

# Policy Interpretation and Practical Exploration on "Double Reduction"

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**Abstract:** In late July 2021, the general offices of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council jointly released a guideline on the "double reduction" policy, aiming to effectively improve the education level of schools, to reduce the excessive homework and after-school tutoring burden on students. The significance of "double reduction" lies in that "double reduction" reflects the orientation of quality education; "double reduction" reflects the quality and balanced development of compulsory education. The practical exploration on "double reduction" can be classified as three levels: at the national management level, consistent measures to reduce the burden and numerous "supporting measures" work together to reduce the burden and improve the quality; at the provincial level, how to implement the "double reduction" policy has become the focus of social attention; at the level of education participants, "double reduction" points out the direction for stakeholders and prevents rebound risks. "Double reduction" is a systematic project, which should guide and encourage students, parents, teachers, principals, and training institutions, the public and other parties to make joint efforts.

**Keywords:** "Double Reduction", Education, After-School Tutoring

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the pressure of education has been increasing, which not only harms the healthy growth of students physically and mentally, but also increases the financial and energy burden of families. In late July 2021, the general offices of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council jointly released a guideline on the "double reduction" policy, aiming to effectively improve the education level of schools, to reduce the excessive homework and after-school tutoring burden on students.

## 2. Connotation of "Double Reduction"

As the name implies, "double reduction" is to reduce the burden of students from two aspects, homework burden and after-school tutoring burden, the main body of burden reduction is compulsory education stage students. The "double reduction" means that there will be some improvements while the reduction is being made. What we are doing is to improve the after-school services and quality resources, and to improve the quality and capacity of education.

### 2.1 Reduce the Burden Both in School and Outside School.

On the one hand, to reduce homework pressure, schools must reduce the total amount and length of homework. Homework is no longer a monotonous exercise, but a hierarchical, flexible and personalized form to serve students' learning consolidation. Written work is no longer "homework", but according to the needs of the school section, as far as possible to let written work done in school; Parental and student corrections that do not help students' growth will be banned, and homework will be answered with professional help from teachers. The phenomenon that students blindly make up lessons after school and parents cover all other tasks should be put an end. Parents need to cooperate with the school to guide students to complete the necessary study, rational use of electronic products, and let students scientifically use their spare time through labor, sports, communication and other activities.

On the other hand, we should reduce the burden of after-school tutoring, strictly govern and comprehensively regulate the behavior of after-school tutoring. All curriculum-based tutoring institutions must be registered as nonprofit organizations and they cannot raise money from the public. They are not allowed to conduct training on weekends, national holidays or during winter and summer vacations, and local governments should not approve any new tutoring institutions to conduct academic course training for primary and middle school students. Curriculum-based tutoring institutions are prohibited from listing, capitalizing, engaging in unfair competition, leaking privacy, occupying minors' rest time, robbing teachers, and providing bad learning methods that lazy students' minds.

## ***2.2 Add service During Burden Reduction.***

After-school services need to meet the diverse needs of students. The after-school service should not teach new lessons and classify students who have difficulties and those who are able to study. In-school services will provide after-school services or delayed trusteeship not earlier than the local off-duty time. The teacher resources can be made up of in-school teachers who flexibly leave work; excellent teachers transferred from the region, and qualified social staff and volunteers. The after-school service not only appeals to the community to provide places for student activities, but also develops online learning resources and provides free online Q&A services for students.

## ***2.3 Multivariate Evaluation Criteria to Improve Quality and Efficiency.***

Teachers should not be evaluated by admission rate and students should not be evaluated by achievement. The government should set up a correct view of achievements and guide parents to form a scientific view of parenting. To improve students' learning efficiency, we should make full use of prescribed courses, optimize educational methods and improve examination methods. We will narrow the gap in education levels by expanding quality resources, deepen the reform of enrollment, coordinate the staffing of schools, guarantee financial subsidies, and improve the quality of teaching.

# **3. Significance of "Double Reduction"**

## ***3.1 "Double reduction" Reflects the Orientation of Quality Education.***

Excessive educational pressure in compulsory education may affect students' future development. Only by reducing the growth "overdraft" caused by excessive tutoring and paying attention to the balanced development of students' morality, intelligence, physique, beauty and labor, can we relieve the pressure on teenagers' body and mind.

"Double reduction" is an opportunity for education to change to the direction of comprehensive education, not only reflected in the "double reduction" requires the school system design to reflect the quality-oriented implementation of the basic task of moral education, but also reflected in the guidance of parents to change the blind tutoring parenting view, pay attention to the physical and mental health of children. "Double Reduction" provides a feasible path for after-school tutoring institutions to change their business philosophy of raising scores and focusing on exams, to transform non-disciplinary quality education and training, to supplement the deficiencies of school education, and to meet students' differentiated educational choices. These changes will ultimately serve to promote the integration of education and improve the overall efficiency of education.

## ***3.2 "Double Reduction" Reflects the Quality and Balanced Development of Compulsory Education.***

Nowadays, in order to get a head start in the competition for admission, many schools and parents try their best to let students learn ahead of their time on the grounds of "not letting children lose at the starting line". In order to meet the needs of advanced learning, some after-school tutoring institutions take the opportunity to carry out anxiety marketing. As a result, China's primary and secondary education has become a two-track system -- one is free compulsory education in schools, and the other is the education provided by out-of-school tutoring institutions with high tuition fees. This not only impacts the order of school education, but also enlarges the inequality in education.

Building a high-quality education system is the goal of education development during the 14th Five-Year Plan period and beyond. The "double reduction" is an important part of systematic planning to deepen the comprehensive reform of basic education and accelerate the construction of high-quality

basic education system. The real purpose of "double reduction" is to return to the law of education and the law of talent growth and finally realize the overall construction of high-quality education system.

#### **4. Practical Exploration on "Double Reduction"**

##### ***4.1 At the National Management Level, Consistent Measures to Reduce the Burden and Numerous "Supporting Measures" Works Together to Reduce the Burden and Improve the Quality.***

The 2021 Evaluation Plan for Provincial People's Governments' Performance of Education Responsibilities will focus on deepening education evaluation reform and "double reduction". The implementation progress of the "double reduction" work in each province is reported once every half month, and supervision measures such as the establishment of "double reduction" exposure platform provide standard guarantee for the "double reduction" work; after-school services for primary and secondary school students, after-school custodian services for primary and secondary schools, improvement of weak links in compulsory education and capacity enhancement, exploration of summer custodian services, special rectification of paid supplementary lessons for primary and secondary schools and illegal acceptance of gifts and cash by teachers, and other measures have ensured the reduction of burden without reducing quality of the "double reduction" work. The establishment of the Supervision Department of After-school Education and Training under the Ministry of Education and the joint initiative of 120 national after-school training institutions have provided favorable conditions and environment for the promotion of the "double reduction" work.

##### ***4.2 At the Provincial Level, How to implement the "Double Reduction" Policy has become the Focus of Social Attention.***

Nine national pilot areas have explored ways to reduce after-school tutoring, make rational use of resources in and out of school, and strengthen supervision of training fees. Some of the measures implemented in the pilot areas are expected to provide reference for the national work of "double reduction". For example, Beijing has promoted the reasonable flow of outstanding principals, backbone teachers, special-grade teachers and senior teachers within the region to promote the quality and balanced development of compulsory education. Shanghai has promoted public junior high schools, neighborhood communities and gymnasiums to provide diversified platforms for students to practice activities, and explored the pilot work of implementing "happy activity day" in junior high schools. Jiangsu province has increased financial input to further expand the human, material and financial resources of after-school services. Chengdu, Sichuan province has linked students' participation in after-school tutoring with teacher evaluation. As early as 2020, Changzhi city in Shanxi Province announced that weight and eyesight will be included in the scores of the high school entrance exam to guide families to correct their educational attitudes. Liaoning will continue to deepen the reform of collectively-run schools, aiming to achieve 80% coverage of high-quality education resources in compulsory education by the end of 2021 and full coverage by the end of 2022.

##### ***4.3 At the Level of Education Participants, "Double Reduction" Points Out the Direction for Stakeholders and Prevents Rebound Risks.***

Guide the society to recognize the public welfare attribute of education. Officials from the Ministry of Education stressed that the society should not only provide places and resources for after-school activities, but also explore community education services. They should also publicize scientific education concepts, stop hyping up exam results ranking and enrollment rate. Guide parents to see the real development needs of students. Parents are important participants in students' learning, so we should realize that the development of abilities beyond knowledge is the implicit need of children's growth. "Double reduction" policy is the opportunity to change the concept of parenting. Parents should "improve their own education quality and ability, rationally plan their children's future development direction, and do not blindly follow the trend of sending children to attend after-school tutoring". Schools should be the main position to improve the quality of education. How to develop after-school services with local and school-based characteristics, bring children back from after-school tutoring classes, how to solve the problem of insufficient teachers, and better provide students with effective classroom teaching and rich after-school services, are the current problems that need to be solved. After-school tutoring institutions need to be transformed correctly. After-school tutoring institutions should do "true education", transform to quality education, return to the public welfare

mentality, and do a good job in education rather than doing big business.

## 5. Conclusion

"Double reduction" is a systematic project, which should guide and encourage students, parents, teachers, principals, training institutions, the public and other parties to make joint efforts. Only by combining efforts to educate people, treating both symptoms and root causes, and returning to the essence of education, can "double reduction" be truly implemented and blossomed.

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