

**THE DEVELOPMENT
OF
EDUCATION IN JAPAN**

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Part I: OUTLINE OF EDUCATION IN JAPAN

Chapter 1. Fundamental Principles of Education in Japan

Basic principles for education in Japan are provided in the Constitution of Japan enacted in 1946 and in the Basic Act on Education revised in 2006.

The Constitution provides for the basic right and duty of the people to receive education as follows: “All people shall have the right to receive an equal education corresponding to their abilities, as provided for by law. The people shall be obligated to have all boys and girls under their protection receive general education as provided for by law. Such compulsory education shall be free.” (Article 26)

The Basic Act on Education sets forth the national aims and goals of education in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution. The Act defines the aim of education as “to achieve the full development of personality and to nurture individuals with sound minds and bodies equipped with necessary capacities as builders of a peaceful and democratic state and society.” To attain this aim, the Act stipulates the provisions for equal opportunity in education, compulsory education, and school education, etc. More specific provisions relating to the school system, educational administration, financial support and other matters are specified in the School Education Act and many other education laws and regulations which were enacted based on the spirit of the Basic Act on Education. In addition, the Basic Plan for Promotion of Education was formulated to specify basic policies and measures to be taken for the promotion of education.

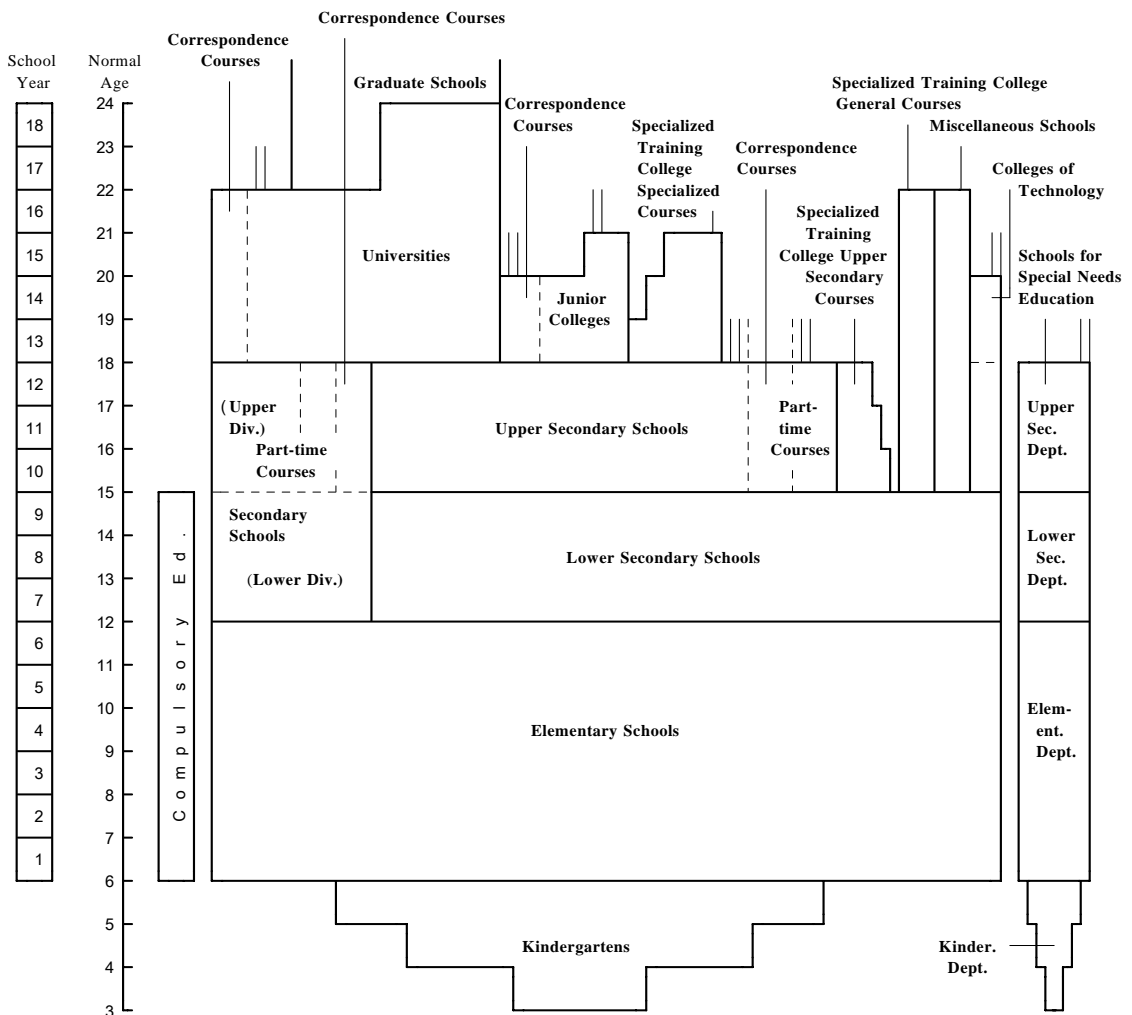
Chapter 2. Educational System in Japan

1. Institutions of Formal Education

Chart I-1 shows the present organization of the school system in Japan based on the basic principles mentioned in Chapter 1.

Chart I-1 Organization of the School System in Japan

Organization of the School System in Japan



Major characteristics of each of the different types of institution of formal education are presented below.

(1) Kindergartens

Kindergartens are non-compulsory schools intended to help infants develop their minds and bodies, and are places that lay foundations in preparation for compulsory and further schooling by providing appropriate learning environments for the sound development of infants. They cater for preschool children aged three and above.

(2) Elementary Schools

All children who have attained the age of six are required to attend elementary school for six years. The elementary school is intended to provide children with elementary general education suited to the relevant stages of their mental and physical development.

(3) Lower Secondary Schools

All children who have completed the elementary school course are required to go on to lower secondary school for three years. The lower secondary school aims to provide children between the ages of 12 and 15 with general secondary education suited to the level of their mental and physical development, based on the education given in the elementary school.

(4) Upper Secondary Schools

Upper secondary schools are non-compulsory schools intended to give lower secondary school graduates advanced general and specialized secondary education suited to their level of mental and physical development and their career options, on the basis of the education given in lower secondary schools. There are three types of upper secondary school courses: full-time, part-time and correspondence. The full-time course lasts three years, while both the part-time and correspondence courses last three years or more. Part-time courses are of two types: day courses and evening courses. The majority of them are offered in the evenings.

In terms of the content of teaching, upper secondary school courses can be classified broadly into three categories: general (intending to give general education), specialized (intending to give specialized education) and integrated (intending to give general and specialized education as electives). General courses offer general education placing emphasis on academic subjects, while specialized courses are designed to provide vocational, technical or other education for those students who have chosen a particular vocational area as their future career. These courses are further classified into several categories: agriculture, industry, business, fishery, home economics, nursing, science-mathematics, etc. Integrated courses comprehensively offer general and specialized education.

In 1988, “credit system” upper secondary schools, which fall under a special category of part-time and correspondence upper secondary schools, were institutionalized. This system was introduced to the full-time upper secondary schools

in 1993. It aims to provide upper secondary school education to a variety of students at any time in accordance with their own needs. They are non-graded schools whose intent is to give these students the qualification for graduation from an upper secondary school course on the basis of the total number of credits. As of May 2007, there were 785 schools of this kind.

(5) Schools for Special Needs Education

Special Needs Education is education for children with disabilities, in consideration of their individual educational needs, which aims at full development of their capabilities and at their independence and social participation. Special Needs Education is carried out in various forms, including in resource rooms, in classes for Special Needs Education (both are in regular schools), and in special schools named "Schools for Special Needs Education." The Schools for Special Needs Education are established for children with comparatively severe disabilities in order to provide them with appropriate and effective education tailored for their special educational needs. They also play an important role by sharing their expertise with regular schools for the purpose of educating children with disabilities there.

(6) Institutions of Higher Education

Institutions of higher education in Japan include universities, junior colleges, colleges of technology and the special training schools that will be discussed later.

a. Universities

Universities are institutions of higher education, which, as a center of learning, conduct teaching and research in depth in specialized academic disciplines, provide students with broad knowledge, and contribute to the development of society by returning the achievements of education and research to society. Universities require for admission the completion of upper secondary schooling or its equivalent. A university has one or more undergraduate faculties or other basic units for educational activities, which offer courses usually lasting four years (six years for veterinary courses, medical courses, dental courses, and some pharmacology courses which aim primarily to develop practical skills associated with clinical medicine).

A university may set up a graduate school aiming to give graduate students opportunities to pursue profound learning and research concerning academic theories and their application. Graduate schools require the completion of an undergraduate course or its equivalent for admission. A graduate school offers masters degree courses (the standard length of which is two years), doctoral degree courses (the standard length of which is five years, except for veterinary courses, medical courses, dental courses, and some pharmacology courses which aim primarily to develop practical skills associated with clinical medicine, and which all last four years) and professional degree courses (standard two-year term of study; however, three years in the case of

law schools). Those students who have successfully completed these postgraduate courses may be awarded a master's, doctoral or professional degree.

b. Junior Colleges

Junior colleges aim to conduct teaching and research in depth in specialized subjects and to develop in students abilities required for vocational or practical life. For admission, junior colleges require the completion of upper secondary schooling or its equivalent. They offer courses lasting two or three years in various fields. A junior college has one or more specialized departments as its units of educational activities.

c. Colleges of Technology

Unlike universities or junior colleges, colleges of technology require for admission the completion of lower secondary schooling. They aim to conduct in depth teaching in specialized subjects and to develop in students such abilities as are required for vocational life. A college of technology has one specialized department or more, and the duration of a course is five years (five and a half years for mercantile marine courses). There are a variety of main courses including those in mechanical engineering, electric engineering, electronic control, information technology, material/bio-engineering, civil engineering, mercantile marine, and management information.

(7) Specialized Training Colleges and Others

In addition to the above-mentioned elementary and secondary schools and institutions of higher education, there are educational establishments called "specialized training colleges" and "miscellaneous colleges."

Specialized training colleges are educational institutions of a new type which were created in 1976. Under the new system introduced in that year, miscellaneous colleges offering systematic educational activities which have certain standard have been legally designated as "specialized training colleges."

Specialized training colleges offer systematic educational activities whose aim is to help students develop the abilities required for vocational and daily life, and also to help improve their cultural standards. These colleges are required to maintain an enrollment of at least 40 students, to offer courses lasting at least one year, and to offer instruction for 800 hours or more per year for each course. The courses at specialized training colleges can be classified into three categories: upper secondary courses which admit a level of graduates from lower secondary school ; postsecondary courses which admit a level of graduates from upper secondary school ; and general courses which have no entry requirements for the candidates. Those specialized training colleges offering upper secondary courses can be called "upper secondary specialized training colleges," while those offering postsecondary courses can be called "professional training colleges."

In particular, specialized training colleges have made steady improvements in

response to various social needs that are becoming increasingly advanced and complicated, and have developed into higher educational institutions to which about 15% of upper secondary school graduates go. In light of this, the title of “Diploma” has been granted since 1994 to those who have completed the courses accredited by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). Since 1999, those who have graduated from specialized training colleges that satisfy certain requirements have been allowed to transfer to universities. Furthermore, based on advancing educational contents and prolongment at study period of professional training colleges, MEXT established in 2005 a system to grant a degree of “Advanced Diploma” and qualification to enter graduate schools to those who have met the requirements of completing the course period of 4 years or longer and 3400 or more course hours.

Miscellaneous colleges offer education similar to formal education, and provide students of varied ages with knowledge and skills required for their vocational and daily life, irrespective of the academic qualifications of entrants.

2. Process for Admission to Schools and Universities

(1) Admission to Kindergartens

The School Education Act prescribes that kindergartens may admit preschool children who have reached the age of three and have not reached the compulsory school age of six.

(2) Admission to Elementary and Lower Secondary Schools

All parents are required by law to have their children attend an elementary school for six years from the beginning of the school year after the children have reached the age of six until the end of the school year in which they reach the age of 12. Further, it is also obligatory for all parents to have their children attend a lower secondary school for three years from the beginning of the school year after the children have completed the elementary school course until the end of the school year in which they reach the age of 15.

(3) Admission to Upper Secondary Schools

All children who have completed lower secondary schooling (compulsory education) are entitled to apply for upper secondary schools or colleges of technology.

Local public upper secondary schools select students on the basis of the scholastic achievement test, given by the Board of Education of the prefecture or municipality running the school, and the records on each applicant presented in the student credentials or other documents submitted by the lower secondary schools. Then the school principal approves the admission of the selected students.

Of lower secondary school graduates of March 2007, 97.7% went on to either upper secondary schools or colleges of technology.

(4) Admission to Universities and Junior Colleges

Admission to universities and junior colleges is granted on a competitive basis to those who have the qualification for entrance to these institutions. Entrants are selected by means of scholastic achievement tests (including the nation-wide examination jointly administered by the National Center for University Entrance Examinations and national, local public and private universities) and other tests assessing students' abilities and aptitudes. Credentials submitted by upper secondary schools are also taken into account. Recently, however, an increasing number of universities and junior colleges have come to admit a certain number of students on the basis of the recommendation from upper secondary school principals, abolishing academic achievement exams in principle, by means of selection using academic records in senior high schools as a main criterion, or by combining detailed screening of the application documents with a careful interview process.

In order to enter school in April 2007, approximately 770,000 upper secondary

school graduates of the previous fiscal year applied for admission to universities or junior colleges. About 690,000 students were successfully admitted to these institutions. Of these entrants, about 90,000 (13%) had graduated from upper secondary schools one or more years ago.

The total number of entrants to specialized training colleges (postsecondary courses) in 2008 school year was about 255,000, of which, about 80,000 entrants (31.4%) are those who graduated from upper secondary schools one or more years ago. The percentage of the total number of entrants accounted for 18.7% of Japan's 18 year-old people.

3. Social Education

In Japan the term “social education” is used as a general term for organized educational activities (including those for physical education and recreation) mainly for adults and young people, other than those provided in the curriculum of formal education.

Activities in social education are carried out in diverse ways on the basis of people’s voluntary and spontaneous desire for learning.

Major social education facilities include “citizens’ public halls,” public libraries, museums, “youth education facilities,” and “women’s education centers.”

(1) Citizens’ Public Halls

Citizens’ public halls are key facilities for social education in the community. They undertake a variety of educational, academic and cultural programs adapted to the practical lives of community people. As of 2005, citizens’ public halls exist in approximately 89% of all municipalities throughout the country. They are carrying out a variety of activities which include organizing different kinds of courses, classes, lectures and exhibitions, lending books, and holding meetings for physical training and recreation. They also open their facilities to the public for their voluntary learning activities.

In October 2005 there were 17,143 citizens’ public halls in Japan. (Of these, 17,134 were run by local governments and the remaining 9 by private organizations.)

(2) Public Libraries

Public libraries are social educational facilities which collect, arrange and keep books and written records to make them available for public use and thus to respond to the public’s needs and demands for educational, cultural, research and recreational activities. In October 2005 there were 2,979 public libraries throughout the country. (Of these, 2,955 were run by local governments and the remaining 24 by private bodies.)

(3) Museums

Museums are intended to be utilized as social educational facilities by the public in their educational, cultural, research and recreational activities, by means of collecting, keeping and displaying materials on history, the arts, folklore, industry, the natural sciences, etc. There are several categories of museums: general museums, history museums, art museums, science museums, zoological gardens, botanical gardens, etc. In October 2005 there were 1,196 museums in Japan. (Of these, 26 were operated by the national government or independent administrative institutions, 667 by local governments, and 503 by private bodies.)

(4) Facilities for Youth Education

a. National Olympics Memorial Youth Center (independent administrative institution)

The National Olympics Memorial Youth Center is a social educational institution aiming at promoting youth education and fostering sound youths by way of providing training for youths and people involved in youth education including youth educational leaders, promoting liaison and cooperation among youth educational facilities and organizations, and granting subsidies to youth educational organizations. The Center plays a role as the only national center in Japan with regards to youth education.

b. Independent Administrative Institution National Youth Houses

Youth houses are public facilities designed to help develop young people with sound bodies and minds by providing them with opportunities to participate in overnight group training and offering the facilities for use in such training.

Some of these youth houses are operated by the national government, and some by local governments. Some of the latter are non-residential facilities located in urban areas for day use. In October 2002, there were 406 youth houses. (Thirteen of them were operated by the national government, and 393 by local governments.)

In April 2001, national youth houses were integrated into a corporation and changed from a national organization to an independent administrative institution.

c. Independent Administrative Institution National Children's Centers

Children's centers are public facilities intended to provide children of compulsory school age with an opportunity to experience activities that cannot be conducted at home or school through overnight group training in nature.

There are both national and local children's centers. In October 2002 there were 339 facilities (14 national centers and 325 local centers).

In April 2001, national children's centers were integrated into a corporation and changed from a national organization to an independent administrative institution.

(5) Women's Education Centers

Women's education centers are social educational facilities that are intended to enhance women's education. They undertake their own programs for the education and training of women and those engaged in women's education, for the exchange of experience and information among these people, for the provision of useful information for them, and for various surveys and research. These centers also make their facilities and equipment available to voluntary groups and organizations of women for educational purposes. Through these activities, women's education centers aim to contribute to the improvement of the quality and capabilities of women, as well as their knowledge and skills. As of March 2005, there were 184 centers of this kind throughout the country; the National Women's Education Center, which is an independent administrative institution, and women's educational centers operated by

local governments (91 centers) and by non-governmental bodies (92 centers) nationwide.

(6) Audio-visual Centers and Libraries

Both audio-visual centers and audio-visual libraries make audio-visual teaching materials available to schools, social education facilities and community people, and also provide them with advisory and other services concerning the use of audio-visual aids in education. As of April 2007 there are 733 audio-visual centers and libraries throughout the country.

Chapter 3. Quantitative Development of Education

1. Number of Institutions and Enrollment Therein

The total number of educational institutions is 60,072 and the total number of enrollments in schools and universities in Japan exceeds 19.9 million, which accounts for 15.6% of the total population of Japan. (School Basic Survey 2007)

2. Proportion of the Age Group Enrolled in Schools and Going On to the Next Stage of Education

Table I-2 shows a historical trend in the proportion of the age group enrolled in educational institutions of each level.

As is indicated in this table, the enrollment ratio for compulsory schools in Japan has always been nearly 100%. Since 1950 the proportion of the age group going on to upper secondary schools steadily increased year by year and reached 96.4% in 2007. The proportion of the age group going on to universities or junior colleges increased to 53.7% in 2007.

Table I-2 Proportion of the Age Group Enrolled in Schools and Going on to the Next Stage of Education

Year	Percentage of 5-years old children enrolled in kindergartens	Percentage of school age children receiving compulsory education		Percentage of students going on to upper secondary schools, etc.			Percentage of upper secondary school graduates going on to universities, junior colleges, etc.				Percentage of students going on to universities (undergraduate courses) or junior colleges (regular courses) (including those taking the entrance examinations for the second year or more)				Percentage of university graduates going on to graduate schools		
		Elementary	Lower secondary	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female		
																%	%
1950	8.9	99.64	99.20	42.5	48.0	36.7	30.3	34.6	17.2	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
1951	---	99.72	99.47	43.6	51.4	39.6	23.6	30.1	12.9	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
1952	12.1	99.72	99.51	47.6	52.9	42.1	21.6	26.9	13.0	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
1953	14.0	99.75	99.91	48.3	52.7	43.7	21.5	25.4	15.7	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
1954	17.1	99.75	99.91	50.9	55.1	46.5	19.7	23.3	14.7	10.1	15.3	4.6	---	---	---	---	---
1955	20.1	99.77	99.92	51.5	55.5	47.4	18.4	20.9	14.9	10.1	15.0	5.0	---	---	---	---	---
1956	21.8	99.78	99.91	51.3	55.0	47.6	16.0	18.7	12.5	9.8	14.7	4.9	---	---	---	---	---
1957	23.6	99.79	99.93	51.4	54.3	48.4	16.1	18.2	13.3	11.2	16.8	5.4	---	---	---	---	---
1958	25.2	99.81	99.93	53.7	56.2	51.1	16.5	19.0	13.3	10.7	16.0	5.2	---	---	---	---	---
1959	26.8	99.82	99.93	55.4	57.5	53.2	16.9	19.6	13.8	10.1	15.0	5.1	---	---	---	---	---
1960	28.7	99.82	99.93	57.7	59.6	55.9	17.2	19.7	14.2	10.3	14.9	5.5	---	---	---	---	---
1961	31.1	99.82	99.93	62.3	63.8	60.7	17.9	20.2	15.3	11.8	16.9	6.5	---	---	---	---	---
1962	33.0	99.82	99.92	64.0	65.5	62.5	19.3	21.9	16.5	12.8	18.1	7.4	---	---	---	---	---
1963	36.4	99.82	99.92	66.8	68.4	65.1	20.9	23.8	17.8	15.4	21.7	9.0	---	---	---	---	---
1964	38.9	99.81	99.91	69.3	70.6	67.9	23.4	26.9	19.6	19.9	27.9	11.6	---	---	---	---	---
1965	41.3	99.81	99.91	70.7	71.7	69.6	25.4	30.1	20.4	17.0	22.4	11.3	4.2	---	4.7	---	1.9
1966	44.2	99.82	99.90	72.3	73.5	71.2	24.5	28.2	20.6	16.1	20.2	11.8	5.2	5.7	2.3	---	---
1967	47.2	99.83	99.90	74.5	75.3	73.7	23.7	26.1	21.1	17.9	22.2	13.4	5.0	5.5	2.4	---	---
1968	49.4	99.83	99.90	76.8	77.0	76.5	23.1	24.7	21.4	19.2	23.8	14.4	4.8	5.3	2.4	---	---
1969	51.8	99.83	99.90	79.4	79.2	79.5	23.2	24.1	22.3	21.4	26.6	16.1	4.9	5.5	2.3	---	---
1970	53.8	99.83	99.89	82.1	81.6	82.7	24.2	25.0	23.5	23.6	29.2	17.7	4.4	5.1	1.5	---	---
1971	56.2	99.83	99.89	85.0	84.1	85.9	26.8	27.6	25.9	26.8	32.5	20.8	3.8	4.4	1.5	---	---
1972	58.3	99.85	99.89	87.2	86.2	88.2	29.2	30.0	28.4	29.8	35.7	23.7	4.0	4.6	1.7	---	---
1973	60.6	99.87	99.89	89.4	88.3	90.6	31.2	31.6	30.8	32.7	38.0	27.0	4.2	4.7	1.7	---	---
1974	61.9	99.89	99.90	90.8	89.7	91.9	32.2	32.2	32.2	35.2	40.5	29.8	4.0	4.6	1.6	---	---
1975	63.5	99.91	99.91	91.9	91.0	93.0	34.2	33.8	34.6	38.4	43.6	32.9	4.3	5.1	1.7	---	---
1976	64.0	99.92	99.92	92.6	91.7	93.5	33.9	32.8	35.1	38.6	43.3	33.6	4.4	5.2	1.6	---	---
1977	64.1	99.93	99.93	93.1	92.2	94.0	33.2	32.2	34.3	37.7	41.9	33.3	4.2	5.0	1.6	---	---
1978	64.1	99.94	99.94	93.5	92.7	94.4	32.8	31.9	33.7	38.4	43.1	33.5	4.0	4.7	1.6	---	---
1979	64.4	99.98	99.98	94.0	93.0	95.0	31.9	30.5	33.4	37.4	41.5	33.1	3.8	4.5	1.6	---	---
1980	64.4	99.98	99.98	94.2	93.1	95.4	31.9	30.3	33.5	37.4	41.3	33.3	3.9	4.7	1.6	---	---
1981	64.4	99.98	99.99	94.3	93.2	95.4	31.4	29.7	33.1	36.9	40.5	33.0	4.1	4.9	1.7	---	---
1982	64.0	99.99	99.98	94.3	93.2	95.5	30.9	28.9	32.8	36.3	39.8	32.7	4.5	5.3	2.1	---	---
1983	63.8	99.99	99.99	94.0	92.8	95.2	30.1	27.7	32.4	35.1	37.9	32.2	4.9	5.8	2.1	---	---
1984	63.9	99.99	99.99	93.9	92.8	95.0	29.6	26.6	32.5	35.6	38.3	32.8	5.2	6.2	2.3	---	---
1985	63.7	99.99	99.99	93.8	92.8	94.9	30.5	27.0	33.9	37.6	40.6	34.5	5.5	6.5	2.5	---	---
1986	63.6	99.99	99.98	93.8	92.8	94.9	30.3	26.3	34.1	34.7	35.9	33.5	5.7	6.7	2.8	---	---
1987	63.6	99.99	99.98	93.9	92.8	95.0	31.0	26.6	35.3	36.1	37.1	35.1	6.0	7.1	2.9	---	---
1988	63.7	99.99	99.99	94.1	92.9	95.3	30.9	25.6	36.1	36.7	37.2	36.2	6.0	7.3	2.7	---	---
1989	64.0	99.99	99.99	94.1	93.0	95.3	30.6	24.5	36.7	36.3	35.8	36.8	6.3	7.6	3.0	---	---
1990	64.0	99.99	99.99	94.4	93.2	95.6	30.5	23.8	37.2	36.3	35.2	37.4	6.4	7.7	3.1	---	---
1991	64.1	99.99	99.99	94.6	93.5	95.8	31.6	24.5	38.6	37.7	36.3	39.2	6.7	8.1	3.3	---	---
1992	64.1	99.99	99.99	95.0	93.9	96.2	32.7	25.1	40.1	38.9	37.0	40.8	7.4	8.8	3.7	---	---
1993	63.8	99.99	99.99	95.3	94.2	96.5	34.5	26.5	42.3	40.9	38.5	43.4	8.2	9.8	4.4	---	---
1994	63.5	99.99	99.99	95.7	94.6	96.8	36.0	27.8	44.1	43.3	40.9	45.9	9.1	10.9	5.1	---	---
1995	63.2	99.99	99.99	95.8	94.7	97.0	37.5	29.6	45.4	45.2	42.9	47.6	9.0	10.7	5.5	---	---
1996	62.8	99.98	99.98	95.9	94.8	97.1	38.9	31.7	46.0	46.2	44.2	48.3	9.0	10.7	5.4	---	---
1997	62.5	99.98	99.98	95.9	94.8	97.0	40.6	34.4	46.8	47.3	45.8	48.9	8.8	10.6	5.3	---	---
1998	62.3	99.98	99.98	95.9	94.8	97.0	42.4	37.2	47.6	48.2	47.1	49.4	9.0	11.0	5.6	---	---
1999	61.6	99.98	99.98	95.8	94.8	96.9	44.1	40.1	48.1	49.1	48.6	49.6	9.8	12.0	6.0	---	---
2000	61.1	99.98	99.98	95.9	95.0	96.8	45.1	42.6	47.6	49.1	49.4	48.7	10.3	12.8	6.3	---	---
2001	60.6	99.98	99.98	95.8	95.0	96.7	45.1	43.1	47.1	48.6	48.7	48.5	10.3	12.8	6.3	---	---
2002	59.9	99.98	99.98	95.8	95.2	96.5	44.8	42.7	46.9	48.6	48.8	48.5	10.6	13.2	6.4	---	---
2003	59.3	99.98	99.98	96.1	95.7	96.6	44.6	42.6	46.5	49.0	49.6	48.3	11.0	13.8	6.8	---	---

Notes:

1. Based on the "School Basic Survey."
2. Percentage of 5-year-old children enrolled in kindergartens: The percentage represents the proportion of the first grade pupils in each year who have completed a kindergarten course.
3. Percentage of school age children taking compulsory education: The percentage represents the proportion of children taking compulsory education (excluding

non-Japanese children) in the total population of compulsory school age children (the number of children enrolled excluding non-Japanese children + the number of children exempted or temporarily exempted from enrollment + the number of children whose domicile has been unknown for one year or more).

4. Percentage of students going on to upper secondary schools, etc.: The percentage represents the proportion of lower secondary school graduates and graduates of the first course of unified secondary schools who went on to take regular/short courses of upper secondary schools, etc., colleges of technology, or the second course of unified secondary schools (including those taking these courses while also having a job; excluding graduates who failed the entrance examinations and will take them again the following year).

5. Percentage of upper secondary school graduates going on to universities, junior colleges, etc.: The percentage represents the proportion of the graduates from upper secondary schools or the second course of unified secondary schools in March of each year who, in April of the same year, entered universities (including short courses), junior colleges (including short courses) or advanced courses at upper secondary schools, etc. (including those taking these courses while also having a job).

6. Percentage of students going on to universities (undergraduate courses) or junior colleges (regular courses) (including those taking the entrance examinations for the second year or more): The percentage was calculated by dividing each year's number of entrants to universities (undergraduate courses only) and junior colleges (regular courses only) (including those who took the entrance examinations for their second year or more) by the number of those who graduated from lower secondary schools or the first course of unified secondary schools three years ago.

7. Percentage of university graduates going on to graduate schools: The percentage represents the proportion of university graduates in March of each year who, in April of the same year, entered graduate schools (or doctoral courses in the case of those who finished an undergraduate course in medicine or dentistry).

8. The percentage of students going on to upper secondary schools and the percentage of upper secondary school graduates going on to universities, junior colleges, etc. exclude those who are going to take correspondence courses.

3. Enrollment Classified by Sex

Based on the provisions in the Constitution and the Basic Act on Education which guaranteed equal educational opportunity for boys and girls, the proportion of female students advancing to the next stage of education after compulsory education has rapidly increased year by year since 1946.

As is shown in Table I-2, since 1969 the proportion of the age group going on to upper secondary schools has always been higher for female students than for male students.

On the other hand, the proportion of the age group going on to institutions of higher education has always been higher for boys than for girls, although the rate of increase in the proportion for girls has been remarkable. The majority of university students are boys, while the majority of junior college students are girls. Practically all students of colleges of technology are boys, while more or less the same proportions of boys and girls are enrolled in special training schools and miscellaneous schools.

4. Enrollment Classified by Type of Establisher of Schools

In accordance with the provisions of the School Education Act, Japanese schools can be established only by the national, prefectural and municipal governments and non-profit corporations called “school juridical persons.” Educational institutions set up by the national government are called “national schools,” those set up by prefectural or municipal governments “local public schools,” and those set up by non-profit corporations “private schools.” Almost all compulsory schools (elementary schools, lower secondary schools and special needs schools) are established by local governments. (Elementary and lower secondary schools are primarily run by municipal governments and special needs schools by prefectural governments.) On the other hand, private schools play an important role at the levels of kindergartens, upper secondary schools, lower secondary schools and higher education institutions (excluding college of technology). They also play a major part among special training schools and miscellaneous schools. As of 2007, 29.7% of upper secondary school students, 94.1% of junior college students, and 73.2% of university students are enrolled in private institutions. The proportion of national institutions is high among colleges of technology and universities (graduate schools). (School Basic Survey 2007)

5. Enrollment Classified by Type of Course

In Japan the differentiation of courses begins after completing compulsory education (after graduating from lower secondary schools).

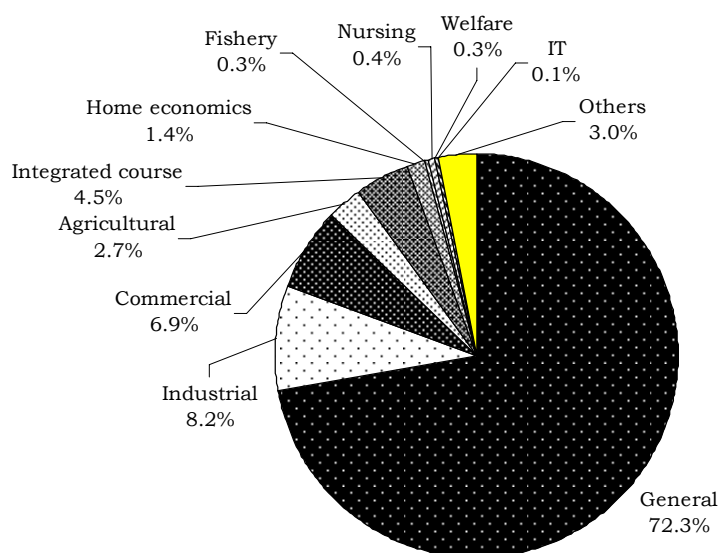
In 2007, 72.3% of upper secondary school students were enrolled in general academic courses, and the rest in specialized or integrated courses.

Chart I-2 shows the percentage distribution of upper secondary school students according to type of course.

Chart I-3 shows the percentage distribution of university and junior college students by major field of study. As regards universities (undergraduate courses), more than a half of all students are enrolled in humanities and social science courses, while nearly one quarter of them are in scientific courses (natural science, engineering, agriculture, medicine, dentistry, etc.). The distribution of students by major fields of study varies among national, local public and private institutions. In national universities the enrollment in humanities and social science courses accounts for only 22.8% of total enrollment, while the proportion of students enrolled in these courses reaches 47.0% in local public universities, and about 59.3% in private universities.

With regard to junior colleges, education and home economics courses take up about one half of all students, followed by humanities and social science courses.

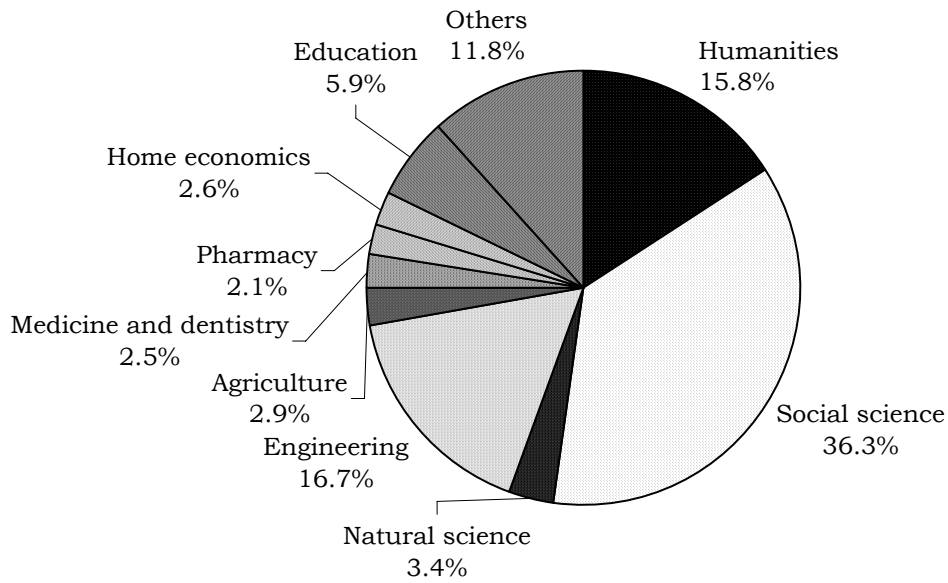
Chart I-2 Percentage Distribution of Upper Secondary School Students by Type of Course, as of May 2007



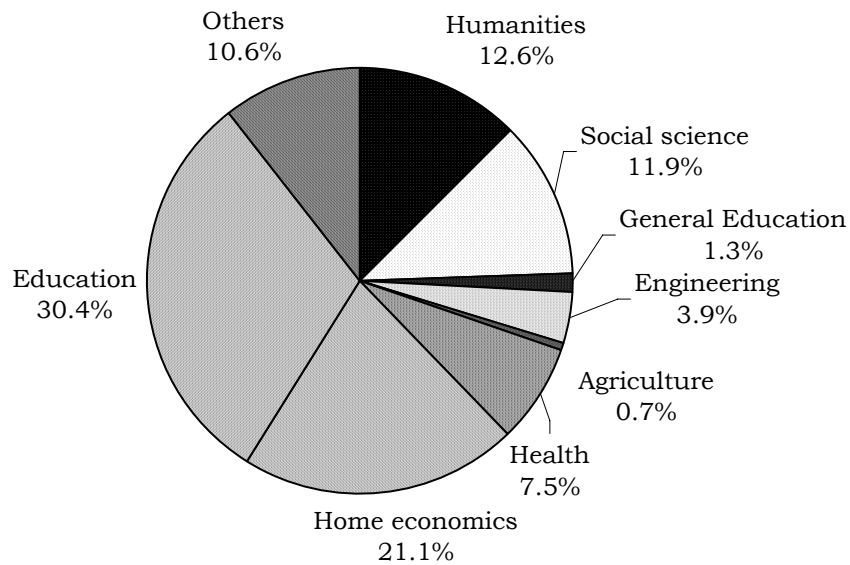
Note: Based on 2007 school year "School Basic Survey."

Chart I-3 Percentage Distribution of University and Junior College Students by Major Field of Study, as of May 2007

[1] Universities (undergraduate course)



[2] Junior Colleges



Note: Based on 2007 school year "School Basic Survey."

6. Facilities for Social Education

Table I-4 presents the number of social education facilities classified by type of facility.

Table I-4 Number of Social Education Facilities Classified by Type of Facility
(as of October 2005)

Type of facility	Total	National	Run by independent administrative institutions	Prefectural	Municipal (including those run by associations)	Private
Citizens' public halls	17,143	-	-	-	17,134	9
Libraries	2,979	-	-	62	2,893	24
Museums	1,196	2	24	152	515	503
Youth houses	380	-	-	72	308	-
Children's centers	311	-	-	96	215	-
Women's education centers	183	-	-	6	85	92
Audio-visual centers and libraries	830	-	-	58	772	-

Note: The numbers of citizens' public halls, Libraries, museums, youth houses (excluding those run by the national government and independent administrative institutions), children's centers, and women's education centers are based on the 2005 school year "Social Education Survey." The numbers of audio-visual centers and libraries are those as of April 2003.

Chapter 4. Curriculum and Textbooks

1. Curriculum in Kindergartens and Elementary and Secondary Schools

(1) General Framework

MEXT lays down the educational contents and the minimum number of school days per year for kindergartens, and the subjects to be offered in elementary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools, as well as the standard number of yearly school hours for each subject in these schools.

MEXT also specifies objectives and standard content of each subject or each area of school activity in the “Courses of Study,” which presents national guidelines for the curriculum for each of the four school levels: kindergarten, elementary school, lower and upper secondary school. The content of the Courses of Study for the respective schools is prescribed and announced by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology based on a report by his/her advisory organ, the Central Council for Education.

Each school organizes and implements its own curriculum in accordance with the provisions of the relevant statutes and the Courses of Study, and also in due consideration of the actual circumstances of the school and the locality in which it is located, as well as of the characteristics of children enrolled and the stage of their mental and physical development.

(2) Curriculum in Kindergartens

The Courses of Study for kindergartens sets forth specific “aims” to be achieved by children by the end of a kindergarten course with regard to their emotions, willingness and attitudes, as well as specific “contents” to be taught to achieve each objective. These “aims” and “contents” are set forth in each of five aspects of children’s development: “health,” “human relations,” “environment,” “language,” and “expression.” “Aims,” are to be achieved through the instruction centered around play.

It is also specified that the standard number of school hours per day and that the minimum number of school weeks per year should be 39, except under special circumstances.

(3) Curriculum in Elementary, Lower and Upper Secondary Schools

MEXT revised the Courses of Study for elementary schools and the Courses of Study for lower secondary schools in March 2008. The new courses of study will be fully implemented in the 2011 school year for elementary schools and in the 2012 school year for lower secondary schools, but will be partially enforced in the 2009 school year as a transitional measure.

Tables I-5 and I-6 present the subjects to be taught in elementary and lower secondary schools, as well as the national standard number of yearly school hours to be devoted to each subject in three different time periods: in the present day, during the transition and after the revision. Meanwhile, the general education subjects, the standard number of credits for each subject, and the compulsory subjects for upper secondary schools are as shown in Table I-7. Each school may decide on the subjects to be taught for specialized secondary education and the number of credits granted for them based on the subjects indicated in the Courses of Study for upper secondary schools and the standard number of credits specified by the establisher of the school.

Table I-5 Standard Number of Yearly School Hours in Elementary Schools (1)

[2008 school year]
[Current State]

Subjects	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	5th year	6th year	Total
Japanese Language	272 (8)	280 (8)	235 (6.7)	235 (6.7)	180 (5.1)	175 (5)	1377
Social Studies	- -	- -	70 (2)	85 (2.4)	90 (2.6)	100 (2.9)	345
Arithmetic	114 (3.4)	155 (4.4)	150 (4.3)	150 (4.3)	150 (4.3)	150 (4.3)	869
Science	- -	- -	70 (2)	85 (2.4)	90 (2.6)	100 (2.9)	350
Life Environmental Studies	102 (3)	105 (3)	- -	- -	- -	- -	207
Music	68 (2)	70 (2)	60 (1.7)	60 (1.7)	50 (1.4)	50 (1.4)	358
Art and Handcrafts	68 (2)	70 (2)	60 (1.7)	60 (1.7)	50 (1.4)	50 (1.4)	358
Homemaking	- -	- -	- -	- -	60 (1.7)	55 (1.6)	115
Physical Education	90 (2.6)	90 (2.6)	90 (2.6)	90 (2.6)	90 (2.6)	90 (2.6)	540
Moral Education	34 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	209
Special Activities	34 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	209
Period for Integrated Study	- -	- -	105 (3)	105 (3)	110 (3.1)	110 (3.1)	430
Total	782 (23)	840 (24)	910 (26)	945 (27)	945 (27)	945 (27)	5367



[2009 and 2010 school year]
[Transition Period]

Subjects	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	5th year	6th year	Total
Japanese Language	272 (8)	280 (8)	235 (6.7)	235 (6.7)	180 (5.1)	175 (5)	1377
Social Studies	- -	- -	70 (2)	85 (2.4)	90 (2.6)	100 (2.9)	345
Arithmetic	136 (4)	175 (5)	175 (5)	175 (5)	175 (5)	175 (5)	1011
Science	- -	- -	90 (2.6)	105 (3)	105 (3)	105 (3)	405
Life Environment	102 (3)	105 (3)	- -	- -	- -	- -	207
Music	68 (2)	70 (2)	60 (1.7)	60 (1.7)	50 (1.4)	50 (1.4)	358
Art and Handcrafts	68 (2)	70 (2)	60 (1.7)	60 (1.7)	50 (1.4)	50 (1.4)	358
Homemaking	- -	- -	- -	- -	60 (1.7)	55 (1.6)	115
Physical Education	105 (3)	105 (3)	90 (2.6)	90 (2.6)	90 (2.6)	90 (2.6)	567
Moral Education	34 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	209
Special Activities	34 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	209
Period for Integrated Study	- -	- -	95 (2.7)	100 (2.9)	75-110 (2.1-3.1)	75-110 (2.1-3.1)	345-415
Foreign Language Activities	- -	- -	- -	- -	0-35 (0-1)	0-35 (0-1)	0-70
Total	816 (24)	875 (25)	945 (27)	980 (28)	980 (28)	980 (28)	5576

The shaded parts indicate the ones different from the current state



[After 2011 school year]
[New Courses]

Subjects	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	5th year	6th year	Total
Japanese Language	306 (9)	315 (9)	245 (7)	245 (7)	175 (5)	175 (5)	1461
Social Studies	- -	- -	70 (2)	90 (2.6)	100 (2.9)	105 (3)	365
Arithmetic	136 (4)	175 (5)	175 (5)	175 (5)	175 (5)	175 (5)	1011
Science	- -	- -	90 (2.6)	105 (3)	105 (3)	105 (3)	405
Life Environment	102 (3)	105 (3)	- -	- -	- -	- -	207
Music	68 (2)	70 (2)	60 (1.7)	60 (1.7)	50 (1.4)	50 (1.4)	358
Art and Handcrafts	68 (2)	70 (2)	60 (1.7)	60 (1.7)	50 (1.4)	50 (1.4)	358
Homemaking	- -	- -	- -	- -	60 (1.7)	55 (1.6)	115
Physical Education	105 (3)	105 (3)	105 (3)	105 (3)	90 (2.6)	90 (2.6)	597
Moral Education	34 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	209
Special Activities	34 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	209
Period for Integrated Study	- -	- -	70 (2)	70 (2)	70 (2)	70 (2)	280
Foreign Language Activities	- -	- -	- -	- -	35 (1)	35 (1)	70
Total	850 (25)	910 (26)	945 (27)	980 (28)	980 (28)	980 (28)	5645

The shaded parts indicate the ones different from the transitional period
Figure in the () show the number of school hours.

Notes:

- (1) One school hour lasts 45 minutes.
- (2) "Special activities" include "class activities," pupils' councils, club activities, and "school events." In this table, however, the number of hours for special activities indicates that for "class activities" only. Each school will allot an appropriate number of hours.

Table I-6 Standard Number of Yearly School Hours in Elementary Schools

[2008 school year] [Current Status]				
Subjects	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	Total
Japanese Language	140 (4)	105 (3)	105 (3)	350
Social Studies	105 (3)	105 (3)	85 (2.4)	295
Mathematics	105 (3)	105 (3)	105 (3)	315
Science	105 (3)	105 (3)	80 (2.3)	290
Music	45 (1.3)	35 (1)	35 (1)	115
Fine Arts	45 (1.3)	35 (1)	35 (1)	115
Health and Physical Education	90 (2.6)	90 (2.6)	90 (2.6)	270
Industrial Arts and Homemaking	70 (2)	70 (2)	35 (1)	175
Foreign Language	105 (3)	105 (3)	105 (3)	315
Moral Education	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	105
Special Activities	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	105
Elective Subjects	0-30 (0-0.9)	50-85 (1.4-2.4)	105-165 (3-4.7)	155-280
Period for Integrated Study	70-100 (2-2.9)	70-105 (2-3)	70-130 (2-3.7)	210-335
Total	980 (28)	980 (28)	980 (28)	2940

[2009 school year] [Transition Period]				
Subjects	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	Total
Japanese Language	140 (4)	105 (3)	105 (3)	350
Social Studies	105 (3)	105 (3)	85 (2.4)	295
Mathematics	140 (4)	105 (3)	105 (3)	350
Science	105 (3)	105 (3)	105 (3)	315
Music	45 (1.3)	35 (1)	35 (1)	115
Fine Arts	45 (1.3)	35 (1)	35 (1)	115
Health and Physical Education	90 (2.6)	90 (2.6)	90 (2.6)	270
Industrial Arts and Homemaking	70 (2)	70 (2)	35 (1)	175
Foreign Language	105 (3)	105 (3)	105 (3)	315
Moral Education	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	105
Special Activities	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	105
Elective Subjects	0-15 (0-0.4)	50-85 (1.4-2.4)	80-140 (2.3-4)	130-240
Period for Integrated Study	50-65 (1.4-1.9)	70-105 (2-3)	70-130 (2-3.7)	190-300
Total	980 (28)	980 (28)	980 (28)	2940

The shaded parts indicate the ones different from the current state.

[2010 school year] [Transition Period]				
Subjects	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	Total
Japanese Language	140 (4)	105 (3)	105 (3)	350
Social Studies	105 (3)	105 (3)	85 (2.4)	295
Mathematics	140 (4)	105 (3)	140 (4)	385
Science	105 (3)	140 (4)	105 (3)	350
Music	45 (1.3)	35 (1)	35 (1)	115
Fine Arts	45 (1.3)	35 (1)	35 (1)	115
Health and Physical Education	90 (2.6)	90 (2.6)	90 (2.6)	270
Industrial Arts and Homemaking	70 (2)	70 (2)	35 (1)	175
Foreign Language	105 (3)	105 (3)	105 (3)	315
Moral Education	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	105
Special Activities	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	105
Elective Subjects	0-15 (0-0.4)	15-50 (0.4-1.4)	45-105 (1.3-3)	60-170
Period for Integrated Study	50-65 (1.4-1.9)	70-105 (2-3)	70-130 (2-3.7)	190-300
Total	980 (28)	980 (28)	980 (28)	2940

[2011 school year] [Transition Period]				
Subjects	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	Total
Japanese Language	140 (4)	105 (3)	105 (3)	350
Social Studies	105 (3)	105 (3)	85 (2.4)	295
Mathematics	140 (4)	105 (3)	140 (4)	385
Science	105 (3)	140 (4)	140 (4)	385
Music	45 (1.3)	35 (1)	35 (1)	115
Fine Arts	45 (1.3)	35 (1)	35 (1)	115
Health and Physical Education	90 (2.6)	90 (2.6)	90 (2.6)	270
Industrial Arts and Homemaking	70 (2)	70 (2)	35 (1)	175
Foreign Language	105 (3)	105 (3)	105 (3)	315
Moral Education	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	105
Special Activities	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	105
Elective Subjects	0-15 (0-0.4)	15-50 (0.4-1.4)	10-70 (0.3-2)	25-135
Period for Integrated Study	50-65 (1.4-1.9)	70-105 (2-3)	70-130 (2-3.7)	190-300
Total	980 (28)	980 (28)	980 (28)	2940

The shaded parts indicate the ones different from the current state.

[2012 school year]

[New Courses]

Subjects	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	Total
Japanese Language	140 (4)	140 (4)	105 (3)	385
Social Studies	105 (3)	105 (3)	140 (4)	350
Mathematics	140 (4)	105 (3)	140 (4)	385
Science	105 (3)	140 (4)	140 (4)	385
Music	45 (1.3)	35 (1)	35 (1)	115
Fine Arts	45 (1.3)	35 (1)	35 (1)	115
Health and Physical Education	105 (3)	105 (3)	105 (3)	315
Industrial Arts and Homemaking	70 (2)	70 (2)	35 (1)	175
Foreign Language	140 (4)	140 (4)	140 (4)	420
Moral Education	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	105
Special Activities	35 (1)	35 (1)	35 (1)	105
Period for Integrated Study	50 (14)	70 (2)	70 (2)	190
Total	1015 (29)	1015 (29)	1015 (29)	3045

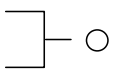
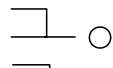
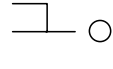



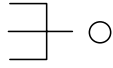
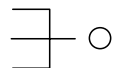
The shaded parts indicate the ones different from the transitional period

Note: Figure in the () show the number of school hours.

Notes:

- (1) One school hour lasts 50 minutes.
- (2) "Special activities" include "class activities," students' councils, and "school events." In this table, however, the number of hours for special activities indicates that for "class activities" only. Each school will allot an appropriate number of hours

Table I-7 General Education Subjects in Upper Secondary Schools, the Standard Number of Credits for Each Subject, and Compulsory Subjects

Subject Area	Subject	Standard Number of Credits	Compulsory Subjects for all students
Japanese Language	Japanese Language Expression I	2	
	Japanese Language Expression II	2	
	Integrated Japanese Language	4	
	Contemporary Japanese Language	4	
	Classics	4	
	Appreciation of Classics	2	
Geography and History	World History A	2	
	World History B	4	
	Japanese History A	2	
	Japanese History B	4	
	Geography A	2	
	Geography B	4	
Civics	Contemporary Society	2	Either "contemporary society" or "ethics" + "politics and economy"
	Ethics	2	
	Politics and Economy	2	
Mathematics	Basic Mathematics	2	
	Mathematics I	3	
	Mathematics II	4	
	Mathematics III	3	
	Mathematics A	2	
	Mathematics B	2	
	Mathematics C	2	
Science	Basic Science	2	 <p>Two subjects (including at least one of "Basic Science," "Integrated Science A," or "Integrated Science B")</p>
	Integrated Science A	2	
	Integrated Science B	2	
	Physics I	3	
	Physics II	3	
	Chemistry I	3	
	Chemistry II	3	
	Biology I	3	
	Biology II	3	
	Earth Science I	3	
	Earth Science II	3	
Health and Physical Education	Physical Education	7-8	
	Health	2	
Art	Music I	2	
	Music II	2	
	Music III	2	
	Fine Art I	2	
	Fine Art II	2	
	Fine Art III	2	
	Crafts Production I	2	
	Crafts Production II	2	
	Crafts Production III	2	
	Calligraphy I	2	
	Calligraphy II	2	
	Calligraphy III	2	
	Foreign Language	Oral Communication I	
Oral Communication II		4	
English I		3	
English II		4	
Reading		4	
Writing		4	
Home Economics	Basic Home Economics	2	
	Integrated Home Economics	4	
	Home Life Techniques	4	
Information	Information A	2	
	Information B	2	
	Information C	2	

Schools may teach additional subjects that are not in this table.

Homeroom Activities	35 school hours or more per year
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Period of Integrated Study

105-210 hours allotted by the time of graduation; 3-6 credits can be granted.
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Notes:

- (1) One school hour lasts 50 minutes.
- (2) Thirty-five school hours of lesson per school year are counted as one credit.
- (3) The number of credits to be earned by the time of graduation is 74 or more.
- (4) "Special activities" include homeroom activities, students' councils, and school events. Each school will allot an appropriate number of hours to special activities other than homeroom activities.

(4) Education at Special Needs Schools

Special needs schools provide education at the kindergarten, elementary school, lower and upper secondary school levels and offer special guidance in accordance with the level of disability of each child.

Also, the system is flexible enough to enable organizing educational curriculums in accordance with the children's levels of disability.

2. Textbooks for Elementary and Secondary Schools

(1) Examination and Adoption of Textbooks

In accordance with the provisions of the School Education Act, all elementary and secondary schools in Japan are required to use textbooks in the classroom teaching of each subject. As a principle, textbooks to be used in schools must be either those approved by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, or those compiled by MEXT itself. As a matter of fact, most of the textbooks currently used in schools are those published by commercial publishers and approved by the Minister. Textbooks compiled by MEXT itself are limited to those for certain vocational subjects in upper secondary schools and those for special needs schools, both of which, due to a very limited market existing, no commercial publisher would be willing to publish.

The “examination” of textbooks means that, after examining draft textbooks written and compiled by the private sector, the Minister approves those which are deemed suitable as textbooks to be used in schools.

The usual procedure for such examination of textbooks is as below. Either the author or the publisher who wishes to publish a textbook applies to the Minister for the examination of the proposed textbook. The draft of the textbook is submitted to the Minister for the examination by the Textbook Approval and Research Council, an advisory body to the Minister, and also for the examination by both Senior Specialists for Textbooks (who are officers at MEXT) and specialist members of the Council (who are university teachers, school teachers or others) as required. The results of the examination by the Senior Specialists and specialist members are reported to the Council for its consideration. The Council makes its judgment as to whether each proposed textbook is suitable for use in schools according to the Textbook Examination Standard , after due consideration of these reports as well as the results of the examination by the Council members themselves. Based on the report submitted by the Council, the Minister approves or disapproves each of the proposed textbooks.

During the 2008 school year, 1,353 approved textbooks, as well as 240 textbooks published by MEXT, are used in elementary, lower secondary, upper secondary schools, and special needs schools.

The decision on which textbooks are to be used by the students in respective schools is called adoption of textbooks. The authority of adoption of textbooks for local public schools rests with the local Board of Education of the municipality or prefecture setting up these schools. On the other hand, such authority for national or private schools rests with the principal of each school. For the purpose of deciding on textbooks for municipal elementary and lower secondary schools, a prefecture is usually divided into a number of areas, most of which comprise two or more municipalities. The

municipal Boards of Education within a particular area shall jointly adopt the same textbook for each subject. At present, there are 593 areas in the 47 prefectures of Japan (as of April 1, 2008).

Usually, the same textbooks are to be adopted for elementary and lower secondary schools for four years in a row.

(2) Free supply of Textbooks

With a view to realizing to a greater extent the spirit of the provisions in the Constitution that “compulsory education shall be free,” since 1963 the national government has been supplying textbooks for all subjects free of charge to all children enrolled in compulsory schools; national, local public and private. All costs for the free supply are met by the national government. MEXT’s budget for the free supply of textbooks amounted to approximately 39.4 billion yen in 2008 school year. The average amount of textbook expense per pupil was 3,091 yen for elementary schools, 4,477 yen for lower secondary schools and 5,626 yen for general courses and 6,907 yen for specialized courses of upper secondary schools in the 2008 school year.

Upper secondary school students enrolled in full-time courses buy their own textbooks, while the national government bears part of the textbook purchase costs for students enrolled in part-time or correspondence courses, as well as for students enrolled in upper secondary departments of special schools for the disabled.

3. Curriculum in Institutions of Higher Education

Students in universities (including graduate schools), junior colleges and colleges of technology are required to meet certain credit requirements for the completion of a specific course at these institutions. The optimum standard requirements for credits are specified, as shown in Table I-8, in the respective ordinances of MEXT providing for optimum national establishment standards for the different types of institution of higher education. The content and methods of teaching are at the discretion of individual institutions of higher education.

Table I-8 Standard Credit Requirements for Graduation from (Completion of Courses in) Institutions of Higher Education

Type of institution and course	University						
	Undergraduate course				Postgraduate course		
	Course other than medicine/dentistry/veterinary	Medicine and dentistry	Some pharmacology courses which aim primarily to develop practical skills associated with clinical medicine	Veterinary science	Masters course	Doctoral course	Professional degree course
Length of course	4 years	6 years	6 years	6 years	2 years (1)	3 years (1)	2 years (law school: 3 years)
No. of credits required for graduation	124 credits	188 credits (2)	186 credits (3)	182 credits	30 credits(4)		30 credits (law school: 93 credits)

Type of institution and course	Junior college		College of technology	
	2-year course	3-year course	Course other than mercantile marine course	Mercantile marine course
Length of course	2 years	3 years	5 years	5.5 years
No. of credits required for graduation	62 credits	93 credits (5)	167 credits or more	147 credits or more (6)

(1) Doctoral courses take five years to complete on average. When this period is divided into the first phase (2 years) and the second phase (3 years), the first phase (2 years) is treated as the masters' course. The doctoral course for medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine is four years long. Students with excellent research performance must be enrolled in a master's program for a minimum of one year and in a doctoral program for a minimum of three years.

- (2) Acquisition of some credits can be replaced by taking equivalent course hours, when necessary for the purpose of education.
- (3) Includes 20 credits from practical training conducted at university-affiliated hospitals, other hospitals or pharmaceutical departments, with the aim of developing practical capacities concerning pharmacology associated with clinical medicine necessary for future professional practices as a pharmacist.
- (4) In graduate schools, receiving necessary research guidance and passing the examinations and degree thesis review conducted by the relevant graduate school, is required in addition to gaining 30 credits.
- (5) For the three-year junior colleges for evening courses, acquisition of at least 62 credits is sufficient.
- (6) Besides this, 12 months of On-the-Ship Training (included in the course term) is required.
- (7) The method of calculating credits for universities/junior colleges is different from that for colleges of technology.

4. School Calendar

Unlike in many other countries, the school year in Japan usually begins on April 1 and ends on March 31 of the following year. This school year corresponds with the fiscal year in this country. In elementary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools, school years are usually divided into three terms: April through July, September through December, and January through March. Some of them adopt a semester system (usually, the first semester comprises April through September and the second one October through March). Institutions of higher education usually adopt a two-semester academic year.

At all school levels, vacations are granted in summer (from around the end of July through August), in winter (from the end of December to early January) and in spring (at the end of the school year). The beginning and ending dates of these vacations are determined by respective boards of education according to each locality and the circumstances of schools.

In general, educational institutions in Japan are closed on Sundays and on the national holidays listed below. Furthermore, a five-day school week was introduced in a phased manner by implementing such a week once a month from September 1992 and twice a month from April 1995. The system has been implemented in a full-fledged manner since April 2002, making every Saturday a no-school day.

New Year's Day:	January 1
Adults' Day:	Second Monday of January
National Foundation Day:	February 11
Spring Equinox Day:	Day of spring equinox
Greenery Day:	April 29
Constitution Memorial Day:	May 3
Children's Day:	May 5
Marine Day	Third Monday of July
"Respect for the Aged" Day:	Third Monday of September
Autumnal Equinox Day:	Day of autumnal equinox
Health-Sports Day:	Second Monday of October
Culture Day:	November 3
Labor Thanksgiving Day:	November 23
The Emperor's Birthday:	December 23

Chapter 5. School Teachers

1. Number of Teachers and Other Personnel by Type of Institution

Table I-9 shows the number of teachers and other personnel working at educational institutions of different types, as of May 2007. In this table “teachers” include school principals, university presidents, teaching staff, professors and other people directly concerned with educational activities, while “other personnel” means those workers concerned with clerical and other work supporting teachers.

Table I-9 Number of Teachers and Other Personnel by Type of Institution
(as of May 2007)

Type of institution	Number of teachers (full-time)			Percentage of female teachers	Number of other personnel (full-time)	Percentage distribution of teachers by establisher		
	Total	Male	Female			National	Local/public	Private
Total	1,326,480	686,972	639,508	48.2	425,364	12.9	42.3	44.8
Kindergartens	111,239	6,943	104,296	93.8	20,570	0.3	22.5	77.2
Elementary schools	418,246	155,859	262,387	62.7	84,990	0.4	98.6	0.9
Lower secondary schools	249,645	146,282	103,363	41.4	33,561	0.7	93.7	5.6
Upper secondary schools	243,953	175,360	68,593	28.1	51,899	0.2	75.5	24.3
Unified secondary schools	1,148	790	358	31.2	157	12.3	47.8	39.9
Special needs schools	66,807	27,813	38,994	58.4	15,357	2.2	97.4	0.4
Colleges of technology	4,453	4,186	267	6.0	2,781	88.7	7.5	3.8
Junior colleges	11,022	5,682	5,340	48.4	5,936	-	8.5	91.5
Universities	167,636	137,113	30,523	18.2	188,876	36.4	7.0	56.6
Special training schools	42,103	20,717	21,386	50.8	17,154	0.4	6.7	92.9
Miscellaneous schools	10,228	6,227	4,001	39.1	4,083	-	0.6	99.4

Note: Based on 2007 school year “School Basic Survey.”

2. Composition of School Teachers in Japan

(1) Number of Teachers Classified by Type of Establisher of Schools

As is shown in Table I-9, the percentage distribution of teachers by type of establisher varies among different types of schools. The majority of teachers at elementary, lower secondary, upper secondary and special needs schools are working at local public schools, while the majority of teachers at kindergartens, junior colleges, special training schools and miscellaneous schools are employed at private institutions.

(2) Number of Teachers Classified by Sex

The percentage distribution of teachers by sex also varies among different types of school (see Table I-9).

The number of female teachers accounts for 93.8% of all kindergarten teachers and 62.7% of all elementary school teachers. At the lower and upper secondary levels, the proportion of female teachers is relatively low: 41.4% at the lower secondary level and 28.1% at the upper secondary level. At the higher education level, the proportion of women teachers is relatively higher (48.4%) for junior colleges, while it is very low for universities and for colleges of technology.

(3) Number of Teachers Classified by Academic Background

Table I-10 gives the percentage distribution of elementary and secondary school teachers by academic background. Teachers who are university graduates account for 87.2% of the elementary school teachers, 93.8% of the lower secondary school teachers, 97.8% of the upper secondary school teachers, and 97.8% of the unified secondary school teachers. It may be added that practically all teachers at institutions of higher education including colleges of technology are university graduates.

Table I-10 Percentage Distribution of Elementary/Secondary School Teachers by Academic Background

(as of October 2007)

Academic background	Elementary school teachers	Lower secondary school teachers	Upper secondary school teachers	Unified secondary school teachers
Graduated from university/graduate school	87.2%	93.8%	97.8%	97.8%
Graduated from junior college	12.5%	6.0%	1.5%	1.8%
Graduated from upper secondary school	0.4%	0.3%	0.7%	0.3%

Note: Based on 2007 school year "School Teachers Survey."

3. Work Load of Teachers

Most kindergarten and elementary school teachers are assigned to single classes, and are responsible for teaching all or most subjects to the class. In elementary schools there are a small number of teachers specializing in each of the practical subjects such as music, arts and handicrafts, physical education and home economics, because teaching these subjects requires special competence for teachers.

Instruction in lower secondary schools is departmentalized to a large extent, and the majority of teachers are specialists responsible for teaching one or two subject areas to several classes of children. Instruction in upper secondary schools is more departmentalized than in lower secondary schools. The greater majority of teachers teach only one subject area or even only one subject.

The maximum number of pupils/students per class for elementary and secondary schools is defined by law. The standard class size is defined as 40. (In May 2007, the national average number of pupils/students per class was 25.7 for elementary schools and 30.2 for lower secondary schools.)

It is required by law that the number of teachers to be assigned to each school be more than the number of classes. In May 2007, the average number of pupils/students per teacher (teachers here include the school principal, the vice-principal, etc.) was 17.1 for elementary schools, 14.5 for lower secondary schools, and 13.9 for upper secondary schools (full-time schools and regular courses of part-time schools). The average number of school hours per week for public school teachers is shown in the Table I-11.

Table I-11 Average Number of School Hours per Week for School Teachers
(National Average of unit hour/week)

	Elementary school	Lower secondary school	Upper secondary school
1965 SY*	31.5 hours	28.0 hours	22.1 hours
SY 2004	18.4 hours	14.9 hours	13.6 hours

*Note SY stands for School Year

4. Development/Certification System and Training for Teachers

Most teachers of elementary and secondary level education are trained at universities (including graduate schools and junior colleges) accredited by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. In 2007, professional graduate schools (Graduate School of Teacher Education) specializing in training teachers were established in an effort to develop teachers with practical teaching skills and capabilities.

In order to become an elementary or secondary school teacher, it is necessary to obtain a teaching certificate from a relevant prefectural board of education, after meeting prescribed requirements. There are three types of teaching certificates: regular certificates (Advanced class, 1st class, 2nd class), special certificates and temporary certificates for each school type. Certificates for lower and upper secondary schools are further divided by subjects. Regular certificates are valid in all prefectures. Table 1-12 shows the minimum requirements for teaching certificates by school types.

A system for renewing educational personnel certificate will be introduced in April 2009. Under this system the regular certificate and special certificate will be valid for 10 years and be renewed after completing certificate renewal course, so that they can acquire the latest knowledge and skills.

Table I-12 Minimum Requirements for Teaching Certificates

Type of certificate		Basic qualification	Minimum number of credits to be earned at university (or junior college) in:					
			Teaching Subjects	Professional subjects	Teaching subjects or professional subjects	Subjects related to special education	Others*	Total
Elementary School teacher	Advanced class regular certificate	Masters degree	8	41	34		8	91
	1st class regular certificate	Bachelors degree	8	41	10		8	67
	2nd class regular certificate	Associate degree	4	31	2		8	45
Lower secondary school teacher	Advanced class regular certificate	Masters degree	20	31	32		8	91
	1st class regular certificate	Bachelors degree	20	31	8		8	67
	2nd class regular certificate	Associate degree	10	21	4		8	43
Upper secondary school teacher	Advanced class regular certificate	Masters degree	20	23	40		8	91
	1st class regular certificate	Bachelors degree	20	23	16		8	67
Special needs school teacher	Advanced class regular certificate	Masters degree, and acquisition of a regular certificate of kindergarten, elementary, lower secondary, or upper				50	8	58

		secondary teacher						
	1st class regular certificate	Bachelors degree, and acquisition of a regular certificate of kindergarten, elementary, lower secondary, or upper secondary teacher				26	8	34
	2nd class regular certificate	Associate degree, and acquisition of a regular certificate of kindergarten, elementary, lower secondary, or upper secondary teacher				16	8	24
Kindergarten teacher	Advanced class regular certificate	Masters degree	6	35	34		8	83
	1st class regular certificate	Bachelors degree	6	35	10		8	59
	2nd class regular certificate	Associate degree	4	27			8	39

Notes:

- (1) "Others" are the Japanese Constitution, physical education, foreign language communication and operation of information devices.
- (2) In addition, there are certificates for nurse teachers.

*1 Special certificate: The special certificate is intended to attract working people who have specialized knowledge and techniques to the teaching profession.

*2 Temporary certificate: A temporary certificate is only granted when a teacher who has a regular certificate is not available for a teaching post.

In order to effectively utilize working people with excellent knowledge and skills in the field of school education in response to the diversification of elementary and secondary education, a system has been established for appointing people who lack educational personnel certificate as part-time teachers (special part-time teacher system). This program originally needed permission from the prefectural Board of Education but the procedures were simplified in 1998 and now it only needs registration.

There is no certification system for teachers at institutions of higher education. The qualification standards for these teachers are specified in the respective ordinances of MEXT providing for national establishment standards for the different types of institutions of higher education.

Regarding the in-service training of elementary and secondary school teachers, a statutory system of one-year induction training for beginning teachers was created in May 1988. The one-year compulsory training for all beginning teachers at all public elementary, lower and upper secondary schools, and school for Special Needs

Education is conducted at the prefectural and municipal levels. In FY 2003, a system was established to provide training to teachers who have reached their 10th year in the teaching profession in order to improve their skills in teaching the content of textbooks and in providing student guidance, according to their individual abilities and aptitude. Teachers are also provided with other training according to their teaching experience, as well as social experience training at private companies. Furthermore, a variety of training programs for developing leaders in school education and for addressing urgent challenges are provided at the Independent Administrative Institution National Center for Teachers' Development which was established in April 2001.

5. Appointment of Teachers

Elementary and secondary school teachers are recruited by competent authorities from among those who hold relevant teacher certificates outlined in the preceding section.

The prefectural Board of Education is not only responsible for the appointment of teachers of prefectural schools (most of which are upper secondary schools), but also responsible for the appointment of teachers and other staff of municipal elementary/lower secondary schools and part-time courses of upper secondary schools within the prefecture based on confidential reports by the respective municipal boards of education. This facilitates the exchange of teachers among different municipalities within the prefecture. The responsibility for the appointment of teachers and other staff of elementary/lower secondary schools and part-time courses of upper secondary schools in major cities designated by government ordinance and the appointment of teachers and other staff of kindergartens and full-time courses of upper secondary schools rests primarily with the municipal Board of Education.

Teachers at private kindergartens, and elementary and secondary schools are appointed by the authority of the corporation establishing the respective schools, while teachers at elementary and secondary schools established by a national university corporation are appointed by the president of the university to which the school is attached.

The procedure for the appointment of municipal elementary and lower secondary school teachers as well as of prefectural upper secondary school teachers is as follows.

Usually, the prefectural Board of Education every year conducts a teacher appointment examination for certified teacher candidates, which comprises written tests in general education subjects, professional subjects and teaching subjects, interviews, essay tests, and practical tests in physical education, fine arts, foreign language, etc.

The prefectural Board of Education appoints a new teacher after comprehensively considering his/her results in the appointment examination, academic performance at university and various social experiences.

Teachers at institutions of higher education are recruited by the appointing authority from among those who satisfy certain requirements specified in the aforementioned ordinances of MEXT for the respective types of schools. The educational abilities and the academic achievements of applicants are duly taken into account.

6. Economic Status of Teachers

The salary scales and the kinds and amounts of allowances for teachers at national educational institutions, who used to be national government employees, had been laid down by laws. However, they are now specified by individual national university corporations since these teachers became employees of national university corporations instead of national government employees when national universities became incorporated in 2004 school year.

Those for teachers at prefectural or municipal educational institutions, who are local government employees, are determined by ordinances of each prefecture or municipality. The salary scales and the kinds and amounts of allowances used to be provided for in prefectural and municipal by-laws based on those for national school teachers, so they were more or less at the same level nationwide. Nevertheless, the system was revised in 2004 school year from one based on the standards of national schools to one in which the prefectures became capable of independently deciding the salary scales and the kinds and amounts of allowances according to the local circumstances based on the duties and the special expertise of the teachers.

The salaries for local public compulsory school teachers are basically paid by the prefectural governments due to their stable financial conditions, but one-third of the amounts are borne by the national government in order to maintain the national level of compulsory education and to secure equal opportunities for education nationwide.

Salaries of private school teachers are determined individually by school juridical persons that have established the respective private schools.

With regard to the salaries of teachers at compulsory educational institutions, the “Law concerning Special Measures for Securing Competent Educational Personnel in Compulsory Education Schools with the Aim of Maintaining and Improving the Level of School Education” provides that necessary preferential measures must be taken for the salaries of teachers compared to the pay standard of general government officials. This Law was aimed at attracting excellent people to the teaching profession, thereby further improving the level of compulsory education. This system is expected to become increasingly important for securing competent teachers as the issues facing schools become increasingly diversified and complicated.

7. Teacher Assessment and Responses to Incompetent Teachers

It is important to assess the capacity and performance of teachers, and to adequately reflect the assessment results in personnel decisions, treatment and training, etc., in order to help teachers improve their qualifications and capacities and to utilize them to the maximum extent possible. To that end, each board of education has tried or implemented a new teacher assessment system which assessed the capacities and performances of teachers in all 64 prefectures and designated cities by the end of 2007.

Meanwhile, boards of education of each prefecture and designated city have developed a framework which provides continuous consultation/training as responses to teachers incapable of giving appropriate guidance, so that incompetent teachers will not teach children.

Furthermore, in order to prevent any teacher scandals, each board of education has given instructions to take appropriate responses through such efforts as requiring teachers to comply with a code of conduct, further improving the recruiting method and training, and implementing stringent disciplinary action when teachers have engaged in any illegal behavior.

Chapter 6. Educational Administration and Finance

1. Educational Administration

The general structure of educational finance both at the national and local (prefectural and municipal) levels is shown in Chart I-4. The nature and main functions of the education authority at each level are summarized below.

(1) Educational Administration at the National Level

The role as a central education authority in Japan is assigned to MEXT. Under the legal provisions, MEXT's missions are: to foster creative people with warm-hearted human nature specifically by advancing education and promoting lifelong learning; to encourage academic, sporting and cultural activities as well as comprehensive progress in scientific technologies; and to carry out properly religious administrative affairs.

As far as educational fields are concerned, the national government makes plans and projects on school education systems and educational administration systems, and provides various kinds of financial assistance including teachers' salaries and funds for developing school buildings and other educational facilities. It also provides instructions and advice on the operation of such facilities.

Schools including national universities, junior colleges, and colleges of technology as well as social educational facilities and cultural facilities such as youth houses, museums and art museums have gradually come to be incorporated as independent administrative institutions since April 2001.

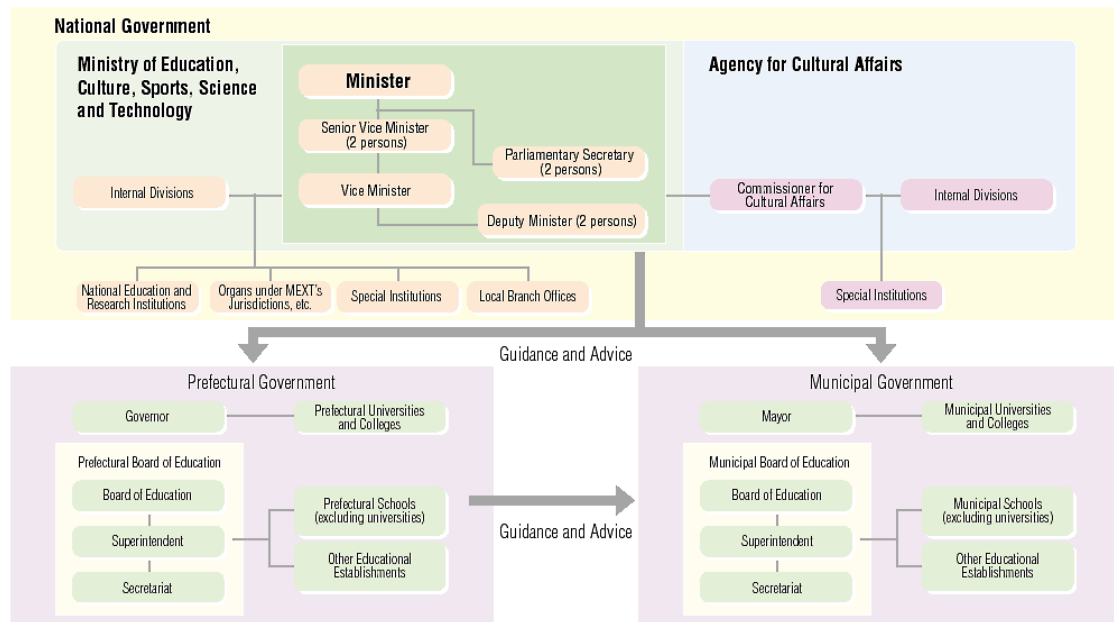
The structure of MEXT as of September 2008 is given in Chart I-5.

With regard to its relation to local governments, MEXT has the power to provide guidance, advice or assistance to local educational authorities (i.e., administrative heads of prefectural and municipal governments, and prefectural and municipal boards of education), and to require them to submit such reports as deemed necessary relating to educational activities under their jurisdiction. MEXT may also give local educational authorities orders for corrections or improvements in administration and management of government services concerning education, when it finds that such administration and management violate the provisions of laws and regulations or impede the primary objectives of education.

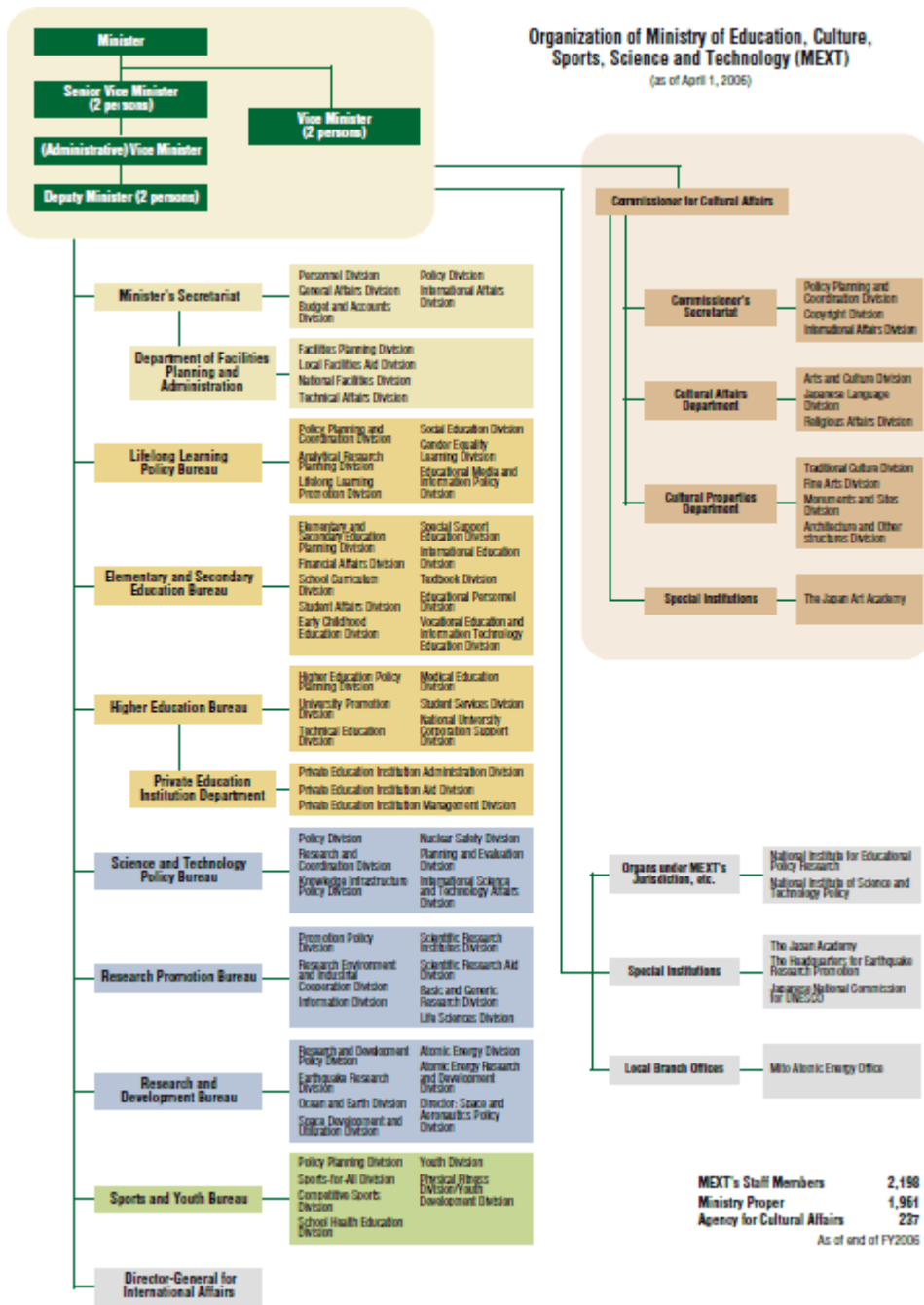
In the meantime, a point should be mentioned concerning the relationship between the central and local educational administrations. MEXT offers guidance/advice and support to educational administrations at the local government level (Governor and the boards of education of local governments), and requires local governments to submit reports on educational activities conducted in their jurisdictions. Also, the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology can request or instruct the boards of education to make corrections when prescribed

conditions are met, such as in the event that an apparent infringement of “the right to receive education” occurs due to negligence or violation of laws by the board of education, or in the case where emergency efforts to protect life and body are necessary.

Chart I-4 General structure of educational finance both at the national and local level



ChartI-5 Structure of MEXT



(2) Educational Administration at the Prefectural Level

In Japan there are 47 prefectures, each of which is further divided into a number of municipalities. In every prefecture, there is a prefectural Board of Education, which is responsible for the administration and management of government services relating to education, science and culture in each prefecture. The prefectural Board of Education is basically composed of five members (can be 6 pursuant to the ordinance) appointed by the governor with the consent of the prefectural assembly. (Both the governor and the members of the prefectural assembly are elected directly by the residents.) The members hold office for four years. The prefectural Board of Education appoints a Prefectural Superintendent of Education, who serves as its chief executive

officer responsible to the board for the execution of the policies and measures determined by the board. The Board of Education superintendent shall be appointed from the members of the board by the board.

The major functions of the prefectural Board of Education are as follows:

- a. To administer and manage prefectural educational establishments (upper secondary schools, special needs schools, museums, public libraries, lifelong learning promotion centers, centers for educational research and training, etc.) other than universities and junior colleges
- b. To conduct and promote activities for social education and sports
- c. To disseminate and promote cultural activities and to contribute to the protection of cultural properties
- d. To provide advice and assistance to governmental and non-governmental bodies for their activities for the cooperation with UNESCO
- e. To provide guidance, advice or financial assistance to the municipal education authorities (i.e., mayors and municipal boards of education) within the prefecture
- f. To require mayors or municipal boards of education to submit pertinent reports, and, when needed, to give them orders for corrections or improvements in their activities
- g. To approve the establishment and abolition of municipal kindergartens, unified secondary schools, upper secondary schools, special needs schools, special training schools and miscellaneous schools
- h. To deal with personnel affairs (including appointment and dismissal of teachers and other staff) and pay salaries to the teachers and other staff of municipal elementary schools, lower secondary schools, special needs schools and part-time courses of upper secondary schools.
- i. To issue certificates for teachers

Apart from the prefectural Board of Education, the prefectural governor also has some powers and responsibilities for education. His/Her main functions concerning education include the following:

- a. To administer and manage prefectural universities and junior colleges
- b. To approve the establishment of private kindergartens, elementary schools, lower and upper secondary schools, unified secondary schools, special needs schools, special training schools and miscellaneous schools, and to provide general supervision and advice and assistance to these schools. (Private institutions of higher education are under the general supervision of MEXT, as described above.)
- c. To coordinate and execute budgets on matters under the jurisdiction of the prefectural Board of Education and also to acquire and dispose of prefectural educational properties

(3) Educational Administration at the Municipal Level

In each municipality, there is a municipal Board of Education. The municipal Board of Education primarily consists of five members (a board of six or more members in the case of cities and three or more in the case of towns and villages pursuant to the ordinance) appointed by the mayor with the consent of the municipal assembly. (Both the mayor and the members of the municipal assembly are elected directly by the residents.) The members hold office for four years.

The municipal board selects a Municipal Superintendent of Education, who serves as its chief executive officer, from among the board members.

The major functions of the municipal board are as follows:

- a. To administer and manage municipal educational establishments (mainly, elementary and lower secondary schools, citizens' public halls, public libraries, centers for educational research and training, etc.)
- b. To conduct and promote activities for social education and sports
- c. To disseminate and promote cultural activities and to contribute to the protection of cultural properties
- d. To provide advice and assistance to non-governmental bodies for their activities for the cooperation with UNESCO
- e. To adopt textbooks to be used in municipal elementary and lower secondary schools

The municipal mayor also has some powers and responsibilities in education. His/Her main duties include the following:

- a. To administer and manage municipal universities and junior colleges
- b. To coordinate and execute budgets on matters under the jurisdiction of the municipal Board of Education, and also to acquire and dispose of municipal educational properties

2. Educational Finance

(1) Educational Expenditures of the National Government

The educational expenditures of the national government may be classified into two categories: 1) expenditures for national educational institutions and 2) education-related contributions and subsidies which are made to prefectures, municipalities, private educational establishments and other bodies.

In addition, the national government provides “Local Allocation Tax” grants to prefectural and municipal governments, which lack sufficient funds for implementing administration of a specific level. The grants are aimed at ensuring that every local government secures a certain level of income and public services. The sources of these grants are defined by law as a certain percentage of total national revenue from the income tax, corporation tax and liquor tax, a certain percentage of consumption tax income, and a certain percentage of cigarette tax income. While these grants are not earmarked for any specific services, a certain level of local government expenditures for education is made possible under these grants.

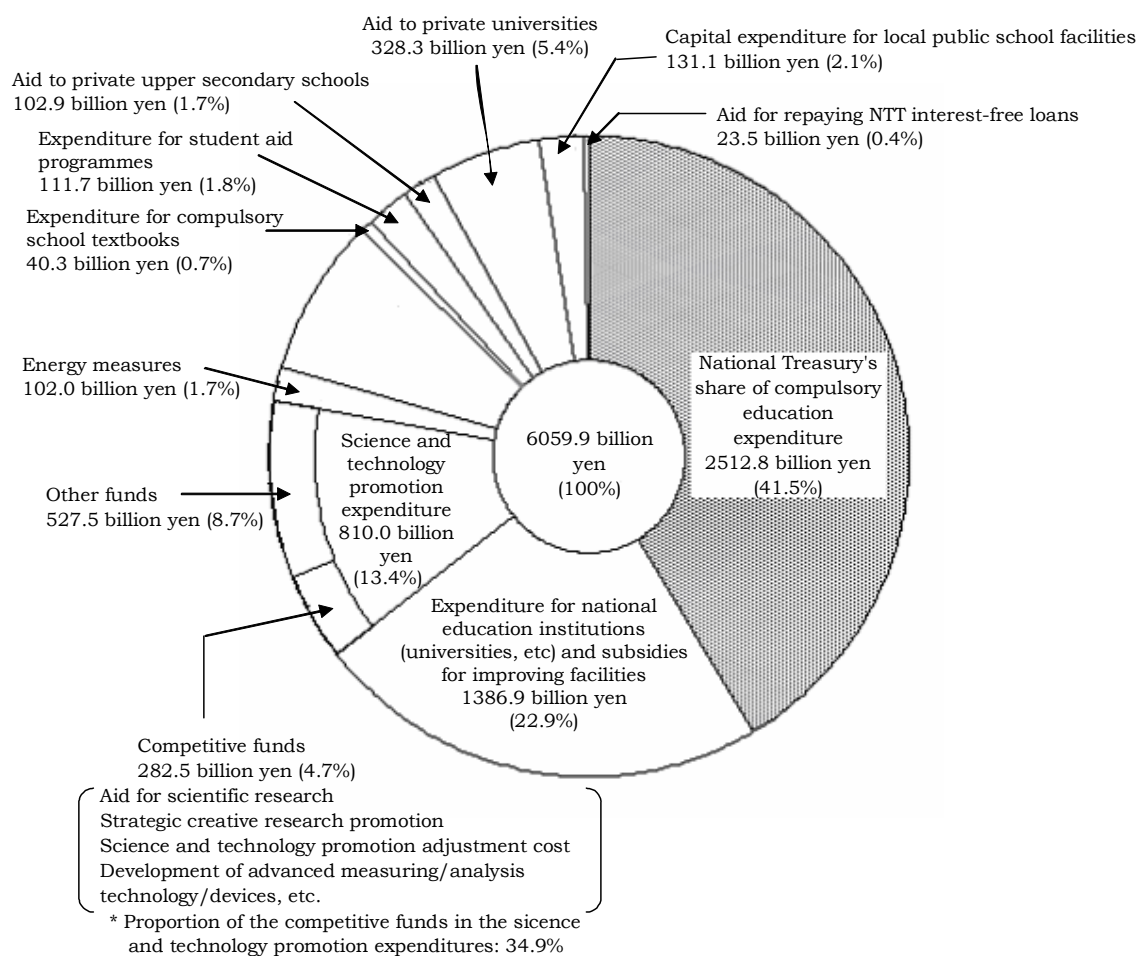
Major national subsidies for education are listed in Table I-14.

Chart I-6 shows the budget of MEXT for 2004 school year, classified by categories of expenditure.

Table I-14 Major National Contributions and Subsidies for Education

Contributions/subsidies for:	Granted to:	National share
1 Salaries and Allowances		
(1) Salaries and allowances of educational personnel at compulsory schools	Prefectures	1/2
(2) Salaries and allowances of educational personnel of schools for the otherwise disabled	Prefectures	1/2
2 Teaching Equipment		
Science teaching equipment	Prefectures, municipalities and school juridical persons	1/2 or 3/4
3 Encouragement of School Attendance		
(1) Encouragement of kindergarten attendance	Municipalities	1/3 or 1/4
(2) Aid to needy and quasi-needy	Prefectures and municipalities	1/2 etc.
4 Education in Remote Areas		
Subsidies for promotion of education in remote areas	Municipalities	1/2 or 2/3 or 1/3
5 Vocational Education		
Subsidies for promotion of vocational education	Prefectures, municipalities and school juridical persons	1/3 or 6/10
6 Building Construction of Public Elementary and Secondary Schools		
School facilities (construction of new buildings, repair of facilities, reconstruction of obsolete buildings, etc.)	Prefectures and municipalities	1/2, 1/3 etc.
7 Subsidizing of Current Expense of Private Upper Secondary Schools, etc.	Prefectures	Fixed amount
8 Promotion of Physical Education		
Expansion and improvement of physical education facilities	Prefectures, municipalities and school juridical persons	1/2 or 1/3 or fixed amount
9 School Lunch Service		
Expansion and improvement of school lunch facilities	Prefectures and municipalities	1/2 or 1/3

Chart I-6 Budget of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology,
Classified by Category of Expenditure, SY2001



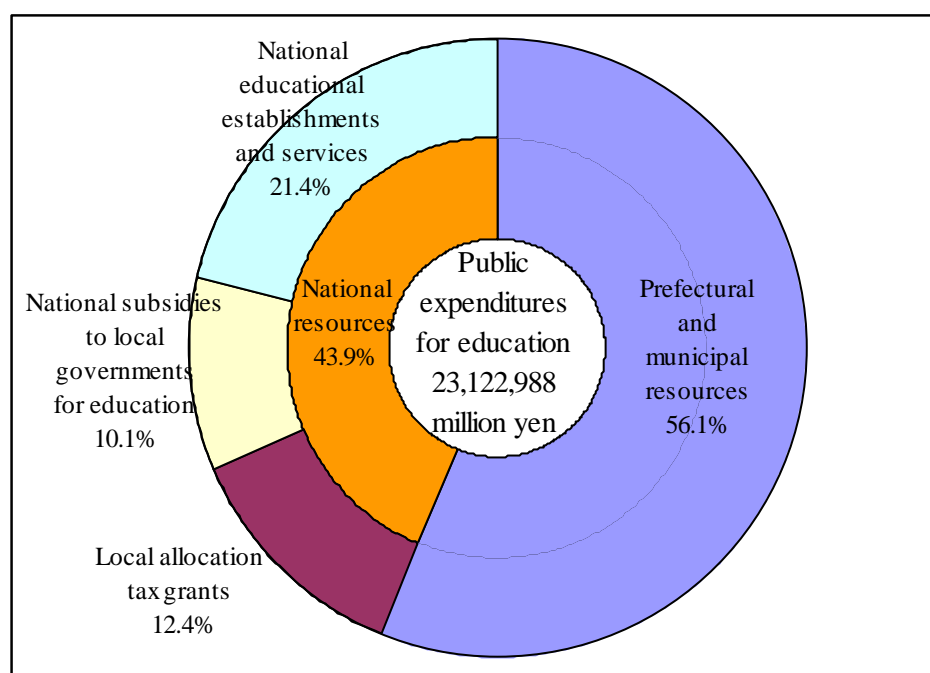
(2) The Share of Education in National Income and in Public Finance

In the 2005 school year, ending March 2006, total public expenditures for education amounted to 23,122,988 million yen, which accounted for 6.3% of national income and 15.6% of the net total of national and local government expenditures. The proportion of expenditures spent on education to the total expenditures of the national government was 8.4%, and the average proportion of local government expenditures devoted to education to the total expenditures was 20.0%.

(3) Distribution of Public Expenditures for Education by Source

The percentage distribution of the 2005 school year public expenditures for education by source is shown in Chart I-7. The national government bears 43.9% of public expenditures.

Chart I-7 Percentage Distribution of Public Expenditures for Education by Source (SY 2005)



Note: Based on “SY 2006 Survey on Local Educational Expenditures -2005 budget year-”

(4) Sources for School Expenditures

No tuition fees are charged for instruction in national/public elementary and lower secondary schools which provide compulsory education. However, tuition fees are charged to students in national/public upper secondary schools and in national/public institutions of higher education. The tuition fees collected from national university students are transferred to revenue receipts of the national university corporation that established the university concerned. Also, the national government takes fiscal measures for national university corporations regarding expenditures necessary for the education and research activities of national universities.

It is a general principle that private educational institutions are supported by their own income including tuition fees. Part of their income, however, is derived from subsidies by national and local governments.

(5) Financial Aid to Private Educational Institutions

In Japan, private educational institutions play a major role in the whole system of education. In 2008, about 75% of university students, about 31% of upper secondary school students, and about 81% of kindergarten pupils were enrolled in private institutions. Thus, quantitatively, these institutions have a relatively large place in the nation’s educational system. They have also been contributing much to the development of formal education, by means of carrying out distinctive educational and

research activities based on the distinctive aims or principles set out by their founders. In this manner, private institutions significantly contribute to both the qualitative and quantitative development of Japanese formal education.

In view of the important role played by these private institutions, the national government, under the Private School Promotion Subsidy Act, has been providing subsidies to these institutions for their current and other expenditures, with a view to helping maintain and improve the level of the educational and research activities of these institutions, as well as helping alleviate the financial burden of students enrolled therein.

In its budget for the 2008 school year, the national government included 324.87 billion yen of national subsidies for private universities, junior colleges and colleges of technology for their current expenditures. It also included 103.85 billion yen in subsidies for prefectural governments, to cover part of their prefectural subsidies to private elementary and secondary schools for their current expenditures. In addition, grants amounting to 15.83 billion yen were also included to cover the necessary expenditures for improving facilities and equipment of private universities, such as educational and research equipment, while 3.078 billion yen was also included in the budget as funds required for developing the facilities and equipment of private upper secondary schools.

The Promotion and Mutual Aid Corporation for Private Schools of Japan provides low interest long-term loans for private institutions for the improvement of their facilities and equipment. The total sum of these loans planned for 2008 school year amounts to 60 billion yen.

(6) Scholarship Programs

Scholarship programs, which are important educational measures for offering equal educational opportunities and for developing competent human resources, are offered by a number of organizations including the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO), which deals with the nation's scholarship programs, as well as local governments, non-profit corporations, and schools.

The JASSO's scholarships are provided to hard-working students who have economic difficulty going to a university, a junior college, a graduate school, or a college of technology or taking a specialized course of a special training school, in the form of loans. There are two types of loans: loans with no interest and loans with interest (no interest while in school and interest within 3% after graduating from school).

In the 2008 school year, the total budget for the scholarship programs of the JASSO amounts to 930.5 billion yen, and approximately 1,219,000 students will benefit from the scholarship loans.

As for the application procedure, the JASSO screens and decides on the recipients from applicants who filed an application with their schools and were recommended by the school principals. The JASSO sends scholarship money to the recipient students on

a monthly basis. The recipients are to repay their loans within 20 years of graduation at the latest. There is also a system to exempt the recipient taking a graduate course from repaying all or part of the loan if he/she was found to have made an especially distinguished achievement while in the graduate school.

Chapter 7. International Educational Exchange and Cooperation

During recent years, the different nations in the world have become increasingly interdependent. It is now more necessary than ever to promote effective international cooperation in all fields. In this context, with a view to contributing to better mutual understanding and cooperation with other countries, the Japanese government is actively undertaking activities for educational exchange and cooperation with other countries through UNESCO, OECD, APEC and other international organizations. The government is also strengthening a variety of bilateral programs, including those for exchange of students, teachers, educational leaders and others. Further, the government is actively promoting teaching of Japanese to foreigners.

1. Educational Cooperation through International Organizations

Japan has been in cooperation and collaboration with UNESCO, OECD, APEC and other international organizations in a variety of programs in the field of education.

Concerning UNESCO, the Japanese government has been providing support/cooperation for “Education for All (EFA)” and “Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).” In the EFA program, Japan supports full dissemination of literacy education and primary education in the Asia/Pacific region in cooperation with the UNESCO Bangkok Office. In the ESD program, Japan provides support/cooperation for the dissemination of the “United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development,” which was launched in 2005 following the proposal made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) (Johannesburg Summit) held in 2002 and the 2002 General Assembly of the United Nations. In addition, Japan has been making efforts to further promote ESD by setting up the inter-ministerial liaison committee in the Cabinet to formulate a national implementation plan.

Regarding OECD, Japan cooperates and actively takes part in programs for research and study on educational policy organized by OECD’s Education Policy Committee (EDPC) and the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI).

Japan also implements the “Collaborative Studies on Innovations for Teaching and Learning Mathematics in Different Cultures” in collaboration with the government of Thailand and the University of Tsukuba through the education network, and also participates and cooperates in the projects of the APEC Education Network proposed by other member countries.

Furthermore, the Government majorly contributes to the UNU through providing its headquarters building in Tokyo and providing funds for its finance and activities of research and training.

2. Exchange of Students

The international exchange of students is important in the sense that it facilitates internationalization and strengthens international competitiveness of universities, and it is also important for building a human network that could be the foundation for mutual understanding between Japan and other countries and for stable international relations; therefore, Japan has been comprehensively promoting various measures in relation to international student exchange.

Also, Japan has laid out a “300,000 International Students Plan,” which aims to raise the number of foreign students in Japan to 300,000 by 2020 and has compiled the basic policies and the direction of measures. Accordingly, Japan will make efforts to launch a wide range of systematic measures, which include providing information on study in Japan, improving entrance exams and entry to Japan, and promoting globalization of universities and job placement support for foreign students. In addition, Japan will facilitate study abroad programs for Japanese students, thereby promoting international student exchange.

In particular, the following efforts are being made this fiscal year.

- (1) A budget has been prepared for the government-financed foreign student system (MEXT Scholarship) to cover 11,974 students: an increase of 120 from the previous year. Furthermore, the establishment of a flexible system that enables adjustment to the number of foreign students that can be accommodated, in accordance with diplomatic requests; as well as emphasizing their distribution to universities that take special efforts to accommodate foreign students.
- (2) A budget has been prepared for the honors scholarship for privately-financed students to cover 12,100 students: an increase of 50 from the previous year.
- (3) Implementation of a project to support renting property for international student houses, support for building international student houses, implementation of tests for study in Japan, and holding of the “Study in Japan Fair” abroad.

(1) Acceptance of Students from Overseas

In May 2007, there were 118,498 foreign students studying in institutions of higher education, such as universities, in Japan. (Of this total, 10,020 were students invited under the Japanese Government Scholarship Program and 2,181 were those sent by foreign governments.)

Table I-15 presents the number of foreign students classified according to the region of origin.

Table I-15 Number of Foreign Students by Region of Origin

(as of May 1, 2007)

Region	Asia	Near and Middle East	Africa	Oceania	North America	Latin America	Europe	Total
Number of students	109,495	797	989	534	2,112	1,024	3,547	118,498
Percentage distribution	92.4%	0.7%	0.8%	0.5%	1.8%	0.9%	3.0%	100.0%

(2) Sending Japanese Students Abroad

According to the statistics by the OECD, etc., the number of Japanese people who went to any of 30 major countries for study was about 83,000. Table I-16 shows the number of these students by region of study.

Table I-16 Number of Japanese Who Went Abroad for Study by Region

	Asia	Near and Middle East	Oceania	North America	Latin America	Europe	Total
Number of Japanese who went abroad for study	21,852	19	4,085	43,965	29	12,995	82,945

Note: Based on IIE "OPEN DOORS" Edition, OECD "Education at a Glance", data from the Chinese Department of Education and the Taiwan Department of Education, all 2004 Editions.

(3) Exchange of Upper Secondary School Students

The upper-secondary school exchange program is very important for cross-cultural understanding and it contributes to fostering friendships with other countries. During the 2006 school year, 34,539 Japanese upper secondary school students went abroad for study or study tour, either long-term or short-term, while 5,852 foreign upper secondary school students visited Japan for study or study tour. In order to further encourage Japanese upper secondary school students to study abroad, MEXT supports the exchange programs provided by international educational exchange organizations for upper secondary school students and their services of offering information on study overseas.

3. Exchange of Teachers

(1) Sending Teachers Abroad

In order to promote leading teachers who has international perspective, every year National Center for Teachers' Development executes a program for providing teachers for elementary and secondary school with an opportunity to visit other countries.

Table I-17 Number of Teachers Sent Abroad

(SY 2007)

Elementary and secondary teachers sent abroad	617 persons
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(2) Invitation of Assistant Language Teachers, etc.

In order to help improve teaching of foreign languages in primary and secondary schools and to increase mutual understanding between Japanese and foreign people, the government introduced in 1987 the "The Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme (JET Programme)."

The number of foreign full-time teachers at institutions of higher education was 6,066 as of May 2007.

Table I-18 Assistant Language Teachers, etc., Invited to Japan

(SY 2007)

Country of Origin	Assistant Language Teachers	Coordinators for International Relations	Sports Exchange Advisors
U.S.A.	2,701	106	1
Canada	591	27	0
U.K.	555	22	0
Australia	281	34	1
New Zealand	228	14	0
Ireland	93	2	0
South Africa	94	0	0
China	11	65	1
Republic of Korea	3	51	5
Jamaica	40	1	0
Singapore	37	2	0
India	23	2	0
Trinidad and Tobago	21	0	0
Germany	2	17	1
France	10	9	0
Brazil	0	14	1

Russia	1	7	0
Italy	1	6	0
Holland	2	2	0
Barbados	4	0	0
Finland	1	2	0
Austria	2	0	0
Kenya	1	1	0
Spain	0	2	0
Hungary	0	0	2
Philippines	0	2	0
Peru	0	2	0
Mongolia	0	2	0
Other	5	7	1
Total	4,707	399	13

4. Exchange of Young People

In order to provide opportunities facilitating exchanges with various people in and outside Japan, MEXT has been sending young Japanese people overseas and inviting young foreign people to Japan. At the same time, it entrusts exchange activities, including joint experience activities between Japanese and foreign young people and activities of experiencing the tradition and culture of various countries, to youth organizations. In addition, MEXT actively supports the youth exchange programs implemented by nationwide organizations, such as the World Youth Visit Exchange Association.

Under these assisted programs, 387 Japanese young people were sent abroad and 341 foreign young people were invited to Japan during 2003 school year including leaders of youth activities.

5. Teaching of the Japanese Language to Foreigners

Recently, along with the increases in the number of foreigners in Japan and in international exchanges between Japan and foreign countries, the number of foreigners studying Japanese reached approximately 160,000 in Japan (the 2007 survey by the Agency for Cultural Affairs) and approximately 2.98 million abroad (the 2006 survey by the Japan Foundation). In response to the increase of foreigners learning Japanese in and outside Japan and the diversified demands of foreigners' study of the Japanese language, it is necessary to actively promote Japanese language education.

Therefore, MEXT is implementing measures including: providing support for Japanese language education to convention refugees and war-displaced Japanese returned home from China; enhancing the Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language program for international students; and improving the quality of Japanese language education institutions. In addition, MEXT implements various projects, such as setting up Japanese language classes in rural areas and training volunteers and retired teachers in order to develop Japanese language instructors.

The National Language Research Institute is conducting basic research on the content and methods of teaching the Japanese language.

In addition, in aiming to meet the demand for Japanese language education in other countries and contribute to the globalization of school education and promotion of international exchange at the community level, MEXT launched in 1990 the "Regional and Educational Exchanges for Mutual Understanding Program (REX Program)" that sends Japanese teachers of public secondary schools to secondary educational institutions abroad for two years to teach Japanese language.

6. Education for Japanese Children Living Overseas, Returnee Children and Foreign Children in Japan

(1) Enhancement of Education for Japanese Children Living Overseas

Along with the progress of globalization, about 59,000 Japanese children of compulsory school age live abroad as of April 2007.

For education of these children living abroad, the local Japanese residents' associations and other organizations have founded Japanese schools (84 schools as of April 2007) and supplementary schools (195 schools as of April 2007) around the world.

To enhance the quality of education at these Japanese schools and supplementary schools, MEXT sends teachers overseas from domestic national, public, and private compulsory educational institutions (1,355 in SY 2007). MEXT also carries out activities such as (1) providing textbooks for compulsory education free of charge, (2) developing educational materials and (3) offering correspondence courses. Recently, in order to support people living abroad with obtaining educational information from Japan, MEXT provides information on overseas educational institutions via its website.

(2) Enhancing Education for Returnee Children from Overseas and Foreign Children in Japan

During 2006, about 10,000 children of elementary, middle and high school ages returned from one-year or longer overseas stays.

Meanwhile, approximately 73,000 foreign children are enrolled in Japanese public elementary, middle and high schools as of May 2007. About 25,000 of these children need Japanese language instruction as of September 2007.

If foreign children in Japan wish to go to Japanese public compulsory educational institutions, they are accepted free of charge like Japanese children are. They are provided the same educational opportunities as Japanese children, including access to free textbooks and school expense subsidies.

It is important for these returnee and foreign children in Japan to adapt themselves to circumstances at Japanese schools smoothly, to develop the attributes fostered through experience in other countries, and to promote education for international understanding through mutual enlightenment with other students by making use of these attributes.

Therefore, MEXT allocates additional teachers to teach Japanese, etc. to foreign children living in Japan, offers Japanese teaching training for teachers dealing with foreign children, formulates and distributes guidebooks for schooling and Japanese learning materials such as "Let's Learn Japanese (Nihongo o Manabou)", and develops and disseminates the JSL (Japanese as a second language) curriculum. Furthermore, MEXT implements a "Project Promoting Acceptance of Japanese Children Returning from Overseas and Foreign Schoolchildren" to support model schemes of local governments, regarding the general framework of local schools for accepting returnee

and foreign children and the promotion of schooling of foreign children.

For returnee students, MEXT has taken measures to improve admission screening and to introduce more flexibility into the transfer system, and has been preparing a school system to implement adaptation assistance and Japanese language lessons within the framework of the “Project Promoting Acceptance of Japanese Children Returning from Overseas and Foreign Schoolchildren.”

Part II: RECENT TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN GOVERNMENT POLICIES IN EDUCATION

Chapter 1. Promotion of Educational Reform

Japan's education system has served as a driving force behind social development through fostering of human resources. With the steady efforts of the people including education personnel, it has realized the principle of equal opportunity, raised national educational standards, and responded to the particular needs of different time periods. As a result, Japan has realized an affluent society and a secure way of life in the post-war era, which are some of the significant achievements that have been gained.

Nevertheless, the circumstances surrounding education have changed greatly in respects such as the progress of science and technology, advanced information technology, internationalization, the falling birthrate and aging population, and the nature of families. At the same time, the environment surrounding children has changed significantly, and a variety of issues have come to light. Looking at the current status of education, it appears that confidence in education is wavering, and that education is facing a number of significant problems. Specifically, in addition to bullying, truancy and horrific incidents that should not be happening are taking place in which children are both the victims and the victimizers. There are concerns that such problems will lead to a decline in children's desire to learn. Furthermore, factors such as the decline in the normative consciousness of society as a whole and changes in family and community values are casting a shadow on the sound growth of children.

In light of this situation, educational reforms are being sought with a view toward educating the human resources that will chart a course into the 21st century.

1. The Revised Basic Act on Education and the Basic Plan for Promotion of Education

(1) The Revised Basic Act on Education

The existing Basic Act on Education was completely revised and the revised Basic Act on Education was established on December 15, 2006. The law was promulgated and put into effect on December 22 as Law No. 120 of 2006.

The Basic Act on Education stipulates the fundamental ideas and principles for education in Japan, and is meant to serve as a fundamental law for all legislation related to education. The original Basic Act on Education was promulgated and put into effect in March 1947. The education system developed under this law greatly boosted the national educational standards and served as a driving force behind Japan's social development. Nevertheless, challenges surrounding education like those described above have arisen amidst the substantial changes in society.

In light of such circumstances, the recent revisions to the law clearly set out principles for education considered to be extremely important today while at the same

time inheriting the universal principles set out in the previous law. Such principles include placing value on public-spiritedness and other forms of the “normative consciousness” that the Japanese people possess, as well as respecting the traditions and culture that have fostered said consciousness.

For the revised Basic Act on Education, the objectives and principles of education are laid out in Chapter 1. Here, striving toward the process of character formation is prescribed as the “goal of education,” and the determination to foster people who are healthy both mentally and physically in their capacity as constituents of the nation and society is laid out as well. As such, it stipulates matters which are considered important in order to realize these goals of education in the form of “educational targets.” Moreover, in addition to “equal opportunity in education,” the “principle of lifelong learning” has been newly prescribed as an educational principle.

In Chapter 2, fundamentals related to carrying out education are laid out. In addition to reassessing provisions related to “compulsory education,” “school education,” “teachers,” “social education,” “political education,” and “religious education,” it also has new prescriptions on “universities,” “private schools,” “home education,” “childhood education,” and “mutual coordination and cooperation between schools, homes, local community residents, and others.”

Chapter 3 clearly stipulates the roles of the state and local governments, while also laying out issues like the formulation of the Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education. With regard to the Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education, discussions are currently moving forward at the Central Council for Education with the aim of formulating the plan within FY2007 (refer to Chapter 1, Section 4).

(2) The Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education

Pursuant to Article 17 of the aforementioned revised Basic Act on Education, the Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education sets out basic government policies for measures to promote education, and other necessary matters to be implemented to support measures for the promotion of education in a comprehensive and planned manner. The basic plan was established in July 2008 for the first time in Japan.

The basic plan is composed of four chapters and sets policy measures for the next five years with an eye on how education ought to be 10 years from now.

Chapter 1 of the basic plan provides an overview of the current educational situation and tasks, reaffirms that Japan aspires to be “a nation based on education” and concludes that efforts of the whole of society is necessary for the promotion of education.

Chapter 2 presents the following goals for the coming 10 years:

- To develop basic skills before completion of compulsory education so that all children can lead independent lives in society; and
- To develop human resources who would support and develop society and lead the international community.

Furthermore, aiming for the realization of such an ideal state of education, it is necessary to prepare the financial budget and ensure investment in education, while using the situation of investments in education, such as public and financial spending, of OECD countries and others as a reference.

Chapter 3 organizes policy measures to be implemented for five years from 2008 to 2012 into the following four basic directions:

- (1) Efforts of the whole of society for improving education;
- (2) To develop capacity while respecting individuality and to foster the foundation to live as an individual and as a member of society;
- (3) To foster intelligent and well-educated people with specialties who support the development of society; and
- (4) To ensure the safety and security of children and to develop a high quality environment for education.

Furthermore, a total of 77 specific measures are listed in line with the directions.

Chapter 4 lists the following four points as necessary matters to promote comprehensive measures in a planned manner:

- The role of the central and local governments in implementing the plan
- Financial measures for education and their focused and effective management
- Monitoring of progress and review of the plan.

Article 17 of the Basic Act on Education also stipulates that local governments shall participate in formulating the government's basic plan and make efforts to develop plans for measures for the promotion of education in accordance with the conditions of the locality.

It is also stipulated that the plan shall be steadily implemented and further efforts for the promotion of education shall be made to build a "nation based on education."

2. Comprehensive Five-Day School Week System

With the aim of reviewing the overall lifestyle of children and enabling them to fully achieve self-realization by spending more time however they choose to spend it and utilizing their individuality, the five-day school week system was introduced in a phased manner, being adopted once a month since September 1992 and twice a month since April 1995, and has been fully implemented since the 2002 school year.

The report prepared by the Central Council for Education in January 2008 recommends maintaining the five-day school week system stating, "the five-day school week system is a social system which has been introduced in a step-wise manner over a long course of time along with the introduction of the five-day working week system for the whole of society, based on the principle that the whole of society should cooperate to bring up children by sharing the roles among three actors (schools, homes and communities) and that the five-day school week system has been adopted in most countries. Therefore, the maintenance of the five-day school week system is

appropriate.” Accordingly, the five-day school week system is maintained in the recent revision of the Courses of Study.

Chapter 2. Impending Issues and Governmental Policies

1. Lifelong Learning

(1) The necessity of lifelong learning

If Japan is to create a rich and energetic society in the 21st century, it is crucial to create a lifelong learning society in which “people can freely choose relevant learning opportunities and participate in learning at any time throughout their lives, and their learning should be duly evaluated in society.”

As regards social backgrounds which have necessitated the creation of a lifelong learning society, the following points have been pointed out.

i) The necessity of learning aimed at coping with social and economic changes

Along with social and economic changes such as the progress of advanced science and technology, the spread of information media, the progress of internationalization in the various sections of society, and changes in the industrial structure, people are now increasingly required to acquire new knowledge and skills constantly.

ii) Coping with increasing learning demands caused by the maturing of society

A mature society is characterized by such phenomena as the improvement of the level of people’s income, an increase in leisure time, and the aging of the population. Along with the maturing of our society, there have been increasing demands from people for learning activities which may contribute to securing an enriched mind and a worthwhile life.

iii) Adverse effects of society preoccupied with academic credentials

In order to correct adverse effects of society preoccupied with academic credentials, it is required to create a society in which individuals can be duly evaluated not in terms of the results of their academic credentials, but in terms of the results of learning which they have acquired at the different stages of life.

People’s lifelong learning activities are carried out not only through education programs that people take intentionally for educational improvement purposes/that are offered by organizations whose purpose is to provide education, but also through sports activities, cultural activities, hobbies recreation and volunteer activities. These activities take place in diverse places, such as elementary/lower secondary/upper secondary schools, universities and other higher education institutions, citizens’ public halls, public libraries, museums, cultural facilities, sports facilities, culture centers, and industrial and business enterprises. It can be stated that lifelong learning represents a master concept covering a great variety of learning activities carried out in these diverse places throughout life.

(2) Measures taken by MEXT

With a view to promoting diverse learning activities comprehensively and thus to creating a lifelong learning society, MEXT, through the Lifelong Learning Policy Bureau, has been taking measures to promote formal and non-formal education, and culture and sports, for the purpose of promoting people's lifelong learning activities. In addition, MEXT has been endeavoring to maintain and increase its cooperation with other government departments related to lifelong learning.

2. Elementary and Secondary Education

Japan's elementary and secondary education has gained positive appraisal from overseas for its level of dissemination, as well as for its high quality. In the years ahead, it will become vital to strengthen educational policies aimed at correcting those elements in the existing educational systems which have been criticized as too uniform and too rigid. It will also be crucial to help develop distinctive personalities and diverse abilities of individuals.

With this in view, MEXT has been carrying out the following policies and measures.

The first policy concerns the improvement of the content and methods of teaching and learning. Though Japanese children rank high in terms of academic ability on an international basis according to the results of nationwide and international surveys, problems such as insufficient motivation to learn and lack of study habits have become obvious. In the 21st century, which is referred to as the era of "a knowledge-based society," it has become increasingly important to foster the "zest for living," emphasizing the harmony of strong academic capacity, a well-rounded spirit, and a healthy body. The revised Basic Act on Education of December 2006 and the revised School Education Act of June 2007 highlight basic and fundamental knowledge and skills, the ability to think, decide and express oneself, and the importance of motivation to learn, in addition to the balanced development of intellect, virtue and body. These laws also stipulate that it is necessary to foster these elements in school education in a harmonized manner. On the other hand, according to the results of various surveys, including OECD's PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) Surveys, Japanese children have weaknesses in comprehension and essay questions that assess the ability to think, judge and express; in solving problems that require knowledge and skills; in motivation to learn; and in study and lifestyle habits.

In light of this situation, MEXT revised the Course of Kindergarten Education, the Courses of Study for elementary school and the Courses of Study for lower secondary school in March 2008.

The recent revisions incorporate the following three points as basic aims:

- (1) To nurture a "zest for living" based on the principles of education stated in the revised Basic Act on Education, etc;
- (2) To emphasize the balance between the acquisition of knowledge/skills and development of the ability to think/judge/express; and
- (3) To develop rich spirit and a healthy body by enhancing moral education and physical education.

Specifically, the government decided to improve the educational content, including the enhancement of linguistic activities, science and mathematics education, education concerning traditions and cultures, moral education, experiential education, and foreign language education and to increase the number of class hours.

Effort will be made in the future to develop an educational environment for the smooth implementation of the new course of study through publicizing the purposes of the revision, and through improving teaching systems and both the quality and quantity of teaching materials and textbooks.

The second policy aims at redressing the complement of teachers.

The Government set by law the standards for class sizes and the standard complements of teachers of public elementary, lower and upper secondary schools, secondary education schools and special needs schools for the purposes of:

(1) Reducing the size of classes, which are basic units of learning and school life of pupils and students; and

(2) Providing educational conditions to secure the teachers required for smooth teaching activities.

The standards of class sizes and teacher deployment have been systematically improved. The number of pupils and students per class and the standards for teacher deployment have been improved seven times since 1959 for schools for compulsory education and six times since 1962 for upper secondary schools and the maximum number of pupils and students is now set as forty.

In order to realize the simple and efficient government, it has been decided to promote administrative reform since FY2006, such as reforming the total payroll cost of public servants, including teachers. The change in the number of teachers has been implemented every school year in order to develop necessary educational conditions, such as the reinforcement of the management function of schools and the enhancement of special needs education, although the formulation of a new plan for the improvement of the number of teachers was postponed.

The class sizes system has been gradually made flexible in terms of its management since the 2001 school year, from the perspective of increasing the independence of local governments to enable the prefectural boards of education to set the standard of class sizes at less than forty. As a result, a small class size has been adopted mainly for the first and second grades in most prefectures.

The third policy aims at the enrichment of moral education. Moral education aims at nurturing in children such morality as will provide a sound foundation for ensuring a better life for them on the basis of their proper awareness of how a human being should live. In recent years, the environment surrounding children has been changing, and moral education should be further enriched to make children be aware of the preciousness of life, consideration for others and children's norms such as right and wrong and good and evil, as well as to nurture sociality.

Therefore, the new Courses of Study have been improved to make children learn through personal experiences in cooperation with the home and the community in moral education.

The fourth policy concerns the enrichment of student guidance. In student guidance, it is important to deal appropriately with undesirable behavior such as non-attendance at school, violent behavior, bullying, and dropout and to improve and enrich guidance from a positive perspective of considering the characteristics of each child and cultivating rich humanity. Therefore, measures are taken to succeed in providing classes that are easy to understand and enjoyable school life, enrich emotional education, improve the quality and ability of teachers, and deploy school counselors and improve the school counseling system including the expansion of school counselor staffing, and promote cooperation and communication among the schools, families, communities, and authorities concerned.

The fifth policy is for the enrichment of career education aimed at instilling in students a desirable understanding of labor world of work. Through the whole process of school education, it is required to provide organized and systematic career education in line with the developmental stage of the individual students have been taken to nurture abilities and attitudes to help them to independently select and decide their career path.

The sixth policy is aimed at reforming upper secondary school education. Based on the report on the 14th meeting of the Central Council for Education, which pointed out that the scope of students' choice of their learning should be expanded so as to help students develop their personality to a maximum, and the discussion at the Consultative Committee for the Promotion of Reforms in Upper Secondary School Education, MEXT has been facilitating the creation of "integrated" courses of upper secondary schools, the creation of new types of upper secondary schools, and the organization of school curricula whereby students are allowed to choose their own subjects to a great extent. With regard to procedures for the selection of upper secondary school entrants, MEXT, for the purpose of achieving the diversification of the procedures and the introduction of multiple criteria for selection, has been encouraging prefectural governments to adopt diversified selection methods.

The seventh policy concerns the promotion of kindergarten education. Article 11 of the Basic Act on Education, revised in 2006, newly added the provision for "childhood education," defining it as an important tool for cultivating the basis for personal development that has life-long effects. The School Education Act, was revised in 2007, and it reviewed the order of provision of the type of schools (kindergartens are listed first), revised the aims and objectives of kindergartens, and newly adopted the provisions concerning childcare assistance. In March 2008, The Course of Kindergarten Education was revised based on the revisions of the Basic Act on Education and the School Education Act as well as on the report of the Central Education Council, etc. In October 2006 the system of "Centre for early childhood education and care" was launched. This system accredits kindergartens and nursery schools that provide a combination of pre-school education and daycare and implement childcare support in the local community. As of April 1, 2008, 229 facilities have

obtained the status of Centres for early childhood education and care, and MEXT has been making efforts for the dissemination of the system in cooperation with the Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Labor.

The eighth is the promotion of Special Needs Education. The system for the promotion of Special Needs Education has been drastically revised based on recent trends surrounding education for children with disabilities in Japan, such as the emergence of children with severe/multiple disabilities in special schools separated by every type of disability, and the growing need for appropriate guidance necessary to support children with disabilities in elementary and lower secondary schools. The revised School Education Act was enforced in FY2007, and it stipulates the establishment of School for Special Needs Education that can accommodate several types of disabilities in one school, and the promotion of Special Needs Education in all types of schools, including ordinary schools. MEXT has commissioned local governments to implement projects which comprehensively promote peripatetic counseling, teacher training, understanding and enlightenment activities, etc., in order to promote the enhancement of a support system for schools with children with disabilities, including developmental disabilities.

The ninth policy aims at the promotion of education on human rights. MEXT is trying to enrich education to heighten awareness of fundamental human rights through school and social education in conformity with the Constitution of Japan and Basic Act on Education. At the United Nations General Assembly in December 1994, a resolution was adopted that proclaimed the period from 1995 to 2004 as the “U.N. Decade for Human Rights Education.” Following this resolution, the Government, by a Cabinet decision, established the “Headquarters for the U.N. Decade for Human Rights Education” in December 1995. In July 1997, the National Plan of Action about the U.N. Decade for Human Rights Education was formulated by the Headquarters. Under the Act of Promotion of Measures for Human Rights Protection enforced in March 1997, the Human Rights Protection and Promotion Council established within the Ministry of Justice compiled several reports regarding comprehensive promotion of measures for human rights education and enlightenment, a new human rights redress system, and a committee system of human rights protection. In addition, the “Education and Enlightenment of Human Rights Act” was put into effect in December 2000, and in March 2002, under the initiative of the Ministry of Justice and MEXT, the “Basic Plan for Human Rights Education and Enlightenment” was formulated and adopted by a Cabinet decision as an outline of the measures for comprehensive and planned promotion of human rights education and enlightenment. The Basic Plan includes measures to enable children to understand the importance of human rights as well as educational measures to cope with important issues concerning human rights (e.g. violation of the human rights of women, children, disabled people, Ainu people, foreign nationals, people with HIV/AIDS, and violations via the Internet). Following such trends, MEXT is working toward steadily promoting human rights education.

The tenth policy is aimed at the current school textbook. School textbooks play a vital role in formal education as main teaching materials. Under the textbook examination on procedure, MEXT has been striving to ensure that the suitable content of teaching be provided for all children. On the other hand, the national government provides all textbooks free of charge for all children enrolled in compulsory (elementary and lower secondary) schools. With respect to the textbook examination system, discussions are currently underway over the measures to revise textbooks and to improve the authorization process that comply with the new 2008 Courses of Study.

The eleventh policy is for the development of vocational education. Vocational education is provided mainly at specialized upper secondary schools such as industrial high schools and agricultural high schools, playing a significant role in fostering the human resources that will lead to the future development of Japanese industries, including mid-level engineers. In order to foster specialists who have advanced knowledge and skills, such specialized upper secondary schools, in cooperation with industries in the communities, provide practical education programs while placing importance on practical work and on-the-job training.

3. Higher Education

(1) Guarantee of the Quality of Universities

Based on the report compiled by the Central Council for Education in August 2002 titled “Establishment of New System for Guarantee of Quality of Universities,” the School Education Act was amended at the 155th extraordinary session of the Diet, and implemented a more flexible approval system for the establishment of faculties and universities, introduced the third-party evaluation system, and introduced gradual corrective measures against universities that are in violation of the relevant law.

- Flexible approval system for the establishment of faculties and universities

It has become possible for a university to establish a new faculty by notifying MEXT, without obtaining approval by MEXT as was required before, provided that the establishment of the faculty will not change the types and fields of degrees given by the university. Except for some fields, restrictions on the granting of approval for the establishment of universities, etc. have been abolished and the guidelines for granting such approvals have been provided by ordinance instead of notification.

- Introduction of third-party evaluation (certified evaluation) system

In the 2004 school year, all national, public, and private universities have introduced a system under which universities will be evaluated, on a regular basis, by evaluation agencies authorized by MEXT (certified evaluation system). If evaluation results are made public, universities will be evaluated by society and therefore they will make efforts to improve themselves based on the evaluation results, which is expected to increase the universities’ academic and research level.

- Introduction of gradual corrective measures against universities in violation of the relevant law

With respect to universities in violation of the relevant law, there was no option, in principle, but to order such universities to close. Currently, however, it has become possible, since 2003 school year, for MEXT to take transitional corrective measures: (i) advise the university to correct the violation; (ii) instruct the university to make changes to the faculty if violation is not corrected despite the advice; (iii) order the university to terminate the operation of the faculty if the violation is not corrected despite the change order.

In this way, MEXT is committed to assuring and improving the quality of university education through stringent screening in the approval system for the establishment of universities, follow-up of progress in implementation, the certified evaluation system and the gradual corrective measures against universities in violation of the relevant law.

(2) Incorporation of National Universities

In accordance with the National University Corporation Act, national universities have become corporations since April 1, 2004. Incorporation of national universities is

intended to free national universities, which were conventionally regarded as national administrative agencies, from the national framework, and to enable them to aggressively engage in advanced education and distinctive research activities and work toward acquiring rich individuality and attractiveness in an environment where universities operate more independently and autonomously.

More specifically, the following drastic reform measures have been taken with respect to the various management issues of national universities:

- (i) Incorporation of each national university to ensure that independent and autonomous management;
- (ii) Introducing the management methods based on private-sector concepts;
- (iii) Institutionalizing the management system with the participation of external people;
- (iv) Changing the personnel system to a more flexible one that is not constrained by the Government Official Act (non-civil personnel system); and
- (v) Transition to an ex-post checking system through introduction of evaluations.

Higher education in Japan can be characterized by the diversified developments of national, public, and private universities. In particular, national universities have played a core role in raising the level of scientific research in Japan and are contributing to the balanced development of the Japanese higher education system regarding regional distribution and field composition of research activities.

The incorporation of the national universities is intended to ensure that the national universities play such role more assuredly, and it will be the starting point of university reform in the course of promoting administration of higher education.

(3) Support of University Education Reforms through National, Public, and Private Universities

In order to foster Japanese people who will lead in the 21st century, it is critically important to promote efforts for university education reforms at individual universities.

To this end, based on the principle of competition among national, public, and private universities, financial support is provided from the budget for the 2008 school year for the total of 14 programs (project size 68 billion yen) to achieve the following objectives: (1) supporting for the reform of university education in national, prefectural and private universities; (2) establishing the world's top education and research centers and strengthening of graduate-level education; (3) reinforcing the function of university as the center of knowledge through coordination of education and research resources in local areas; (4) promoting the system for educating medical doctors, etc., in cooperation between universities and university-affiliated hospitals; and (5) developing advanced human resources and improving of educational programs through industry-academia collaboration.

(4) Professional Graduate Schools

The professional graduate school system was inaugurated in 2003 as a training course aiming specifically at developing advanced professionals, in order to meet the increasing demand for the development of advanced professionals who are capable of playing a leadership role in society and the international community as science and technology advance and social and economic globalization progresses. Professional graduate schools have the following institutional characteristics: (1) they adopt practical educational methods, including small group education, interactive and multi-active lessons, case studies, and onsite investigations; (2) they do not require research instructions and thesis reviews; and (3) they assign a certain proportion of teachers in professional practice, while being fundamentally committed to the provision of education that bridges theories and practices.

Since the inauguration of the system, a number of professional graduate schools have been established in various fields, such as law (law schools), business/MOT (technology and management), accounting, and public policies, etc. Since competent teachers with more advanced expertise who are rich in humanity and social experiences are increasingly needed, as the social structure has changed dramatically and school education issues have become more complicated and diversified in recent years, a graduate school system for teachers was established as part of the professional graduate school system (established in the 2008 school year).

When providing financial support MEXT has focused on the excellent approaches of professional graduate schools that are devoted to the development and improvement of practical educational methods and content that bridge theories and practices. Efforts will be made in the future to aggressively promote approaches to maintaining and improving the quality of education offered by professional graduate schools.

(5) Other recent trends surrounding reform of higher education

In light of changes in higher education in Japan and in response to the report of the Central Education Council entitled “The Future of Higher Education” compiled in January 2005 — for the purpose of presenting a comprehensive vision of higher education based on a mid- and long-term perspective — MEXT partially revised the School Education Act in May 2006 to introduce a new faculty management system. In July 2007, MEXT also revised the Standard for the Establishment of Universities to clarify the objectives of education and research and to make organized training for teachers mandatory. MEXT has clearly made efforts for the quality improvement of education and research in universities.

At the graduate school level, MEXT has been committed to the improvement of graduate school education by formulating “Guidelines on Measures for the Promotion of Graduate School Education” in March 2006, based on the report of the Central Education Council entitled “The Graduate School Education in the New Age- Towards the Development of Internationally Attractive Graduate School Education” compiled in September 2005.

In the future, MEXT will make efforts for further reform of higher education in order to build educational centers of the world's highest level, achieve globalization of universities, etc., and improve and assure quality as set forth in the "Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education," which was formulated in line with the Basic Act on Education revised in December 2007.

4. Private Educational Institutions

In Japan, the ratio of students enrolled in private schools is about 76% for universities and junior colleges, about 96% for special training schools and others, about 31% for upper secondary schools, and about 81% for kindergartens. Private schools have made a great contribution to the development of formal education in this country. In recent years, in the context of various social changes, including the progress of internationalization in the various sectors of society and the spread of information media, there have been growing demands for the promotion of distinctive and unique educational research relevant to diversified demands for education from the public. Private institutions have been positively developing distinctive and diverse programs in education and research on the basis of individual spirits of their founders and, in this regard, they are playing an important role in education. In view of the important role played by private educational institutions, while placing the promotion of private educational institutions as one of the important policy issues, the Government has been striving to help maintain and improve the educational and research conditions of these institutions, to alleviate the financial burdens of students enrolled in these institutions, and to help secure a sounder management of these institutions. In this regard, the Government has been taking various promotional measures, including: i) providing financial subsidies, including those for current expenses, for private institutions; ii) supporting the programs administered by the Promotion and Mutual Aid Corporation for Private Schools of Japan for providing loans for private institutions; and iii) taxation measures favorable to private institutions.

5. Social Education

Besides formal school education, various organized education activities (including physical education and recreation activities) which are carried out mainly for youth and adults are generally called “social education.” Social Education is provided in such facilities as public halls, libraries and museums and plays a major role in enabling lifelong learning to occur. MEXT promotes these educational activities in various manners with the primary purpose of encouraging people to engage in study independently and voluntarily. The manners are as follows:

(i) Promoting social education utilizing public halls, which serve as regional bases for learning and cultural activities, as well as other public facilities for social education such as libraries, museums, and youth education centers.

(ii) Developing instructors for social education, and providing training programs for them on a national, regional, and prefectural basis in order to improve their abilities;

(iii) Providing youth, adults, women and the elderly with various learning opportunities, promoting learning using educational media, and promoting human rights education further.

MEXT also is endeavoring to support home education by providing learning opportunities and information concerning home education and improving consultation services, thereby enhancing education and learning activities with the aim of creating a gender-equal society.

Furthermore, for the purpose of comprehensively promoting the revitalization of educational capacity as well as volunteer activities and experiential activities of local communities, MEXT provides support for school education conducted by the entire community and builds safe and secure places for children for after school activities.

6. Health Education

For the purpose of developing abilities and endowments to lead a healthy and safe life, health education at school is carried out through entire educational activities including not only health and physical education but also moral education and special activities according to the developmental stages of children.

However, in recent years, new health issues have been pointed out including drug abuse, sexually deviant behavior and signs of lifestyle-related diseases. To cope with these issues, MEXT has been taking the following measures.

The first measure deals with the mental problems of children. MEXT has taken measures such as improving the counseling system, including allocating school counselors, preparing and distributing reference materials for teachers, and improving the quality of special education teachers. MEXT has also been taking measures to enhance health consultation services through cooperation between schools and local health institutions, such as dispatching professionals specialized in particular medical fields upon the request of schools.

The second measure aims at the enhancement of education to prevent drug abuse. MEXT has instructed all lower and upper secondary schools to hold a drug abuse prevention class annually by experts outside the school such as police officers. MEXT has also been taking and improving measures such as the preparation and distribution of materials for children and publicity and enlightenment activities using huge displays in sports stadiums and so on.

The third measure concerns instruction on food and the improvement of school lunches. Schools offer dietary guidance to pupils and students while aiming to not only provide appropriate knowledge about food, but also to enable students to acquire desirable dietary habits, and also to provide nutritiously well-balanced school lunches. MEXT has been taking and improving measures for dietary education by, for example, preparing and distributing “Materials for Dietary Learning” for children and students, holding symposiums, and preparing and distributing the “Instruction Manual on Diet” for teachers. In March this year, the courses of study were revised to include “the promotion of dietary education at schools” and to improve the content regarding dietary education in related subjects.

The fourth measure concerns the enhancement of safety at school. Since there are incidents, accidents and natural disasters in and outside of schools that threaten the safety of children, schools are working to develop a system under which the whole community monitors the safety of children, and to improve safety education by promoting anti-crime lessons to help students acquire the ability to foresee and avoid danger.

7. Sound Development of Young people

For the purpose of fostering young people—who not only carry on their shoulders the dreams and goals of the future, but can positively engage in activities for building a better society—MEXT has been taking the following measures to promote the sound development of mental and physical health of young people and nurture to develop a rich sense of humanity such as the sense of justice and morals.

In order to foster a rich sense of humanity and good social skills in young people, it is important to provide them with opportunities to engage in various activities through experiences in natural environment and other experiences. To this end, MEXT has been taking various measures to: (i) implement projects to promote activities based on long-term experiences in natural and experience-based environmental study programs; (ii) enhance the “Children’s Dream Fund” to provide subsidies to non-government groups in offering experience-based activities and reading activities for children; (iii) provide young people with opportunities to engage in various advanced experience-based activities at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center, National Youth Houses, and National Children’s Centers, and foster instructors; (iv) provide support for children and youth groups.

Reading activities are indispensable for young people to learn language, improve their sensitivity, enhance their ability to express themselves, enrich their imaginative power, and acquire the skills required to lead a meaningful life. Based on such recognition and in accordance with the Law Concerning the Promotion of Children’s Reading Activities and the Basic Plan for the Promotion of Children’s Reading Activities, MEXT has been striving to provide young people with opportunities to enjoy reading, enhancing library materials and improving conditions for reading, and raising awareness of the importance of reading.

In order to prevent juvenile delinquency, it is important to ensure that young people are aware of the concepts of rules and morals, such as the difference between right and wrong and good and evil, the preciousness of life, and consideration to others. To this end, MEXT has been working toward the sound development of young people in schools, in the home, and in the community, by measures such as supporting home education, promoting experience-based activities, and enhancing moral education.

Furthermore, there is great concern over the environment factors which have negative influence on the young, including exposure to harmful information such as sexual and violent content on media. In order to protect young people from such information, MEXT has been taking measures to develop in young people the ability to use information properly, raise awareness of this issue among their guardians, and conduct relevant research and study.

8. Physical Education/Sports

Physical education in schools and sports activities in communities promote the sound development of mental and physical health among young people and have important significance for balanced growth in intelligence, morality, and physical fitness. Such activities are also contributive to sound development of young people by nurturing self-responsibility, self-control, and the spirit of fair play in them, improving their communication skills through interaction with team mates and instructors, and nurturing in them consideration for others. From these perspectives, the following measures are being taken through cooperation between schools and communities.

In recent years, the long-term decline in children's physical fitness and athletic ability has led to concerns about the adverse influence of this on children's health and the deterioration of their spirits and energy. To solve this problem, schools promote various original programs to improve children's physical fitness, not only in physical education classes but also in school education as a whole, by providing children with opportunities to actively take exercise so that they will be able to enjoy sports all through their lives. In particular, for the purpose of enhancing club activities in which children the fun and pleasure of doing exercise and spend enriched school life through mutual cooperation and close friendship with others, diverse measures are being taken to promote club activities such as those involving external instructors in the community or those carried out jointly by several schools.

Communities also carry out comprehensive measures to improve children's physical fitness, such as increasing awareness of the importance of physical fitness by inviting posters and slogans concerning this issue and providing children with "stamp cards" and "pocketbooks" that contain information on sports and health as incentives for children to actively participate in sports activities.

Furthermore, with the objective of fostering young people who have a global perspective and well-rounded characters through sports activities along with the internationalization of society, MEXT has promoted sports exchange projects between Japan and the Republic of Korea since the 2002 FIFA World Cup jointly hosted by these two countries, and implements various measures to actively support other sports exchange projects held by sports associations and local public bodies.

9. Coping with Internationalization

Over half a century has passed since the last world war. During this period, the cold war has ended and the world has seen progress in the approach to creating a new international order that aims at peace and prosperity. On the other hand, there have always been tensions and disputes caused by racial and religious issues.

Under such stressful conditions, in order for all nations and races to make progress and develop together, it is essential to make efforts to understand the history, culture, customs and values of others and build trusting relationships among nations. Furthermore, amidst the movement towards globalization, it is extremely significant that Japan is understood globally from various perspectives, in order to ensure that Japanese people will be able to engage in cross-border activities and promote smooth international exchanges with foreign people.

In order to do its part in establishing international understanding and creating world peace, as well as for stability in the international community, it is necessary for Japan to progressively, consistently and positively carry out various activities for international exchange and cooperation in education, culture and sports, and thus to obtain firm confidence from the international community. It is necessary to make Japan more open to the international community.

With this in mind, the Government positively supports exchange and cooperation in various fields such as education, technology, culture etc. and the international exchange activities provided by private associations.

With regard to participation in international cooperation in education for developing countries, based on the Official Development Assistance (ODA) Charter (adopted by the Cabinet in August 2003), the Government is actively promoting support for education and human resources development in developing countries, by utilizing Japanese human resources and experiences in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

10. Coping with the Age of Information

The New IT Reform Strategy (January 2006) was developed as the government's IT strategy after FY2006, amid further progress in information and telecommunications technology, such as broadband internet. In this Strategy, new objectives were included; specifically, "to build a nation which is renowned to the world as the frontrunner of the next generation IT reform and to complete IT reform by FY2010." Following this, based on the Strategy, the Government formulated "Priority Policy Plan - 2008" in August 2008 and is committed to the promotion of informatization in areas such as education, scientific technology/academics, sport and culture.

(1) Correspondence of Elementary and Secondary School Education to the Computerized Society

It is becoming increasingly important for elementary and lower secondary education to empower children to acquire the "ability to utilize information," so that they can handle information in an appropriate manner and develop the capacity to proactively respond to the information society. There is a pressing need for schools to respond to informatization, and children using ICT, such as computers, Internet, and digital cameras, as learning materials, is now an ordinary scene. It has also become important for teachers to conduct lessons effectively using ICT as one of the instruction tools to carry out "understandable lessons" which would lead to "solid academic performance." Furthermore, it is important to promote informatization of school work, which would reduce the work load on teachers and secure time to spend with children. These matters are aimed at improving education and it is extremely important to promote the informatization of education in the rapidly progressing information society.

To that end, "improvement of learning activities to enable students to appropriately use information devices, such as computers, and information and telecommunications networks" and "cultivation of information ethics" are included in the new courses of study for elementary schools and lower secondary schools, which will be partially implemented in April 2009 prior to full-scale implementation, to improve information education, thereby enhancing the efforts towards smooth and solid implementation of new courses of study.

Through the collection and provision of pioneering and effective practical research concerning informatization of education and examples of advanced ICT utilization, efforts are being made for the development of the ICT environment in schools, the improvement of teachers' capacity to teach ICT, the promotion of informatization of school work, and the development of advanced ICT human resources, etc., in addition to the promotion of information ethics education in dealing with negative aspects of informatization. Furthermore, the development of an ICT support system for schools is

promoted by implementing study and research activities concerning the approaches taken by local communities and schools to the progress of informatization of schools in a planned and organized manner. Such approaches include formulating a plan to develop the ICT environment for schools and establish teacher support systems, etc.

In the future, based on the objectives listed in the “New IT Reform Strategy” (January 2006) and various recommendations included in the “Basic Plan for Promotion of Education” (July 2008), the Government is determined to actively promote the informatization of education at the level of elementary and lower secondary education.

(2) Correspondence of Higher Education to the Computerized Society

As information communication technology advances, there is an increasing necessity for effective and efficient education to meet the demand for the advancement and diversification of educational content. As an educational method meeting such needs, the introduction of education utilizing ICT, such as e-learning, is being promoted. Based on the “New IT Reform Strategy” (January 2006), the Government is making efforts for further improvements aimed at more than doubling the proportion of departments and faculties that conduct remote education using the Internet by the 2010 school year.

The Government will work toward improving the foundations of IT environment and increasing students’ information literacy, and will also establish specialty courses and information-related courses with the aim of fostering specialists who will play an important role in developing the advanced information telecommunication network-based society of the future.

(3) Correspondence of Lifelong Learning and Social Education to the Computerized Society

In the field of lifelong learning, in response to the change in information and telecommunications, since April 2008 the Government has been distributing information concerning school education and social education, training and learning programs via the Education and Learning Network (EL Net), which has been converted from a satellite communication system to an internet system. Also, the Government is conducting research studies that are necessary to contribute to the promotion of lifelong learning.

(4) Correspondence of the Technological and Scientific Fields to the Computerized Society

In the fields of technology and science, in order to maintain the highest research environment level in the world and improve the level of research studies, the Government will promote the development of infrastructures for science and technology information and computerization in these fields.

Furthermore, the Government will also promote creative research developments in the field of information telecommunication in order to meet the progress of the advanced information telecommunication network society.

(5) Correspondence of Cultural Fields to the Computerized Society

In the cultural field, for the maintenance of an information foundation that provides and transmits comprehensive information relevant to culture in and out of the country, the Government has been promoting the development of a cultural policy information system. In order to correspond to the increase in the number of people who are studying Japanese at home and abroad and various other demands for learning Japanese, the Government has also been promoting the development of a comprehensive network system to support Japanese education. Furthermore, the Government will work further toward establishing a media art plaza in response to the diversification of the media, and a digital library on culture that will record and collect contemporary performing arts by advanced digital technology and provide such contents to the public through the Internet, etc. In the field of cultural property, the Government promotes the creation of digital archives in museums and art galleries, etc., and promotes “Cultural Heritage Online,” which is an Internet portal site where information on national and regional cultural heritage, whether tangible or intangible, can be gathered together.

(6) Response to the “Negative Aspect of Informatization”

People have raised the issue of lack of face-to-face communication and attenuation of human relationships along with an increased opportunity for communication on the Internet, brought about by the penetration of information and communications technology. Illegal and harmful information is prevalent on the Internet, and therefore, it is now necessary to respond to the so-called “negative aspect of informatization.” Furthermore, cyber-bullying via blogs, mobile phones and email has become a social issue involving children. In order to respond to these issues, the Government is taking various actions, such as promoting information ethics education in schools, implementing courses for teachers, parents and guardians, and campaigning for measures against harmful information.

11. Buildings for Educational Facilities

(1) Approach to the Educational Facilities in Response to the New Era

a. Basic view for educational facilities

Educational facilities include elementary and lower secondary schools and sports and cultural facilities, which serve as community bases, as well as university facilities, which serve as centers for developing excellent human resources and for academic and research activities. These facilities play a significant role as bases for the implementation of educational policies.

MEXT meets the people's needs for lifelong learning, culture and sports and promotes the construction of comfortable and splendid educational facilities that are suitable as places for learning and spending time in for all children and students. Also, in order to protect the lives of children and students amid the increasing awareness of disaster and crime prevention, the Government is making efforts to ensure the safety and security of educational facilities. The Government is also committed to the advancement and revitalization of facilities and equipment of national universities and the creation of education and research environments to explore the future, in response to the ever increasing public expectation of universities to fill the role of creation and succession of knowledge in the 21st century, which is often referred to as "the Century of Knowledge."

b. Laying down the Guidelines for Upgrading of School Facilities

School facilities must secure an exuberant facility environment in which the children may experience an exciting education and daily life. The facility must also provide the necessary functions for corresponding to the diversification of the contents and methods of education.

In order to promote the upgrading of facilities with such functions, MEXT formulated the "Guidelines for Upgrading of School Facilities," which describes the points to be noted for planning and designing such facilities in accordance with school types, such as elementary schools and lower secondary schools. This guideline presents the policies for facility development to support children's self-initiative activities, and policies for the development of safe, comfortable and pleasant facilities, and policies for facility development in cooperation with the community.

MEXT conducts periodic reviews of the Guidelines for Upgrading of School Facilities, in order to respond to changes in the content and methods of learning and in social conditions, and notifies the prefectural Board of Education of the revised guidelines.

(2) Measures to Ensure Safety and Security of Public School Facilities

School facilities where schoolchildren spend almost all day are of great significance as educational environments to foster zest for living in schoolchildren.

Furthermore they also serve as temporary evacuation centers for local residents when disasters such as earthquakes occur. Therefore, to ensure safety of school facilities is particularly important.

According to a survey conducted by MEXT in April 2007, however, less than 60% of public elementary and junior high school (including the first half of secondary school) were earthquake resistant. Promoting improvement in earthquake resistance is an urgent task.

Also, many of the public school facilities were constructed during the period between 1965 and 1984 when the number of school children radically increased, so a number of buildings are now old. As of May 2007, the percentage of public elementary schools aged between 20 and 29 years is about 36%, and those aged over 30 years is about 42%; taking measures against aging school facilities is also an important issue.

Local governments, founders of schools, need to consider these situations and to improve school facilities systematically. Because of that, MEXT has provided and enhanced state subsidies for improving public school facilities works such as construction, enlargement reconstruction, seismic reinforcement and innovation, to help local governments implement improving public school facilities appropriately. In FY2006, MEXT changed parts of subsidies into *the Grants to Create Safe and Secure Schools*, mainly for improving earthquake resistance works so as to increase the discretion of the local governments and to promote efficient improvement of facilities.

MEXT has provided support for creating favorable educational environments.

Under the severe financial circumstances of recent years, when improving public school facilities, it is maybe useful to introduce PFI (Private Finance Initiative), which is a method of utilizing private funds. Under this initiative, private groups are in charge of a range of works from design, construction to management of public school facilities in a lump, and we can expect reduction of expenditures and improvement in the level of services.

(3) Building Educational Facilities in Coordination with the Community

a. Improvement of school facilities as centers of the community

Schools are places of learning for school children and are at the same time centers of various activities, such as lifelong learning activities and exchange activities for local residents, including the elderly.

MEXT takes the importance of collaboration and cooperation with local communities, homes and schools into consideration, and makes efforts for the improvement of schools' facilities as community centers by, for example, presenting the methods of promoting the development of schools' facilities as community centers.

b. Promotion of barrier-free school facilities

It is necessary to give consideration so that all students, with or without disabilities, can have safe and smooth school lives. Therefore, it is important to

promote barrier-free school facilities, in order to enable schools to play the roles as local community centers, and temporary evacuation sites for the local residents in the event of a disaster.

Thus, based on the guidelines stipulating the basic concepts concerning the promotion of barrier-free school facilities, MEXT has been promoting barrier-free school facilities by, for instance, compiling exemplary cases to introduce systematic efforts for barrier-free facilities. Furthermore, MEXT provides support for barrier-free efforts by local government, for example, by providing government subsidies to make things such as slopes and toilets for the disabled, in order to make facilities barrier free.

c. Utilization of vacant classrooms and closed school facilities

Recently, with the decrease in the number of children due to declining birthrate, there are a growing number of vacant classrooms and closed school facilities. Since school facilities serve as centers of diverse activities for local residents, it is important to utilize vacant schools and closed school facilities effectively, in accordance with the conditions and needs of each school and community. Currently, these facilities are utilized as exchange spaces, counseling rooms and so on for schoolchildren and are utilized in diverse ways by the community. They are also converted into facilities such as welfare service institutions for children and as community centers.

MEXT has compiled and distributed pamphlets which has introduced the examples so that vacant classrooms and closed school facilities can be effectively used. MEXT also revised the property disposition procedures in March 2007 to convert the vacant classrooms or closed school facilities into facilities other than schools, in an attempt to make the conversion procedures even more simplified and flexible, thereby supporting the effective utilization of such properties through creative implementation of local governments' initiatives.

(4) Building Environmentally Friendly Educational Facilities

a. Promotion of Eco-Schools (environmentally-friendly school facilities)

Environmental issues, such as global warming, have been propelled to the forefront of the international arena in recent years, and Japan is required to actively promote environmental measures. As for school facilities, energy use is expected to increase when higher functions and better comforts are pursued. Therefore, it is important to have a view to reduce environmental load in the development, maintenance and management of school facilities.

It is also necessary to implement environmental education and energy conservation activities using school facilities that have been developed with this view in mind.

In order to contribute to the reduction of environmental load and environmental education, MEXT has been making efforts for the development and enhancement of

eco-schools by conducting pilot model projects (dissemination/enlightenment projects) in public schools, in cooperation with related ministries and agencies.

b. Improvement of outdoor educational environment and facilities

In order to develop indomitable and tolerant children, it is necessary to improve outdoor educational environments and facilities of schools, such as turfing school grounds and making school biotope. Turfing school grounds is expected to bring about educational effects and environmental conservation effects, such as revitalization of sports activities and improvement in environmental education.

MEXT has provided subsidies for turfing public school grounds. Altogether, there are 337 schools more than 300m² of whose grounds has turfed with the subsidies during the period between FY1997 and FY2006.

c. Utilization of lumber for school facilities

Lumber, the traditional constructional materials in Japan, are effective for promoting warm and pleasant educational environments and contributing to the development of indomitable and tolerant children. Also, they are expected to cultivate affection for school facilities and promote understanding of the regional culture.

MEXT provides state subsidies to local governments not only for construction and reconstruction of wooden school facilities but also for renovation works using lumber for the floors, walls and interiors of existing school facilities in order to promote the use of lumber for school facilities.

(5) Measures for Indoor Environment of Educational Facilities

MEXT promotes environmental measures, which include those to prevent indoor air pollution, in order to help school children lead healthy and comfortable school lives.

Specifically, the harmful effect (or the so-called “Sick-House Syndrome”) caused by indoor air polluted with chemical substances evaporated from building materials has become a serious issue, and preventive measures are necessary for school buildings. MEXT formulated a pamphlet listing major measures concerning indoor air pollution when developing school facilities and distributed it to each prefectural board of education. The “Guidelines for Upgrading of School Facilities” contains some measures; for example, schools shall confirm that the level of chemical substances is below the reference value before the building is handed over.

Furthermore, with regards to what is termed the “Asbestos Issue,” reports of health hazards at business facilities raised serious concerns in 2005. In response, MEXT implements nation-wide surveys on the use of sprayed asbestos in school facilities, in order to absolutely ensure the safety of children.

Based on the results of the surveys, MEXT is implementing measures against asbestos by providing necessary financial support for founders of school facilities and by notifying them of points to consider, listing specific measures and methods.

(6) Improvement of national universities' facilities, etc.

a. Measures to develop and improve education/research environment

University facilities in Japan have been integrated with education and research activities, while responding to the expansion of higher education and progress in academic research and meeting the various needs of a given time, and have formed the foundation to support education and research activities. MEXT is actively committed to the development and improvement of university facilities, while remaining aware that universities are: places where intellectual creation activities and inheriting intellectual property happen; places to conduct creative and advanced academic research activities and develop creative people; places whose facilities should be developed and improved to open the way to the future of Japan.

Among national universities' facilities occupying approximately 25 million m², those constructed more than 25 years ago and currently in need of large-scale renovations account for 8.3 million m² (as of May 1, 2007). The figure tends to increase further due to degradation with age. These aged facilities are facing various problems which require urgent renovations: for instance, safety problems related to seismic capacity, functional problems related to the aging of facilities for electricity and water supply, information facilities, and management problems related to inefficient energy consumption.

Approximately 2.8 million m² of cramped facilities needs to be eliminated (as of May 1, 2007). The development is required in order to respond to newly established graduate schools and education and research activities of young researchers.

In response to the third basic plan for science and technology which was approved by the Cabinet in March 2006, MEXT drew up the Second Five-Year Program for Emergency Renovation and Building of Facilities of National Universities ("The Second Five-Year Program") in April 2006 to promote the development of facilities of national universities in a focused and planned manner. The program identifies the revitalization of aged facilities as a priority issue.

The program aims to regenerate fundamental facilities for the development of outstanding human resources and centers of excellence in research which conduct world class advanced research activities, by eliminating the cramped facilities and renovating the aged facilities. Among 10 million m² of area to be developed for national universities (as of the end of FY2005), approximately 5.4 million m² is listed as urgently needing development.

b. Promotion of system reform aiming for "Knowledge Center"

National universities, etc., have the responsibility to meet the needs of society and expectations of the people, and must effectively develop and manage their facilities, which are essential bases of operations, in order to carry out education and research, based on their own principles.

From this perspective, each national university, etc., has been promoting system reforms, such as facility management aiming for effective and flexible use of facilities, and a new method of development, such as facility development by soliciting donations.

Chapter 3. Qualitative and Quantitative Achievements and Remaining Issues

1. Access to Education

As described in Part I, Chapter 1 regarding the basic principles of education in Japan, the Constitution guarantees access to education and equity in education to all Japanese people.

The Basic Act on Education also provides as follows:

- The people shall all be given equal opportunities to receive education according to their ability, and they shall not be subject to educational discrimination on account of race, creed, sex, social status, economic position or family origin;
- The state and local public corporations shall take measures to give financial assistance to those who have, in spite of their ability, difficulty in receiving education for economic reasons;
- The people shall be obliged to ensure that boys and girls under their protection receive nine years' general education.
- No tuition fees shall be charged for compulsory education in schools established by the state and local public corporations.

Under the principles of the Constitution and the Basic Act on Education and as provided by the School Education Act and other related laws and ordinances, compulsory education is provided for all Japanese people, free of charge, for nine years in total (six years in elementary school and three years in lower secondary schools), and various measures are implemented to avoid inequality in access to education and unfairness in education due to sexual difference, economic disparity, and physical or intellectual disabilities. The specific systems for achieving this end are described below.

While distributing textbooks free of charge to all children enrolled in compulsory education, as mentioned in Part I, Chapter 4. 2(2) above, the Government bears, in principle, half of the expenses incurred by prefectural governments for paying salaries to teachers working at public schools of compulsory education stages, in accordance with the principle of providing compulsory education free of charge, ensuring equal opportunities for education.

In Japan, access to basic education for nine years is guaranteed under the Constitution and relevant laws, and access to education at upper secondary schools is also provided for many people as about 97% of graduates of lower secondary schools go on to upper secondary schools. In order to facilitate access to education other than school education, MEXT is working on the following measures.

- Improving the functioning of social educational facilities such as citizens' public halls and revitalizing such facilities
- Providing more learning opportunities with the use of various communication

media such as the Internet, television, movies, and DVDs

- Making classrooms and other school facilities open to the community (as places where children engage in activities at weekends or as a base for various activities by local residents)

Thus, by providing learning opportunities other than school education and facilitating access to education, it will be possible to correct regional and economic disparity in education and assure equity in education.

2. The Role of the Education System in Combating Poverty as well as Other Forms of Social Exclusion and Cultural Marginalization

Education is important social capital that brings about the development of the country. In particular, basic education is essential for the acquisition of the knowledge, values, and skills that form the basis of people's lives. The dissemination of basic education is believed to make a significant contribution to poverty reduction.

Article 26 of the Constitution of Japan stipulates: "All people shall have the right to receive an equal education correspondent to their ability, as provided for by law. All people shall be obligated to have all boys and girls under their protection receive ordinary education as provided for by law. Such compulsory education shall be free."

Article 4 of the Basic Act on Education stipulates: "All people shall be given equal opportunities to receive education according to their abilities, and shall not be subject to discrimination in education on account of race, creed, sex, social status, economic position or family origin." Japan thus provides its people equal opportunity in education regardless of race or social status, etc.

Under these legal grounds, the educational system in Japan has realized the principles of equal opportunity, etc., raised the level of education of the people, and made considerable contributions to the development of society through the development of human resources. As a result, Japan has accomplished great achievements, and realized an affluent economic society and safe and secure living conditions in the post-war era.

Chapter 4. Inclusive Education — the Way of the Future

1. Approaches, Scope and Content

Japan aims to build a society in which all people can receive education, irrespective of age, sex, social status, economic position or family origin. The Constitution of Japan guarantees “academic freedom” and states that “all people shall have the right to receive an equal education correspondent to their ability, as provided for by law” and that “all people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin.”

Based on the constitution, equality in educational opportunity is proclaimed in the Basic Act on Education, revised in 2006: “All people shall be given equal opportunities in education according to their abilities, and shall not be subject to discrimination in education on account of race, creed, sex, social status, economic position or family origin.”

Orientation towards an inclusive educational system for persons with disabilities is seen as a major trend of the international community. In Japan, the 2006 revised Basic Act on Education added the provision, “The national and local governments shall provide educational support to persons with disabilities, to ensure that they are given sufficient education in accordance with their condition,” targeting all the stages of education. The system for the promotion of Special Needs Education has been drastically revised based on the recent trends surrounding education for children with disabilities, such as the emergence of children with severe/multiple disabilities in special schools separated by every type of disability, and the growing need for appropriate guidance necessary to support children with disabilities in elementary and lower secondary schools. Specifically, the School Education Act was amended in 2006, and now stipulates the establishment of School for Special Needs Education that can accommodate several types of disabilities in one school and the promotion of Special Needs Education in all schools, including regular schools. The Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education, which was adopted by the Cabinet in July 2008, lists the promotion of Special Needs Education in elementary schools and lower secondary schools, such as the formulation of individualized teaching plans etc., as one of the priority tasks among those to be addressed in the next five years.

Education is offered free of charge to foreign children living in Japan who wish to study at public compulsory education schools, thus guaranteeing foreign children the opportunity to access the same education as Japanese students, by provisions including distribution of free textbooks and financial assistance, etc. Since many foreign children do not learn Japanese prior to coming to Japan and hence enter an environment with a different language and lifestyle, a system has been developed to

provide appropriate Japanese instruction and guidance to help them adapt to school life.

For those who have difficulty in going to school due to economic reasons, the Basic Act on Education stipulates, “The national and local governments shall institute measures to provide financial assistance to those who encounter economic difficulties in receiving education in spite of their ability.” Furthermore, the School Education Act provides that municipal governments shall provide necessary financial assistance to those who have financial difficulty in sending their children to school (Article 19). The Government has taken measures to reduce or exempt school fees, including the system to provide free textbooks for compulsory education, and it offers a school lunch assistance program for children from low-income families receiving compulsory education. The national and municipal government also supports higher education (university, etc.) through scholarship programs.

In addition, the Government is committed to the provision of equal opportunity in education to various types of learners. The 2006 revised Basic Act on Education sets forth the principle of lifelong learning: “Measures shall be taken to create a society in which each individual can learn throughout their lives, at every opportunity and in every setting, and apply the outcomes of lifelong learning appropriately to improve themselves and lead a fulfilling life,” which is identified as a fundamental principle of education. Under this legal framework, the government implements measures to meet the advancing and diversifying needs of the people through the following activities: effectively utilizing broadcasting media, such as television and radio; improving and developing the Open University of Japan, which provides a wide range of people with access to university education; promoting the education of specialized training colleges, which provide practical vocational education and specialized technology education; disseminating and promoting correspondence social education, accredited by MEXT as one form of correspondence education offered by school corporations or incorporated nonprofit organizations that should be promoted for social education purposes; and promoting cooperation with private education institutions, which play an important role in supporting various learning activities of the people.

2. Public Policies

As described above, in recent years, public policies are actively linked to the support for disabled children, foreign children and those facing financial difficulties in going to school, among various types of inclusive education in Japan.

As for education for children with disabilities, both the number of students receiving special support in resource rooms* or those in classes for Special Needs Education at regular schools (approximately 158,000 as of May 2007) and the number of students attending Schools for Special Needs Education (approximately 58,000 as of May 2007) are increasing, and currently about 2.0% of children receive Special Needs Education in various forms. For instance, (1) in regular classes, children receive tailored education through, for example, team teaching, small-group instruction, instruction according to different achievement levels as well as teaching at resource rooms, with unique teaching contents /methods and support assistants. Also at (2) Schools for Special Needs Education and classes for special needs of elementary schools or lower secondary schools, children are taught by special curriculum in small classes by teachers with specialist knowledge and experience, using various resources, specially developed textbooks, and facilities/equipment designed with consideration of disabilities.

As for policy making, Mext facilitates the improvement of national standards, considering various indexes, such as the condition of student enrollment, support systems in school and teachers' specialties, and actively provides these information to the boards of education and concerned parties. Specifically, the establishment rate of in-school committees and the appointment rate of Special Needs Education coordinators are used as indexes to measure the progress in developing support systems, and both rates reached 99.5% in public elementary and lower secondary schools in 2007. Improvement of the figures of kindergartens and upper secondary schools is included in the "Five Year Plan for Implementation of Priority Measures" (FY2008–FY2012) adopted by the Headquarters for Promoting Measures for Persons with Disabilities.

* Special support service in resource rooms is a form of education designed to enable children with relatively mild disabilities, such as speech impediments, emotional disturbances, weak eyesight, and hearing difficulties, who attend regular elementary or lower secondary school classes for most subjects, to receive Special Needs Education that is required to improve or overcome the various difficulties associated with their disabilities, in a special setting (resource rooms).

As of May 2007, about 5,400 students with disabilities (about 0.17% of the total number of students) are enrolled in higher education institutions (source: Japan Student Services Organization).

Universities take various measures for schooling support programs for students with disabilities. Pre-admission measures include entrance exams offered in Braille or enlarged letters for the National Center Test for University Admissions or for

admission screening by each university, offering longer exam durations, and setting up special exam centers. Post-entrance measures include extending the time allowed for regular exams, allocating note takers, and developing facilities to accommodate disability-related needs, such as elevators and ramps. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology provides certain financial assistance to universities and has established Tsukuba University of Technology, a national higher educational institution for the hearing impaired and the visually impaired.

The number of foreign students enrolled in Japanese public elementary, middle and high schools is approximately 73,000 in total, as of May 2007, among which the number of foreign students in need of Japanese language instruction is about 25,000 as of September 2007.

It is important for these returnee and foreign children in Japan to adapt themselves to circumstances at Japanese schools smoothly, to develop the attributes fostered through experience in other countries, and to promote education for international understanding through mutual enlightenment with other students by making use of these attributes.

Therefore, MEXT allocates additional teachers to teach Japanese, etc. to foreign children living in Japan, offers Japanese teaching training for teachers dealing with foreign children, formulates and distributes guidebooks for schooling and Japanese learning materials such as “Let’s Learn Japanese (Nihongo o Manabou)”, and develops and disseminates the JSL (Japanese as a second language) curriculum. Furthermore, MEXT implements a “Project Promoting Acceptance of Japanese Children Returning from Overseas and Foreign Schoolchildren” to support model schemes of local governments, regarding the general framework of local schools for accepting returnee and foreign children and the promotion of the schooling of foreign children (See Part I, Chapter 7-6 “Education for Japanese Children Living Overseas, Returnee Children and Foreign Children in Japan”).

The financial aid program for those with financial difficulties in attending schools provides financial assistance to under-privileged people who require public assistance or to people identified by municipal boards of education as needing associate assistance. This assistance includes the provision of subsidies for general school supplies, physical education equipment, school supplies for new students, school shoes, going to school expense, medical care, school lunches, and transportation costs for field trips and out-of-school activities, etc.

Scholarship programs are important educational measures, offered by local governments and public-interest corporations and schools — including the Japan Student Services Organization (Independent Administrative Institution), which conducts national scholarship schemes — who aim to provide equal opportunities in education and human resources development. The Japan Student Services Organization targets outstanding students facing financial difficulties in receiving education from universities, junior colleges, graduate schools, colleges of technology,

and specialized training college courses, and provides two types of loans: interest-free loans and interest-bearing loans (no interest is charged to borrowers while studying and a maximum interest of 3% is charged after graduation)

3. Systems, Links and Traditions

Regarding economic, political and social barriers to inclusive education, the Basic Act on Education prohibits such discrimination, and the Government has established the following measures and systems in Japan, with an aim to create a society in which all people have access to education.

With respect to economic barriers in particular, the Government is making efforts to eliminate the barriers through financial assistance programs and scholarship programs, etc., as described above. When local governments provide children with disabilities with assistance for schooling, such as transportation expenses, as a means to reduce the economic burden on the parents and guardians of students with disabilities in Schools for Special Needs Education and classes for Special Needs Education, the national government provides special allowance to cover a part of the cost. The Government also provides assistance with current expenditures to school corporations that have set up private schools for Special Needs Education and classes for Special Needs Education, and to school corporations that have established private kindergartens with at least two infants with disabilities.

School education is, in principle, conducted in joint cooperation among MEXT, prefectural boards of education, municipal boards of education and schools, etc. Nonetheless, it is still important that in addition to education-related parties, other organizations related to welfare, medical/health care, and labor cooperate with each other, in order to promote inclusive education for children with disabilities. MEXT promotes the allocation of special needs coordinators who assume the role of communicating and coordinating with related organizations and serve as contact points for parents and guardians (99.5% allocation rate as of 2007 at public elementary and lower secondary schools). MEXT also encourages them to formulate and utilize individualized education support plans, under cooperation with related organizations, for appropriate support in accordance with individual needs.

Support has been provided as described earlier for foreign students living in Japan who have difficulty in attending school due to financial reasons.

In dealing with truancy, various efforts are made using education support centers which take measures for the prevention and early detection of and early response to truancy. Efforts are also made to develop effective activity programs, in accordance with the conditions of truant students, for external organizations, such as NPOs, so as to provide various forms of support for children unwilling to go to school. When necessary, some flexible responses are also available to accommodate individual cases. For example, taking lessons at organizations other than schools, such as education support centers (adaptation classes) and private establishments, or studying at home using IT devices, is recognized as attendance. Elementary schools, etc., with truant children are allowed to develop special education courses if the need for such measures is found.

In addition, the “Examination for Granting an Equivalency Certificate of Lower

Secondary School Graduation” certifies that a person has an academic ability equivalent to lower secondary school graduates, and grants the person a qualification for admission to upper secondary school, in the case where the parent or guardian of such person has been withheld or exempted from the obligation to send him/her to a compulsory education school due to unavoidable reasons, such as illness. And the “Upper Secondary School Equivalency Examination” certifies that a person has an academic ability equivalent to upper secondary school graduates and grants the person a qualification for admission to university, etc., so that academic achievements of learners who could not graduate from upper secondary school due to various reasons can be appropriately evaluated, and can then be used for purposes including employment. And the other special measures are taken, for example, upper secondary schools and universities recognize the achievements attained at specialized training colleges as credits when some requirements are met.

4. Learners and Teachers

In order to provide educational opportunities to various types of learners, Japan examines and implements specific measures for the promotion of lifelong learning. When the Basic Act on Education was revised in 2006, the “principle of lifelong learning” was added, and the provisions concerning lifelong education and social education were revised. Based on this, the Government has been working on the assistance for learning throughout the life of each individual citizen and the improvement of the educational capacity of the whole of society (See Part II, Chapter 2, “1. Lifelong Learning”).

The Course of Kindergarten Education and the Courses of Study for elementary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools serve as standards of educational courses and set forth the contents of education offered by kindergartens, elementary schools, lower secondary schools and upper secondary schools in Japan. For universities, etc., specific curriculums and methods of higher education are left to their discretion. (See Part I, Chapter 4, “Curriculum and Textbooks”). In particular, The Course of Kindergarten Education and the Courses of Study for elementary, and lower secondary schools were revised in March 2008 with an aim to realize the principle of the current courses of study, namely to foster a “zest for living,” in line with the revised Basic Act on Education and the revised School Education Act.

As for the Special Needs Education, teaching content and methods are devised for each individual educational needs. To that end, children in resource rooms or classes for Special Needs Education at regular schools receive education in line with the Courses of Study for elementary schools and lower secondary schools; however, flexibility is often exercised in accordance with the individual needs of the children by, for example, incorporating the curriculum of Schools for Special Needs Education in accordance with their conditions. The Courses of Study for elementary schools and lower secondary schools were revised in March 2008 and, in order to further promote Special Needs Education in regular schools, specify planned and organized efforts at teaching contents and methods for the individual needs of children with disabilities through means as follows: when necessary, making “Individualized Teaching Plans” that include educational targets, teaching contents and methods for each child with disabilities; and preparing “Individualized Education Support Plans” in order to provide appropriate support on a long-term basis in cooperation with homes and organizations related to medical care, welfare, etc.

Teachers who teach elementary and lower secondary level education in Japan are trained in university programs (including graduate schools and junior colleges) accredited by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. In April 2008, Graduate Schools of Teacher Education specializing in training teachers were established as professional graduate schools, in an effort to develop teachers with high expertise and practical teaching skills and capabilities. The teacher certificate

system is not applied to teachers of higher education institutions, and they are required to meet the qualification requirements individually set in the standards for each school category (Ordinance of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology).

“A system for renewing educational personnel certificate” will be introduced in April 2009. Under this system regular certificates and special certificates will be valid for 10 years and teachers be can renewed upon completing certificate renewal course so that they can acquire the latest knowledge and skills at the time (See Part I, Chapter 5-4 “Development/Certification System and Training for Teachers”).