

Research on Supporting Educational Policies for Inclusive Assessment System Balancing Educational Equity

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Abstract: The "Overall Plan for Deepening the Reform of Education Evaluation in the New Era" has put forward the direction of reform to strengthen the improvement of outcome evaluation, reinforce process evaluation, explore value-added evaluation, and construct an all-encompassing evaluation system. Supportive policies that ensure fairness in assessment cover resource allocation, support and incentives for teachers, compensation for disadvantaged groups, etc. At present, there are still educational disparities in urban and rural areas, between schools, and among different groups. Modifying the evaluation indicators will not address the problem of unfairness at its source. The framework of inclusive evaluation will be used in this paper to study the actual problems of the current evaluation system in terms of fairness, and cooperation among supporting policies and evaluation reform will also be examined. The five parts of the all-encompassing evaluation system are: the direction of evaluation, allocation of resources, teacher placement, compensation mechanism and quality supervision. Through evaluation reform, resources should be allocated to weak links, resources need to be balanced for the fairness of evaluation, compensation policies should address the problem of different starting points, and a governance model that promotes the synergy of evaluation and policies should be established. Based on the above, it is proposed that supervision and assessment of high-quality and balanced education be strengthened; financial support be optimised; teacher rotation and exchange be increased; guarantees for the enrollment of special groups be enhanced; and the application of value-added evaluation in quality monitoring be explored.

Keywords: Educational Equity, Inclusive Evaluation, Educational Evaluation Reform, Supporting Policies, High-quality and Balanced Compulsory Education.

1. Introduction

The contents and forms of evaluation will directly change the teaching. In September 2020, an all-new plan for the reform of educational evaluation was announced, and the aim was to establish an evaluation system in accordance with China's actual circumstances and of world-class level. In October of that year, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued the "Overall Plan for Deepening the Reform of Education Evaluation in the New Era", which was the first all-encompassing reform document for educational evaluation in the history of New China. The five categories of entities in the plan are: the Party committee and government, schools, teachers, students and society; there are 22 reform tasks and five directions.

The problem of fairness will not be solved in the reform of educational evaluation. China has a very large system of primary and secondary schools. By 2025, the retention rate of nine-year compulsory education will be 96.1 per cent and the gross enrolment rate for preschool education will reach 92 per cent, close to that in high-income countries. The Scale is expanding, but the quality has not risen accordingly. Significant differences still exist in the educational environment and quality of urban and rural areas, as well as among different regions and schools [1]. All 2,895 counties in China have met the national standards for basic education balance and been designated as such. The basic balance is far from high-quality at present, and many problems need to be solved. The reform should also address the problem of how to distribute the resources of the evaluation system fairly and support the development of underdeveloped areas and

disadvantaged groups.

Inclusive Evaluation is a type of problem-thinking. Respect the differences among the people, give more attention to those in need, promote participation, and pursue fairness. In the past, assessment has generally sought to rank students; now, inclusive assessment aims to learn about all students' current abilities and how they have developed. The evaluation norms need to be reasonable, several types of evaluation should be employed, and the outcomes published need to be actionable. Evaluation methods are not comprehensive enough by themselves, so an entire system of policies needs to be built. How does resource allocation differ according to the direction of assessment, how can teachers support fair evaluation, how to reduce the initial difference in starting points among students through compensation policies, and what impact will monitoring policies have on the reform all need to be considered comprehensively.

2. The Connotation of the Inclusive Evaluation System and Its Fairness Dimension

The previous evaluation system focused on scores and graduation rates; as a result, too much attention has been paid to education in terms of resources and intense competition has occurred over the years. In light of the above, the other is inclusive assessment. The "Overall Plan" clearly indicates that it needs to "resolutely overcome the stubborn problems of valuing only scores, only graduation rates, only diplomas, only papers and titles". In terms of value orientation, inclusive evaluation believes that the purpose of assessment should be to help students improve and develop, rather than to select and

discard them [2].

The Problem of educational equity has created the following three levels in an all-encompassing assessment system. First, in terms of fairness, the criteria for assessment should take into account differences in students' family backgrounds, regional resources and other inherent circumstances, and a uniform standard of measurement should not be applied [3]. The difference between the two is relatively larger in the cities. Fairness in the process should consider all links in a student's learning, not only the final examination results. The "Overall Plan" has put forward the idea of improving the assessment of results, strengthening monitoring of processes and exploring added value in evaluation; thus, this is one such idea. Fairness of results refers to how the evaluation results are used; that is, it should be used to allocate resources for weaker schools and disadvantaged groups, not to increase the existing gap in advantages.

Inclusive assessment is not to lower the standards or ignore competition; instead, it aims to create an all-encompassing evaluation system that meets the various needs of all students. That is to say, the aims of the Design for evaluation should be multiple, such as efficiency and fairness, identification and motivation, etc. According to the theme of "Education Opportunities and Equity" in the 2026 Global Education Monitoring Report published by UNESCO, many countries have been addressing problems of unequal distribution of education due to gender, area, wealth and disability. The Conclusion of this paper will also serve as a reference for others. The first conclusion of the report is that, under fair policies, the lives of the people will be improved, and those who are suffering most will be helped first. China has also made some progress in the reform of evaluations in recent years. The amount of government guarantees, the quality of education and social recognition in the scope of county-level high-quality balanced supervision and assessment for compulsory education, etc., have also been added. For the evaluation idea to be applied in practice at the work level, a number of relevant policies need to be issued at all levels of the policy system. There are also other reasons for the above.

3. Policy on Resource Allocation and the Foundation for Evaluating Fairness

If educational resources cannot be distributed fairly among all the schools, then there will be no basis for evaluating fairness. If there are considerable differences in teacher allocation, school facilities and equipment among the schools, and the same evaluation criteria are used to measure them, the results will be difficult to be trusted [4]. The "Overall Plan" puts the evaluation of the educational work of the Party committee and the government at the top of the reform agenda, proposes to "resolutely correct the tendency of pursuing high school graduation rates alone", and prohibits the use of graduation rates as a criterion for evaluating lower-level Party committees, governments, education departments, and school teachers. After graduation rates are no longer tied to resource allocation, balanced allocation will be institutionally feasible.

How to Determine if Resources are Balanced? The Supervision and Evaluation System for High-Quality Balanced Development of Compulsory Education has provided practical norms. The County-level Supervision and Evaluation Measures for High-Quality Balanced

Development of Compulsory Education issued by the Ministry of Education set seven indicators for resource allocation: the number of teachers with specific educational qualifications per 100 students, which should be no less than 4.2 for primary schools and no less than 5.3 for secondary schools; the per-student area of teaching and auxiliary buildings, which should be no less than 4.5 square meters for primary schools and no less than 5.8 square meters for secondary schools; and the per-student value of teaching instruments and equipment, which should be no less than 2,000 yuan for primary schools and no less than 2,500 yuan for secondary schools. At least 6 indicators for each school need to meet the requirements, and the inter-school difference coefficient of all indicators should not exceed 0.50 for primary schools and 0.45 for secondary schools [5]. Based on the above data, the idea of resource balance is no longer abstract but can be quantified and compared item by item.

Funds are also unavailable for the present time. In 2025, the central government will provide 158.2 billion yuan in subsidies for urban and rural compulsory education, an increase of 2.3 billion yuan from the previous year. Since the spring semester of 2024, the living subsidy standard for economically disadvantaged boarding students has been increased. The per-student amounts for primary school students and junior high school students have risen from 1,000 yuan and 1,250 yuan, respectively, to 1,250 yuan and 1,500 yuan [6]. Another problem that is often ignored is that village primary schools and teaching points with fewer than 100 students are still counted as having 100 students for the purpose of allocating public funds. This "minimum guarantee" method addresses the actual problem of chronically low funds for small-scale schools. Without the above financial support, the idea of fair assessment would not have been realised. Finally, how much students can enjoy relatively equal educational conditions directly determines whether the evaluation results reflect the actual quality of education or are due to the inherent advantages provided by the school's finances and location.

4. Teacher Support Policies and the Key Foundation for Fair Evaluation

Teachers are the main providers of education and the first link in the chain of fairness for evaluation. The reasons for the difference in educational quality between urban and rural areas and among different schools generally lie in the different quantities, structures and professional levels of the teaching staff. The first structural problem of educational inequality is the unequal distribution of teachers in urban and rural areas and the different quality levels of good schools and poor schools [7]. Therefore, in the 2024-2025 academic year, the government plans to send out 15,952 teachers to take part in the "Three Regions" Talent Support Program, including 6,655 for junior high schools, 9,035 for primary schools, and 262 for kindergartens [8]. The transfer of good teachers from strong areas to weak areas and other regions can help alleviate the problem of unequal distribution of educational resources.

In terms of the reform of the teacher evaluation system, the "Overall Plan" has proposed the general requirement of "reforming teacher evaluation and promoting the fulfillment of the mission of teaching and nurturing students". Specifically, the three areas are: the first is professional ethics and behaviour, the second is educational and teaching results, and the third is strengthening front-line student work. The

focus of assessment has moved away from external indicators such as students' test results and enrollment rates to focus on what teachers actually do during the teaching and nurturing of students. The signal emitted by this transformation is relatively clear: teacher evaluation is no longer limited to scores and enrollment rates, but now also considers how much a teacher has contributed to and changed in the growth process of students. Teachers should pay attention to the development of all students rather than focusing only on the excellent results of a few "top students". This is the specific form of inclusive assessment at the level of teacher evaluation.

One way to distribute the teaching staff fairly in different schools is to rotate them among the schools. The "Supervision and Evaluation Measures for the High-Quality Balanced Development of County-level Compulsory Education" have a strict provision: the number of teachers engaged in rotation and exchange across the entire county each year must not fall below 10% of the total number of teachers who meet the exchange conditions. Among them, the proportion of core teachers should not be less than 20% of the total number of teachers in the rotation and exchange. The current situation is that high-quality teaching staff are concentrated in a few schools for a long time, and the purpose of this regulation is to help more students have access to good teachers. Teachers are to be selected based on the condition that they hold a professional title of intermediate level or higher, and the selection of teachers and educational administrators can also be carried out in a "group" fashion; this will help to form synergies and avoid the problems of single-person operations [9]. The policies in the above areas work together to form a general support chain for rural teachers, from "being able to be recruited" to "being able to stay", and finally to "teaching well", thereby providing a guarantee at the teacher level that rural students will receive fair evaluations.

5. Compensation Policies for Vulnerable Groups and the Guarantee Mechanism for Fair Evaluation

A reasonable evaluation should give all the resources the same weight and consider any special circumstances of the assessment. Groups such as migrant children, disabled children and students from economically disadvantaged families are at a disadvantage at the start of their school life due to their family circumstances or physical conditions. Inclusive assessment should be able to recognise and adjust for the shortcomings of the system in a reasonable way; it should not be uniformly assessed based on a single standard.

For the enrolment of children who live with their parents, China has issued an education policy based on residence permits for compulsory education. All areas have abolished unreasonable requirements for admission documents and time limits. Public schools are responsible for educating most of these children. Mixed-class arrangement and unified management are used. Children who move with their parents should not be concentrated at a few schools or in one class. 85% of the migrant children from urban areas in China can be enrolled in public schools. The evaluation of high-quality balanced compulsory education in county-level areas also requires that the proportion of eligible migrant children attending public schools and government-subsidised private schools across the entire county be no less than 85%.

In terms of special education guarantees, the Ministry of

Finance allocated 4.25 billion yuan for special education in 2025, an increase of 610 million yuan from the previous year, and this was an increase of 16.8% [10]. In the spring semester of 2025, the per-student public funding standard for special education schools in the compulsory education stage and students with disabilities in regular classes increased from 6,000 yuan per year to 7,000 yuan, and approximately 910,000 disabled students were covered [11]. In terms of financial assistance for families in difficult circumstances, the unified "Two Exemptions and One Subsidy" policy for compulsory education students waives tuition fees and offers free textbooks, and provides living expense subsidies for students from financially disadvantaged families.

The logic of the compensation policy is as follows: Fairness in evaluation means giving everyone the same treatment under the same circumstances, and also varying the level of support provided according to different circumstances; by offering policy compensation to students who have started from a disadvantaged position, it can be ensured that they have a relatively favourable starting point for the evaluation. This is the distinction between inclusive assessment and formal fairness assessment. Currently, the main contents of the compensation policies are admission chances and necessary funds. How to reflect the inclusivity of disadvantaged groups in the design of the system, including evaluation standards, evaluation methods and application of evaluation results, still needs to be optimized [12].

6. Dynamic Monitoring of Education Quality Policies and Fairness Evaluation

Monitor for the development of all aspects in building an all-round assessment system. The effectiveness of the policy, its problems and how to address them in the next iteration cannot be determined through experience alone. A continuous data collection process. Quality supervision should be added to the system for determining fairness in the evaluation and ensuring that fairness is realised in practice.

The county-level assessment of high-quality and balanced compulsory education has established a four-dimensional framework, as shown in: how resource allocation is done, whether the government's guarantee is adequate, whether the quality of education meets the standards, and how high social recognition has achieved been [13]. The 15 individual indices of the government's guarantee level are shown in the subsection below. With more dimensions for evaluation and more people to participate in the assessment, various roles can all be covered, and it will no longer be based on a few test papers and scores to determine the winners and losers. Fairness in education has multiple aspects, so the evaluation system should address all of them. This is a type of progress.

The technology also meets the above requirements. In the "Overall Plan", it is clearly stated that "We should make full use of information technology to improve the scientific nature, professionalism and objectivity of educational evaluation". After introducing the digital way, large-scale and regular observation will be carried out normally. We can now observe the changes in the path of students from various groups and areas over time; this was not feasible in the past. The direction for exploration in the "Overall Plan" is the value-added assessment. It is not complicated; it does not consider who has a higher starting point but rather who has achieved more progress from the original level. The goal is not to run faster,

but to improve from where one is. This algorithm will also be more equitable for children with various starting conditions [14].

If only to be presented in a report, the monitoring data will be less impactful. Identify the problem in the data, and then adjust the resources and policies accordingly. In some places, in the course of promoting the creation of high-quality and balanced education, they have already built a dynamic database that includes elements such as resource allocation, government guarantee levels, educational quality, and social recognition. As shown in the above data, policies are being adjusted accordingly. There is some data to support the evaluation of fairness, and we need to keep some records. The "15th Five-Year Plan" for Education Development (2026-2030) released by the State Council in 2026 included strengthening the reform of education evaluation as one of the six all-around reform tasks. The above deployment has raised the level and provided a stronger institutional foundation for coordinating the reform of the evaluation system and support policies.

7. Conclusion

Construction of an all-encompassing evaluation system includes policy areas such as resource allocation, teacher training, compensation for disadvantaged groups and quality supervision, and is therefore not solely a technical problem. In accordance with the "Overall Plan for Deepening the Reform of Education Evaluation in the New Era" and focusing on the supervision and assessment of high-quality and balanced compulsory education, a framework has been formed thus far. The funding guarantee mechanism is gradually improving, teacher rotation and exchange are being implemented in an orderly manner, and supporting policies such as the enrollment of migrant children and special education guarantees are also being rolled out gradually. These links are close to each other and generally form an entire policy chain that covers all parts of the evaluation direction, resource allocation, teacher distribution and compensation for disadvantaged groups, and quality supervision. The development of inclusive evaluation has finally achieved institutional support in practice.

The current policy system still has some deficiencies. The connection between the reform of evaluation and resource allocation is not strong enough. The direction of the "commander's baton" is clear, but the allocation of resources still follows the old path; thus, they are out of sync. The Application of value-added assessment has been relatively limited in practice. How to measure the development increment of students with different starting points scientifically has not been technically solved. Most compensatory policies are only available at the time of entry. After reaching the stage of formulation for evaluation criteria and selection of assessment methods, inclusive Design has not been applied. Quality monitoring has identified problems, but the conversion efficiency of these problems into policy improvements is relatively low, and a closed-loop feedback system has not yet been established.

The following are the problems to be addressed: Link the evaluation results of supervision with the allocation of funds and project arrangements to make full use of the evaluation for guiding the flow of resources; Accelerate technological research and practical application of value-added evaluation to build a more scientific student evaluation model; Expand the inclusive guarantee for groups such as migrant children,

disabled children, and students from economically disadvantaged families to cover all links in the evaluation process; Build a responsive mechanism that can quickly translate monitoring results into policy adjustments. The reform of the evaluation system and supporting policies need to be in harmony; otherwise, an equitable and inclusive evaluation system will not be realised.

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