

HOW AMBITIOUS CURRICULA,  
ALIGNED ASSESSMENT, AND  
FOCUS ON ALL STUDENTS  
CAN IMPROVE EDUCATION

**Nuno Crato**

**University of Lisbon**

**Minister of Education of Portugal (2011-2015)**

I'll sustain that good national results need a good and clear curriculum, aligned quality materials, students' regular assessment, support to all, vocational paths, and flexibility

# Improving a Country's Education

PISA 2018 Results in 10 Countries

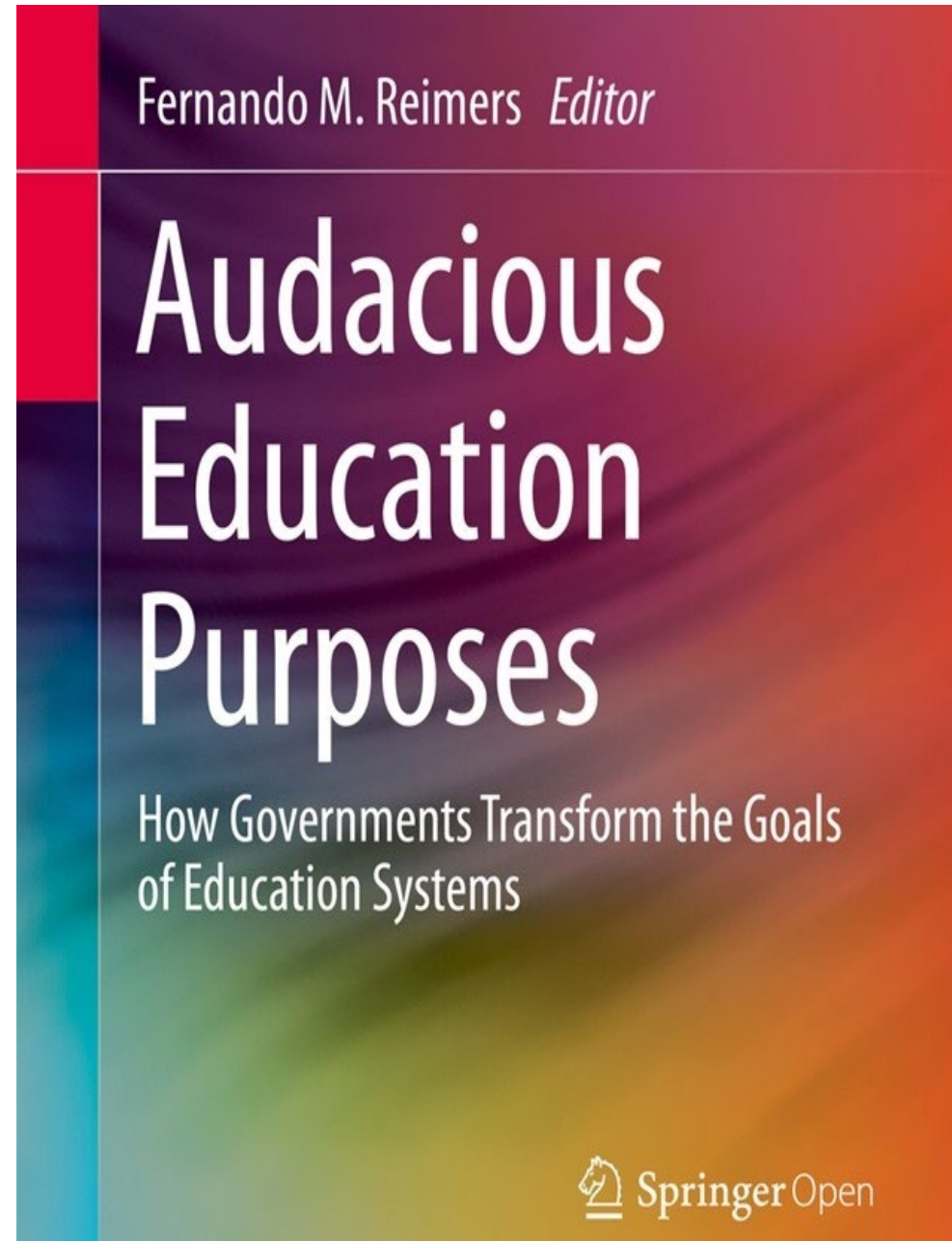
How an ambitious curriculum, aligned assessment, and focus on all students improved education in Portugal

**Nuno Crato**

**University of Lisbon**

**Minister of Education of Portugal (2011-2015)**

I'll sustain that good national results need a good and clear curriculum, school autonomy, students' regular assessment, support to all, vocational paths, and flexibility.



authoritarian times  
1933 - 1974

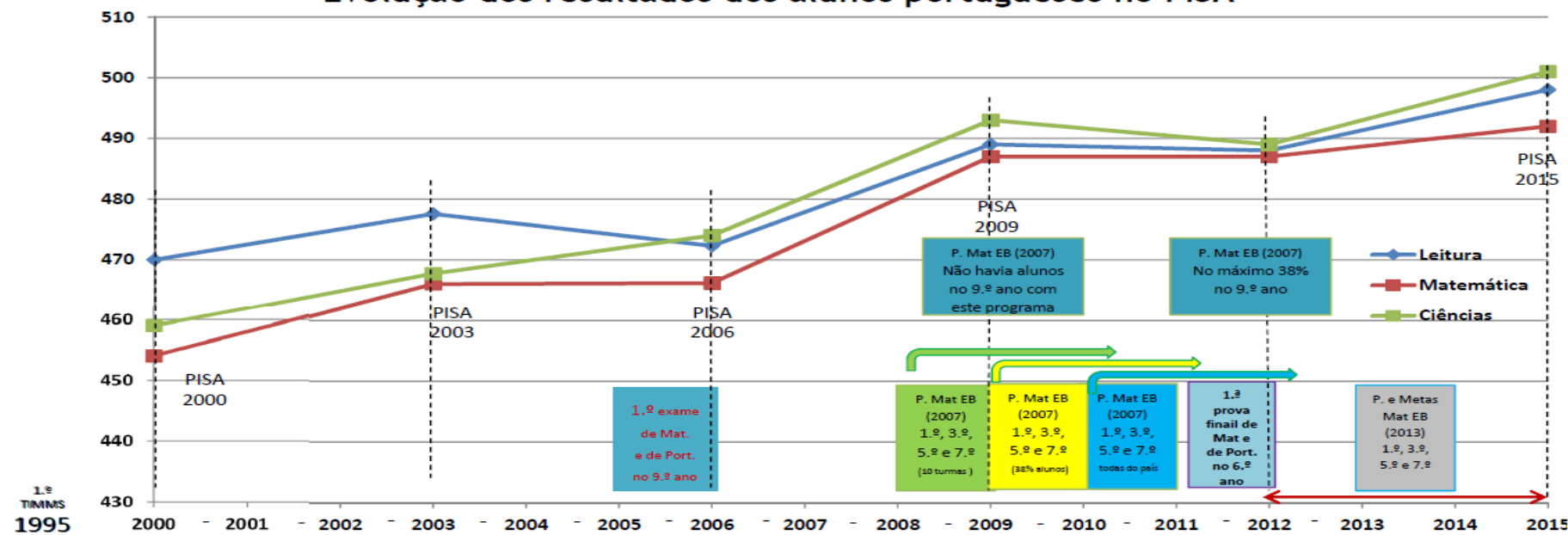
“romantic” era  
1974 - 1995/2000

pragmatic times  
2000 - 2011

knowledge curriculum  
2011 - 2015

????  
2016 - ...

Evolução dos resultados dos alunos portugueses no PISA



Two different countries:

1995 - 2000

2001 - 2015

Specific factors

2001: School results

2005: Evaluation 9<sup>th</sup> grade

2006: Assessment 4<sup>th</sup> 6<sup>th</sup>

action programs, PAM

2007: Textbook evaluation

2011: Competences end,

knowledge-based

standards start

2012: Better standards

2012: Evaluation 4<sup>th</sup> 6<sup>th</sup>



# Everything starts with the curriculum

A demanding curriculum

Curriculum centred on the essential subjects

Structured, progressive, and detailed standards

Frequent assessment

4, 6, 9, 12 years

Comparison of internal and external assessments

Program to fight failure

Intervention at first difficulties

Special hours

Temporary groupings

School autonomy

Credits to schools to support students with difficulties

Incentives based on progress

Alternate paths

Vocational paths in middle school

Two vocational pathways

Businesses support from start to finish

Knowledge at the base

Evaluation is an incentive

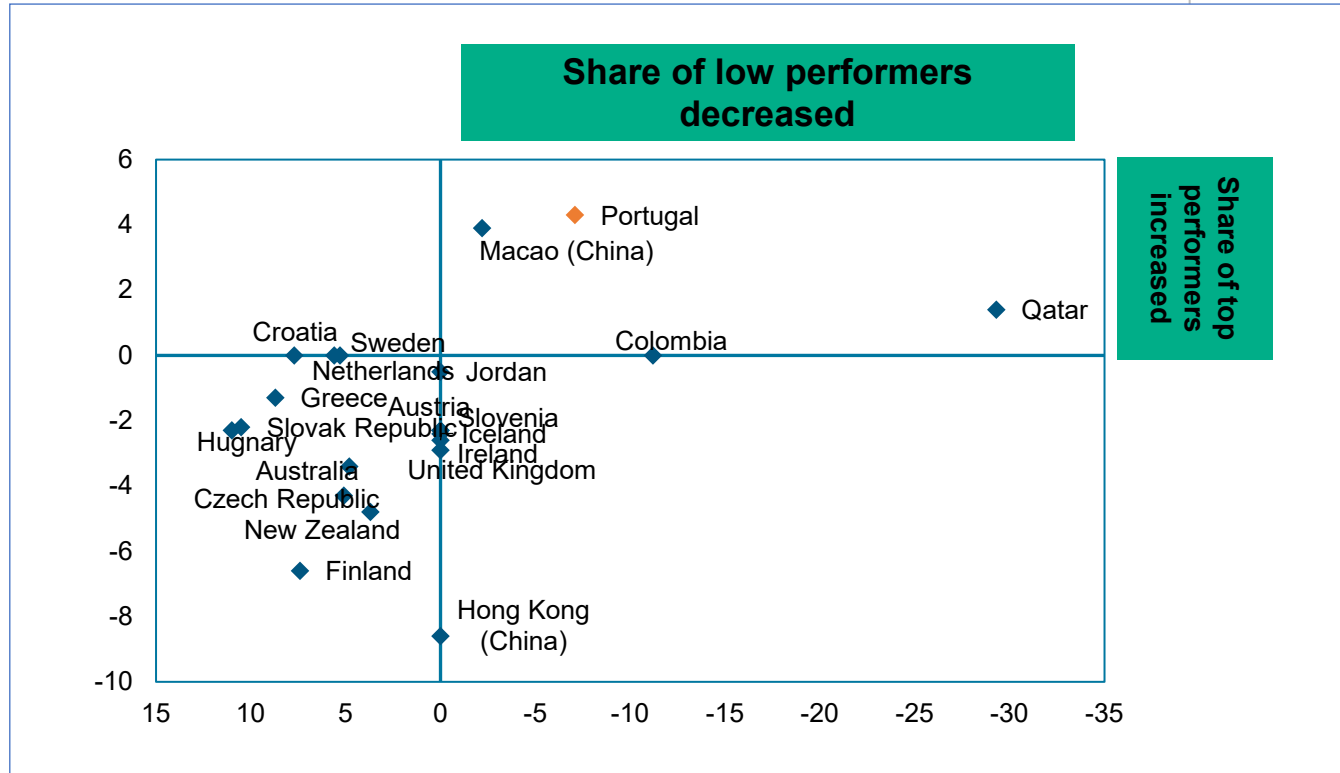
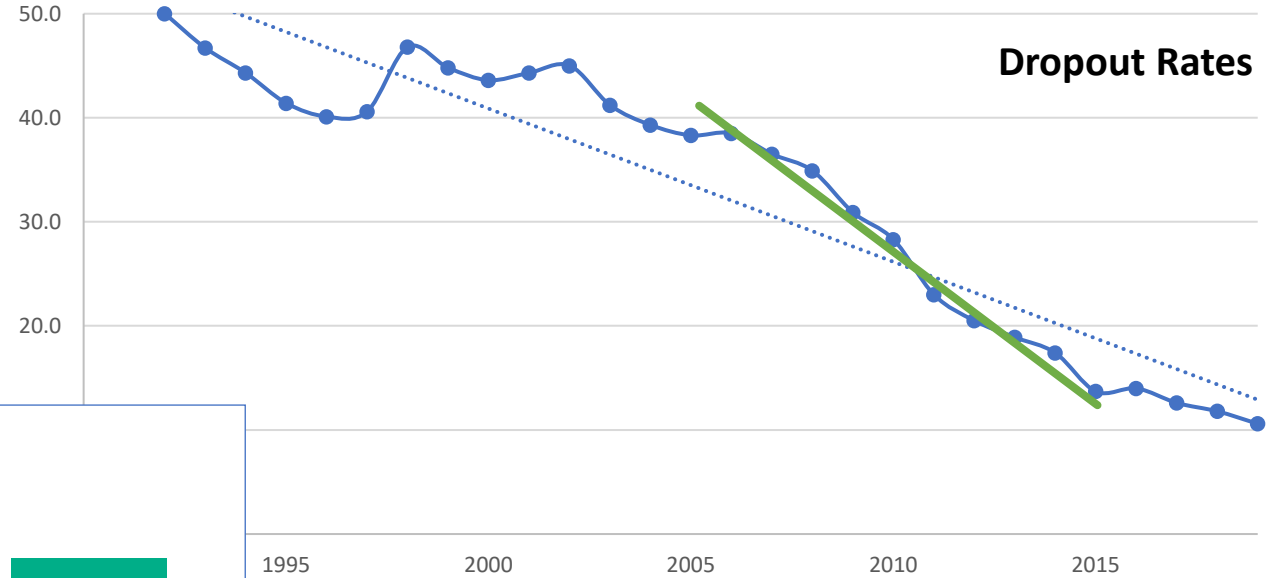
Everybody can reach a reasonable level

Evaluating results = freedom of processes

Alternatives make all progress

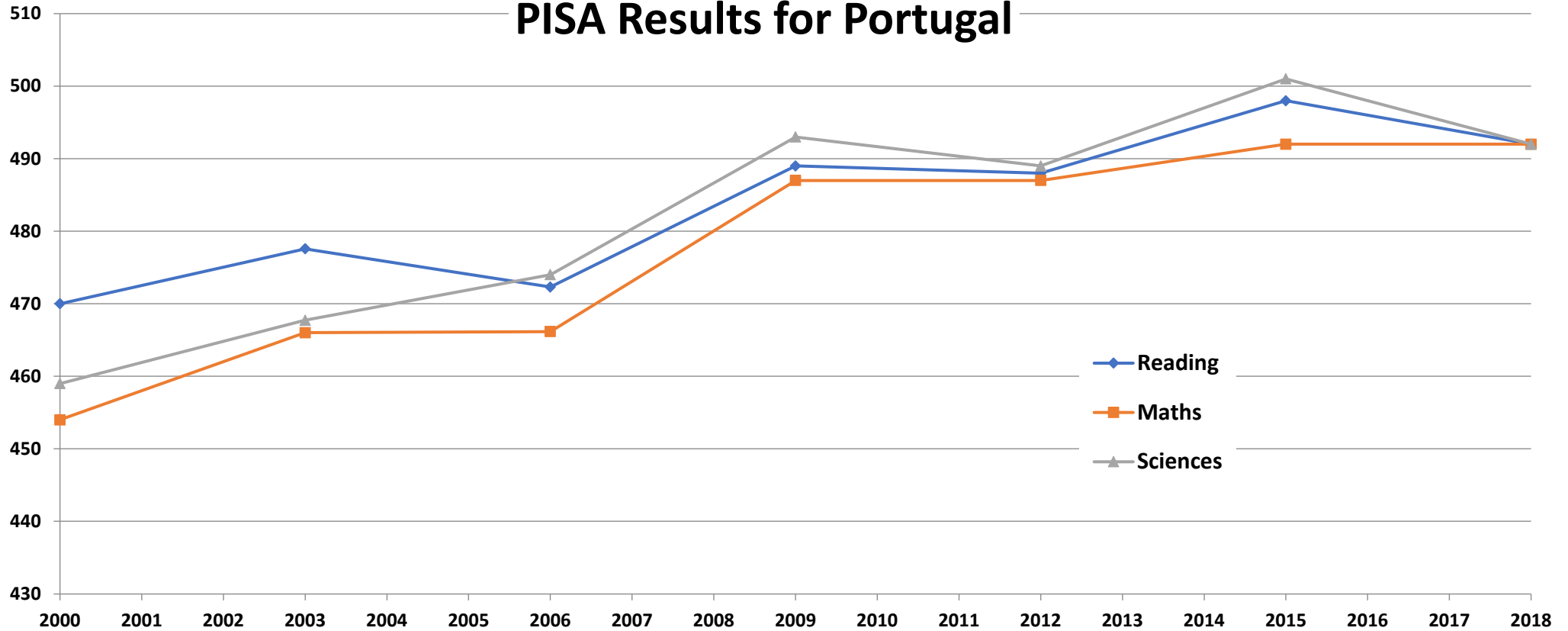
## PISA 2006-2015

Portugal: one of only two countries that significantly increased the top and decreased the bottom



2000	43.6%
2011	25.0%
2015	13.7%

# PISA Results for Portugal



# A CURRICULUM FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

## HIGH QUALITY FOR ALL

Worldwide: UNESCO 2017

56% in Math below MPL

58% in Reading below MPL

European Union Target for 2020:

Low achievers < 15%

LOW PERFORMERS	2009	2012	2015	2018
<b>OECD</b>				
Science	18.8	18.7	22.1	22.0
Math (36)	23.5	24.4	24.6	24.1
Reading	19.4	18.9	20.9	22.6
All domains				13.4
<b>PORTUGAL</b>				
Science	16.5	19.0	17.4	20.2
Math (36)	23.7	24.9	23.8	23.3
Reading	17.6	18.8	17.2	19.6
All domains				12.6
<b>EU</b>				
Science		16.6	20.6	21.6
Math (36)		22.1	22.2	22.4
Reading		17.8	19.7	21.7
All domains				12.7*