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## Unleash education

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Educational reform can precede the reform of the household registration system, says an editorial in *Beijing News*. The following is an excerpt:

The Ministry of Education (MOE) issued a regulation on managing the files of primary and middle school students. Some people interpreted it as saying students could attend schools in any region, regardless of their household registrations. A spokesperson of the MOE rejected this interpretation at a recent press conference.

The spokesperson said setting up a national student-registration network would be a technical measure to enhance the management of information in the interest of keeping accurate records. It will have no impact on guaranteeing the schooling of migrant students.

Obviously the authorities' explanation did not meet public expectations.

But actually students' registrations should not have to match their household registrations. The State has long made it clear that the children of migrant workers should enjoy the right to receive an education, and the governments of the host cities should take the administrative responsibility to provide it.

This means that the State allows students to dissociate their school registrations from their household registrations, at least as long as they are of the ages covered by the compulsory education system.

But the children of migrant rural workers are not the only ones who have had trouble with this policy. Many other school-age children without local household registration have difficulties in securing an education.

Now that a unified school registration information system is to be built, we will have a platform for the construction of a compulsory education system that is under the unified management of the central government. Educational reform disassociated from household registration reform is possible.

Of course educational reform cannot be done by the MOE alone. The central government should manage it. Support with State finances is an indispensable condition.

(*China Daily* September 28, 2007)

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