

# The Dilemma and Confusion of Primary and Secondary School Teachers Under the Policy of "Double Reduction" and Solutions

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**Abstract:** On July 24, 2021, issued by the general office of the central committee of the communist party of China, the State Council general office on further reducing the compulsory education stage students homework burden and the burden of external training opinion "(hereinafter referred to as" opinions "), clearly put forward that reduce the total amount and homework time, improve after-school service level, comprehensively standardize the external training, vigorously improve the teaching quality. "Opinions" is an education policy that fully implement the party's educational policy and implement the fundamental task of moral education.[1]However, there are various problems in the process of policy's implementation, which lead to more pressure and causes extra burden for teachers. In this paper, researchers mainly discuss the heavy work tasks and extended working hours after the policy, and try to give relevant solutions to the difficulties and confusion of teachers.

**Keywords:** "Double reduction" policy, Teachers' burden, Analysis and solutions.

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## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the one-sided education behaviors as catching graduation rate is popular all over the country, so many schools and parents encourage children to use holidays to do more exercises and attend take lessons after school. This lead to children gradually become "can learn, not live" phenomenon. What's more, to practice "Implement education depends on the graduation rate" error cognition, it even need to sacrifice the students' health. It seriously deprive the students of the right to independent study and other personal autonomy, which is not conducive to the all-round development of children in morality, intelligence, physique, beauty and labor. So, On May 21, 2021, the 19th meeting of the Commission for Deepening Overall Reform of the CPC Central Committee deliberated and adopted the Opinions on Further Reducing the burden of homework and After-school Training for Students in Compulsory Education (hereinafter referred to as the Opinions), which was officially issued in July of the same year. The introduction of "double reduction" policy releases several signals. First, it puts forward higher requirements on how to further play the important role for schools and teachers in the compulsory education stage; second, it gives a higher outlook on how to transform and upgrade for after-school education and training institutions. When the continuous withdrawal of after-school training institutions from the market and the continuous reform of the school system, the pressure of the burden of primary and secondary school teachers has some new changes.

According to their nature, the burden of teachers can be divided into the occupational burden that primary and secondary school teachers must bear in school education and the extra burden that should be reduced in the process of education. This paper mainly discusses the excessive burden for teachers that can be avoided and reduced under the "double reduction". The core mission of teachers under the policy of "double reduction" has new implications. How to correctly understand its connotation, pay attention to the current situation of teachers' burden, and explore the

governance path of teachers' burden reduction are the problems that should be discussed at present. The following is the team members' analysis of relevant issues after research.

## 2. Teachers Have Heavy Work Tasks

In the socialist society, the duty of our primary and secondary school teachers is "teaching and educating people", which is a long-term plan for the comprehensive development of physical and mental quality. With the help of the vivid cases in the teaching textbooks, and set themselves examples to the students, the teachers shapes students' socialist core values, dialectical materialism and positive outlook on life. However, due to fierce competition in education, the educational concept of quick success and quick success affects the parents group. In line with the principle of "quick success is a market", some teaching and training institutions have lost the position of "teaching and educating people". They continuously capitalized the after-school education and training industry, which will become short-sighted. If they want to improve students' grades in a short period of time, it will not good for children in the long term. With the formal implementation of the "double reduction" policy, after-school training institutions have been renovated, and a large number of discipline training institutions have been withdrawn from the market, effectively improving the educational ecological environment in China. At the same time, higher requirements are put forward to schools and teachers: how to play the role of schools and teachers more effectively. The "double reduction" policy that is benefit to regulate the off-campus market, it only contributes to allowing more students to spend more time and energy on studying in school. To achieve the good results, teachers' affects are not ignored. Teachers are the leaders for the growth of students, but they are also faced with a variety of troubles. For example, head teachers need to face numerous head teacher meetings, and bear the task of enlightening, relieving and supervising students' psychology. When evaluating teachers' titles, they have to spare no efforts on papers. Without papers, there will be no title, and they will not be recognized. In the daily work, they are busy with

preparing lessons, correcting homework, which means they often sacrifice their leisure time..... The promulgation of the policy as an important measure is conducive to the realization of quality-oriented education, but it ignores the bitterness of teachers and makes teachers become the passive implementer of the policy.

The "double reduction" policy has intensified the conflict of ideas between the parents and schools. The policy has changed the big pattern of the education industry, but it cannot change the degree of competition in education. Under the influence of "volume" culture, the attitudes of parents for "double reduction" especially after-school service attitude are mixed. They always have such the poor family condition that can't get the good resource and children can't stand out among peers as the worries. After some school training institutions withdraw from the market, some parents doubt the effectiveness of the school education, indirectly weakened the home-school cooperation mechanism. Parents are the first teachers of their children. In the development history of modern education, the home-school cooperation mechanism clearly divides the main responsibilities of both home and school. Schools pay attention to "intellectual education", while "moral education" mainly depends on parents to realize. [2]In order to pursue the old idea of "crash", the parents who doesn't have a good command of education "cross the line" to the rights and responsibilities led by the school. What's more, the parents give their main rights and responsibilities to the teachers to "share the worries". Teachers bear the excessive moral education requirements, take a large effort to do a good job of students' psychological guidance work, and constantly communicate with parents. Gradually, teachers is tired of dealing with different kinds of busy affairs and taking good care of dozens of students in the class. During the time of the policy's implementation, teachers need to devote more of their best to work, which will mean the teachers fail to keep a work-life balance. For example, they are unable to take care of themselves and their families, so their happiness in life and work enthusiasm will be hit.

### **3. Extension of Teachers' Working Hours**

The right to rest is a basic human right and a basic right granted to workers by the Constitution. However, prior to the issuance of the Opinions, surveys showed that the weekly working hours of primary and secondary school teachers in China reached an average of 54.5 hours, more than 25% of the legal working hours. However, during this time, there was not much time for classroom teaching. As mentioned above, teachers spend a lot of time in their evaluation, meetings and other affairs, and only 22% of the time actually spend on classroom teaching.[3] After the implementation of the "double reduction" policy, more stringent requirements have been put forward for after-school services in primary and secondary schools everywhere. Teachers, especially class teachers, need to continue to play a leading role in the after-school service stage, and should reflect the "diversification" services clearly emphasized by the policy. Many schools are actively reforming in this direction, but carrying out colorful art, reading, popular science and other interest groups and community activities for students has brought greater challenges to the teacher community. Teachers need to expand their knowledge beyond their own disciplines and spend more time to ensure that after-school services are implemented. The

working hours of teachers have been greatly extended, affecting their normal life and physical health. After the introduction of the policy, the responsibility for after-school services is undoubtedly to sprinkle salt on the wounds, increasing the workload of teachers.

After the full implementation of after-school services, the Ministry of Education also clearly stipulated that the education participating in after-school services should be compensated in consideration of the hard work of the teachers. It is mentioned in the document that "teachers should be cared for. Teachers can be arranged as a whole to implement 'flexible commuting', and teachers who participate in after-school services will be given corresponding subsidies." However, due to the different implementation of the policies, many teachers reflected that the subsidies they received from after-school services every day were only enough for their own cup of milk tea, and even some teachers worked for nothing, which seriously exceeded the psychological expectations of teachers. According to the survey, most school students' personal after-class delay costs are between 300 and 500RMB. Apart from water, electricity and fees paid, there are only a few subsidies actually implemented to each teacher. How much subsidy can be given? How to make up? Can it be implemented? These problems are a big mountain in the minds of all teachers involved in after-school services.

In addition, the "flexible commuting" system mentioned above refers to that employees can choose to continue to work or leave work directly for some time when their work tasks are completed.[4] However, this concept is often used by companies in society as a routine for employees to work overtime. Flexible working hours are often extended, squeezing teachers' few free time. So, if we give up the subsidy for after-school service and choose to leave work after completing the task, is it feasible? After the investigation, it was found that the after-school services of many schools were not voluntary, but had to be done and responsible for problems when they were assigned, which caused a great burden to the teachers' families. Some parents who misunderstand the implementation of the policy will also be dissatisfied with the after-school service. Some students who have spare time can enter the training institution to continue their study after school, but the after-school service binds the children's time with the school to a great extent, and needs to pay "unnecessary" after-school service fees. This dissatisfaction can easily be transferred to teachers to show their complaints. Under low return, high investment and external pressure, we can't help thinking about whether teachers can do a good job of teaching and educating people with ease.

### **4. Difficulty of Work Increasing**

Under the "Double Reduction" policy in the obligation education stage, the first thing to be deducted is the burden of students, namely the amount of homework and the length of completion time, and the second thing to be deducted is the burden of Training Institutes. Therefore, it has become the primary problem for teachers to make students maintain the learning quality in the limited homework. It is understood that before the introduction of policy, some teachers tend to be above the standard homework amount and homework time. First of all, although the quantity of homework assigned is large and has many repetitions, it is an effective way to help students of all learning abilities to strengthen their memory and understanding. Secondly, the holidays filled with a lot of

homework can help students focus their attention on study, reducing the time spent on mobile phones and computers, and avoiding inefficiency. Undeniably, the "sea of homework" strategy in general has greatly consolidated what have learned in class, but it makes the students tired, and the homework time of students with different learning abilities will also have a great difference. However, after the promulotion of the policy, teachers need to pay more attention to the innovation of homework, to avoid repetition, and design diversified and sophisticated homework for students at different stages. This is a shortcoming for teachers who are used to using ready-made homework manuals or combining different homework for many years, and a lot of experience is needed for the rational design of homework. Many teachers have no such training. And how is a 'reasonable amount of work' defined? Too much homework is easy to be reprimanded, blindly reducing the amount of homework to leave a lot of spare time for students will be dissatisfied with parents and even criticized. Teachers can only be more and more cautious in the field of work. the sudden change in the mode of work, to both teachers and students have brought great impact.

In addition, at the present stage, a results-oriented theoretical system has emerged in teacher evaluation, which tends to focus on evaluation results and unify and standardize various indicators of teachers, forming a quantitative rather than qualitative environment. In this model, teachers' personal ideas and teaching philosophy are severely limited, because results can be quantified, but effort cannot. However, the fact is that the evaluation of teachers is linked to salary to some extent, which most teachers cannot avoid. The "materialized" environment makes this group have to face the reality and obtain social recognition according to unified standards. When blindly obeying arrangements for evaluation, teachers gradually lose their sense of mission, coupled with increasing various burdens, will be the last straw to crush teachers.

Based on the above analysis, we have carried out targeted research and put forward relevant solutions.

#### **4.1. Deeply Analyze and Solve Teachers' Heavy Workloads**

Although the "double reduction" policy aims to reduce the burden of "school work" and "out-of-school training" on students, it has, to a certain extent, posed a new challenge to the teaching capacity of school teachers. After researching, many primary and secondary school teachers reflected that after the implementation of the 'double reduction' policy, the pressure on students has been reduced, but the burden on their shoulders has become heavier. In most primary and secondary schools, teachers are not only tasked with preparing, completing and reviewing lessons but also have to spend a lot of energy on non-educational tasks, such as handling disputes between students, communicating with parents and providing guidance for students. As the demands on teachers increase, the workload of teachers becomes more and more difficult and they are unable to take care of both themselves and their children, which in the long run will reduce teachers' motivation and lead to a decline in teaching quality. The "double reduction" policy should not only focus on reducing the burden of students, but also on the teachers who serve them.

##### **4.1.1. Reforming the teacher evaluation system**

In the past, teachers were evaluated on the basis of their effectiveness in teaching, which was linked to student performance and promotion rates. However, this system led

teachers to focus on how to improve their performance, neglecting the principle of moral education. At the same time, teachers have to spend more energy on performance appraisals under this system, adding to their already heavy workload. Therefore, reform of the teacher evaluation system is necessary, and the focus should be on changing the system to one where students are evaluated on the basis of their rate of advancement.

The fundamental responsibility of teachers is to train students to become adults and good people, and the standard of "good people" is not only reflected in academic performance, but also in the full range of moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic development. So the evaluation criteria of teachers should not be limited to students' achievements and promotion rate, but should open up the pattern and put teachers' morality and their style of life in the first place. In addition, the teacher evaluation system should fully respect the reasonable demands, legitimate rights and interests of teachers and attach importance to humanistic care and positive incentives. [5] The ultimate aim of reforming the teacher evaluation system is to reduce the extra burden on teachers and turn their pressure into internal drive, so that they can focus more on improving the quality of their classrooms and paying attention to student development.

##### **4.1.2. Developing an effective team of teachers**

Reducing teachers' workload means that the school management has to think more deeply about how to allocate teaching and classroom management in a scientific and effective way, so that each teacher can do his or her own job and maximise the impact of teaching at minimal cost.

###### **a) Deputy class teacher system**

Classroom teachers face the pressure of both improving the quality of their own teaching and managing their classes in a timely manner, and their workload is truly daunting. Therefore, it is important to play an active role as a team by creating the post of deputy class teacher to support the class teacher in classroom matters and to make a scientific and reasonable division of labour, thereby reducing the workload of the class teacher and improving the efficiency of the whole school.

###### **b) Flexible working system**

Flexible working is a system whereby employees are given the flexibility and autonomy to arrange their working hours on the premise of completing the prescribed work tasks. [2] The implementation of a flexible working system is of great help in enhancing teachers' work efficiency, as teachers can distribute their work rationally and better achieve a work-life balance. This system also motivates teachers to a certain extent by giving them a certain degree of freedom in arranging their work, which can significantly improve their work initiative.

##### **4.1.3. Harmonious home-school education**

Family education is the cornerstone of school education, and the two complement each other in order to produce excellent students. However, the traditional Chinese sense of family education is very weak, and most parents believe that the school is solely responsible for their children's education and that parents only need to ensure that their children are raised. This leaves school teachers with the overwhelming task of being not only teachers but also 'parents', and this lack of energy hinders the quality of teaching. Therefore, schools should play a leading role in home education, not only to share the pressure of teachers, but also to promote the overall growth of students. The fundamental aim of the 'double

reduction' policy is to return to the heart of parenting, and home-school co-education is an important way to facilitate the effective implementation of the 'double reduction' policy. The implementation of harmonious home-school co-education not only reduces the burden of teachers and students, but also updates parents' concept of child-rearing, which is of great significance to social development. The school is a great example of the importance of home schooling. [6]

## **4.2. Deeply Analyze and Solve The Extending Working Hours**

Since the implementation of the "double reduction" policy, it has effectively reduced the workload of students' homework and off-campus training, but it has also put forward new requirements for primary and secondary school teachers. Because they need to take care of students and guide them after school, that is, after-class delayed service has appeared. So teachers' working hours in school have been extended, the pressure has increased, and their work responsibilities have increased. In order to reduce the burden on teachers and reduce teachers' working hours, we must seriously "untie" and completely solve the problem of non-teaching tasks entering the campus. Minimize matters and responsibilities outside the main responsibility, so that teachers are not troubled by matters other than teaching and educating people, so that they can have more energy and time to focus on teaching and educating people. Solving the problem of the extension of teachers' working hours is a systematic project, which should be coordinated in an all-round way. We should not only increase investment in education and coordinate social resources, but also innovate institutional arrangements, explore and implement flexible commuting and supplementary rest systems, and reduce the burden on teachers in all aspects.

### **4.2.1. Improving the remuneration level of teachers**

First of all, it is necessary to further implement and improve the supporting policies for teachers' after-school service, ensure that teachers receive corresponding remuneration, and protect the legitimate rights and interests of teachers in material terms. Ma Hengyan, a deputy to the National People's Congress, suggested that the financial department optimize the performance salary plan for primary and secondary school teachers, set up a special fund for "after-school service funds" in the performance salary, and allocate funds to schools according to the number of students to ensure that after-school service funds are mainly used to subsidize teachers and related personnel participating in after-school service. Secondly, set up rewards and incentive mechanisms for after-school services, and give appropriate policy preference in terms of evaluation, professional title evaluation and task assessment. Wu Minglan, deputy to the National People's Congress and a teacher of Liupanshui Experimental Primary School, suggested that provincial departments should be urged to revise the professional title evaluation criteria and include the results of post-school delayed service in the professional title evaluation conditions. The education department should establish a recognition and incentive system for post-school delay services, so that after-school delay services become the value pursuit of schools and teachers. The education department should cooperate with the personnel department to use the performance of teachers in after-school service as a reference for professional title evaluation, recognition and performance salary distribution.

### **4.2.2. Enhancing home-school communication**

Since the implementation of the "double reduction" policy, the emergence of after-school delay services has in principle caused teachers to leave their off work hours no earlier than the normal local hours, and teachers' working hours have been extended again. In this case, the flexible reform of teachers' commuting to and from work can be promoted. Flexible working system refers to a system in which employees can flexibly and independently arrange working hours on the premise of completing the prescribed work tasks. [7]For example, the subject teacher who participates in the post-school delay service can arrive at school later than normal time if there is no class in the morning. Recently, Wenzhou issued the "Implementation Opinions on Strengthening Teachers' "Etiquette and Preferential Treatment" Work", which puts forward that subject teachers who participate in after-school service can appropriately arrive late or leave school early in the morning of the afternoon without affecting normal teaching; innovative implementation of "double holiday reduction", which can have half a week. "Double leave reduction." You can also try the "savings system" of post-school delayed service time, convert teachers' after-school service hours into time points, and exchange savings time points for "double breaks" to facilitate teachers to solve housework. The implementation of a flexible commuting system is of great help to improve teachers' work efficiency. Teachers can reasonably allocate their work and better achieve work-life balance. This system also motivates teachers to a certain extent, gives teachers a certain degree of freedom to arrange work, and can significantly improve teachers' initiative in work.

### **4.2.3. Using social resources coordinatedly**

The after-school delay service takes up a large number of teachers' off-duty hours. In the case of teachers' time, we can consider attracting some professionals from society to participate in the school's post-school delay service. However, in this regard, the relevant documents issued by the Central Committee clearly stipulate that it is up to the education department and relevant departments to select according to law and regulations, including some professionals from qualified social training institutions. After selection, it is determined that he has this condition, can abide by some basic systems, and can better Only by fulfilling the task of after-school service can these high-quality institutions and professionals be introduced to the school. In this process, it should be noted that schools cannot contact these institutions directly, which is not allowed by the Law on the Protection of Minors. Several should be selected by the education department, and then provided to the school to choose independently, and the fees should comply with the relevant regulations. After the introduction of corresponding personnel, the working hours of teachers can be reduced and the workload of teachers can be reduced.

## **4.3. Deeply Analyze and Solve the Difficulty of Teachers' work**

Under the "double reduction" policy, the third major problem faced by primary and secondary school teachers is the increasing difficulty of their work. As we all know, what we are advocating at present is to reduce burden of students in the compulsory education stage. For primary and secondary school teachers, the theoretical knowledge they teach in the classroom is necessary for students to practice after class, and to be consolidated and improved through

continuous practice. Taking this phenomenon into consideration, the difficulty of teachers' work has increased considerably. However, teachers receive a large amount of theoretical knowledge and a few teaching practice processes before they entering the campus for teaching. They are extremely deficient in how to design students' homework efficiently and pertinently. At the same time, the education mode of primary and secondary school teachers has been developed and innovated under a certain mode. Although great progress has been made, it still needs to break through the thinking boundary and set up relevant assignments according to the characteristics of students in a personalized and differentiated way to achieve the effect of reducing the burden without reducing the quality of studying. In addition, the current teacher evaluation system is more inclined to expressionist evaluation, using a unified standard to evaluate teachers, which seriously restricts teachers' professional autonomy and weakens their sense of self-efficacy. However, in the current environment, some primary and secondary school teachers are physically and mentally exhausted owing to the increasing difficulty of their work and their eagerness to cultivate talents for the country, which is very detrimental to their mental health. In this regard, we urgently need relevant solutions and should pay more attention to the state of teachers.

#### **4.3.1. Jump out of inherent thinking**

The so-called inherent educational thinking here is not only the educational thinking used by primary and secondary school teachers in their teaching practice, but also the relevant educational mode set by the school. Although teachers continued to innovate in their professional fields, the general environment of the school did not changed, and it is difficult to improve the quality of the overall education system. While we advocate the all-round development of students towards morality, intelligence, physique, aesthetics and labour, we should also ensure the quality of students' learning. To motivate students' enthusiasm, the most essential thing to do is to make students interested in relevant subjects. In this regard, schools need to constantly attempt and innovate. For instance, they can jump out of the previous inertia education, carry out indoor and outdoor teaching, promote international teaching, let students learn easily while improving their quality of learning.

#### **4.3.2. Reasonably arrange psychological consultation**

Facing the increasing work pressure of primary and secondary school teachers under the implementation of the "double reduction" policy, it is urgent to arrange psychological counseling reasonably. Compared with the majority of teachers' mental health training at present, it can alleviate the psychological pressure of teachers to a certain extent. On top of that, personalized psychological counseling and training for the special needs of some teachers are also important. Currently, many schools have promoted the collective mental health education and training of primary and secondary school teachers and asked teachers to write their perceptions and summaries. It is true that this can alleviate the

psychological pressure of some teachers, and some internal questions could be solved, but there are still some teachers who need targeted answers. Teachers are the concrete implementers of school mental health education. They should use noble ethics and good quality to infect and edify students, which requires teachers to have a sound personality. Therefore, it is very necessary to reasonably arrange personalized psychological counseling. Its fundamental purpose is to solve problems, while psychological problems are long-term problems that can not be solved overnight, and thus, needing long-term efforts.

#### **4.3.3. Transfer knowledge step by step**

According to the requirements of the current policy, students should not only develop morally, intellectually, physically, aesthetically and industrially, but also have less academic burden, which leads to slow down the teaching speed to a certain extent. Ensuring that students have a solid grasp of the knowledge before teaching the next part of knowledge. This requires teachers not to rush for success, but to make progress steadily on the basis of the above changes in the evaluation system. Teach students knowledge in a timely and appropriate manner, which also greatly reduces the difficulty of their own work. While ensuring efficient classroom teaching, it can also maximize students' absorption and mastery of knowledge. And then, teachers can spend more time designing personalized, flexible and differentiated courses.

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