

# Technical and Vocational Education in China

Xueping Wu · Yiqun Ye

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# Foreword

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

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

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

education system. Education is part of China's overall development, and as such it requires her own efforts, wisdom and innovation in order to set up and manage a modern education system able to respond to the unique challenges she faces. To sustain development, China needs to learn from the experiences, the achievements, the researches and experimentation of other countries, without underestimating, in the process, her own achievements and characteristics. With significant Chinese characteristics, Chinese educational development will also play an important role in the global educational system.

This year is the 40th anniversary of The Reform and Opening Up and the 5th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative. Along with the fast social and economic development in the past years, Chinese education has witnessed tremendous achievements due to the increasing public financial support, changing attitude towards education, and the progress of information technology. Mutual understanding is the precondition for international exchange and cooperation. However, up to now, foreigners have encountered many hurdles in trying to improve their knowledge of Chinese education. On the one hand, not many of them manage to achieve a working knowledge of the Chinese language and, on the other hand, there is an undeniable shortage of English literature on Chinese Education.

In order to help foreign friends and scholars know more about today's Chinese education, *Chinese Education Series* comes into being. This series include four volumes, namely **Educational Policies and Legislation in China**, **Educational Governance in China**, **Higher Education in China**, and **Technical and Vocational Education in China**. The various volumes endeavor to explain the context of Chinese education, to introduce educational development in the present situation, to analyze the problems as they develop, and to look forward to the future of Chinese education in different areas, with each author offering his or her own original perspective. We hope that the series have to some extent help global society to better know the outline and features of modern Chinese education, that it has aroused interest in it, and has encouraged readers to explore the legislation governing its development.

Many thanks are due to Higher Education Press and Springer, for undertaking the publication of the *Chinese Education Series*. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the authors who carefully revise the volumes with true professionalism and selflessness, while handling busy schedules, and to all the friends and colleagues who have offered invaluable criticism, advice and encouragement.

Hangzhou, China

Xiaozhou Xu



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# Preface

Since the foundation of People's Republic of China in 1949, China's education has experienced nearly 70 years' of development. This was not an easy period for modern China. Just like what was said by Deng Xiaoping, the general designer of China's Reform and Opening Up, "Since there is no previous experience to fall back on, we need to wade across the stream by feeling the way." We must acknowledge that the reform in China has inevitably faced a lot of difficulties and frustrations, particularly in the first 30 years since the foundation of People's Republic of China. However, the introduction of Reform and Opening Up Policy in 1978 has brought China new ideas and a correct direction. Since then, tremendous developments have taken place. Human resources have been gradually regarded as the first productivity and thus education, through which creative talents are cultivated, has been given special attention in the policy of central government. If you thumb through the recent policy text, you will find that emphasis like "giving priority to education," "promoting the education equity," "to deeply implementing the strategy of developing the country through science and education and to strengthen the country by talented persons," "cultivating innovative and entrepreneurial talents" etc., have become the key guidelines of the educational policy in China.

As known to all, the educational development of a country is based on its economic foundation. Therefore, the making of the educational policies must be consistent with the real situation of certain historical periods. Since 1978, the educational policy in China has experienced mainly four stages: (1) The recovery and reconstruction of the educational order (1978–1984). Education in China suffered great losses during the ten-year's "Culture Revolution." So the basic framework of educational policies in this stage was to correct the wrong thoughts of education, recover and improve the basic educational system, commence on building an educational system and adapting to the economic construction. (2) The total start-up of educational system reform (1985–1992). During May 15–20, 1985, the first National Educational Conference since the introduction of Reform and Opening

Up was held in Beijing. In this conference, Deng Xiaoping put forward the necessity and urgency of transforming the oppressive burden of a large population to a huge human resource, which provided clear direction for the reform of the educational system. After the conference, the Decision on the Reform of the Education System was issued, which has been regarded as the milestone for the development of education. (3) The adjustment of educational policy facing the reform of the market economy system (1993–2002). In this period, several policies came into being, of which the Outline of Educational Reform and Development in China issued in 1993 and the Decision on Deepening Educational Reform and Promoting Quality Education in an All-round Way issued in 1999 were the most important. It can be concluded that the educational policies in this period mainly focused on basically realizing the Universalization of Nine-Year Compulsory Education and the Eradication the Illiteracy among the Middle-aged and Young Group until 2000; on the implementation of quality education, the development of vocational education, the expansion of higher education, the reform of educational system, the guarantee of educational funds, and so on. (4) The new development of the educational policy under the guidance of Scientific Outlook on Development (2002–Present). The rapid development of the economy and the realization of nine-year compulsory education have provided a sufficient foundation for the further reform of education in the new century. With the goal of constructing a harmonious society, giving priority to education, promoting education equity and enhancing the educational quality have become the key issues of this period. The great achievements of China's education should be due to the timely educational reform in different periods. The formulation and implementation of educational policies made the reforms possible. In China, with a special educational system, the educational policies have a direct impact on the development of education.

The scope of this book is clear: (1) analyzing the values which guide the formulation of China's educational policies and legislation; (2) introducing the basic framework of the educational policies and legislation in China; (3) presenting several educational policies which are the milestones in the development of China's education; (4) emphasizing four hot topics of policies, namely the policies of internationalization of education, private education, lifelong learning and teacher education.

This book is organized into eight chapters. Chapter 1 addresses the theoretic basis of educational policies in China, which is from the perspective of the education position, education quality and education equity. Chapter 2 looks at the major history and framework of the system of educational legislation in China, as well as the three important educational laws and legislations. Chapter 3 gives a detailed introduction to the outline and planning of educational development in China which has a profound impact to the reform and development of China's education. From Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7, policies of educational internationalization, private education, lifelong learning and teacher education are respectively introduced. Beginning from the analysis of "the Policy on Chinese-foreign Cooperation



in Running Schools,” Chap. 4 focuses on the policies of studying abroad and the internationalization of higher education in China. Chapter 5 provides a close look at the history, the current development and the legislation and policies of private education in China, considering both the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. In Chap. 6, we turn to policies of lifelong learning. Chapter 7 pays special attention to the teacher education system and teachers law in China.

Hangzhou, China  
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