
NEWSLETTER

After-School Service in Chinese Primary Schools in the Context of the Implementation of the Double Reduction Policy: The Current State, Problems, and Countermeasures

By Shi, D. S., Li, L., Zhao, S. N., & Chu, L.

Correspondence to: Lin Chu, Beijing Union University, China. E-mail: editorial-office@bonoi.org

IN February 2017, the Ministry of Education of China issued the Guiding Opinions on Optimizing After-school Service for Primary and Secondary School Students. The State Council released the Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Homework and Off-Campus Training for Compulsory Education Students (also referred to as the Double Reduction Policy) in July 2021. The release of the Policy sparked wide concern over after-school service for schoolchildren. It is believed that after-school service has the potential to increase educational capacities of the school, reduce parents' burden, and promote all-round development of students. Nevertheless, a number of issues need to be addressed in current after-school service in Chinese schools.

This study conducted an in-depth investigation into the implementation of after-school service in primary schools of H City in the wake of the release of the Double Reduction Policy. H City is a border city in Yunnan Province, comprised of nine counties and one city district. From November 2021 to January 2022, the research team visited seven primary schools in the city, including four urban and three rural schools, and held five thematic seminars and gathered data on after-school service in these schools. In the meantime, it also carried out a larger-scale questionnaire survey in 16 urban and 410 rural primary schools selected by stratified sampling and distributed 3,969 teacher and 44,656 parent questionnaires. Furthermore, the research team interviewed 5 primary school principals, over 50 primary school teachers, more than 50 parents, and over 20 pupils.

Analysis results of the data from the questionnaires and interviews show that after-school service is available to all students from all primary schools in the city and teachers are fully aware of relevant policies; that current after-school service is rich in educational contents, well satisfying heterogenous needs of students in different grades; that after-school service in the majority of the schools is well-organized and has engaged the attention of multiple out-of-school agents; and that positive effects of after-school service mark the successful execution of the Double Reduction Policy. At the

same time, problems with current after-school service for pupils should also be noted: (1) considerable gaps in the understanding of after-school service between teachers and parents; (2) disparities in the quality of after-school service among different schools and low participation of pupils; (3) the lack of sustainable support; (4) an appropriate evaluation mechanism to be developed to clarify the division of responsibility.

Source: China Educational Technology, 2022; 2022(11):17-31.