

# Innovative Development Strategies of High School Art Education from the Perspective of Educational Leadership

Qianxi Liu

School of Education, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom

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**Abstract:** High school art education is not only the core carrier of aesthetic education, but also an important part of quality education. At present, although China's high school art education has achieved a 96.8% national class opening rate (data source: the Ministry of Education's 2023 national report on the development of school art education), it still faces prominent problems such as uneven resource distribution, unbalanced teacher allocation, and rigid teaching models. As a key force in coordinating education reform, educational leadership has a direct impact on the quality of art education in terms of policy implementation, curriculum construction, resource integration and other aspects. Based on the public statistics of the Ministry of Education and the practice cases of art education in many high schools, this paper analyzes the current difficulties in the development of art education in high schools from the perspective of educational leadership, and proposes multiple paths of curriculum innovation, teacher empowerment, resource integration, evaluation reform, and digital-intelligence integration, so as to provide practical solutions for promoting the high-quality development of art education in high schools and help achieve the core goal of "educating people with aesthetics and culture".

**Keywords:** Educational leadership, high school art education, innovative development, aesthetic education practice, resource integration.

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## 1. Introduction

The Work Regulations for School Art Education clearly requires that all senior high schools should open art courses and fully incorporate art education into the students' comprehensive quality evaluation system. As aesthetic education has been promoted as a national education strategy and integrated into the whole process of talent cultivation, high school art education, as a key link in the implementation of aesthetic education, has increasingly highlighted its educational value in cultivating aesthetic feelings, inheriting cultural genes and helping students shape a sound personality. However, from the perspective of practice, in addition to the core problems such as the imbalance of regional development and the lack of educational efficiency, there are also derivative problems such as the lack of matching between the curriculum and student needs, and the lack of innovation in teaching methods [1]. According to the statistical data of the Ministry of Education in 2023, the teacher-student ratio of high school art teachers in counties in Central and Western China is as high as 1:520, far exceeding the reasonable allocation standard of 1:200 (data source: the supporting statistical report of the Ministry of Education's The Opinions on Strengthening and Improving School Aesthetic Education in the New Era); Art courses in some schools still focus on theoretical appreciation, while hands-on courses account for less than 28%, and students' hands-on participation opportunities are limited. As the core ability of coordinating the development of schools, educational leadership covers multiple dimensions, such as the principal's curriculum leadership, the executive power of administrative departments' policies, and teachers' professional leadership. Exploring the innovation path of art education from the perspective of educational leadership can accurately solve key problems such as resource allocation, mode innovation,

mechanism guarantee, and promote the transformation of high school art education from "Popularization" to "high quality", laying a solid foundation for students' comprehensive development.

## 2. Educational Leadership Empowers the Core Connotation of High School Art Education

Educational leadership empowers the core value of high school art education: it not only responds to the needs of the national aesthetic education strategy, but also focuses on the high-quality development goal of art education, which is embodied in the three-dimensional structure of "leading, overall planning and enabling". The core is to break the barriers to the development of art education through scientific decision-making, dynamic coordination and efficient implementation, and fully release its comprehensive aesthetic education value of aesthetic cultivation, cultural inheritance and personality shaping. From the perspective of policy, education leadership is not only reflected in the accurate interpretation and rigid implementation of the national aesthetic education policy, but also requires the education administration department to dynamically adjust the policy implementation path in combination with the regional education resource endowment, address the policy adaptation issues caused by regional differences, and ensure the precise implementation of rigid requirements such as art education class hours, teachers, funds, etc., as emphasized in The Work Regulations for School Art Education, "education administration departments at all levels should establish an art education supervision and evaluation system and regularly carry out special inspections". From the school level, the principal's curriculum leadership directly determines the development direction of art education. It is necessary to

accurately position the development focus of art education in combination with the school situation, balance the relationship between popularization and characteristic development, and specifically cover key measures such as building a hierarchical and classified characteristic curriculum system, optimizing the allocation of teaching resources, and creating an immersive campus art atmosphere [2]. From a practical perspective, educational leadership is embodied in teachers' professional leadership and team cooperation, and teaching effectiveness is improved through normalized teaching and research innovation, interdisciplinary teaching design, and teacher-student co-creation practice, so as to drive students' Deep Participation in artistic creation and cultural inheritance practice [3]. According to the report on aesthetic education work of Shandong Provincial Department of education in 2023, Yiyuan No.2 Middle School's success in achieving 80% student participation in art activities and 100% coverage of art quality assessment is that the school's management has built a complete leadership implementation system of "policy implementation - curriculum design - activity support - Evaluation closed loop", transforming policy requirements into operable curriculum programs and activity plans, and continuously optimizing through normalized supervision and feedback, so that art education can truly integrate into the whole process of daily teaching.

### **3. The Realistic Dilemma and Lack of Leadership in The Development of High School Art Education**

The current development dilemma of high school art education is essentially the external manifestation of the lack and imbalance of educational leadership, and these problems show significant differences between urban and rural areas and regions [4]. In terms of resource allocation, regional differences are particularly significant and far-reaching: according to the data of the Ministry of Education, the average annual investment in high school art education in the central and western counties is less than 48,000 yuan, and some schools even lack basic art classrooms, musical instruments and digital teaching equipment, while the annual investment in some high schools in the eastern developed regions can reach more than 300,000 yuan (for example, Shandong Taishan Middle School has a special fund of 320,000 yuan for art education in 2023); In terms of teacher allocation, the proportion of full-time art teachers in County high schools in the central and western regions is only 76.3%, more than 30% are part-time teachers, and fewer than two annual training sessions, so the improvement of professional ability is limited, which is difficult to meet the diversified learning needs of students. At the level of curriculum implementation, the problems of homogeneity and lag are prominent: Although the opening rate of art courses in general high schools across the country has reached 96.8%, most high schools still focus on traditional music and art appreciation, and the content is out of touch with students' interests and the needs of the times. The cases of developing 23 characteristic school-based courses like Chongqing Jihua Middle School account for less than 18% [5]. In terms of the evaluation mechanism, the utilitarian tendency is obvious and the evaluation dimensions are simplistic: more than 62% of schools still take a single academic achievement as the core evaluation index, ignoring the process cultivation of artistic

literacy and the consideration of students' creativity and practical ability. The root cause of these problems lies in the deficiency of educational leadership: administrative departments' insufficient overall coordination, the lack of dynamic adjustment mechanism of resource allocation; The curriculum leadership of school management is weak, lacking systematic planning and characteristic positioning; Teachers' lack of professional leadership makes it difficult to promote the innovation of teaching content and methods.

### **4. The Basic Principles of Art Education Innovation from The Perspective of Educational Leadership**

To drive the innovation of art education by educational leadership, we need to firmly grasp the four core principles, which not only anchor the essence of aesthetic education, but also conform to the law of high school education practice, so as to ensure that the reform is steadily advancing in the direction of high-quality development. The first is the morality-oriented principle of fostering virtue through education, which closely follows the core goal of art education to "cultivate aesthetic ability, inherit cultural genes, and shape a sound personality", and deeply integrates patriotism, cultural self-confidence, and aesthetic quality cultivation. It is not only integrated into the teaching content, but also throughout the whole process of practice. Chongqing Jihua Middle School combines intangible cultural heritage technology inheritance with red culture story interpretation in paper art courses, so that students can cultivate the feelings of home and country in their hands-on creation, which is a vivid embodiment of this principle [6]. The second is the principle of collaborative development. We should give full play to the role of educational leadership in overall planning and coordination, break down the barriers of the main body of education, and build a "school-family-society-venue" normalized collaborative education mechanism. For example, Shenzhen Academy of Fine Arts and Guan Shanyue Art Museum jointly build a "mobile classroom". Through the two-way interaction of exhibition resources into the campus, expert lectures into the classroom, and student works into the museum, we can truly transform high-quality cultural resources into teaching effectiveness. Third, the principle of adjusting measures to local conditions, based on the regional cultural endowment, the advantages of school teachers and the guidance of students' interests, to avoid blindly following the trend and homogenization development: Yiyuan No.2 Middle School dug into local folk resources to develop paper cutting and dough sculpture courses, and Taishan Middle School built characteristic projects of cloisonné enamel painting and woodcut engraving relying on regional craft characteristics, which not only reduced the cost of curriculum development, but also enhanced students' cultural identity [7]. Fourth, the principle of digital-intelligence integration conforms to the trend of digital transformation of education, empowers the reform of art education with digital-intelligence thinking, and adheres to the core of art and humanities. For example, Shenzhen fine arts school develops "AI+Art" course, and uses digital technology to optimize creative ideas, work presentation and communication, which not only enhance teaching efficiency, but also retains the uniqueness of students' creation, highlighting the practical value of the principal's digital intelligence leadership.

## **5. High School Art Education Innovation Practice Strategy Driven by Educational Leadership**

### **5.1. Curriculum Innovation: Establishing A Three-Level Linkage Characteristic System**

Based on the principal's curriculum leadership, build a three-level system of "national curriculum foundation+school-based curriculum development+practical curriculum empowerment". Strictly implement the compulsory requirement of one class hour per week, and consolidate the foundation of music and art; Develop characteristic school-based courses in combination with regional culture and student needs. For example, Jihua middle school has built 23 interdisciplinary courses in 6 major sectors around paper art to achieve the deep integration of art, literature, history and handicrafts; A fixed practice period is set up once a week to carry out printmaking creation, choral performances and other project-based activities, and learn from the hierarchical path of "foundation creativity improvement" of Shenzhen Academy of Fine Arts to meet the development needs of different students [8].

### **5.2. Teacher Empowerment: Improve The Three-Dimensional Support Mechanism**

Optimize the construction of teachers through the linkage of administration and school management. The proportion of full-time teachers is more than 90% by reference to the practice of Yiyuan No. 2 middle school; Establish the normalized training of "teaching and research activities, famous expert lectures, and inter-school exchanges", and promote the experience of annual skill training for all staff of Taishan Middle School and 30% of teachers' participation in provincial teaching and research; The workload of extracurricular guidance will be included in the performance assessment, and professional title appraisal and promotion will be treated equally with the main subjects, so as to break the prejudice of "emphasizing the main subjects but ignoring the arts" and stimulate the vitality of teachers.

### **5.3. Resource Integration: Building A Diversified Supply Network**

Break down resource barriers with leadership as the link. In terms of hardware, it refers to the standards of Taishan Middle School and is equipped with special classrooms, digital drawing tablets and other equipment; On the software, a linkage network of "campus associations+off campus venues" is built, and the "school-venue curriculum" mode of Shenzhen art school is used for reference to carry out practice teaching in the art museum and intangible cultural heritage museum; Relying on the National Smart Education Platform for primary and secondary schools, build a regional resource sharing database, integrate high-quality courses and cases, cover more than 80% of ordinary high schools, and ensure the supply of resources in weak areas.

### **5.4. Evaluation Reform: Establish A Literacy Oriented Mechanism**

Give play to the guiding role of evaluation leadership, and build a "process+result+characteristics" multiple evaluation system. Comprehensive coverage of artistic quality assessment, from the four dimensions of appreciation, skills,

innovation and participation, with process assessment accounting for no less than 60% [9]; Establish the annual self-evaluation system of the school, focus on the core indicators such as curriculum implementation and teacher allocation, link the evaluation results with resource allocation, assessment, rewards and punishments, and promote the continuous optimization of the quality of art education.

### **5.5. Digital-Intelligence Integration: Creating Immersive Teaching Scenarios**

Rely on forward-looking leadership to promote the integration of technology and art education. utilize VR to restore the creation process of classic works, use AI painting tools to reduce the creation threshold, and build an online work display platform; Strengthen teachers' digital literacy training to ensure that more than 85% of teachers can skillfully use digital tools, so that technology can serve teaching innovation and balance interest and effectiveness.

## **6. The Leadership Guarantee Mechanism for The Innovative Development of Art Education**

### **6.1. Policy Implementation Guarantee**

Education administrative departments at all levels need to strengthen policy leadership, strictly implement the policy requirements such as "school art education work regulations" and "opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and improving school aesthetic education in the new era", incorporate art education into the comprehensive education reform plan, and establish a closed-loop management mechanism of "deployment at the beginning of the year, supervision at the middle of the year, and evaluation at the end of the year". We will implement preferential policies for areas with weak art education resources, narrow the regional gap through special fund subsidies, targeted training of teachers, and assistance from high-quality schools. Referring to the experience of California's Prop 28 policy, we will clarify the rigid standard that art education funds account for no less than 3% of the annual education funds.

### **6.2. Funding Guarantee**

The school management needs to optimize the leadership in the use of funds, establish a special funding system for art education, and clarify that funds are used for equipment purchase, teacher training, activity development, student work exhibitions and other core areas. The practice of Taishan Middle School to invest 320,000 yuan of annual funds in facilities construction and students' art practice activities has reference significance. At the same time, social forces should be encouraged to participate, broaden funding channels through enterprise donations, public welfare cooperation, alumni funding and other ways, provide stable financial support for art education innovation, and alleviate school funding pressure.

### **6.3. Guarantee of Collaborative Education**

Give play to the role of education leadership in overall planning and coordination, and build a collaborative education mechanism of "administrative department leading, school leading, family participation and social support". The school has set up a special management department for art education, which is under the special responsibility of school level leaders to coordinate the curriculum, teachers, resources

and other matters; Through parents' schools, art open days, parent-child art activities and other forms, guide families to pay attention to art education and form a synergy in education; In conjunction with the community, we will carry out activities such as art and Culture Festival, student works tour exhibition, public benefit performance, etc. for example, Jihua Middle School will bring students' paper art works into the community exhibition, so as to realize the social impact of aesthetic education, and let art education go out of the campus and integrate into life [10].

#### 6.4. Supervision, Evaluation and Guarantee

Establish a professional supervision and evaluation system, and establish a supervision team composed of education administrators, art education experts, and front-line backbone teachers to conduct a comprehensive evaluation from the aspects of curriculum implementation, teacher allocation, fund use, and educational effectiveness. The development level of art education will be incorporated into the school running quality evaluation system, directly linked to the assessment of principals and the evaluation of excellent schools. Units and individuals with outstanding performance will be commended and promoted, and those who fail to implement will be rectified within a time limit, forming a virtuous cycle of "supervision-feedback-improvement", which forces the efficient play of educational leadership [11].

### 7. Conclusion

Educational leadership is the core driver to solve the development dilemma of high school art education and promote innovation and transformation. From policy guidance to school practice, from resource integration to mechanism guarantee, the multi-level effectiveness of educational leadership directly determines the quality of art education. Practice has proved that the effectiveness of art education can be effectively improved by strengthening the principal's curriculum leadership, building a characteristic curriculum system, giving full play to the administrative leadership, optimizing the allocation of resources, and activating the innovative teaching mode of teachers' professional leadership. The 80% participation rate of art activities in Yiyuan No.2 middle school, more than 300 domestic and foreign art competition awards in Jihua middle school, and the characteristic school running results of Shenzhen art school all confirm the value of leadership driven reform.

At present, high school art education is in a critical period of transformation from "Popularization" to "quality", and still faces problems such as regional development imbalance, rigid teaching models, and imperfect evaluation mechanism. It is urgent to deepen the construction of collaborative education mechanism and the rational application of digital intelligence

technology with the focus on educational leadership. In the future, we should continue to anchor the core of "aesthetic education", deeply combine the policy requirements, regional characteristics, student needs, and technological empowerment, promote the systematic innovation of art education in the dimensions of curriculum, teachers and resources, and truly make art education an important carrier for cultivating students' aesthetic literacy, innovation ability and cultural confidence. Only in this way can we achieve the high-quality development of high school art education, provide solid support for the comprehensive implementation of quality education and the construction of an educational power, and enable every student to achieve comprehensive development in the edification of art.

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