

# Research on the Practice Model of “Integration of Sports and Education” in Pingshan District, Shenzhen

Li Haixia

School of Education Science, Huaihua University, Huaihua

**Abstract:** This study mainly employs methods such as literature review, surveys, and logical analysis to summarize and investigate the development process of the integration of sports and education and the exploration of cultivating sports reserve talents in Pingshan District. The study found that Pingshan District has established policies and organizational safeguards, improved funding incentive mechanisms, and strengthened team management, preliminarily establishing a district-wide training network system for sports and education integration, led by the district’s amateur sports school, with key project schools as benchmarks and characteristic project schools as the foundation. The practice of “Integration of Sports and Education” in Pingshan District not only provides experience for its own follow-up development but also offers useful references for other provinces and cities.

**Keywords:** Pingshan district; Integration of sports and education; Practical experience

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In September 2020, the Ministry of Education and the General Administration of Sport issued the “Opinions on Deepening the Integration of Sports and Education to Promote the Healthy Development of Young People” (hereinafter referred to as the “Opinions”), formally proposing the “Integration of Sports and Education” strategy [1]. The aim is to explore the role of sports in promoting the physical and mental health and comprehensive education of young people through collaboration and participation from multiple departments and entities [2].

The “Integration of Sports and Education” emphasizes the combination of the education and sports systems, which is a necessary path for the sustainable development of competitive sports reserve talent cultivation in China. Its main advantages include: (1) alleviating the contradiction between study and training, and cultivating well-rounded individuals with sports specialties; (2) helping to solve the employment difficulties of retired athletes; (3) promoting the comprehensive, coordinated, and sustainable development of sports; and (4) facilitating the widespread and in-depth implementation of quality education. The “Integration of Sports and Education” reflects the fundamental goal of using sports to educate and achieve comprehensive development, representing a major direction for educational and sports reforms that is imperative to implement.

Pingshan District in Shenzhen places great emphasis on the reform and innovation of the integration of sports and education. In the implementation process, the district adheres to the concept of “joint obligations, shared resources, complementary strengths, and shared achievements” between the sports and education departments. Actively seeking points of integration, it has promoted the development of youth competition training and quality education in the district to a higher level. In practice, Pingshan District has accumulated a wealth of experience. This study not only summarizes the experiences and lessons learned, clarifies its own issues and future development directions, but also provides practical experience and reference value for other cities and regions to carry out the integration of sports

and education.

## 1. Existing Issues in Domestic “Integration of Sports and Education”

(1) The sports and education authorities find it difficult to form a synergy. Due to the lack of policy and organizational support, the two departments struggle to create a sustainable and virtuous cycle of development.

(2) The integrated curriculum reform of sports teaching is challenging to advance. When universities undertake systemic reforms for the integration of sports and education, primary and secondary schools, which form the base of the pyramid, also need to integrate simultaneously. However, constraints in terms of teachers, venues, and funding limit the development of integrated sports and education in schools.

(3) The sports competition system and athlete grading system are relatively lacking. The U-series sports events for young people are only present in campus football, while other sports lack a series of competitions. Without a tiered structure, it is difficult to improve students’ sports competitiveness.

(4) Irregular recruitment practices. The connection between the “exit” and “entry” of students is not smooth, and there is fierce competition, leading to the loss of sports talent resources and waste of financial resources.

(5) The integrated model of “schools, families, and communities” is hard to form. Family education hinders students’ sports education, and communities lack the capacity to conduct diverse sports activities to supplement the extracurricular sports exercises of schools. Additionally, school sports facilities cannot be shared with the community.

## 2. The Implementation of “Integration of Sports and Education” in Pingshan District

### 2.1. Integrated Sports and Education: Jointly Building Sports-Featured Schools

The issuance of documents such as the “Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Homework and Off-campus Training for Students in the Compulsory Education Stage” (2021) and the “Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving School Physical Education in the New Era” (2020) has further positioned school physical education as a foundational and indispensable component in achieving the fundamental task of cultivating virtue in education. The status and value of school physical education have been significantly elevated [3]. The Pingshan District Sports Bureau, in collaboration with the Education Bureau, fully mobilizing their enthusiasm and exemplary effects. By 2022, Pingshan District had 53 schools with traditional sports projects and high-level sports projects. The model of jointly building sports-featured schools has matured and developed stably, becoming a major “brand” of the Pingshan District’s reform in integrating sports and education.

### 2.2. Jointly Organizing Youth Sports Competitions

The “Opinions” regard “perfecting the youth sports competition system” as a key means of deepening the reform of integrating sports and education and have made comprehensive arrangements for the construction of the school sports competition system. Under the strategy of integrating sports and education, school sports reforms must adhere to the development concept of “health first” and revolve around “teaching, practicing, and competing” to advance work. Among these, “competing” refers to organizing sports competitions for all students [4]. Against this backdrop, the Pingshan District Education Bureau has actively strengthened cooperation with the Sports Bureau, jointly holding multiple youth U-series competitions annually and creating brand projects for sports such as baseball/softball, table tennis, volleyball, and rowing. These initiatives have been warmly welcomed by schools, consolidating and developing the foundation for training, significantly demonstrating the advantages of integrating sports and education. The league format has formed a brand and tradition.

### **3. Practical Exploration of Cultivating Sports Reserve Talents through the Integration of Sports and Education in Pingshan District**

#### **3.1. Entering the Legal Track and Improving Policy Safeguards**

To implement the central government's directives on enhancing the level of integration of sports and education and to promote the development of related work in Pingshan District, the district's education development plan for 2021–2025 proposed strengthening the top-level design of integrating sports and education. In 2009, the Pingshan District Party Committee and People's Government issued the "Implementation Opinions on Strengthening the Integration of Sports and Education to Promote the Amateur Training of Young People," which set the overall goals, guidelines, principles, and guidance for the integration of sports and education in the district. In 2010, the district's Education Bureau and Sports Bureau jointly issued the "Management Measures for Strengthening the Integration of Sports and Education to Promote the Amateur Training of Young People," which addressed the detailed issues in the implementation of the integration of sports and education and proposed solutions and approaches.

The introduction of these two policies filled the gap in domestic policy and legal aspects of the development of the integration of sports and education at the district level. They clarified the responsibilities of the sports and education departments in the integration of sports and education from a legal perspective. This played a very important role in changing the mindset, raising awareness, and unifying the thinking of the sports and education departments, pointing the way and direction for vigorously promoting the integration of sports and education.

#### **3.2. Establishing Joint Management Systems and Improving Organizational Safeguards**

The integration of sports and education is a social system project involving all levels of sports and education, requiring strong organizational guarantees. In 2010, Pingshan District established a leading group for the integration of sports and education, which was fully responsible for guiding, coordinating, and supervising the integration of sports and education in the district.

After the establishment of the organizational system for the integration of sports and education in Pingshan District, the direct leadership of district leaders ensured the feasibility of policies and measures in the integration of sports and education. The participation of various bureaus and departments ensured the coordination and efficiency of the implementation process. This truly enabled the sports and education departments to jointly research, consult, issue documents, formulate unified plans, and deploy work collectively. It ensured that the integration of sports and education operated normally, orderly, and smoothly, achieving standardization, institutionalization, and long-term development. This undoubtedly placed Pingshan District at the forefront nationwide.

#### **3.3. Increasing Financial Investment and Improving Financial Safeguards**

To promote the orderly progress of the integration of sports and education, the sports and education departments consulted with each other, striving to achieve resource sharing and complementary strengths while increasing investment in training, competition, and rewards related to the integration of sports and education. For training, the education department was responsible for the teachers, salaries and benefits, cultural learning requirements, and hardware facilities of the schools; the sports department was responsible for the salaries and benefits of coaches and other personnel, training living requirements, and training office expenses, forming a clear division of labor with both cooperation and checks and balances.

The joint funding and management by the sports and education departments significantly achieved resource savings and optimized allocation. By concentrating funds on sports competitions that benefit both sports and education, the training and competition system achieved a high output ratio, leading to substantial progress and development in the reform of amateur training. The establishment of a training fund reward mechanism also significantly increased the number of participants in amateur training, achieving the goals of rewarding excellence, encouraging improvement, expanding the scale of amateur training, and consolidating its foundation [5].

### 3.4. Strengthening System Management and Improving Mechanism Safeguards

To enhance the efficiency of the integration of sports and education, Pingshan District promoted the transformation of management work towards procedural and standardized practices, establishing a comprehensive management mechanism:

(1) Decision-making Management: The leading group for the integration of sports and education established a meeting coordination mechanism, responsible for developing strategies, supervising training, and inspecting projects.

(2) Competition Management: This included detailed regulations on the organization, registration, scope of participation, eligibility, selection criteria, and complaint handling for competitions.

(3) Student Registration Management: A strict multi-level review process was implemented, involving school applications, Sports Bureau reviews, and Education Bureau approvals for enrollment procedures.

(4) Financial Management: This standardized the allocation, use, rewards, and subsidies of funds, with a dedicated financial supervision and management system to ensure proper use of funds.

(5) Training Management: Each school established a leadership group for amateur training.

(6) Summary and Commendation: At the end of each year, the leading group for the integration of sports and education organized commendations for outstanding units and individuals in the district's integration of sports and education work.

The management system of the integration of sports and education in Pingshan District clearly defined the responsibilities and divisions of labor between the sports and education departments, as well as between departments and individuals. This enabled coordinated efforts based on clear responsibilities, supported by reliable policies and organizational leadership mechanisms. Ultimately, it formed a truly useful, practical, and efficient management model, promoting the transformation of management work towards standardization and institutionalization.

### 3.5. Strengthening Team Building and Improving Training Safeguards

Coaches play an irreplaceable leading role in sports training and are the key to the continuous improvement of high-level athletes. Pingshan District places great emphasis on the construction and development of the coaching team, actively exploring and innovating to blaze a trail with its own characteristics:

(1) Purchasing Services: The district sports school and project schools jointly funded the recruitment of high-level coaches as part-time sports teachers in project schools, improving training quality through better remuneration.

(2) Recruiting High-Level Professional Coaches: Coaches were recruited through a "green channel" for talent, with full-time positions and benefits, continuously infusing fresh blood into the coaching team.

(3) Incorporating Training Work into Teaching Hours: The district reasonably arranged coaches' daily teaching and amateur training work, creating favorable conditions for their training activities.

(4) Strengthening Coach Training: Planned business training, event observation, and participation in academic activities were organized to continuously improve the professional level of coaches.

Pingshan District's pioneering model of introducing outstanding coaches as part-time teachers through purchasing services has gradually been perfected and achieved excellent results. The district plans to expand this model to more characteristic sports projects across the district. By improving remuneration and addressing challenges related to staffing and qualifications through the "purchasing services" model, a new path will be opened for the overall improvement of the coaching team's capabilities.

### 3.6. Broadening Training Channels and Improving Measure Safeguards

#### 3.6.1. Jointly Organizing Sports Events to Leverage the Regulatory Role of Competitions

Youth sports series events are jointly organized by the district Education Bureau and Sports Bureau, with unified planning, regulations, and funding (split 50/50 between the two departments). This approach not only conserves resources but also enhances inter-departmental coordination. The joint organization of series events is another pioneering innovation in the reform of the integration of sports and education in Pingshan District, which has been implemented for over a decade. It has selected a large number of outstanding reserve talents for competitive sports in Pingshan. Through competitions, the project settings for amateur training are adjusted, and reserve talents are identified and selected, contributing to the improvement of competitive sports levels.

### 3.6.2. Jointly Affixing Labels to Encourage Schools to Develop Characteristic Sports

Joint labeling and cooperative, based on education, explores, develops, and cultivates the sports market to add momentum to the integration of sports and education. This measure effectively promotes the development of school sports, enhances the reputation and visibility of schools, and is particularly conducive to cultivating reserve sports talents, providing an additional viable pathway for amateur training [6].

## 4. Development Strategies for the Integration of Sports and Education in Pingshan District's Amateur Training Model

In recent years, athletes from Pingshan District have won five gold medals in world-class competitions, 37 gold medals in national competitions, and 85 gold medals in provincial competitions. In “campus football,” 36 young talents have been sent to higher-level schools, football associations, and football clubs. Despite these significant achievements, major bottlenecks still exist in the integration of sports and education in Pingshan District, including athletes' injuries, conflicts between training and learning, low cultural education levels of athletes, and employment issues. These problems mainly stem from the disconnection between sports and education [2]. To address these issues, the following suggestions are proposed:

(1) Establish a Unified Management System: Quickly determine the management theme and leading department for deepening the integration of sports and education. Establish a multi-departmental management system with the education and sports departments as the core and other functional departments providing support. Conduct top-level design of policies and systems for weak links in sports work, and establish a collaborative innovation mechanism and integration platform among departments.

(2) Further Integrate Sports and Education Resources: Seek support from the government and education departments.

Solve Degree Issues: Address enrollment problems and strive to form a “primary school-junior high school-senior high school-university” integrated management mechanism to attract more outstanding sports talents into the integrated training model.

Develop a Tiered Competition System: Reasonably set up competition systems and athlete grading systems for primary, junior, and senior high schools, using “campus football” as a model to vigorously develop youth U-series events. Build a competition platform from “campus popularization-regional promotion-layered selection-national league” while establishing a tiered structure to address students' concerns and achieve sustainable development.

Explore an Integrated Development Model: Increase opportunities for youth sports participation by forming a new pattern where parents actively engage in sports, teachers prioritize sports, and families care about sports.

(3) Innovate Training Forms: Focus on talent reserve, cultivation, and transfer.

Recruit Retired Athletes for School Sports: Ensure a strong teaching force for youth sports.

Smooth the “Last Mile” for Campus Athlete Advancement: Reduce the loss and discontinuation of outstanding athlete prospects.

Mobilize Social and Market Resources: Draw on training models such as “sports clubs” and “paid training” to expand funding sources for the integration of sports and education, further stimulating the enthusiasm of training entities and moving towards a socialized and diversified training system [7].

## 5. Conclusion

The integration of sports and education is a necessary path for cultivating reserve talents in competitive sports. Under the new situation of deepening amateur training reform, Pingshan District's education and sports departments have formed a tight and efficient system for integrating sports and education through legal frameworks, policy safeguards, organizational guarantees, financial support, management mechanisms, team building, and diversified training measures. This has effectively promoted the development of youth amateur training and quality education in the district to a higher level, achieving remarkable results.

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