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### The enlightenment of the proposal of National Fifteen plan to the reform of basic education in China

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#### Abstract

70 years after the founding of the People's Republic of China, China's education has undergone tremendous changes. After a long period of efforts, China's overall development level of the basic education ranks among the top in the world. With the implementation of the 14th five-year plan for China's National Economic and Social Development, in the field of education, we will fully implement the fundamental task of building moral character and fostering people, in order to speed up the modernization of education, build a strong country in education and train builders and successors with the all-round development of morality, intelligence, Physique, art, and labor, we need further reform in the basic education. Based on the analysis of the achievements of the basic education since the founding of the People's Republic of China in the past 70 years, this paper probes into the problems existing in the basic education since the reform and opening up of China in the past 40 years, and puts forward the path of the reform of the basic education.

Keywords: Educational planning; Basic education; Reform; Essential-qualities-oriented

The Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) was held in Beijing from October 26 to 29,2020. The proposal of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China for formulating the 14th five year plan for National Economic and Social Development and the 2035 long term goals adopted at the plenary session is a comprehensive plan for completing the Xiaokang and achieving the first centenary goal, taking advantage of the situation to embark on a new journey to build a modern socialist country in an all-round way and make strategic arrangements for advancing to the second centenary goal are guiding documents for economic and social development. The recommendations provide an ambitious blueprint for future development and set out guiding principles as operational guidelines and fundamental guidelines for the full implementation of the work.

According to the future trend of development, in the field of education, we should: fully implement the fundamental task of establishing moral education and fostering people, give prominence to the actual effect of moral education, promote the innovation of intellectual education, pay attention to physical health, attach importance to aesthetic education, and strengthen labor education, in order to speed up the modernization of education and build a powerful country in education, we need to train builders and successors who are capable of all-round development of moral, intellectual, physical, art and labor.

# Basic Education's achievements since the founding of the People's Republic of China years ago

Over the past 70 years, the basic policy of the basic education has, first of all, made universal education at all stages, and has put forward, in stages, the goals and policy requirements for universal access to primary education, compulsory education education, senior high school education and preschool education, and has been gradually implemented. The most important and priority policy orientation of the basic education is equitable and balanced development. The State attaches great importance to the assistance and support for the development of remote and minority areas, and a system of people's bursaries has been generally established, benefiting hundreds of millions of students, said basic education, a spokesman for the State Council. Especially since the reform and opening up, the State Council, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education and other relevant departments, has continuously issued a series of national policy documents on further promoting rural education, education in the western

region, the allocation and use of funds for basic education, the readjustment of the distribution of schools, the development and transformation of schools, the "two exemptions and one subsidy" for compulsory education, teacher training, nutritional meal subsidies for students from contiguous impoverished areas, assistance for children left behind, financial assistance for students from economically disadvantaged families, poverty alleviation and development, and the plan for Universal Access to education at the senior high school level, hundreds of millions of students will benefit from efforts to solve the problem of balanced development between urban and rural areas, the east, the basic education, the Inter school gap, and the old, young, border and poor areas in the basic education. In accordance with the requirements of the 13th five-year plan for the development of national education, by 2020, 95 percent of counties (cities and districts) will have achieved a basic balance in compulsory education.

Over the past 70 years, the basic education's achievements in reform and development have been reflected in four aspects. The first is the unprecedented expansion of the basic education, the number of students increased year by year. In 2017, there were 255,000 primary and middle schools, 240,000 kindergartens, 15.544 million teachers and 231,068.9 million students, including 46,001,400 kindergarten students, 100,937,000 primary school students, 44,420,600 junior high school students and 39,709,900 high school students; Second, the level of running schools and the quality of education and teaching in the basic education has been continuously improved. China persists in running schools according to its national conditions and has formed its own characteristics and advantages. Since the reform and opening up, the basic education has actively developed radio and television education and audio-visual teaching in schools, and computer education has been popularized throughout the country, it has greatly improved the level of education and teaching in the rural areas, especially in the old and young marginal mountain and poor areas. After a long period of hard work, China's basic education has risen to the top of the world in terms of its overall development level. In school settings, school conditions, facilities and equipment, curriculum and teaching materials, teachers, and in some respects, reached and exceeded the international average level, and took the lead in the realization of the world's most populous country basic education development; Third, basic education's funding and resources have been firmly guaranteed. After years of development, the basic education has become the most basic public education, funded mainly by the state's public finances. Reform and opening-up have greatly strengthened China's economic strength, especially after the central and local

tax-sharing system was implemented in 1994, the central fiscal capacity to pay has been significantly strengthened. In 2017, the financial investment in education reached 3.4 trillion yuan, or more than 4 percent for six years in a row. Fourth, the basic education has been improved and a basic education system suitable for China's national conditions has been formed, the administrative and school management systems of the basic education have continued to improve. The state implements the school education system, the pre-school education system, the primary education system, the compulsory education system and the secondary education system according to law, and has established the basic education system, and formed a school setting, education, training objectives, years of study, enrollment, membership examination, supervision and accountability and other special norms. The basic education continued to promote the separation of evaluation, primary and secondary school charter construction generally carried out. <sup>1</sup>

#### 2. Basic Education's biggest problem since China's reform and opening up 40 years ago

"exam-oriented education" is a stubborn disease of our country's basic education, and it is also the biggest problem of basic education since the reform and opening up 40 years ago. For a long time, in accordance with the situation of productive forces and the requirements of social politics and economy, our education emphasizes the selection function. Much of the energy of the Education Administration, primary and secondary schools and teachers is focused on identifying students to be promoted or rejected at each critical stage of the education programme. Under the guidance of this function view, the primary and middle schools always take examination and further education as their starting point and destination, which constitutes the "examination-oriented education" that we should criticize. The essence of this educational model lies in the one-sided pursuit of higher education rate, taking the passing of selective examinations as the ultimate goal of education and teaching. In order to meet the need of entrance examination, the basic essential characteristics of primary and secondary education can not be reflected by arbitrarily raising the teaching requirements and ignoring the law of students'physical and mental development.

Another characteristic of "examination-oriented education" is reflected in the one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness of its educational objects and quality benefits. The attitude towards students is often static and rigid, ignoring the psychological needs and personality differences of students, with the examination of the only standard to measure all students, and strive to forge "obedience, examination, high score" of the "standard piece. Regardless of whether students have the basic qualities required by social development and individual development, it often leads to individual abnormal development. In the evaluation of quality and benefit measurement, there is actually a criterion for the rate of admission to higher education, which results in the sacrifice of the interests of most students in exchange for the development of some aspects of a few students, as a result, education and the waste of talent and education and social development, economic construction between the virtuous circle difficult to form the situation.

Many people think that the main causes of "examination-oriented education" are the orientation of the baton, the dissimilation of the educational evaluation standard, the scarcity of "high quality" higher education resources and the limitation of the educational concept in the national consciousness. Among them, the direction of the baton is the most important factor. Therefore, in recent years, the related departments have put forward the "diversified college entrance examination" enrollment mode based on "multiple test + multiple evaluation + multiple admission", which is expected to change the direction of the college entrance examination baton and solve the problem of exam-oriented education.

In fact, since the 1980s, we began to reflect on "examination-oriented education", and gradually integrated into the "quality education", a new field of theoretical and practical exploration. Based on the needs of the real society and the development trend of the economy and science and technology in the twenty-one St Century, "primary and secondary schools should change from 'examination-oriented education' to the track of improving the overall quality of the people", primary and secondary education should be aimed at all students to improve the quality of students, "to promote the lively development of students, " and as a liberal education of the essence.

# **3.** Reflections on deepening the reform of the examination and enrollment system by the State Council of China

#### 3.1 The course of deepening the reform of examination enrollment system

Twenty years after the resumption of the Gaokao, in 1999, the "3 + x" program was first tried out in Guangdong Province and then rolled out across the Chinese mainland. From 1999 to 2013, the "3 + x" model was still set for Chinese, mathematics and foreign languages, the biggest difference is the flexible setting of the subject "x", universities can from physics, chemistry, biology, politics, history, geography 6 subjects or comprehensive subjects to choose 1-2 college entrance examination subjects. The most common "3 + x" subject setting mode is "3 +Synthesis of literature and Science", followed by "3 +Synthesis of literature and Science", "3 +Synthesis of literature and science + 1", "3 +Synthesis of literature and SCIENCE/SYNTHESIS + 1". The "3 +X" model has formed many variants in the process of continuous evolution, and a few provinces have included the academic level examination, the comprehensive quality evaluation, the basic ability test and so on into the subject setting model.

By the time the "New National College entrance examination" kicked off in 2014, the "State Council's implementation opinions on deepening the reform of the examination and enrollment system" was issued by the State Council in September 2014, it is a measure deployed by the State Council to thoroughly implement the requirements of the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on advancing the reform of the examination and enrollment system, further promoting educational fairness and raising the level of selection, marks a new round of examination enrollment system reform fully launched. All subjects, including phonics and body beauty, are required to take a high school achievement test, the ministry said, adding that the six subjects included in the Gaokao are required and optional Other subjects can be completed compulsory examination, the results can be qualified. In the form of examination, Chinese, mathematics, foreign language, politics, history, geography, physics, chemistry, biology are mainly written examination;. During this period, with the help of the provincial proposition and the new curriculum reform of senior high school, the reform of the college entrance examination showed some local characteristics.

From 2014 to 2019, the "3 + 3" and "3 + 1 + 2" models were implemented. The first batch of "new college entrance examination" reform pilot areas (Zhejiang and Shanghai) all chose the "3 + 3" subject setting model. Chinese, mathematics and foreign languages are compulsory subjects, regardless of the arts and Sciences. Students may choose 3 subjects from 7 or 6 High School Examination subjects as elective subjects (or graded examination subjects). Zhejiang Province has 2 test opportunities for English and elective subjects, while Shanghai has only 2 test opportunities for English. The scores of the 3 elective subjects shall be calculated according to the grading system and shall be included in the total score of the college entrance examination.

Similarly, in the middle school entrance examination reform, including the implementation of

middle school academic level examination, the improvement the junior of students' comprehensive quality evaluation, the reform of enrollment methods, the further improvement of independent enrollment policy and the strengthening of examination enrollment management are also constantly promoted. Including all subjects stipulated in the national curriculum programme, including Chinese, mathematics, foreign languages, ethics and the rule of law, history, geography, physics, chemistry, Biology, sports and health, music, fine arts and information technology, the aim is to guide students to study every course stipulated by the state, to avoid serious partial subjects, to overcome the tendency of "no examination, no teaching, no examination and no study" in some subjects, and to guide students to lay a good common foundation for all-round development, to ensure the basic quality of junior high school education, but also for the senior high school level schools and colleges and universities to create the conditions for scientific selection of talent. Some good measures have been adopted, such as: The content of the examination is that the junior middle school students should know and should know, reducing the content of simple memory and mechanical training; the overall difficulty of the examination paper is appropriate, and it is closely related to the social reality and students'life experience, pay attention to the ability of the examination, avoid off-topic, odd questions. In the reform of examination methods, the paper-based examination, exploring interview, oral examination, practical inspection, experimental operation and skills testing, and other ways. In the way of performance, grade presentation, A, B, C, D, e five grades, moderate reduce the pressure of students in the examination, to avoid the students score score calculation, excessive competition. In terms of the composition and number of subjects, Some schools are exploring two scoring models, one is "4(Chinese, math, English, sports) + 4(physics, chemistry, history, politics) + 1(geography, biology, choosing a subject) ", the other is "4(Chinese, math, English, sports) + 4(physics, chemistry, history, politics) + 2(geography, biology) " to prevent group bias and increase the burden on students.<sup>[2]</sup>

### **3.2** The requirement of China's reform and social development on the training of Labor Reserve Army

"socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era. This is a new historical orientation for China's Development, " General Secretary Xi Jinping solemnly declared in his report to the 19th CPC National Congress. On the party's educational policy for the New Era, March 18,2019, at a seminar for Teachers of ideological and political theory courses in schools hosted by General Secretary Xi Jinping, he stressed that in implementing the party's

educational policy in the new era, we must adhere to the guiding position of Marxism and implement the thought of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, adhering to the direction of running schools under socialism and fulfilling the fundamental task of establishing moral character and fostering people, adhering to the principle that education should serve the people, serve the governance of the country by the Communist Party of China, serve the consolidation and development of the socialist system with Chinese characteristics, serve the reform, opening-up and socialist modernization drive, and take root in running education in China, in combination with productive Labor and social practice, we will speed up the modernization of education, build a powerful country through education, ensure that the people are satisfied with their education, and strive to train New People for the era who will shoulder the task of national rejuvenation, we will train socialist builders and successors who are well developed in morality, intelligence, Physique, art and craft. In his important speech, the general secretary clearly put forward the general direction and fundamental policy of our socialist education in the new era, and pointed out the direction and provided the fundamental follow for the socialist education with Chinese characteristics in the new era.<sup>[3]</sup>

I believe that from compulsory education to compulsory education, from Basic Education to higher education, we should combine the requirements of the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, we should strive to cultivate New Forces and reserve armies capable of shouldering the task of national rejuvenation and having a global vision. In order to combine the education of students with productive Labor, we must train the builders and successors of the socialist cause with all-round development in morality, intelligence, Physique, beauty and labor.

The aim of the basic education is to enable every citizen to have the minimum knowledge and capacity to achieve his or her aspirations and happiness and to become a useful citizen and producer contributing to the development of the society to which he or she belongs. The value of the basic education is mainly reflected in two aspects: First, the basic goal of the basic education is to improve the quality of the nation as a whole, and its target and focus are all the people of the right age, not some people, second, the basic education is to lay the foundation for the improvement of the quality of the whole nation. It emphasizes the training of basic qualities, not the training of professionals or certain specialized personnel. Therefore, basic education's teaching content, curriculum system, teaching concepts and ideas, teaching methods, and evaluation must be subject to such a basic value goal.<sup>141</sup>

#### 3.3 The unification of "examination-oriented education" and "quality education"

Beijing Normal University, a professor at the basic education, has said that the top level of the future design concept is to strengthen the core literacy of students. The core accomplishment is the necessary character and key ability which the students need to adapt to the individual life-long development and the social development. The core quality of Chinese students' development is to cultivate "all-round development person", which is divided into three aspects: Cultural Foundation, Independent Development and social participation, comprehensive performance for the humanities, scientific spirit, learning to learn, healthy life, responsibility, practice and innovation, and other six qualities, specific to the national identity, such as 18 basic points. All the qualities relate to each other, complement each other and promote each other, and play an integral role in different situations.

In fact, these core qualities are realized through the unification of "examination-oriented education" and "quality education" . First of all, "quality education" should be an ideal educational model, not a "new" educational model. The transition from examination-oriented education to quality-oriented education is not a reconstruction of an ideal educational paradigm, but a continuous process of educational development, a process of sublation of examination-oriented education in order to be established and developed. Secondly, "quality-oriented education" opposes frequent examinations and the unilateral pursuit of higher education rates, but it does not mean that "quality-oriented education" absolutely repels examinations and higher education. Modern education can not be separated from evaluation. When we measure students' physical and mental development, there is no better way to replace the exam. As the operating mechanism of "examination-oriented education", examination and further education are also applicable to "quality education". But "quality education" education is no longer as the purpose of education, but more as a means of education.

Teachers must impose strict requirements on students through external forces, so that educational needs are gradually internalized into students'conscious will, and the degree of internalization is improved as far as possible so that students can feel both hard-working and happy learning, so that the individual quality can be relatively lively and active development.

#### 4. The path of basic education reform

#### 4.1 Adhere to the existing direction of basic education curriculum reform and continue to promote

The Third National Education Working Conference held in 1999 and the basic education held in 2001 put forward the task of transforming the talent training mode and establishing a new basic education curriculum system. In 2001, under the leadership of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council, the Ministry of Education officially launched a new round of basic education curriculum reform and issued a series of policy documents, including the outline of curriculum reform for the basic education (for trial implementation), the basic education curriculum system with Chinese characteristics is preliminarily constructed to meet the requirements of the Times. The basic education curriculum reform began to investigate and research in 1999, organized the national high-level experts to carry out the top-level design. The curriculum reform has generally moved from the experimental stage to the full implementation stage, and the six reform objectives are gradually being realized:

One is to change the tendency of the curriculum to lay too much emphasis on knowledge transfer, and to emphasize the formation of a positive and active learning attitude, so that the process of acquiring basic knowledge and basic skills becomes a process of learning and forming correct values. The second is to change the curriculum structure, which places too much emphasis on subject-based, too many subjects and lacks of integration, and to set up a nine-year consistent curriculum category and proportion of class hours as a whole, as well as a comprehensive curriculum to meet the needs of the development of different regions and students, reflect the balance of the curriculum structure, comprehensive and selective. Third, we should change the current situation of "difficult, complicated, partial, old" course content and pay too much attention to book knowledge, strengthen the connection between course content and students' life as well as the development of modern society and science and technology, and pay attention to students' learning interest and experience, selected essential knowledge and skills for lifelong learning. Fourth, to change the current situation of curriculum implementation, which places too much emphasis on acceptance of learning, rote memorization and mechanical training, and to encourage students to take the initiative to participate, to be willing to explore, and to be diligent in practice, develop students'ability to collect and process information, acquire new knowledge, analyze and solve problems, and communicate and cooperate. Fifth, the curriculum evaluation overemphasizes the function of screening and selection, giving full play to the function of evaluation to promote the development of students, improve and improve the teaching practice. Sixthly, we should change the situation that curriculum management is too centralized, carry out national, local and school level curriculum management, and strengthen the adaptability of curriculum to local, school and students.

#### 4.2 We will continue to make moral education a top priority for the liberal education

The administrative departments of education at all levels and all educational workers should enhance their consciousness of administering education with morality, constantly strengthen the construction of professional ethics, serve as teachers, teach and educate people, manage and educate people, serve and educate people, and educate people in the environment. The school education should insist on putting the moral education work in the first place, arming people with scientific theories, guiding people with correct public opinion, molding people with noble spirit and inspiring people with excellent works, building the school into an important position for the construction of socialist spiritual civilization.

## **4.3** While continuing to develop public schools, we should actively encourage the running of schools by social forces

The basic education gives priority to government-run schools and actively encourages social forces to run schools. The compulsory education insists that government run schools should be given priority to and supplemented by social forces, and ordinary senior secondary education should actively encourage social forces to run schools while continuing to develop public schools. Private schools are treated equally with public schools in terms of recruitment, evaluation and appointment of teachers, teaching and research activities, recognition and awards, etc. The government shall commend and reward those who have made outstanding achievements in running schools. Full-time primary and secondary schools run by social forces shall, after retaining sufficient funds for the development of the schools, arrange appropriate funds to reward the school organizers. The administrative departments of education at all levels shall strengthen the guidance and supervision of education and teaching in privately-run primary and secondary schools and kindergartens, carefully examine their qualifications and conditions for running schools, standardize their conduct in running schools, and ensure the full implementation of the party's educational policy.

#### 4.4 Strengthening the reform of the mechanism of running public schools

We will vigorously promote the reform of the personnel system in primary and secondary schools. Fully implement the system of teacher qualification and strictly import teachers. Priority is given to the recruitment of teachers'college graduates to teach at the compulsory

education. Senior high school teachers, in the recruitment of teachers college graduates to teach at the same time, pay attention to the recruitment of teachers with other qualifications of college graduates. To carry out the system of teacher appointment and establish a new mechanism of teacher appointment which can enter and leave, and can go up and down. According to the professional characteristics of primary and secondary school teachers, to achieve the unity of post appointment and post appointment. We will establish an incentive mechanism, improve and perfect the assessment system, and dismiss teachers who are unable to perform their duties. We will implement the appointment system for principals in primary and secondary schools, define their qualifications, and gradually establish a mechanism for open recruitment and competition for headmasters. Under the system of term of office for principals, they may be re-appointed for a second term. Actively promoting the rank system of principals.

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