



From the coast of Alagoas to the Amazon rainforest

Pathways for transforming the quality of education in Brazil

Bruna Alves (Iede)
Ernesto Martins Faria (Iede)
Maria Helena Bravo (Iede)
Marcela Bourroul
Marcelo Pérez Alfaro (BID)
Maria Carolina Paseto (BID)

AUTHORS

Bruna Alves (Iede)
Ernesto Martins Faria (Iede)
Marcela Bourroul
Marcelo Pérez Alfaro (IDB)
Maria Carolina Paseto (IDB)
Maria Helena Bravo (Iede)

Proofreading:

Cecília Giambruno (IDB)

English Translation:

Dermeval Aires Jr.

Brazil, 2026

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Executive summary

This study presents and analyzes key management actions and pedagogical practices adopted by the municipal education networks of Coruripe (in the state of Alagoas) and Manaus (in the state of Amazonas) in Brazil, both networks experienced a positive variance in their performance measured by the Basic Education Development Index (Ideb), a key quality indicator in Brazilian education, in 2019 - 2023. Despite the fact that the sizes of the municipal education networks – 22 schools in Coruripe and 500 in Manaus are quite distinct - both stood out for the rise of their Ideb scores in Primary and Early Secondary Education¹, and now find themselves ahead of many other cities with similar contexts.

Coruripe was already experiencing a level of excellence after consistently evolving in the recent decade, and scored 9.7 in 2023, reaching the first place in the Ideb's national ranking of municipalities with 50 thousand inhabitants. It was also in the top quartile of municipalities of its state, according to the *Criança Alfabetizada* rating, since 99% of its 5th grade students achieved adequate learning levels in Portuguese language and mathematics in 2019 and 2023. Coruripe also reduced inequalities by raising learning levels among students from low socio-economic backgrounds, as well as among black, brown and Indigenous students.

In its turn, Manaus scored 6.2 in the Ideb in 2023 and stood out in the country's Northern Region, which has historically faced numerous educational challenges related to access, infrastructure, and scarcity of teachers (BID, 2024). Despite its adverse context, Manaus reached a percentage of students with adequate learn-

¹ In Brazil, EF corresponds to the initial compulsory basic education in other countries, encompassing levels internationally classified as primary education and lower secondary education, which tend to cover ages 6 to 14 and are divided into two cycles (EF1 from 1st to 5th grade and EF2 from 6th to 9th grade). According to the division of responsibilities among the three levels of government (federal, state, and municipal), early childhood education (EI) and elementary education (EF) are primarily the responsibility of municipalities, while secondary education (EM) is the responsibility of states, but there are regions where the second cycle of elementary education (EF2) is also offered by the state school system.

ing levels in Portuguese language and mathematics above the national average in 2019 and 2023, and high passing rates. These two criteria are simultaneously met by few educational networks of the northern region, and only in the case of Manaus among capitals.

The opportunity to learn about the strategies that proved to be effective in promoting learning, as well as in overcoming some of the educational challenges faced by these municipalities, may be useful to inspire the development of improved management and pedagogical practices in other education networks in Brazil. With the aims of compiling the best practices adopted by these two networks and disseminating their lessons, the lede - Interdisciplinarity and Evidence in Educational Debate - Institute conducted a field survey, which main findings are systematized in the present document.

The analysis of the information about the two municipalities reveals common initiatives that paved the way for the evolution of their Ideb-scores. The following policies may be highlighted as key references for other interested networks:

DIMENSION	COMMON MUNICIPAL NETWORK INITIATIVES
 Assessments	Standardized external assessment instruments on students' performance in Portuguese language and mathematics are regularly applied to all schools of the network. These assessments allow for different aggregate result levels (by network, school, homeroom and student) and provide guidance on pedagogical interpretations.
 Data-based pedagogical follow-up	Use of data on learning and context data, including from external evaluations of the network, as a pedagogical planning and replanning tool. Learning recovery and active search actions are implemented in cases of students at risk of dropout.
 Professional development	Continuing Education Plans are implemented for teachers, with a focus on peer exchanges and classroom practice, as well as for school managers, with a focus on pedagogical actions that may exert a positive influence on learning.
 Curriculum guidelines with flexibility	A structured curriculum is in place, and education professionals are familiarized with it. It allows for adaptations, according to different student profiles. Pedagogical materials and resources aligned to the curriculum are available in support of its implementation in the network.
 Coherence and integration	Assessment, planning, training and other initiatives are connected as an integrated cycle, including the collaborative work among teachers, managers and the Municipal Secretariat of Education, thereby strengthening the network's structure.

1.

Introduction

This report presents key management actions and pedagogical practices implemented in the municipalities of Coruripe (state of Alagoas) and Manaus (state of Amazonas) in Brazil - education networks that stood out for their progress among 5th grade students in the country's Basic Education Development Index (Ideb)² between 2019 and 2023, despite the fact that they rose from different educational levels and experience quite distinct operational contexts.

The Ideb index is used by the Brazilian Ministry of Education since 2007 to measure the performance of schools and networks in two essential aspects: passing rates, which are obtained from the country's School Census, and average performance in Portuguese language and mathematics, as ascertained by the Basic Education Assessment System (Saeb).³ The Ideb is one of the main indicators of educational quality and progress in policies in this field, serving as a reference for the public administration's planning. The IDB⁴ itself has already conducted several analyses on this topic in CIMA, a repository of data and analyses

The opportunity to learn about successful educational practices implemented by the schools and networks that stand out in the Ideb index allows for an understanding of the strategies that proved to be effective in the promotion of learning, as well as in overcoming long-standing educational challenges in Brazil. Identifying these practices makes it possible to disseminate the ones with potential positive educational impacts in other networks, and to provide inputs for the construction of increasingly effective educational policies.

2. Established in 2027, the Ideb is calculated and disclosed every two years by the Anísio Teixeira National Institute of Educational Studies and Research (Inep). It covers data on school passing, obtained from the **School Census**, and performance averages obtained through the **Basic Education Assessment System (Saeb)**. Its scale ranges from 0 to 10 – the higher, the better. For more information on the Ideb, visit: <https://www.gov.br/inep/pt-br/areas-de-atuacao/pesquisas-estatisticas-e-indicadores/ideb>

3. The Basic Education Assessment System (Saeb) comprises a set of wide-scale external assessments in Brazil. It is used to assess students' competencies, and enables a diagnosis of the skills and knowledge acquired over the years, as well as of the gaps that need to be addressed.

4. <https://publications.iadb.org/publications/portuguese/document/Nota-CIMA-33-Quais-os-avancos-da-educac%C3%A3o-no-Brasil-Panorama-dos-resultados-do-IDEB-e-seus-desafios.pdf>



This case study reports the findings of a field work conducted in the municipalities of Coruripe (in Alagoas) and Manaus (in Amazonas), and presents the recommendations that emerge from the best practices identified.

1.1 METHODOLOGYC APPROACH AND CASE SELECTION

This technical note's analysis is based on field activities (conducted through visits and semi-structured interviews) and statistical data on each network's results. The interviewees include municipal managers responsible for several areas of operation at the Municipal Secretariats of Education and, particularly, secretaries and technicians responsible for the fields of work of literacy, teachers training, and school management assessment and support (10 professionals). Interviews were been conducted with professionals who work at urban and rural four schools, such as principals, pedagogical coordinators and teachers assisting 5th grade students of Portuguese Language and Math, totaling more than 30 interviews.

According to the division of functions among Brazil's three governmental spheres (the Union, states and municipalities), the provision of EI and EF is primarily a municipal responsibility, whereas EM is a responsibility of states. However, in some regions, the EF2 grades are also provided by the state network.

The selected networks that became the object of this study experienced a positive Ideb variance in 2019 - 2023, and stood out in relevant ways vis-à-vis their peers from similar contexts.

In the case of Coruripe, the examined indicators show that its network achieved a level of excellence through a consistent evolution in the recent decade. In 2023, it reached an Ideb score of 9.7 and the first place nationally among cities with 50,000 inhabitants. It was also in the upper 25% of the *Criança Alfabetizada*⁵ rating in its

5. This assessment, created in 2023 to measure literacy in the 2nd year of elementary school, is based on assessments conducted collaboratively by states and municipalities. Annually, it analyzes the percentage of literate students and has become part of the SAEB (National Basic Education Assessment System).

state, and 99% of its 5th grade students achieved adequate levels in Portuguese language and mathematics in 2019 and 2023. Coruripe also reduced inequalities, while raising learning levels among students from low socio-economic backgrounds, as well as black, brown and Indigenous students.

In its turn, Manaus positively surprised education technicians through its evolution. The municipality scored 6.2 in the Ideb in 2023 and stood out in the country's Northern Region, which has historically faced numerous educational challenges related to access, infrastructure, and scarcity of teachers (BID, 2024). Despite its adverse context, Manaus reached a percentage of students with adequate learning levels in Portuguese language and mathematics above the national average in 2019 and 2023 and obtained high pass rates. These two criteria are simultaneously met by few educational networks of the northern region, and only in the case of Manaus among capitals.

As is known, the two examined networks have different sizes, outcomes, and histories. Yet, they achieved a rising Ideb trajectory and are representative of Brazil's territorial diversity, when we talk about size of cities and different region like North and Northwest that are poor regions in Brazil. Their joint analysis aims precisely at understanding common features in the provision of public education in their realities.

The specific objectives of this study were to understand the policies of both networks, to analyze the practices that effectively improve Ideb-performance over time, and to structure a set of guidelines and recommendations based on their findings.

The individual cases of Coruripe and Manaus will be described separately, but with the same structure: an introduction covering the municipal socio-political context, network profile and educational indicators, followed by a description of the initiatives found to be the most relevant ones for their Ideb progress in 2023, and additional positive practices with minor impacts on teaching and learning, according to the field literature.

As is known, the two examined networks have different sizes, outcomes, and histories. Yet, they achieved a rising Ideb trajectory and are representative of Brazil's territorial diversity

The study's concluding remarks summarize the best practices shared by both networks, thereby meeting the general objective of this document: namely, to serve as a reference for managers, technicians and professionals at schools, based on the real experiences of two municipalities from different contexts, if compared to each other, but similar to many other municipal contexts in Brazil. ■

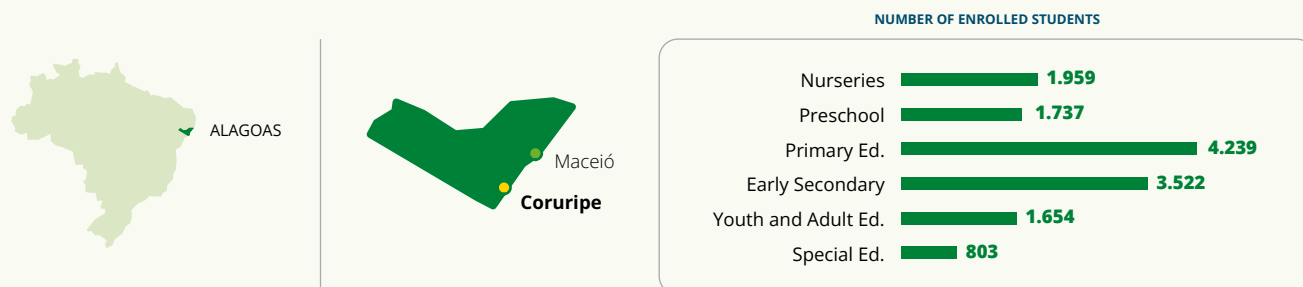
2.

Coruripe: excellence and consistency in becoming a national headliner

2.1 FEATURES OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF CORURIBE

The municipality of Coruripe is located in the state of Alagoas. It covers a territorial area of 897.8 km² with a resident population of 50.414 persons (IBGE, 2022). Coruripe's population lives primarily from agriculture, fishing, arts and crafts, and local trade. According to data from the 2025 School Census, Coruripe's municipal network has 22 schools. 20 of them provide Early Childhood Education, and 16 schools provide Primary and Early Secondary Education. The municipal network does not provide Higher Secondary Education. 204 teachers are active in the primary grades, and 157 teachers work in the early secondary grades. A total of 13,914 students is distributed as follows:

FIGURE 1. Enrollment Distribution, Coruripe (AL)



Source: School Census 2024.

IDEB

In 2023, Coruripe's municipal network attained high Ideb averages in Primary and Early Secondary grades (jointly known as *Ensino Fundamental* in Brazil). In Primary Education grades, an expressive number of schools reached either the maximum Ideb score (10 points) or a score close to it.

FIGURE 2. Ideb EF 2023, Coruripe (AL)

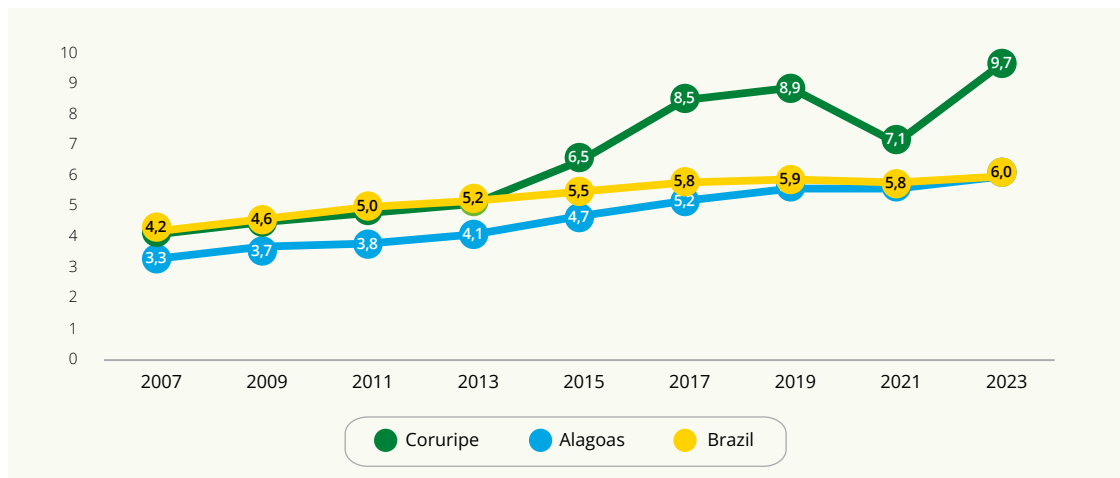
	Mathematics	Portuguese Language	Approval	Ideb
Primary Ed. (5TH GRADE)	10	9,46	100%	9,7
NATIONAL REFERENCE (BRAZILIAN AVERAGE)	6,09	5,81	97%	5,8
Early Secondary Ed. (9TH GRADE)	9,63	7,85	100%	8,7
NATIONAL REFERENCE (BRAZILIAN AVERAGE)	4,99	5,09	92%	4,6

Note: Standardized average obtained from average skill levels in Math and Portuguese Language. As well as in Ideb, score ranges from 0 to 10.

Source: Saeb/Ideb, Inep, 2023. QEdu.

The following graph shows how Coruripe's Ideb score in primary education rose above Alagoas' and the Brazilian averages from 2015 on, reaching a level of excellence in 2017-2019. The drop experienced in the COVID-19 pandemic (2021) is followed by a sharp recovery that not only surpassed the 2019 levels, but also drew the municipality close to Ideb's top score.

FIGURE 3. Ideb score evolution 2007-2023, Coruripe (AL)

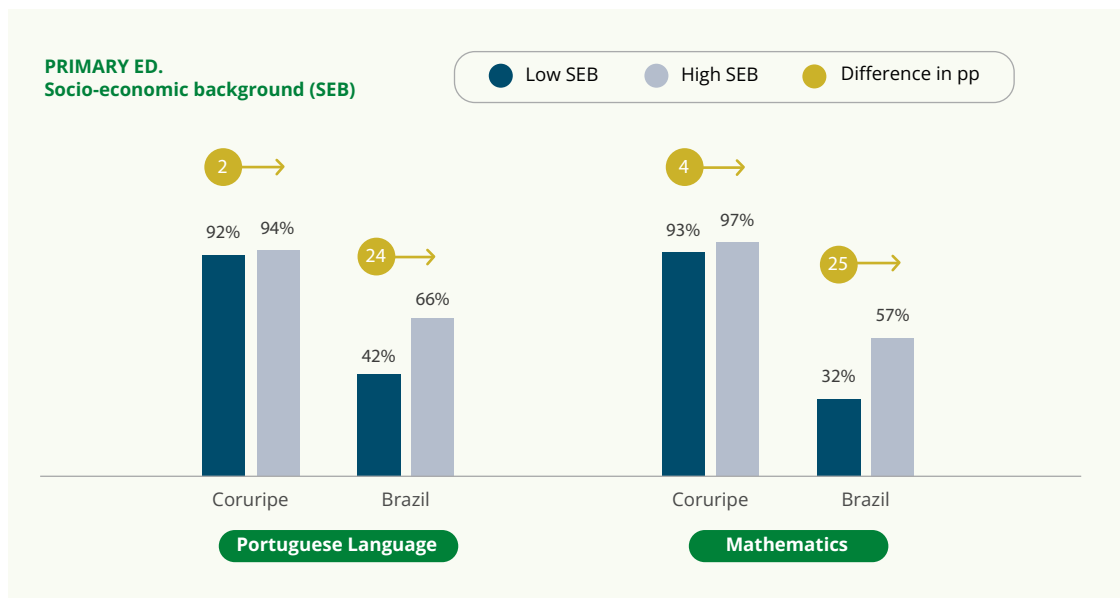


Source: Saeb/Ideb, Inep, 2007-2023, QEdu.

ANALYSIS OF EQUITY LEVELS WHEN COMPARING LEARNING FROM SPECIFIC GROUPS

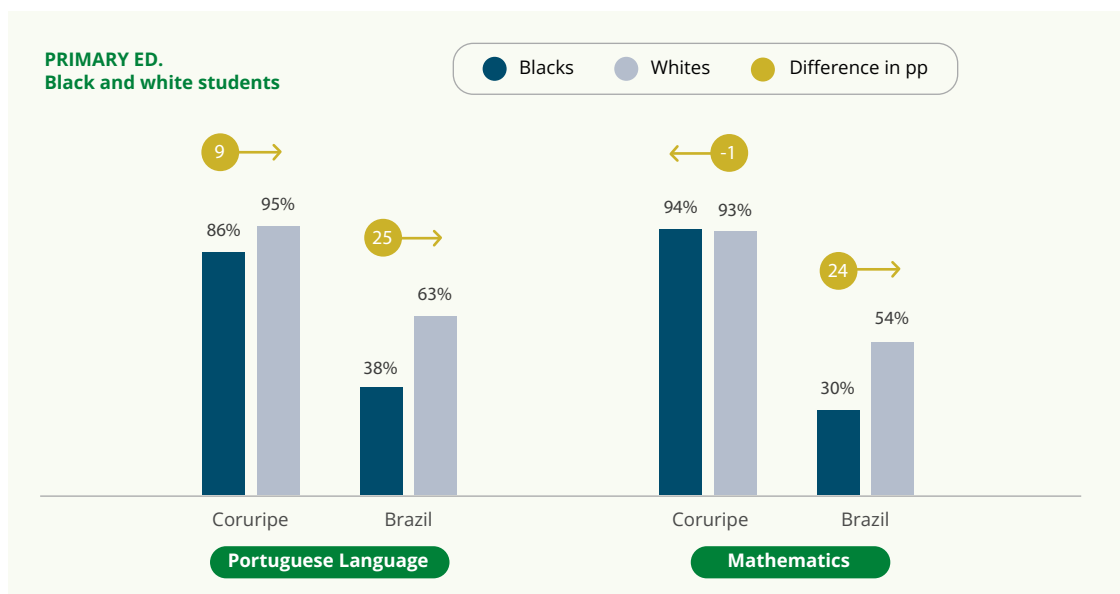
When open data, analyzing different students, under the aspects of race and socio-economic backgrounds (SEB), we could see the fact that white students or students from high socio-economic backgrounds (SEBs) did attain higher levels of adequate learning vis-à-vis their peers, the difference is smaller if compared to the averages of Alagoas and Brazil.

FIGURE 4. Equity rates among students of high and low Socio-economic background who achieved adequate learning levels in Primary Ed. in 2019, Coruripe (AL)



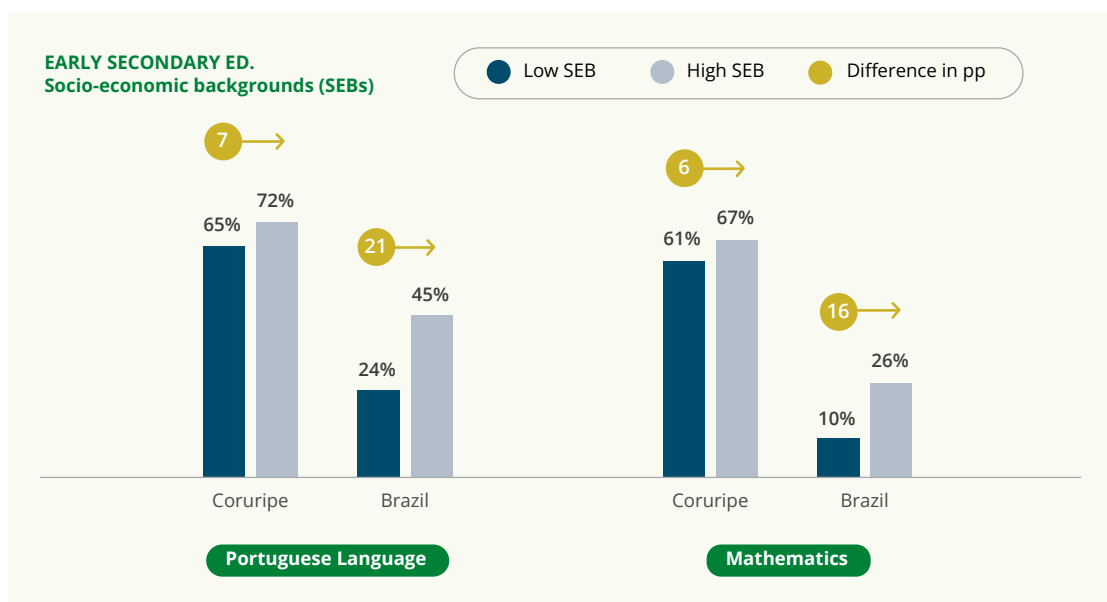
Source: Saeb, Inep, 2019. QEdu.

FIGURE 5. Equity rates among black and white students who achieved adequate learning levels in Primary Ed. in 2019, Coruripe (AL)



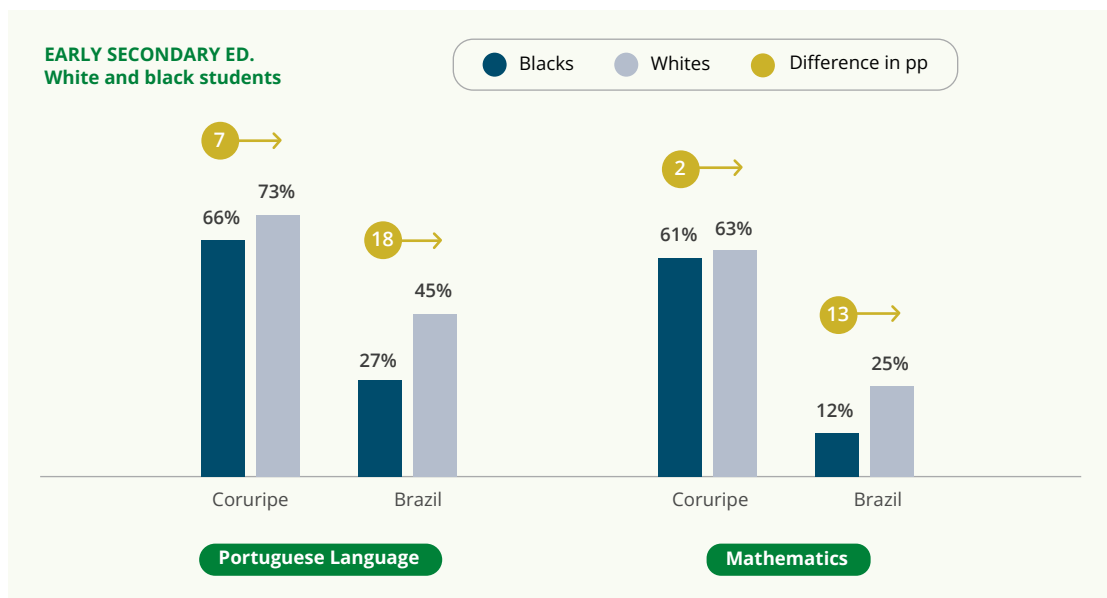
Source: Saeb, Inep, 2019. QEdu.

FIGURE 6. Equity rates among students who achieved adequate learning levels, Primary Education in 2019, Coruripe (AL)



Source: QEdu.

FIGURE 7. Equity rates among students who achieved adequate learning levels, Early Secondary Education in 2019, Coruripe (AL)



Source: QEdu.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The chart below presents data on the infrastructure of Coruripe's schools. Improvements are needed in several aspects, particularly in connection with sewage, accessibility, and the provision of labs, libraries and sports courts.

FIGURE 8. Percentage of Schools with Selected Infrastructural Facilities and Equipment Features in 2023, Coruripe (AL)



Source: Censo Escolar, Inep, 2023.

MUNICIPAL SECRETARIAT OF EDUCATION (SEMED) CONTEXT

Continuity is a feature of Coruripe's educational policy, prompted by the reelection of its current mayor in 2024. The current administration's priority goal is to universalize the provision of Early Childhood Education. Its next goal is the implementation of full-time education, a proposal that lengthens the school day and the students' curriculum by providing complementary activities that enable a more complete and diverse education, beyond the conventional academic content.

A prominent aspect in Coruripe's educational policy is the provision of equitable conditions to all schools within its network, independently of where the school is located. This effort aims at ensuring that all schools have the necessary conditions to attain high learning levels, while maintaining their alignment to the standards defined by the municipal network, as well as by the state and national quality indexes (Snobe; Pinto, 2015; Xavier; Alves; Petrus, 2024).



2.2 BEST PRACTICES IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF CORURIPE

The following sub-sections revise the most relevant aspects identified in Coruripe's educational management for the attainment of its expressive indicators.

LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND PEDAGOGICAL FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Coruripe's network has had a culture of evaluation since 2010. It uses the assessment model *Avalia Coruripe*, which draws on Classical Test Theory. Its aim is to diagnose students' performance in key curricular areas. Held every two months, the assessment covers Portuguese language and mathematics with 10 questions on each subject. This model is developed by Semed's technicians following the guidelines of Brazil's National Common Core Curriculum (BNCC) and matrices of the Basic Education Assessment System (Saeb).

The *Avalia Coruripe* assessment is digitally applied to students of all grades. The local schools have tablets exclusively used to this end. After collecting the assessment's data, the Semed technicians visit the schools to discuss results with teachers and pedagogical coordinators, while conducting performance analyses for the selected knowledge fields and descriptors. This process enables management representatives to identify the fields that require more attention and define training topics for the network, based on the results (Vidal et al, 2024).

In addition to *Avalia Coruripe*, the municipality participates in assessments on reading fluency, among others, conducted in partnership with the Center for Public Policies and Educational Policy Assessments (CAEd), the Alagoas Educational Assessment Center (Saveal) and the Saeb.

The network conducts specific training activities linked to these assessments, such as integrated review sessions and simulations. Its review sessions bring together students from several homerooms and prioritize the development of specific Saeb descriptors.

The Ideb is seen by the network's professionals as the result of a continuous, long term effort, instead of as an isolated goal to be attained on a one-off basis. This vision reflects an expanded conception of educational quality, in which the Ideb-performance reflects the collective work of all professionals in education, and it also stems from an investment of several administrations and continuities of more than a decade of investment in this focus.

The network's pedagogical follow-up routine consists in a structured process involving various professionals to ensure the effectiveness of students' learning, particularly in the fields of reading fluency and mathematics literacy. A highlight is the interaction among schoolteachers, pedagogical coordinators and Semed technicians.

Schoolteachers resort to in-house instruments, constructed by themselves and, as well as to instruments developed by the Semed to follow up on students' evolution. Their records are the basis for analyzing students' progress and conducting pedagogical planning adjustments.

Coordinators, in turn, conduct a weekly follow up routine with teachers in class, revise teaching records and conduct their own surveying of students' learning.

Through the schools' management staff, the Semed consolidates the data on learning collected at the schools and conducts bimonthly follow-up tasks with the support of technicians specialized in Portuguese and mathematics. The technicians give feedback to the teachers and pedagogical coordinators, including on *Avalia Coruripe's* results.

Through a diversity of assessment instruments and the integrated work of many professionals, Coruripe's educational management has been able to ensure an efficient follow-up on students' development and identify the fields that need to be improved (Feitosa; Silva; Pires, 2023).

In the cases of students who did not achieve the established yearly or bimonthly goals, the local network provides remedial lessons either before or after the regular school shift.

Another relevant follow-up practice is the *Plantão Pedagógico*, ("After-hours pedagogical support"), a monthly meeting in which schoolteachers and management professionals provide individual assistance to students' families. The clinic is an opportunity for parents and guardians to understand the educational process and the performance of their children, and to express doubts, concerns and suggestions, thereby strengthening their bonds with the school.

The students' attendance is rigorously monitored by management through the active search routines implemented after the COVID-19 pandemic (Wandercil et al, 2024). Whenever a student is unjustifiably absent for three consecutive days, a Semed team visits their household to dialogue with their parents and guardians, understand the reasons behind the student's absence and promote reintegration.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Coruripe's network also has a structured continuing development program developed by Semed, named *Capacita Coruripe*. Its activities are conducted on a bimonthly basis with school principals, pedagogical coordinators, teachers, assistants, cooks, janitors and drivers, among others – in other words, all active school professionals, instead of only those who work in the classrooms.

Capacita Coruripe is conducted by a company hired by the municipal administration in collaboration with the Semed, which develops the applicable content in accordance with the needs of the network identified through the *Avalia Coruripe* assessment.

The topics addressed by *Capacita Coruripe* in 2024 covered literacy with a focus on reading and comprehension, reading fluency, assessment descriptors, and educational transition processes, (students going through schooling stage changes). The program regularly assesses its own training activities and gives feedback to participants on the content and methodologies of these activities (Guskey, 2023).

Local teachers also have two specific training moments at their schools: the Collective Pedagogical Work Appointment (HTPC) and Individual Pedagogical Work Appointment (HTPI), led by pedagogical coordinators.

In addition to its general training programs, the Semed provides capacity building in a few specific fields. Teachers involved in the Math Olympiad, for instance, participate in a training project in partnership with the Federal University of Alagoas (UFAL) to guide and train “Olympic students”. In their turn, teachers active in the Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE) program, as well as School Life Assistants (AVEs) obtain access to the **Applied Behavioral Analysis Course** (ABA Course), which provides specialized training to meet these students’ needs in adequate ways.

The topics addressed by Capacita Coruripe in 2024 covered literacy with a focus on reading and comprehension, reading fluency, assessment descriptors, and educational transition processes

Coruripe’s teachers expressed satisfaction at the professional development routine and recognized the appreciation of their individual projects, as well as the ability to establish linkages via joint activities in the municipality’s schools.

CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

The curriculum guidelines of Coruripe’s teaching network are established by the Semed, which also maintains its alignment to the BNCC national core curriculum and to Saeb’s assessment matrix.

Despite the existence of a structured national core curriculum, the local network allows for flexibility, so that its schools and teachers may adapt the teaching messages to their students’ profiles. Due to this freedom, the students’ unique needs and traits can be taken into account without compromising local adherence to the learning descriptors and objectives established for each bimester (Floriani; Fernandes, 2009). Coruripe’s network also stimulates creativity and innovation throughout the teaching process, by favoring learning customization and student engagement, by making it possible that, based on the autonomy of the teachers and the profile of the students, some themes as well as the order, are updated.

According to local school teams, the available didactic materials convey essential guidance related to the curriculum. Their adoption takes place after they are assessed by Semed professionals, to ensure that the selected books and additional resources are adequate to the pedagogical needs of the local school community. Even though the use of didactic books is not mandatory, there is a clear indication that they should be part of the class-planning process, as they are con-

sidered to be relevant learning facilitators. This approach allows teachers to select the resources that best meet their pedagogical objectives, while contributing to consistent and effective educational practices.

MANAGEMENT

Governance and democratic management

The Semed conducts a routine of bimonthly training meetings with all teachers of its network, held in its head office. This aspect contributes to the success of municipal educational policies, as a training model that approximates its central management to local teachers.

Another relevant aspect is the follow-up work conducted at the schools. Local school managers visit the schools twice a month to monitor educational results and help solve problems – a routine that they see as positive and effective. In addition to the managers' follow-up activities, Semed professionals such as capacity builders and specialized technicians provide individual assistance to schools in monitoring students' learning and conducting pedagogical replanning activities.

A strong sense of community and belonging among school professionals, the Semed, students and families is noticeable in Coruripe. A prominent feature, in this regard, is the work of school councils and student councils in discussing pedagogical proposals, which promotes the school community's participation in local management and decisions (Souza, 2009).

Infrastructure and resources

Semed's current administration made significant investments in infrastructure and pedagogical materials, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. Its allocation of funds has been focused on school reform and construction work.

Another highlight is its investment in technology, through the purchase of robotics kits, computers, tablets, and other essential equipment for conducting school activities.

School transport is the municipal management's critical point, in particular, due to Coruripe's territorial extension. A prominent feature in this regard is the local partnership with program *Caminho da Escola* ("School Route") and the National Program in Support of School Transport (Pnate).

In 2023, the School Meal Central was inaugurated, with the effects of qualifying the use of funds assigned to school meals and enabling a more rigorous quality control of the food provided at schools.

Specialized Educational Assistance

The local network counts on psychologists and psychopedagogues to assist students with special educational needs. Local assistance is provided by specialized pedagogues at schools' Resource Rooms either before or after the regular school shift.

Students with special educational needs also count on the support of the professionals known as School Life Assistants (AVEs), who use their skills to adapt the pedagogical activities in ways that meet the requirements of each student's Individual Educational Plan (PEI).

Additional features are a partnership with a private company for the provision of digital resources and tablets in support of teaching activities for students with special needs, and the availability of psychologists who provide monthly assistance to the parents or guardians of neurodivergent students.

Another relevant action is the *Cantinho do Autismo*, or “Autism’s Corner”, a municipal space that offers multidisciplinary resources to supplement the assistance provided at schools. This space provides a wide range of services such as swimming, psychological support and phonoaudiologists, among others, which enable the provision of comprehensive assistance to students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Partnerships

Coruripe adopted a strategic and collaborative approach through the search for partnerships and hirings that increased the provision and quality of educational services. A highlight is its collaboration with the state of Alagoas for implementing the *Escola 10* (“A+ School”) program, which aims at improving the quality of education in state public schools. Further, the municipality is participating in the Creative Schools Program and in the Brazilian Conferences on Creative Learning, which foster experience exchanges and disseminate innovative pedagogical practices.

Another relevant element of Coruripe’s educational management is its collaborative relationship with other municipalities in the region, such as Maceió, thereby establishing experience exchanges through which the Semed may learn from successful practices in similar contexts. These exchanges are seen as a way of strengthening local actions and implementing innovative solutions that may be adapted to the municipality’s reality. ■

3.

Manaus: a prominent example in a region marked by considerable educational challenges

3.1 FEATURES OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF MANAUS

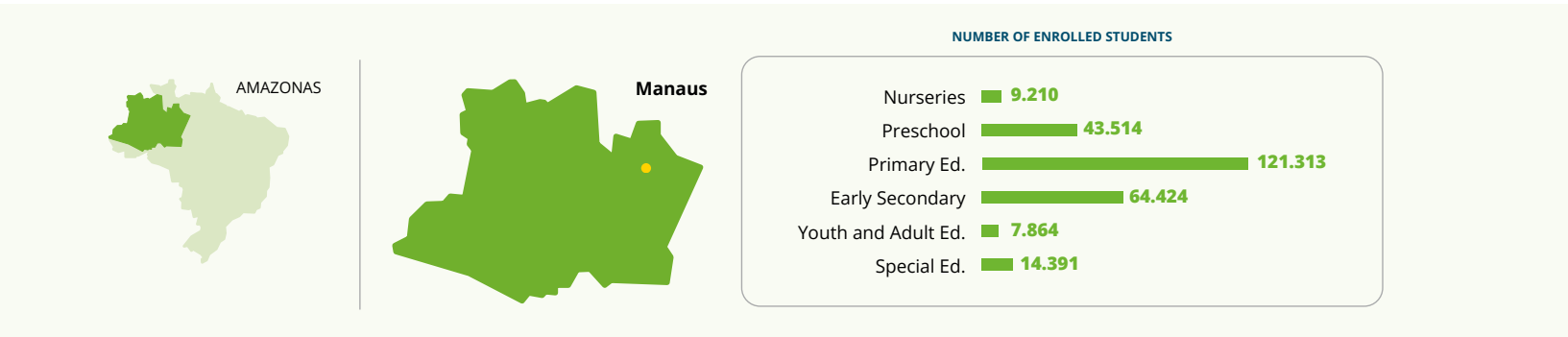
Manaus' municipal network also became a partner in the Project to increase and improve education levels in the municipal public network of Manaus (PROEMEM I, BR-LI392), funded with Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) resources amounting to USD51.2M, in addition to USD40.3M in municipal counterparty funds, with the aim of "Expanding coverage and improving the quality of education in Early Childhood Education, and Primary and Early Secondary Education in Manaus' municipal network". PROEMEM I's execution began in 2017 and finished in 2024. Over this period, the project helped implement actions of the Secretariat of Education of Manaus, through the provision of financial and technical support. In 2026, has preparing the next step of a new project.

The municipality of Manaus is located in the state of Amazonas, with a territorial area of 11,401 km² and a resident population of 2.064 million inhabitants (IBGE). Situated at the center of the Amazon rainforest, Manaus covers Brazil's 6th largest urban area and is the 7th most populated city, encompassing extensive rural and riparian areas with diverse and hefty challenges related to the right to quality education (Giambruno, C.; Castro Vergara, N. et al, 2025; Giambruno, C; Pérez Alfaro, M, et al, 2024). Its economic activities include the sectors of trade, education, finances, industry, media, research, military facilities, technology, and entertainment.

According to data from Brazil's 2024 School Census, the municipal network of Manaus comprises 505 schools, including 272 schools that provide Early Childhood Education and 370 schools providing Primary and Early Secondary Education. Of the latter, 87 schools also provide Youth and Adult Education. Manaus' municipal net-

work does not provide Higher Secondary Education. Its teaching workforce includes 3,493 Primary Education teachers, and 2,785 Early Secondary Education teachers. A total of 258,124 municipal students is distributed as follows:

FIGURE 9. Enrollment Distribution in Manaus (AM)



Source: School Census 2024.

IDEB

Manaus' municipal network scored Ideb averages between the threshold goals set for Primary Education, and slightly below the threshold goals set for Secondary Education in 2023. This is a positive result, in particular, as we bear in mind its network's size.

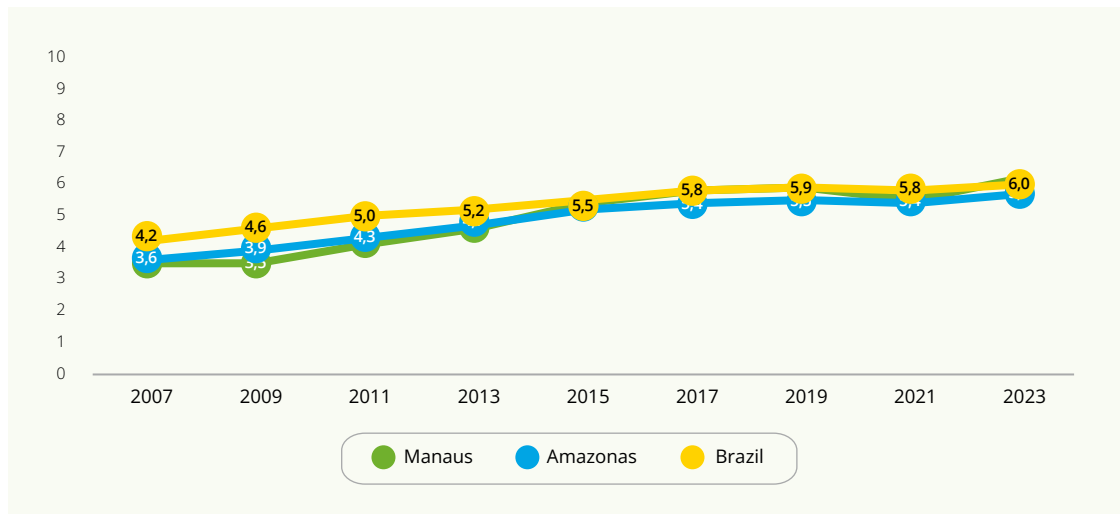
FIGURE 10. Ideb 2023, Manaus (AM)

	Mathematics	Portuguese Language	Approval	Ideb
Primary Ed. (5TH GRADE)	6,4	6,07	100%	6,2
NATIONAL REFERENCE (BRAZILIAN AVERAGE)	6,09	5,81	97%	5,8
Early Secondary Ed. (9TH GRADE)	5,2	5,39	97%	5,1
NATIONAL REFERENCE (BRAZILIAN AVERAGE)	4,99	5,09	92%	4,6

Note: Standardized average obtained from average skill levels in Math and Portuguese Language. As well as in Ideb, score ranges from 0 to 10.
Source: Saeb/Ideb, Inep, 2023. QEdu.

The following graph shows the evolution of Manaus' Ideb scores in Primary Education, moving beyond the average scores of Brazil and the state of Amazonas. Soon after the COVID-19 pandemic, the municipality's Ideb level was similar to Amazonas', but in the subsequent assessment cycle, Manaus surpassed the regional levels.

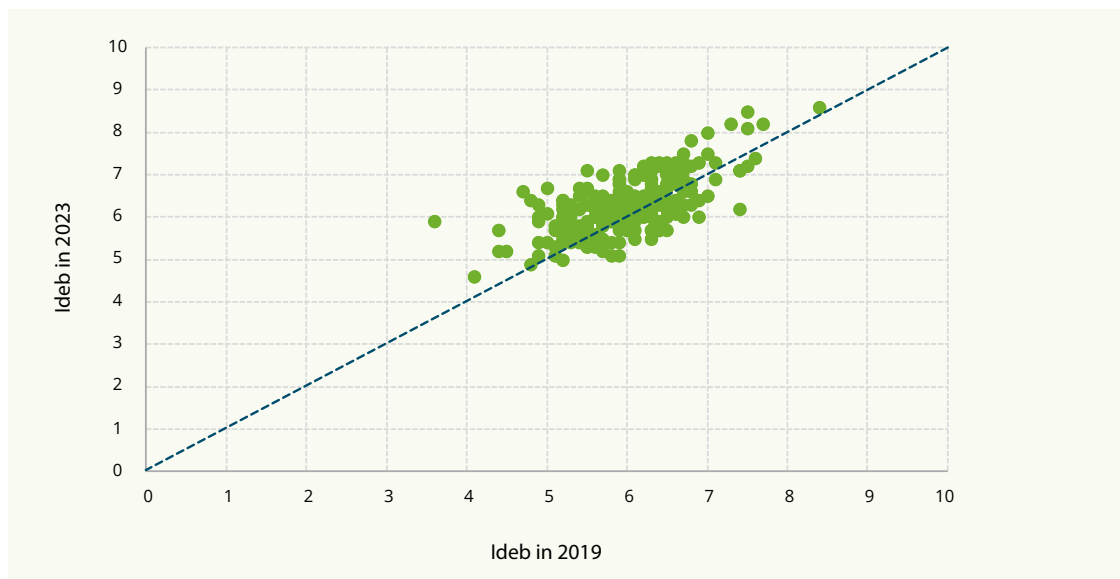
FIGURE 11. Ideb score evolution, 2007-2023, Manaus (AM)



Source: Saeb/Ideb, Inep, 2007-2023, QEdu.

The graph analysis of individual schools shows that, although many schools have either reached or surpassed their 2019 levels, some schools - in particular, in Primary Education - did not yet recover their levels from the period prior to the pandemic. This is coherent with the nationwide findings, which point to persistent impacts of the pandemic on learning levels, especially in mathematics (Alves Soares, B.; Martins Faria, E., et al, 2025).

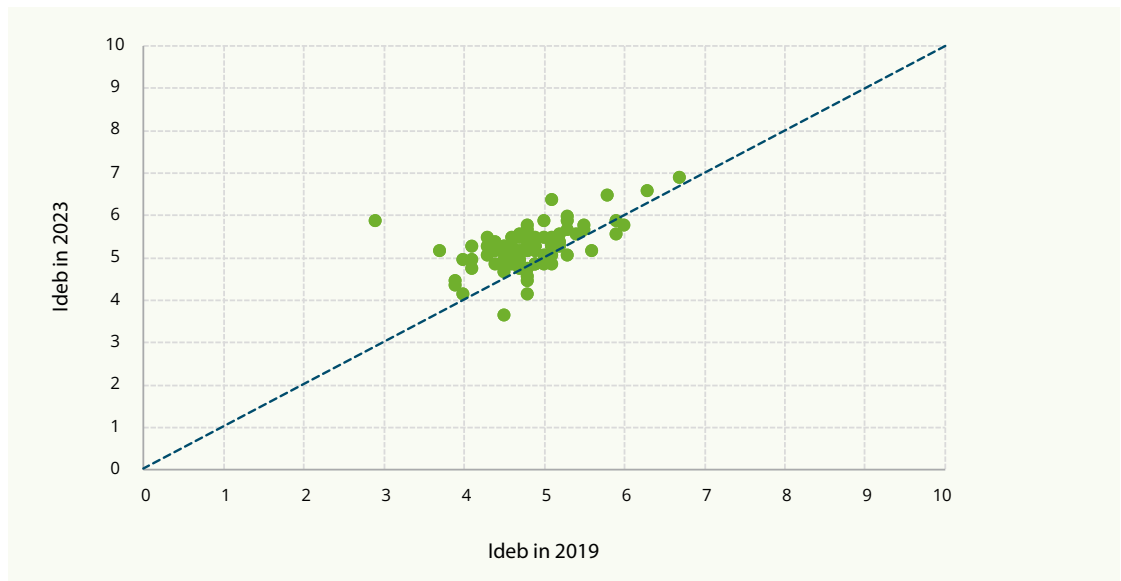
FIGURE 12. Ideb score per school, Primary Education grades, Manaus (AM)



N = 228 schools with data on the years 2019 and 2023.

Source: Data provided by Inep.

FIGURE 13. Ideb score per school, Early Secondary Education grades, Manaus (AM)

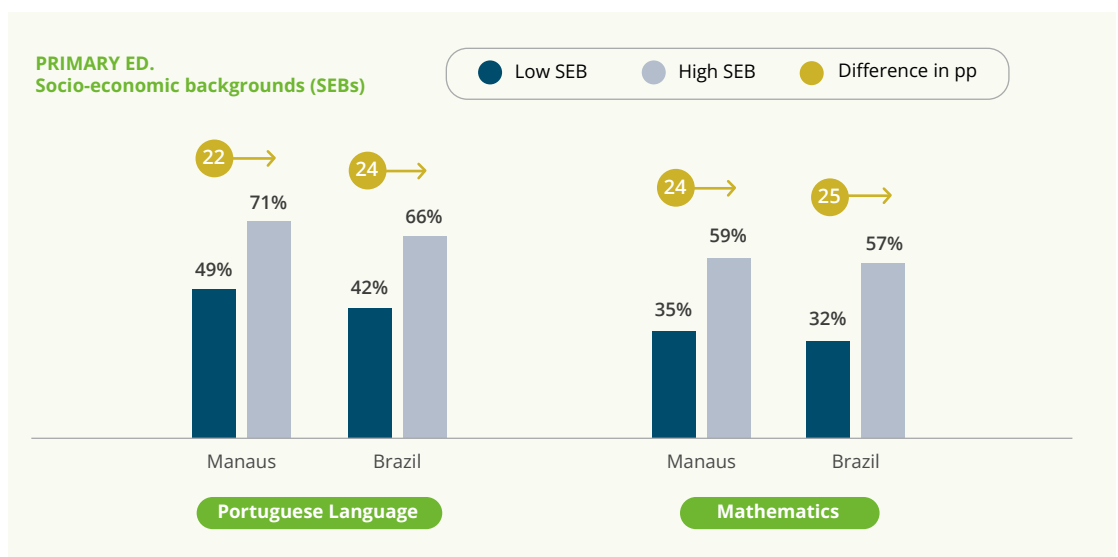


N = 84 schools with data on the years 2019 and 2023.

Source: Data provided by Inep.

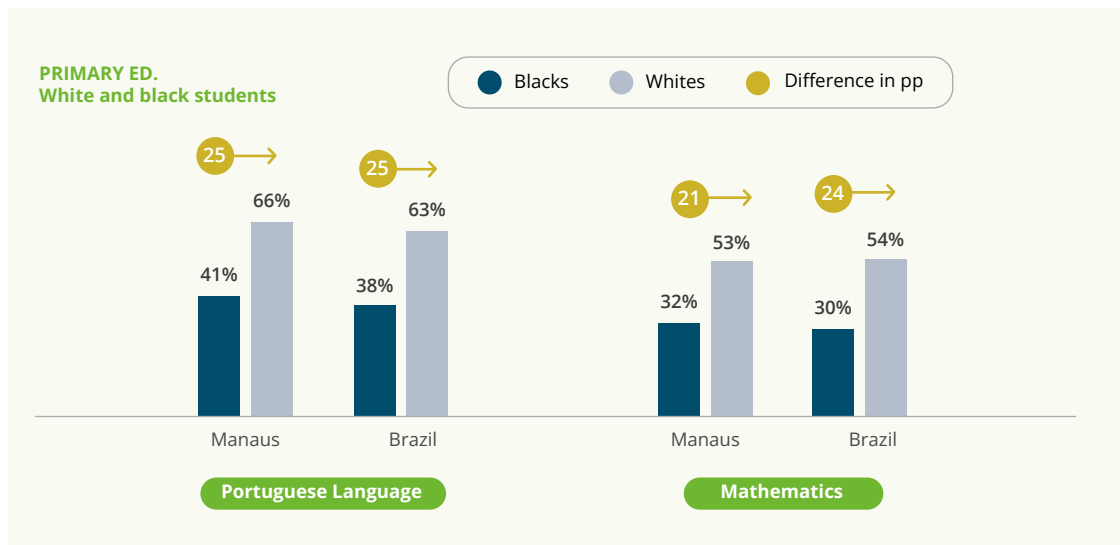
In terms of equity of results among the students of Manaus' network, a disparity of learning levels is noticeable between white students and students with high socio-economic backgrounds (SEBs), on the one hand, and the other student groups.

FIGURE 14. Equity rates among students who achieved adequate learning levels, Primary Education in 2019, Manaus (AM)



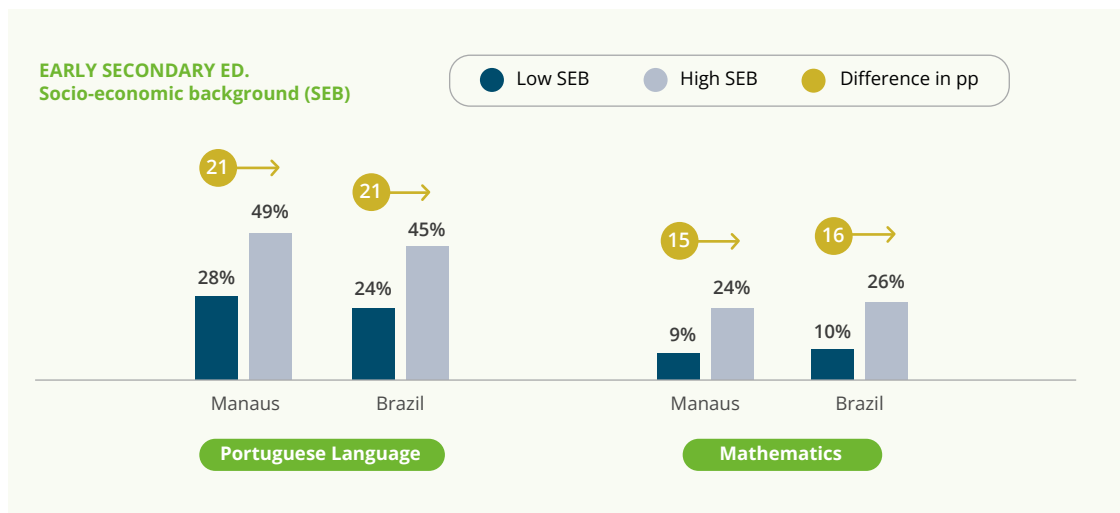
Source: QEdu.

FIGURE 15. Equity rates among students who achieved adequate learning levels, Early Secondary Education in 2019, Manaus (AM)



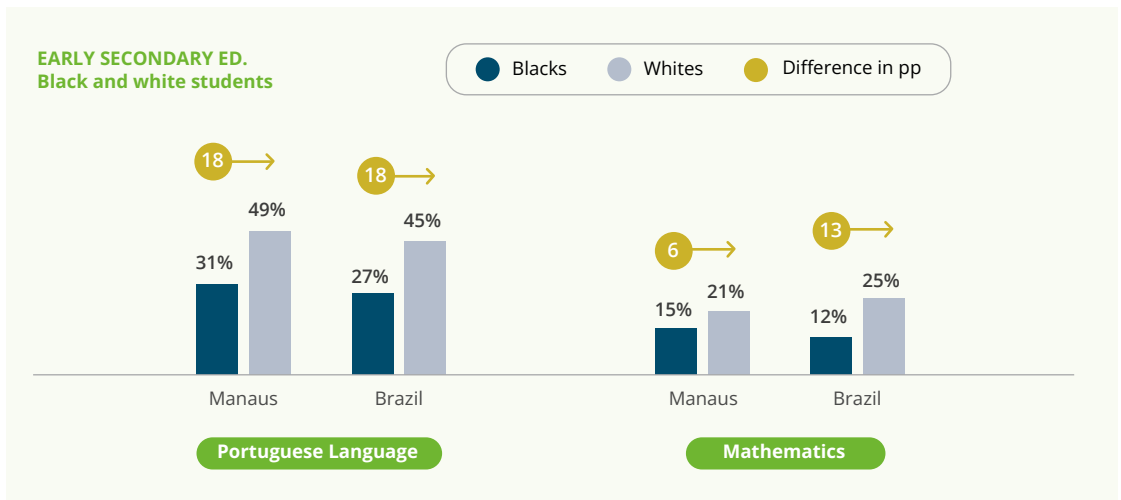
Source: QEdu.

FIGURA 16. Nível de equidade entre estudantes de baixo e alto nível socioeconômico com nível adequado de aprendizado nos anos finais do Ensino Fundamental em 2019, Manaus(AM)



Source: Saeb, Inep, 2019, QEdu.

FIGURA 17. Nível de equidade entre estudantes pretos e brancos com nível adequado de aprendizado nos anos finais do Ensino Fundamental em 2019, Manaus(AM)



Fonte: Saeb, Inep, 2019. QEdu.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The following chart presents data on school infrastructure in Manaus, which points to the need for improvements in numerous aspects, in particular, public sewage network, treated water supply, and accessibility.

The study’s field visit revealed considerable infrastructural differences, through which local urban schools feature better conditions than schools from riparian or Indigenous areas.

FIGURE 16. Percentage of Schools with Selected Infrastructural Facilities and Equipment Features in 2023, Manaus (AM)



Source: Censo Escolar, Inep, 2023.



MUNICIPAL SECRETARIAT OF EDUCATION (SEMED) CONTEXT

As well as in Coruripe, continuity was observed in Manaus after the mayor's reelection in 2024, when most pedagogical technicians and advisors were maintained in their work positions. In 2025, the Secretariat's strategic priorities were to ensure literacy at the proper age, as well as improved learning results and inclusive education actions, with a focus on diversity and equity.

After the COVID-19 pandemic, a set of actions was developed to mitigate high local illiteracy rates. Policies were implemented with a focus on learning recovery and acceleration, particularly in Primary Education. The number of pre-literate students dropped from 18,000 to approximately 2,000 in 2024.

The local assessment and data management culture became stronger in this context. A highlight was the implementation of the program *Educa+ Manaus* for 5th and 9th graders as the networks' main strategy to address learning deficiencies. Another measure in response to the pandemic was the establishment of the Manaus Educational Media Center 2020 as an innovative initiative that integrates technology to teaching by producing educational content for students and schoolteachers. Such content includes video lessons, digital teaching materials, gamified activities, complementary pedagogical projects, network communication actions and special projects such as *Sexto Tempo* ("Sixth Learning Shift").

3.2 BEST PRACTICES IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF MANAUS

The next subsections describe the most relevant aspects of Manaus' educational management for the evolution of its indicators.

LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND PEDAGOGICAL FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

The educational assessment actions of Manaus' municipal network draw on the Basic Education Assessment System (Saeb) and are structured by the Division of Assessment and Monitoring Activities (DAM). Its assessment model comprises four initiatives:

1. **Diagnostic Assessment:** This initiative is conducted with 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade students at the beginning of the school year, to monitor literacy in Portuguese language and mathematics.
1. **Test simulations:** Test simulations are held twice a month with 5th and 9th grade students (Saeb's target groups) as part of program *Educa+*. Their purpose is to monitor student learning levels and guide the production of Learning Sequences.
2. **Student Performance Assessment:** This assessment is conducted every bimester with all Primary and Early Secondary students, and all Youth and Adult Education students, to assess student performance in Portuguese and mathematics, and identify the current levels of essential skills and competencies along the schooling trajectory.
3. **Pró-Saeb Assessment:** The *Pró-Saeb* assessment is held every bimester in the years in which the Saeb is applied, as one of the current early student assessment mobilization strategies. It carries out a student performance diagnosis in Portuguese language and mathematics under the guidance of Saeb's reference matrices for classroom interventions.

The DAM-led process to design Manaus' municipal assessment instruments follows an extensive development and validation protocol. To ensure that the application process is in harmony with the Saeb, local pedagogical advisors undergo systematic training activities and personally apply the municipal assessments at schools.

The assessments' results are presented to a diversity of network stakeholders with data disaggregated by municipality, Zonal District Division, school, homeroom and student. The disclosed data enables the identification of critical skills that support the design of intervention plans, pedagogical materials and specific training activities. Starting in 2023, the Semed-advisors have carried out technical visits to all schools, to build capacities among teachers in interpreting the assessments' results and using them in their pedagogical practice (Vidal et al, 2024).

In addition to the municipal assessments, Manaus' municipal network participates in the Amazonas State Assessment System on Educational Performance (SADEAM), as well as in the Saeb.

The above-described assessment actions showed to have predictive capacity vis-à-vis the Saeb and Ideb, and directly influence the design of municipal educational policies.

Pedagogical follow-up activities are conducted through the joint work of teachers, management teams and Semed technicians.

In their planning-work, teachers use the data on learning collected in the classrooms, as well as the results of the network's external assessments, in particular, of its simulated tests. Their interpretation is guided by Semed technicians.

The management team (pedagogical coordination and direction) also participates in follow-up activities, by analyzing results with the teachers, guiding interventions and contacting students' families. This enables teachers to monitor the development of their students based on the skills provided by the National Common Core Curriculum (BNCC), and to adjust pedagogical strategies as needed.

While the assessment is applied by the pedagogical advisors, teachers participate in a continuing education activity through the Media Center, to familiarize themselves with, and analyze upcoming Learning Sequences – a feature that strengthens the alignment between the assessment and pedagogical practice.

The main remedial action promoted by the network, and one of the pillars of program *Educa+*, is project *Sexto Tempo* ("Sixth Learning Shift"), which is aimed at 4th and 8th grade students (who do not take the Saeb assessment), and 5th and 9th grade students (who must take it). *Sexto Tempo* is structured by the Media Center covering Portuguese language and mathematics via online platforms such as Google Drive and YouTube, counting on the teachers' work as video lesson mediators. This action also envisages the application of Learning Sequences linked to the external assessments applied in the network, which allow for customized pedagogical interventions in accordance with the results achieved by the students.

Active Search efforts were structured by the Semed with school managers' adherence to analyze student absenteeism and design adequate interventions. Active Search has become even stronger with the establishment of student councils at local schools (357 student councils in 2024, corresponding to 98% of all schools that provide Primary and Secondary Education) (Wandercil et al., 2024).

One of the positive outcomes of this initiative is that students have acted as community education agents, using their social bonds and peer language to identify dropout cases, interceding in their colleagues' return and serving as a bridge between the schools and communities. This strategy has been particularly effective in situations in which school managers have difficulties of access to students, demonstrating that organized student engagement may strengthen school retention and achievement policies.

Another network project provides educational coaching activities at schools prioritized for their performance and attendance indicators, with the objective of strengthening students' motivation.

In regard to family engagement, schools have held activities to bring families closer to their work. In this context, project *Circuito do Saber Pró-Saeb* ("Pro-Saeb Knowledge Circuit") has emerged as a successful family engagement experience. Its meetings are held on Saturdays with a structure that combines pedagogical, social and motivational activities with students and their parents or guardians.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The goals stipulated by Manaus' administrative and strategic plans include the provision of annual capacity-building to approximately 90% of its teaching workforce. Nearly 9,000 of the total 13,000 local schoolteachers participated in these activities in 2024, and the figure of 10,000 teachers was envisaged as the goal in 2025. The approval rate of these assessments among local teachers reached 98%.

The connection between training and assessment is a key aspect in the structuring of professional development activities, which draw on the municipal assessments' results, particularly on the skills identified as critical during the simulated tests. This alignment contributes to learning progress. In this regard, the capacity-building activities on Saeb-descriptors, provided to teachers in assessed years, are a highlight.

The Division for Teachers' Development (DDPM) is responsible for implementing the network's continuing education policy. It is structured in two specialized subdivisions: Continuing Education Management (GFC) and Educational Technology Management (GTE).

The GFC conducts three central initiatives. One of them is the Learning Network, which holds training activities on curriculum implementation in the network, aimed at teachers from all teaching modalities provided by the Semed, and includes specific features such as Indigenous education and special education.

The second initiative conducted by the GFC is the In-Service Training Workshop (OFS) a professional development activity held in partnership with the State University of Amazonas (UEA). Its features are similar to those of a postgraduate course. Through a methodology that combines elements of research and action, each teacher develops customized projects that may be applied to the needs of their teaching reality.

The third GFC initiative is the Educational Mentoring Program (PTE), a one-year course that provides systematic follow up on teachers during the first year of their activities in the network, by approaching pedagogical and legal aspects of their profession.

The GTE plays a cross-cutting role in the projects conducted by the GFC, by promoting the pedagogical use of digital technologies in teaching rooms. A highlight is Project *Curumim*, which holds teachers' training activities on the introduction of programming and robotics concepts to the local students, from Early Childhood Education to Youth and Adult Education.

Training activities for school managers are conducted through the School Management Training Program (FGE). In 2025, this program focused on the provision of activities in preparation to the Saeb assessment, and instructions about comprehensive education. It also held activities in preparation to this modality's expansion in the network (Tamião; Machado, 2022).

CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

The teaching network of Manaus has its own in-house curriculum, which was developed by its professionals in 2020. This document draws on the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law, the National Education Plan, the BNCC, and the Amazonas State's Curriculum Framework (RCA), seeking to appreciate the municipality's multiculturalism and diversity.

The study's interviewees expressed the view that the pedagogical materials are diverse and have good quality: they include books from the National Textbook and Teaching Material Program (PNLD), materials on the programs conducted by the Semed, specific materials on literacy, and gamified activities, among other options, which they expressed to suffice for their classroom-work.

One of the cornerstones of program *Educa+* regards its Learning Sequences (Araújo, 2013). These sequenced units were developed by the Media Center's team

in line with the Saeb-matrix, and include multiple revision stages conducted by multidisciplinary teams. Despite its prescriptive feature in relation to the skills to be developed in each period, this approach is still pedagogically flexible, since it allows teachers to carry out complementary interventions in accordance with the needs identified in class.

Governance and Democratic management

A strategic priority of the current administration is the democratization of student participation through the systematic dissemination of student councils (Oliveira; Luiz; Silva, 2022). In 2025, only six Primary and Early Secondary Education schools did not have a student council. The councils' organizational structure was designed to ensure their effectiveness as student engagement vectors in the educational setting.

In each school, a teacher is responsible for coordinating local pedagogical follow-up activities. Furthermore, every school has 14 specialized directorates represented by students. This model was adapted to include students from the 1st to the 5th grade, and attests to the feasibility of democratic participation, starting in Primary Education, and to the effectiveness of student engagement.

Infrastructure and resources

The municipal network's current administration has invested in school infrastructure, with a focus on three pillars: connectivity, thermal comfort and quality of pedagogical materials. In this regard, actions are based on the premise that increases in the duration of pedagogical activities can only enable the attainment of the desired objectives when they are combined with adequate physical facilities.

In 2024, more than 350 schools underwent renewal works that considered, particularly, the climate features of the Amazon region, where high temperatures can significantly jeopardize the students' performance.

Specialized Educational Assistance

The municipality of Manaus maintains Municipal Socio-Psychopedagogical Assistance Centers (CEMASPs) responsible for promoting integrated educational, psychological and social actions. The main objective of these centers is to provide multidisciplinary assistance to students and their families.

The CEMASPs have recently implemented the initiative *Espaço Superação* ("Resilience Space") to provide specialized assistance to students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). ■

5.

Concluding remarks and key lessons

The municipalities analyzed in this case study have implemented educational initiatives that contributed to improve their respective Ideb results.

Both have achieved a positive variance in their Ideb scores between 2019 and 2023, as well as percentages of students with adequate learning levels in Portuguese language and mathematics above the national averages in 2019 and 2023, and a passing rate of 95% in 2019 and 2023. Despite having emerged from quite different contexts, the best practices identified in Coruripe (AL) and Manaus (AM) still bear key similarities. The most relevant elements found in the two networks are systematized below. These lessons can provide valuable guidance to the trajectories of other networks working to improve the quality of their educational provision.

STANDARDIZED EXTERNAL INSTRUMENTS TO ASSESS STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE AND MATHEMATICS.

The *Avalia Coruripe* assessment and Manaus' Student Performance Assessment are practical regular examples of actions conducted by the two networks. Key features of these successful assessments: they are systematically conducted; they cover all schools and enable different results' aggregation levels (by network, school, homeroom, and student); and they provide pedagogical interpretation guidelines.

DATA-BASED AND CONTEXT-BASED PEDAGOGICAL FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES.

A second dimension can be observed in the assessments: they are not only a record, but also a planning and replanning tool for instructing pedagogical actions, in addition to teachers' feedback based on their class-work. In both networks, local schoolteachers, managers and Semed professionals join efforts and draw on several information sources on student learning to identify what has been under-

stood, and what (and who) needs to be strengthened or supported. Further, both Coruripe and Manaus conduct learning acceleration and active search activities to identify and reintegrate students at risk of dropping out.

INVESTMENT IN CONTINUING EDUCATION PLANS FOR NETWORK PROFESSIONALS.

These plans are executed in a structured and planned way, which has earned positive feedback from its participants. It may be noted that in both municipalities, teachers' training activities prioritize peer exchanges and class activities, while addressing topics such as teachers' understanding of assessment results and pedagogical strategies. Such an approach increases the likelihood that these reflection moments will make sense for teachers and contribute to their work. In the case of school managers, the conducted activities are focused on pedagogical and administrative actions that may exert a positive influence on learning outcomes.

PEDAGOGICAL GUIDANCE.

A structured curriculum was built to meet the needs of each network, and local education professionals are familiarized with it. Pedagogical materials aligned to the curriculum are available to the networks' teachers and support their class activities. In addition to providing clear directions, both networks allow for flexibility, and teachers may adapt the approaches in place to their students' needs.

COMMUNITY INTEGRATION, SPECIALIZED EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE AND INVESTMENTS IN INFRASTRUCTURE.

As regards community integration, Coruripe conducts initiatives that bring families and schools closer to each other, and Manaus has fostered the establishment of student councils to foster democratic management at schools. Both networks count on multidisciplinary teams and dedicated centers to assist students with special educational needs. Regarding the local infrastructure, both administrations are aware of their weak points and have invested to improve the quality of their school settings, to provide more adequate conditions to students and teaching staff.

PEDAGOGICAL COHERENCE AND INTEGRATED WORK BY THE TEACHING NETWORK.

Assessment, planning, and training activities, as well as additional initiatives are interconnected parts of a self-reinforcing cycle driven by a functional core. Further, local professionals work together, counting on the support of pertinent tools. Teaching staff, school managers, and Semed representatives interact on a continuous basis, thereby strengthening the structure of their networks.

FIGURE 19. Main Conclusions of the Studied Cases

DIMENSION	COMMON MUNICIPAL NETWORK INITIATIVES
 Assessments	Standardized external assessment instruments on students' performance in Portuguese language and mathematics are regularly applied to all schools of the network. These assessments allow for different aggregate result levels (by network, school, homeroom and student) and provide guidance on pedagogical interpretations.
 Data-based pedagogical follow-up	Use of data on learning and context data, including from external evaluations of the network, as a pedagogical planning and replanning tool. Learning recovery and active search actions are implemented in cases of students at risk of dropout.
 Professional development	Continuing Education Plans are implemented for teachers, with a focus on peer exchanges and classroom practice, as well as for school managers, with a focus on pedagogical actions that may exert a positive influence on learning.
 Curriculum guidelines with flexibility	A structured curriculum is in place, and education professionals are familiarized with it. It allows for adaptations, according to different student profiles. Pedagogical materials and resources aligned to the curriculum are available in support of its implementation in the network.
 Coherence and integration	Assessment, planning, training and other initiatives are connected as an integrated cycle, including the collaborative work among teachers, managers and the Municipal Secretariat of Education, thereby strengthening the network's structure.

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