

## Brazil Places an Order for 93 Million Textbooks

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The National Fund for Educational Development (FNDE) has already completed the purchase of the textbooks that will be used in the National Textbook Program (PNLD) in 2005. Over 93 million books will be made available to the 35 million children who study in the country's public schools.

"We reached an excellent agreement that made it possible for both sides to concretize the program for 2005," pointed out the President of the FNDE, José Henrique Paim.

The FNDE, an organ linked to the Ministry of Education (MEC) and responsible for acquisitions, spent US\$ 216 million (620 million reais) on books that will be distributed to students in the 5th to 8th grades, in Portuguese, mathematics, science, history, and geography.

In addition, 3 million students in the first year of high school in public schools in the North and Northeast regions will receive books in Portuguese and mathematics.

"One of the big challenges in expanding textbook distribution is the expansion of secondary education around the country," he affirmed.

Altogether, 13 publishers participated in the textbook procurement process and should send the material directly to the schools. The FNDE expects that delivery of the textbooks will begin in December.

The process will run through the end of January, by which time all schools should have received the instructional materials.

**For Disabled Too**

Textbooks, basic tools for the classroom activities of teachers and students, will also be sent to schools for the disabled, beginning in 2005.

More than 200 thousand special students, from the first to the eighth grade, will receive texts in mathematics, Portuguese, sciences, history, and geography.

Disabled students who study in regular schools already receive these books. In all, over 500 thousand children will benefit from the program.

The material will be distributed by the National Textbook Program (PNLD), to blind children, whose book will be in braille, as well as deaf, mute, and otherwise handicapped students, who will receive the same books as unimpaired students.

"The books are a guarantee of the right to education," emphasizes the chief of staff of the Ministry of Education's Secretariat of Special Education (Seesp/Mec), Cláudia Gribowski.

According to data from the 2002 School Census, 2,409 institutions are eligible to receive the instructional materials. This total includes both private non-profit and philanthropical organizations, such as Associations of Parents and Friends of Exceptional Children (Apaes), and public entities.

According to Gribowski, books for special students needn't be different from other books, because teachers should use the material according to their own teaching methods. "Textbooks are a tool; what varies is the method practiced in each school," she explains.

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