

Comparison study of rural school layout adjustment policies in China and the United States

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Abstract. The adjustment of rural school layout is an important topic facing promoting educational equity. At present, China's rural primary and secondary schools have experienced extensive and lasting adjustment of school layout, and achieved remarkable results, but the adjustment process of rural school layout in China has also produced a series of problems and negative effects. Through the analysis of the rural school layout adjustment policy in China and the United States, this paper can further understand the whole development process of the rural school layout adjustment in the United States, learn from their successful experience, draw lessons from their failure, and have important enlightenment significance and guidance for the improvement of China's school layout adjustment policy. This article mainly analyzes the adjustment policy of rural school layout in China and the United States, the impact of the layout adjustment of rural schools in China and the United States, and the problems faced by China is tweaking the layout of rural schools and the advanced experience of the United States.

Keywords: School layout adjustment, Rural schools in China, American schools, Comparative analysis.

1. Introduction

In recent years, scholars and the national education department have found the serious consequences of arbitrarily adjusting the school layout. The academic circle has begun to study and explore the problem of adjusting the school layout, and the state has also issued corresponding policies and regulations. About rural school layout adjustment is not much, in the study of education policy and academic research mainly is the study of rural school layout adjustment measures, but the lack of research on rural school layout adjustment problems, this article carried out the analysis of the problems of China and the United States in the adjustment process research, for China's construction in line with the national conditions and the actual situation has a further boost. With the rapid development of Urbanization in China, the rural students have been greatly reduced. At present, all regions are still facing the realistic dilemma of adjusting the layout of rural schools, which has become one of the difficult problems plaguing all sectors of society. Originated in the countryside, rural school layout adjustment policy is mainly to the reasonable allocation of rural school education resources, mainly taking the form of undoing to teach, merge the countryside school, to improve the effect of scale and benefit. But rural school layout adjustment is not standard, not only did not fundamentally solve the problem of rural education fair. On the contrary, it has increased the educational burden of rural areas. This article will review the adjustment policies on the layout of rural schools in China and America in recent years, and reflect on the problems arising in China's layout adjustment. The purpose of exploring the experience of American states in the process of adjusting schools is to inspire Chinese education executors and scholars to think about rural education in various ways.

This paper will try to reflect on the existing rural school layout adjustment policies in China and the United States, and study the constraints of rural school layout adjustment, in order to put forward measures suitable for the actual rural school layout adjustment in China.

2. Changes In The Layout Adjustment Policies Of Rural Schools In China And The United States

2.1 The Policy of Adjusting the Layout of Rural Schools in China

Since the 1990s, the Chinese government has adjusted the layout of some rural schools. In November 1998, China is still exploring and trying to adjust the distribution of schools. The Chinese government has released a document on strengthening schools in weak cities, which proposed to cancel or merge some schools with poor educational conditions and standards by means of school layout adjustment [1]. In May 2001, The State Council issued the "Decision on The Reform and Development of Basic Education", and the adjustment of the layout of rural schools in China officially began to be carried out with goals, plans and steps [2]. Subsequently, in 2009, the Ministry of Education issued the "Guidance on Strengthening the Management of Primary and Secondary Schools and Standardizing School Running Behavior", which proposed that the school layout should avoid simply withdrawing and merging schools, take the nearby enrollment and not increase the burden on farmers as the premise, and pay attention to the education costs and inconvenient problems for students due to the adjustment of the layout [3]. In 2012, The General Office of the State Council issued a notice on regulating compulsory education schools in rural areas suspending the adjustment of the layout of rural compulsory education schools. Solve all kinds of practical difficulties and problems caused by the adjustment of school layout [4]. In July 2016, the government issued a document promoting the integrated reform and development of rural education, emphasizing the necessity of running small-scale rural schools well and proposing to accelerate the standardization construction of Urban and rural basic education schools. In 2018, the government issued a document emphasizing that the layout of rural schools should be conducive to providing fair and quality education to rural students, while respecting the law of physical and mental development and making it easier for students to enroll nearby. In May 2021, China's Ministry of Education stressed ensuring equal access to school for school-age children from poor families, and ensuring no dropouts or dropouts.

In a word, China is constantly adjusting the layout of rural schools, discovering problems and solving them in time, preventing the "one-size-fits-all" approach in some regions, and seeking a standardized and efficient layout adjustment policy.

2.2 The Policy of Adjusting the Layout of Rural Schools in the US

Before the middle of the 19th century, schools were established and managed independently in all parts of the United States. In the late 19th century, with the gradual improvement of the state educational leadership system, various states carried out school adjustment movements of different degrees. In the 1970s and 1980s, the rural economy was depressed, and some areas had to take the initiative to merge into large school districts in order to save education funds, so as to alleviate financial difficulties [5]. Under the influence of the Industrial Revolution, school consolidation was first carried out in cities and then spread to rural areas. In 1897, the National Education Association's "Rural School 12 committee report" marked the merger of rural schools and school district reorganization, and state legislation promoted the merger. The Rural Life Movement was launched in 1908 with the main aim of merging rural schools. 1929 economic crisis, the United States government sharply cut education spending. Subsequently, the New Deal was implemented by the US government and the speed of adjustment became the main feature of the adjustment of school layout in the US during this period. In 1944, the first United States government proposed the "revival of rural education" at the education conference and the reorganization of rural primary school districts. After the 1960s, the movement for rural school consolidation in the United States gradually weakened, and most of rural primary schools have been reorganized or merged. In 1983, the American Committee on the Quality of Basic Education released *The Country in Danger* and continued to adjust the layout of rural schools. Subsequently, the school layout adjustment gradually moved to the road of scientific planning and rational development [6]. After the 1980s, many states established special

funds through legislation, which largely solved the family education burden of rural students [7]. In 2000 president Clinton launched the Rural Educational Achievement Program. The program includes the Small Rural School Achievement Program, which gives financial aid to smaller schools in rural areas.

2.3 Similarities and Differences Between Rural School Layout Adjustment Policies in China and the United States

American take schools merge and the establishment of traffic system and a large number of supporting measures for the continuous adjustment of rural schools policy implementation and complement each other between the policies Cooperation, is the key to realize rural education resources effectively integrate into the implementation of the rural school layout adjustment policy in China exist blind from junior high Too much attention to boarding school and ignore the public bus system construction facilities Neighborhood school principal and other issues Rationally using the strategy of the rural school layout adjustment and experience, effective use of small schools, boarding schools and school buses on two legs, is a reasonable logic of the rural education resources integration in China at present stage [8].

3. The policy impact of the layout adjustment of rural schools in china and the united states

3.1 The Current Layout Adjustment of Rural Schools in China

The adjustment of the education layout in the rural areas of China is based on the withdrawal and merger. The main objects of withdrawal and merger are those with unreasonable layouts, a large number of dilapidated houses and relatively insufficient students. Under the influence of the western national education trend, China's government-run primary schools are carried out in accordance with the established administrative divisions of the country at the very beginning, which is also the common situation of the current adjustment of the layout of rural schools in China [2]. The adjustment of school layout in China usually takes the location of the township government as the unit for junior high school and the village as the unit for primary school. The adjustment is carried out within the administrative division of the township, and the schools between the townships are independent and parallel without merging.

At present, in order to improve the educational environment and promote the development of rural education, the Chinese education department has taken a series of measures to promote equity in rural education. However, the result of pursuing educational equity in rural areas does not fundamentally solve the problem of educational equity in rural areas, but increases the educational burden in rural areas and makes urban and rural education more unfair [9]. The development of rural basic education in China has long been plagued by the problems of scattered rural schools, insufficient teachers and a shortage of funds. Since 1990, in order to integrate the scattered rural education resources, the state has appropriately concentrated the scattered rural primary and secondary schools and teaching points based on the economic and natural conditions and social development needs of each region, and rearranged and planned the network of primary and secondary schools in the region. In order to achieve the concentration and optimization of educational resources, improve the quality of rural primary and secondary education and scale benefit. However, the large-scale evacuation of schools resulted in the rapid disappearance of schools in a large number of villages, and the cultural and educational centers in rural areas converged from villages to towns and other economically developed areas.

Moreover, China has put forward new requirements for rural revitalization. The Chinese government has to re-examine the construction and layout of rural schools. Changes in the emphasis of national strategic development [1]. With the continuous deepening of reform and opening up and the rapid development of economic construction, China has gained strength in all areas, But it has also

led to growing economies in both urban and rural areas. In order to solve this problem, the state began to consciously pay close attention to the quality of rural school education.

3.2 The Current Layout Adjustment of Rural Schools in the United States

Abiding by laws and regulations and setting clear standards is one of the most prominent features of the century-long adjustment of the distribution of compulsory education in the United States. The adjustment of basic education distribution in the United States is also based on laws and everything is carried out in accordance with laws. Although the measures to adjust the school layout during the Adjustment of basic education distribution in the United States education period vary from state to region in the United States, state governments adopt corresponding strategies to set standards and supervise the implementation of school districts and schools [7]. In the rural school merger movement, each state has made its own efforts by formulating policies and measures to promote and encourage the merger of rural schools, and establishing or increasing financial support. Some states have even passed legislation to increase funding for integrated rural schools.

In order to improve the serious imbalance in education, states merge and adjust schools and school districts according to the local tax revenue and economic development, increase the investment in education at the national and state levels, and alleviate the difficulties of rural school district development to a certain extent. States will have independent school districts of tax burden and economic conditions good school districts to merge, on the one hand, reduce the burden on the economy is not developed area development education, on the other hand, to guarantee high-quality education to students, in order to guarantee the district residents the right to school affairs management, effectively reduce the negative effect appeared in the process of layout adjustment, Many states have tightened their control over the school layout process by statute [10].

3.3 Comparison of the Layout Adjustment of Rural Schools in China and the United States

For the United States: after the consolidation of rural schools, many students have to spend more time on the way to and from school. Although the United States provides school busing for students, it is not as convenient as going to school locally. Some primary and middle school students tend to get bored with school activities and homework after spending a lot of time on the way to and from school. From the national point of view, the adjustment of schools has improved the quality of education and the unbalanced development of education, but from the perspective of the masses, school layout adjustment has damaged the fair opportunity for some students to enter the school and cut the connection between school and community.

For China: Since 2000, China has already issued relevant policies documents to horizontally merge smaller schools and teaching sites, and to improve school accommodation conditions and update school buildings and equipment as supporting measures to promote the specific implementation of rural school layout adjustment. But some problems in the process of implementation are also worth pondering. The so-called scale effect brought by mergers can be optimized in what scale. Whether large-scale schools and classes really contribute to the improvement of education efficiency and effect has always been controversial. Rural China, like the United States, faces the same problems of longer distances and longer commutes. The convenience of the school in the village is replaced by a long journey on foot. Moreover, some students arrive at the school for more than 3-4 hours each way. Such students either live in school or have to drop out.

4. Problems faced by china and advanced experience in the united states in adjusting the layout of rural schools

4.1 Problems that China Faces in Adjusting the Layout of Rural Schools

Vague national policy standards have led to blind withdrawal and consolidation in rural areas. In 2001, the Chinese Government issued the Decision on the Reform and Development of Basic

Education", although this is the most comprehensive policy regulation for the adjustment of rural school layout, it plays an important role in guiding the adjustment of local school layout, these provisions are basically principled and vague, and lack of operability [11]. The rural school layout adjustment procedure is unfair and normative. In various parts of unfair, just the opposite of case is directly revealed the promulgated by the state policy of rural school layout adjustment and the concrete implementation and enforcement of local government, the lack of a set of procedural system arrangement, it is because there is no a set of specifications, fair layout adjustment process to ensure the rationality and validity of policy implementation. Because of the still lack of targeted regulations, the strategy is not effective [3].

The adjustment of the layout of rural schools has led to difficulties in the enrolment of students and their families and has worsened the cultural situation in the villages where the schools have been merged. Rural students going to school itself is very difficult, after the withdrawal of the school and more located in the township government, the school service radius has become larger, so that many children are difficult to enter the nearby school, which leads to many children to delay the age of admission, and those boarding school students because of young age, poor ability to take care of themselves, there are many inconveniences to study. At the same time, before the dissolution of the rural schools, because the distance is relatively close, accommodation can be settled at home, so the cost of students is not much, but after the dissolution of the students are mostly boarding, boarding will generate living expenses, accommodation costs, pocket money, travel expenses, etc., no matter how much will increase the economic burden of ordinary villagers, especially poor families. And children boarding from childhood will also increase the mental burden of parents because all parents will have an instinctive worry about their boarding children's clothing, food, housing, transportation, and physical and mental health [1]. In addition, the impact of rural school layout adjustment on rural social ecology. Rural schools bear the dual responsibility of rural cultural inheritance and cultural creation. Once the schools withdraw from the countryside, the worship of "market spirit" and "economic benefits" brought by the wave of urbanization will be on the rise, which not only impacts the characteristic culture of the countryside, but also intensifies the marketization and non-agricultural trend of rural education, and ultimately leads to the destruction of the rural social ecology [9]. Rural primary and secondary schools play an important role in rebuilding rural cultural atmosphere, re-establishing the existence of rural spirit, reconstructing rural lifestyle, and improving rural students' cultural confidence, etc., while the integration of rural schools will inevitably lead to the alienation of rural students from rural life and rural experience. The unreasonable withdrawal and integration profoundly affect the ecological environment of rural education, weaken the educational function of rural cultural institutions, and fundamentally affects the overall development of rural education.

4.2 Advanced Experience of Rural School Layout Adjustment in America

The merger of schools in the United States leads to the expansion of school service radius, which is bound to affect the enthusiasm and convenience of students in the merged school districts. Therefore, as schools merge, states have different compensation policies [5]. In the rural school merger movement, each state has made its own efforts to promote and encourage the merger of rural schools by formulating policies and measures, and establishing or increasing financial support for the merger of schools. Some states have even passed legislation to increase funding for integrated rural schools.

By standardizing the operation and management of school buses and implementing a legalized school transportation system, the merger of rural schools not only improves the quality of education but also consolidates the achievements made in quantity, to the greatest extent offsetting the negative impact caused by the increasing distance between home and school [8]. As the core of the school transportation system, the public school bus has become a basic measure to ensure the development of public education in the United States. Together with the school merger movement, it has become an important force to pull the adjustment of rural school layout.

State governments in the United States set up special funds to cover the educational burden of families. The fund was set up to address the two main burdens of family education: the cost of transportation for children to school. The United States government passed legislation to establish a system of free public transportation services for integrated schools. The legalization of this system removes obstacles to the realization of educational equity and the better development of the school merger movement. Whether the state arranges the bus or the parents arrange it themselves, the state is bound to pick up the TAB. The second issue addressed was the cost of accompanying parents of students living on campus. If students live on campus and are accompanied by their parents, these costs are also funded by government legislation. Set up a special fund to recruit and retain teachers. In the process of merging rural schools in the United States, the government has kept small-scale schools in some areas considering the actual situation in each region. However, these regions are usually located in remote areas with the poor environment and backward development. Besides, teachers are not well treated and there is great teaching pressure, so it is difficult to provide a professional development platform for teachers. Therefore, excellent or qualified teachers cannot be attracted to these regions, and the quality of education is difficult to be guaranteed. In order for the problems facing these areas to be better solved, the government passed legislation to set up a special fund for the recruitment and retention of teachers [7].

4.3 Suggestions to Optimize the Chinese Rural School Layout Adjustment Policy

In the process of the adjustment of the distribution of compulsory education schools in the United States, the rapid merger of primary and secondary schools, the establishment of large-scale schools, the pace of school merger slowed down, and then the support of small-scale schools. They realized that the most important thing is to plan the school layout according to local conditions and protect children's right to receive an education. In contrast, in some areas of China's school layout adjustment status quo, some areas blindly implement the "one size fits all" approach, without considering the regional differences, seriously damaging the local children's right to nearby schools. Layout adjustment, therefore, cannot casually, blindly, especially in rural areas, need to change on the number of students geographical location, the traffic school, children go to school, the school provides lodging conditions, a distance of local residents intend to consider such factors as whether to undo, mergers, new, fully meet the needs of children came to the entrance, only by flexibly retaining and supporting small schools or teaching places can we effectively and reasonably achieve the smooth adjustment of school layout [6].

Strengthen the theoretical research and go deep into the empirical investigation in the process of adjusting the layout of American compulsory education schools. Educational policy makers and academic researchers carry out empirical research on school layout adjustment, which provides a solid theoretical basis for merger. China's current school layout adjustment needs to be more scientific, and the investigation and research before the decision are not enough, so there are various problems, which bring immeasurable losses to the interests of all parties. In the future, investigation and research should be strengthened to provide reliable and effective support information for adjusting the distribution of basic education schools .

Rural school amalgamation should adapt to local conditions. The integration of rural primary and secondary schools is a very complex, global, and systematic project. China's vast territory, the terrain is complex, the cultural and economic gap between various regions are large, especially in rural areas, mostly mountainous and hilly, with many villages and rural population distribution in such terrain. Take the school bus system in the United States, for example, it emerged with the movement of school mergers in the United States, ensuring the students who are far away from the school go to school [7]. In recent years, China has also begun to implement a school bus system in some areas, but whether it can fully adapt to the test of time in China remains to be tested, mainly because of China's complex terrain and scattered residential areas, the implementation of school bus system will face great challenges both in terms of conditions and safety. Moreover, the implementation of the school bus system also depends on the level of economic development, and today's level of economic

development cannot meet the nationwide popularization of the school bus system. Therefore, we should encourage the active implementation of school busing in areas where it is possible, and actively explore boarding in those areas where it is not suitable.

5. Conclusion

The adjustment of rural school layout is not only related to the protection of rural students' right to education and the development of rural schools but also affects the development trend of the whole society. At present, China's rural school layout adjustment is in a critical stage. This paper reviews the process and successful experience, of the American rural primary and secondary school layout adjustment. It will give great enlightenment for China to successfully pass the school layout adjustment. The adjustment of school layout in the United States is carried out under the economic development level and social environment of the United States. China should learn from it according to its own national conditions. Under the guidance of the principle of withdrawing and merging, expanding the scale of schools, and promoting the balanced development of education between urban and rural areas, local governments have abolished and merged some schools with poor running conditions and small scale in rural areas. With the negative impact of the previous adjustment of school layout on rural education and the importance of the current national strategic decision on rural revitalization, the adjustment of the layout of rural schools should be optimized. At present, China is in a critical period of urbanization development, so the adjustment of rural school layouts must be considered in the context of rural social development and urbanization development, reasonable planning, and scientific adjustment.

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