



EDUCATION IN CHINA

A Snapshot



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Education in China

A SNAPSHOT

Foreword

In 2015, three economies in China participated in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment, or PISA, for the first time: Beijing, a municipality, Jiangsu, a province on the eastern coast of the country, and Guangdong, a southern coastal province. Shanghai, which, like Beijing, is also a Chinese megacity of over 20 million people, has participated in PISA since 2009. These four economies alone are home to more than 233 million people – more than the entire population of Brazil, nearly three times the population of Germany and nearly four times the population of France.

What do we know about the largest education system in the world? A system that is educating 260 million young people, and that employs 15 million teachers? Not very much. This paper aims to change that. It provides a broad overview of how China's education system is organised and operates, and how reforms, both past and current, have reshaped education in China over time. The report then examines in greater detail education in the four economies within China that participated in PISA 2015. It provides the context in which China's participation in PISA – and its results in PISA – should be interpreted.

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Chapter 1

Organisation and management of education in China



Introduction

The People's Republic of China (hereafter “China”) is the world's most populous country, with a population of over 1.3 billion, covering approximately 9.6 million square kilometres. Since the implementation of economic reform and opening policies in 1978, China has become one of the world's fastest-growing major economies. With the GDP growth rate averaging between 7% and 8% a year in recent decades, China has become the world's second largest economy by nominal total GDP (World Bank, 2015).

Despite China's emergence as one of the world's most influential economies, relatively little is known in other countries about China's education system or about how its students learn. This report seeks to provide an overview of education in China today, including mechanisms the country uses to manage its education system, as well as current policies and reforms. It focuses on education in mainland China, and puts a spotlight on the four provinces and municipalities that participated in the 2015 edition of the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). PISA is a triennial international survey

which aims to evaluate education systems worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students. These districts represent not only the economic heartland of emerging China, but also important regions for education innovation and development.

THE STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

This report is organised into six chapters. The first outlines China's national education system and how it works, including the organisation of the system, and how the government deals with educational development, reform and quality improvement, teachers, students, curriculum and teaching. The second chapter introduces current education reforms and relevant nationwide policies, including the challenge of balancing educational development in rural and urban areas, and reforms of the examinations. The remaining four chapters are each devoted to the four participating provinces and municipalities in PISA 2015.

Box 1.1 Participation in PISA

Shanghai has participated in PISA since 2009. In 2015, China expanded its participation in PISA to include Beijing, Shanghai, Jiangsu and Guangdong. Beijing and Shanghai are municipalities administered by the Chinese central government; they are also megacities boasting populations

of over 20 million people. Jiangsu is a province on the eastern coast of China. Guangdong is a southern coastal province. Hong Kong has participated in PISA since 2000, while Macau has participated in PISA since 2006. Both are special administrative regions of China.

Basic statistics relating to Chinese municipalities and provinces participating in PISA can be found below:

Municipality/Province	Population (in million)	Area (in km ²)	GDP (in CNY trillion)	GDP per capita (in CNY)
Beijing municipality	21 516	16 410	2.133	99 136
Shanghai municipality	24 257	6 340	2.356	97 127
Jiangsu province	79 600	102 600	6.509	81 771
Guangdong province	107 240	179 800	6.779	63 213

Note: All data are of 2014.

Sources:

Beijing Bureau of Statistics (2015), “北京市2014年国民经济和社会发展统计公报” [Beijing Economic and Social Development Statistical Bulletin 2014], www.bjstats.gov.cn/tjsj/tjgb/ndgb/201511/t20151124_327764.html.

Guangdong Bureau of Statistics (2015), “广东2014年国民经济和社会发展统计公报” [Guangdong Economic and Social Development Statistical Bulletin 2014], www.gdstats.gov.cn/tjzl/tjgb/201507/t20150722_310084.html.

Jiangsu Bureau of Statistics (2015), “江苏2014年国民经济和社会发展统计公报” [Jiangsu Economic and Social Development Statistical Bulletin 2014], www.jssb.gov.cn/tjxxgk/xwyfb/tjgbfb/sjgb/201502/t20150217_254151.html.

Shanghai Bureau of Statistics (2015), “上海2014年国民经济和社会发展统计公报” [Shanghai Economic and Social Development Statistical Bulletin 2014], www.shanghai.gov.cn/nw2/nw2314/nw2319/nw11494/nw12335/u21aw994813.html.

China's education system

China has the largest education system in the world. With almost 260 million students and over 15 million teachers in about 514 000 schools (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2014), excluding graduate education institutions, China's education system is not only immense but diverse. Education is state-run, with little involvement of private providers in the school sector, and increasingly decentralised. County-level governments have primary responsibility of the governing and delivery

of school education. For the most part, provincial authorities administer higher education institutions. In recent years, the Ministry of Education has shifted from direct control to macro-level monitoring of the education system. It steers education reform via laws, plans, budget allocation, information services, policy guidance and administrative means (National Centre for Education Development Research, 2008).

Box 1.2 Administrative divisions in China

To manage the vast territory and huge population, China's Constitution provides for three levels of administration, excluding the central government: provincial level, county level and township level. Of these, the provincial-level division is the highest level of classification. The primary responsibility for education lies with counties for managing and delivering primary and secondary education, whereas higher education falls under the jurisdiction of provincial authorities.

Provincial-level divisions are directly administered by the central government. There are four kinds of provincial-level divisions: province, municipality, autonomous region and special administered region. Currently, there are 23 provinces, 4 municipalities, 5 autonomous regions and 2 special administered regions.

Provincial-level governments have the right to exercise their own management policies within the purview of the law and under regulations imposed by the central government. Provincial-level administrative divisions can further be subdivided into county levels and township levels.

Provinces and municipalities have their own local governments. They elect delegates to the National People's Congress (NPC), which governs the administration of

economic, social and cultural affairs. A municipality has the same political, economic and jurisdictional rights as a province. The four municipalities are: Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin and Chongqing.

As of August 2015, there were 2 852 county-level divisions in China. The responsibility of basic education lies with county-level administrations, hence efforts are made to integrate the development of education and the labour force with the development of the local economy and the advancement of culture, morals and living standards for all China's citizens.

The autonomous regions, like provinces and municipalities, have their own local governments. The central government has granted the autonomous regions more legislative rights because they are home to large populations of minority ethnic groups. The special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau are governed by the principle "one China, two systems". This principle guarantees autonomy to these regions while maintaining their place in a unified China. Thus Hong Kong operates under the jurisdiction of the Hong Kong Basic Law and Macau operates under the jurisdiction of the Macau Basic Law—constitutional documents approved by the NPC that preserve a high degree of governing autonomy in both regions.

Source: National Centre for Education Development Research (2008), *National Report on Mid-Term Assessment of Education for All in China*, Beijing, China, http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/China/China_EFA_MDA.pdf.

THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

In China, students usually enrol in pre-school at age two or three, and leave pre-school at the age of six. Pre-school education is not compulsory, and many pre-schools are privately owned. However, the government has taken on

a more proactive role in promoting access following a national commitment to progressively universalise one to three years of pre-school by 2020. The details of the government's efforts to develop the pre-school education system are summarised in Box 1.3.

FIGURE 1.1 CHINA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM ORGANISATION

Age	Schooling	
27	22	PhD programme
26	21	
25	20	
24	19	Master's programme
23	18	
22	17	
21	16	University (bachelor's degree) and vocational college
20	15	
19	14	
18	13	
17	12	
16	11	Senior secondary school
15	10	Junior secondary school
14	9	
13	8	
12	7	
11	6	Primary school
10	5	
9	4	
8	3	
7	2	
6	1	Pre-school and kindergarten
5		
4		
3		

Source: OECD (2015), *OECD Economic Surveys: China*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eco_surveys-chn-2015-en.

In China, students must complete nine years of compulsory education. Most students spend six years in primary school, though a few school systems use a five-year cycle for primary school. Primary education starts at age six for most children. This is followed by three to four years of junior secondary education. Before the 1990s, secondary schools recruited students on the basis of an entrance examination. To emphasise the compulsory nature of junior secondary schools, and as a part of the effort to orient education away from examination performance and towards a more holistic approach to learning, the government has replaced the entrance examination with a policy of mandatory enrolment based on area of residence (Schleicher and Wang, 2014). The gross enrolment ratio for primary education in 2014 was 103% compared with 104% in 2006, while for secondary education gross enrolment ratio was 94% compared with 64% in 2006 (UNESCO-UIS, 2016)

After finishing compulsory education, students can choose whether to continue with senior secondary education. Senior secondary education takes three years. There are five types of senior secondary

schools in China: general senior secondary, technical or specialised secondary, adult secondary, vocational secondary and crafts schools. The last four are referred to as secondary vocational schools. Students undergo a public examination called *Zhongkao* before entering senior secondary schools, and admission depends on one's score on this examination. The government uses examination results from *Zhongkao* to assign students to different senior secondary schools.

China has made significant efforts to expand participation in secondary vocational schools in recent years in order to meet the country's fast-evolving economic and manpower needs. In 2014, secondary vocational schools accounted for a little less than 22% of total senior secondary school enrolment in China (UNESCO-UIS, 2016). Although senior secondary education is not part of compulsory education in China, in 2014, 95% of junior secondary graduates continued their study in senior secondary schools (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2015). This figure is notable because in 2005 only around 40% of junior secondary graduates attended senior secondary schools (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2005).

Box 1.3 Government efforts to reform pre-school education

In China, pre-school education is an important social service provided by the government. County-level governments administer pre-school education, while the central government formulates laws, regulations, policies and development plans. Local governments at all levels are responsible for coordinating the development of regional plans and specific policies, and they are also responsible for the daily management of kindergartens. The Ministry of Education is responsible for the formulation of policies and standards, as well as the management and professional guidance of the kindergartens.

To meet the education needs of pre-school children, the Chinese government plans to universalise pre-school education by 2020. To achieve this goal, county-level governments implemented the Three-Year Pre-school Education Action Plan. This law requires that governments

at all levels actively increase budgetary investment in pre-schools. As a result, local governments across China have built a large number of public kindergartens. At the same time, the central government has encouraged private individuals and groups to establish private kindergartens. In 2014, the gross enrolment rate in three-year pre-school education reached 70%, a figure which represents an increase of nearly 20% over five years. (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2015).

In order to improve the quality of pre-school education, the Ministry of Education has issued other relevant documents such as Regulations on the Management of the Kindergarten, Kindergarten Working Regulations, and Professional Standards for Kindergarten Teachers. Through these documents, Chinese governments at all levels are strengthening oversight of kindergarten enrolment, safety, student health, education quality and so on.

Tertiary education in China experienced a huge expansion in the first decade of the 21st century. The gross enrolment ratio of tertiary education throughout China increased from 21% in 2006 to 39% in 2014 (UNESCO-UIS, 2016). During this period, various institutions and programmes were established and international mobility and cooperation were promoted dramatically. As a result, the tertiary education system became more diverse. In China, undergraduate degrees

require four years of study. Associate degrees take three years to complete, and students spend two to three years completing a master's degree. A doctoral degree requires five years of study after a bachelor's degree, and three years after a master's. In addition to these tertiary education programmes, Chinese students can also enrol in professional higher education programmes, which normally take three years.

Box 1.4 Where are the 15-year-olds?

Most Chinese students start primary school when they are six or seven years old, as is required by the Law of Compulsory Education. After nine years of compulsory education, students will choose whether to pursue further education at the age of 15. As a matter of course, some 15-year-old students do not enrol in secondary school. For those that do, they can opt between the general (academic) track or vocational track. Additionally, there are four kinds of general secondary schools: regular senior secondary schools, combined senior secondary schools, regular high schools and 12-year schools which enrol students starting in primary school. In 2013, 8.2 million Chinese students were enrolled in regular senior secondary education, and 6.7 million were enrolled in secondary vocational education.

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China (2014), *China Statistical Yearbook 2014*, www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj/2014/indexeh.htm.

However, the number of students graduating from junior secondary schools in 2012 was about 16.6 million, which means about 10% of graduating students did not attend school after compulsory education (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2014).

Until 2014, students were permitted to sit for the college entrance examination only at their place of *hukou* registration. This policy had immense implications for migrant children, who had to return to their home provinces in order to continue their educations. Beginning in 2014, some local governments began implementing changes so that children of longer term-migrants could sit for college entrance examination in their hosting provinces.

Admissions to undergraduate programmes are based on students' college entrance examination (*gaokao*) scores. A few exceptional cases are considered without the

examination scores. Admissions at the graduate level are based on another entrance examination. However, some students are admitted due to recommendations.

Box 1.5 Admission to higher education

Gaokao, or the National College Entrance Examination, is required for admission to higher education in China. Students take this exam after completing secondary school.

The Chinese Ministry of Education works closely with provincial education authorities, universities and college sectors to set all policy matters relating to higher education enrolment, and to assure that enrolment policy falls in line with central government priorities. The Ministry of Education oversees policy implementation, and sets guidelines for senior secondary curriculum content and examinations. The Ministry also oversees *gaokao* examination content. The provincial education authorities are responsible for *gaokao* student applications, conducting examinations, managing enrolment and setting policy according to provincial needs under the guidance of the

Ministry of Education. Universities bear the third level of administration responsibility for enrolling students according to the guidelines set by the Ministry of Education.

For universities administered at the national level, the Ministry of Education sets enrolment quotas in consultation with each university. Universities administered at the provincial level follow enrolment plans that are developed by the provincial education authority and approved by the Ministry of Education. A complex matrix of provincial quotas, university quotas and subject quotas is negotiated annually between universities and provincial authorities. While the university sector expresses some autonomy in the enrolment of students, regulating quotas is ultimately a decision made by the Ministry of Education, with flexibility mainly given to private colleges and joint Chinese-foreign educational programmes.

THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

The Ministry of Education of People's Republic of China is the agency of the State Council that oversees education throughout the country. State Council is the chief administrative authority in China and is chaired by the Premier. It is responsible for carrying out the policies of the Communist Party of China as well as the regulations and laws adopted by the National People's Congress. Its responsibilities can be found in Annex A. Currently, there are 27 departments, whose functions are described in Annex B.

At the provincial level in China, there are departments of education or commissions that are in charge of education. At the county level, bureaus of education are in charge. Policies and strategies designed by the Ministry of Education are implemented by local departments of education, or universities under its direct management. Local education authorities, departments and bureaus of education often formulate policy documents that correspond to national policy and include local adjustments and guidelines for specific implementation. As policies are implemented by local governments, more practical guidelines are added. As such, policies generated by the central government aim to set general goals rather than dictate specific methods. By the time these policies and strategies arrive in the schools and other relevant institutions, they include practical guidelines.

Currently, the Ministry of Education directly manages 32 educational organisations and 75 universities. These organisations promote a wide range of educational activities, such as educational research, educational publishing and media, service and associations. Some of these organisations play important roles in operating the whole education system.

LAWS AND OTHER REGULATIONS CONCERNING EDUCATION

The Chinese government assigns a high value to education. It holds the belief that education is the basis of national development and modernisation. In China, there are many laws and regulations in education. They are regarded as effective ways of steering and monitoring implementation across a large and complex system. The government uses laws and regulations to protect access to education, and to guarantee high-quality education. The Ministry of Education often drafts these laws, and submits them for approval by the National People's Congress. Once approved, the State Council enacts the law. Finally, the National People's Congress formalises local policies and implementation measures at the respective levels.

The Law on Compulsory Education enacted, in 1986, was a milestone for China. According to this law, all school-age children with Chinese nationality have the right to receive compulsory education; and parents are responsible for enrolling their children in school and making sure they finish nine years of compulsory schooling. This law established a comprehensive system, and described rules for schools, teachers, teaching and learning, as well as education financing and the legal responsibilities of social sectors. The law was revised in 2006, and it now stipulates that all students in compulsory education are exempted from tuition and miscellaneous fees. The 2015 version of the law stipulates that text books can be priced only at marginal profit.

The Chinese government sometimes supplements education laws with regulations. In 1995, for example, Regulations on the Qualifications of Teachers was issued as a supplement to the Teachers Law of the People's

Republic of China. This regulation provided more details about acceptable types of teaching qualifications, prerequisites, exams and teaching credentials, which facilitated practical implementation.

MANAGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION

China's education system has undergone continuous reforms since the early 1980s. From expansion of access to promotion of quality education as a core value, the government regularly adjusts and advances education policy to make the system compatible with the country's social and economic development, as well as new education needs and trends. Within the Ministry of Education, the Department of Development and Planning is responsible for national educational development. In 2010, the department proposed the National Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020). This document is a strategic plan for reform and development of education at all levels in China during these years. It has become the most important guidance document in Chinese education. It delineates national strategies, tasks and system reforms.

Local Chinese governments manage their development using a plan called the Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development. These plans are issued by the State Council. They are sometimes called Five-Year Guidelines instead of Five-Year Plans to distinguish China's socialist market economy from planned economy. The development of education is always a part of the Five-Year Guideline, which always includes basic strategies for educational development. Following the release of the Five-Year Guideline, the Ministry of Education formulates the Five-Year Guideline for National Education Development in which it delineates educational development goals for the next five years. At the end of this period, progress is analysed and evaluated. The results of this evaluation, in addition to other inputs like the school-age population forecast and plans for major educational projects at the provincial levels, help officials formulate the next Five-Year Guideline. The current 13th Five-Year Guideline covers the period of 2016-2020.

Apart from the Five-Year Guideline, other comprehensive educational development and reform guidelines may also be published according to need. For instance, in 2004 the Ministry of Education and the Western Development Office of the State Council issued the 2004-2010 Education Development Plan of the Western Region to help develop education in China's relatively underdeveloped western regions.

The government considers both scale expansion and quality improvement when formulating major strategies for educational reform and development. Proposed plans always include quantitative developing plans as well as working plans for quality improvement.

In addition, officials set standards for various types of educational institutions in order to guarantee the quality of education. Most of the standards clearly state mandated requirements for infrastructure, teachers, staff, management and funding.

MANAGING EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND REFORM

Massive reforms have been undertaken in the education system in China at the national level in the past two decades. At the same time, China has experienced rapid economic growth and comprehensive social transformation. This section explains how education policies and reforms are implemented.

The Department of Policies and Regulations in the Ministry of Education is in charge of educational reform policies and strategies, including the research and survey of relevant issues. The policies developed by this department are usually large-scale and comprehensive in nature. Other departments in the Ministry of Education also draft policies on education issues according to the current situation, such as the Department of Teachers or the Department of Elementary Education. All of these departments work together to carry out national reforms. Policies are never decided alone by the department in charge. Often, draft proposals are posted on the Ministry of Education website for public comments.

Every year, all the departments in the Ministry of Education set their respective working priorities according to the Ministry of Education's priorities and the current situation in the country. All policies are published in the *Ministry of Education Bulletin* and sent to provincial bureaus of education, who develop their provincial-level policies according to local context. Then the policies are transmitted to lower-level governments or to relevant institutions for implementation.

To further promote education reform and comprehensively implement the National Medium and Long-Term Educational Reform and Development Programme (2010-2020), the Ministry of Education established the Department of Comprehensive Reform in 2012. This new department undertakes the daily work of the National Education System Reform Leading Group, which develops strategies and policies, helps implement reforms, inspects the progress of pilot programmes and publicises reforms.

For each reform measure, officials conduct educational research to identify causes and potential solutions to existing educational problems. Policies are designed accordingly. In general, officials carry out pilot experiments of new policies before implementation. Officials choose one or several municipalities or provinces for these pilots. After analysing experiment results and the implementation experience, the government introduces the reforms nationwide. In most cases, the

central government develops policies that serve as general guidelines, while the local governments develop more practical policies on how to implement the reform according to their different circumstances.

The State Council provides important leadership in education. Education is central to China's deepening economic and social reforms. A major reform of the education system may require extensive adjustments of various sectors of society. Thus, when the reform is ready for implementation, it is announced by the State Council. The State Council devises policies and strategies required by the new reform and transmits these directly to local governments instead of bureaus of education.

EDUCATIONAL INSPECTION

The Office of National Education Inspectorate, which was re-established as a department in the Ministry of Education in 1986, is the agency that manages national educational inspection. In 2016, the office was renamed the Bureau of Education Inspections. It also serves as the Office of Education Inspection Committee of State Council. China's educational inspection system consists of four administrative levels covering all provinces. The responsibility of the Bureau of Education Inspections is not only to monitor and examine the implementation of state laws, regulations, principles and policies, but also to evaluate and provide useful feedback to lower-level governments and institutions. The bureau sets standards and procedures for inspection, and organises inspections at every level. In addition, the bureau is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the quality of different types of education institutions, as well as setting standards and procedures for quality evaluation.

After every inspection exercise, comments and feedback are forwarded to schools or lower-level governments. In addition, the results of the inspections are publicly reported. Education quality reports are published, and they serve as an important reference for the government's future work.

Special inspections are conducted according to the imperatives set by current reforms or in case of emergencies. At present, four special subjects are being inspected; three of these subjects are relevant to compulsory education in rural areas. The first is improving basic school conditions, like buildings and facilities, in poor areas. The second subject is equitable development of compulsory education, aimed at reducing gaps in performance between rural and urban areas, through more effective and equitable fiscal transfers. The third

is a nutrition improvement programme for compulsory education students in rural areas. The last item is the safety of school buses. This project was undertaken after several school bus accidents.

China's educational inspection system itself is being reformed currently. The reform of the inspection system is recognised as a breakthrough in transforming the management role of the government in education. This reform is also an important means to guaranteeing the achievement of educational development goals. Several policies have been adopted that will transform the inspection system. They are described in Chapter 2.

EDUCATION FINANCING AND MANAGEMENT

State budgetary allocation is the main source of funds for education in China. China's central treasury and local treasuries contribute to education funding. This arrangement is in line with a policy that encourages diverse resource mobilisation, as delineated in Article 54 of the Education Law.

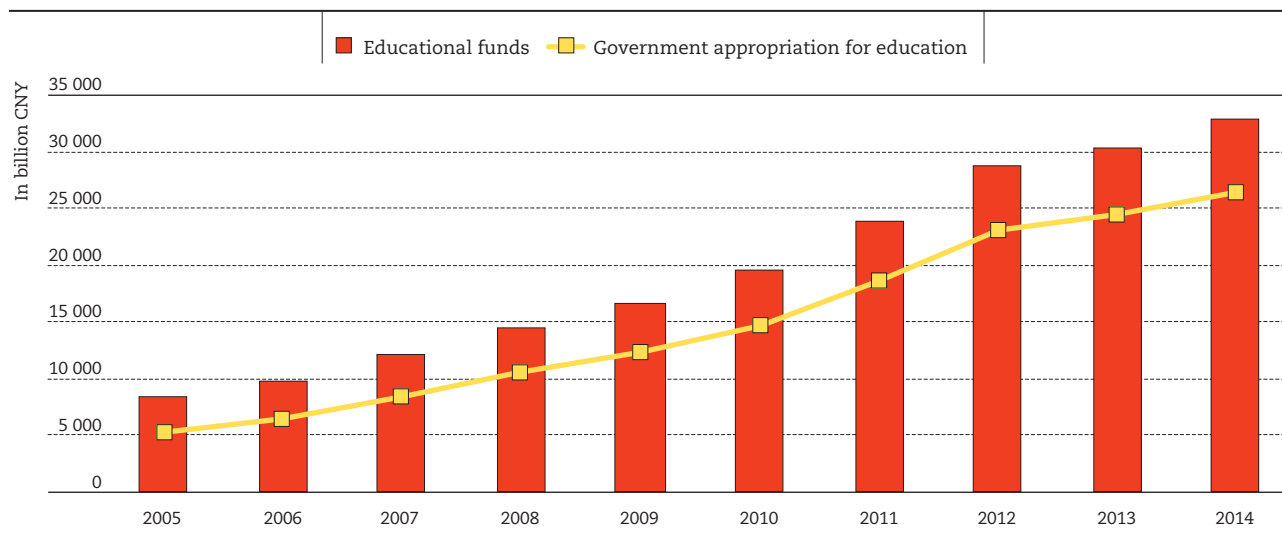
Investment in the education system in absolute terms in China has continued to increase at a high rate, as shown in Figure 1.2. China's investment in education has increased at a rate of 19% on average in the last ten years. This trend of increased investment is due to government laws and policies. The Education Law requires increased government appropriations for education at all levels proportional to the growth of the national economy. The State Council is tasked with determining the appropriate proportional increase in government appropriations for education. Therefore China's educational expenditure per student, as well as teacher salaries, should see continued growth.

Meanwhile, the Educational Law also stipulates that government appropriation for education as percentage of GDP should also continue to grow in accordance with the country's economic development and revenue growth. As shown in Figure 1.3, education appropriations reached the government goal of over 4% of GDP in 2012, which was set by the National Medium and Long-Term Educational Reform and Development Programme (2010-2020).

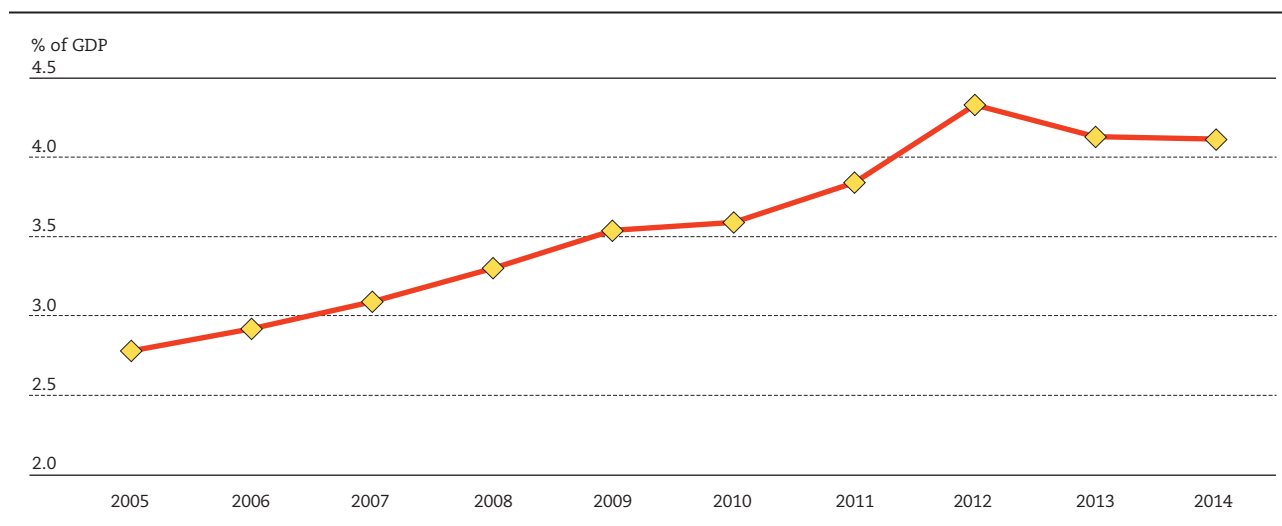
The management of educational funds involves three major tasks: fundraising, appropriation and supervision. The Department of Finance within the Ministry of Education is in charge of these tasks. The Funds Supervision Affairs Centre within the Ministry of Education also plays an important role in funds management.

FIGURE 1.2 TOTAL EDUCATION FUNDS AND GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS FOR EDUCATION (2005-2014)

In billion CNY



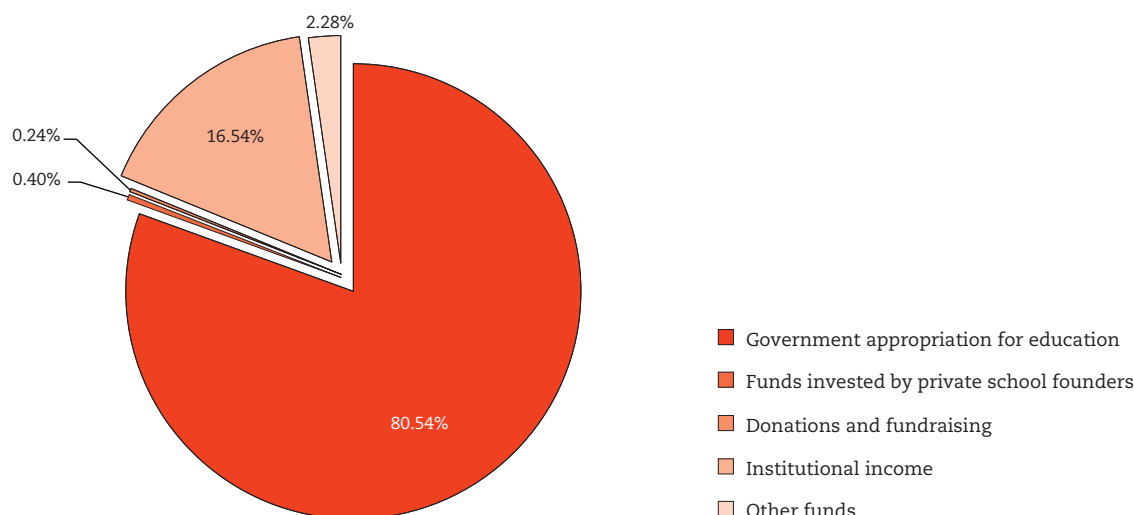
Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China.

FIGURE 1.3 GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS FOR EDUCATION AS % OF GDP (2005-2014)

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China.

The government pays close attention to fund management, since sources of funds are diverse and their proper proportion, as well as stability, is important to the educational finance system. Although governmental budget allocation is the main source of public educational expenditures in China, the government has attempted to raise funds through alternative channels,

including taxes and fees. It has also raised funds from businesses, and allocated these funds to business-run schools. The government has also raised money from private school founders, and received funds via donations and institutional income. However, according to 2014 statistics, shown in Figure 1.4, government appropriations still provide the largest share of educational funds.

FIGURE 1.4 SHARE OF EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION BY SOURCE OF FUNDING (2014)

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2014), *China Statistical Yearbook*, www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj/2014/indexeh.htm.

China's educational appropriations reflect the fact that education is a national priority. The country has focused significant resources on improving education quality and reducing inequalities in recent years. Currently, the Ministry of Education has set four areas of priority: 1) rural, remote, poor and minority areas; 2) primary education in rural areas, vocational education and pre-school education; 3) subsidies for students from poor families; and 4) building a high-quality team of teachers.

China has emphasised the supervision of educational funds in official documents in recent years. The government has stated that it aims to develop a more public and comprehensive supervision system for education funding. This would consist of a regular and standardised system for supervision. Such a system would mandate the supervision of schools and relevant organisations by education administration departments, and the monitoring of administration departments themselves by the public.

Educational administration departments at all levels are required to strengthen their supervision of schools and organisations through financial evaluation, internal audit and special inspections. Subsequently, the inspection results are to be put into effective use. All administration departments are expected to link inspection results to performance appraisals and resource allocations. In this way, the government hopes to make real use of the inspection system by building a standardised management system.

All administration departments are expected to submit their budgets and final accounts, as well as public funds and administration expenses, to public scrutiny. Universities that are directly affiliated with the Ministry of Education are also required to demonstrate financial transparency.

Box 1.6 Education funding

The education system in China is funded by a number of sources. Government appropriations are the major source of funding. Government appropriations are comprised of budgetary and non-budgetary funds, of which budgetary funds are the main component. Budgetary funds, or public expenditure on education, include funds from both the education sector and other sectors. Non-budgetary funds include taxes for education levied by local government, educational funds from enterprises and other funds that

belong to government appropriations. Additional financial sources for education include tuition fees, donations and fundraising.

Other than government appropriation for education, private organisations and individuals are the principal sources of funding for schools run by these organisations or individuals.

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2014), *China Statistical Yearbook*, www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj/2014/indexeh.htm.

Box 1.7 Educational investments in compulsory education in rural areas

At the end of 2005, the State Council issued the Notice of the State Council on Deepening the Reform of Funds for Rural Compulsory Education. The law was a milestone. It consolidated a new financial system for compulsory education in rural areas. Under the new system, local governments and the central government were compelled to share educational expenses on rural compulsory education according to projects or by percentage. The law also mandated that investment should increase incrementally. From 2006 onwards, China gradually integrated the compulsory education funding guarantee mechanism in rural areas. And in 2010, 97% of the total educational investment in rural compulsory education came from budgetary government appropriation for education (Ministry of Finance, 2014).

The government also began to fund special programmes to improve education in rural areas. In 2006 and 2015, two different programmes targeting teachers were created in order to attract more qualified teachers to rural and remote areas. These programmes will be introduced in detail in the next section of the report. In addition, the government has invested in infrastructure programmes to provide students with better learning environments. In 2009, the national programme for safe primary and secondary school buildings was initiated in order to guarantee student safety; and in 2010 The Transformation Plan for Underdeveloped Rural Compulsory Education Schools was implemented. This plan directed special funds to pay for the improvement

of conditions in rural schools. In addition, the State Council initiated the implementation of the Plan for Improving the Nutrition of Rural Students Receiving Compulsory Education in 2010. The central government spent over 30 billion Chinese yuan renminbi (CNY) between 2011 and the end of 2013 and funded 100 000 schools with over 22 million students (Central People's Government, 2014; Ministry of Finance, 2014). In 2014, the Ministry of Education, the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Finance jointly launched the Comprehensive Improvement Programme for the Basic Conditions of School Running for Compulsory Education in Schools in Poor Areas. According to the plan, CNY 50 billion will be invested over five years to comprehensively improve teaching conditions and infrastructure in underdeveloped schools. The programme will fund the construction of rural school buildings and sports fields, as well as the purchase of desks and chairs, equipment for science labs, equipment for providing drinking water and also the construction of canteens and dormitories at boarding schools.

Apart from funding, financial management support is imposed on rural primary and secondary schools to ensure that funds are used effectively. A budgeting and disbursement management system has been established in several pilot districts. The system puts educational administration departments in charge of managing schools' finances, which allows for strong management and oversight of finances.

Source: Central People's Government (2014), "按国务院要求农村义务教育学生营养改善计划取得成效" [The achievement of the plan for improving nutrition for rural students receiving compulsory education, Central People's Government], http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2014-01/02/content_2558702.htm, Ministry of Finance (2014), "Fund assurance system of rural compulsory education," http://www.mof.gov.cn/zhengwuxinxi/caijingshidian/zgcjb/201407/t20140715_1113083.html.

Teachers and teaching

Traditionally, teaching has been a very respectable profession in China. In 1985, the government proclaimed 10 September a holiday – annual Teachers' Day. In 1986, the Law on Compulsory Education pronounced that the entire society should respect teachers. The Teachers Law was issued in October 1993. It codified protection for teachers' rights and also clearly stated their responsibilities.

Although teachers are moderately paid, their jobs are stable and they are entitled to good benefits, which makes the profession popular, especially in big cities. There are about 15 million full-time teachers in China now, according to national statistics (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2014). Among them are 5.6 million primary school teachers and 3.5 million junior secondary school teachers, which is about 60% of the total number.

QUALIFICATION AND RECRUITMENT OF TEACHERS

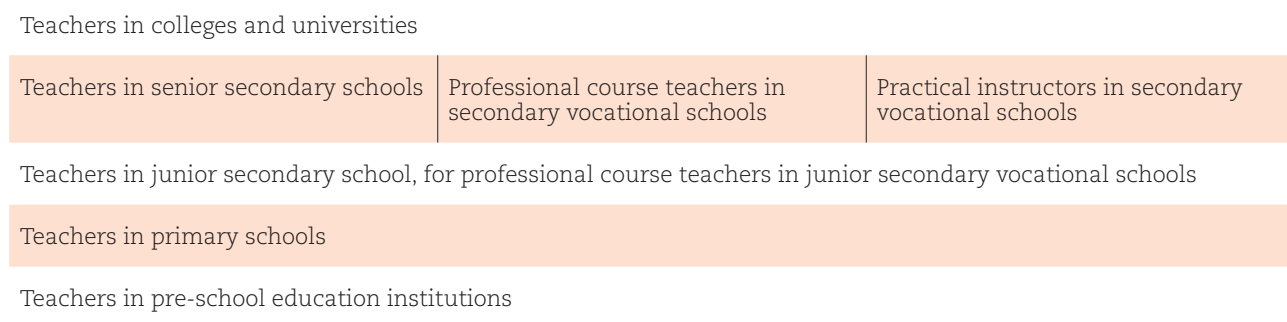
Different qualification certificates are required for different types and different ranks of teachers in China (Figure 1.5). Citizens who receive qualification certificates are eligible to teach at schools that accept their teaching certificates or certificates pertaining to lower levels of training. However, citizens who receive the Certificate for Practical Instructors in Secondary Vocational Schools can only apply to practical instructor positions.

Candidates must apply personally for teaching positions. Candidates submit official identification documents, as well as an academic diploma or compliance certification from a teacher qualification examination. An applicant must also present a health certificate and reference letters describing his or her moral character. Finally, candidates

are required to disclose whether they have a criminal record. All applicants should apply for the certificates in local educational administration departments at the county level. However, the certificates are issued by different departments according to their categories. As for qualification certificates for teachers in pre-school, primary school and junior secondary schools, they are issued by county-level governments. Qualification certificates for teachers in senior secondary school are issued by educational administrative departments in the

upper level. Certificates for practical instructors are also issued by educational administrative departments or by other relevant departments. The certification process is more complex when it comes to higher education. Universities that are directly affiliated with the Ministry of Education or provincial-level governments have the right to issue certificates for their own faculties. Teachers at other universities must hold government-approved certificates.

FIGURE 1.5 TEACHERS TYPES AT DIFFERENT LEVELS



Source: Teacher's Law of the People's Republic of China, 1993.

The qualification system has undergone reform recently. In the new system, the teacher's qualification examination is held nationally. Every certificate applicant has to pass the examination except the applicants for higher education. In the past, the examination was held at the provincial level mostly, and graduates from dedicated teacher training schools were allowed to skip the exam. Currently, there are separate examinations for pre-school, primary, secondary and vocational education, all of which consist of two parts: the written examination and the interview. Further description of exam content is listed in Table 1.1. The written examination is taken partly on paper and partly on a computer. The interview includes a structured interview and situational simulation. Interviewers may ask applicants to answer questions from randomly selected topics. Or candidates

may be asked to prepare a course, answer questions about it, present the course and create an evaluation for students based on the material.

According to the Teacher's Law, schools and other educational institutions should progressively adopt a system where teachers are recruited using employment contracts. The recruitment contract is issued by government at the county level and above, or by schools that demonstrate some special conditions. The whole recruiting process should be open and transparent, which makes the competition more equal. The tradition of permanent employment, what was known conventionally as the "Iron Rice Bowl", has been challenged by the introduction of teacher contracts. Now teachers must, according to their terms of employment, satisfactorily meet regular inspections and appraisals.

TABLE 1.1 THE CONTENT OF QUALIFICATION EXAMINATION IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF EDUCATION

Content of qualification examination	Pre-school education	Primary education	Secondary education	Vocational education
Content of written examination	Comprehensive quality	Comprehensive quality	Comprehensive quality	Comprehensive quality
	Education knowledge, ability and care for infants and young children	Education knowledge and teaching ability	Education knowledge and teaching ability	Education knowledge and teaching ability
			Subject knowledge and teaching ability	Professional knowledge and teaching ability
Content of interview	Basic teaching skills such as pedagogy, teaching and assessment, as well as basic attributes like occupational cognition, psychological fitness, manner, expression, thinking and moral quality			

Source: Ministry of Education (2013), “中小学教师资格定期注册暂行办法” [Regular Registration Interim Measures for Teachers' Qualification in Primary and Lower Secondary Education], www.moe.gov.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/s7151/201309/156643.html.

In addition, the government has established a regular renewal process of teachers' qualification certificates in order to improve the quality of teachers. Every pre-school, public primary, secondary and vocational school teacher has to re-register for his or her qualification certificate every five years (Ministry of Education, 2013). If a teacher fails to register in time, or fails to get the certificate, he or she will be ineligible to keep his or her teaching position. New teachers are required to register and obtain a certificate within 60 days of finishing their probation periods. In order to be registered, applicants have to pass the ethics evaluation and annual assessment, finish no less than the required 360 professional development hours or get the equivalent amount of credits, demonstrate the psychological and physical health necessary for teaching, and fulfil other requirements prescribed by local governments. Teachers in private schools have not been included in this new registration system yet, however, local governments have suggested that they be included, and some provinces have already done so.

TEACHER TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Chinese government has instituted several policies to improve the quality of teachers in primary and secondary schools, notably trainings.

According to the new training policy, each teacher in public primary and secondary schools must take no less than 360 class hours of training every five years. Trainings are designed according to teachers' professional

responsibilities, and aim to improve their professional ethics and skills. In 2010, the National Teacher Training Programme for Teachers in Kindergarten, Primary and Secondary Schools was implemented by the Chinese Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance. The programme is an important measure, as it is designed to improve the overall quality of teachers, especially those from rural primary and secondary schools. The plan is composed of many specific training programmes such as the Project of Exemplary Teacher Training for Teachers in Primary and Secondary Schools and the Project for Rural Core Teacher Training in Central and Western China. The central government will invest CNY 6.4 billion over the next five years to support the first round of the training, which covers over 6.5 million teachers in rural areas in the central and western part of China. Special training is designed for new teachers during the probation period to help them adapt to their job requirements. Every new teacher must finish at least 120 class hours of training before beginning his or her post.

Apart from the training for teachers, the government also holds training programmes for educational administrators, especially school principals. New school principals or aspiring principals are required to take over 300 class hours of training that focus on the skills needed for their positions. Principals are required to take no less than 360 class hours of training every five years. This programme is designed to help school principals learn new knowledge and skills, improve managerial skills and exchange experiences with other school

principals (Ministry of Education, 2012). In 2014, the Ministry of Education implemented the National Training Programme for Primary and Secondary School Principals. This plan aims at training a group of leaders to implement quality education, promote reforms and develop basic education in rural areas, especially outlying and poverty-stricken areas. The programme also aims at training a group of outstanding principals, especially principals who have backgrounds as educators. Officials charged these principals with drawing on advanced education philosophy in order to innovate school practices, and serving as role models for other principals. This plan consists of various projects including the Rural Principals Assistance Projects in Remote and Poor Areas, the Ability Improvement Project for Special Education School Principals and the Outstanding Principal Pilot Project.

The government has established sabbatical leave for headmasters and teachers in primary and secondary schools only recently. Under this new system, outstanding teachers and headmasters may take a half-year sabbatical leave every five years. During this period, the teacher or headmaster can join study programmes abroad.

Other systems like the Teaching Study Group System and the Lesson Observation and Evaluating System serve a similar function to the training system. Under the Teaching Study Group system, every teacher is a member of a teaching study group. These groups are created according to each teacher's teaching subject and grade, which means that all the teachers who teach the same subject in the same grade form a teaching study group. In the group, detailed and practical subject teaching plans are designed at the beginning of the semester, so that every teacher who teaches the same content follows a similar schedule. Lesson preparation is completed partly by individual teachers, and partly via collaborative effort in the teaching study group. During group sessions, teachers analyse textbooks, determine key points and discuss the best teaching approach. The teaching study group also has the function of consolidating teaching experience and increasing the quality of teaching. Indeed, successful teaching study group experiences are published frequently in educational journals or teacher magazines in China. In the teaching study group system, experienced and outstanding teachers often serve as

leaders of the groups. Thus other teachers, especially new teachers, can learn from the experienced teachers and improve their teaching skills through daily work. The Lesson Observation and Evaluating System is to some degree both a supervision system and a learning system since it requires every teacher to observe other teachers' teaching and lesson planning and give feedback. For new teachers, this is also a good way to learn from experienced teachers, while for experienced teachers, this is a good way to supervise new teachers and give them suggestions.

PROMOTION AND REWARD

Teachers in China are ranked by professional grades. Different professional titles are set for both primary and secondary teachers. In the last five years, the title system has undergone a reform to create a unified title system. A new highest title has been added. Teachers in both primary and junior secondary schools use the same title system, which has expanded teachers' opportunities for professional development, and elevated their social status. Professional titles are listed in Table 1.2 with the professional requirements, in descending order.

There are a fixed number of posts in each professional title, which implies that promotion processes can be competitive. Mostly, the teacher must have enough publications and awards to receive a promotion, though this is not an official requirement. This informal standard can be quite challenging and unfair to teachers in rural areas. However, in 2015, the Rural Teacher Support Programme was initiated. The programme was designed to support the promotion of teachers in rural areas by excluding publication and foreign language skills from consideration. Promotions are issued by the same institutions that recruit teachers, and are managed by government at the county level and above, or by the schools in some cases.

Special-Grade Teacher is also a title for primary and secondary teachers. It is not a professional title, but an honour. It was specially established for very outstanding teachers. The teachers who win the title are supposed to be role models for teachers, and experts in education. The number of special-grade teachers should be within 15% of the total number of all teachers.

TABLE 1.2 PROFESSIONAL TITLES WITH REQUIREMENTS

Title	Requirements
Professor senior teacher	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Determined occupational faith and lofty career aspirations; many years in teaching position and exceptional guidance of youth. 2) Mastery of the curriculum and comprehensive expertise in teaching subject, with outstanding teaching performance and excellent pedagogy. 3) Has the ability to organise and guide research on teaching, has made innovations in teaching or curriculum reform that are widely used and considered to be exemplary. 4) Guides other teachers, is well known and is recognised as educational expert by peers. 5) Has a bachelor's or higher degree, and has served as a senior teacher for over five years.
Senior teacher	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Teaches and guides students effectively according to their ages and backgrounds, with outstanding teaching results. 2) Demonstrates a solid theoretical foundation and expertise in his or her teaching subject, is an experienced teacher and has demonstrated outstanding teaching performance. 3) Has the ability to organise and guide teaching research, and has made notable innovations in teaching or curriculum reform. 4) Is a qualified leader in teaching position, and plays an important role in guiding teachers of the first grade, second grade and third grade. 5) Has a doctoral degree and has served as a first-grade teacher for over two years, or has a master's, a bachelor's degree or an associate degree and has served as a first-grade teacher for over five years. Teachers in urban areas should have at least one year of teaching experience in rural areas.
First-level teacher	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Has the ability to educate students correctly and can complete the work comparatively well. 2) Has solid theoretical foundation and expertise in his or her teaching subject, demonstrates experience in teaching skills and comparatively good teaching performance. 3) Has the ability to organise and guide teaching research to some degree, can undertake some teaching research tasks. 4) Contributes to guiding teachers in the second and third grade, and helps with the improvement of their teaching skills and abilities. 5) Has a doctoral or master's degree and has served as a second-grade teacher for over two years, or has a bachelor's degree or associate degree and has served as a second-grade teacher for over four years, or has graduated from secondary normal school and has served as a second-grade teacher for over five years.
Second-level teacher	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Masters teaching principles and methods skilfully and can manage his or her work relatively well. 2) Masters the basic knowledge of education, psychology and teaching, demonstrates expertise in his or her teaching subject and pedagogy, has comparatively effective teaching experience. 3) Masters the methodology of teaching research, and tries to actively develop teaching research. 4) Has a master's or bachelor's degree, has finished the probationary period and has passed the examination, or has an associate degree and has served as a third-grade teacher for over two years, or has graduated from secondary normal school and has served as a third-grade teacher for over three years.
Third-level teacher	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Masters teaching principles and methods at a basic level and correctly guides students. 2) Has basic knowledge of education, psychology and teaching, demonstrates expertise in teaching subject and teaching method and can manage the job. 3) Has an associate degree or has graduated from secondary normal school, has finished the probationary period and has passed the examination.

SALARIES

Teachers in China receive average salaries compared to other civil servants in the country. Teacher salaries are guaranteed by the Teacher's Law. Prior to reforms, salaries were determined by teachers' professional titles and working experience.

Reform of the teacher salary structure, introduced in 2009, presented a new way of calculating teacher's salaries based on performance. The aim of this reform was to institute finer differentiation of salaries among teachers so as to

provide stronger incentive for better performance. In the new system, teacher salary is composed of four parts: post salary, grade salary, performance salary and allowance.

Among them, post salary and grade salary are the basic salaries. They are determined according to a nationwide unified standard.

Performance salary is related to performance and contribution, and it is a very flexible part of the total salary. The total amount of performance salary is regulated and controlled by the central government; the way it is

distributed is delineated in several official documents. However, within the approved amount of performance salary, each school can allocate independently. The performance salary of compulsory education is composed of a basic part and a bonus part. The basic part of performance salary makes up about 70% of the total amount of performance salary, and is determined by factors like regional economic development level, local price level and job responsibilities. The specific standard of allocation is determined by the personnel department, finance department and education department of local government at the county level and above. The basic share of performance salary is paid monthly, for the most part. The bonus component of performance salary amounts to 30% of the total, and is mainly related to workload and actual contribution. Allocation of the

bonus part is based on appraisal, and determined by schools themselves. Based on the actual situation in schools, items like allowances for class teachers, subsidies for teachers in rural schools, allowance for extra class hours and bonuses for outstanding achievements are components of the performance salary.

As for the allowance component, it mainly stands for allowances for teachers working in remote and underdeveloped areas, as well as allowances for special positions. The standard for allowances is developed by the central government and is uniform nationwide. The allowance for special positions of teachers in primary and secondary schools is composed of seniority allowance, senior teacher allowance, special education allowance and school reform allowance.

Student affairs

ADMISSIONS

The Compulsory Education Law stipulates that nine-year compulsory education should be basically universal in all urban and rural areas of all provinces and for all ethnic minorities. However, providing and legislating compulsory education does not necessarily lead to the immediate eradication of education inequalities. Because of key school policies where selected “good” schools are given privileged resources, as well as the long-term lack of educational investment in rural areas, educational resources are unevenly distributed. In order to guarantee equal opportunity, the neighbourhood attendance policy dictates that students enrol in schools in their districts. But many families get around this policy by purchasing apartments near good schools or by using other means. At the same time, China’s economic development has caused massive migration, which has created new problems for the neighbourhood attendance policy. When families migrate, migrant children must change schools. The neighbourhood attendance policy can make it difficult for migrant children to enter schools in new districts. In response to this issue, local governments have adopted a series of measures according to the Compulsory Education Law to make sure that every child can have access to compulsory education. For example, following the 2003 Notice of Improving Education of Children of Rural Migrant Workers, local governments prohibited state schools from charging additional fees for migrant students.

Recently, more policies have been issued to implement the neighbourhood attendance policy more thoroughly. Such

policies have forbidden entrance exams for compulsory education and outlawed fees for school choice. Lawmakers have also developed open enrolment processes in order to guarantee a fair admissions system. At the same time, more specific strategies have been developed to ensure high-quality and balanced development of compulsory education throughout the country.

STUDENT ENROLMENT AND THE STATUS INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

In 2010, the Ministry of Education began to build a national standardised student enrolment and status information management system. The system assigns to all students an enrolment number linked with his or her identification number (ID). Information about a student’s whole education process is recorded in the information system with this ID. By preventing counterfeit enrolment information from entering the system, and by curbing repeated registration in different provinces, this information system also helps officials make policy decisions, as well as monitor and administer the education system. For instance, through this system the Ministry of Education can easily obtain precise student statistics for one district, and even one specific school. This helps the Ministry make budget appropriations decisions and monitor educational spending. The information system is also available on line, which provides a great convenience to parents applying for school transfer. Officials use the system to help promote fair and open management of education in China.

FINANCIAL AID FOR STUDENTS

To ensure that compulsory education is available to all children, the government has exempted all rural students in western China from all school fees since 2006. This exemption has benefitted more than 48 million students. Furthermore, all rural students nationwide have been exempted from school fees since 2007. The government has also made textbooks available to all rural students for free. Funding for these exemptions comes from the national budget. In total, 150 million students have received assistance under these policies. Since 2008, compulsory education students in urban areas have also been exempted from school fees. In addition, the government provides subsistence aid to students who come from economically disadvantaged families and study at rural boarding schools in central and western China. These students receive CNY 4 per day in primary school and CNY 5 per day in junior high school. In terms

of senior high school education, the government has instituted various exemptions. Secondary vocational students in rural areas study for free. Urban secondary vocational education students enrolled in agriculture-related programmes and students from families living on low-income subsidies are also exempt from fees. National grants are offered to economically disadvantaged senior high school students at an average level of CNY 500 per year per student. These grants cover around 20% of all enrolled senior high school students nationwide. After the spring of 2013, this amount increased to CNY 2 000 per year per student. For higher education, a scholarship, grant and loan system has been put in place, including national grants, national endeavour fellowships, national scholarships and national student loans. Moreover, one year of pre-school education is provided for free in some areas. Thus, the current national student aid system covers all levels of education.

Curriculum

Box 1.8 Basic Education Curriculum Reform

The aim of China's Basic Education Curriculum Reform is to promote all-around development of students. Emphasis is placed on the moral, intellectual and physical development of students in order to cultivate moral virtues, discipline, culture and ideals.

China's focus on the all-around development of all individual learners has been supported further by the

country's shift away from basic skill development towards a holistic approach to human development. The emphasis on value development and the prioritisation of ideological development while retaining the importance of skills development are key components of the new curriculum.

Source: Nanzhao and Muju (2007), *Educational Reform and Curriculum Change in China: A Comparative Case Study*, www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/COPs/Pages_documents/Comparative_Research/EduReformChina.pdf.

For many decades, Chinese education relied on a centralised curriculum that left little room for local variation and flexibility. In 1988, the government began to encourage diverse interpretations of the educational programme by producing different textbooks still based on the same curriculum. In 2001, a new curriculum framework was established. The framework encouraged diversification. There was a shift from centralisation to a joint effort between the central government, local authorities and schools. The role of the government has changed from one of command to one of service. In 2011, the government instituted a renewed version of the educational framework which allowed even more flexibility.

TEXTBOOK COMPILATION

The government encourages and supports qualified institutions, groups and personnel to develop diverse and high-quality textbooks for primary and secondary education according to certain standards. The authors apply to the Ministry of Education for approval if they want to develop a new textbook. The review process is conducted before the textbook comes into use. If the textbooks are for national use, the review is conducted by the National Primary and Secondary School Textbook Review Commission. If it is only for local use, the textbook is reviewed by the provincial textbook review commission. Policies require that the reviewer be independent from the textbook publisher.

CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT

China now utilises a three-level curriculum model consisting of curricula developed at the national level, regional level and school level. This model involves the central government, local authorities and schools in developing the most suitable curriculum for the local context.

At the national level, the Ministry of Education produces the curriculum plan for elementary and secondary education, develops guidelines on curriculum management and determines the nation-level curriculum as well as lesson hours. In addition, the Ministry of Education is responsible for setting the national curriculum standards. It also conducts pilot studies based on the curriculum evaluation system.

At the provincial level, relevant authorities develop an implementation plan for the national curriculum. In doing so, provincial authorities try to interpret the intentions and objectives of the national curriculum, and to translate them into a local curriculum that fits the local context. The plan is then sent to the Ministry of Education before implementation.

At the school level, schools can organise their teachers to develop their own courses and carry out educational research according to the provincial plan. During curriculum implementation and course development, the local education bureau is expected to guide and supervise the schools' work. Schools then provide feedback about implementation.

NEW CURRICULUM

According to *The Basic Education Curriculum Reform Outline* (Ministry of Education, 2001) (Box 1.8), the primary school curriculum should consist of courses that encourage all-around development of individual learners. This document suggests that schools offer courses like morality and life, Chinese, mathematics, physical education and art to primary students in lower grades. Morality and society, Chinese, mathematics, science, foreign language, comprehensive practical activity, physical education and art should be offered to primary students in higher grades.

The curriculum for junior secondary students mainly includes morality, Chinese, mathematics, foreign language, science (or physics, chemistry and biology), history and society (or history and geography), physical

education and health, art and comprehensive practical activity. Schools are encouraged to choose comprehensive courses, and to offer optional courses as well. The government emphasises that Chinese, art and painting courses in compulsory education should attach more importance to Chinese character (script) writing.

When it comes to senior secondary school, the government suggests that schools offer various elective subjects in addition to the compulsory subjects. The requirements in elective subjects should be different from the requirements in compulsory subjects.

Throughout primary and secondary education, the comprehensive practical subject is emphasised as a compulsory subject. The subject covers information technology, research study, community service, social survey, and labour and technology for primary and junior secondary school students. It covers research study, community service and social practice for senior secondary students. The comprehensive practical subject aims at improving students' creativity and research capability, as well as helping students develop a sense of social responsibility through practical experiences.

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

The National Institution of Education Sciences, under the direct management of the Ministry of Education, is an important institution that leads educational research on various topics. It also serves as an important support to educational policy-making. The National Centre for School Curriculum and Textbook Development is also directly affiliated with the Ministry of Education. It also focuses on research but, more on curriculum and textbooks. The National Education Examinations Authority of the Ministry of Education focuses on examination.

Local governments also have their own educational research institutions, which focus more on curriculum and pedagogy. At the grassroots level, every school has a "teaching study group". These groups play an important role in educational research based on practical experiences.

Non-governmental research activities have developed over the past decade. Research societies on various topics, such as higher education and teachers, have been established, and some are affiliated with the Ministry of Education.

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Chapter 2

Educational reforms and current issues



Introduction

Recent education reforms have placed an emphasis on eradicating illiteracy, accelerating the development of pre-school education, universalising nine-year compulsory education and improving the quality of compulsory education, especially in rural areas. These efforts have been rewarded by results. National data indicate that the enrolment ratio of school-age children in 2014 reached more than 99% (National Bureau of Statistics of China,

2015). In addition, the adult illiteracy rate dropped to around 5% in 2014 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2015). Admittedly, the existing education system still lags behind the demands of economic development and fails to meet public aspirations for education. Currently, the Chinese government gives priority to the political and financial development of education, which shows a determination to build a better education system.

Narrowing the rural-urban gap and regional differences in education

China's urbanisation is unprecedented in scale and speed. The urban population has roughly quadrupled in the last 35 years. In 2014, more than 700 million people lived in cities in China (OECD, 2015). Urbanisation has helped to raise living standards and to transform the life experience of hundreds of millions of Chinese, but it has also generated several important social challenges. Equal access to education is perhaps the most critical challenge among them. Equal access means not only that every child can get access to education, but also that they can get equal access to education of similar quality.

BALANCED DEVELOPMENT OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION

The Chinese government has made educational equity in compulsory education a priority. Following its efforts to universalise compulsory education nationwide, the government has put more emphasis on balanced development in order to narrow the rural-urban gap and regional differences. A number of programmes have been launched to improve poor school conditions in rural areas, including the Rural Primary and Secondary Schools Dilapidated Building Renovation Project in Central and Western China, the Rural Primary and Secondary Boarding Schools Project, and Comprehensive Improvement of the Basic School Conditions for Schools at Poor and Underdeveloped Areas. Through such initiatives, infrastructure for rural schools has improved substantially.

However, better infrastructure only solves a small part of the problem. Even if there is a better schooling environment, other factors like fewer promotion chances and lower quality of life in rural areas make teaching force shortages a serious problem. National programmes such as the Special Teaching Post Plan for Rural Schools and the Free Pre-Service Teacher Education Programme attract more teachers to teach in rural areas for several years with better remuneration and benefits. In addition,

the government has developed different promotion standards for rural teachers in order to encourage teacher morale and enthusiasm. The government also offers rural teachers access to special training programmes designed to improve teaching skills. However, recruiting and keeping qualified teachers in rural areas involves more than just policies. Initiatives such as these are connected to broader efforts to improve social and economic opportunities in less developed parts of the country. Improving teaching quality in rural areas is still a challenging task for the government, but is part of a larger social and economic agenda.

In light of technological advancements in recent years and increased Internet access, the government has set up a long-distance education programme for rural primary and secondary schools, as well as a project for expanding access to digital teaching resources at all teaching sites. These programmes are effective tools for improving teaching quality in rural areas, as they make it possible for rural teachers to access high-quality teaching resources that originate in urban areas.

The government also uses educational inspection to promote equitable development and close the gap between urban and rural schools. In 2011, the Ministry of Education signed an agreement, the Compulsory Education Development Memorandum, that clearly illustrated the timetable and roadmap for achieving equitable development of compulsory education by 2020. The agreement established a special inspection programme to evaluate the equitable development of compulsory education in every province. Shanghai took the lead in these development efforts. It was the first region to pass the National Equitable Development of Compulsory Education Evaluation. Jiangsu and Zhejiang were the first two provinces to get certificates. They followed the three municipalities (Shanghai, Beijing and Tianjin).

Box 2.1 Special policies for teachers in rural areas

In recent years, the Chinese government has issued a set of policies aimed at improving the quality of rural education. The government has initiated and funded several programmes to deal with the issue of teacher shortages in underdeveloped areas, and has set up programmes to attract young people to work in rural and disadvantaged regions.

Implemented with a special fund set up by the central government from 2006, the Special Teaching Post Plan for Rural Schools is an important national programme for enhancing the rural teaching force. The programme recruits graduates from universities to work for three years in rural schools in central or western China, mainly in remote regions with minority populations and educationally disadvantaged counties. These teachers are recruited by

educational administrative departments at the provincial level. After three years of teaching, teachers take a qualification exam. If they pass the exam and are willing to stay, they can keep the tenure track teaching position. In 2015, around 90% of the teachers who finished the three-year teaching period stayed in their posts.

Recognising that the uneven quality of teachers results in a big gap in educational quality between urban and rural areas, the government has sought to build communion among rural and urban teachers. Teachers in large and medium cities are required to work short periods in rural schools at regular intervals. Rural teachers can apply for continued learning or in-service training at county or higher level teacher training institutions.

EQUAL ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR MIGRANT CHILDREN

Another challenge comes from the *hukou* (domicile registration) system (Box 2.2). China's economic development has caused extensive internal migration, which has raised important questions about education for both families and the government. Most children of migrants (there are around 60 million currently in China) remain in their home regions. But a large number (an estimated 36 million in 2010) accompany their parents to a new city during their schooling years (OECD, 2015). Both

groups of migrant children face challenges in receiving adequate education.

As mentioned earlier, neighbourhood residency is the main basis for determining school enrolment in China. This means that if migrant children want to stay with their parents, their access to education is limited because their *hukou* or residency status must remain the same as their place of origin. But if children separate from their parents and stay in their home regions, they suffer both mental health and educational consequences.

Box 2.2 The *hukou* system

China's *hukou* system is a domicile registration system that accords rights and obligations to families based on their birth status. It determines the degree of access to social services, such as education, healthcare, insurance and social housing, that a family can enjoy in their place of residence. The modern *hukou* system was formalised in 1958 to manage labour mobility and ensure structural stability in China. There are two types of *hukou*: urban *hukou* and rural *hukou*. Beginning in the 1980s, increased urbanisation began to demonstrate a sharp – and problematic – division between urban and rural *hukou*. In essence, the *hukou* system has proved to be highly discriminatory against rural *hukou* holders residing in urban areas. About 260 million Chinese workers are impacted by this division.

Access to education is a severe obstacle faced by rural *hukou* holders residing in urban areas. For example, according to an estimate, only 30% of children from migrant families living in Shenzhen and Beijing attended state schools, the remaining children were either enrolled in private schools or

had to return to their place of *hukou* registration (Koen et al, 2013). Migrant students are also under-represented in elite schools. Discriminatory policies, as an outcome of the *hukou* system, become more problematic with each education level. For example, in Shanghai, migrant children can only attend vocational high school. Therefore, young migrants wishing to attend general high school are forced to return to their locality of registration in order to study. Furthermore, only students with local *hukou* are allowed to take *gaokao* in their area of residency. Therefore migrant students are compelled to return to their area of registration. University acceptance rates for locally registered students are, also, much higher than those with out-of-town residence. As a result, between 2009 and 2014, 97% of China's poorest counties sent no students to Beijing's prestigious Tsinghua University. Similarly, in Shanghai, students with a local *hukou* were 53 times more likely than the national average to get a place at the city's premier Fudan University.

...

Box 2.2 The hukou system (continued)

Reforming the system is complicated because registration status determines the rights of people in both their new urban location and their place of origin. However, over the past decade, the government has initiated pilot experiments to unify rural and urban *hukou* in some provinces, such as Shandong province. Before 2014, 12 provinces and 1 autonomous region had already modified *hukou* registration to make it easier for migrant workers to settle down in cities within the same province. But these provincial systems are very different from each other. Since 2014, the document Opinions of the State Council on Further Promoting the Reform of the Household Registration System has provided the overarching plan for unifying the reform and setting new national criteria which can be adapted according to the needs of the local administration. The new

policy establishes a uniform household registration system that does not distinguish between rural and urban *hukou*. Migrants who move to an area other than that of their *hukou* registration must apply for a temporary residence permit in their destination area. This permit gives them access to social services. To facilitate the conversion of the temporary residence permit into local *hukous*, the reform removes *hukou* transfer limits in small cities, and relaxes *hukou* restrictions in medium-sized cities. This reform will help about a million Chinese migrants. Still, these *hukou* reforms target only certain “desirable” urban migrants, defined by their employment record, education level and housing situation. The *hukou* system continues to be a challenge for a number of migrants unable to meet the criteria.

Source: Koen V. et al (2013), “Policies for inclusive urbanisation in China”, OECD Economics Department Working Paper, No. 1090, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5k3xz6hc2z0x-en>, Branigan T. (2014), “China reforms hukou system to improve migrant workers’ right”, The Guardian www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/31/china-reform-hukou-migrant-workers.

Policies on the education of migrant children are carried out by local governments to make sure all school-age children get real free compulsory education, which is required by the central government. The basic principles local governments are charged with carrying out are as follows: the local government that hosts migrants bears the main responsibility for providing education to their children, and public schools are responsible for educating migrant children that reside in their district. This means

that the migrant population is included in the regional education development plan. Additionally, designated budgetary appropriations pay for the education of migrant children. According to the Ministry of Education, about 90% of migrant children studying in public schools are covered by government finance. The other 10% of students study in private schools. In addition, the college entrance exam (*gaokao*) will be made available to migrant children in 29 hosting provinces instead of their home provinces.

Reforming curriculum at all levels and focusing more on creativity

The New Curriculum Reform started in 2001 covers the entire education system, including educational philosophy, aim, content, method and the evaluation system at all educational phases. Six objectives are specified in the Basic Education Curriculum Reform Outline:

- 1) Change from a narrow perspective of knowledge transmission in classroom instruction to a perspective concerned with learning how to learn and developing positive attitudes.
- 2) Change from a subject-centred curriculum structure to a balanced, integrated and selective curriculum structure to meet the diverse needs of schools and students.
- 3) Change from partly out-of-date and extremely abstruse curriculum content to essential knowledge and skills in relation to students’ lifelong learning.

- 4) Change from a passive-learning and rote-learning style to an active, problem-solving learning style to improve students’ overall abilities to process information, acquire knowledge, solve problems and learn cooperatively.
- 5) Change the function of curriculum evaluation from narrowly summative assessment (e.g. examinations for the certificate of levels of achievement and for selection) to more formative purposes such as the promotion of student growth, teacher development and instructional improvement as additional functions.
- 6) Change from centralised curriculum control to a joint effort between the central government, local authorities and schools to make the curriculum more relevant to local situations.

In addition to these six objectives, the new reform also established a comprehensive evaluation system that

covers not only students, but also teachers and schools. The New Curriculum Reform formally entered the stage of implementation in 2001 in 38 areas and by 2005 all schools nationwide were studying under the new curricula (Hongbiao, 2013). The new evaluation system is a departure from the former system, which only counted students' academic grades. The new system relies on diverse criteria for student outcomes, thus changing the examination-oriented study mode to reduce the burden of

the students. The vision for this new assessment system is that it should help students discover and develop their potentials, as well as understand themselves and build self-confidence. The evaluation system should also help teachers analyse and improve their teaching skills. Periodic review of curriculum implementation and analysis of problems met during implementation is required by the new evaluation system in order to help schools improve the curriculum system.

Reducing the role of standardised testing and reforming the *gaokao*

The National College Entrance Examination, also known as *gaokao*, is also undergoing major changes. The State Council published official guidelines in 2014 to reform the *gaokao* system. Reforms of examinations at different levels have been developed as well to reduce the influence of standardised tests. This reform of examinations aims to establish a modern examination system composed of standardised tests, comprehensive evaluation and assorted admissions criteria. It also aims to promote the reform of the education system as a whole. Shanghai and Zhejiang province are going to be the pilot experimental regions of the new system, as agreed with the central government. Both provinces have developed their own plans to carry out this reform. Several other provinces and municipalities have also announced their own reform plans for the *gaokao*, including Beijing, Jiangsu and Guangdong.

MAIN MEASURES TO REDUCE THE INFLUENCE OF STANDARDISED TESTS AT ALL LEVELS

This reform involves entrance examinations at all levels. Its provisions are described below.

First, authorities of a given region must provide compulsory education to children who are residents of this region. Compulsory education may not be contingent on entrance examinations.

This policy aims at solving the school-selection problem effectively, especially in urban areas. It requires that local governments explore multiple measures in order to guarantee the neighbourhood attendance policy. Such measures include providing students direct transition from primary school to junior secondary school, reasonable division of school districts in which students can enrol in junior secondary school directly and establishing new schools that provide nine-year education if possible.

Second, promote the reform of senior secondary school entrance examinations by establishing a new evaluation system.

This reform covers the improvement of the academic proficiency test system and comprehensive evaluation system, and encourages local governments to explore enrolment methods based on these systems for senior secondary schools. It also advises secondary vocational schools to enrol students based on their academic proficiency test results.

Third, improve and normalise the academic proficiency test and the comprehensive attribute evaluation system for senior secondary schools.

Fourth, establish a new examination and enrolment system for higher vocational education.

The government wants to reform the higher education admissions process by separating the examination and enrolment systems at vocational colleges and universities. The new examination for higher vocational education will consist of a part that covers material on the general exam and a part on specialised skills.

Fifth, reform the *gaokao* system, and try to establish a system with comprehensive evaluation and diverse enrolment mechanisms.

The new *gaokao* is structured differently than former examinations. Instead of testing students on two broadly defined subjects (art and science), the new test will be structured as a general examination. The new examination and enrolment system will consist of two parts. One is the national unified exam, which will test students on Chinese, mathematics and foreign language. The other is the academic proficiency test that covers various other disciplines. For the academic proficiency test, students can choose the disciplines according to their interests. The disciplines students choose will be relevant to their majors when applying for university admissions.

Sixth, establish a graduate programme entrance exam that can select innovative talents and can sufficiently test proficiency in high-level applied science.

To achieve this goal, an approach will be explored whereby students take separate examinations for professional degrees and academic degrees. As for the exam designed for academic degrees, the emphasis should be put on academic knowledge and skills as well as the potential for innovation. For professional degrees, the focus should be more on professional attributes and skills. The government will also grant graduate programme host institutes and their faculties more enrolment autonomy.

Seventh, create more opportunities for citizens to get a diverse education.

In addition to these provisions, this reform aims to create more channels for citizens to get access to education of all types and at all levels. This includes creating opportunities for outstanding employees to get access to relevant higher education.

PILOT EXPERIMENT IN ZHEJIANG PROVINCE

The new examination can be described as a “3+3” model. The first “3” stands for the three disciplines included in the national exam: Chinese, mathematics and English language. The second “3” stands for the three subjects that can be selected from physics, chemistry, biology, politics, history, geography and technology. Each student may take the foreign language and other selected subject examinations twice, and the grades can be valid for two years. The total score is 150 for each subject, and the exam results for subjects in academic proficiency tests are given at the levels of A, B, C and D.

In terms of enrolment, universities used to be classified into several tiers according to their strengths, while students were classified into groups according to their scores. The group of students with the highest scores was eligible to apply to first-tier universities. Similarly, students with the second highest scores were able to apply to universities in the second tier. However, due to reforms, the tier rule has been repealed, which means every student can apply to any university now. The government has admitted that cancelling the tier rule is good for students as well as the higher education system.

PILOT EXPERIMENT IN SHANGHAI

The new examination system in Shanghai is quite similar to Zhejiang, which can also be interpreted as a “3+3” mode. The differences are that the exams for three selected subjects are “one-chance” exams that are taken in May, one month before the national exam. In addition,

the subject of technology is not among a subject students may take for this exam.

Shanghai also cancelled the division rule for universities and students during admissions. Now students may be admitted to two universities at the same time, which was not allowed in the old system.

In addition, the spring *gaokao*, which was named so to distinguish it from the main exam in June, is under experiment in Shanghai now. The spring *gaokao* is quite different from the general one, not only because the spring exam is carried out on a smaller scale with fewer students taking it, but because they test different content. The spring *gaokao* gives universities more decision-making power on final admissions offers. The exam content can also be divided into two parts, one of which is the unified exam covering Chinese, mathematics and English languages. The other part is developed by the universities themselves. With the establishment of spring *gaokao*, students will have two opportunities to apply to university every year, which will partly relieve pressure.

PROMOTING PUBLICISED ADMISSION PROCEDURES

To relieve the burden on young students and move the system away from exam-oriented education, the government has exerted substantial effort to reduce the influence of standardised tests, especially standardised compulsory education admission tests. To achieve this goal, the government has issued numerous policies and measures stating clearly that admissions to a school cannot take into account any achievement certificates or examination results. Schools must admit all students based on their residency without considering any other factors.

Enrolment based on neighbourhood residency is never equivalent to equal access, however. If the enrolment process is not transparent, unfair enrolment can still exist. To make the process really fair and transparent, the government has tried hard to establish a well-publicised admission procedure that is subject to public inspection. The enrolment information management system, introduced earlier, was developed mainly for this purpose. Once the management system is up and running, every student will be issued a unique ID with education information. Subsequently, it will be very difficult for families to enrol students in schools using fake residence information.

Strengthening educational inspection

National educational inspectorate institutions are charged with inspecting policies, inspecting education and assessing quality. In recent years, the government has increased the work forces of inspection institutions in order to achieve these objectives.

According to official documents published in 2013, at least one inspector should be assigned to each primary or secondary school in China. In addition, the inspector's name, picture, contact information and major tasks should be released to the public. Inspectors are recruited by local government inspection institutions. These institutions chose inspectors for the most part from a pool of experienced headmasters, teachers, educational researchers and administrators. Each inspector is assigned to about five schools, and performs regular inspections of each school at least once a month. The inspection covers enrolment, school fees, curriculum, teaching, learning burden, food sanitation and so on. Inspectors report back to inspection institutions after every inspection. They also communicate comments and guidance to schools after inspections. Inspectors are rotated every three years. In May 2015, the inspection system covered over 99% of primary and secondary schools.

The government recently established a special inspection system for major educational emergencies. According to the Interim Measures for the Special Inspection of Educational Major Emergencies published in 2014, once an emergency such as a natural disaster or accident happens, the inspection institution becomes involved in order to make sure that schools respond actively. The inspection institution makes sure that schools handle the emergency properly and protect educational activities. Throughout the process of solving the problems, the inspection institution should guarantee promptness, transparency and clear responsibilities of all parties concerned.

INSPECTION LEGISLATION

The Regulation on Educational Inspection was issued by State Council in 2012, after which the Tianjin municipality developed its own regulations with more details and practical rules. The regulation of Tianjin municipality has been approved by the Standing Committee of People's Congress of Tianjin Municipality, and was made a law in May 2014. In 2015, Shanghai also approved its own regulation of educational inspections. It is widely recognised as a breakthrough that has made the system more powerful.

Inspection legislation guarantees the implementation of the educational inspection system, which is important to the reform of the educational management system.

BUILDING AN AUTHORITATIVE AND SPECIALISED INSPECTION TEAM

The Regulation on Educational Inspection established specific standards for inspection teams, as well as the composition of these teams. Previously, inspection teams consisted almost entirely of retired educators. Recently, more and more provinces have recruited currently active teachers and educational administrators who know more about modern education compared to their retired colleagues. Additional training of inspectors is carried out regularly to ensure their proficiency.

Some regions, like Chongqing municipality, have started to create specialised inspection teams, and to mandate that teaching and administration be evaluated separately. Recently, teaching inspectors have been given professional titles via the educational researcher professional title system. This has made it possible for inspectors to receive promotions. Anhui province made a similar adjustment and recruited four chief inspectors to undertake separately the inspection of elementary education, vocational education, higher education and lower-level government.

STANDARDISED PROCEDURES AND OPERATION NORMS

More and more provinces have developed standardised procedures for inspection and quality assessment. Hunan province carried out the Whole Process Supervision standard, mandating inspection before, during and after the implementation of one specific policy. Inspection before implementation refers to normal inspection designed to identify potential problems or defects. After this inspection, the feedback provided informs administration decisions, which may lead to some adjustments. Inspection during implementation requires inspectors to visit each school at least twice a week, to guide their adjustments. Inspection after implementation entails assessing the effectiveness of adjustments, during which implementation process is summarised. If new problems are found, new adjustment will be required. Within each inspection, inspectors introduce operation norms to make the process systematic and comprehensive. This Whole Process Supervision standard as well as the operation norms help improve the effectiveness of the inspections.

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Chapter 3

Beijing



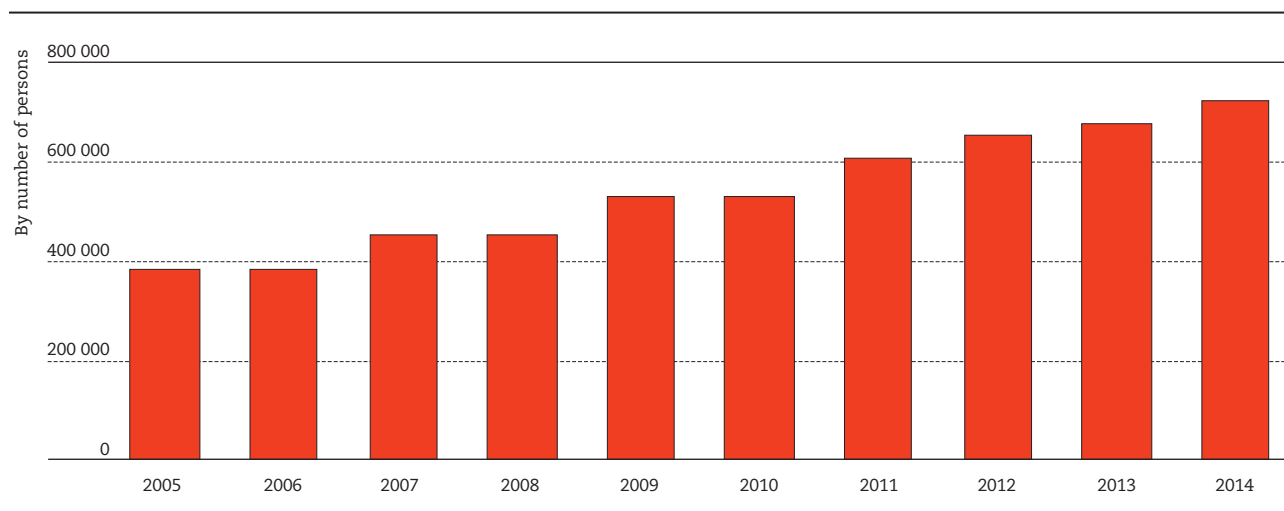
Introduction

Beijing is the capital of China; it is also a national political and cultural centre. Not only does it host China's central government, but all provinces also have their representative offices in Beijing. At the same time, many major enterprises and multinational companies keep their headquarters in Beijing. As mentioned earlier, Beijing is one of the four municipalities in the country. With a population of over 20 million, it is the second most populous city in China, surpassed only by Shanghai. Its economy ranks among the most developed and prosperous in China.

Beijing is also the largest science and technology research centre in the country. In 2014, the city had over 726 000 science and technology professions, a figure which nearly doubled in the last ten years, as shown in Figure 3.1. Research and development expenditure in Beijing was nearly CNY 127 billion, accounting for nearly 6% of its GDP. There were 138 111 patent applications in 2014 and 74 661 granted patents throughout the year.

FIGURE 3.1 PERSONNEL ENGAGED IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ACTIVITIES IN BEIJING (2005-2014)

By number of persons



Source: Beijing Bureau of Statistics, 2015.

Beijing is also known as the education centre of China. Citizens in Beijing have a higher education level than citizens in any other city in China. According to the Sixth National Population Census of China, nearly 31 500 people out of every million citizens have a bachelor's degree or above. The illiteracy rate is less than 2%, while the national average is 4% (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2011). Beijing is home to an extensive number of colleges and universities, hosting several universities with international reputations, including Peking University and Tsinghua University. By the end of 2013, Beijing had 89 regular higher education institutions, while Shanghai, for example, had 68.

INFLUENTIAL ROLE IN EDUCATION

There is no doubt that Beijing plays an influential role in Chinese education. This is not only due to the prominence of the municipality's higher education institutions, but also because of its high level of investment in primary and secondary education and the impact that this has on other important education indicators. For example, Beijing's student-teacher ratio in both primary and secondary education is far lower than the national average. Its senior secondary education student-teacher ratio ranks first among China's 31 provincial divisions (with Hong Kong and Macau excluded), as shown in Table 3.1. Beijing's government appropriation for funds per school student, as well as its government appropriated budgetary funds for education per school student, put it first among all regions at all levels, as shown in Figure 3.2.

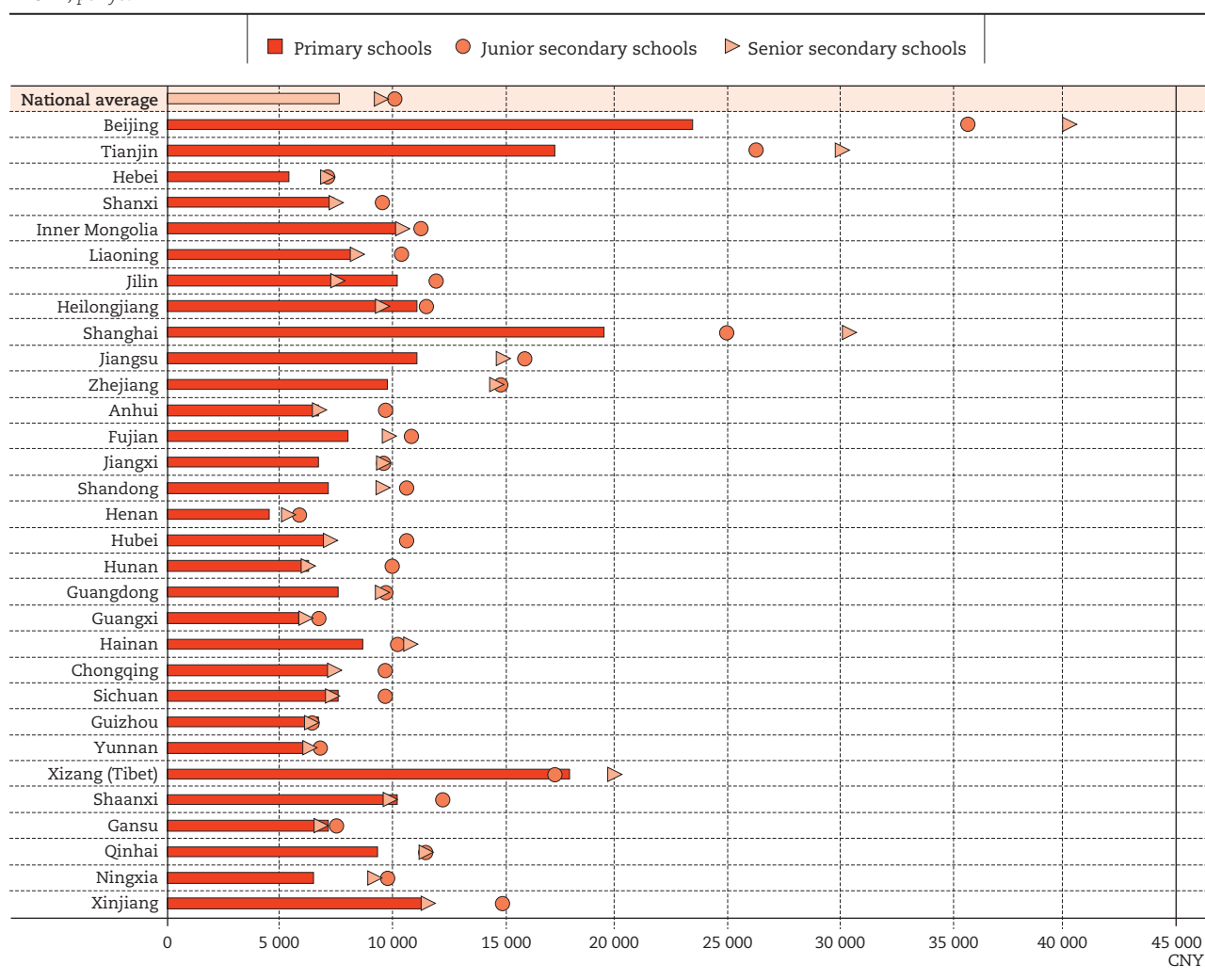
TABLE 3.1 STUDENT-TEACHER RATIO RANKED BY TEACHER LEVEL

	Primary education	Rank	Junior secondary education	Rank	Senior secondary education	Rank
Beijing	14.36	9	9.75	3	9.00	1
Shanghai	15.92	13	12.11	14	9.45	2
Jiangsu	16.86	18	10.50	5	11.41	4
Guangzhou	18.47	26	14.63	27	15.23	17
National average	16.76		12.76		14.95	

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2014.

FIGURE 3.2 GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATED BUDGETARY FUNDS FOR EDUCATION PER STUDENT IN REGULAR PRIMARY SCHOOL, REGULAR JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL AND REGULAR SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL (2013)

In CNY, per year



Source: Ministry of Education, 2014.

There are also many famous exemplary high schools in Beijing that hold key positions of prestige in the whole country's teaching and learning systems. The high school affiliated to Renmin University is one of the most famous super high schools in the country. It serves as a prestigious

training institution for high school teachers, and even headmasters. In 2015, the National Training Plan for Headmasters chose it as one of its training bases – the only high school included in a plan that is dominated by higher education institutions.

Although Beijing has made great achievements in universalising compulsory education and improving the quality of education, it still faces many challenges. Some of the most difficult challenges include high pressure for

students, inequalities in access and the uneven quality of schools. To solve these issues, the local government has carried out a series of policy measures.

Alleviating academic burdens for elementary school students

CURRICULUM REFORM

Building on the previous curriculum reform of 2001, current policy seeks to transform a curriculum focused on discipline-based knowledge transmission and preparation for examinations into a curriculum that encourages student-led enquiry and more comprehensive and balanced learning experiences. Through the expansion of subject choices and the introduction of integrated content, officials hope to improve interest in the curriculum and make it more relevant – while at the same time instilling Chinese values and attitudes.

The government has mandated the development of new textbooks that address issues relevant to contemporary life, society and the environment. Problem solving and the application of knowledge to real-world situations are encouraged in new textbooks, which also emphasise the importance of creativity and practical ability. In addition, the curriculum reform emphasises curricular continuity between different education levels. Put simply, this means that every year the curriculum should help students build on skills and knowledge acquired in previous years.

One big breakthrough in this reform is that the government has introduced a Credit Unit System to secondary education. Beijing Number 11 Middle School is an example of this reform. In the new system, students no longer have a fixed classroom, as in most schools. Instead, every student can arrange his or her unique timetable. Apart from teaching the courses, teachers serve as advisors for students' life management and studies.

NINE-YEAR SCHOOLS AND DIRECT ENROLMENT

It is widely acknowledged that entrance exams and strong competition impose the heaviest academic burden on Chinese students. To solve this problem, the government has forbidden primary school to junior secondary school entrance exams. However, enrolment in good-quality schools is still competitive. The academic performance of students in primary schools is sometimes considered by some districts for junior secondary school admissions. The reason for this is that some think that it is unfair to send children who are very outstanding to really poor schools.

To solve this dilemma, the Beijing government has tried two strategies. First, it has done its best to improve the educational quality of all compulsory schools in the region. Second, it has established a new kind of school, the nine-year school, that eliminates the transition. In nine-year schools, students can complete junior secondary education directly after finishing primary level education without changing schools. The curriculum studied in these schools is more consistent as well, since students do not change institutions. Teachers know more about the students, and there is more room for students to develop their own projects over the years. For students not enrolled in nine-year schools, the government tries to enrol them in “partner” schools. The government matches primary schools with junior secondary schools, and then allows students from one primary school to directly enrol in the partnering junior secondary school. In this way, entrance exam pressure is removed or reduced, and the consistency between primary education and junior secondary education is strengthened.

Overcoming inequality

MIGRANT CHILDREN

Because Beijing is the capital of China, it is home to many workers from other cities who do not hold local *hukou*. For many years, the education of their children was a problem. However, because the government now requires that every child nationwide have equal access to compulsory education, the government has approved new policies to facilitate the enrolment of the migrant children in recent years. If parents can provide proof of employment in Beijing, proof of their current address and the proof that neither parent can take care of their children in their original province, they can apply through local government for access to schools in their current neighbourhood.

ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS THAT ENSURE IMPARTIAL ENROLMENT

Students are enrolled in junior secondary schools in Beijing through random selection. All primary schools and junior secondary schools are divided into different

school districts. Primary school graduates can apply to junior secondary schools within the same district. In their applications, students must include ranked preferences for more than one school. Schools then enrol students based on stated preferences. That said, if the number of applicants to a school exceeds available space, a computer system will choose students randomly. If students are not assigned their first choice schools, the system will try to send them to their second choice schools if they are not full yet. If that fails again, the students will be sent to third choice schools, and so on, till all students are enrolled.

Students graduating from elementary schools and entering middle schools in Beijing have their information collected through a new electronic system. This system records all student enrolment information, such as how students enrol. The education administrative department can check the system to make sure that the enrolment is impartial.

Improving the quality of education

BALANCING DEVELOPMENT THROUGH GROUPS

To improve quality in lagging parts of the education system, the administration department tries to group schools so that each underdeveloped school has an outstanding school as its partner. The outstanding school will share teaching materials and teaching skills with the underdeveloped school. Sometimes they also share school management systems.

In some districts, like the Dongcheng district, grade groups are established within a group of schools. This means that teachers from the same grade form a group and share all teaching materials, classroom management techniques and even the curriculum timetable in order to help the underdeveloped school improve teaching quality.

INTRODUCING EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES TO UNDERDEVELOPED AREAS

Another way to help educationally underdeveloped districts is to give them access to good educational resources. There are many famous secondary schools in Beijing, but admission to them is limited. In order to expand access to quality schools, the Beijing city government has established branches of these famous schools in underdeveloped districts. These newly

established branches are operated by the original schools. Some teachers at the new schools are also from the original institutions, which means teaching quality at branch schools can be as high as at the famous ones. In this way, the local government is working to improve educational quality in districts with fewer resources.

IMPROVING TEACHERS' SKILLS

Beijing is also testing new training methods for teachers. In the past, teacher trainings consisted of lectures in which teaching experts or outstanding teachers introduced their skills to other teachers. This kind of training is somewhat ineffective. Nowadays, teacher-study institutions in some districts of Beijing are developing new types of training. They prescribe visiting schools and engaging in school activities, instead of just asking teachers to attend lectures.

Researchers from these teaching-study institutions listen to teachers' lessons first, and then give them feedback and guidance. Next, they help small groups of teachers with their teachings. The final step is that they come back again to check the effectiveness of their training.

INTERNET AND TECHNOLOGY-BASED EDUCATION

The Beijing government puts a lot of emphasis on promoting Internet-based education. Through the

Internet, the education resources can be available everywhere, which helps schools in rural and less advantaged districts to enrich their teaching resources.

The Beijing Digital School was started in 2012. It is a government project that provides citizens with good-quality online educational resources. The digital school, which is a website, offers both students and teachers access to online courses. Students and teachers can

also access additional course materials created by famous teachers through their accounts. Discussion with teachers or other students is also supported by the website, as users can chat in real time. Since this system requires that users register their real names with school information included, offline discussion is also available in some circumstances.

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Chapter 4

Shanghai



Introduction

Shanghai is the largest Chinese city by population, and it is also one of the country's four municipalities. While Beijing is China's political centre, Shanghai is undeniably its commercial and financial centre, located by the East China Sea (part of the Pacific Ocean). The city's economic output amounted to CNY 2.35 trillion (USD 384 billion) in 2015, with the service sector producing nearly 65% of the total (Shanghai Bureau of Statistics, 2015). Shanghai

piloted the first free-trade zone in the country. The zone was launched in 2013, and it served as a testing ground for the Chinese government's push for deepening market-oriented reforms and economic vitality.

Currently, Shanghai is the most cosmopolitan and open city in China. As one of the country's most developed cities, it is a leader among other regions in all kinds of reforms, including education.

Pioneer in examination reform

REFORM THE COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION (GAOKAO)

Since the reestablishment of *gaokao* in 1977, Shanghai has played an important role in reforming the exam. It is at the forefront of testing structural and content reforms to these tests.

The Ministry of Education proposed to separate entrance exams and graduate exams for high schools in 1983. Shanghai took embarked on a pilot exploration, organising the college entrance examination under its own jurisdictions in 1985. In 1988, Shanghai gave students more freedom compared with the traditionally highly regulated curriculum. Students were allowed to combine science with humanities, which put a greater emphasis on active inquiry in the learning process.

Since 2001, the entrance examination has taken the form of "3+X". This means that students are tested on the three core subjects (Chinese language, English language and mathematics), plus the "X" – a comprehensive test of six subjects (namely, politics, history, geography, physics, chemistry and biology). The subjects in the "X" test are meant to evaluate students' competence in analysing and solving problems with fundamental knowledge. Individual educational institutions decide on the weights of the three core subjects and the "X" component. For example, at Shanghai University for Science and Technology, the three core subjects are worth 40% of a candidate's overall scores, while the "X" component makes up 60%. Recently, Shanghai has begun developing a new *gaokao*, as described in Chapter 2.

These reforms transformed the *gaokao* in significant ways. But examinations do not exist in a vacuum. As a matter of course, changes to entrance exams also influence the teaching curriculum. Chinese students no longer focus solely on memorisation and rote learning. They now learn how to use knowledge and skills acquired in school

to solve real-world problems. They also perform cross-disciplinary studies and are evaluated on their ability to solve new problems and demonstrate deep understanding.

In 2014, China initialised another *gaokao* reform which the media called "the most systematic and comprehensive reform since the reestablishment of *gaokao* in 1977" (Jingwei, 2015). Shanghai and Zhejiang province were chosen to conduct the first experiments. Till now, Shanghai has adopted a series of supplementary measures covering all test evaluation and student admissions procedures. In 2017, Shanghai will start to admit students based on three criteria: their *gaokao* performances in June, scores of the Academic Test for the Ordinary High School Students and personal growth portfolios.

SPRING GAOKAO

The most common *gaokao*, held in June each year, is referred to as the autumn (June) *gaokao*. However, starting in 2000, a number of provinces have experimented with the spring (usually given in January) *gaokao* as a way of providing greater opportunity for students who may have missed the autumn session, or for those who failed the exam during the autumn session and wish to try again.

Beijing, Anhui, Tianjin, Shanghai and Inner Mongolia introduced the spring *gaokao*, but since 2007, Shanghai remains the only province that still holds the examination. Often described as a failed experiment because of the costs involved in managing an additional exam, and the lack of institutional and participant enthusiasm, the spring *gaokao* retains a good reputation in Shanghai. An increasing number of spring *gaokao* takers from Shanghai have gained admission to both tier one (like Shanghai University) and tier two (like Shanghai Normal University) institutions each year.

The Shanghai Municipal Education Examinations Authority has noted that the spring *gaokao* provides

flexibility for students who want to start their courses at different dates. Shanghai University, for example, operates many of its courses through a credit-based structure and three-term system. It enrolls around 80 students each year through the spring *gaokao*.

In 2015, under the general framework of a new round of *gaokao* reforms, Shanghai embarked on the reform of the spring *gaokao*, testing fresh graduates, from year 11 and 12 as well as graduates from the previous year. In terms of enrolment, an applicant has the right to choose, if he or she is to be admitted by two universities. The reform of the selection standard is an attempt at multifaceted evaluation, which involves students' *gaokao* performance, scores on the Academic Test for the Ordinary High School Students and interview (or skill test) results. In addition, certain programmes define specific professional requirements (for instance, specific olfactory requirements for the majors of perfume and aroma science). During 2015, the first year of the reform, officials received generally positive feedback from public on the new selection standards.

UNIVERSITY SPECIFIC EXAMINATIONS

A significant development in higher education reform is the approval by the Ministry of Education for selected

universities to conduct their own entrance examinations for undergraduate students.

Universities differ slightly in how they enrol students, including their requirements for students to either take the *gaokao* or not. However, it is clear that giving students the freedom to select which university they want to attend allows universities to identify talent that they might not see through the mainstream *gaokao* system. Before 2009, the Ministry of Education limited the number of students that could be admitted via universities' self-operated examination to 5% of the enrolment total, but the quota has increased since.

However, allowing universities to independently enrol students is controversial. Some argue that it could result in corruption and inequality, and that urban students could have an advantage in admissions at outstanding universities. To tackle this problem, the new reform requires that all admissions offers be approved by the headmaster. In addition, the headmaster is responsible for the enrolment result. In this way, the enrolment process is handled with higher transparency.

Enhancing equity and inclusion

Shanghai was among the first cities in China to achieve universal primary and junior secondary education, and was also among the first to achieve almost universal senior secondary education. According to the 2014 *Shanghai Statistics Yearbook* (Shanghai Bureau of Statistics, 2015), enrolment at the age of compulsory education in Shanghai was above 99.9%, and 97% of the age cohort attended senior secondary school (general and vocational). It is notable that the gross enrolment for pre-school programmes was 104.9%, which already surpasses the new national pre-school education goal for 2020.

In addition, Shanghai is also the first provincial-level division to receive the National Certificate of Equitable Development in Compulsory Education, which was issued by the Education Supervision Commission of the State Council of China. The Shanghai government has been working on the long-standing problem of disparity in school quality in the city's compulsory education system for some time now. The decrease in the size of the school-age cohort has helped to solve the problem. The government has evaluated city schools in terms of physical structure standards and education quality. According to the physical structure standard, schools are classified on a four-level index. The schools that meet the government's standard are rated as A or B. Those below

the standard are classified as C or D. Shanghai has closed many C- and D-class schools. Those that the city has not closed were merged into class-A and class-B schools; while others were reorganised after renovations (NCEE, n.d.).

MIGRANT CHILDREN

As introduced in earlier sections, China restricts the right to receive a wide variety of government services to the residents of one's province (*hukou's* location). But approximately one out of every five people in China is a migrant. Migrants are typically rural people who have left the impoverished countryside to find work in the booming cities (OECD, 2015). Shanghai is one of the principal recipients of migrant workers because of its active industrial and commercial economies.

Since 2002, national policy has guided by two statements (known as the policy of "Two Mainly"): "Education of migrant children is mainly the responsibility of the recipient city", and "migrant children should be educated mainly in public schools". These two policies become extraordinarily important as China rapidly urbanises.

Shanghai has been a national leader in dealing with the educational problem of migrant children. In July 2013, Shanghai started to implement a point-based residential

permit system whereby persons who have obtained a Shanghai residential permit and accumulated 120 points by meeting educational, employment, investment and other conditions may enjoy corresponding social benefits. One of these social benefits is the eligibility of their children to take *gaokao* in Shanghai. Migrants who have obtained a Shanghai residential permit without accumulating 120 points, or migrants who have legal and stable residence and employment may enjoy public education services equivalent to those received by urban *hukou* holders. These services include compulsory education and eligibility to take local secondary vocational school entrance exams for their children.

CURRICULUM REFORMS EMPHASISING STUDENT-CENTRED TEACHING AND LEARNING

Shanghai has long been viewed as a pioneer in education reform. In particular, the city's curriculum reform has received wide attention. Curriculum reform in Shanghai follows the general framework of national reform, as described earlier. But Shanghai is often given the privilege of experimenting with reforms before they are endorsed by other parts of the nation. Since 1988, Shanghai has launched two series of curriculum reform. The reform series have focused on overcoming "examination orientation" practices in schools in order to build quality education.

The first phase of curriculum reform started in 1988, with an attempt to allow students to select courses by personal interest. A curriculum comprising three blocks was established: compulsory courses, selective courses and activity curriculum. Accordingly, textbooks and teaching materials were developed and phased in.

Curriculum reform moved into its second phase in 1998. It aimed at integrating natural science with the humanities, the national curriculum with school-based curriculum, and knowledge acquisition with active inquiry. The purpose was to transform students from passive receivers of knowledge to active participants in learning, so as to improve their creativity and self-development and to fully achieve their potentials. Traditional subjects were

reorganised into eight "learning domains": language and literature, mathematics, natural science, social sciences, technology, arts, physical education, healthcare and a comprehensive practicum. Schools were encouraged to develop their own curricula specific to their individual conditions. Museums and other "youth education bases" became crucial spaces for implementation of the new curriculum.

The new curriculum has three components: the basic curriculum to be taught to all students, mainly implemented through common compulsory subjects; the enrichment curriculum, which aims to develop students' potential and is realised mainly through courses selected by students; and research-oriented curriculum, which is designed as limited selective courses for all students. The research-oriented curriculum asks students who are supported and guided by teachers, to identify research topics independently. Through independent learning and exploration, students can learn efficiently, think creatively and critically, participate in social life and promote social welfare. Since 2008, the government has implemented the new curriculum in all grades of primary and middle schools throughout the city.

In parallel to the curriculum reforms are reforms of teaching practice. These reforms aim to change the real, lived experience of students in classrooms and to better facilitate student learning. One very significant change has been made in recent years through the slogan "return class time to students". This calls for more group work and student activities in classes relative to teacher lecturing. This has caused a fundamental change in the perception of a good class. The standard of good teaching used to be lecturing and well-designed presentations by teachers. Shifting from summative evaluation to formative evaluation is also an important goal of these reforms. The function of evaluation has long been to select talented students. The guiding principle of evaluations has now shifted to encouraging students who show improvements. The evaluation system that is currently under development emphasises diverse criteria with more focus on individual development.

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Chapter 5

Jiangsu



Introduction

Jiangsu is a province consisting of 13 prefecture-level cities. It is an eastern coastal province of China, bordering Shanghai and Zhejiang province in the south. The capital of Jiangsu is Nanjing. Jiangsu is one of the most developed provinces in China, with the second highest total GDP after Guangdong province.

However, there is a wealth gap between the prosperous south and the poorer northern regions of Jiangsu, with the Yangtze River as the watershed. This has led to uneven economic growth. Jiangsu is one of the cradles of ancient Chinese civilisation. The wealth gap can be traced back to different cultural origins. South Jiangsu is known as the home of the three most prosperous southern cities, Suzhou, Wuxi and Changzhou, because it boasts fertile land for agriculture. These cities share with Shanghai and Zhejiang the “Jiangnan” culture, which has been famed for its prosperity and opulence since ancient times.

Despite the wealth gap between the north and south, Jiangsu is still one of the most developed provinces in China. Cities from Jiangsu, Shanghai, Zhejiang and Anhui form the Delta City Group of the Yangtze River, which is one of the largest city groups in China.

Jiangsu's urban-rural income gap is quite small compared to most Chinese provinces. In 2014, the per capita disposable income of Jiangsu's citizens was CNY 27 173. The per capita disposable income of the region's urban residents was CNY 34 346 (the national urban average was CNY 28 844) that same year, while rural residents had a per capita disposable income of CNY 14 958 (the national average was CNY 10 489) (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2014). The urban-rural income ratio of Jiangsu province is among the smallest in the nation (Figure 5.1).

As one of the most developed provinces, Jiangsu has actively implemented educational reform pilot experiments. During the implementation of reforms known as the Comprehensively Deepening Reforms, Jiangsu built the national pilot experiment zone for education modernisation and for reforms in higher education. Such experiments included: the demonstration zone for provincial pre-school education reform and development, testing of the quality and equitable education reform and development of compulsory education in the province and innovative development for vocational education in Jiangsu. Jiangsu province now has a total of 24 reform pilot programmes.

A leader in pre-school and equitable development

LEADER IN PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

To promote the development of high-quality pre-school education, Jiangsu is the first region to issue the Regulation on Pre-school Education, a regulation that dictates schooling standards and management structures. This regulation facilitates the development of private kindergartens, and serves as quality assurance for pre-school education.

Jiangsu province has also made great strides in providing universal pre-school education to children in rural areas. In 2013, the government built or rebuilt 930 kindergartens in rural areas. In 2014, it built 400 more. At the end of 2013, the gross enrolment rate of three-year pre-school education in Jiangsu reached 97%, ranking third place in China that year.

MORE EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT IN COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Jiangsu is the first province to receive the Certificate of Equitable Development in Compulsory Education which was issued by the Education Supervision Commission of the State Council of China, following Shanghai, Beijing

and Tianjin municipalities. It is more challenging for a province to get the certificate since all the counties in the province have to meet the requirement.

Increasing investment in economically underdeveloped regions is one of many approaches the Jiangsu government uses to achieve equitable development. According to the director of the Jiangsu Bureau of Education, in order to narrow the regional gap in infrastructure, the government must invest over CNY 20 billion in the poor counties in the north. These funds can be matched by up to CNY 200 billion, funds that should be used mainly to improve the quality of living and food services in rural schools. In addition, Jiangsu promotes the establishment of schools for children left behind (whose parents are migrants working in other cities), as well as schools for special education. In June 2015, the enrolment of migrant children in compulsory education was 99%, and the enrolment of disabled children was 96% (People's Daily, 2015).

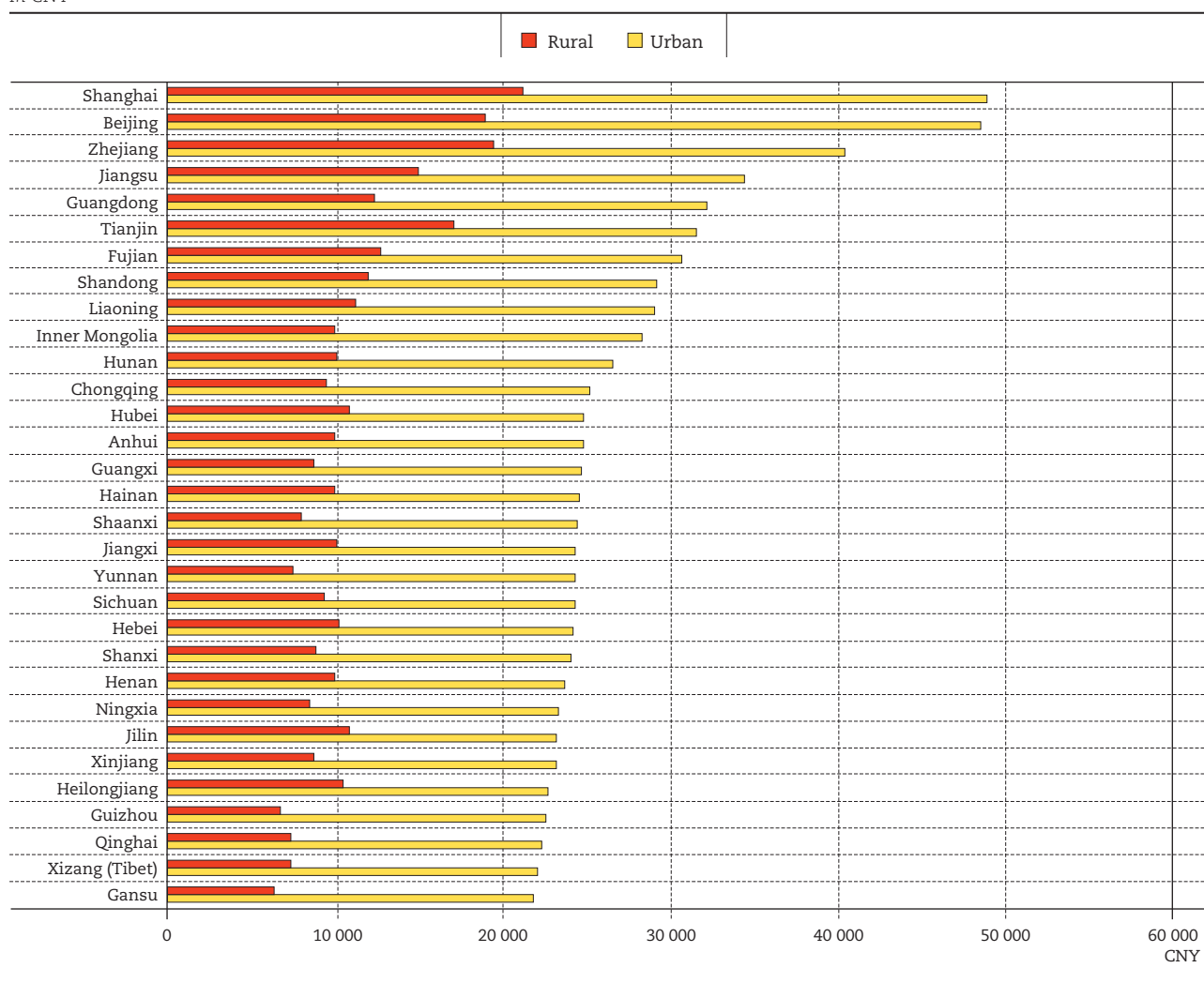
Improving teacher quality at underdeveloped schools is a more essential way to achieve equitable development. The provincial government has widely implemented programmes to support education at rural schools. About

two thousand schools, half in urban areas and half in rural areas, have been matched in pairs in order to help the rural schools with teaching and educational management. In each school pair, at least three outstanding teachers from the urban school will teach in the rural area for at least one year. The government has also implemented the Improving the Rural Teachers' Skills and Attributes Programme, which sends rural teachers to urban schools for better training.

Furthermore, Jiangsu, like other provinces, is trying to transform the teaching profession by making teachers employees of the school system, instead of each school. The province has also instituted a regular rotation of teachers. More than 15% of teachers are under exchange at other schools annually (Jiangsu Bureau of Education, 2012).

FIGURE 5.1 PER CAPITA INCOME OF URBAN AND RURAL RESIDENTS BY REGION (2014)

In CNY



Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2014.

Redistributing resources and expanding access for migrants

SCHOOL REDISTRIBUTION

Since becoming the leading province in implementing the Nine-Year Compulsory Education Act in 1996, Jiangsu province has focused on redistribution and adjustments of locations of rural schools. These efforts are a top priority because these schools are in remote locations

and must make do with poor facilities. Many factors have to be considered: population density, geographical environment or location, traffic conditions and other contributing factors. Taking these issues into account has helped improve plans for new school construction projects. In April 2001, the provincial government issued

the document Opinions on Accelerating the Basic Education Reform and Development, which demanded accelerating school construction redistribution to areas of greater need. Through this directive, school district planning is broken down as follows: high schools are placed within the downtown area, middle schools and central primary schools are placed in the suburbs, and migrant worker schools are placed in central villages. The redistribution of primary and secondary schools in rural areas of the province has become balanced with respect to the developed metropolitan cities. By reorganising schools and resources in rural areas, the province has worked to create a balance between education offered in both urban and rural areas. Currently, the province has a total of 4 023 primary schools and 2 077 junior high schools.

IMPROVING SCHOOL CONDITIONS AND PROMOTING RESOURCE SHARING

Jiangsu has put a major focus on school buildings, infrastructure and facilities improvement in recent years. Development and implementation of teaching methodology with the sharing of resources throughout the province has also been at the forefront of the new reforms.

In 1996, Jiangsu province was named the leading province for outstanding implementation of the Nine-Year Compulsory Education Act in China. The province's department of finances devoted more than CNY 14 billion to the new construction and revitalisation of schools and education facilities throughout Jiangsu. Hence the province's efforts to transform and modernise public education have earned it the honour of being China's leading province in education. In 2011, Jiangsu province started implementing The Medium-Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan for Jiangsu province from 2010-2020. Jiangsu upgraded and implemented new technology throughout the school sector. This phase was instrumental in acquiring computer hardware and software and the newest education technology for the school system. In order to accomplish the three-year plan, a long-term building management plan for maintenance and facilities maintenance was designed. Officials designed the management plan to ensure that standards for on-campus housing or boarding would be maintained and would comply with all safety codes and regulations. The plan also covered transportation and commutes for all students to all schools.

In 2012, the province's department of finances allocated special funds for a trial project to build sports grounds in rural schools. By equipping these rural schools with better sports facilities, overall student sport performance has been greatly enhanced.

In 2015, the province was the first to issue the Jiangsu Provincial School Standard for Compulsory Education (Trial).

By creating a standardised educational community, Jiangsu province has been able to support and bridge the gap between higher- and lower-performing schools. These schools have been successful in sharing resources, teachers, education aids and support. These schools have also been able to integrate management systems, research and learning styles, as well as assessments. Using cross-sharing models and mentoring, lower-performing schools have improved with help from the higher-performing schools. This has been accomplished through the promotion of philosophies of “one to one assistance,” and “strong schools help weak schools”.

Because technology is critical to contemporary education, Jiangsu province has taken steps to make sure its students have access to the latest technology and educational trends. In addition, the province has made school-wide networks and Internet connectivity standard across Jiangsu. Within networks, students and teachers have access to e-learning study trials, as well as an abundance of high-quality e-learning and online learning resources. In order to assist students with the learning curve and help all students regardless of their economic conditions, officials have standardised technology curricula and resources throughout the province.

SCHOOL ENTRANCE GUARANTEED FOR CHILDREN OF MIGRANT WORKERS

Jiangsu province allows a higher quota of migrant children to attend local schools than any other province in China. In 2011, 620 000 migrant workers' children were allowed to attend school in Jiangsu province. The high level of migrant participation in education in Jiangsu is the result of deliberate policies by provincial and county governments to enhance access to schools and overcome the enrolment obstacles faced by migrant groups. One of these policies is the 2012 Opinion on Migrant Workers taking the college entrance exam, which allows students without Jiangsu *hukou* to take the local *gaokao*. In addition, several cities have introduced innovative measures to expand school participation. In Nanjing, the government has adopted policy measures to ensure consistency in treatment, classroom experience and development trajectory for locals and migrants. To encourage the implementation of these policies, the government provided additional funds to schools that accepted migrant students, and offered bonuses to schools where migrants performed well. Similarly, Zhanjiang implemented a policy aimed at providing equal benefits and scholarship opportunities to locals and migrants entering vocational education. At a provincial level, migrant students who complete their high school in Jiangsu and who have parents with stable employment, enjoy university acceptance rates equal to their local counterparts.

The number of migrant students going to schools has drastically increased and, in 2011, around 0.6 million

children of migrant workers were new entrants to different school levels in Jiangsu province. Jiangsu province takes up to 12.5% of the entire nation's migrant workers. Among the 1.5 million migrant children living in Jiangsu, 730 000 or nearly 49% are from other provinces. There are nearly 1.2 million migrant students in primary schools in the province, of which about 600 000 or 51% are from other provinces. Nearly 350 000 of these migrant students are in middle school, of which more than

130 000 or just under 40% are from other provinces. In Suzhou, Wuxi, Changzhou, Nanjing, Zhenjiang and other southern Jiangsu cities, there are higher rates of migrant children. The above five cities have a little over 1 million students, or 70% of the total number. Migrant student enrolment rate can reach as high as 99%, with 85% of students studying in public schools. These figures are higher than the national average.

Providing a well balanced curriculum

HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM REFORM

Jiangsu's high school curriculum reform is a key part of the province's broader curriculum reform efforts. These reforms provide academic support and structure that is stronger than the support and structure that was offered traditionally at schools, which creates a well-balanced curriculum for students. The province has 576 high schools with a total of just over 1 million students, including 223 three-star schools and 247 four-star schools.¹ In 2005, Jiangsu was among the first provinces in China to implement these new curriculum and academic structure changes. Jiangsu presented the Chinese central government with a curriculum reform implementation plan, curriculum management guidance,

credit management guidance, school-based curriculum guidance, educational administration software with instructions and other relevant supporting documents. The provincial government also issued guidance documents on 14 courses. These documents include suggestions about teaching and school-based evaluation, class and credit arrangements, elective module guidance and other relevant guidance documents.

Since introducing these curriculum reforms, provincial educators and academics have embraced the new concepts, which have proven to be very popular. Evaluations and observations and implementations of the reforms have seen favourable changes to the quality of teaching and teaching methods.

Note

1. This is according to a system that Jiangsu has established to evaluate schools on a scale of 1 to 5 according to four criteria: quality of teachers and facilities, quality of management, quality of education in terms of developing the whole student and student achievement. Stars are awarded by a committee of government officials and external experts.

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Chapter 6

Guangdong



Introduction

Guangdong is located in the southernmost part of China's mainland, and is bordered by the country's two special administrative regions: Hong Kong and Macau. Guangzhou is the provincial capital of Guangdong. It is home to a special economic zone, Shenzhen, which was also the first special economic zone established after the reforms and economic opening up of the country in the early 1980s. Guangzhou and Shenzhen are major cities in China that are comparable to Beijing and Shanghai. The four cities play important roles in national politics and in the economy. Since 1989, Guangdong has topped the total GDP rankings among all provincial-level divisions. However, it also has the largest population, and its GDP per capita only ranks in the top third of all provincial-level divisions.

Guangdong hosts the largest import and export fair in China, the Canton Fair in Guangdong's capital city, Guangzhou. Guangdong is also the oldest foreign trade port, and the starting point of the Maritime Silk Road.

Foreign trade brings a tradition of openness to the city, which makes the province active in various reforms alongside Shanghai.

Guangdong has unique styles of language, tradition and culture. The oral language used by most citizens is Cantonese, which is not mutually intelligible with Mandarin, the most widely used Chinese. One of the most notable differences between Cantonese and Mandarin is how the spoken word is written: with Mandarin the spoken word is written as such, whereas with Cantonese there may not be a direct written word matching what is said. This results in the situation in which Mandarin and Cantonese texts look almost the same, but are pronounced differently. People in Hong Kong and Macau also speak Cantonese, which is mutually intelligible with the Cantonese spoken in Guangdong, although there are minor differences in accent and vocabulary. Sharing the same oral language can, to some degree, facilitate the cooperation and communication in education (Box 6.1).

Box 6.1 Languages in China

The languages spoken in China belong to the Sino-Tibetan language family and are comprised of hundreds of local dialects, many of which are not mutually intelligible. Predominantly, languages in China can be divided into seven dialect groups: Mandarin, Yue (Cantonese), Hakka, Min, Wu, Gan and Xiang (Ministry of Education, 2013). Despite much language diversity, the Chinese use a unified script system for writing that facilitates communication in general, and education in particular.

Originating from the northern dialects, Mandarin is both the official language and the language of basic education in mainland China. With the increase in literacy, Mandarin is understood in most parts of China. As a result, "Chinese" usually means Mandarin. Yue is spoken in Guangdong, Guangxi, Hong Kong and Macau. The most common form of Yue is Cantonese, which is spoken in the city of Guangzhou. Cantonese is also the native language of the majority of citizens in Hong Kong and Macau. The Hakka dialect is spoken by a group of Han Chinese living in the hills of northeast Guangdong and in many other parts of southern China, as well as Chinese Taipei. Min is mostly spoken in Fujian, eastern Guangdong, Hainan and Chinese Taipei. Wu is spoken in Shanghai, Zhejiang, southern Jiangsu

and Anhui. Wu is comprised of hundreds of distinct spoken forms, many of which are not mutually intelligible. The Suzhou dialect is the most well-known form of Wu. Phonological differences mark the Chinese dialects rather than differences in vocabulary and syntax.

Nearly all students in mainland China can speak and write in Mandarin, since Mandarin enjoys the status of an official language and is used as the medium of instruction in schools. However, Cantonese and Min are also widely known in the mainland. In Hong Kong and Macau, students are versed in Cantonese rather than Mandarin.

There are two types of characters in the Chinese written script: simplified Chinese characters and traditional Chinese characters. As its name indicates, simplified characters are simplified from the original written form, i.e. the traditional Chinese characters. The first official round of official character simplification was released in two documents in 1956 and 1964. This was followed by other rounds of simplification, as the aim of the transformation was to help increase literacy. People who have learned the simplified set of characters can also understand the traditional Chinese characters with little additional effort.

From the beginning of China's economic opening up and reforms to year 2013, the urbanisation rate of Guangdong shifted dramatically from 16.3% to 67.76%, ranking it first among all the provinces, but excluding municipalities

like Beijing and Shanghai (Xinhua News Agency, 2015a). The Pearl River Delta is also one of the largest city groups in China.

REFORM OF THE HUKOU SYSTEM FOR MIGRANTS AND THEIR CHILDREN

As the centre of China's export-led manufacturing industries, Guangdong is one of the most important destinations for migrant workers from rural areas all over China. In 2010, Guangdong province began to experiment with a point-based system for rural migrant workers to obtain urban *hukou*. It is similar to Shanghai's system, and since 2010 Guangdong has introduced other new policies. Starting in 2013, children of migrant workers who qualify as "highly-skilled" under the pilot programme and have obtained urban *hukou* after accumulating sufficient points can take university entrance exams locally.

Starting 1 January 2014, children whose father or mother is a migrant worker and who: 1) have a stable job; 2) have a stable place of residence; 3) have made full social insurance payments for at least three years; and 4) have held a Guangdong provincial residential permit for at least three years, and who themselves have enrolled in a secondary vocational school for at least three years, may be eligible to take the entrance exam for post-secondary vocational schools on equal footing with students holding Guangdong *hukou*. The stringent conditions demonstrate that despite the reforms, children with rural *hukou* must surmount significant obstacles in order to take university entrance exams in their place of residence.

Increasing investment and building partnerships

INCREASING EDUCATIONAL INVESTMENT

Although Guangdong has the highest GDP in China and invests a huge sum of education, it also has the largest population. The result of this is that government appropriated funds for education per school student in all kinds of education rank below the national average, as shown in Figure 3.2.

The local government appropriation for education is very large. It amounts to a figure that is over 19% of the total government appropriation in recent years, which is the largest appropriation of any province or municipality in China. However, because the province's population is so large, the educational investment is still not enough. The gaps in resources and quality between schools and regions in Guangdong are large compared to other developed provinces like Jiangsu and Zhejiang.

As required by the State Council in 2011, government appropriated education funds should continuously increase. The Guangdong government has set a goal to increase local government funds for education to over 25% of total local government spending before 2020. The state government and provincial government charge companies and individuals between 2% and 3% on the combined amount of the real-added value tax, consumer tax and business tax in order to fund education. In addition, according to this document, 10% of the income from the sale of land transfers must be used to fund education. The income generated by these taxes is over and above the amount earmarked by government appropriated funds. Some 13% of education funds collected from land transfer income have been designated for infrastructure development of rural schools.

COOPERATION WITH HONG KONG AND MACAU

Sharing the same language and located nearby, Guangdong has the opportunity to cooperate with Hong Kong and Macau. The Hong Kong–Zhuhai–Macau Bridge construction project was begun in 2009. The project consists of a series of bridges, and tunnels that will connect Hong Kong, Macau and Zhuhai, three major regions on the Pearl River Delta in China (Xinhua News Agency, 2015b). After the project's completion, which is due in late 2016, communication between Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau will be easier.

A Guangdong free-trade zone was established in April 2015, and it has played a major role in deepening cooperation with Hong Kong and Macau. The Guangdong free-trade zone is also expected to pool educational resources from Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau, although it was originally an economic arrangement. "Introducing quality educational resources from Hong Kong and Macau to Guangdong should be an important element in the cooperation between Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau, and it will facilitate the sound development of such cooperation," Luo Weiqi, the provincial chief of education in Guangdong, said in March 2015 (Lulu, 2015). The Shenzhen campus of the Chinese University of Hong Kong is such an example as the university benefits students from across the regions. Meanwhile, the Hengqin campus of the University of Macau is administered independently by Macau, and the campus, though located in Zhuhai's Hengqin district, is isolated from the rest of Hengqin.

Spurring education development in Shenzhen

SHENZHEN SPECIAL DISTRICT

Shenzhen gives observers a window into the reform and opening up of China. Shenzhen has experienced a rapid transformation from a fishing-town to an international city in recent decades. Situated immediately north of Hong Kong, Shenzhen became the first and the most successful special economic zone in China. It currently also holds sub-provincial administrative status, and has slightly less power than a province. As stated earlier, Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen are the four major cities in China.

CATCHING UP WITH HONG KONG IN ECONOMIC GROWTH AND EDUCATION

Shenzhen is a major financial centre in southern China. The city is home to the Shenzhen Stock Exchange as well as the headquarters of numerous high-tech companies. It was dubbed China's Silicon Valley due to this high concentration of technology companies. It is the picture of a modern city, with a gleaming, tower-filled skyline. Thus it is hard to imagine that before 1979, Shenzhen was a fish market town. The fast development of the city is the result of a vibrant economy made possible by rapid foreign investment that began with reform and opening policies and the establishment of the special economic zone.

TABLE 6.1 BASIC STATISTICS FOR SHENZHEN AND HONG KONG

City name	Area (km ²)	Population (2014 in million)	GDP (2014 in billion US dollars)	GDP per capita (2014 in US dollars)	GDP increasing rate (2014)
Shenzhen	1 997	10.8	257.8	24 336	8.8%
Hong Kong	1 104	7.3	289.2	39 900	5.5% (or 2.5%)

Source: Census and Statistics Department of Hong Kong, China 2015; Shenzhen Bureau of Statistics, 2015.

Currently, Shenzhen continues to develop at a brisk rate, despite the fact that development in the rest of the country slowed down of late. Hot Spots, an Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) research programme commissioned by Citigroup, ranked Shenzhen as second in economic strength among the 120 the world's major cities (EIU, 2012). As shown in Table 6.1, Shenzhen is catching up with the city of Hong Kong, in terms of economies experiencing rapid growth. Because living expenses are lower in Shenzhen, the two cities are competitive. In 2015, for the first time in a decade, the city of Hong Kong has been unseated as the most competitive city in China in the China Blue Book on Urban Competitiveness, according to the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (2015), which placed Shenzhen in the top spot.

Shenzhen has also developed its education system, especially its higher education system. Shenzhen is the

first city to get the Certificate of Equitable Development in Compulsory Education. Many famous universities have graduate schools or research centres in Shenzhen.

The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen, was founded on 11 October 2012 and approved by the Ministry of Education of China on 16 April 2014 (Education News, 2014). The Chinese University of Hong Kong chose Shenzhen for the location of its first campus outside Hong Kong for two reasons: 1) Shenzhen needed to improve its competitiveness in post-secondary education; and 2) Shenzhen is the neighbour of Hong Kong, which makes it easier for the new campus to share resources with the main campus in Sha Tin, Hong Kong.

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Annex A

The responsibilities of the Ministry of Education

The responsibilities of Ministry of Education shall include the following:

- 1) To draw up strategies, policies and plans for educational reform and development; and to draft relevant rules and regulations and supervise their implementation.
- 2) To take charge of the overall planning, coordination and management of all forms of education at various levels; to formulate, in collaboration with relevant departments, the standards for the setting-up of schools of all types at various levels; to guide the reform of education and teaching methods; to take charge of the statistics, analysis and release of basic educational information.
- 3) To promote all-around development of compulsory education and equitable education; to take charge of macro-level guidance and coordination of compulsory education; to direct regular senior secondary education, pre-school education and special education.
- 4) To lay down requirements and create basic documents for teaching in elementary education; to organise the examination and approval of unified course materials for elementary education; and to develop high-quality education in a comprehensive manner.
- 5) To provide guidance for the supervision of education nationwide; to organise and direct the inspection and evaluation of the implementation of nine-year compulsory education and the literacy campaign among the young and the middle-aged; and to monitor the quality and level of the development of elementary education.
- 6) To provide guidance for the development and reform of employment-oriented vocational education; to formulate curriculum catalogues for secondary vocational education, documents for the guidance of teaching and standards of teaching assessment; to enhance the compiling of teaching materials for secondary vocational education and to improve occupational counselling.
- 7) To direct the development and reform of higher education, and further deepen the reform of the administrative system of universities directly affiliated with the Ministry of Education.
- 8) To formulate curriculum catalogues and documents for the guidance of teaching; to examine and verify, in collaboration with relevant departments, the establishment, renaming, abolishment and adjustment of higher education institutions; to undertake the implementation and coordination of Project 211 and Project 985; to direct and coordinate all forms of higher education and continuing education; and to provide guidance for the improvement of the assessment of the higher education.
- 9) To take charge of the overall management of educational funds under the jurisdiction of this Ministry, take part in formulating policies for the raising and allocation of educational funds and capital investment in construction for educational purposes; and to prepare statistics of the funds for education across the country.
- 10) To plan and direct educational work for the ethnic minority groups, and to coordinate educational aids for ethnic minority groups and ethnic minority areas.
- 11) To direct the work of ideology and political education, moral, physical, health, arts and national defence education in all types of schools at various levels; and to direct the construction of the Party in institutions of higher learning.
- 12) To administer teachers' work; to formulate and supervise the implementation of qualification standards for teachers of various types and at various levels together in collaboration with relevant departments; and to direct the training of staff across the education system.
- 13) To manage the entrance examination for academic credentials for higher education

and the administration of records of students' enrolment status; to make recruitment plans for higher education in collaboration with relevant departments; to take part in drawing up employment policies for college and university graduates; and to direct regular colleges and universities in their work to facilitate graduates' job hunting and starting their own businesses.

- 14) To plan and guide research by institutions of higher education in natural sciences, philosophy and social sciences; to coordinate and guide the institutions of higher education to take part in developing a national innovation system, and undertake the state's key projects and programmes for the development of science and technology; to guide the construction and development of scientific and technological innovation at institutions of higher education; to direct the development of the education information system and promote the integration of production, teaching and research.
- 15) To organise and guide international educational exchanges and cooperation; to formulate policies and programmes to help Chinese students studying abroad and foreign students studying in China, to create joint educational programmes between Chinese and foreign educational institutions, and to manage schools for the children of foreign nationals. To plan, coordinate and direct the work of promoting

the Chinese language in the world. To carry out educational cooperation and exchanges with Hong Kong, Macau and Chinese Taipei.

- 16) To formulate guidelines and policies for the nationwide standardisation and promotion of spoken and written Chinese language; to compile medium and long-term plans for the development of the Chinese language; to formulate standards and criteria for Chinese and languages spoken by ethnic minority groups, and to organise and coordinate the supervision and examination of the implementation of standards and criteria; to direct the popularisation of Putonghua and the training of teachers of Putonghua.
- 17) To take charge of the work of the conferring academic degrees; to be responsible for the implementation of the conferral system for academic degrees; to be responsible for work towards international reciprocity in academic degrees, mutual recognition of academic degrees and so on.
- 18) To coordinate between state departments and UNESCO for cooperation in education, science and technology, culture and other areas; to take charge of the liaison of state departments and the UNESCO Secretariat and relevant institutions and organisations.
- 19) To carry out other work assigned by the State Council.

Annex B

List of the Ministry of Education's departments with functions

1) GENERAL OFFICE

Responsible for daily operation of the Ministry, as well as public relations with the community at large.

2) DEPARTMENT OF POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

Performs research about educational reform and development strategy, and does surveys on major issues. Develops comprehensive educational draft laws and regulations. Serves as legal construction contractor of the educational system and is responsible for the work of administration according to law. Undertakes the audit of relevant normative documents. Undertakes the administration reconsideration.

3) DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

Makes plans regarding national education development. Undertakes work on university management structure reform. Formulates plan about higher education enrolment and major arrangement standards jointly with other stakeholders. Participates in the development of various types of school construction standards at all levels. Undertakes the collection and analysis of basic education statistical information. Undertakes the infrastructure management of higher education institution and organisation which are under direct management. Undertakes the overall planning, coordination and macromanagement of private education institutions. Undertakes the safety overview and logistical socialisation reform management of higher education institution.

4) DEPARTMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE REFORM

Undertakes the daily work of the National Education System Reform Leading Group Office. Undertakes the overall promotion and implementation of the Education Plan. Studies and proposes suggestions about the key principles, policies and measures of the education reform's implementation. Undertakes the organisation work of promoting major education reform.

5) DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL

Undertakes the human resource management of subordinate organisations, universities, embassy education offices as well as the Ministry of Education itself. Plans and directs the construction of higher education teacher groups.

6) DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

Participates in the development of guidelines and policies about educational financing, funding and student funding. Undertakes the collection of statistics about national education funding and investment. Holds the responsibility for the management of assets, final accounts, finance and the internal audit of subordinate organisations and universities. Manages the fund of the compulsory education guarantee mechanism and other relevant special funds. Participates in the education load project of international financial organisation.

7) DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION I

Undertakes the macroeconomic management of compulsory education; drafts policies with concerned parties to ensure compulsory education in rural areas; formulates policies to promote balanced development of compulsory education policy; and puts forward measures to guarantee to all types of students an equal access to compulsory education. Formulates school standards for compulsory education with parties concerned; normalises compulsory schools' behaviours; and promotes teaching reforms. Guides moral education, extracurricular education and safety management of primary and secondary schools.

8) DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION II

Undertakes the macromanagement of general high school education, early childhood education and special education. Formulates the development policy of general high school education, early childhood education and special education, and the fundamental teaching documents of elementary education.

9) DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION

Undertakes the overall planning, comprehensive coordination and macromanagement of vocational education. Formulates the specialty catalogue and basic teaching requirements of secondary vocational education. Sets standards for secondary vocational schools with concerned parties. Guides education reform and teaching material construction work for secondary vocational education. Guides teacher training at secondary vocational schools. Undertakes the macro-level guidance of adult education and eliminates illiteracy.

10) DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Undertakes the macro-level management of higher education. Guides basic teaching construction and reform of higher education. Guides the improvement of higher education assessments. Formulates the specialty catalogue and teaching guidance for higher education schools. Guides all kinds of higher continuing education and distance education.

11) BUREAU OF EDUCATION INSPECTIONS

Undertakes daily work of the Office of Education Inspection Committee of State Council; is mainly responsible for the supervision of governments and schools in their implementation of education policies, regulations and other important decisions; monitors and assesses education quality.

12) DEPARTMENT OF ETHNIC MINORITY EDUCATION

Guide and coordinates ethnic minority education. Plans bilingual education for ethnic minorities. Guides ethnic unity education for primary and secondary students. Undertakes coordination of educational assistance for ethnic minorities in ethnic minority areas.

13) DEPARTMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Plans and directs the teaching staff development for all kinds of schools. Formulates the policies and regulations of teacher education and teacher management. Formulates all types of teacher qualification standards at all levels and directs the implementation of teacher qualification system. Undertakes the macro-level guidance of teacher education and teacher management.

14) DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL, HEALTH AND ARTS EDUCATION

Directs the sport, health, art and national defence education for both elementary school universities. Formulates relevant policies and educational guidance documents. Plans and directs teaching material construction and teacher trainings for relevant disciplines. Coordinates international sports competitions and artistic exchange activities for both elementary schools and universities.

15) DEPARTMENT OF MORAL EDUCATION

Undertakes the ideological and political work of teachers and students in higher education.

16) DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

Plans and coordinates ideological and political teaching at all higher education institutions. Plans and organises philosophy and social science research in higher education. Organises and coordinates higher education institutions to undertake the key national philosophies and social science research projects.

17) DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Plans and directs scientific and technical work in higher education institutions. Coordinates and directs the participation of institutions of higher education in the national innovation system; implements strategic plans for higher education undertaking key national science and technology projects and other technology plans. Directs the development of scientific and technological innovation platforms. Directs the development of the education information system, combination of production and research and other relevant work.

18) DEPARTMENT OF COLLEGE STUDENT AFFAIRS

Manages entrance examinations as well as student status and academic credentials management for all higher education. Directs local education administrative departments and universities to carries out employment guidance and services for university students. Participates in the formulation of general college graduates' employment policies. Implements employment plans for graduates in urgent need.

19) DEPARTMENT OF POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION (OFFICE OF THE STATE COUNCIL ACADEMIC DEGREES COMMITTEE)

Implements the Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Academic Degrees. Formulates the reform and development plan of national degree and graduate education. Directs and manages graduate education and disciplinary construction. Undertakes the establishment of graduate schools, as well as the construction and management of key national disciplines. Undertakes the implementation and coordination of 211 Project and 985 Project.

(20) DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

Implements standardisation of language.

21) DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Formulates the language standard.

22) DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND EXCHANGES (OFFICE OF HONG KONG, MACAU AND CHINESE TAIPEI)

Organises and guides international cooperation and exchanges of education; formulates policies about study abroad, overseas students in China, joint education and school management of the children of foreign personnel. Acts as a foreign education regulatory body. Guides the work of the Education Department at the Embassy (consulate). Plans, coordinates and guides the international promotion of Chinese. Carries out educational cooperation and exchanges with Hong Kong, Macau and Chinese Taipei.

22) OFFICE OF INSPECTION

Undertakes the inspection of universities and organisations directly affiliated with the Ministry of Education, as well as institutions abroad; is responsible for overall coordination, policy research, system

construction and other affairs. Plans and implements inspections. Cooperates with concerned parties to carry out the inspection staff's training, deployment, monitoring, management, etc. Makes recommendations for improvements after inspections. Bears responsibility for the supervision of relevant affairs.

24) PARTY ORGANISATION

Undertakes the Party-relevant work of the Ministry of Education and organisations under their direct affiliation and located in Beijing.

25) BUREAU OF RETIRED PERSONNEL

Undertakes the work relevant to retirement of staff and guides similar work of organisations directly affiliated with Ministry of Education.

26) UNESCO SECRETARIATS

27) DISCIPLINE INSPECTION GROUP AND SUPERVISION BUREAU

ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The OECD is a unique forum where governments work together to address the economic, social and environmental challenges of globalisation. The OECD is also at the forefront of efforts to understand and to help governments respond to new developments and concerns, such as corporate governance, the information economy and the challenges of an ageing population. The Organisation provides a setting where governments can compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practice and work to co-ordinate domestic and international policies.

The OECD member countries are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States. The European Union takes part in the work of the OECD.

OECD Publishing disseminates widely the results of the Organisation's statistics gathering and research on economic, social and environmental issues, as well as the conventions, guidelines and standards agreed by its members.

Education in China: A Snapshot

What do we know about the largest education system in the world? A system that is educating 260 million young people, and that employs 15 million teachers? This report provides a broad overview of how China's education system is organised and operates, and how reforms, both past and current, have reshaped education in China over time. The report then examines in greater detail education in the four economies within China that participated in PISA 2015. It provides the context in which China's participation in PISA – and its results in PISA – should be interpreted.

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