

Explanation of the policy

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1. The Use of State-Compiled Textbooks is a Major Policy Decision of the Party and the Government

General Secretary Xi Jinping has pointed out that education is a matter of fundamental importance for the country and the Party. Establishing textbooks is a responsibility of the state. The Party Central Committee and the State Council attach great importance to work on textbooks and regard textbook writing as a fundamental strategic project of the state. In July 2017, the State Textbook Committee was established to further strengthen the management and use of government responsibility in the establishment and use of textbooks for universities, middle schools and primary schools, strengthening strategic planning and overall guidance, and serving state strategies. In accordance with the plan of the Party Central Committee, the State Textbook Committee has organized dedicated forces to uniformly compile textbooks for primary and middle schools on Language and Literature [*yuwen*, i.e. Chinese Language and Literature], Politics (Ethics and Law), and History: three state-compiled textbooks. Since September 2017, they have been used uniformly in all primary and secondary schools across the country, and Chinese-medium primary and secondary schools in our region implemented the policy simultaneously.

State-compiled textbooks are national grade, high-level, authoritative textbooks. In 2017, Xinjiang, where classes had been taught in ethnic minority languages, started using the three-subject state-compiled textbooks in the initial grade of compulsory education and using the national common spoken and written language for teaching; since 2018, Tibet started using the three-subject state-compiled textbooks in the initial grade of compulsory education and using the national common spoken and written language for teaching.

In accordance with the unified plan of the central government, schools in five provinces and one autonomous region - Gansu, Jilin, Liaoning, Qinghai, Sichuan and Inner Mongolia - will start using the three-subject textbooks this autumn. Inner Mongolia is a model autonomous region. In line with the plan of the State Textbook Committee, in the spirit of being highly responsible for ensuring a fair and quality ethnic minority education, the Autonomous Region Government, in

full consideration of the level of current national common spoken and written language education and the reality of ethnic minority language education, and upon the approval of the Ministry of Education, put forward the work proposal that our Region implement gradually and push on steadily over three years the study of Language and Literature, Politics, and History in accordance with the three-subject state-compiled textbooks. Starting from this autumn, first grade primary school and first grade middle school students will use the state-compiled ‘Language and Literature’ textbook. In 2021, first grade primary school and first grade middle school students will start using the state-compiled ‘Ethics and Rule of Law’ (Politics) textbook. In 2022, first grade middle school students will start using the state-compiled “History” textbook, as well as using the common national spoken and written language for teaching, thereby realising full coverage of the three subjects in compulsory education. This policy decision has shown consideration for the reality of work necessary in the Autonomous Region and fully embodies the care and concern of the state and party for our Region. Accordingly, the Autonomous Region Government approved the Department of Education to draft, print, and distribute the “State-Compiled ‘Language and Literature’ Textbook Implementation Plan for the First Grade of Primary School and the First Grade of Middle Schools in Ethnic Language Medium Schools”. This work is an important arrangement by the state and the Autonomous Region regarding education.

Textbooks embody the will of the party and the state, reflect major concerns of the people, inherit the achievements and results of the excellent Chinese culture and human civilisation; they are the important means to solve the fundamental problem of what type of people to train, how to train people, for whom to train people, directly relating to the implementation of the party’s educational policy and the realisation of its educational goals. The use of the ‘Language and Literature’ textbooks in ethnic minority language-medium primary and secondary schools is a major decision and plan made by the Party Central Committee to strengthen the national language education in ethnic areas. It is a major reform measure for the use and management of state-compiled textbooks. It is an institutional arrangement for continuously improving the level of use of the national spoken and written language in ethnic schools, promoting high-quality development of ethnic minority education. It is a realistic demand from the masses and students in ethnic minority areas. Vigorously advancing the establishment of national common language education and textbooks will benefit all people of ethnic minority areas by letting them enjoy a fairer and higher-quality education, which has great strategic and far-reaching historical significance.

2. Is the currently existing bilingual teaching system in our district changing? Is the Mongolian language and literature course being cancelled?

Starting from the autumn semester of 2020, the first grade of primary school and the first grade of middle school in the Region's ethnic language medium schools will begin to use the state-compiled 'Language and Literature' textbooks and use the national standard spoken and written language for teaching. Compared to previous years, the 'Chinese' (*Hanyu*) course that previously started in the second grade of primary school will be replaced by the state-compiled 'Language and Literature' (*yuwen*) textbook course now starting in the first grade of primary school as curriculum; and the 'Chinese' course in the first-year middle school will be replaced by the state-compiled 'Language and Literature' textbook course. The curriculum for other subjects and grades remains the same, textbooks remain the same, the language of instruction remains the same, the lesson hours for Mongolian language and literature and Korean language and literature remain the same. After the comprehensive introduction of the three state-compiled subject textbooks, the curriculum of other subjects in ethnic minority languages taught in primary and secondary schools will remain unchanged, the textbooks used will remain the same, the teaching language will remain the same, and the lesson hours of Mongolian language and literature and Korean language and literature will remain unchanged. Therefore, the existing bilingual education system has not changed at all.

3. Does using the state-compiled 'Language and Literature' textbooks have any benefits for students?

General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized that language communication is an important link in communication between people. If the language is different it is difficult to communicate. Without communication, it is hard to reach understanding, and it is hard to form a common identity. If the majority of ethnic minority students learn the national common language well it will be beneficial to their employment, to their acceptance of modern science, culture and knowledge, and to their integration into society. The state-compiled 'Language and Literature' textbook summarizes and absorbs the excellent achievements of the Language and Literature curriculum reform, accumulates the advanced concepts and successful experience of the curriculum reform, focuses on cultivating students' innovative spirit and practical ability, advocates independent, cooperative, and inquisitive learning methods; further improves the use of the language, strengthens the connection between language and life, and is committed to the comprehensive improvement of students' language attainment. The use of state-compiled textbooks is conducive to promoting exchange between students receiving classes in ethnic

minority languages and students of other ethnic groups and broadens the avenues for individual development and future careers.

4. Has the use of state-compiled 'Language and Literature' textbooks increased students' academic burden?

According to the state's unified requirements, three levels of management are implemented at the compulsory education stage: national curriculum, local curriculum, and school curriculum. The state 'Compulsory Education Curriculum Plan' clearly states that compulsory education implements a consistent, comprehensive and balanced curriculum over nine years, with class hours arranged in proportion.

At present, the proportion of national curriculum courses in our Region for compulsory education is 75-80%, and the combined proportion of local courses and school courses is 20-25%. The total weekly class hours are: 25-33 class hours for elementary school and 32-36 class hours for middle school. This autumn, we adjusted the first-year class hours of elementary and middle schools taught in ethnic languages, and moderately reduced the class hours of local courses and school courses. The state-compiled 'Language and Literature' course will take one class hour per day, which fully considers the rhythm of students' physical and mental development and the internal logic of subject knowledge as well as reflecting the basic requirements for the gradual increase of workload from lower grades to upper grades. After adjustment, the proportion of class hours in each subject conforms to the requirements of the national curriculum plan, and the total number of class hours and weekly class hours in the school year are controlled within the scope of state regulations. At the same time, in the process of concrete implementation, each district can also, in accordance with the basic requirements of the curriculum standards and the teaching recommendations formulated by the Autonomous Region, make appropriate adjustments according to the actual conditions of the school.

5. How can the problem of the shortage of teachers for 'Language and Literature' classes be solved?

On the whole, there is not a significant shortage of Language and Literature teachers in the first grade of primary school and the first grade of middle school. There are three key measures to be adopted: First, the government's Education Department guides the Region's ethnic language medium elementary and middle schools through internal adjustments, giving priority to the allocation of teachers of the state-compiled 'Language and Literature' textbooks; the second is to solve the problems of schools in real difficulty through inter-school exchanges within the county.

Third, when it comes to areas where a shortage does exist, teachers, researchers or other qualified educational workers who are in current employment or within five years of retirement from the local league or municipality will be recruited to work in ethnic schools to support teaching.

6. Will the salary of teachers who are temporarily unable to meet teaching requirements be affected?

The ‘Implementation Plan’ issued by the Education Department clearly stipulates that the wishes of teachers who are temporarily unable to meet the requirements of the state-compiled ‘Language and Literature curriculum will be respected. They may choose reassignment or on-the-job training. They will be assured of ‘Three Unchanges’ in their teacher status, professional title, and salary level, thereby effectively guaranteeing the rights and interests of teachers in ethnic language medium schools.

7. School is about to start. Are the state-compiled ‘Language and Literature textbooks sure to arrive before classes start?

In accordance with the “Catalogue of Textbooks to be Taught at Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region Ethnic Language Medium Elementary and Secondary Schools”, the educational departments of each league, municipality, and banner/county have carefully checked the number of books for the state-compiled ‘Language and Literature’ subject in primary and secondary schools within their jurisdiction, and have done a good job of ordering course books. The state-compiled ‘Language and Literature’ textbooks used in the first grade of elementary school and the first grade of middle school were all delivered to the issuing agency on 15 August, which will ensure that the book is available before class so that everyone has a copy.

8. How can teachers teaching the state-compiled ‘Language and Literature’ textbooks be actively supported?

This will be done by implanting a publicly-funded teacher training plan. Beginning in 2021, we will organise the implementation of the Autonomous Region's publicly funded teacher training plan, and specially arrange the publicly funded ‘bilingual’ teacher recruitment plan for Language and Literature classes. We will enlist the support of the Ministry of Education, increase the enrolment plan for the Language and Literature subject “bilingual” teachers at normal universities, and speed up the training of “bilingual” teachers of Language and Literature. In accordance with the timetable for the promotion of the use of “Language and Literature” textbooks in ethnic minority language-taught primary and secondary schools, departments at all levels will rationally

allocate the staffing of teachers, and human resources departments will give priority to carrying out the supplementary work of recruiting ‘bilingual’ teachers of the Language and Literature subject in ethnic language-taught primary and secondary schools, ensuring that teachers are allocated in time and in full.

9. How will the relevant benefits for teachers supporting the teaching of the state-compiled ‘Language and Literature’ classes be guaranteed ?

We will effectively ensure that working expenses and living allowances of the recruited ‘support teachers’ are higher than the state ‘Silver Age Lecture Plan’ standard, and that the schools receiving support provide temporary dormitories for lecturing teachers who need accommodation and provide the necessary living facilities.

10. After using the state-compiled ‘Language and Literature’ textbooks, will the policy for this year’s graduates moving to higher grades be affected?

After the state-compiled ‘Language and Literature’ textbooks enter circulation, it is guaranteed that the policy for students upgrading from preschool to primary school, primary school to middle school, middle school to high school, and the policy for middle school and high school entrance examinations will remain stable, so as to protect students’ vital interests. We will actively strive for the state’s policy support, continue to implement special enrolment plans for agricultural, pastoral, and poverty-stricken areas, and give preference to students taught in ethnic minority languages.

11. How will the quality of education and teaching of state-compiled textbooks be ensured?

We will mainly focus on four main aspects when it comes to teachers teaching well and students learning well. The first is to strengthen teacher training: before school starts, leagues and municipalities will take the lead in organising the training to familiarise them with curriculum standards and textbooks, to encourage teachers to research deeply curriculum standards and become familiar with the philosophy and style in textbook compiling as well as the specific content and requirements of the new textbooks. At the same time, special training for teachers will be carried out through forms such as offline concentrated training, online training, school-based training, sending teachers to the countryside, and ‘one-on-one’ on-the-job training among other methods. After the special training is completed, teachers’ teaching abilities and training needs will be scientifically evaluated, and follow-up training will be integrated into the overall plan for teacher training in primary and secondary schools in the Autonomous Region, and the

implementation will be coordinated and organized. Second is to build a synchronous classroom: We will arrange for excellent model teachers to use the Autonomous Region Education Cloud Platform, the Mongolian Language Resources Network and Inner Mongolia Cable TV to broadcast ‘Synchronised Classroom’ to become a ‘reveal-all’ [i.e. open-access] teaching resource for students’ independent study and for teachers’ training, striving to realise the regional, school, and school section full coverage. Third is to strengthen teaching and research guidance: at the level of the Autonomous Region, we will organise a team of experts to analyse state-compiled Language and Literature textbooks, and in accordance with the system, structure, and content of the textbook compilation, produce teaching guidance unit by unit. At the same time, we will guide the teaching and research organizations of all districts to carry out serious analysis of the student learning situation, carry out classroom teaching assessments in a timely manner, scientifically adjust teaching progress, and guarantee teaching quality. Fourth is to adjust evaluation criteria: in accordance with students’ cognitive level and class hour structure, we will scientifically determine teaching goals, flexibly set up lesson types, and make appropriate adjustments to the exam evaluation standards.

12. How will educational resources for the state-compiled ‘Language and Literature’ curriculum be provided effectively?

The teaching and research office and information centre of the Autonomous Region are carrying out synchronous classroom recording, ensuring that schools can access the Education Cloud Platform, the Mongolian Language Resource Network, and Inner Mongolia Cable TV ‘Synchronous Classroom’ prior to the start of the school year to achieve full coverage of the Region, schools, and school sections.

13. How will funding for teacher training and educational resource development for the state-compiled ‘Language and Literature’ curriculum be guaranteed?

Financial departments at all levels will allocate special funds to prioritise teacher training, teaching resource development, and other special expenditures ensuring teaching of the state-compiled ‘Language and Literature’ textbooks in the national common spoken and written language, and ensuring that what needs to be guaranteed is guaranteed. The Central Ethnic Education Special Fund allocated by the Autonomous Region this year will prioritise the use of state-compiled ‘Language and Literature’ textbooks.

[Translated from the Chinese by Angel Naydenov]