



it caused a firestorm of criticism. In response, the local government in Macheng, which oversees the area including Shunhe, said it had already sent 100 desks to help out, and committed over \$600,000 to close the budget shortfall.

But people are still asking why it took a media report to get officials to pay attention to this basic government function and questioned whether they would really see more money in local budgets.

“I would rather believe there is a ghost in the world than governments' promises,” one commenter wrote in to the Changjiang Times update that the local government would add more money to the school budget.

Another chimed in, “The project funding has to be transparent, otherwise it is not even enough money to spend on officials' drinks...”

When NBC called Xiang Mingxiu, the only teacher at Changchong Village primary school in Shunhe, she confirmed that some progress had been made –10 desks had been sent to her school. (The other 90 desks the local government said had been sent were apparently distributed to other local schools).

“The desk issue has been solved,” Xiang said. But, she was quick to point out that other problems remained. “We need a way to repair our classrooms. All of the windows are broken and the ceilings and walls are covered in holes.”

The government may not pay for the windows, but at least a few of the students in her school won't be expected to bring their own desk from home.

**Notes on my thoughts, reactions and questions as I read:**



Wang Zheng/ Courtesy Changjiang Times

A school boy listens attentively at a coffee table that his family brought from home to his school.

**A. Comprehension questions – answers must be written in complete sentences**

1. *List four items Chinese children were expected to bring to school.*
2. *How many teachers are there at the primary school described in the article?*
3. *From what American news agency did your instructor borrow this article?*
4. *From what Chinese news agency did the American's borrow the article?*
5. *Name two other issues aside from the lack of school supplies that the Chinese children face each day.*

8.RL.1

**B. Answer the question in three or more complete sentences.**

*The teacher at the primary school mentions that there are other issues aside from the lack of desks and school supplies. What are some of these issues? What are some possible solutions for this problem?*

8.RL.2

C. Explain the meaning of the following terms as used in the text.

- *BYO:*
- *issue:*
- *Shunhe:*
- *“firestorm of criticism”*

8.R.4

D. Within the text of this article you will find this quote, “people are still asking why it took a media report to get officials to pay attention to this basic government function” (NBC 2012). What is meant by this statement? Why is it that some issues are ignored like this until published by the media?

8.RL.7/8