

SHANGHAI, CHINA

ZHANG MINXUAN, *Vice-Director General, Shanghai Municipal Education Commission*: The Chinese people have very high expectations of education. All families think that education is important for their kids. So we've set up the life-long development of every child because in China we have an old saying, if a person has no long-term planning, then the problem is near to you.

TITLE: "Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education: Shanghai, China"

ZHANG MINXUAN: These days many foreign experts and educators come to Shanghai to see the development of Shanghai education. I think in the past 30 years, Shanghai education has developed very, very quickly,

TEXT SLIDE: In 2009 Shanghai's average PISA scores were the highest in the world: Reading: 556, Mathematics: 600, Science: 575.

YIN HOUQING, *Vice-Director General, Shanghai Municipal Education Commission*: Basic education in Shanghai has a very long history and tradition. In the past three decades the government in Shanghai has paid special attention to the spread of public education, both in terms of education funding for young people, and in making education policies. The Shanghai government has made a lot of effort to improve young people's access to education. Of course in the process of developing this education system, problems have arisen and at each point the Shanghai government has developed new education policies to solve these problems. It is fair to say that the quality of the Shanghai public education system today is very sound. But if you ask if there are any problems in the process of educational development, the problem today is the variation of performance between schools. In the process of development, many new schools have been built and they have encountered some issues. Such new schools lack tradition, experience, and well-trained teachers. As a result some of the families who live near these schools are not very happy.

TEXT SLIDE: Empowered Administration is... a novel approach to improve the quality of weaker schools in Shanghai.

TEXT SLIDE: Under Empowered Administration:

- a strong schools from Shanghai or an educational institution is contracted to strengthen a weaker school.
- the strong school or institution provides administrative and pedagogical guidance.
- such institutions are generally composed of retired school principals and teachers.

ZHAO LIANGEN, *Director of Education Division, Pudong Education Bureau*: How could we improve this situation? We wondered if it might help to pair stronger schools with weaker schools to improve performance. This suggestion gained

support from the municipal government as well as the community at large, so we moved forward and began to implement this idea. How do we do it? From the municipal government point of view, we created some new policies that encourage and help good schools to assist lesser-performing schools. Secondly, we had the stronger schools and lesser-performing schools sign a cooperation agreement to form a consortium. In this agreement we clearly defined each school's responsibilities, rights, and obligations.

TEXT SLIDE: Empowered Administration involves four partners:

- the Shanghai municipal government;
- the external partner (school or firm);
- the district education authority which finances the endeavour;
- and an external evaluation body to independently assess the results of the project.

STUDENT: *In the Han Dynasty, there was a famous general by the name of Ti Bu. Ti Bu fought greatly for another famous general. And when the Emperor Liu Bang finally united China, he decided he wanted the end of this general.*

YIN HOUQING: We feel there are benefits from implementing this type of experiment. In the process of development in Shanghai, generally the schools inside the city are operating better. The quality of education is higher and teachers have better equipment. In contrast, in the outlying parts of Shanghai, transportation is inconvenient, the teaching community is not strong and management of the educational system does not follow any particular standard.

CHEN XIAOMIN, *Executive Director, Shanghai Educational Evaluation*: Let's view it from a macro point of view, not a micro point of view. What are the features of these schools? Basically, the principals and their management teams have a limited notion of how to run a modern school. They don't have a strong theoretical foundation, and they have not followed the changes of this new era of information technology and modernization. They are behind the standard on current practices. Secondly, because these schools are located in outlying areas, their teacher turnover rate is very high and because their teachers' salaries are not as good as those of the city center teachers, the majority of the teachers in outlying areas prefer to go to the city center to teach. So the teaching community in outlying areas is very young, and inexperienced.

WANG SHOUXIN, *Retired Expert Teacher*: *Now how about this question- this is not mentioned in the textbook, I added this question. I'm aware that the students do not understand. I know the mistakes they are going to make. And yes, I find they make the mistakes that I expected. It's incredible. So then I give them an opportunity to make corrections.*

YIN HOUQING: Essentially, the stronger schools will send a good management team out to the lesser-performing schools. The incoming management team into the

lesser performing school helps to lead the teachers and help provide them with lessons of experience to transfer the management, methods, concepts and improved educational standards of the stronger schools to the lesser-performing schools.

WANG SHOUXIN: *Generally speaking, in the calculation you just keep one more digit.*

PARENT: *But what about the textbook? The textbook suggests that they should retain four digits?*

WANG SHOUXIN: *You should just do it according to the final requirements.*

WANG SHOUXIN: I think the key lies in the teacher's perspective. Normally teachers think it's very difficult to teach the weak students. But after they change their preconceptions, they realize that all of the students have the desire and potential to be successful.

TEXT SLIDE: Donggou Middle School

- located in the outlying Pudong District of Shanghai
- enrolls 400 pupils aged 12-15
- in 2005 rated the worst-performing school in the District.

TEXT SLIDE: In 2005, only 89% of Donggou Middle School students achieved the standard required to continue to high school. Under an Empowered Administration arrangement, Ms. Lu Lingdi was appointed Principal to improve the school's performance.

LU LINGDI, *Principal, Shanghai Donggou Middle School*: When we first came we really felt that the school had many, many weaknesses. The teachers came to the class very casually, they didn't have a class lesson plan and they didn't prepare much. The students didn't even dare to look at their teacher. They always kept their heads down, and they didn't have any self-confidence at all. There was no class management, no regulations, and no discipline.

LIU JINGHAI, *Principal, Zhabei No. 8 Middle School*: What could be done to improve the quality of the teaching staff? How could we help to improve their performance? Changing a teacher's behavior is actually a common problem throughout the world. Teaching is a relatively conservative and insulated occupation. Once the teacher's behavior is formed, to change it is quite difficult.

TEXT SLIDE: Ms. Lu Lingdi is mentored by Mr. Liu Jinghai to help her strengthen the school. Mr. Liu Jinghai has experience implementing a school turnaround strategy. He helped to transform Shanghai's struggling Zhabei District School Number 8.

TEXT SLIDE: Mr. Liu successfully transformed Zhabei District School Number 8. He did so relying on his philosophy of "success education".

- all students are viewed as potential high achievers.

- developing student self-confidence is the key
- intensive teacher mentorship is the strategy

LIU JINGHAI: In the past, our way of changing the situation was to send outstanding teachers and analysts to sit in the classroom and exchange ideas with the teachers and to advise them. We realized after we had done this that the next day the class was obviously better. But as soon as we left, the teachers went back to their old way of teaching. The trick is to make the change in the teacher's behavior a systematic and lasting change. However, with so many teachers, we can't possibly advise them all one-by-one forever. Such intensive, long-term advising is not realistic. So what we did was to as a good teacher to demonstrated how a good class is supposed to be, and ask him or her to write a lesson plan and create a powerpoint or flash presentation demonstrating from the first moment of the class to the last moment of the class, the whole procedure.

YUAN DONGMEI, *Visiting Teacher*: Teachers are using this e-platform very well. Their collective teaching preparation and knowledge sharing is very good. The older teacher and younger teacher together produce a standard lesson plan and then according to this model other teachers can follow it as well.

TEACHER: *Have you all had the experience of boiling water in a kettle? It gets lower and lower gradually, yes? So this is common sense, you can relate to it, you can understand this example.*

YIN HOUQING: As I said before, to operate every public school is our administration's duty. My administration must provide each school with the resources they need. But when my administration is facing tens of hundreds of schools, sometimes we don't have enough resources to cope with this scale. Therefore when we want to manage all the schools, we have to delegate some of the tasks to competent outside organizations to help us. It can be another school, or sometimes it is a specialized non-governmental education consulting firm. In these organizations we have lots of principals and outstanding teachers who have reached retirement age. Then these organizations will, according to the city administration's requirements, form teams to be sent to the schools that we need them to go to.

ZHANG LIGE, *Expert Math Teacher*: *Here, let's look at "x". When this one changes, this one has to be changed to "xxi". And another thing, you have to be more responsive and sensitive to student's questions. I know sometimes many students do not understand what is going on, so you have to help them solve their problems.*

ZHANG LIGE: We have to come here once a week. Today we are here for two purposes. We have an expert group here and I am a math teacher, I discuss with other teachers how to conduct a class and make students understand what is being taught. I have several requirements when I sit in the classroom. Because we prepared the class plan together, I want to see and analyze if the goal of the plan is reflected in the teaching. That's the first point. Secondly I want to see if the

students have grasped the goals of this lesson plan. Thirdly, I want to see if there are any other problems. Today I sat in the classroom, and the teacher is a new teacher. She has only taught about a year so far. Because she is a newcomer, there are still quite a few problems with her teaching methods, and we have to point out what these problems are. After the class I exchanged opinions with her and told her there were some questions from students that she did not acknowledge in the classroom. If you don't acknowledge these problems then you can't resolve these problems.

ZHANG LIGE: *These flash cards have been used for a while, I think they're quite effective. The good thing about them is that they deliver the content and make the whole process very clear. So I think she should have paid attention to being faster to answer the questions of the students. I don't think this is her normal style. She has been a teacher who has been really sensitive to students' questions and her class that she has been teaching has been making steady improvement.*

ZHANG LIGE: The other thing is after the class we usually have to communicate with the principal so the principal knows what's going on. If the principals don't know the details of what's going on, they become disconnected from what is actually happening in the classroom. So when we are reporting to the principals we will tell them what the good points are, but we also tell them what the problems are.

TEXT SLIDE: Donggou Middle School students who achieve high school admission:
- in 2005: 89%- worst-performing school in the district
- in 2010: 100%- among the top third of schools in the district

LU LINGDI: This is a gradual process. Some teachers can change significantly. Some teachers change slowly. But one year later, sometimes even half a year later, we find that some of the teachers, especially the young teachers, have progressed very quickly. They felt that success education was very good, and brought back the vigor in the classroom. The students now all keep their heads up, and they have self-confidence and the teachers have confidence too.

YIN HOUQING: We have had three terms of this empowered administration, each term is for two years. When we implemented the first term we felt this mission had greatly affected our school system and attitude, and increased our confidence immensely. For example, in some of the schools, originally their grades were very poor and the parents transferred their kids to other schools. But after the empowered administration took over these poor-performing schools for a year or two, the students all came back. Even for those kids who did not go to these schools before, their parents also enrolled them. So, we went from having students flee the school in droves, to having families actually eager to enroll their children in the school. In these two years there has been a huge change. It makes us feel that empowered administration is a good way to improve poor-performing schools.