《外语拟退出统一高考 高考英语改革引热议》

The English test will be removed from China ’ s college entrance exam by 2020, according to details of exam and admission reform revealed by the Ministry of Education. The national college entrance exam, known as the "Gaokao" has been used to evaluate Chinese students for three decades. The Ministry of Education has worked out a plan for reforming exams and enrollment. The Ministry will solicit public opinions before its release.

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Instead, tests will be held several times a year to allow students to choose when and how often they sit the exam so as to alleviate study pressure and change China’s once-in-a-lifetime exam system.

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The plan and suggestions for its implementation will be announced in the first half of next year. It will be piloted in selected provinces and cities and promoted nationwide from 2017. A new exam and admission system will be established by 2020, according to the eduction ministry.

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The decision has aroused a heated discussion among Shanghai educators and parents who doubted the reform would reduce the burden of learning English or if the substitute test could reflect a student’s English skills and help students learn English better.

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“The reform shows China is learning from the West to give students more test-taking chances. But more chances might become more of a burden since Chinese students are likely to repeat the test until they get the highest score,” said Cai Jigang, a professor at Fudan University’s College of Foreign Languages and Literature and chairman of the Shanghai Advisory Committee for College English Teaching at Tertiary Level.

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Yu Lizhong, chancellor of New York University Shanghai, where classes are in English and students are required to have a high standard of English, said the most important aspect of the reform lay in what to test and how to test.

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“As far as I see, the reform doesn’t mean English is no longer important for Chinese students after it will be excluded from the unified college entrance exam,” Yu said. “In a way, English is even more important than before

since the test would only serve as reference, while every college and university, even every major, can have different requirements of a student’s English skills under a diverse evaluation system.”

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Yu said some students will have their study pressure reduced if the major they choose doesn’t need excellent English while others still need to study hard if they want to be among the best students.

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The eduction ministry said the reform would not affect students attending the college entrance exam over the next three years.

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