

# RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

## **M.Ed. In TESL Program Country Informational Reports**

Produced by Graduate Students in the M.Ed. In TESL Program  
In the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development

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# Language Culture of Portugal

Created and Presented By: Nathan C. Couto



# General Geographic Information

- Portugal is located on the Iberian Peninsula in Southwestern Europe. It is bordered only by Spain and the Atlantic Ocean.
- Also part of Portugal are the 12 Azorean Islands and the Madeira Islands near the coast of Northern Africa.
- Population: 10,781,459 (2012 est.)
- Languages: Portuguese, Mirandese, Spanish
- Government: Republic with a parliament, prime minister and president



# General Educational Information on Literacy

- Educational Expenditure: 4.4% of GDP (2008)
- School Life Expectancy: ALL (male and female) 16 years in school
- Literacy Rates: (Definition: People 15 + who can read and write)
  - Male: 96.9%
  - Female: 93.6%



# Poverty and Strife

- It is important to note that population is mainly static or in decline
- 61% of total population lives in urban areas
- 15.3% Unemployment Rate (2012 est.)
- 18% Below Poverty Line (2006 data)
- Economic Strife as Country has high debt
- Racial Strife: The country is mostly homogenous Mediterranean European whites, however, there is no “racial data” kept by the government.



# Ethnic Racial Strife Continued

- In the urban areas of Portugal there are immigrants mainly from Africa, Brazil, and Eastern Europe
- In 2008 4.1% of resident population were immigrants
- When there was a sharp increase in immigration there was also a dramatic change in the nature of schooling in urban districts.
- It is important to note that racial strife is not a major factor in emigration. (Economic issues are)

# Educational Opportunities

- Public schooling is available as well as private and religious institutions
- Public schooling from early childhood programs to higher education is partially funded by and overlooked by Portugal's Ministry of Education and Science. (PMES) They also monitor private institutions.
- School is compulsory until the age of 15 at which point "dropping out" is an option
- 102% of children from ages 5-14 are enrolled in some schooling
- 85% of 4-year-olds participate in early childhood programs

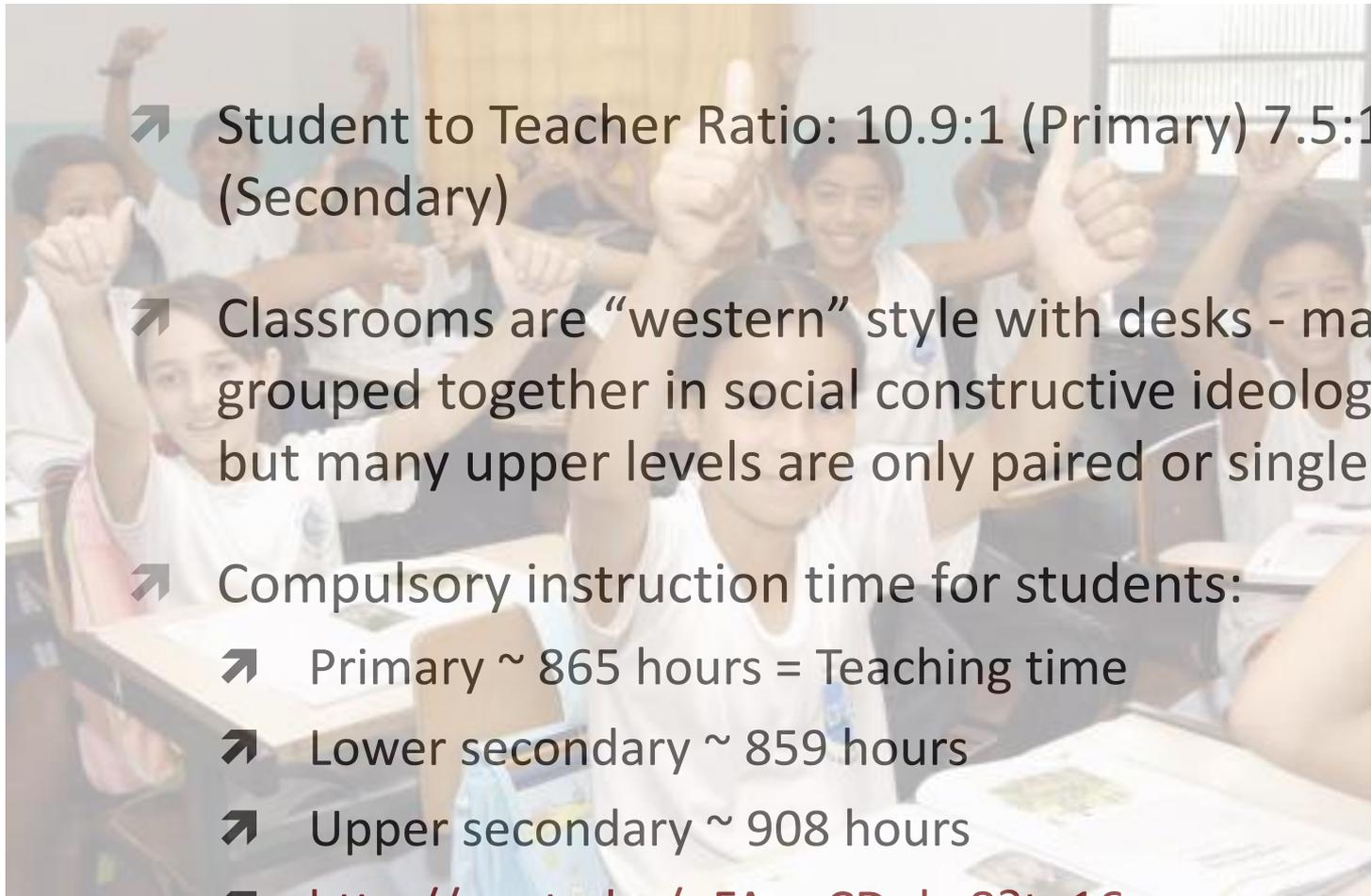


# Educational Opportunities

- Teacher Performance Appraisal occurs and is mandated by the PMES and has been negotiated with teacher unions.
- Teachers must achieve the equivalent of a Master's Degree
- The core academic areas:
  - Portuguese (Language & Literature)
  - History and Geography
  - English
  - Physical Education
  - Mathematics & Science
  - (Offerings of other subjects vary)



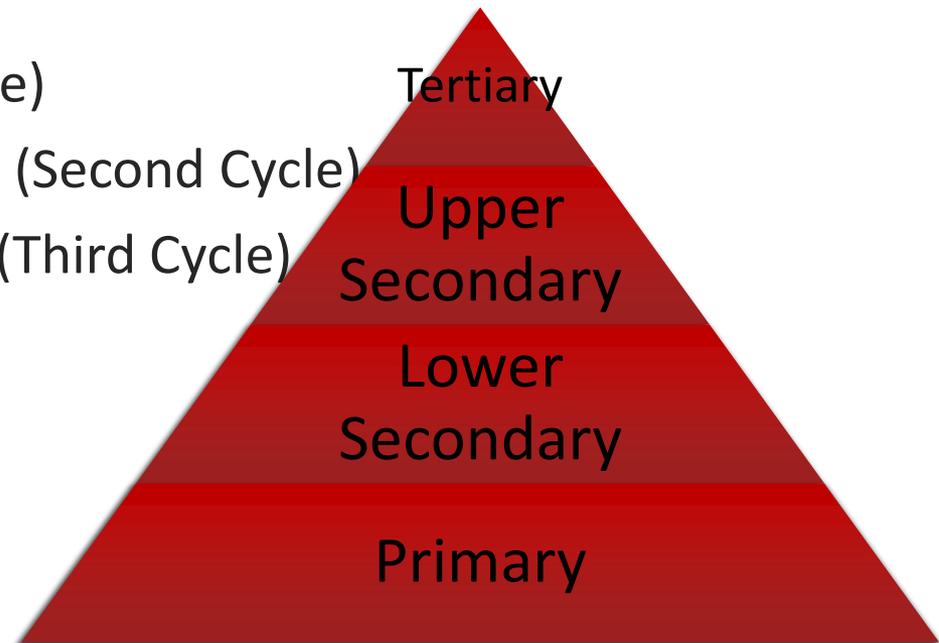
# Educational Opportunities



- Student to Teacher Ratio: 10.9:1 (Primary) 7.5:1 (Secondary)
- Classrooms are “western” style with desks - many grouped together in social constructive ideology, but many upper levels are only paired or single file
- Compulsory instruction time for students:
  - Primary ~ 865 hours = Teaching time
  - Lower secondary ~ 859 hours
  - Upper secondary ~ 908 hours
  - <http://youtu.be/pFAuuCDobz8?t=16s>

# Educational Opportunities

- Official Language Policy: Portuguese is used in all government settings
- Grade Level Configurations:
  - Early Childhood Programs
  - Primary: Grades 1-4 (First Cycle)
  - Lower Secondary: Grades 5&6 (Second Cycle)
  - Upper Secondary: Grades 7-9 (Third Cycle)
  - Post-Secondary
  - Tertiary



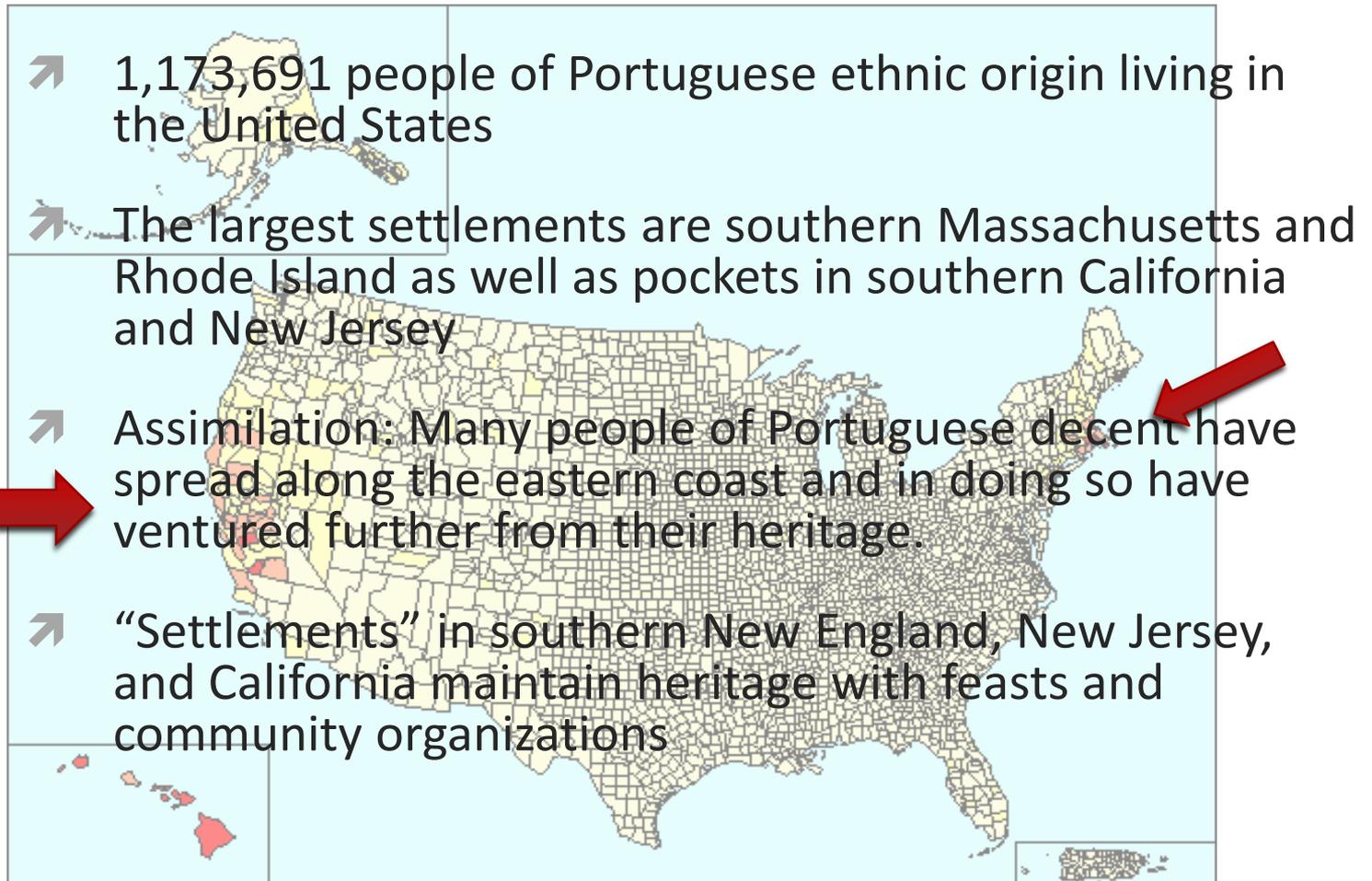
# Educational Opportunities

- All students are mandated to go to school until the age of 15
- Much data shows that Low SES students are underperforming even in a mostly homogenous rural setting.
- School curriculum differs on school by school basis. Many urban schools focus on social-emotional needs and technology while some rural schools still include much agricultural education

# Possible Immigrant Attitudes

- Due to the large number of visitations and permanent returns to Portugal, there are much favorable views of America among Portuguese immigrants
- United States has provided opportunity in the past for Portuguese immigrants
- Portugal has a mainly positive view of the USA 45% of sample views USA in positive light

# Immigration Trends



# Values, Beliefs, Religion

- It used to be that Portuguese immigrant families valued work and family commitment over education and independence, but modern immigrants favor education (due to the same cultural shift in Portugal) and family
- Religion tends to be Roman Catholic, though many immigrants may convert to another Christian religion once in the US
- 4 core cultural values: respect, honor, good faith, and trust
- Family systems usually patriarchal, but mothers act as facilitators and negotiators
- Eldest son usually groomed for family leadership
- Daughters tend to partake in and be more responsible for household duties

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