

## Students get hands-on civics lesson

By CHENG YINGQI  
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Nearly 300 students from well-known high schools presented their proposals on a model political consultative conference on Friday in Beijing.

The conference was part of the activities at a summer camp named 2012 Ameson Chinese Elite Program, which lasts from July 23 to 30.

The camp attracted 260 students from China's most prestigious high schools, and 22 from the United States.

"Most of these outstanding Chinese students have just learned about our country's political system from textbooks, instead of having any participation in the real political process," said Sean Zhang, a member of China Zhi Gong Party and a well-known education expert. "I believe it will be a great help for them to understand China's political system through the model political consultative conference."

"As for the US students, as far as I know, most of them have the wrong belief that China has only one party, so I think it is necessary to give the future US elites a chance to better understand our political development."

Mary Carmack, 18, from the US, said: "I had never heard of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, though I have heard about the National People's Congress. In the summer camp, a speaker gave us a lecture on how the NPC and CPPCC work, which

is very interesting."

The CPPCC serves as a key mechanism for multiparty cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the Communist Party of China and a major manifestation of socialist democracy.

At present, the CPPCC consists of representatives of the CPC and non-communist parties, and its main functions are to conduct political consultation, exercise democratic supervision and participate in the discussion and the handling of State affairs.

The model political consultative conference was designed after the framework of the CPPCC with students filing proposals after investigating a social problem they are concerned with.

Students were divided into 10 groups, and each group selects a topic the members are most interested in and carries out investigation under the guidance of teachers.

"This is the first time that I have participated in this kind of activity, and I think it is really amazing," said Sun Peigen, 17, from Nantong Middle School in Jiangsu province. Sun's group decided to file a proposal on food safety.

"Although the government had issued enough laws and regulations on food safety, we find shocking food safety incidents constantly and everyone has to worry about the food on their table every day."

"I think the reason is that the responsible departments are



ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

**Amelia Dmowska and Rakesh Goli, high school students from the United States, deliver a presentation on a proposal to standardize English signs at public places during a model political consultative conference in Beijing on Friday.**

passing the buck, so we want to file a proposal to clarify the responsibility of different government bodies," Sun said.

Wang Zhe, 17, from the High School attached to Northeast Normal University in Jilin province, said: "Although all my classmates are busy preparing next year's college entrance exam this summer and I am spending a week here, I think I am learning more than at any time I was at school."

"In the past, I thought that social problems are not the business of high school students like me. But now I have learned that we high school students can form a very strong force and

act as participants to make our society better."

Lica Li, chief representative of the China Office of Ameson Education and Culture Exchange Foundation, said: "After their research, I find the students change their minds — they understand the social problem better, they stop blaming, they know the complexity and they start searching for solutions."

The students gave presentations on their proposals from Friday to Sunday, and CPPCC members and education experts will choose one of the 10 proposals, which is likely to be submitted to next year's NPC and CPPCC sessions.

## Reform would make gaokao only one factor

By CHENG YINGQI  
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Gaokao, the all-important Chinese national college entrance examination, might become just one of the key admission criteria, as policymakers and educators advocate more rounded development of students.

Chinese universities should separate student enrollment from the gaokao, said Tan Songhua, who sits on the National Education Advisory Committee and is a key architect of the gaokao system.

"If we can separate the examination and recruitment processes, with the gaokao scores serving only as a reference for university administrators, colleges can set their own criteria for enrollment," he said.

In doing so, China will also be able to make the exam department more professional in providing test services, Tan told a group of teachers from China and the United States at a gathering in Beijing on July 23.

China holds the national exam once a year. Sixteen of the 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities use test papers provided by local education authorities, while others use a unified national exam.

After the exam, students' scores are sent to province-level education departments, which are in charge of scoring and distributing students' materials to colleges according to their rankings.

At present, the most important criterion for selecting students is the admission scores, but with the reform, the "glory of high scores" will recede, Tan said.

Tan also suggested a number of measures for the reform, including improving the uniformity of question difficulty of the exam, developing new channels for college admission, using variable criteria in the assessment of students, encouraging colleges to set individualized admission criteria and high-school principals to recommend out-

standing students directly to college.

However, Tan conceded that while some pilot projects are already under way, full-scale changes will need time because China's gaokao is in the middle of reform and is still changing.

But the heads of some of China's finest high schools that produce the highest gaokao scores applaud his ideas.

"Competing for high-score holders is not what a world-class university should do, because it is not the students' score, but their academic achievement that makes a university outstanding," said Liu Changming, principal of Beijing No 4 High School.

"I do not want my students to regard exam scores as everything," said Zhang Zhimin, principal of Shanghai Gezhi High School, who also attended the seminar organized by the Ameson Education and Culture Exchange Foundation.

"I want them first to be healthy and virtuous, then concerned about school performance."

## More than 30 deer released to appease China's tigers

By WUYONG  
and HAN JUNHONG  
in Wangqing, Jilin

More than 30 captive red and sika deer were released into the wild on Sunday in Northeast China's Wangqing Nature Reserve, in a bid to reestablish the food chain for wild Siberian tigers.

The release is part of a tiger recovery trial project run by the World Wild Fund for Nature and the Forestry Department of Jilin Province. It aims to repopulate the area where China's few remaining tigers live with desirable prey, a crucial first step in improving living conditions of the endangered big cat.

Over the past 50 years the Siberian tiger population in China dropped from an estimated 200, to just 15 last year, due to massive pressure from deforestation, economic development and poaching. However, more than 500 wild tigers live across the border in Russia, according to WWF.

A recent WWF-backed survey found that lack of prey was a major hurdle in supporting the settlement of tigers in Northeast China. The same survey found that the number of ungulate animals in the Changbai Mountain area, especially favored prey such as red deer and sika deer, is too low

**There is very little prey for the 15 wild Siberian tigers now living in Changbai Mountain ... increasing the breeding population of the prey will restore the food supply chain and help attract the settlement of Siberia tigers in the long run."**

FAN ZHIYONG  
DIRECTOR OF WWF CHINA'S SPECIES PROGRAM

to support the recovery of the Siberian tiger population.

"There is very little prey for the 15 wild Siberian tigers now living in Changbai Mountain, which limits the growth of tiger numbers in China. We believe that releasing deer will help recovery efforts. Increasing the breeding population of the prey will restore the food supply chain and help attract the settlement of Siberia tigers in the long run," said Fan Zhiyong, director of WWF China's species program.

Fan said WWF will not stop working on this project until wild tigers have an adequate

food supply.

WWF's survey found the density of red deer and wild boar is only 0.3 per square kilometer on Changbai Mountain, less than half the number in neighboring Russia's Far East region that has a far healthier tiger population.

Jiang Guangshun, a senior researcher from Northeast Forestry University, who has engaged in wild tiger research for decades, had high praise for the project.

"It is a great chance for China to attract wild tigers back home because we have not seen them since the 1970s. And we want them to settle down in China, not roam around the border," said Jiang.

He is also backed by Zhu Jiang, head of WWF China's Siberian tiger population. Zhu told China Daily that this initial trial would help create the conditions needed to support the survival of at least one female tiger in the Wangqing area. The presence of a tigress can help in getting tigers to settle in an area.

Siberian tigers mainly live in East Russia, Northeast China and mountainous areas in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

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ZHANG KE / FOR CHINA DAILY

**Above: Personnel from the World Wild Fund for Nature and the Forestry Department of Jilin Province open a fence to release deer into the wild at Wangqing Nature Reserve in Jilin on Sunday.**



ZENG MING / FOR CHINA DAILY

**Left: A red deer was returned to the wild at Wangqing Nature Reserve on Sunday as part of a tiger recovery project.**

### Beijing Huiyuan Media Village Apartment



Beijing Huiyuan Media Village (Huiyuan Service Apartment) is located in the central area of the business district of the Olympic and Asian Games villages, about 500 meters away from the National Stadium (the Bird's Nest). As the media village of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, it was home to more than 1,000 Chinese and foreign journalists. It offers a number of different varieties of apartments. Spacious and well-lit, they have ample facilities and furnishings and are suitable for residential or business use. Businesses may be registered here and it is ideal for individual business or tourist customers.

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## Shanghai netizens log on to free wifi on city streets

By WANG ZHENGHUA  
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Shanghai's financial center has moved one step closer to its goal of building an "intelligent city" by offering free wifi services at 30 public venues.

Shanghai residents can now log onto "i-shanghai" to access free wireless at railway stations, ports, hospitals, exhibition centers and a number of popular scenic spots such as Xintiandi and Yuyuan Garden.

Users are able to enjoy two-hours of free Internet access

every day.

The service is part of a program to turn Shanghai into an "intelligent city", and has been launched by the municipal government together with the country's three major telecom operators, China Mobile, China Unicom and China Telecom.

According to the plan, Shanghai will expand the WLAN services to 300 major public places across the city by the end of this year, covering public transportation hubs, parks, green belts, scenic spots, culture venues, waiting areas of hospitals, rest areas of commercial zones as well as

the service areas of administration buildings.

The number of areas with free wifi will grow to 450 by the end of 2013, the municipal government said.

A report released by the China Internet Network Information Center on July 19 showed the number of Chinese people accessing the Internet via mobile devices had increased to a high of 388 million by the end of June. The total number of Chinese Web users stood at 538 million in the first half.

In Shanghai, the number of cell phone users surpassed 30 million by the end of June,

with 5.6 million of them using 3G services.

There are 13,500 WLAN access points across the city, and Shanghai Municipal Commission of Economy and Information said all the Internet-related indexes are leading the country.

Yet on Sunday, many residents approached by China Daily said they were either not aware of the free wifi services, or found the service unreliable and occasionally difficult to access.

"I happened to find the signal, tried to log on and succeeded," said Mei Xiaohao, who works near the city's Xin-

tiandi, an affluent entertainment area in Shanghai. "The speed is satisfying."

But China Daily reporters found that not all parts of Xintiandi was covered by i-shanghai, and the signal could be very weak or even disappear outside the center of the area.

At the Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Center, there was no clear logo to inform the public of the free wifi, but the signal was much faster and more stable compared with Xintiandi, even enabling users to watch online videos.

Li Xiuhui contributed to this story.