

THE TENDENCY OF REFORM AND DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN CHINA

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1. THE SITUATION AND TASKS IN EDUCATION

China's reform, opening up and modernization drive are now entering a new stage. This presents us with a rare opportunity in education, and this also sets new tasks and requirements for it. Under the changed circumstances, the tasks are as follows: to be guided by the spirit of the Fourteenth National Party Congress and the theory of building socialism with Chinese characteristics, adhere to the Party's basic line, implement the state educational policies, gear education to the needs of the modernization drive, the would and the future, speed up educational reform and development, improve the quality of the work force, train a large number of capable people, establish the educational system suited to a socialist market economy.

The major principles for establishing a socialist educational system suited to the specific conditions in our country are as follows:

1. As the basis of our modernization drive, education must always be given the strategic position at the top of the list of development priorities.
2. Education must serve the socialist modernization drive, be integrated with productive labour and be geared to the needs of the central task of economic development, so as to promote all-round social progress.
3. We must adhere to the policy of reform and opening up in education with a view to reforming the educational system, structure, teaching contents, and methodologies. We must boldly assimilate the advances of other culture.
4. We must rely on teachers, constantly work to raise their political and professional levels and improve their working,

studying and living conditions.¹

2. THE OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR EDUCATION

In accordance with the "three-stage development" plan for the country's modernization drive, the general objectives of educational development to be attained before the end of the century are as follows: the educational level of the people as a whole should be significantly improved; pre-job and job-related training after employment for both the urban and rural work force should be considerably improved; the number of capable personnel in all fields should basically meet the needs of the modernization drive; and basic framework of a socialist educational system suited to China's specific conditions and geared for the 21st century should be in place. With another 20 or 30 years of hard work, a mature and sound socialist educational system should be established, thus modernizing education in China.

To attain these objectives, we must deepen educational reform, maintain coordinated development, increase investment in education, improve the professional competence of teachers, enhance the quality of instruction, stress efficiency in education, prepare regional plans and encourage all sectors of society to participate in the development of education.

In terms of structure, Nine Year's Compulsory Education (NYCE) will serve as the foundation for major efforts to strengthen basic education and develop TVE and adult and higher education.

In terms of regional development patterns, consideration should be given to the uneven economic and cultural development of different regions in drawing up concrete plans and providing suitable guidance.

TVE, a major component of modern education, is an important pillar of industrialization, large-scale production and modernization. Government at all levels must give it a high priority, drawing up overall plans for promoting its rapid

development. All government departments, enterprises and public institutions and all sectors of society should become actively interested and involved in education so that TVE schools of various kinds and at different levels will flourish.

Higher education (HED) has the important responsibility of training high - level qualified personnel with special expertise, developing science and technology and promoting the modernization drive. In the 1990s HED must be geared to the needs for accelerating the reform, opening up and the modernization drive. We should explore new approaches, enlarging the scale of development in education, making its structure more rational and markedly improving its quality and efficiency. The development of HED must depend mainly on internal efforts to improve efficiency.

To meet the challenge of the global revolution in technology, funds from both the central and local governments and other areas should be fully utilized to promote the development of about 100 important universities and certain key disciplines and specialities, so that by the next century, a number of universities and specialities will rank among the most advanced in the world in terms of teaching quality, scientific research and management.²

Education should be further opened to the outside world by strengthening international exchange and cooperation, boldly drawing on the successful experience of other countries in development and management of education.

3. REFORM IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR THE 90'S:

In the 1990s, along with the deepening of restructuring in the economy and politics and technology, comprehensive restructuring in education must be carried out step by step and in a coordinated way.

Restructuring of the educational system should be conducive to the continued development of education along socialist lines and to the training of builders of the country and

successors of the socialist cause who are developed morally, intellectually and physically. Restructuring should help governments at all levels and communities and teachers have to work hard to improve teaching quality, raise the level of scientific research, enhance educational efficiency and make education better serve the socialist modernization drive.

The mechanism for financing schools will be reformed. The current situation in which the state is the only sponsor of schools will be replaced by a new one in which the state will become the major sponsor, supplemented by a great variety of other sponsors in society. At the current stage, basic education should be chiefly sponsored by local governments; higher education will gradually become mainly the responsibility of the central, provincial and autonomous regional governments and governments of municipalities directly under the central government with various other sectors of society also contributing, and TVE and AED will mainly be sponsored by trades, enterprises and public institutions or jointly sponsored by all sectors of society.

Local governments will be responsible for making overall plans and for administering of education at the secondary level and below, under the guidance of the policies of the central government. The state will decide on the approximate length of schooling, the curriculum and its criteria, rules on the number of teachers and size of other staff a school can recruit, qualifications for teachers, and criteria for the salaries of teachers and staff. Governments at the provincial, autonomous regional and municipal level have the right to decide on the specific length of schooling, scale of yearly enrollment, teaching plans, selection and approval of textbooks prepared at the provincial level, and on the maximum number of teachers and their salaries. The rights of governments below the provincial level are to be determined by governments at the provincial, autonomous regional and municipal level.³ The various schools at the secondary level and below will adopt a principal (headmaster) responsibility system.

Secondary and primary schools are encouraged to set up community education organizations in cooperation with nearby

enterprises, public institutions, neighborhood committees or villagers' committees to give all sectors of society the opportunity to help support schools, participate in school management, help improve the learning environment and help secondary and primary education become more closely linked to the real world.

Higher education will be further restructured. Restructuring will be chiefly aimed at smoothing the relations between the governments and colleges, between the central and local governments, and between the State Education Commission and other ministries and commissions. The ultimate goal is to gradually establish a higher educational system under which universities can independently provide education geared to the needs of society under the leadership of the government.

Institutions of higher learning will be given greater freedom in enrolling students, changing the number of specialties, adjusting organizational structure, promoting and demoting cadres, using funds, granting professional title, paying salaries and engaging in international exchange cooperation in accordance with individual circumstances.

The government should alter its functions. Instead of exercising direct administration over higher education, it will carry out macro-management through legislation allocation of funds, planning, information service, policy guidance and essential administration.

The central government will continue to exercise direct management over some key universities which affect overall national economic and social development and play a leading role in higher education as well as, over a limited number of special universities which may be difficult or inconvenient for local governments to administer.

In the relationship between the State Education Commission (SEDC) and other ministries and commissions, SEDC is responsible for making overall plans, giving policy guidance, coordinating efforts, monitoring and assessment and providing essential services.

Nation-wide planning of student enrollment will be replaced by a new system, which combines national mandatory plan with guidance plans. For the present, the state will continue to guide enrollment through macro-control of the total number of students enrolled. The national mandatory plan will guarantee the supply of the people with professional skills needed for national key construction projects, national defence, culture and education, basic sciences, remote areas and sectors with harsh working conditions.

The government will no longer pay all the expenses of college students and a fee system will gradually be introduced. Higher education is non-compulsory, so students should in principle pay tuition and other costs themselves. Loan programmes will be launched to help students from financially disadvantaged families.

The government, enterprises, public institutions, societies of schools may all set up scholarship programmes for students of good character plus good academic record as well as, for those enrolled in majors which are associated with national priorities, specially for students who will work in harsh conditions upon graduation.

The postgraduate training system and the degree system will be improved. Pilot projects will be launched to improve the regulations governing authorization of an institution to confer master's degree and qualification of a professor to teach doctor's degree candidates. In addition, the system of quality control and evaluation will be strengthened.

The standards and methods for allocating funds will differ for schools of different categories and at different levels. Financing, which used to be based on the number of students, will be gradually reformed and replaced with a foundation system. In addition to budgetary allocations for education from the central and local governments, schools may raise funds in accordance with the law.

Restructuring of the internal management of schools will be actively pursued, with stress on the reform of the system of personnel and distribution. On the basis of determining the appropriate number of employees, a post responsibility system and contract system for teachers and staff will be instituted with remuneration varying according to work performance. Such reform is designed to eliminate egalitarianism, encourage teachers and other staff to show more enthusiasm for their work, change the internal operational mechanisms of schools, improve the conditions for school operation and raise efficiency in higher education through correct policy guidance, ideological education and material incentives.

Efforts to strengthen the implementation process legislation in education will be speeded up and a system for supervising the enforcement of these laws will be gradually established and improved so that education can be put under the supervision of the law. Laws and regulations on all aspects of education will be formulated and gradually improved. Efforts to draft the most basic and most urgent laws and regulations governing education will be speeded up so that by the end of the century a framework of laws and regulations regarding education will be in place. Local governments should proceed from actual conditions and formulate their own laws and regulations on education as soon as possible.⁴

CONCLUSION

We should strengthen education according to the Party's basic line: i.e. patriotism, community spirit and socialist ideology, contemporary and modern history and the present conditions in the country among children and young people. We should encourage students to understand practical problems with the Marxist stand, view points and methods, increase their solidarity with workers and peasants and learn to engage in practice as they mature.

More attention should be paid to expanding the ranks of teachers of ethics. Strengthening ethic education is the responsibility of all teachers. They should educate their students in ethics throughout the process of education, set a good example

themselves and enable students to develop in an all-round way.⁵

The philosophy of education should be further reformed and teaching contents and methodologies should be improved to prevent school education from being divorced from the needs of economic and social development to varying degrees. Teaching contents should be updated and the curriculum readjusted in accordance with the latest advances in modern science, technology and culture and in light of the actual needs of the socialist modernization drive.

The range of specialties available is too narrow and should be expanded and teaching should be more closely linked with practical work and training. Institutions of higher learning should strengthen cooperation with work units in society in carrying out training, so as to combine teaching with research and production.

Art education plays an important role in fostering student's aesthetic concepts and abilities, in development of high moral integrity and in training qualified personnel who have a well-developed way. We should increase our awareness of the importance of aesthetics, fully exploit the role of art education in teaching and education and conduct many types of activities in art education suited to schools of different types and at all levels.⁶

At present, China is in the process of modernization. We must put education at the top priority in order to speed up the country's modernization. Without education, there will be no builders of modernization.

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