

Variable Remuneration Policy Of São Paulo Education Network: An Evaluation Of The 20 Years Of The Teaching

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the variable remuneration policy (Merit Bonus and Outcome Bonus) adopted by the Education Department of the State of São Paulo as the payment to the teaching staff of the São Paulo network since 2000. In order to make a critical balance of two decades of this policy existence, a bibliographical-documental research was developed which analyzed the national and international literature on the subject and the reports of the agencies of the Public Management Department responsible for technical support and monitoring of the Outcome Bonus. Semi-structured interviews with school teachers and principals were also analyzed. The bibliographical analysis indicated that the policies of variable remuneration do not lead to significant changes that could legitimize its use as a public policy; the analysis of the reports highlighted their little effectiveness in improving the student performance, indicating the need to review the model adopted in Sao Paulo; and lastly, the interviews showed the discredit of the teachers with this policy and the negative repercussions for their work. Thus, it is concluded that the bonus policy has not served to increase student performance, and, even less, to improve the quality of education in the State of São Paulo.

Keywords: Variable remuneration; merit bonus; outcome bonus; performance remuneration; teaching work.

1. Introduction

Even though the concept of quality in education is polysemic, it is not difficult to observe that the education offered to a large portion of the Brazilian population distances itself from almost any conception of quality that can be adopted. The issue becomes more complex when seeking to understand the causes of the problems faced and the ways to overcome them. However, for business reformers (Freitas, 2012; Ravitch, 2011), the solution inevitably involves incorporating the accumulation of market logic as a guiding thread for the State's actions in education.

Several authors converge in showing that the political and economic support of the reforms implemented in education is based on a liberal conservative alliance, whose objectives operate towards the proliferation and expansion of the market logic (Lima & Gandin, 2012). In this sense, the assumptions of managerialism (Castro, 2008; Newman & Clarke, 2012) offered form and content to reforms, paving the way for the introduction of such logic in state spaces. It is noteworthy that managerialism is one of the main mechanisms used by the State, since it is permeated by strong instrumental rationality, transcending strictly state spaces and large organizations, becoming forms of regulation of everyday life in its aspects. ideological and practical (Chauí, 2000).

Elements such as: focus on results; decentralization of management; search for efficiency, productivity, cost/effectiveness; emphasis on technical rationality; creation of competitive environments; customer-oriented ethos (Gewirtz, 2002; Lima & Gandin, 2012), forged the conditions for polishing educational systems based on managerial logic. Consequently, reforms are being

observed within school networks based on large-scale external evaluations linked to high-impact accountability processes.

In a scenario where the adoption of variable remuneration strategies, such as pay-for-performance models (Mello, 1994), is gaining more and more strength, it is becoming common to question the forms of remuneration for teachers, especially salary equality and career stability offered in public networks.

The state of São Paulo was a pioneer in the implementation of management policies, particularly in relation to the search for alternative teaching salaries. In 2020, the Merit Bonus, modified to Results Bonus (BR) in 2008, completed 20 years of existence in the São Paulo state public network. Despite being linked to performance only after this modification, when it began to be linked to the results obtained by the school in the School Performance Assessment System of the State of São Paulo (Saresp), the São Paulo bonus policy has always sought to constitute itself as a strategy of initially encouraging the attendance of education professionals and improving school flow and, subsequently, improving student performance in large-scale external assessment promoted in the network¹.

In 2020, BR was paid based on the results obtained by schools in 2019. As Saresp was not carried out in 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2021 there was no (for the first time since 2001) payment of the bonus to education professionals in São Paulo. And, despite rumors that BR would be extinguished, the São Paulo State Department of Education (Seduc) announced, in November 2021, that BR would continue, but, from 2022, it would be paid based on the results of the Basic Education Development Index (Ideb), and no longer using the São Paulo State Education Development Index (Idesp). Given this scenario, this article will seek to take stock of the performance payment policy practiced for more than 20 years in

the state of São Paulo, by comparing the literature on the subject, analyzing official documents that deal with Bonuses for Results in the state and also from semi-structured interviews carried out with teachers and school directors.

The documents analyzed were the opinions published between 2012² and 2018 by the Result Bonus Support Service (SABR) and, later, by the Technical Group of Indicators and Public Policy Assessment (GIAPP). In total, there are 13 documents addressing the proposals and results relating to Seduc's BR between 2011 and 2017. It is worth noting that SABR³ and GIAPP are the bodies of the Public Management Secretariat (SGP) responsible for technical support and monitoring to the Intersecretariat Commission⁴ and the processes related to the BR of the different government departments, especially with regard to the validation and preparation of analytical reports on the policy.

According to Cellard (2012), document analysis allows both the survey of the characteristics that mark a given document and the establishment of relationships between the research object and the information made available. As for content analysis, it is a “set of communication analysis techniques that uses systematic and objective procedures for describing the content of messages” (Bardin, 1977, p. 38).

In addition to comparing specific literature and analyzing official documents, data from interviews carried out with education professionals from the São Paulo state public network were analyzed. It is noteworthy that these interviews come from research completed in 2018 that analyzed six Seduc programs and, among them, BR, from 2008. 18 semi-structured interviews were carried out with education professionals in São Paulo, including teachers and directors, whose speeches were analyzed here and their identities will be preserved with the use of fictitious names.

The text begins by recovering the theoretical debate on payment for performance, problematizing the limits of the policy as an element of stimulation, appreciation and permanence in the teaching career. It then presents Seduc's incentive and payment-for-performance policy since 2000, addressing the program's changes and contradictions. Likewise, it presents the analysis of official documents and, finally, highlights data from interviews with professionals from the state network, from a perspective of assessing the policy in relation to the objectives established by Seduc.

2. Incentives and pay for performance in the literature

Instead of salary standardization or equality, variable remuneration, such as payment of incentives or payment for performance, has been presented in the literature as a way of obtaining a set of returns such as teacher attendance, improvement of student performance in external assessments in large scale, greater alignment of the work of teachers and the school, rewarding professionals' efforts, encouraging them to stay in their career, among several attributes included in this remuneration model (Ferraz, 2009; Morduchowicz, 2003).

Mello (1994) points out that differentiated salary incentives, based on results, would be good initiatives for schools to become more responsible and meet the demand for education focused on basic learning needs. In this sense, for Morduchowicz (2003), standardized remuneration does not allow teachers to be encouraged to carry out efficient work; on the other hand, payment based on merit, by stimulating competitiveness in the role, favors improved performance, so that the most effective would be monetarily rewarded.

Hanushek and Rivkin (2007) argue that the teacher's work should be measured through the manifestation, or not, of student learning, verified through external

assessments. Such a mechanism would allow the production of data to systematize incentives for the best, especially since insisting on a general increase for teachers would be an expensive, ineffective and long-term measure. According to Harvey-Beavis (2003) and Shanahan (2010), there are three models of variable remuneration that predominate: merit payment, generally providing for individual monetary awards based on student performance; the criterion based on knowledge and skills, involving individual monetary awards for qualifications and the consequent demonstration of such skills and knowledge useful for improving student results; and, finally, payment based on the school's performance, implying, in this case, monetary rewards for a group or for the school, through the students' improvement in certain indexes.

Attention is drawn to the increase in states that incorporate some form of performance assessment into their networks. According to Santos et al. (2012), of the 27 state departments analyzed, 16 presented performance evaluation processes and, of these, 13 offer some variable remuneration model. Zatti and Minhoto (2019), with data from 2015, indicate that there were 24 states with Teaching Performance Assessment (ADD), and in 14 of them the policy was in force. Of these, eight associate ADD results with career progression, 10 states link them to the payment of bonuses and in four the effects are double: career progression and bonus.

Despite this, there is no consensus in the literature that variable remuneration can be an instrument for improving the quality of education (Cassetari, 2010; Marsh et al., 2011; Muller, 2018; Scorzafave et al., 2015). Research by Harvey-Beavis (2003) and Shanahan (2010) highlights the main criticisms: 1. it does not improve teacher motivation or retention at school and does not present itself as an attractive

factor for recruitment; 2. increases competitiveness, weakens autonomy and harms cooperation and professionalism among teachers; 3. the evaluation and measurement criteria associated with pay for performance are unreliable; 4. teaching is one of the activities that should not be associated with payment for performance; 5. narrows the curriculum and encourages teachers to teach to the tests; 6. there is no evidence that this policy improves student results; 7. receiving the bonus takes time and implementing the policy is expensive; 8. the policy is based on the market model, causing distortions in the values of public education; 9. can encourage opportunistic behavior, both in relation to the search for the prize and to avoid sanctions.

Research indicates a profound difficulty in stating what impacts are generated, since multiple variables and many models are involved, that is: whether the program focuses on the performance of the teacher or the school; whether the incentive is financial or not; whether or not there are sanctions for low performance; the duration of the awards; the levels of awards; whether performance evaluation allows progression into new salary scales; what is evaluated in the teacher and who evaluates it; among other aspects (Shanahan, 2010).

In this sense, the survey report *A Big Apple for Educators*, conducted by Marsh et al. (2011), analyzed the bonus payment program implemented by the city of New York, between 2007 and 2008, entitled *Schoolwide Performance Bonus Program (SPBP)*. The research was commissioned by the city's Department of Education itself and its results refuted the hypothesis that pay-for-performance systems constitute effective policies for stimulating and satisfying work. The New York City government suspended the program in 2011. The report indicated that SPBP

did not improve student outcomes at any level, did not affect the school's Grade Progress Report, perception, attitudes, and behavior toward to the practices and opinions of teachers included in the program and those not included. Furthermore, the bonus granted had limited motivational power, the pressure caused by the accountability policy was often more noticeable because it was more present and prominent than the bonus and, finally, it was concluded that the motivational process, unilaterally, did not promote changes in schools (Marsh et al., 2011).

Longitudinal research developed by Chiang et al. (2015; 2017) indicates similar results. The information originated from the analysis of the Teachers Incentive Fund program, with results socialized after two and four years of policy implementation. The initiative consists of offering subsidies and technical support for various pay-for-performance systems to principals and teachers in high-need schools in 155 districts in the United States (Chiang et al., 2015). Their analysis concluded that: few district-structured pay-for-performance systems aligned with program guidance; teachers from schools included in the program (treatment schools) were less satisfied than teachers from other schools (control schools); pay for performance did not maintain or attract teachers with better performance; the principals who performed best remained in their schools, while those with the lowest performance left their units; the policy caused small and positive impacts on students' reading performance, however, in mathematics, the results were insignificant; The impacts of pay for performance on student results differed between districts and it was not possible to relate such differences to the main characteristics of the program researched.

In the second report of the study (Chiang et al., 2017), attention is drawn to the fact that, although certain favorable impacts on teacher satisfaction are observed, there

is no evidence that such satisfaction has contributed to the improvement of student results, a since “[...] positive impacts on student performance emerged in the first two years – a period when pay for performance was actually decreasing satisfaction” (Chiang et al., 2017, p. 10).

In Brazil, Oshiro et al. (2015) analyze whether the BR of the São Paulo Department of Education has any effect on students' grades in standardized tests. The results were inconclusive, as no elements were found that would allow us to state that there were permanent positive effects in schools:

Finally , we tried to assess whether the adoption of the bonus changed some school indicators (such as school climate, parental participation in the school , compliance with the curriculum, use of time in the classroom, experience of teachers/principals, etc.) that could help to understand both the difference in results between the fifth and ninth years, and the decay of the effect for the fifth year between 2009 and 2011. However, this analysis was inconclusive in clearly pointing out any of these factors as being associated with this trajectory of the effect of policy on grades. (Oshiro et al., 2015, p. 229)

Scorzafave et al. (2015) present data from another research, whose objective was to analyze the effects of the bonus policy on proficiency inequality between students in the 5th and 9th year of Elementary School in public education networks. On a comparative basis, the study considered networks that had not adopted any type of bonus since 2007, public networks that adopted bonus policies whose design was aimed at reducing proficiency inequality and, finally, networks that adopted bonus policies without the component aimed at to proficiency inequality. The data suggests that even in payment-for-performance models that focus on the learning of low-proficiency students, such as in the state networks of

São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo and Rio de Janeiro, there was an increase in proficiency inequality between 2007 and 2011, when compared to networks whose bonus policy did not incorporate this focus, as well as in relation to networks that did not adopt bonus policies.

Barbosa and Fernandes (2013) consider that the variable remuneration policies implemented in the São Paulo state public network constituted more as mechanisms of control and accountability of teachers than as forms of incentive to improve the quality of education and, based on the teachers' speech, interviewed, note an increase in dissatisfaction, individualization of teaching work and a reduction in union organization.

Variable remuneration policies are based on the assumption that offering financial incentives can be a stimulus for teachers to improve their work and, consequently, student performance. However, the conclusion drawn from the research considered is that there are no changes significant and positive aspects that can legitimize its use as public policy. On the contrary, the data suggests that they are expensive initiatives, consume a lot of time and reflection in the endless improvement of programs and that their problems are associated with technical issues to the detriment of other analyzes and perspectives.

3. 20 years of variable remuneration policies in the São Paulo state network – a necessary balance

Influenced by an economic perspective on education, the government of the state of São Paulo, under the management of Mário Covas, created, through Complementary Law No. 891 of 2000, the Merit Bonus. The law established that the bonus was a “[...] pecuniary advantage to be granted only once, in the current year, [...] directly linked to the measurement of attendance presented by the

teaching professional during the 2000 academic period, in the exercise of their duties” (Complementary Law 891, 2000). In the following year, under Geraldo Alckmin's government, Complementary Law n° 909 (2001) added a new element to frequency measurement, the professional's performance. The Merit Bonus is now “[...] a pecuniary advantage to be granted only once, in the current year, [...] directly linked to the performance evaluation presented by the professional, added to the measurement of frequency, during the 2001 financial year, in the form to be regulated” (Supplementary Law No. 909, 2001).

In 2008, the variable remuneration policy underwent a profound systematization process (Complementary Law No. 1,078, 2008), receiving the name Bonus for Results (BR). By articulating attendance, school flow and student performance, what the literature calls high-impact accountability was formed (Bonamino & Sousa, 2012).

For the purpose of applying the BR, two factors are considered: the goals, which suggest the value to be achieved in each of the indicators, whether global or specific, and within a certain period of time; and the target achievement index, which is referred to as the percentage relationship established between the value that was achieved in the evaluation process and the target previously set. The BR is paid based on the index achieved by the teacher throughout the academic year and the target established by Seduc during the period of evaluation of the results, granting the teacher the receipt of up to 20% of the sum of his monthly remuneration for the period of evaluation, multiplied by the aggregate index of achievement of specific goals and the index of days of effective exercise. After more than a decade of BR implementation, two other changes mark São Paulo's variable remuneration policy: the replacement of Idesp indicators with Ideb

indicators (Joint Resolution CC/SG/SFP ⁵ -4, 2021) and the extension of BR to all State Secretariats, the State Attorney General's Office and the State Comptroller General's Office and in the Local Authorities (Complementary Law 1,361, 2021).

Considering all the transformations in the variable remuneration policy of the São Paulo government, from the 2000 Merit Bonus to the current formulation of the BR, the central argument has always been guided by the discourse of efficiency in the service provided by the State, the valorization of teaching and improved quality educational, manifested from Idesp. However, over time, changes moved from a more general incentive policy to a systematic variable remuneration policy, the specific literature of which does not offer consensus as to its effectiveness.

After more than two decades of variable remuneration policy, the reality found is far from the government's own predictions. Using a set of data that portrays the policy, it was possible to systematize a critical assessment of the BR, exploring several assumptions that traditionally support the policy. The data presented below correspond to the results of the document and content analyzes and will be described in the following sections. The first highlights the analysis of the 13 opinions produced by the SGP bodies responsible for technical support and monitoring of processes associated with BR. The second highlights the statements of the teachers interviewed to carry out the research used in this article.

3.1 Analysis of opinions

Among the various recommendations in the documents, the low effectiveness of the BR and the consequent need to review the instrument's modeling stand out. These points are in line with what much of the literature has already pointed out, that is, difficulties in modeling initiatives based on the diversity of factors that can influence results (Harvey-Beavis, 2003).

The review recommendations focus mainly on the calculation model used by BR, which is based on a single indicator, Idesp, to understand an entire complex chain of efforts and realities present at Seduc, in school units, education boards and central administration and in the educational phenomenon itself. According to the opinions, the recommendations for the inclusion of more indicators are based on a set of findings, as evidenced by the excerpt from one of the opinions: “[...] need to include other indicators in the Education BR (complementary to Idesp, which must remain in the basket), especially indicators that reflect the entire chain of efforts (pedagogical and non-pedagogical) required for the final result [...]” (São Paulo, 2015, p. 10).

The need to review what the documents called the “all or nothing” logic, which causes great disparity between school results, is also highlighted: “Again, the sum of these factors favored the “all or nothing” logic, generating a distribution of IC ^{6s} in which many schools zero the IDESP IC, many receive 120%, and few receive it within this range [...]” (São Paulo, 2017c, p. 8).

In this sense, the 2017 report revisits previous opinions (since 2013) to repeat the need to review the BR, given the deficiencies of such a policy:

According to opinions from 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016, both in terms of agreement and investigation, this SABR has alerted to the deficiencies and opportunities for improvement in the current BR SEE ⁷ calculation model . Without the intention of repeating itself, but inevitably resorting to the accumulation of knowledge from the past, the urgency to review BR SEE comes to the fore, despite all the difficulty and dimension of the task. In particular, after nine years of implementation, the BR of the Department of Education – BR SEE, needs to be updated in view of the medium/long term objectives so that, considering the history built, there is an evaluation of performance to date and of milestones

proposed for 2030, both to renew the objectives and to rethink the necessary efforts, if deemed appropriate to revise the route. (São Paulo, 2017b, p. 3)

Even after numerous manifestations from the internal bodies of the SGP, recommending a review of the model adopted in BR, the Intersecretariat Commission, responsible for “defining global indicators and their calculation and evaluation criteria, as well as the goals of the entire Department of Education” (Complementary Law No. 1,078, 2008), ignored the recommendations, allowing the continuity of a public policy whose effectiveness had been questioned annually. Analysis of the documents suggests that the BR is not an appropriate instrument, either for promoting improved performance in external assessments or as a factor for institutional change, as evidenced by the excerpts below from the opinions:

In this way, we return to our recommendation to include performance indicators for the different administrative levels of the SEE (schools, teaching boards and central administration, with their different coordinators and which perform pedagogical and non-pedagogical activities), replacing the current BR model of a single indicator, which has not been effective as a management instrument, generating the expenditure of significant financial resources (around R\$680 million per year) without there being a sustained improvement by the organization in fulfilling its institutional mission. (São Paulo, 2014c, p. 15)

Finally, the effectiveness of the instrument, in terms of its contribution to promoting improvements in school results, has been questioned, at least in the way it has been implemented, since the positive evolution expected for the results, towards the goals of 2030, has not been observed, with regression, oscillation or stagnation of results being common for most schools. (São Paulo, 2017a, p. 4)

As indicated, the proposal for the 2017 evaluation period does not bring any changes to the SEE BR, with the flaws found in the past remaining unchanged and without further clarification of the recurring questions. Furthermore, the evidence available to date seems to indicate that the payment of bonuses, in the current configuration adopted by the instrument, has been ineffective in positively influencing IDESP results. Therefore, we consider the proposal technically inadequate, once again recommending the formulation and inclusion of more indicators that measure the organization's effort. (São Paulo, 2018, p. 14)

When suggesting changes to the BR model, especially in expanding the basket of indicators, the bodies look at Idesp data from schools and the state network itself. The mentions in the reports regarding the performance of schools indicate a predominance of low and stagnant performance throughout the analyzed period, with emphasis on the Final Years of Elementary and High School. The exception is in the Initial Years of Elementary School, however, the opinion itself highlights that the increase in performance at this stage was observed in most states, which makes the correlation with the payment of bonuses unfeasible (São Paulo, 2017a).

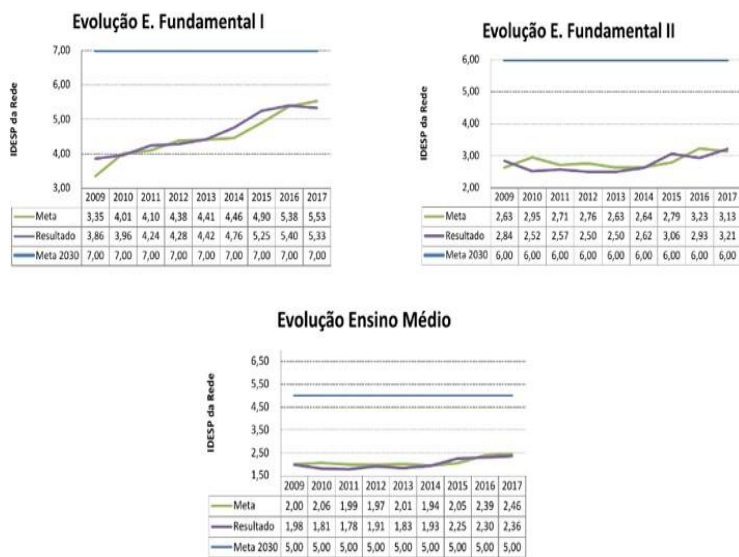


Figure 1. Evolution of Idesp - Initial and Final Years of Elementary and Secondary Education (2009 – 2017).

Source: São Paulo (2018, p. 7-8).

In relation to performance at Saesp, the documents highlight the non-linearity of the goals proposed to schools. What is presented is the maintenance or reduction of targets for subsequent years, especially in the Final Years of Elementary and High School, coincidentally, stages with greater difficulties in advancing the indicators, as shown in Figure 1. The 2017 opinion (São Paulo, 2017a) resumes the criticism, emphasizing that it demanded clarifications regarding the changes in the goals of the Intersecretariat Commission, however, it received no response. The issue that comes to the surface is associated with the uses and objectives of the arrangements and modeling of the variable remuneration system, above all, in the proposition of goals and their consequent performance, whose purpose can be diverse, including being used as elements susceptible to manipulation in the political game. of governments (Ravitch, 2011).

Still in relation to the use of a single indicator, the irregular performance of schools portrayed by the “all or nothing” movement draws attention. According to the opinion of the technical note (São Paulo, 2015), the following is observed: of the 1539 units in the Initial Years of Elementary Education, 473 had a Target Compliance Index (CI) of zero, another 887 with a CI of 120% of target or higher and only 103 are between the range of 0 and 120; in the Final Years of Elementary School the movement is similar, since of the 3712 units, 1513 obtained CI equal to zero and 1581 higher than 120% and, finally, repeating itself in High School, with results concentrated at the ends of proportion of 46.18% above the target, 42.52% with zero performance and only 11.3% in the range from 0 to 120%.

In addition to the results that are concentrated at the ends, another factor seems to further accentuate the irregularity of performances at Saresp. It is observed that the result of a school unit in a certain year can be influenced, inversely, by its result in the previous year (São Paulo, 2017a). In other words, if a school performed unsatisfactorily in one year, there is about a 50% chance that the unit will recover the following year.

In another opinion (São Paulo, 2014b), the body makes suggestions for indicators, such as “training and improvement of teachers and technical and administrative employees; teachers’ working conditions; involvement with parents and community; adequacy of school infrastructure; execution of the school calendar as scheduled”.

In none of the 13 opinions is it possible to observe a correlation between improved performance of school units and the Bonus for Results policy. However, on the contrary, analyzes predominate pointing out that the model adopted can generate a set of consequences for the school and teachers, reinforcing data from various research on the topic. Statistical arrangements and modeling, due to their quantitative nature and acting in isolation, as in the case of BR, present profound difficulties in understanding the complex educational phenomenon, thus creating situations that make school dynamics move in the opposite direction of the expected objectives. of the bonus policy. Instead of the thesis of encouragement to achieve some objective, a movement is created permeated by various consequences for the school and its teachers, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Recommendations from the opinions - consequences for schools and teachers.

Schools	<p>“The feeling of injustice is reinforced when teachers are held responsible for school performance, but believe that they were not given adequate working conditions, which generates demotivation and distrust in relation to BR (especially when the school does not receive the bonus) and the own teaching activity.” (São Paulo, 2014a, p. 9)</p> <p>“As already explained in previous SABR opinions, the use of a single performance indicator in the SEE proposal allows several sectors that contribute to the final result to not have their participation identified, their performance measured, and their results charged, so that accountability for schools’ IDESP results becomes diffuse, falling almost exclusively on the teaching staff.” (São Paulo, 2014c, p. 11)</p> <p>“Another problem associated with the adoption of a single indicator is the greater ease with which school units receive a zero score, despite the efforts they may have made in other initiatives.” (São Paulo, 2014c, p. 11)</p>
Teachers	<p>“Among the problems highlighted is the amplification of the intra-class relationship for the systemic improvement of the education network, without other aspects being considered.” (São Paulo, 2015, p. 8)</p> <p>“As a result, the exclusivity of IDESP as an indicator generates excessive protagonism for professionals who teach Portuguese and mathematics subjects, without other areas of the Secretariat</p>

having the opportunity to be in the spotlight.” (São Paulo, 2015, p. 8)

Source: Own preparation based on the documents analyzed (São Paulo, 2014a, 2014c, 2015).

From the analysis of the opinions, it is possible to conclude that the recommendations for reviewing the instrument prepared by the SGP bodies were successively ignored by the Intersecretariat Commission, that is, by the State government itself.

In addition to the bonus being inadequate and ineffective as an instrument for promoting improved school performance, the policy ends up worsening working conditions, promoting a series of negative consequences for schools and their teachers, such as abandonment of teaching.

3.2 What do the interviewed teachers and principals say?

The interviews that served as the basis for this article were carried out with 18 professionals from high schools in a city in the interior of the state of São Paulo. Between 2017 and 2018, six Portuguese language teachers, four Mathematics teachers, four school directors and four coordinating teachers were interviewed. However, for this article only a few interviews were used. The speeches of teachers and principals also highlight the non-effectiveness of the bonus policy in improving teachers' work and improving student performance in external assessments. Teachers pointed out the discredit of such a policy in schools:

I work here, not thinking about bonuses, so much so that people here [...] I see that they were upset because they didn't receive bonuses [...] but I, personally, don't

even think about bonuses. [...] Not here, people work here. It seems like there isn't even a bonus, understand? There are people who do a lot of activities, each one in their own part, trying to do the best they can, but I never aimed for bonuses (Mathematics teacher, Flora).

The interviews also showed that, although teachers value the possibility of extra earnings, especially considering the low salaries received in the network, the bonus does not serve as a motivation for teachers, especially for those who do not receive it:

As I am used to not getting paid, I don't create this expectation of "I have to get paid, I have to work hard to receive the bonus", I work, I am aware of carrying out my role in the classroom. Now, of course, money is fundamental, we don't work for free, right? (Portuguese language teacher, Catarina).

Teachers also mention that the bonus is not always considered a way of rewarding good performance, but of compensating for low salaries, which, in turn, does not contribute to improving the teacher's performance in their work:

The bonus is compensation for a low salary, it is compensation for my suffering in the classroom and I will continue exactly as I was; For the most part, there is no impact of "look, I received a bonus! Now I'm going to improve" (director Fernando).

Faced with the difficulties of receiving the bonus despite having dedicated themselves to their work, the teachers demonstrated that they considered the bonus unfair. This reflects, as pointed out in the opinions analyzed, the effects of the centrality of Idesp as the only indicator. In other words, although there are many factors that affect student learning and their performance at Saresp, only teachers are held responsible for this.

I think it's very unfair that, for example, I've been working here for five years and I only got paid for one year, so I don't worry about bonuses because regardless... if it comes, great! But I consider that I work a lot with them in the classroom, so I mean, I'm not working properly because I don't get paid? (Portuguese language teacher, Catarina).

Reinforcing what the analysis of the opinions had already highlighted, the interviews show that teachers do not carry out their activities thinking or being guided by the bonus, but rather by motivations associated with pedagogical practice and the development of students, therefore reducing the centrality in the belief offered by business reformers and by Seduc itself that the bonus is a strong inducer and motivator of change.

Research (Chiang et al., 2015; Marsh et al., 2011) suggests that accountability policies operate more through pressure and demands than through the motivational power of the bonus, classified by research as reduced. According to studies, the bonus tends to make teachers feel grateful for their effort and hard work, however, they say they would have done the same without it. The research findings are close to the position of the interviewed teachers, as they reject the idea that their practice is motivated by monetary rewards to the detriment of other values, such as, for example, adequate uniform salary and professional recognition in society.

This becomes even worse when we observe that, within the same school, teachers from different stages of education, or even from different cycles of primary education, can receive the bonus while others cannot, which can lead to the fragmentation of the category and the feeling of devaluation:

I think that teachers should be recognized in general because, then, this bonus thing becomes a bit fragmented, you know? Cycle I receives it, Cycle II does not receive

it, High School receives it... [...] Well, this bonus had to end. The teacher had to be valued, everyone, in general, right? All the teachers, and he had to be committed to doing the job, right? (director Mercedes).

What also draws attention is the understanding that the bonus policy does not promote the appreciation of teachers, on the contrary. In the teachers' view, a salary improvement for everyone would represent this appreciation:

I don't agree, I would like the bonus to be converted into a salary increase, it would be much better. But, [...] I'm not going to say that... being hypocritical and saying that "oh, I'm not happy when a bonus comes", it's extra money, I'm happy, but I would like it to be a salary increase, a decent salary compatible with our work, which is not the case (Portuguese language teacher, Márcia).

This feeling of devaluation can also lead to abandonment of teaching, as evidenced by the teacher's statement below:

So I think that the bonus is something that shouldn't exist, the appreciation of the real teacher is that yes, it should exist, we should have a decent salary, right? That would give us a position of respect in society because we don't have respect from anyone, we only have respect for ourselves, we respect each other, only one colleague respects another because the rest don't see the slightest importance and for what I have I realized and what has made me want to leave Education the most is that the situation will get worse [...] (Portuguese Language teacher, Maria).

The research by Barbosa et al. (2020) draws attention to the large number of dismissals of effective teachers in the São Paulo state public network which, since 2008, has remained at around 3 thousand per year. The study by Pagani (2019) highlights that these dismissals are often motivated by the feeling of devaluation of teachers in the face of precarious working conditions, especially salaries, and that

these teachers do not always abandon teaching, but rather leave the public school system in São Paulo. to work in another network where they feel more valued. We understand that the frequent abandonment of teaching in the São Paulo network can also be considered as an indicator of the failure of the variable remuneration policy adopted to the detriment of general salary increases.

Thus, even indicating that the bonus money is welcome, the interviewees expressed opposition to the bonus policy, sometimes arguing for the incorporation of the bonus into the salary, sometimes for the termination of the program, but, above all, converging on the defense position the appreciation of the uniform salary. The refusal of variable remuneration models by workers seems to be related to the various problems presented by the program and explored throughout this article.

4. Final considerations

Among the various aspects addressed by managerial ideology, teachers' remuneration models are questioned, particularly in relation to salary equality and stability in public education networks. Business reformers' criticism of the model is based on the belief - not on evidence - that such an arrangement makes the creation of quality education unfeasible. Supported by this perspective, Seduc's variable remuneration policy, represented here by the various “bonus” arrangements, has completed more than 20 years. The various data analyzed in this article allow us to affirm that Seduc's variable remuneration policy was guided, over two decades, more by the ideological nature of the measures than by the results they presented.

The numerous recommendations highlighted by the documents emphasize that the Result Bonus policy presents persistent gaps that make the instrument unfeasible for achieving the objectives of institutional change and student performance in

external assessments. Among the recommendations, the constant request to review the basket of indicators stands out, since, according to the documents, Idesp alone does not allow understanding the entire complex set of pedagogical and non-pedagogical efforts present in the institution, evidence periodically ignored by Seduc.

The statements of the interviewed teachers also reinforced the limits of BR, especially in relation to the lack of effectiveness in motivating teachers. On the other hand, teachers pointed out that the possibilities of career recognition are related to uniform salary increases, to the detriment of variable remuneration policies.

The BR's weaknesses resulted not only in the policy's lack of effectiveness, as evidenced by the irregular performances of school units over the years, but also in the negative and systematic consequences for schools and their teachers. In addition to the initiative not offering evidence that could justify its maintenance, BR provided, over 20 years, a series of repercussions that, added to the precariousness of working conditions, became obstacles to remaining in the state network.

Thus, the literature presented here, the documents from the support body that evaluated the effectiveness of BR in São Paulo and the education professionals interviewed highlighted the problems and the lack of positive results of the variable remuneration policy in São Paulo. Despite this, it was recently announced not only the continuity of the policy, but its expansion to other State departments, the Attorney General's Office, the General Comptroller's Office and local authorities (Complementary Law 1,361, 2021). The insistence on the controversial variable remuneration policy generates an annual expenditure of around 680

million reais (São Paulo, 2014c) that could be used in different ways, which leads to the question whether the reasons for the permanence and expansion of BR actually lie improving school performance and institutional change or other objectives.

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