EDUCATION IN CHINA SERIES



Basic Education in China



Libing Wang

ZHEJIANG UNIVERSITY PRESS
浙江大学出版社

Homa & Sekey Books
Paramus, New Jersey, U.S.A.

需要全本请访问 www.ertongbook.com

EDUCATION IN CHINA SERIES



BASIC EDUCATION IN CHINA

LIBING WANG

ZHEJIANG UNIVERSITY PRESS
浙江大学出版社

Homa & Sekey Books
Paramus, New Jersey, U.S.A.

Authors
Prof. Libing Wang
College of Education
Zhejiang University
Hangzhou 310028, China
E-mail: libingw@gmail.com

First published in August 2009
Copyright © 2010 by Zhejiang University Press and Homa & Sekey Books
All Rights Reserved

ISBN 978-7-308-06918-2
Zhejiang University Press
No. 148, Tianmushan Road, Xixi Campus, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou 310028, China
Tel: 86-571-88215650 Fax: 86-571-88215650
Email: zupress@zju.edu.cn Website: www.zjupress.com

ISBN 978-1-931907-58-3
Homa & Sekey Books
3rd Floor, North Tower, Mack-Cali Center III
140 East Ridgewood Ave., Paramus, NJ 07652 U.S.A.
Tel: 201-261-8810; 800-870-HOMA; Fax: 201-261-8890; 201-384-6055
Email: info@homabooks.com Website: www.homabooks.com

National Depository Library of China Cataloging-in-Publication Data Number: 2009130799

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Wang, Libing.
Basic education in China / Libing Wang. -- 1st American ed.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-1-931907-58-3 (hardcover)
1. Basic education--China. 2. Basic education--Government policy--China. 3. Education and state--China. I. Title.
LC1035.8.C6W36 2009
370.951--dc22

2009032874

Printed in China

图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

中国基础教育 = Basic Education in China：英文/
汪利兵著. —杭州：浙江大学出版社，2009.7
ISBN 978-7-308-06918-2

I. 中… II. 汪… III. 基础教育—研究—中国—英文
IV. G639.2

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2009)第 121804 号

Not for sale outside Mainland of China
此书仅限中国大陆地区销售

丛书主编 徐小洲 Carlo Socol

中国基础教育
汪利兵 著

责任编辑	陈晓菲
封面设计	俞亚彤
出版发行	浙江大学出版社 网址：http://www.zjupress.com Homa & Sekey Books 网址：http://www.homabooks.com
排　　版	杭州中大图文设计有限公司
印　　刷	杭州富春印务有限公司
开　　本	787mm×960mm 1/16
印　　张	11
字　　数	261 千
版 印 次	2009 年 9 月第 1 版 2009 年 9 月第 1 次印刷
书　　号	ISBN 978-7-308-06918-2 (浙江大学出版社) ISBN 978-1-931907-58-3 (Homa & Sekey Books)
定　　价	55.00 元

版权所有 翻印必究 印装差错 负责调换
浙江大学出版社发行部邮购电话 (0571)88925591

Contents

Series Editors' Preface……ix
Preface……xi

1 Pre-school Education……1

1.1 Responsibilities……1
1.2 Objectives and Guiding Principles……2
1.3 The Content of Pre-school Education……3
1.4 The Funding of Pre-school Education……8
1.5 The Operation of Kindergartens……10
1.6 Development of Pre-school Education in the New Century……13

2 School Admission Arrangements……17

2.1 School Catchment Area……17
2.2 Admission to Public Schools……19
2.3 Admission to Private Schools……21
2.4 Special Arrangements for Non-local Children……22
2.5 Admission to Senior Secondary Schools……24
2.6 Parental Choice……26

3 School Curriculum……29

3.1 Three-level Management of School Curriculum……29
3.2 The Structure of Basic Education Curriculum……32
3.3 National Curriculum Criteria……36
3.4 The Development and Regulation of School Textbooks……38
3.5 The Relevance to the World of Life……40
3.6 School-based Curriculum Development……41
3.7 Comprehensive Practice Activities……44

4 Financing of Basic Education……47

4.1 The Responsibility of the Central Government……47
4.2 The Responsibility of Local Governments……49

4.3 The Pay and Conditions of Teachers……50
4.4 School Operating Expenditure……53
4.5 School Capital Investment……56
4.6 Student Support System……58
4.7 Some Facts and Figures……60

5 Examinations and Assessments……65

5.1 The Development of JSECEs……65
5.2 Recent Reforms of JSECEs: the Case in Zhejiang Province……68
5.3 The Development and Reforms of SSECEs……71
5.4 The Development of University Entrance Examinations……73
5.5 New University Entrance Examination System in Zhejiang Province ……76
5.6 Student Assessment……79
5.7 Teacher and School Assessment……82

6 Teacher Education……87

6.1 Pre-service Teacher Education……87
6.2 Reforms on Pre-service Education of Primary School Teachers……90
6.3 Qualified Teacher Status……92
6.4 Induction Training of New Teachers……93
6.5 Teachers Continuing Education……95
6.6 National Teacher Education Network……99
6.7 Capacity Building of Teachers in Education Technology……102
6.8 Free Teacher Education Project……104
6.9 Teacher Training for the Implementation of New Curriculum Reforms ……106
6.10 Professional Master's Degree in Education……108

7 Special Education……111

7.1 General Guidelines……111
7.2 Modalities of Schooling……113
7.3 Special Education Curriculum……118
7.4 Teacher Training……122
7.5 The Case in Zhejiang Province……125
7.6 Future Directions……127

8 Basic Education of Rural-Urban Migrant Children……131

8.1 Background……131

8.2 National Policies……133
8.3 Local Responses……135
8.4 Innovative Practice in Schools……138
8.5 Future Directions……141

References……143
Index……149

Series Editors' Preface

Of all human activities education is among the highest and noblest. As a social factor, it has been seen as "an engine of social development", "a purifier of human harmony" and "an expression of culture". Without education, the prospects for humanity would be bleak and world prosperity might be a mere dream. Civilization, social development and personal advancement are continuous with education: they precede and follow it. Nations, families and individuals stake their hopes on education. Because of its special role at all levels of human progress, education has been given priority in all ages in countries the world over.

As a result, humanity has accumulated a wealth of positive experience and, in the world's long history, many intractable problems have been solved, setbacks have been tackled and challenges have been turned into opportunities. But we cannot rest on our laurels or stop addressing the present and the future. New challenges and problems have come as a consequence of the faster pace of change and expansion, which characterizes the new century. To promote steady and sustainable development and foster understanding among peoples in this increasingly global world of ours, we should never give up exploring new avenues and finding new opportunities. Education, as history shows, is perhaps the single best approach we can rely on to achieve our goals. With this background, mutual exchange and cooperation become all the more important.

China's rise in the recent past has benefited from educational development spanning a period of sixty years, beginning with the birth of the People's Republic of China. China has made considerable strides and achieved enviable goals in the field of education during often very difficult times. Now, with a population of about 1.3 billion, our country, which has the largest educational system in the world, is well on track in successfully achieving the "popularization of compulsory education" and the "massification of higher education". Some of China's achievements may surprise us: a modern educational system is basically in place; vocational and technical educational policy tries to meet the demands of social and economic development; the internationalization of education has set out along a broad avenue; educational policies and legislation are being regularly improved, etc. At the same time, however, as a developing country, China is facing many hurdles and challenges in her task of further developing the educational system. Education is part of China's overall

development, and as such it requires her own efforts, wisdom and innovation in order to set up and manage a modern educational system able to respond to the unique challenges she faces. To sustain development, however, China needs to learn from the experiences, the achievements, the research and experimentation of other countries, without underestimating in the process her own achievements and characteristics. In a word, since Chinese educational development will necessarily have a Chinese character, while at the same time being an inseparable part of the global educational system, we can expect China to play the role of a good citizen in the global village.

Mutual understanding is the precondition for international exchange and cooperation. However, up to now, foreigners have encountered many hurdles in trying to improve their knowledge of education in China. On the one hand, not many of them manage to achieve a working knowledge of the Chinese language and, on the other hand, there is an undeniable shortage of English literature taught in modern China. In order to help foreign friends and scholars know more about today's education in China, the Zhejiang University Seeco Educational Research Centre, which was established in 2007 to promote studies in the field of comparative education, has undertaken the task of producing the present *Education in China Series*. The various volumes endeavor to explain the context of education in China during the past sixty years, to introduce educational development in the present situation, to analyze the problems as they develop, and to look forward to the future of education in China in different areas, with each author offering his or her own original perspective. We hope that the series will help global society to better know the outline and features of modern education in China, that it will arouse interest in it, and will encourage readers to explore the legislation governing its development.

We are pleased to announce that the series has obtained the support of the General Administration of Press and Publication of the People's Republic of China, to whom we express our sincere gratitude. Many thanks are due to Zhejiang University Press and Homa & Sekey Books of U.S.A. for undertaking to publish the series. Finally, we would like to express sincere appreciation to the authors who compiled the books with true professionalism and selflessness, while handling busy schedules, and to all the friends and colleagues who have offered invaluable criticism, advice and encouragement.

Xiaozhou Xu & Carlo Socol
Hangzhou, China

Preface

In China, the term 'basic education' is normally used to include pre-school education, primary education, and academic-oriented secondary education (vocational secondary education is excluded). Basic education is an important part of China's national education system which also embraces secondary vocational and technical education, higher education, and adult education. In 1986, China officially introduced a 9-year compulsory education system in the country, which covers 6-year primary education and 3-year junior secondary education. In this sense, pre-school education and senior secondary education are not part of the compulsory education system, although great efforts have been made on the part of the government to promote the coverage of pre-school education and senior secondary education during the past decade.

The Legacy Before 1949

Efforts to establish a modern education system in China started in the late Qing Dynasty, the last feudal empire in China. In 1902, the then government of the Qing Dynasty issued China's first series of official documents on the establishment of a modern school system entitled *Royal Charters on School System*, which consisted of charters on the establishment of kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools, and higher education institutions. In these documents, the objectives, duration of study, entrance requirements, subjects of study of different levels of education institutions, and their connections were envisaged. However, due to lack of confidence and political endorsement, these charters were not able to be implemented as they had been planned.

The first Chinese modern education system that was put into force was the updated version of *Royal Charters on School System,* issued two years later in 1904. According to these documents, the education system in China should be divided into three levels, including primary education (age 7-16), secondary education (age 16-21) and higher education (age 21-). As far as primary education was concerned, there were also three sub-levels of institutions, namely kindergartens (under age 7), junior primary schools (age 7-12), and senior primary schools (age 12-16). The guiding principle for the 1904 school system was the so-called 'Zhongtixiyong', which means that it was based on

the tradition of Chinese culture to train students to become loyal to the existing feudal system, and at the same time draw experience from western countries. Literacy, moral education, and practical education were emphasized. Moreover, subjects in science and humanities, such as physics, chemistry, foreign languages, gymnastics, drawing and handcrafts were introduced in primary and secondary schools. The development of teaching pedagogy was also emphasized both in school classrooms and teacher training institutions. The issuance of the 1904 school system led to the termination of China's 1,900 years' tradition of examination-based education and official selection system in 1905 (Kejuzhidu), and marked the establishment of the modern Chinese school system.

With the outbreak of the Xinhai Revolution in 1911, the Qing Dynasty came to its end and China became a republic. In order to restore the education system and make it more adaptable to the newly-established democracy and republic spirit, the government set up the Ministry of Education to prepare the reforms of the old school systems. In July 1912, a provisional national education conference was convened with the participation of social celebrities and education specialists from across the country to discuss the reform of the school system. Based on the outcome of the conference and after wide consultation, *Order on the School System* was issued by the then Ministry of Education in September 1912, which was followed by a series of regulations on different levels of educational institutions. In 1913, the above-cited documents were synthesized to make up the framework of 1913 school system which was implemented until 1922. The 1913 school system maintained the three-level school system but shortened the duration of study. Primary education was restructured into two sub-levels, including junior primary school (age 6-10) and senior primary school (age 10-13). The age cohort of secondary school was subsequently changed to age 13-17, while higher education institutions began to take students at age 17. The guiding principle of the 1913 school system was to establish a modern school system which was compatible with the new democratic and republic system. More attention was paid to strengthening the link between education and real social life, citizenship education, and pragmatic education.

The 1913 school system was upgraded in 1922 when the government introduced a new school system based on an American model. The duration of study for primary education was further cut to 6 years, including 4-year junior primary school and 2-year senior primary school. Secondary education was extended from 4 years to 6 years with a clear division of junior secondary and senior secondary schools. Curriculum framework and subject standards were

also revised to reflect the new demands and social reality at that time. Generally speaking, the 1922 school system was a result of China's attempt to modernize its education system by borrowing experience from developed countries, especially from the United States. John Dewey's idea and progressive education were very influential in many schools and teacher training institutions in the country.

It was obvious that official regulations on the school system had been developed and renovated since the late Qing Dynasty and throughout the first republic period before 1949. However, due to the political instability and financial incapability caused by social unrest and the Second World War during that period, the participation rate of the school system remained a very low level. Up to 1949, the year of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the total primary school enrollment was 24 million, only 20 percent of the school age population. The total enrollment of junior and senior secondary schools were 0.925 million and 0.315 million respectively. 80 percent of the population in China were illiterate.[1]

Basic Education in the New China

After nearly half a century's radical social changes affected by the Second World War and the civil war, the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949. Education was regarded as one of the key issues and challenges facing the new government. In October 1951, the new government issued an important official document entitled *Decisions on the Reforms of School System* to start the education reconstruction process. The document started by saying that the old system had the following defects: firstly, training schools and classes for workers and peasants did not have a place in the school system; secondly, the division of junior and senior primary schools with total duration of study for 6 years prevented the children from labor families from completing the whole stage of primary education; thirdly, technical schools had not been institutionalized to meet the demands of the country. Therefore, the following policies were proposed.

- Nursery education for 3- to 7-year-olds should be implemented in nursery schools, which should first be provided in urban areas with necessary resources and then spread to other locations.

[1] See National Center for Education Development Research (2001), *Studies on the Education Structure System in Contemporary China*. Retrieved 17 March, 2009, from http://www.cecs.edu.cn/ M_sub01/index05.03.asp

- Primary education should cover school-age children as well as youths and adults. Primary schools should provide primary education for school-age children, while Accelerated Schools for Workers and Peasants (ASWP), part-time schools, and literacy schools should provide primary education for out-of-school youths and adults.
- The duration of study in primary schools should be 5 years starting from 7-year-olds. Primary schools were no longer divided into junior and senior primary schools and should operate as a single school. Primary school graduates could continue their study in secondary schools or other forms of secondary education institutions according to their results in the graduation examinations. Primary schools should also set up vocational training classes to prepare those who could not continue their study in ordinary secondary schools.
- Secondary education should be provided in secondary schools, Accelerated Secondary Schools for Workers and Peasants (ASSWP), part-time secondary schools, and secondary vocational schools. The first three kinds of secondary schools should provide students with comprehensive education, and the last one should provide secondary vocational education for students according to the needs of the country.
- The duration of study in secondary schools should be 6 years, which was divided into 3-year junior secondary schools and 3-year senior secondary schools. The normal starting ages for junior secondary schools and senior secondary schools were 12 and 15 respectively. There were selective examination procedures for students who wanted to further their studies in upper level schools.[1]

In 1958, in order to further promote reforms of the school system, the government began to take the policy of encouraging provincial authorities to conduct pilot programs concerning school system reforms. In 1959, the government went on to issue *Decisions on the Experimentation of School System Reforms*, which stipulated that provincial governments should take the responsibility of selecting certain primary and secondary schools in their areas to conduct school system reforms. Subsequently, various forms of school systems were experimented across the country. Up to April 1960, the kinds of school systems experimented included: 4-year secondary schools; 5-year secondary

[1] See State Council (1951), "Decisions on the Reforms of School System", *People's Daily*, 3 October, 1951.

schools; 3+2 secondary schools; 4+2 secondary schools; 5+4+2 primary and secondary schools; 9+2 primary and secondary schools; all 10-year schools; all 9-year schools, etc. According to the statistics of 27 provinces, the number of secondary schools involved in the experimentation reached 3,495, 18.6 percent of the total number of secondary schools in the surveyed provinces.

A task force was set up in 1964 to investigate the reforms of the school system. The task force submitted two reports later in the same year with the following recommendations.

- The number of secondary schools with 3+3 model should gradually be reduced and transformed into 4+2 model.
- Experimentation of all 5-year secondary school model and the division of specialization between science and humanities for senior secondary school students should continue.
- The basic school system should be 5 years for primary school, 4 years for junior secondary school, and 2 years for senior secondary school.

After the turbulent decade of the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976, the government started to rebuild its education system. In January 1978, the government issued *Tentative Teaching Plan for 10-year Full-time Primary and Secondary Schools*, which clearly stated that the school system should be 5 years for primary schools, 3 years for junior secondary schools, and 2 years for senior secondary schools. In December 1980, the government issued another important document entitled *Some Decisions on the Popularization of Primary Education*, which stated that the country prepared to adopt 12-year primary and secondary education system. In the transitional period, 5-year primary schools were allowed to exist along with the new 6-year primary schools which were mainly piloted in urban areas. The document asked the Ministry of Education to lay out new school system reform plans and unify the country's basic school system. Since then, the majority of large and medium-sized cities adopted 6-year primary school model, and senior secondary schools were restored to 3 years. The 6+3+3 model of school system became more and more popular in the years afterwards.

The Enforcement of Compulsory Education

The year 1986 can be seen as a milestone in the development of basic education in China when *Compulsory Education Act of the People's Republic of China* was passed through the National People's Congress, which paved the

way for continuous quantitative expansion of compulsory education in the years afterwards. The main content of the Act can be summed up as follows.

- China would introduce 9-year compulsory education. Provincial governments should determine their own pace and strategies to achieve this goal according to their own conditions of economic and cultural development.
- All children at the age of 6 should start to receive compulsory education, regardless of their gender and ethnic backgrounds. In areas without necessary facilities and resources, the starting year of compulsory education could be postponed to the age of 7.
- The 9-year compulsory education should be divided into two stages, including primary education and junior secondary education. Efforts should be made to increase the coverage of primary education first, and then the coverage of junior secondary education. The school system should be decided by the central education authority.
- The development of compulsory education should be under the general leadership of the central government with local governments responsible for the organization and management of compulsory education in their own regions. The central education authority should determine the teaching systems, content of study, and curriculum framework, and examine school textbooks.
- Local governments should properly locate primary and junior secondary schools in their jurisdictional areas, so that school-age children could go to nearby schools. Local governments should also establish special schools or classes for children with physical or mental disabilities. Compulsory education facilities should be incorporated into rural and urban development planning.
- No tuition fees should be imposed on students taking compulsory education. The government should set up scholarships to help students with financial difficulties. The central and local governments should be responsible for the funding of recurrent expenditure and capital expenditure to guarantee the operation of compulsory education. The growth of government expenditure on compulsory education should be higher than the growth of government recurrent income. The government expenditure on education per-capita should be increased gradually. Local governments could impose Extra Charges of Education Funds in rural and urban areas to supplement the regular funding of compulsory

education in their areas. The central government should provide financial subsidies for the development of compulsory education in less developed and minority areas, and encourage donations from social organizations and individuals.

- The government should take necessary measures to strengthen and develop teacher education, so that primary school teachers can have the graduation certificates of secondary normal schools, and junior secondary school teachers can have graduation certificates of 3-year higher teachers colleges. The access to the teaching profession should be subject to government regulation.

Soon after the promulgation of the Compulsory Education Act, the government proposed that in order to promote the development of compulsory education, there should be flexible arrangements for different regions across the country. In economically and culturally developed areas, it was required that the 9-year compulsory education should be achieved in about 1990. In moderately-developed areas, it was required that 6-year compulsory education should be achieved in about 1990, and 9-year compulsory education be achieved in about 1995. In economically and culturally less developed areas, attempts should be made to achieve 6-year compulsory education at the end of the 20th century. Local governments were also asked to take action according to local circumstances.

The implementation of compulsory education in China was accompanied by the country's campaign to eliminate adult illiteracy. In 1988, the government issued *Regulation on the Elimination of Illiteracy*, which provides that all illiterate citizens between the ages of 15 to 40 should have the right and responsibility to receive literacy education. Illiterate citizens above the age of 40 are encouraged to take literacy education. Literacy education should be related to life skill development. The regulation set up national criteria of literacy and asked local governments to evaluate the progress of literacy programs according to the criteria. Local governments should provide financial support for teacher training, textbook development, and other related activities.

To facilitate the development of compulsory and literacy education across the country, the central education authority introduced a national monitoring system in 1993. Guidelines on the evaluation indicators, criteria, procedures, and the recognition of evaluation results have been developed to evaluate the development of compulsory education and literacy education at county or district level. In 1994, the then State Education Commission (now known as

Ministry of Education) issued *Tentative Regulation on the Evaluation of Compulsory Education*, which has become the official basis for the evaluation of compulsory education in the country.

Quantitative Expansion of Compulsory Education

After the establishment of compulsory education system in China in 1986 and the introduction of monitoring system for the development of compulsory and literacy education in 1993, great progress had been made in the quantitative development of compulsory education before the end of the 20th century. It is understandable that at the early stage, the focus of attention was put on the quantitative development of compulsory education. This can be seen in the following sets of indicators used by the government to monitor and evaluate the progress of compulsory and literacy education at county, city, or district level.

- Coverage level. The sub-indicators of this include participation rate of school-age children and those with physical or mental disabilities, dropout rate, completion rate, and percentage of illiterate persons in the age group of 15-40.
- Profiles of teaching staff. This covers teacher/student ratio, teachers' qualifications, the training of head teachers, and teachers' professional development.
- Profiles of school infrastructure. This covers school space per student, teaching facilities, the application of ICT, the construction of outside learning bases, library book holdings, physical education facilities, teaching instruments for music and art, and healthcare facilities.
- School financing. The growth of local government expenditure on school education should be higher than the growth of local government recurrent income. Expenditure on education per student, the income of teachers, and school recurrent expenditure per student should increase year by year, etc.
- Teaching quality. This covers students' behavior, the guarantee of teaching time, elimination of students' violation of laws and regulations, completion rate of students, etc.
- Literacy education. This includes consolidation rate of the people getting literate, and the illiteracy rate of adults.

The procedure of the evaluation starts with self-evaluations at county, city, or district level, followed by re-evaluations, inspections and confirmations