

Governance Practice of After-School Service in Schools under the Vision of “Double Reduction” Policy¹ —— With the Formulation and Implementation of After-School Service Scheme of Chongqing Shapingba Ronghui Primary School

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Abstract: Launching the after-school service of primary and middle schools has important practical significance for reducing the excessive homework burden in the school and training burden after-school. However, the smooth implementation of after-school service is involved reasonable compensation for the after-school service of teachers, the expectation of parents regarding the quality of after-school service and the scientific setting of the contents of after-school service. However, how to scientifically formulate the after-school service scheme with the characteristics of a school is a difficulty for the decision-makers of the school. The paper tries to decompose the scheme of after-school service of one urban primary school in China to conclude the problems that should be noticed by the modern school's governance, so as to provide a sample reference for the scientific decision-making for the schools in the modern era.

Keywords: Difficulty of “3:30 pm”; After-school service; Educational decision making; School governance

Along with the rapid development of economic society, the excessive homework burden in school and the training burden after-school have been increasingly prominent. In addition to enhancing the regulation on “off-campus childcare”, the government also has launched the after-school service for primary and middle schools in the whole of China since the autumn of 2021^[1]. However, the after-school service of primary and middle school would face such problems as how to protect the legal rights of teachers, how to meet the expectation of parents regarding the quality of after-school service and how to scientifically set the contents of after-school service. Thus, how to effectively coordinate the profits of all parties would be the key point for the effective implementation of the after-school service. In view of these, after launching the after-school service, Chongqing Shapingba Ronghui Primary School starts to try to solve many difficulties of the after-school service through the friendly consultations of all governance subjects, so as to improve the overall education level with the premise to ensure the reduce the excessive homework burden of students.

1. Scheme decision-making: The formulation of an extension scheme under the benefit game

The undertaking of supply and demand analysis based on service subjects, element focus based on the contradiction factors, and multiple rounds of consultations based on interest demands of the school have a crucial significance of after-school service.

1.1 Public opinion evaluation: supply and demand analysis based on service subjects

How to scientifically formulate the after-school extension scheme with the characteristic of the school is the key point to

¹ **Project Name:** The Tenth (2021-2023) Basic Education Research Project of Chongqing Education Society “Research on the Practice of Collaborative Research and Training of Teacher Communities in A New Era” (No. : XH2021B235)

determine the job. In September 2020, when receiving the Opinions on the Implementation of After-school Service of Primary and Middle Schools from the government, the school launched the public opinion evaluation job as soon as possible. Since the job involved the utilization of public resources of the school, the teachers' right to work and rest and the students and parents learning options, the school decided to make a primary supply and demand analysis before launching the job to provide a piece of correct decision-making information for the implementation of after-school service. Hence, the school elaborately designed the Letter of Intent for Teachers to Participate in After-school Service of Primary and Middle Schools, Request for Opinions for Students (Parents) to Participate in After-school Service of Primary and Middle Schools, Letter of Intent for Students (Parents) to Participate in After-school Service of Primary and Middle Schools and Proposal for Teachers to Participate in After-school Service. There were primary statistics and analysis of the number of teachers and students participating in after-school service and how to set up courses. The data showed that the teachers' willingness to participate in after-school service reached 98% with the guarantee of reasonable labor compensation; for the content of curricular contents, students tended to "set up the characteristic courses to push the all-round development" while parents expected to "finish the homework".

1.2 Formulating scheme: elements focus based on the contradiction factors

Grasping the principal contradiction in the after-school extension service and the dominant aspect of the principal contradiction could effectively boost the solution to the relevant problems. Chongqing City launched a pilot project for school service in 2014, and the pilot districts and counties were mainly the main districts. The "after-school service" of primary and middle schools was held around the whole city on September 1, 2020^[2]. During the pilot, as the main undertaker of the after-school service, schools bore so many pressures, such as the insufficient understanding of parents on the problems of after-school service, the vague attribution of rights and responsibilities of the after-school service, lack of specific regulation on the appraisal of the teachers participating in the after-school service from government, low participation enthusiasm of teachers in the school for the after-school service, the unsustainable financial fund for after-school service. How to carry out a good and order after-school service needed a very perfect scheme to coordinate the profit of all parties. According to the studies of relevant scholars, the stakeholders were involved with the government, society, parents, schools and teachers; and the main conflicts among the core stakeholders were as follows: government and the administrative department for education emphasizing the safety and stability pressure brought by after-school service in the areas of concern to the masses, parents especially caring for the sharing quota of the fee of after-school service and the guarantee of the extension service quality, teachers concerning about the reasonable compensation of the fee of after-school service and the distribution of workload, schools focusing on the reasonable distribution of the fee of after-school service and the proper allocation of the service workers. The stakeholders had different focuses, so the formulation of the scheme must pay attention to the conflict points of core interests of all parties and effectively ensure the maximal profit for all stakeholders.

1.3 Consultations: multiple rounds of consultations based on stakeholders

The after-school service scheme shoulders a profit expectation form multiple stakeholders. According to the theory of stakeholders, the stakeholders mean the individuals or the groups who have a connection with the activity of the organization; and the core stakeholders refer to the individuals, groups or organizations that have specific interest needs for the activity objectives and can take certain action strategies to have a direct impact on the activities or, those are directly affected by the activities. According to the theory, we think that the government (education authorities), students and parents, schools and teachers would be the core stakeholders of the extension service. The need of the government (education authorities), parents, schools and teachers should be highly valued. To the better promotion of the effective implementation of the after-school service, the education administrative department (education commission) called for a special meeting for the after-school service of primary and middle schools to have a regulation on the fee of after-school service held in the whole district and make a primary estimation on the compensation for teachers due to the after-school service to ensure that after-school service does not cause conflicts due to differences between schools and districts. At the same time, schools were required to call for teachers' meetings to talk about the after-school service time, the compensation for school service and the contents of after-school service; and there was the president's association to launch the formulation of the after-school service scheme. The school had a family committee meeting at the school level to communicate the key problems concerned by parents and teachers in the early public opinion evaluation. Through the multiple rounds of consultations between the government (education authorities) and the school, the school and parents, and the school and teachers, the school proposed a basic scheme for communication so as to push the landing of the after-school service in the form of friendly consultation and co-governance.

2. Governance analysis: Analysis of the key problems under the inspection of legitimacy

The process of solving conflicts is the one to clarify relevant responsibility boundaries with multiple parties to have a profit game. Schools would not effectively conciliate conflict until they solved several key problems according to the policies and regulations so as to urge multiple stakeholders to have effective cooperation.

2.1 Inspection of the nature of service: the crucial key to open the black box of the after-school service of primary and middle schools

Different groups would have various cognition on the after-school service, and the main dispute is to focus on the nature of after-school service. What is the nature of after-school service of primary and middle schools? Relevant practical problems would be solved when the key problem is clarified. Firstly, it is stipulated in article 2 of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Compulsory Education, that compulsory education is the one that all school-age children and adolescents must receive under the unified implementation of the country. According to the legislative spirit and the regulation, the optional and non-mandatory after-school service makes it "selective education" for students, so it does not belong to the range of compulsory, unified and free compulsory education. Therefore, after-school service is not the "educational and teaching task that should be completed according to the prescribed standards" of the school with compulsory education; and the after-school service of students of primary and middle schools is not the statutory duty of compulsory education in schools, the legal content of school education and teaching or the legal allocation matters. Furthermore, according to the classification of public education service and the relevant spirit of the Law of Compulsory Education, the after-school service is different from the compulsory, unified and free compulsory education in the perspective of fundamentality, universality and fairness of education service, so it should be the service scope of non-fundamental public education, so the adoption of paid fees and appropriate government subsidies adopted by the after-school service is the main approach to solve the problem of after-school service. In light of the Law of Compulsory Education and the Teacher Law, we could confirm that after-school service is an extension service closely related to compulsory education, so it should be the service scope of quasi-basic public education. Hence, the problem of whether the after-school service should be charged or not that is cared for by parents would be solved, and there is also legal evidence for how to encourage teachers to participate actively in the after-school service with reasonable compensation. Thus, the speech that "the moral obligation of teacher turning to be statutory obligations" should be restrained necessarily.

2.2 Inspection of service subjects: a lever to ensure the orderly running of after-school service of primary and middle schools

There has been an exploration of the after-school service in our country. It could be found by sorting literature that the most prominent problem of the domestic after-school service is the low enthusiasm of teachers, and the basic reason is the too long working hour for teachers. The need for public service generated by the after-school service adds to the occupational stress of teachers from all aspects. In addition, the after-school service is not precisely defined by national law and policy, so teachers deem it as a "non-obligation burden". With the strong intervention of the government (education authorities) at all levels and the negative report from all major media on the teacher occupation, the main implementor (teacher) of after-school service would have ideological change. Such problems as "the function of school social service being transferred to teachers' obligation", "parents having no understanding or support for teachers", "government subsidy input being not in direct proportion to teachers' pay" and "school management neglecting teachers' psychological will" directly reduce the enthusiasm of teachers to take part in the after-school service. As the main organizer of the school teaching and the after-school service, the teacher is a necessary component for the mechanism of schools, and the teachers must boycott the after-school service that "partly turn their moral obligations into the legal one". In addition, partial parents have no rational cognition of the after-school service with a thought that "schools should be responsible for the after-school service"^[3]. In the problem of reasonable sharing of the fee of after-school service, it is normally thought that "the after-school childcare should not be charged"^[4]. All of these social responses generate a different negative impacts on teachers carrying out after-school service smoothly. Thus, there should be a profound study on how to activate the teachers' internal enthusiasm to do well in after-school service.

2.3 Inspection of service course: The fulcrum to ensure the improved quality of the after-school service of primary and middle schools

The after-school service only undertook the responsibility of homework assisting and security caring at the very begin-

ning. Along with the increase of the parent's need, the contents of after-school service is obviously increased: taking care of students, homework tutoring, recreational and sports activities, recreational games, interest cultivation and social practice. However, according to the study and the practice, there are following problems for the after-school service, including fewer activity courses, lower satisfaction, imperfect quality of after-school service. These are the reasons. Firstly, the policy of after-school service is too rough. Schools have an insufficient understanding of the after-school service with the fear of difficulty of not knowing what to do; in addition, the education evaluation prefers the "score evaluation", so parents' main appeal for the extension service is to "finish the homework" instead of the "all-rounded qualification development". Therefore, the content and form of the current after-school service is enriched by "homework tutoring + sports activities", "homework tutoring + sports", and "students' independent activities to participate in community activities", however, the dominant after-school service is still the "homework tutoring". Secondly, the teachers have a low initiative willingness to take part in the after-school service since it greatly extends their working hours in schools. The extensive extension and high energy output of teachers' work have made teachers so tired physically and psychologically; and the compensation of the after-school service is hard to reach their psychological expectations, so the teachers have weak awareness to develop the courses for the after-school service, and there is the less wonderful activity of qualification education. Some schools try to arrange the wonderful activities of qualification education, but it is still unsatisfying for the insufficient energy of teachers.

3. Reflection on the governance: suggestions on modern social governance based on the rule of laws

The after-school service of primary and middle school belongs to the school service for students after they finish their studies instead of the education public goods in the full sense. It should be a non-mandatory quasi-public service to perform the duty of care for parents. It is a welfare policy of the government to ensure citizens do their job with ease under the background of the rapid development of society. For the raising voice for the campus extension service and the childcare service during winter and summer holiday, we, as the front-line workers, advocate: the governments at all levels and relevant research institutions should accelerate the legislative process to define the after-school service as a service product so as to guide all stakeholders to improve their proper understanding on the service; appeal the education authorities and schools at all levels to have a statutory verification of current teacher workload and enhance the protection of teachers' legitimate rights and interests and the construction of teachers' psychological health so as to provide policy protection for teachers to actively participate in the service; suggest all major media to enhance the extensive publication of after-school service to guide the public opinions to positive rate the hard work of the government, schools and teachers, so as to provide a friendly and harmonious development environment for the profound undertaking of after-school service and form a good situation that multiple stakeholders work together to promote the high-quality development of after-school service.

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