diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), constitutes one of the pillars of social rights in Brazil. Historically, the country has built a system that recognizes education as a duty of the State and a right of all, based on equal conditions for access and, fundamentally, for permanence in the school environment. This model seeks to overcome the old segregation, establishing that regular education is the priority space for the development of these individuals, with specialized support that should permeate all stages of basic education.

In the context of national and regional public policies, specifically in Rio Grande do Sul, there is a consolidated discourse that values specialized care and the elimination of architectural, pedagogical, and attitudinal barriers. The prevailing understanding is that a person with autism has the full right to qualified support and comprehensive development, which presupposes that the school adapts to their singularities, and not the

other way around. However, despite this robust theoretical and normative structure that guides the Rio Grande do Sul education system, daily reality reveals a worrying disconnect between what is proclaimed and what is actually practiced.

It is observed that inclusion has often been reduced to the bureaucratic act of enrollment. In several public institutions, the inclusion of students with ASD occurs in overcrowded classrooms, lacking trained support professionals and curricular adaptations that respect neurodiversity. This contradiction exposes a perverse facet of the system: the numerical expansion of students in schools does not, in itself, guarantee the right to learning. On the contrary, the absence of minimum material and pedagogical conditions converts the principle of inclusion into a strategy of internal marginalization.

In this context, this study argues that we are experiencing a process of disguised exclusion, or what can be called "false inclusion." The excessive focus on quantitative indicators of access obscures the pedagogical invisibility of the autistic student, who remains physically present but intellectually isolated. This is an intramural segregation, where the lack of institutional support overburdens the classroom teacher and deprives the student of the possibility of effective participation.

Faced with this problem, this article critically analyzes the implementation of inclusive policies in public schools in Rio Grande do Sul. The objective is to unveil the nuances of this apparent inclusion and discuss how the absence of a real support network compromises the ethics and social function of the school. It proposes a reflection that goes beyond the formality of documents to investigate the materiality of the classroom, seeking to understand the mechanisms that perpetuate the exclusion of students with ASD within the very system that should protect them.

## **2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The inclusion of students with disabilities in schools, particularly those diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), falls within the scope of fundamental social rights and finds solid support in the Brazilian legal system. The 1988 Federal Constitution establishes, in its article 205, education as a right of all and a duty of the State and the family, guided by the principles of equal conditions of access and permanence in school (Brazil, 1988). Furthermore, article 208, item III, ensures specialized educational services

for people with disabilities, preferably in the regular education network, consolidating the paradigm of inclusion.

This constitutional framework is complemented by specific legislation. Law No. 9,394/1996 (Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education) defines, in its article 58, special education as a cross-cutting modality and guarantees specialized support services (Brazil, 1996). Subsequently, Law No. 12,764/2012 (Berenice Piana Law) recognizes individuals with ASD as people with disabilities for all legal purposes, ensuring their access to education and specialized support (Brazil, 2012). Law No. 13,146/2015 (Brazilian Inclusion Law) further deepens this commitment by establishing that the educational system must be inclusive at all levels, prohibiting exclusion and requiring the elimination of barriers (Brazil, 2015).

In the context of public policies, the National Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education (2008) and Decree No. 7,611/2011 reinforce the centrality of Specialized Educational Services (AEE) as a mechanism of complementary pedagogical support to regular education (Brazil, 2008; Brazil, 2011). These regulations indicate that inclusion is not limited to enrollment, but presupposes adequate material, pedagogical, and institutional conditions.

In the State of Rio Grande do Sul, in south of Brazil, these guidelines are reiterated by specific regulations, such as Law No. 15,322/2019, which establishes the Integrated Care Policy for People with ASD, emphasizing comprehensive development, access to specialized services, and support for families (Rio Grande do Sul, 2019). Furthermore, guidelines from the state education system reaffirm the mandatory nature of Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE in Portuguese) as a fundamental strategy for inclusion.

Despite this consistent regulatory framework, in school practice, a significant gap is observed between the enshrined right and its implementation. In many institutions, inclusion has been reduced to the insertion of students with ASD into overcrowded classes, without the proper provision of pedagogical support, specialized professionals, or curricular adaptations.

This scenario highlights a structural contradiction: inclusion, as a legal principle, becomes an exclusionary practice when devoid of concrete conditions. The quantitative expansion of enrollments has not been accompanied, to the same extent, by the qualification of pedagogical practices and the necessary structural support.

In the context of Rio Grande do Sul, this disparity takes on even more critical contours. Although official data point to the expansion of access, the phenomenon that sociological literature calls "exclusionary inclusion" or "subordinate integration" is observed. In these terms, the student with ASD is physically inserted into the school space, but remains pedagogically invisible.

The absence of effective curricular adaptations and the scarcity of qualified professionals, such as mediators and teachers of Special Education Services, reduce the right to education to a merely bureaucratic act of remaining in the classroom, without guaranteeing learning and social development.

Given this scenario, the hypothesis is that there is a process of "false inclusion," in which the formal compliance with legislation conceals practices that, in reality, perpetuate educational exclusion.

This theoretical framework is structured from an interdisciplinary approach that articulates legal foundations, contributions from critical education theory, and contemporary studies on disability and autism. It starts from the understanding that school inclusion cannot be analyzed in isolation, but must be understood as a historical, political, and social phenomenon, traversed by disputes over conceptions of education, difference, and social justice. In this sense, the framework is organized into five axes: the legal framework of inclusion, the conception of inclusion as a structural transformation, the educational specificities of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), public policies in the context of Rio Grande do Sul, and finally, the critique of so-called "false inclusion."

## **2.1 Legal framework of inclusion in Brazil**

Educational inclusion in Brazil must be understood from an articulated set of legal provisions that enshrine education as a fundamental right. The Federal Constitution (Brazil, 1988), the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (Brazil, 1996), and the Brazilian Inclusion Law (Brazil, 2015) form the core of this normative system by establishing principles such as equality, human dignity, and non-discrimination.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006), incorporated into the Brazilian legal system with constitutional status through Decree No. 6,949/2009, represents a paradigmatic milestone in consolidating the social model of

disability. In this model, disability ceases to be understood as an individual attribute and begins to be understood as a result of the interaction between impairments and social barriers.

In the field of public policies, the National Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education (Brazil, 2008) and Decree No. 7,611/2011 detail the operationalization of these guarantees, emphasizing Specialized Educational Services (AEE) as a right of the student and a duty of the State. In the specific case of ASD, Law No. 12,764/2012 (Berenice Piana Law) ensures the right to a specialized companion, configuring itself as a central instrument for the realization of inclusion.

However, as Ferreira (2015) argues, the Brazilian legal system often presents a “symbolic effectiveness,” in which the formal existence of the norm does not guarantee its concrete implementation, especially in contexts of budgetary constraints, such as that observed in the State of Rio Grande do Sul.

## **2.2 Inclusion as a structural transformation**

The specialized literature converges on the understanding that inclusion cannot be reduced to the physical presence of the student in school. Mantoan (2003; 2015) argues that inclusion implies a structural transformation of the school institution, requiring curricular revision, pedagogical reorganization, and a paradigm shift.

Sasaki (2010) reinforces this perspective by stating that inclusion presupposes the adaptation of the environment to the needs of the subjects, and not the other way around. This conception breaks with integrationist practices that hold the student responsible for their adaptation to the system.

Glat and Pletsch (2011) show that the absence of consistent teacher training policies and institutional support compromises the effectiveness of inclusion, generating intra-school exclusion processes. This analysis engages with Skliar (2006), who warns of the risk of inclusion becoming a normative discourse detached from practice, operating more as rhetoric than as concrete transformation.

### **2.3 Autism and educational specificities**

Autism Spectrum Disorder presents characteristics that demand specific pedagogical interventions (APA, 2014). Studies indicate the need for individualized strategies, constant mediation, and structured environments that favor predictability and communication (Baron-Cohen, 2009; Klin, 2006).

In the Brazilian context, Bosa (2006) and Schmidt (2013) highlight the importance of the articulation between school, family, and specialized professionals as a condition for the integral development of the student with ASD. Orrú (2016), in turn, proposes the idea of a "pedagogy of difference," which recognizes neurobiological singularities as a structuring element of pedagogical practice.

Brazilian legislation recognizes these specificities by providing for the right to a specialized aide and appropriate educational support (Brazil, 2012; Brazil, 2015), reinforcing that inclusion depends on effective support.

### **2.4 Policies in Rio Grande do Sul and specialized educational services**

In the State of Rio Grande do Sul, Law No. 15,322/2019 consolidates guidelines for serving individuals with ASD, aligning with national inclusion policies. In this context, Specialized Educational Services (AEE) are configured as a structuring policy, and should act in a complementary and articulated manner with regular education (Brazil, 2008; Rio Grande do Sul, 2019).

However, studies point to weaknesses in the implementation of these policies, especially regarding school infrastructure, teacher training, and the availability of specialized human resources (Pletsch, 2014; Michels, 2011). These limitations compromise the effectiveness of legal guidelines and highlight the gap between norm and practice.

### **2.5 The critique of false inclusion**

The critique of so-called "false inclusion" is based on different theoretical contributions. Bourdieu (1998) contributes the concept of symbolic violence, highlighting

how institutional structures can reproduce inequalities in a naturalized way. Santos (2002) expands this analysis by discussing exclusion as a structural phenomenon, associated with power dynamics and the production of social invisibilities.

In the educational field, Freire (1996) offers an emancipatory perspective, defending a pedagogical practice based on the recognition of differences and the construction of critical subjects. In contrast, the so-called "exclusionary inclusion" (Gentili, 2009) reveals a process in which the student is formally included, but remains excluded from the real conditions of learning.

In the context of autism, this exclusion manifests itself in a particularly acute way. The absence of curricular adaptations, the precariousness of teaching work, and the lack of institutional support result in a merely formal inclusion, which is close to what Mantoan (2003) calls "subordinate integration". Thus, by not transforming itself structurally, the school reproduces segregation practices within its own spaces.

In addition, the managerial logic of education, described by Dourado (2007), contributes to the consolidation of so-called "enrollmentism" ("matriculismo" in Portuguese) in which quantitative indicators of access are prioritized to the detriment of the quality of inclusion. In this scenario, the student with ASD becomes a statistical data point, while their educational needs remain neglected.

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

This study falls within the field of qualitative research, adopting a critical-analytical approach of an interdisciplinary nature, situated at the interface between Law and Education. It is a theoretical-normative and interpretative investigation, whose central objective is to analyze the effectiveness of public policies for the school inclusion of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, with an emphasis on the context of public schools in the State of Rio Grande do Sul.

From an epistemological point of view, the research is anchored in the critical tradition, especially in contributions from historical-dialectical materialism and the critical sociology of education, allowing us to understand law not only as a formal norm, but as a social practice traversed by power relations, structural inequalities and institutional contradictions (Bourdieu, 1998; Santos, 2002). In this sense, it is assumed

that the realization of fundamental rights depends on concrete material conditions, and their positivization in the legal system is not sufficient.

The investigation develops from three articulated methodological axes:

I. Legal-normative documentary analysis - The first axis consists of the systematic analysis of legal and normative documents that structure the educational inclusion policy in Brazil and Rio Grande do Sul. The following provisions were examined: Federal Constitution of 1988 (articles 205, 206 and 208); Law No. 9,394/1996 (Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education); Law No. 12,764/2012 (National Policy for the Protection of the Rights of Persons with ASD); Law No. 13,146/2015 (Brazilian Inclusion Law); Decree No. 7,611/2011 (Special Education and AEE); National Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education (2008); State Law No. 15.322/2019 (Rio Grande do Sul).

The analysis of these documents was guided by analytical reading procedures and systematic legal interpretation, seeking to identify principles, guidelines, state obligations, and mechanisms for implementing school inclusion.

II. Critical bibliographic review - The second methodological axis corresponds to a critical and selective bibliographic review, encompassing classic and contemporary authors in the areas of inclusive education, public policies, sociology of education, and studies on autism. Works with consolidated academic recognition were prioritized, as well as recent productions relevant to the debate.

Among the main theoretical references mobilized, the following stand out: Mantoan (2003; 2015), Sassaki (2010), Glat and Pletsch (2011), Skliar (2006), Freire (1996), Bourdieu (1998), Santos (2002), in addition to specific studies on ASD (Bosa, 2006; Schmidt, 2013; APA, 2014).

The review was conducted in an analytical-interpretative manner, seeking not only to systematize concepts, but also to identify tensions, gaps, and contributions to the understanding of the investigated phenomenon.

III. Critical-interpretative analysis (category “false inclusion”) - The third axis consists of the analytical construction of the object based on the category “false inclusion,” used as a theoretical tool to interpret the discrepancy between the normative plan and educational reality. This analysis is guided by a dialectical perspective, which

seeks to highlight contradictions between: formal law and material effectiveness; Inclusive discourse and institutional practices; School access and meaningful learning.

The category of "false inclusion" is not taken as a closed concept, but as an analytical construct that dialogues with notions such as "symbolic violence" (Bourdieu, 1998) and "exclusion through inclusion" (Santos, 2002), allowing us to understand how seemingly inclusive policies can reproduce inequalities.

It is important to highlight that this research is not configured as an empirical field study, but as a theoretical-critical analysis with a strong normative basis. Even so, it engages with the concrete reality of public schools, based on evidence widely documented in the literature and recurring patterns identified in previous studies.

The methodological choice is justified by the need to understand the structure of public policies and their contradictions, contributing to the legal-educational debate at a theoretical and critical level.

#### **4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The analysis developed in this study shows that the policy of school inclusion in Brazil, and, in particular, in the context of public schools in Rio Grande do Sul, operates under a structural tension between normative progress and the precariousness of its implementation. This tension does not present itself as a punctual or circumstantial mismatch, but as a constitutive element of the very way in which the right to inclusive education has been implemented in the country.

On the one hand, there is a robust legal framework that unequivocally establishes inclusion as a fundamental right. The Federal Constitution (Brazil, 1988), by ensuring equal conditions of access and permanence, associated with the provisions of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (Brazil, 1996) and the Brazilian Inclusion Law (Brazil, 2015), outlines an educational model that presupposes not only the presence of the student with disabilities in school, but the guarantee of effective learning conditions. Law No. 12,764/2012, by recognizing ASD as a disability for all legal purposes, reinforces this obligation, expanding the State's responsibility in providing specialized support. At the state level, Law No. 15,322/2019 reaffirms these commitments, incorporating the perspective of integrated care.

However, when this set of regulations is confronted with the reality of public schools, a profound disjunction emerges between the formally guaranteed right and its concrete materialization. What is observed, recurrently, is the reduction of inclusion to an administrative enrollment procedure, in which the student with ASD is placed in regular classes, often overcrowded, without guaranteeing the pedagogical, structural, and human conditions necessary for their development. This practice reveals a process of emptying the normative content of inclusion, converting a complex right into a bureaucratic act.

In this context, inclusion ceases to be understood as a structural transformation of the school, as argued by Mantoan (2015) and Sasaki (2010), and takes the form of passive integration, in which the student is moved to the school space without it reorganizing itself to accommodate them. This logic reverses the central principle of inclusive education: instead of the system adapting to the needs of the individual, it is the individual who must adjust to a rigid, homogeneous school model that is insensitive to diversity.

This reversal produces significant effects, especially when analyzed in light of the specificities of Autism Spectrum Disorder. The specialized literature is emphatic in pointing out that students with ASD require individualized pedagogical strategies, constant mediation, and structured environments (APA, 2014; Bosa, 2006; Schmidt, 2013). The absence of these elements not only compromises learning but can intensify processes of suffering, exclusion, and invisibility. Thus, mere presence in the classroom, without adequate support, not only fails to constitute inclusion, but can also produce effects contrary to those intended by public policy.

The precariousness in the implementation of Specialized Educational Services (AEE) deepens this scenario. Although AEE is foreseen as a right and as a central element of inclusive policy (Brazil, 2008; Brazil, 2011), its operationalization often occurs in a fragmented way, disconnected from regular education and insufficient in the face of the real demands of students. In the case of Rio Grande do Sul, this fragility directly strains the guidelines of Law No. 15,322/2019, showing that the existence of the norm does not guarantee its effectiveness. AEE, which should function as a structuring support for inclusion, ends up assuming, in many contexts, a residual role, unable to compensate for the limitations of regular education.

The analysis also reveals that the structural organization of the school — particularly the overcrowding of classrooms — constitutes a concrete obstacle to inclusion. In environments with a high number of students, it becomes practically impossible to develop differentiated pedagogical practices, individually monitor students, and promote qualified mediation. This condition exposes a central contradiction: the educational system maintains a logic of operation that is, in itself, incompatible with the principles of inclusive education. Inclusion, in this scenario, begins to operate at the limit of pedagogical impossibility.

From a sociological point of view, this phenomenon can be interpreted as a form of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1998). By inserting students with ASD into contexts that do not recognize their needs, the educational system produces an appearance of equality that, in practice, conceals profound inequalities. The difficulties faced by these students tend to be naturalized or attributed to their individual characteristics, shifting the focus from structural barriers to the subject. It is, therefore, a process of re Individual accountability that masks institutional failures.

This dynamic directly relates to the notion of "exclusion through inclusion" (Santos, 2002), insofar as formally inclusive policies can reproduce mechanisms of exclusion when not accompanied by adequate material conditions. In the case analyzed, inclusion expands access to the educational system, but does not guarantee effective participation, meaningful learning, or integral development. The result is the production of an apparent inclusion, which does not alter the structures that generate inequality.

Another central element concerns teacher training. The absence of consistent initial and continuing training policies focused on inclusive education contributes to the reproduction of limited pedagogical practices. Teachers are frequently placed in highly complex situations without adequate institutional support, which generates overload, insecurity, and, in many cases, ineffective teaching strategies. As Glat and Pletsch (2011) point out, this condition compromises the quality of inclusion and reinforces the perception that it is unfeasible in practice, when, in reality, the problem lies in the absence of structural conditions.

In this scenario, the so-called "false inclusion" emerges as a fundamental analytical category. It is not merely a poorly executed inclusion, but a specific mode of implementing public policies that operates through the dissociation between discourse

and practice. Inclusion is affirmed on a normative and symbolic level, but emptied in its material dimension. This dissociation produces a relevant political effect: by appearing to comply with the legislation, the State reduces the visibility of inequalities and diminishes the pressure for structural transformations.

Thus, the school inclusion of students with ASD, in the context analyzed, reveals itself to be marked by a fundamental contradiction: while it represents an undeniable legal and political advance, its limited implementation transforms this advance into a mechanism for reproducing inequalities. In this process, the school ceases to be a space of emancipation and becomes, in many cases, a space of exclusionary permanence.

Therefore, the results of this study indicate that the realization of the right to inclusive education depends not only on the existence of legal norms, but also on the transformation of the concrete conditions of operation of the educational system. Without investment in infrastructure, a reduction in the number of students per class, strengthening of Special Education Services, and robust teacher training policies, inclusion tends to remain a normative ideal far removed from reality, operating more as a legitimizing discourse than as an effective practice of educational justice.

## **5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The analysis developed throughout this article has shown that the school inclusion of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, although widely guaranteed in law, faces significant limitations in its implementation in the context of public schools, especially in the State of Rio Grande do Sul. The Brazilian normative framework, anchored in the 1988 Federal Constitution, the National Education Guidelines and Bases Law, Law No. 12,764/2012, and the Brazilian Inclusion Law, constitutes one of the most advanced legal frameworks regarding the guarantee of the right to inclusive education. However, the effectiveness of these norms remains conditioned by structural, institutional, and political factors that go beyond the strictly legal field.

The results indicate that inclusion, in many contexts, has been reduced to a formal dimension, focused on access and enrollment, without ensuring the necessary conditions for the qualified permanence and meaningful learning of students with ASD. This reduction implies an emptying of the material content of the right to education,

transforming it into an administrative procedure that does not substantively alter the exclusionary school structures.

In this sense, the notion of "false inclusion" has proven analytically powerful for understanding the observed dynamics. It is a process in which the inclusive discourse is maintained and institutionalized, while concrete practices remain unchanged or insufficient. This dissociation between norm and reality not only compromises the effectiveness of public policies, but also produces relevant symbolic effects, creating the appearance of fulfillment of rights, obscuring persistent inequalities.

The fragility in the implementation of Specialized Educational Services, the overcrowding of classrooms, the insufficiency of teacher training, and the absence of institutional support are central elements of this situation. These factors show that inclusion cannot be understood as an isolated policy, but as part of a broader process of reorganizing the educational system, which involves adequate funding, structural planning, and effective political commitment.

From a legal standpoint, the findings of this study reinforce the need to move beyond a merely normative understanding of fundamental rights, advancing towards a perspective of material effectiveness. This implies recognizing that guaranteeing the right to inclusive education requires not only its legal provision, but also the creation of concrete conditions for its realization. In this respect, the law cannot be limited to a declaratory function, but must assume an inductive role in public policies capable of promoting structural transformations.

Furthermore, it is essential to strengthen mechanisms for controlling and monitoring the implementation of inclusive policies, in order to reduce the gap between what is foreseen in legislation and what is actually practiced in schools. Coordinated action between public managers, education professionals, researchers, and civil society is fundamental to building an inclusion that is not merely formal, but substantive.

Finally, this study points out that the realization of inclusive education demands a paradigmatic shift that goes beyond the educational field, involving a reconfiguration of ways of understanding difference, disability, and the very role of the school. Inclusion, as a principle, cannot be reduced to an insertion strategy, but must be understood as an ethical, political, and social commitment to building a truly democratic education.

Thus, it is concluded that, without transforming the material and institutional conditions of public schools, inclusion tends to remain a normative ideal, distant from the reality experienced by students with ASD. Overcoming this contradiction is, therefore, a central challenge for Law and for educational public policies in contemporary Brazil.

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