

Education reform in China-II

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Structural changes in the secondary school system, notably the opening of more technical and vocational schools, are also an important part of educational reform in China. In 1978 the students in such schools accounted for only 5-

per cent of the total number of secondary students. Today the national figure has risen to some 38 per cent with certain cities and provinces doing even better than that.

BASIC FACTS ON SECONDARY SCHOOLS

At present the length of secondary education in China

of those taking the exams.—Students with excellent records are allowed to skip a grade, but those who fail to pass one of the three courses—Chinese—mathematics, or foreign language—and who fail at the make-up examination, have to repeat the course.



A lively classroom discussion on the Chinese language.

per cent of the total number of secondary students. Today the national figure has risen to some 38 per cent with certain cities and provinces doing even better than that.

According to Liu Bin, Vice-chairman of the State Education Commission, the goal is to have by 1990 an equal number of students in standard secondary schools and in-technical/vocational schools. The dramatic increase in technical/vocational schools in the past eight years has helped to ease the intense competition for college placement.

Parents and students have come to realize that there are many paths to get a desirable job, not just the single track of a college Education. In fact, by teaching practical skills which are socially much in demand, the —technical/vocational schools often give their graduates an

advantage over graduates of standard secondary schools with a general academic education.

is six years—three years for junior and three years for senior middle school. There are two semesters for each grade. The students have a three-week winter vacation (between January & February) and a seven-week summer vacation. There are midterm and end term exams each semester.

Junior middle school students have to pass examinations arranged before graduation. About a third of the graduates of Junior middle schools go on to technical or other vocational schools, and another third continue their studies at senior middle schools. The remainder are assigned to jobs after short-term Training.

To be admitted to colleges or Universities, the students have to take part in national—standardized examinations. In 1987 colleges enrolled 640,000 students or about one-third

of those taking the exams.—Students with excellent records are allowed to skip a grade, but those who fail to pass one of the three courses—Chinese—mathematics, or foreign language—and who fail at the make-up examination, have to repeat the course.

One Entering senior middle school students must seriously consider their future. In the second term of the first year they will be divided into two categories—liberal arts or sciences—in accordance with each student's interest, ability and other conditions. Middle school students take courses in Chinese, mathematics, Politics, history, physics, Chemistry, biology, geography, foreign language, physical culture, fine arts, music, labor, skills and some elective courses.

Although the teaching plan and teaching materials are designed by state in a unified way, different schools can increase the number of courses or select alternative courses according to their—concrete conditions, along with extracurricular activities.

Secondary schools have a principal, one or two deputy principals, a dean and a director of general affairs. The principal is in charge of the administrative and academic work and in addition organizes teachers and staff members so that they fulfil their teaching tasks according to educational policy. Schools are run in a democratic way.

