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Abstract of Keynote Presentation

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Chasing a Balance between Equity and Quality: The New High-Quality Schools Project in Shanghai, China

After PISA 2009, Shanghai education has received unprecedented attention. The measures taken by the Shanghai government for response included a project called the New High-quality Schools (NHQS). Under the policy background of promoting high-quality and balanced compulsory education in China, the NHQS project undertook the unique task of creating high-quality resources. It is not only an honorary certification for the project schools but also an organized small-scale school improvement plan. Compared with the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program in the United States, both projects encourage schools to create high-quality education from a bottom-up approach and provide a platform for excellent schools to share experiences. The main differences are that the NHQS project emphasizes the indispensable importance of quality with equity, and is more guided by the government. The green indicators used in the project go beyond a single criterion of student performance in the past. However, as the overall evaluation system in China has not changed, such small-scale attempts are still facing many difficulties.

Keywords: school improvement, education policy, education reform, equity, quality, Chinese education