

**WORKING CONDITIONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS FROM THE
PERSPECTIVE OF BASIC EDUCATION UNIONS IN MATO GROSSO DO SUL**

***CONDIÇÕES DE TRABALHO DAS/DOS PROFESSORAS/ES DA EDUCAÇÃO
ESPECIAL NA PERSPECTIVA DOS SINDICATOS DA EDUCAÇÃO BÁSICA DO MATO
GROSSO DO SUL***

***CONDICIONES LABORALES DE LOS DOCENTES DE EDUCACIÓN ESPECIAL
DESDE LA PERSPECTIVA DE LOS SINDICATOS DE LA EDUCACIÓN BÁSICA EN
MATO GROSSO DO SUL***



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ABSTRACT: This article aims to analyze data obtained from a questionnaire administered to representatives of Municipal Education Workers' Unions in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, as well as interviews conducted with representatives of the Federation of Education Workers of Mato Grosso do Sul, focusing on the working conditions of teachers in Special Education (SE). The findings reveal a complex scenario. While some municipalities in the state network comply with and have improved the salary floor, this situation is not representative of the broader context. Numerous teachers continue to face precarious working conditions and intensified workloads, particularly in municipalities that fail to comply with current legislation—a situation evidenced by the high incidence of temporary contracts and the lack of planning time. These factors contribute to the precariousness, intensification, and flexibilization of teaching labor in SE. The pressure to meet inclusion demands, coupled with insufficient resources, further exacerbates professional burnout.

KEYWORDS: Teaching labor. Working conditions. Unions. Special Education.

RESUMO: O objetivo deste artigo é analisar dados provenientes de um questionário aplicado a representantes dos Sindicatos Municipais de Trabalhadores em Educação (SIMTEDs) do estado de Mato Grosso do Sul, além de entrevistas realizadas com representantes da Federação dos Trabalhadores em Educação de Mato Grosso do Sul (FETEMS), sobre as condições de trabalho dos docentes da Educação Especial (EE). Os resultados indicam um cenário complexo. Embora haja cumprimento e melhorias no Piso Salarial na Rede Estadual em alguns municípios, essa não é a realidade representativa do todo. Muitos docentes ainda enfrentam precariedade e intensificação no trabalho, especialmente em municípios que não cumprem as legislações vigentes – aspecto evidenciado pelo alto número de contratações temporárias e pela ausência de hora-atividade, que agravam a precarização, a intensificação e a flexibilização do trabalho docente da EE. A pressão para atender às demandas de inclusão, juntamente com a falta de recursos, intensifica o desgaste profissional.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Trabalho docente. Condições de trabalho. Sindicatos. Educação Especial.

RESUMEN: El objetivo de este artículo es analizar datos provenientes de un cuestionario aplicado a representantes de los Sindicatos Municipales de Trabajadores en Educación (SIMTED) del estado de Mato Grosso do Sul, además de entrevistas realizadas con representantes de la Federación de Trabajadores en Educación de Mato Grosso do Sul (FETEMS), sobre las condiciones laborales de los docentes de la Educación Especial (EE). Los resultados indican un panorama complejo. Aunque en algunos municipios se observe cumplimiento y mejoras en el salario mínimo en la red estatal, esa no es la realidad predominante en el conjunto. Muchos docentes aún enfrentan la precariedad y la intensificación del trabajo, especialmente en municipios que no cumplen con la legislación vigente, lo que se evidencia en el elevado número de contrataciones temporales y la ausencia de horas de actividad, lo que agrava la precarización, la intensificación y la flexibilización del trabajo docente de la EE. La presión para atender a las demandas de inclusión, junto con la falta de recursos, intensifica el desgaste profesional.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Trabajo docente. Condiciones de trabajo. Sindicatos. Educación Especial.

Introduction

Historically, labor unions have played a leading role in the struggle for better working conditions across all sectors. “Recognizing the role and leadership of labor unions sheds light on the interpretation of the most significant developments in the world of teaching” (Stockmann, 2020, p. 21).

In Brazil, this struggle for teachers’ working conditions takes place at the national level, led by the National Confederation of Education Workers (CNTE). In Mato Grosso do Sul, the Federation of Education Workers of Mato Grosso do Sul (FETEMS) and the Municipal Unions of Education Workers (SIMTEDs)—which bring together 74 affiliated municipal unions organized into 14 regional chapters and more than 25,000 rank-and-file workers, representing over 50% of the state’s civil service—play a fundamental role in defending the rights and promoting adequate working conditions for education professionals in the state.

The struggles for the rights of education workers intensified following the 2017 labor counter-reform and the 2019 pension reform, as well as proposals to militarize schools and implement “non-partisan schools.” These actions, promoted by the far-right governments of Michel Temer (2016–2018) and Jair Bolsonaro (2019–2022), resulted in the removal of many rights historically won by the working class.

According to Galetti (2023), with the aim of demobilizing the union movement, these governments adopted measures to repress unions, notably the elimination of the union tax. This change imposed the requirement of individual authorization from members to continue contributing financially to the union, thereby hindering the retention and recruitment of new members.

Despite the austerity of these governments, at the state level, FETEMS achieved significant progress in the recognition of education professionals. Of particular note is the full implementation of Law No. 11,738/2008, which establishes the National Minimum Wage (PSNP) (Brasil, 2008). After years of dialogue and mobilizations led by FETEMS, the PSNP was implemented for 20-hour positions for teachers in the state education system in 2018, making Mato Grosso do Sul the first state in Brazil to fully comply with the law. In addition, the application of 1/3 hour-activity for classroom teachers was a significant achievement, the result of intense mobilizations and union struggles.

However, this situation does not apply to all teachers in Mato Grosso do Sul. Not all municipalities in the state comply with the Minimum Wage Law or implement the 1/3 hour-

activity for all teachers, as is the case with Special Education teachers in many municipalities in Mato Grosso do Sul.

It is undeniable that, when analyzing teachers' working conditions, the union's perspective is essential for obtaining important information that has not yet been revealed. The union perspective not only provides a comprehensive view of the difficulties faced by teachers but also enables the coordination and comparison of data released by the government and other sources. These diverse sources in scientific research are crucial for identifying gaps and suggesting actions aimed at valuing and improving the working conditions of these professionals.

As noted in the reference document of the National Education Conference (CONAE) (Brasil, 2024), union activity is a legitimate and democratic exercise in the protection and defense of the individual and collective rights of education workers and professionals, and is essential for promoting social recognition of the importance of public schools and for the valorization of these professionals.

Methodology

According to Teixeira (2015, p. 8), "it is essential to compare the data, evidence, and information collected on the subject with the solid theoretical knowledge acquired during the research process."

Research involves the production of knowledge and requires study, planning, and organization. Methodology is the path chosen by the researcher to conduct their research, obtain answers to their questions, and achieve their objectives. At this stage, the researcher selects a set of scientific procedures to approach the research object and the subjects that provide real data on the concrete reality of the investigated object (Teixeira, 2015).

Thus, the data analyzed in this article are derived from a questionnaire administered to the Municipal Unions of Education Workers (SIMTEDs) in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, and from interviews conducted with the president and vice president of the Federation of Education Workers of Mato Grosso do Sul (FETEMS), collected in the year 2024. The analysis will be conducted using inferential statistics and critical analysis. When constructing the sample of union representatives, the composition was taken into account, ensuring the presence of participants from all 14 regions distributed across the union regions presented in Table 1.

Table 1 – Regional Union Chapters in Mato Grosso do Sul

Regional Union Chapters	Municipal Unions
1 – Amambai Regional	SIMTED-Amambai; SIMTED-Coronel Sapucaia; SIMTED-Paranhos.
2 – Aquidauana Regional	SIMTED-Anastácio (M. Joaquina); SIMTED-Aquidauana (Chico); SIMTED-Bodoquena; SIMTED-Dois Irmãos do Buriti (Sonia); SIMTED-Miranda.
3 – Campo Grande Regional	SINTEBAN-Bandeirantes; ACP-Campo Grande; SIMTED-Corguinho/Rochedo; SIMTED-Camapuã/Figueirão; SIMTED-Jaraguari; SIMTED-Ribas do Rio Pardo; SIMTED-Rio Negro; SINTEDE-Campo Grande; SIMTED-Sidrolândia; SIPREMS- Union of Basic Education Professionals of Sidrolândia; SIMTED-Terenos.
4 – Corumbá Regional	SIMTED-Corumbá; SITEL-Ladário
5 – Coxim Regional	SIMTED-Coxim; SIMTED-Pedro Gomes; SIMTED-Rio Verde; SIMTED-Sonora; SIMTED-São Gabriel do Oeste.
6 – Dourados Regional	SIMTED-Caarapó/Juti; SIMTED-Douradina; SIMTED-Dourados; SIMTED-Itaporã; SIMTED-N. Alvorada do Sul; SIMTED-Rio Brillhante.
7 – Fátima do Sul Regional	SIMTED-Deodópolis; SIMTED-Fátima do Sul; SIMTED-Glória de Dourados; SIMTED-Jateí; SIMTED-Vicentina.
8 – Jardim Regional	SIMTED-Bela Vista; SIMTED-Bonito; SIMTEL-Guia Lopes da Laguna; SIMTEJ-Jardim; SIMTREMA-Maracaju; SIMTEN-Nioque; SIMTED-Porto Murtinho.
9 – Naviraí Regional	SIMTED-Eldorado; SIMTED-Itaquirai; SIMTED-Mundo Novo/Japorã; SIMTED-Naviraí.
10 – Nova Andradina Regional	SIMTED-Angélica; SIMTED-Anaurilândia; SIMTED-Bataguassu; SIMTED-Batayporã; SINTEIV-Ivinhema/Novo Horizonte; SIMTED-Nova Andradina; SIMTED-Santa Rita do Pardo; SIMTED-Taquarussu.
11 – Paranaíba Regional	SIMTED-Aparecida do Taboado; SIMTED-Chapadão do Sul; SIMTED-Cassilândia; SIMTED-Costa Rica; SIMTEI-Inocência; SIMTED-Paraíso das Águas; SIMTED-Paranaíba.
12 – Ponta Porã Regional	SIMTED-Antonio João; SIMTED-Aral Moreira; SIMTEB-Laguna Caarapã; SIMTED-Ponta Porã (Edivaldo).
13 – Tacuru Regional	SIMTED-Iguatemi; SIMTED-Sete Quedas; SIMTED-Tacuru.
14 – Três Lagoas Regional	SIMTED-Água Clara; SIMTED-Brasilândia; SIMTED-Três Lagoas/Selvíria.

Source: Created by the authors based on data provided by the president of FETEMS (2024).

The questionnaire consisted of 32 questions, predominantly objective in nature, with most being multiple-choice and 15 open-ended. Its objective was to explore the union's perspective on the working conditions of Special Education teachers, identifying recurring expressions of dissatisfaction among Special Education teachers and their impact on working conditions.

The questions addressed the unions' views on the factors that most impact these conditions, highlighting aspects such as excessive workloads, infrastructure, technology, lack of psychological support, continuing education, and implementation of the Workload, Career,

and Compensation Plan (PCCR). The questionnaire also sought to determine whether municipalities had already implemented or revised the PCCR for teachers in the past five years and how these changes have improved the working conditions of Special Education teachers.

The interview guide contained 23 questions, addressing topics such as the impact of the democratic election on teachers' working conditions, the opening of civil service exams, and the guarantee of 1/3 hour-activity. In addition, there were discussions on the recognition of Special Education professionals and their participation in union movements, as well as in discussions regarding their working conditions, among other topics.

In order to ensure the participation of the 14 regional chapters, the online questionnaire was distributed, via FETEMS, to all SIMTED representatives. This procedure made it possible to collect relevant data on the working conditions of Special Education teachers and to obtain a union perspective on the topic from a representative sample of unions in Mato Grosso do Sul.

The questionnaire was answered by 27 union representatives, of whom 21 hold the position of president, four are secretaries, one is part of the executive board, and one serves on the fiscal council. These representatives have been active in the union movement from 6 to 18 years, with 20 participants reporting more than 10 years of teaching experience, demonstrating in-depth knowledge of the local educational reality.

The union's perception of the working conditions of Special Education teachers in Mato Grosso do Sul

The survey revealed important information about the employment situation of teachers and Special Education professionals based on the unions' perspectives. Regarding the type of employment contract held by the teachers in question, the questionnaire responses indicated that only four union members stated that there had been a civil service exam for these professionals in the region where they work in recent years.

Fourteen of them consider the temporary contracts signed to be precarious, with alternative responses such as unstable, insecure, terrible, or bad. Only two respondents rated the conditions as fair. Responses such as "Terrible! It's humiliating. Here in the municipality, they are hired not as teachers, but as teaching assistants and paid minimum wage" (SD25) were cited.

In contrast, four interviewees rated the hiring arrangement as good or excellent, while three stated that no such contracts exist for Special Education teachers in their union region. Additionally, four interviewees did not answer the question directly, so their responses were not counted.

When asked about the issue of civil service exams for Special Education teachers, the vice president of FETEMS stated:

Civil service exams provide pedagogical stability within the school, as permanent teachers become part of the community. By “committing to” that school, they develop a sense of belonging, which motivates them to contribute to strengthening the school and the community where they work. This also helps reduce turnover among temporary teachers (Vice president of FETEMS³).

These data show that the hiring practices for elementary school teachers are characterized by precarious employment relationships, and highlight that civil service exams are essential for ensuring a more stable, committed teaching staff that is integrated into the school community, which, in turn, benefits the quality of education and inclusion.

The number of permanent teachers in MS represents less than half of the teaching staff, accounting for 48.6% in 2023, according to data from the 5th Cycle of Monitoring the PNE Goals – 2024, released by the PNE Monitoring Panel (2014–2024) (Brasil, 2025). Temporary hiring practices run counter to the concept of adequate working conditions, since job instability is one of the key issues highlighted in research on teacher health and career development. Furthermore, it represents an obstacle to the inclusion of students with disabilities, as teacher turnover does not guarantee continuity of work, which is essential for consolidating collaboration among the team involved in inclusion. This is a widely debated topic at CONAE, which noted in its reference document that:

This type of temporary employment relationship leads to high turnover among workers, fragments educational work, and hinders collective effort; undermines the building of bonds within the educational community, hindering the implementation of public education policies and the teaching-learning process, as well as the formation of ties with the activist movements of education workers and professionals in their demands, and contributes to the abandonment of the careers of education professionals. For these reasons, the hiring of education workers/professionals must occur in accordance with educational plans (federal, state, district, and municipal), thereby requiring the

³ Research interview conducted on January 25, 2024, in person at the FETEMS headquarters in Campo Grande, Mato Grosso do Sul.

holding of a civil service exam as the standard for entry into the profession (Brasil, 2024, p. 139).

Research on teachers' working conditions has shown that the increase in the number of temporary contracts in basic education has contributed to the precariousness of teaching work (Castro Neta, 2020; Matos, 2022; Martins, 2011; Morais, 2021; Moura, 2013; Nominato, 2022; Santos, 2022; Sequeira, 2010).

Morais's (2021) study reveals that, in the municipality of Corumbá, Mato Grosso do Sul, the situation is even more precarious due to six-month contracts:

[...] the duration of these teachers' employment contracts, which were renewed every six months. In other words, there was no guarantee that teachers would retain their positions for the entire year [...]. At the end of each semester, the temporary teacher undergoes an evaluation with the school administration so that they can share their impressions of the semester and the administration can discuss its perspective on the teacher's pedagogical work. At the end of this dialogue, the administration forwards the evaluation (which the teachers referred to as a self-evaluation) to the municipal education office, which is responsible for deciding whether or not to retain the contracted teacher (Morais, 2021, p. 65-66).

Regarding union membership among Special Education (SE) teachers, 21 union members reported that less than 15% of the SE teaching staff is unionized. According to 18 union members, this low membership rate is attributed to a lack of interest in class struggles, while six mentioned that the reason was fear of reprisals. Other participants stated that economic factors also play a role, as teachers do not want to pay union dues without guarantees that they will be employed the following year. Only one interviewee stated that all teachers are unionized.

The president of FETEMS notes that there is no clear distinction in the union membership of Special Education teachers compared to other fields, such as Physics or Mathematics. Membership is counted in general terms. However, he emphasizes that there is a concerning trend in Brazil and worldwide that affects the labor movement as a whole. This trend is fueled by a far-right neoliberal ideology that promotes the idea that unions represent a hindrance and an obstacle to the interests of the state. This individualistic view, which preaches that "I am good, I am self-sufficient, and I do not need the collective," has been gaining strength globally (FETEMS President, 2024, verbal information). According to the President:

It is important to note that there has been a strong push to promote individualism and entrepreneurship, and this is a concern of ours, especially with regard to outsourced teachers, who often do not see the need to join unions. However, when problems arise, it is these same teachers who seek union support (President of FETEMS, 2024).

Reinforcing this point, the vice president of FETEMS states: “This situation highlights a lack of class consciousness and a sense of community. The struggle for improvements only truly advances when we act collectively.” According to FETEMS representatives, there is a significant difference in the age distribution of union members. Data reported by the interviewees indicate that 66% of retired teachers are union members, while less than 40% of younger, active teachers join unions. This disparity can be attributed to two main factors, according to the president of FETEMS:

In Mato Grosso do Sul, for example, we have a slightly different scenario from the rest of the country, as our permanent teachers receive the highest salaries in Brazil. Thus, older teachers, who participated in the struggles and built what we have today, have a high rate of union membership. On the other hand, new teachers, who do not yet possess this same historical awareness and who have a more transient career path, find it difficult to forge this connection with the union movement (President of FETEMS, 2024⁴).

Regarding the most common demands and complaints related to the professional practice and working conditions of Special Education teachers and professionals, the responses from union members can be classified into five categories: professional recognition and salary conditions, continuing education, working conditions, job security, and professional support and recognition.

Many responses emphasize the need for better salaries, highlighting the lack of professional recognition. Continuing education specific to Special Education is a recurring call. According to some union members, professionals feel that the training offered does not meet their specific needs. There is a demand for participation in events and courses that contribute to professional development. Their responses highlight these perceptions:

SD11: Regarding inclusion in the school system, the main complaints we receive are the lack of continuing education and the number of reports that must be submitted to the coordinators. Also, the lack of support from other professionals to assist with students in the inclusion classroom.

⁴ Research interview conducted on January 25, 2024, in person at the FETEMS headquarters in Campo Grande, Mato Grosso do Sul.

SD21: The complaints are that the continuing education offered by the state is not specific to the field of special education.

SD22: There is a lack of training, teaching materials, and adequate space to meet the needs. But we are pressing the government on these demands.

These findings are highlighted in Stockmann's (2020) dissertation, which notes that, within the state school system of Mato Grosso do Sul, continuing education does not meet teachers' professional development needs.

As for continuing education, sessions are typically held on school Saturdays, during which topics are explored in depth across various disciplines, focusing on social issues involving families, students, and schools. These training sessions are often disjointed and fragmented from the perspective of teachers' professional development. In other words, these are not strictly training sessions aimed at improving teaching practice, but rather at adjusting and adapting their practices to the social circumstances in which schools are embedded (Stockmann, 2020, p. 56-57).

There is dissatisfaction with hiring processes, which are seen as bureaucratic, slow, and precarious, as illustrated by the view of one of the union members:

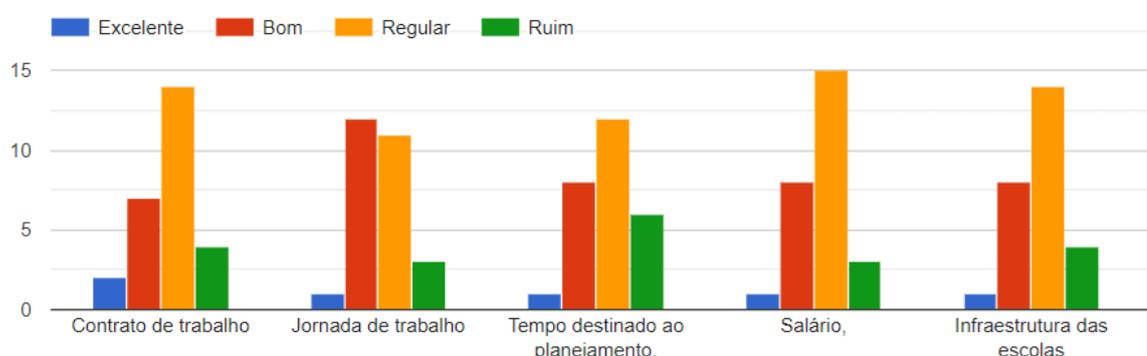
SD9: The contractual conditions, in terms of job security and benefits, are terrible. Terrible! It's humiliating. Permanent teachers work with less pressure, since they feel more secure because they have job security.

Job insecurity and the lack of job stability are also constant concerns. The permanent hiring of teachers and the absence of competitive exams in the field were cited by union representatives. Professionals feel they do not receive proper recognition and that their voices are not heard in discussions about working conditions.

There is a demand for greater support from administration, calls for improvements in the work environment, and a need for adequate conditions to serve students with disabilities. This includes overcrowded classrooms and a lack of support from other professionals to promote inclusion, which were also cited as complaints by Special Education teachers.

The workload and the issue of the *hour-activity* are essential aspects that directly impact teachers' working conditions. This issue was highlighted by union members as one of the main demands of the profession. Figure 1 presents the union members' responses regarding the conditions offered to teachers so that they can perform their work adequately.

Figure 1 – Unions’ assessment of the working conditions offered to Special Education teachers and professionals



Source: Created by the authors using Google Forms, based on the questionnaire data.

An analysis of the data presented in Figure 1 reveals that, from the unions’ perspective, the conditions offered to teachers and Special Education professionals are, for the most part, considered average. Aspects such as employment contracts, time allocated for lesson planning, salary, and infrastructure are evaluated in this way, with particular emphasis on the issue of salary, which receives the most attention. However, working hours are perceived more positively, falling between “good” and “average” in most responses.

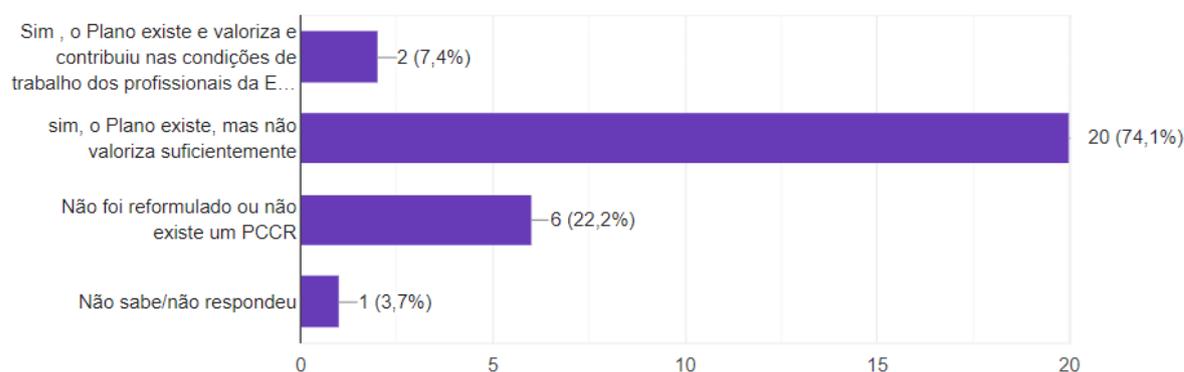
Regarding the union’s view on the factors that most influence the working conditions of Special Education teachers and professionals, the three main issues identified were the lack of psychological support for teachers, with 18 responses; the lack of continuing education, with 17 mentions; inadequate infrastructure, with 16 respondents; and the inefficiency of the PCCR in ensuring working conditions for contracted teachers, with 15 responses⁵.

All states in the Brazilian Federation incorporated Goal 18 of the PNE (2014–2024) into their PCCRs, in accordance with the 5th Cycle of Monitoring of PNE Goals – 2024, published on the PNE (2014–2024) monitoring dashboard (Brasil, 2025). In addressing the issue of guaranteeing teachers’ working conditions in municipal regulations, the analysis aimed to examine the effectiveness of implementing these guarantees within the context of the PCCR from the perspective of labor unions.

Figure 2 summarizes the unions’ perceptions regarding the recognition and contributions that lead to better working conditions for teachers.

⁵ Participants could select more than one option.

Figure 2 – Unions' assessment of value and working conditions under the PCCR



Source: Created by the authors using Google Forms, based on the questionnaire data.

Most of the respondents, 22 union members, stated that, in the union region where they work, the PCCR for education professionals had been approved or updated in the past five years. However, 20 participants noted that, although the plan is in effect, it is not considered sufficient to ensure the recognition and adequate working conditions of these professionals; the remaining respondents were unable to answer.

In the analysis of responses regarding the duties of teachers and Special Education professionals that lead to stressful situations and professional challenges, the responsibility for ensuring inclusion and adequate support for students with disabilities was the most frequently mentioned by union representatives, with 19 responses.

This responsibility reflects the constant pressure faced by education professionals to meet the specific needs of students with disabilities, often being solely responsible for their inclusion. The lack of resources and materials, combined with the responsibility for the success of school inclusion, results in physical and emotional strain for teachers. This reality is corroborated by Stockmann (2020), who states:

Teachers end up feeling guilty or, at best, a sense of helplessness in the face of the goals set by government agencies. This leads to demotivation toward the profession, exhaustion, and illness (Stockmann, 2020, p. 98).

The preparation of individual reports was cited as a stressful factor by 16 participants. Although important as tools for monitoring student progress, these reports represent a form of intensified workload for Special Education teachers. The constant adaptation of teaching materials was mentioned by 15 interviewees as one of the most stressful aspects of the job. This

task is considered a factor that intensifies the workload, as it requires time for study and planning—time that teachers often do not have guaranteed in their temporary contracts.

Furthermore, the materials essential for making adjustments and adaptations to activities that meet the educational needs of students with disabilities are often unavailable to these professionals. On several occasions, teachers must purchase these materials with their own funds.

According to Scaramuzza (2015), when inclusion policies are not implemented as required by law, this can create a sense of unease among teachers. This unease is often caused by a lack of adequate resources and materials, which, in turn, hinders the delivery of quality work.

Interaction with multidisciplinary teams, cited by 13 participants as a source of stress in the work of SE teachers, highlights the importance of collaboration among those involved in student development, but also presents a challenge that requires ensuring ongoing in-service training for everyone involved in the inclusion of students in the special education target population.

Finally, the relationship with parents and guardians, mentioned by 14 interviewees, reveals the need for dialogue and family involvement, which can be both a source of support and a source of emotional strain for these teachers. Therefore, it is important to ensure psychological support for these professionals. This combination of responsibilities results in the complexity of teaching work in Special Education from an inclusive perspective, along with the challenges that professionals face daily.

According to the vice president of FETEMS, Special Education professionals are aware of their role and the importance they play in schools. However, it is essential that these professionals participate in debates on the issues that affect their reality. Only when those who experience the precariousness of their work mobilize and spark discussions with the union, the government, and local authorities can meaningful changes occur. She emphasizes that teachers possess a transformative power and that true change will only happen through collective action

Concluding remarks

It can be inferred that, from the perspective of union members regarding the working conditions of Special Education teachers, the situation is complex, marked by progress but also by significant challenges. Despite the progress achieved in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul,

such as the implementation of the National Minimum Wage and the achievement of 1/3 hour-activity in the state school system and in some municipalities, the reality for many teachers is still one of precariousness and insecurity, especially in municipalities that do not comply with current legislation, as evidenced by the high number of temporary hires compared to the number of permanent teachers.

The analyzed data indicate that, although the PCCR is in place in all municipalities, unions point out that this is not sufficient to guarantee the recognition and adequate working conditions for Special Education teachers. This is because many teachers are hired on a temporary basis and, therefore, have no guarantee of enjoying the benefits provided for in this regulation. Furthermore, the pressure to meet inclusion demands, combined with a lack of resources and psychological support, intensifies professional burnout. Tasks related to report writing, adapting materials, and interacting with parents and multidisciplinary teams highlight the complexity and demands of teaching in Special Education. The vice president of FETEMS reported:

The issue of securing permanent positions for these professionals and regulating their workloads are challenges that form part of our key causes, as this is what brings recognition to these professionals. Everything we have discussed here is in line with our challenges (Vice president of FETEMS, 2024⁶).

In short, the analysis of the union members' responses highlights the urgency of meeting Goal 18 of the PNE (2014–2024), which stipulates that 90% of Special Education teachers in regular schools enter the profession through civil service exams (Brasil, 2025). It is essential to promote continuing education that integrates theory and practice in the area of inclusion, fostering professional development. Furthermore, it is crucial to ensure that teachers have one-third of their workload dedicated to planning and adapting teaching materials. It is also necessary to provide psychological support and improve school infrastructure so that these professionals can carry out their work effectively.

Representatives of the municipal unions in Mato Grosso do Sul confirm that the difficulties faced by these professionals must be translated into concrete actions by municipal administrations, thereby ensuring not only the recognition of the profession but also the quality

⁶ Research interview conducted on January 25, 2024, in person at the FETEMS headquarters in Campo Grande, Mato Grosso do Sul.

of education offered to students with disabilities. This perspective is corroborated by Mufarrej *et al.* (2024, p. 3190), according to whom:

[...] to be inclusive, schools must implement initiatives that enhance the teaching and learning process, seeking to recognize the professional value of educators and promoting initial and continuing professional development that supports students' learning processes.

Mobilizing and strengthening the union, therefore, are potential avenues for promoting change and ensuring better working conditions for teachers.

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 - Data and material availability:** The data and materials used in this study are stored in files under the custody and responsibility of the researchers in charge of the study, ensuring the confidentiality of the information, in accordance with CNS Resolution No. 510/2016 and Circular Letter No. 1/2021-CONEP/SECNS/MS.
 - Authors' contribution:** Sandra Regina: wrote the theoretical section, collected and analyzed the data. Andréia Militão: wrote the theoretical section, edited the article, and performed the final proofreading.
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