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CHINA'S SCHOOL: GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

According to National Bureau of Statistics of China, China has the largest education system in the world. With almost 260 million students and over 15 million teachers in about 514 000 schools [1], China's education system is not only immense but diverse.

China's education system has undergone continuous reforms since the early 1980s. In the field of compulsory education, China has made an incredible leap in less than 20 years and passed the way that developed countries have spent much more time on. 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 (发展规划司) is responsible for national educational development. In 2010, the department proposed the National Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020) (国家中长期教育改革和发展规划纲要(2010—2020年)). 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. In accordance with the Plan, the strategic goals to be attained by the year 2020 are to basically modernize education, bring a learning society into shape, and turn China into a country rich in human resources.

In October 2015, it was decided to accelerate the advancement of education modernization and proclaimed the New Development Strategy in the short term (新发展理念). The five priorities in education were outlined: (1) innovative ideas:

development of content of advanced educational programs that are in line with knowledge and skills of existing needs, search for new educational technologies, innovative management of the educational process and its activities; (2) harmonization: building a state based on the harmonization and harmonization of social, economic and environmental components to meet the needs of modern and future generations, the goals of education in the interests of balanced development include the expansion of knowledge, the development of special skills, intelligence, the formation of life position and values; (3) "green" concept is to improve the quality of education, to enrich the content, forms and methods of teaching with the ideology of national culture, comprehensive personal development with emphasis on moral, intellectual and physical development; (4) openness aimed at quality intensification of integration opportunities; (5) public accessibility: fairness and accessibility in education.

In February 2019, the Central Committee and the State Council of the People's Republic of China announced the "Modernization of Chinese Education by 2035". According to the document, the main goals for the development of education by 2035 are: building a modern education system that provides lifelong learning for all, promotion of quality preschool education, achievement of quality and balanced compulsory education, full promotion of higher education, improvement of professional service opportunities and improving the competitiveness of higher education [2].

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 (2004—2010年西部地区教育事业发展规划) to help develop education in China's relatively underdeveloped western regions.

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.

References

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