

Education Rebuilding by Society as a Whole

**A Further Step toward the Rebuilding of the Public Education System
and the Reconstruction of the Basis for a New Era of Education**

Second Report

June 1, 2007

Education Rebuilding Council

Executive Summary

I. Take Every Approach to Boost Academic Ability

—Concrete measures in reviewing current education with reduced classroom hours and curriculum content—

Recommendation 1: Concrete measures for increasing classroom hours by 10%

—Establish flexible classroom-hour setting through arrangements such as utilization of summer and other vacation periods, addition of a 15-minute class in the mornings, and establishment of a schedule of seven classes a day with each class being reduced by 5 minutes. Realize Saturday classes, if necessary—

Recommendation 2: Make classes more understandable and appealing to all the children

—Increase the content and raise the quality of textbooks, review educational content and subjects in response to current social requirements such as citizenship education, make use of IT in all classrooms, consider the “Academy for Development of Teaching” concept, and provide education more customized to a variety of children—

Recommendation 3: Improve teacher quality and increase significantly the hours for communicating and interacting with children

—Promote utilization of special certificates to appoint people from various sectors of society, enhance in-service training to improve the content of classes and skills, establish a flexible pay structure based on teacher assessment, and reduce the burden of teachers’ clerical tasks—

Recommendation 4: Promptly address difficulties faced by schools

—Maintain a crisis-management system at schools, establish a support team for problem-solving and fulfill accountability of schools and boards of education, and thoroughly examine and utilize results of nationwide academic achievement surveys to provide support with allocation of teachers and funding—

Recommendation 5: Support initiatives based on the ingenuity of schools

—Allow more flexibility in standards for classroom organization and expand and enhance achievement-based teaching, broaden the school choice system, and support the development of teaching materials and skills by teams of teachers—

II. Strong Sense of Discipline and Sound Body: Aim for Balanced Character Formation

Recommendation 1: Give all children a strong sense of discipline

—Designate moral education as a school subject and seek its enhancement compared with current “moral education classes”—

Recommendation 2: Inspire and nurture children’s team spirit and sensibilities and broaden their outlook and potential through a variety of hands-on activities

—Provide all children with nature experiences (one week in primary school) and social career experiences (one week in lower secondary school), and make community service experiences mandatory (at upper secondary schools)—

Recommendation 3: Aim at a society that supports parental learning and child-rearing

—Promote relevant moral education through the cooperation of schools, families, and communities, enhance support for education at home and parenting counseling, actively provide information about scientific knowledge, enhance early childhood education, and establish measures against harmful information and material on children—

Recommendation 4: Build a local base for education rebuilding by communities as a whole

—Implement the “After School Hours Plan for Children” nationwide and encourage the creation of school management councils—

Recommendation 5: Build networks for education rebuilding by society as a whole

—Change the mindsets of principals and boards of education, and train and retain local coordinators—

III. Revitalize Universities and Graduate Schools So That They can Contribute to the Progress of Both the Global and Local Community —Thorough university and graduate school reform—

Recommendation 1: Guarantee the quality of university education

—Tighten graduation approval requirements, promote external evaluation, consider comprehensive reform of entrance exams, enhance scholarships and free tuition to motivated students who study hard, and improve the educational skills of professors—

Recommendation 2: Through globally-based, diversified systems and curriculums, aim at creating the kinds of universities at which multi-national, talented students will gather and study

—Widely encourage September matriculation, implement international recruitment of professors, offer more classes in English, promote a foreign student policy as a national strategy, and keep close contact with businesses and society on curriculum reviews and human resource issues—

Recommendation 3: Aim for graduate schools on a world-class educational level (Global standard basis, specialties, human resources mobility)

—Thoroughly implement a systematic and organized education system, create entrant selection procedures open to all nationalities, world-class graduate schools, and financial supports for students—

Recommendation 4: Enhance the level of local university education through cooperation among national, public, and private universities

—Support regional university consortiums and jointly establish graduate schools—

Recommendation 5: Further reform of national universities according to the current requirements of society

—Push bold reorganization and integration forward, set up a system that can operate multiple universities under one national university corporation, and drastically reform the personnel and payroll system—

IV. A Budgetary Basis Suited to a “New Era of Education”

Education rebuilding is the Cabinet’s top priority. Enhancing the content of the education budget is essential to drive forward reforms that reaffirm the basics of education and usher in a “new era of education” by society as whole.

To that end, funding must be secured for an education budget with priorities, promoting thorough efficiency, which is truly necessary for education rebuilding

—Three concrete measures for rebuilding primary and secondary education—

Ensure equal educational opportunities nationwide.

Concrete measure 1: Provide priority support where necessary

Concrete measure 2: Institute a flexible pay structure based on teachers’ efforts

Concrete measure 3: Minimize the difference of educational expenses on a local basis

—Three concrete measures for realizing university and graduate school reform—

Put an emphasis on “selection and concentration,” “diverse funding,” and “allocation based on evaluations.”

Concrete measure 1: Expand and enhance “competitive funding” and achieve efficient distribution

Concrete measure 2: System reform that enables self-help efforts by universities and colleges

Concrete measure 3: Reform of management expenses grants for national university corporations

Four Response Measures

(1) Increase classroom hours by 10% with the aim of improving academic ability.

– Proceed by shortening summer and other vacations, adding a 15-minute class in the mornings, increasing the number of class hours in a day, and taking other measures at the discretion of schools.

Also, make it possible to hold Saturday classes (advanced learning lessons, supplemental learning lessons, period of integrated study, etc.), when necessary, at the discretion of boards of education and schools, while continuing the basic policy of a five-day school week.

Revision of the Teaching Guidelines (Courses of Study) etc. during fiscal 2007

(2) Enhance moral education

– One week of nature experiences in primary school, one week of social career experiences in lower secondary school, and mandatory community service experiences in upper secondary school.

Also, designate moral education as a school subject within a new framework and prepare a variety of textbooks and teaching materials (selected from diverse materials).

(Note: No quantitative assessment. Class teachers are to be in charge of teaching moral education.)

Revision of the Teaching Guidelines (Courses of Study) etc. during fiscal 2007

(3) Institute a flexible pay structure based on teachers' efforts in order to secure good educators.

Revision of the Special Measures Law on Educational Personnel Salaries, etc. prospectively in
April 2008

(4) Reform of universities and graduate schools through a globally-based perspective

– Promote international recruitment of teachers, increase the percentage of non-Japanese teachers, have more classes in English, and a foreign student policy as a national strategy.

Also, give more flexibility to the "April matriculation principle." Support university efforts to realize a "September matriculation quota" at all national universities.

(Widely encourage the adoption of a September matriculation quota)

Amendment of the Enforcement Regulations for the School Education Law during fiscal 2007, support with guidelines for the establishment

of mid-term objectives by national universities, and management expenses grants, etc.

Secure funding for an education budget with priorities, promoting thorough efficiency, which is truly necessary for education rebuilding—