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# Consideration on Rural Boarding Project in Guizhou Province

CHEN Wei-hong<sup>1,2</sup>, QI Yan-bin<sup>1\*</sup>

1. College of Economics and Management, Sichuan Agricultural University, Yaan 645014, China; 2. College of Management, Guizhou University, Guiyang 550025, China

**Abstract** Operation status of the construction of rural boarding school in Guizhou Province in China is introduced and its implementation status is comprehensively evaluated. Problems in the implementation of relevant policies of boarding project are put forward, including incomplete overall planning, impetuous implementation of policies in some regions and unfair allocation of accommodation subsidies. Difficulties in the development of rural boarding school are discussed, such as liability management of school, poor teaching force, lack of professional manager and special funds, prominent difficulties in board and lodging, problems of safety management and health care, heavy financial burden on the family, lack of mental health education, infrastructure failing to meet the development needs of school, and backward education consciousness of parents in poverty areas. Based on this, advantages and disadvantages of rural boarding project are analyzed from three aspects of government, school, and the student and parent. Finally, relevant countermeasures are put forward to construct and develop rural boarding school according to the actual situation of Guizhou Province, such as strengthening policy support, improving education consciousness of parents, developing human resources in new school, and paying attention to the effects of local culture on school.

**Key words** Rural boarding project; Education resources; Educational equity; China

## 1 Research background and content introduction

**1.1 Research background** In recent years, with the implementation of China's family planning policy and the improvement of urbanization level, ratio of new births in rural areas has declined year by year. Thus, reduction of students leads to a waste of educational resources. And it becomes an inevitable choice to adopt the form of centralized schools. However, after cutting and merging schools, students have to walk a long distance to school and their safety is hard to be guaranteed. The only way to solve this problem is to construct rural boarding schools. In the year 2004, construction project of rural boarding school, the largest education project in western China since the foundation of new China, has launched. At present, this project has benefited a total of 23 provinces (municipalities and autonomous regions) including the central region, setting up 7 651 schools and building or enlarging 13 810 thousand square meters school sites<sup>[1]</sup>.

For a long time, due to geographical conditions, economic conditions and other constraints, basic education has been weak in rural areas of Guizhou Province with the widespread phenomenon of poor infrastructure, lack of teaching force and difficult enrollment of students. However, boarding project has effectively solved the problem of difficult enrollment of students. According to the introduction of the Education Department of Guizhou Province, Guizhou Province has in all obtained 900 million yuan special funds from the project mentioned above, setting up 1 921.2 thousand square meters school sites for

1 044 junior high schools in rural areas. Among them, there are 117.5 thousand square meters teaching and teaching assistant space, 1 443.0 thousand square meters residence hall for students, 351.5 thousand square meters student cafeteria, 7.5 thousand square meters administrative office, and 425 thousand beds for students. Until recently, project schools have already started to operate; and about 400 thousand middle school students in remote areas have begun to live in schools.

**1.2 Research content** With the further implementation of boarding policy in Guizhou Province, some problems must be further analyzed, such as the advantages and disadvantages of boarding mode and its new requirements for local educational departments, status of boarding school in Guizhou Province, difficulties and experiences of boarding school during construction and development, attitudes of all sectors of the community towards boarding schools, and development direction of boarding school in rural areas. Meanwhile, we also analyze whether the boarding policy meets the development needs of local education, solves the problem of "going to school", helps to improve the teaching environment, and optimizes educational resources or not. Based on these problems, we conduct investigation on education departments at all levels, cadres of education departments, school leaders and teachers, students and their parents in order to obtain the direct data, which may provide references for decision making of relevant policies.

## 2 Investigation result

**2.1 Overall evaluation on boarding project** Investigation shows that with the increase of investment in education, pilot schools are currently running in good condition and are very popular among the students, parents and all social sectors.

More than 95% school leaders support the development of boarding schools, but a small number of people believe that we execute measures of boarding school with undue haste, showing inadaptation to local realities to a certain extent. Boarding schools have received certain achievements in standardized management, centralized educational resources, student self-care ability and other aspects, playing an important role in developing rural high-quality education resources and in improving operating efficiency<sup>[2]</sup>. Implementation of boarding school has significantly improved the enrollment rate of rural students and the teaching quality. And more learning time is saved for students because the distance from home to school is shortened. Accommodation and dining become more convenient for students, which have resolved the actual difficulties of parents.

In general, boarding project has effectively integrated the educational resources, has optimized the educational structure in rural areas, has made great contribution to the educational equity, and has won great acclaim from all social sectors and support of rural residents. However, boarding system is not mature at present and there are many problems during the operation of schools, such as scarce financial resources, talent shortage and poor infrastructure. Therefore, it is extreme necessary to improve boarding system in rural areas. In order to meet the actual needs of local education, boarding schools in future should achieve first-class management and teaching quality.

## **2.2 Problems in the implementation of polices**

**2.2.1** Incomplete overall planning. Overall planning is not complete before construction and phenomenon of changing scheme happens from time to time, which is not conducive to the efficient use of funds. This is shown mainly in four aspects. Firstly, some places does not follow the approved plan and annual project. It is found out that a school in Changshun County has already built up the lodging schools but has not yet brought into use. Therefore, students have to rent rooms outside due to fund chain break and delayed delivery. Secondly, some practical factors are not taken into account during the process of planning, such as traffic condition and price change, which slows down the construction of infrastructure. Investigation shows that a school in Sinan County is still digging the foundation of canteen, greatly affecting the life of students. Thirdly, during the enlargement, schools lack the management and organization experiences in safety, health, diet and group activities. Fourthly, project plan is half-baked. There is no tap water or drinking water in the dormitory, and laboratories and computer rooms are not in used due to the lack of teacher and equipment. For instance, because of the poor planning, there is no place to hang out the washing in student's dormitory in a school of Zhijin County.

**2.2.2** Impulsive implementation of policies in some areas. Sole mode is very common during the implementation of polices in China. But regional differences will inevitably cause problems. For instance, it is inappropriate to send five or six-year-old children to schools in rural areas, because the condition there is far poorer than that in cites. Besides, mergence of

schools does not follow the spirit of scientific planning, gradual implementation and scientific guidance. Therefore, some parents are reluctant to implement polices. Related cadres of Leishan County point out that boarding school should adapt to the current development of education based on adequate input of national finance at an appropriate time.

**2.2.3** Unfair allocation of board and lodging subsidies. During the investigation, we have discovered a phenomenon worthy of reflection. Some schools in villages with better economic conditions have great advantage in infrastructure and have the condition to conduct semi-closed management. Thus, a large proportion of students can live in schools and obtain subsidies. However, in poor villages and towns, students obtaining subsidy is significantly inadequate and their rights are violated. Moreover, students in some real poor families can not enjoy the preferential policies due to the lack of investigation on actual situation of peasant household, which has aroused dissatisfaction of students and parents.

## **2.3 Difficulties in the development of rural boarding school**

**2.3.1** Widespread phenomenon of liability management in schools. Economic condition in western rural areas is relatively backward and many boarding schools are now in "liability management". These are caused by insufficient funds and other factors which greatly hinders the construction and development of boarding school. In order to solve the problems in supporting facilities, some schools are in debt for several consecutive years. Most of the school leaders report that after the implementation of compulsory education and the "two exemptions and one subsidy", the only income source for school is the public use per student. But in fact, expenses of schools are various, such as reception fees, wages for board and lodging manager, security guard and so on. Schools are hardly able to lift each foot because these expenses can be applied neither from the public use per student nor from the special funds of upper departments. Schools may allocate a sum of money from senior high school; but if having no senior high school, they may fall into an awkward situation due to the lack of funds.

**2.3.2** Infrastructure failing to meet the needs of school development. Scale of school is significantly increased after collecting all of the resources for running a school, which puts forward higher requirements for infrastructure. However, during the investigation, many boarding schools in rural areas have not yet reached the actual standard, and it is common that there lacks classroom, bedroom, library, laboratory and sports center. For instance, school leaders and teachers do not have a separate office and are in a conference room in order to save space. To solve the accommodation problem, old school building is reconstructed into temporary dormitory for the teachers. But there are safety concerns in the reform of these dangerous buildings. Moreover, schools have to directly give food subsidy to students because there is no student cafeteria, which results in a number of health risks.

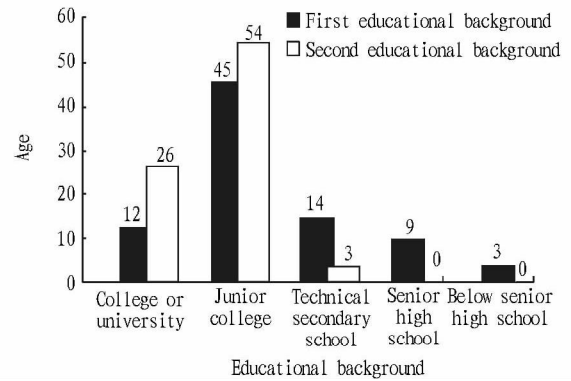
**2.3.3** Problems of food and accommodation. Problem of food and accommodation is discovered during actual investigation,

which is common among boarding schools. This phenomenon means that to parents, students have to spend 1.50 – 3.00 yuan for each meal and 50 yuan for accommodation in each semester, which is unaffordable for parents in poor mountain villages; and to schools, education issues of school-age children have been resolved well due to the implementation of compulsory education in a comprehensive way, but "fiscal revenue" of school is at stake. Only collecting 1.50 yuan and 50 yuan can not solve the financial problems food and accommodation. Therefore, this problem can only be solved by government through strengthening investment in basic education, actively guiding the social forces and expanding sources of funds for basic education.

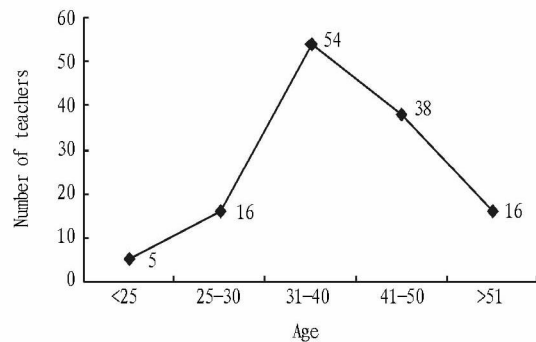
**2.3.4 Poor teaching force.** In rural areas, teachers are basically local due to the natural conditions and economic reasons. And there are few excellent teachers and teachers from other places. Poor teaching force is a common problem in rural schools, which is mainly reflected in three aspects. Firstly, in the aspect of quantity, schools in rural areas generally lack 3 to 5 teachers according to statistics. Thus, some schools employ local substitute teachers; others assign the tasks to other teachers. Secondly, teachers are not qualified professionally and are unable to meet the needs of modern education. A school cadre in Changshun County points out that teachers of English, music, sport and art are in shortage and other substitute teachers are not qualified in these courses. Thus, the quality of teaching is not satisfactory. Thirdly, educational level of teacher is relatively low and teachers are at an advanced age in rural areas. Most of the young teachers are graduated from ordinary normal school, and some are only from high school. The majority of teachers above young and middle-aged level just receive an education of junior high school.

In some decentralized school sites, there are only one or two teachers in a school, whose teaching levels are usually very low. Fig. 1 and 2 analyze educational degree and age structure of teachers in three boarding schools in Changshun County. Most of the teachers are graduated from junior college and teacher training school between the age of 30 and 50. There are in all 16 teachers above the age of 50 and their teaching level is relatively low. However, in urban schools, most teachers receive an education above junior college.

**2.3.5 Lack of professional logistics manager and special funds<sup>[3]</sup>.** Due to the limitation of conditions, upper departments allocate neither special fund nor professional manager for schools. Thus, logistics personnel are relatively scarce in rural schools. And boarding schools need a certain number of accommodation managers, living instructors and relevant logistics human resources reserve. Under the current situation, rural schools are difficult to employ the young, or people with higher educational level or stronger management capacity. Only the older people or rural women without training are willing to assist in school work. Therefore, teachers have to take a part-time job managing a lot of things except teaching. This, on the one hand, increases the work pressure on teachers and has negative impact on the life and work of teachers. On the other hand,



**Fig. 1 Educational level of teachers in three schools of Changshun County**



**Fig. 2 Age structure of teachers in the three schools of Changshun County**

management quality of school can hardly be improved and the requirements of boarding school can hardly be achieved.

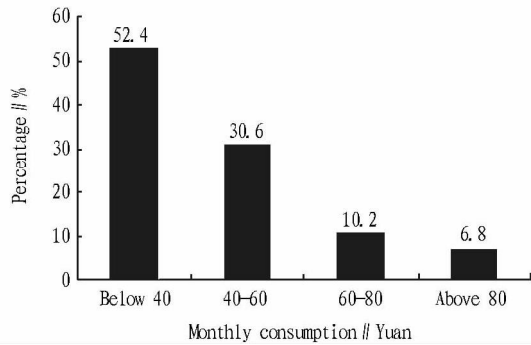
**2.3.6 Safety management and medical problems.** Safety problem of boarding schools are more prominent. Firstly, students are relatively young and their self-care ability, coping capacity and discriminating power are relatively poor, especially the pupils. When they encounter unexpected events, consequences are disastrous beyond imagination. Secondly, if boarding schools are infected with the evils of society, safety of students in boarding school would be threatened. Thirdly, the security risk of commuter students should not be overlooked, in which schools become powerless.

Moreover, investigation shows that many boarding schools in rural areas have no infirmary. Once students get hurt, there is no place to cure. Teachers have to take them to the county seat by motorbike due to the inconvenience traffic.

**2.3.7 Greater financial burden on some families.** Although the boarding school is not for profit, it is not a charitable institution. It is normal and necessary to charge a reasonable fee according to the standard approved by the price department. After the implementation of boarding system, accommodation expenses, living expenses and other education expenses of students have increased in boarding school. And a subsidy of 375 yuan per semester is far from enough for a family in poverty.

Fig. 3 illustrates the monthly consumption of students in Taojiang Primary School. Taojiang is a township of poverty in Leishan County, Guizhou Province, China, where the econom-

ic development is relatively backward. Fig. 3 shows that most of the students spend less than 40 yuan each month, which is a relatively small expenditure for families in other places. But parents in Leishan County still have difficulties in affording it. It is true that a family is offered a loan of 200 yuan from rural credit cooperatives, and they can not clear this debt within three years.



**Fig. 3 Monthly consumption of students in boarding school**

**2.3.8 Lack of mental health education.** After the implementation of boarding school, many students have even more problems of mental health. Firstly, differences between the families lead to the psychological stress and imbalance. Students may become self-abased, weary of study and even become school dropouts. Secondly, students at higher grades of elementary school and junior high school have entered the period of youth initiative. Boys and girls living together in boarding schools might provide the soil and space for early love. Thirdly, under the background of the tide of rural workers, the number of "left-behind children" increases in rural areas. These children lacking family love are likely to suffer from certain mental illness, such as rebellious behavior and emotional resistance.

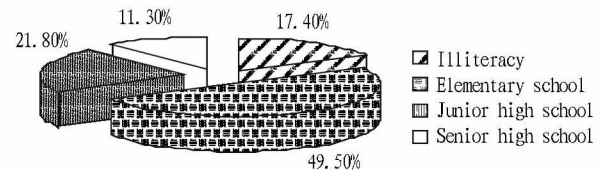
Investigation shows that most of boarding schools do not have a mental health consulting agency, and lack a professional psychological counseling teacher. And psychological problems of students are mainly alleviated by the head teacher. Therefore, professional teachers of mental health are needed in order to better solve students' difficulties in daily life.

**2.3.9 Disjunction of "tripartite education".** Many education experts believe that education should be in the mode of "school + social + family", which is called "tripartite education". However, roles of social and family are often disjointed in rural areas, showing a more significant trend.

After the implementation of boarding school, merchants have opened billiard room, internet bar, game center and so on around the school. Students are willing to save limited meal money to play the game, which affects not only their academic achievements but also their health. Therefore, relevant departments should work together to resolve this problem, so that we can give students a healthy learning environment.

In the aspect of family education, many parents have to go out to work. And the only thing they can do for their children is to pay for education on time. Besides, educational level of parents is generally lower in rural areas, and parents can hardly

play the role of guidance. Investigation on Yangjiaao Village of Sinan County shows that 48.3% students believe their parents are worried about their learning, 25.0% students says their parents never care about their study and 85.0% students by study materials on their own. However, we also found out that parents really care about their children's study, but most of them are only graduated from primary school or simply do not attend school and can not be a qualified tutor of their children (Fig. 4).



**Fig. 4 Statistics of parents' cultural level in Yangjiaao Village of Sinan County**

**2.3.10 Lack of parents' education consciousness in poverty backward area inhabited by ethnic minorities.** In some villages inhabited by ethnic minorities, parents affected by national culture do not care about the education of daughter; they even do not know the grade of their children or the name of the teachers. Some parents prefer to send their children to go out to work rather than let them study in high school. Fortunately, this phenomenon is rare. In Changshun County, there exists the phenomenon of "Child Marriage" in some backward families. If the born child is a girl, which is inconsistent with the contract, she will be abandoned by her parents. Thus, the girl becomes an "orphan having parents". And in Duncao National School, there are 8 to 9 students who are "orphans having parents". Besides, due to the negative impact of "wine culture", some parents of Miao Nationality even believe that it is better to send children to earn money to buy wine than to let them study in high schools.

### 3 Advantages and disadvantages of boarding project in rural areas

Everything has its two sides, so does boarding system. The advantages and disadvantages of boarding project in rural areas are analyzed from three aspects.

**3.1 The aspect of government** Boarding school optimizes the educational resources, guarantees the right of educational equity for children in rural areas, saves the educational cost for government, improves the enrollment of rural children, ensures the development of basic education in rural areas, and promotes the development of rural economy. However, it may have negative impact if government neglects local realities during the execution of the policy. For instance, it may aggravate education burden of rural households, affect the enrollment of students, and cause dropout rate rebound and misunderstanding of parents.

**3.2 The aspect of school** Boarding project can significantly improve the school conditions, effectively integrate the teaching strengths, narrow the gap between urban and rural education,

and enhance the level of basic education. However, since school has not received human, material and financial supports, the burden of school management and operational cost is increased, which may result in negative impact.

**3.3 The aspect of student and parent** Boarding system allows more children to enjoy better educational resources, cultivates children's independent spirit, self-control ability and collective spirit, changes the eating habits of students, and reduces the negative cultural influences from society. At the same time, it can also reduce parent's psychological burden. However, students are prone to have psychological problems under mismanagement. And increase in parents' education cost may be from the burden shifting of society.

## 4 Conclusion and suggestion

**4.1 Strengthening policy support** Policy support is a primary issue to rural areas, which is fully explained by the compulsory education and the "two exemptions and one subsidy" policy in recent years. Firstly, governments at all levels should adjust the structure of fiscal expenditure, continuously improve the proportion of compulsory education expenditure in local fiscal expenditure, make preferential policies, reduce construction fees as much as possible, and encourage enterprises to provide boarding school with free services through non-profit social organizations and state organs. Secondly, when making policies, government should consider regional differences, carry out in-depth investigation on local situation, and conduct preferential treatments in funds. Thirdly, government should also adhere to the principles of "centralization of grades 3, 4, 5 and 6" and "decentralization of grades 1 and 2", retain a number of teaching sites for students in grades 1 and 2 according to local situation in order to meet the practical needs of rural residents. Besides, government should directly give strong support to the schools with poor infrastructure.

**4.2 Improving the education consciousness of parents** The "orphan having parents" mentioned above is a representative of backward education consciousness. Under the rapid development of social economy at present, it is urgent to speed up the healthy and reasonable development of rural basic education and to improve the education consciousness of parents in remote poor mountainous areas. In physics, action spot affects the effect of force. Similarly, in remote and poor areas, especially the minority areas, quality of basic education is closely related to the education consciousness of parents. Once their education consciousness is enhanced, investment in family education would be increased. Thus, we can improve the educational atmosphere of the entire community, promote the healthy development of basic education and comprehensive development of the entire society, economy and culture.

**4.3 Cultivating "new type of human resources in school"** The No. 1 Document in 2004 explicitly issue the "training of new farmers" in order to promote the construction of new socialist countryside. To

ensure the healthy development of boarding school, schools and government departments at all levels should cultivate "new type of human resources in school", improve the management and teaching capacity of school cadres, attract more outstanding personnel by preferential policies, establish guarantee mechanism for teaching strength in compulsory education, improve the wage of rural teachers, advance the educational level and teaching ability of teachers, ensure the stability and rational structure of teaching force in rural areas, appropriately increase the number of staff according to the actual needs of boarding schools, and enhance the work efficiency of schools. In general, boarding school must cultivate the "new type of human resources in school" in order to lay a solid foundation for the further development of school.

**4.4 Effects of custom and culture on schools in ethnic minority areas** Guizhou Province, where ethnic minorities live in concentrated communities, has various cultures deserving of study. But school is a base to cultivate talent, which should not be affected by the bad national customs, while excellent national culture should be further propagated among students. When developing social activities, government should consider its impact on schools and reasonably regulate the government action. For instance, a building with fetishes and superstitions leads directly to the sports ground of a school, which might have bad influence on the mental health of students. Situations are similar in many places due to the lack of government's in-depth consideration when planning.

In a word, boarding school is a project for the people's benefit with some disadvantages in management. But it still produces some good social impact. Thus, strengthening the research on primary and secondary boarding schools in rural areas is a long-term arduous task needing the efforts of all social sectors.

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(3) Early-warning mechanism of food security in the modern sense should be established. This mechanism provides and arranges data in time through monitoring and feedback of multi-evaluation index of food, in order to compare and analyze these data, to send out signal, and to effectively response to social and economic risk of food security.

(4) Since China has not yet introduce the *Law on Food Security Early Warning*, improvement of early-warning mechanism of food security could be more effectively respond to the objective needs. Under the requirements of scientific early warning at information age and the requirements of global economic integration and marketization, early warning of food security in China reveals serious deficiencies and shortcomings. At present, early-warning mechanism of food security should be improved mainly from the aspects of organizational structure, operating principle, operation mode, guarantee of capital sources, and definition of relevant legal liability.

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## 粮食安全预警机制研究

肖顺武 (西南政法大学经济贸易法学院,重庆 401120)

**摘要** 介绍了构建粮食安全预警机制的必要性,具体表现为五方面。一是中国国情、粮情的特殊性:中国人口众多、粮食消耗基数大,出现粮食危机时,通过国际采购无法满足粮食需求。二是粮食作为商品的重要性:粮食是最基本的生活资料,具有社会“稳定器”的作用,是国民经济的基础。三是粮食供给的波动性:中国粮食生产的年际差异明显,而平抑粮食供给波动需要粮食安全预警信息的指导。四是粮食市场化潜在的危机性:粮食的供给、需求弹性较小,无法对市场价格作出较大反应,进而加剧了粮食安全的风险性。五是粮食作为商品具有政治性:粮食作为一种重要的战略资源,对国家的政治、军事行动具有重要的影响。探讨了完善粮食安全预警机制的措施。一是组建独立的预警组织机构,这是完善粮食安全预警机制的前提。二是确立预警机制的运作原则,主要包括:系统原则;定性与定量原则;法律、行政、经济手段并用原则;高效原则;应对手段与基础性工作并重原则。三是酌定预警机制的运作模式。从中国的现实国情出发,应选择政府主导的运作模式。四是加大预警资金投入,提高粮食安全预警信息的质量。五是明确相关主体的法律责任,使粮食安全预警机制正常运作,发挥其应有的社会功能。

**关键词** 粮食安全;预警机制;法律

(From page 28)

## 关于贵州省“农村寄宿制工程”的思考

陈卫洪<sup>1,2</sup>,漆雁斌<sup>1\*</sup> (1. 四川农业大学经济与管理学院,四川雅安 645014;2. 贵州大学管理学院,贵州贵阳 550025)

**摘要** 介绍了中国贵州省“农村寄宿制学校建设工程”的运行现状,并对其实施情况进行了总体评价。提出了寄宿制工程相关政策执行过程中存在的问题,包括:总体规划不够完备、部分地区政策执行操之过急、住宿补助发放不公平等。探讨了农村寄宿制学校发展中面临的一些困境,即学校“负债经营”、基础设施不能满足学校发展的需要、“食宿两难”问题突出、师资力量薄弱、缺乏专业管理人员和专项资金、存在安全管理及医疗问题、加重了部分家庭的经济负担、心理健康教育不到位、“三方教育”脱节、贫困地区家长教育意识落后等。针对上述问题,从政府、学校、学生及家长3个层面分析了农村寄宿制工程的利弊。在此基础上,结合贵州省的实际情况,提出了建设和发展农村寄宿制学校的相关对策建议:一是加强政策性支持;二是提高家长的教育意识;三是培养“新型学校人力资源”;四是注意当地民俗文化对学校的影响。

**关键词** “农村寄宿制工程”;教育资源;教育公平