

# China's 'Double Reduction': Promising Steps Toward Balanced and Quality Education, Yet Challenges Remain

SHANGHAI, SHANGHAI, CHINA, July 8, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A bold policy targets academic stress and inequality, but teacher workload and resource gaps highlight the need for systemic reforms and broader engagement from actors beyond the education sector.

China's "double reduction" policy, launched in 2021, seeks to ease student stress by limiting homework and curbing off-campus tutoring. Early results show reduced anxiety and greater parent satisfaction, yet challenges remain. Teacher workloads have increased, resource gaps persist in rural schools, and underground tutoring continues. Sustained progress will require systemic reforms and collaboration among schools, families, and policymakers to ensure balanced, high-quality education for all.



Students participate in a classroom lesson at a Chinese school, reflecting the evolving focus on balanced education and well-being under the "double reduction" policy.

Academic burden has long been a pressing concern in China and other East Asian societies, where Confucian educational values and high-stakes examinations place intense pressure on students. Excessive schoolwork, competitive environments, and the proliferation of shadow education have led to prolonged study hours, heightened stress, and declining well-being among students. Despite decades of policy interventions aimed at reducing academic workload, deep-rooted systemic and cultural factors continue to perpetuate the problem.

A study published online on July 26, 2024 in [ECNU Review of Education](#) by Licui Chen and Shuangmu Lin from Zhejiang University examines China's groundbreaking "double reduction" policy, implemented in 2021 to alleviate the academic burden on students in compulsory

education. The policy, which targets excessive school homework and off-campus tutoring, has shown early successes but also faces significant challenges. The study analyzes policy documents and literature to evaluate the “double reduction” policy’s impact on China’s compulsory education system.

“The ‘double reduction’ policy is designed to reduce academic stress by limiting homework and restricting off-campus tutoring, while also promoting holistic development through the integration of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education,” said Chen and Lin.

The study found that since its implementation, the policy has led to a significant decline in students’ depression and anxiety levels, a dramatic reduction in subject-based tutoring institutions (from 124,000 to 9,000), and that over 75% of urban schools now provide after-school services, with 97.3% of parents expressing satisfaction.

Despite these achievements, the policy has also generated significant challenges. Teacher workload has increased, with over 90% of teachers reporting prolonged working hours and heightened stress. Resource disparities persist, particularly in rural and disadvantaged schools, which struggle to offer diverse extracurricular activities. Additionally, there remains a persistent demand for tutoring, as parents seek alternative, often costly, underground options to maintain competitive academic performance.

The study underscores the necessity of coordinated action among key stakeholders—schools, families, and policymakers—to mitigate these issues. As Chen and Lin note, “Reducing students’ academic burden is not merely an educational issue but a sociocultural one. Sustainable progress will demand systemic reforms and broader engagement from actors beyond the education sector.”

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## Reference

Titles of original papers: Examining China's “Double Reduction” Policy: Promises and Challenges for Balanced and Quality Development in Compulsory Education

Journal: ECNU Review of Education

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/20965311241265123>

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