

Education Rebuilding by Society as a Whole

Toward Ensuring its Effectiveness

Final Report

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Education Rebuilding Council

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Education Rebuilding by Society as a Whole (Final Report)

Toward Ensuring its Effectiveness

Introduction

The Education Rebuilding Council was tasked to fundamentally reconsider the education system in Japan and issued three reports.

The original goal of education rebuilding is the establishment of a public education system truly trusted by children’s parents or guardians, the public, and society as a whole—the kind of education that is expected. The members of the Education Rebuilding Council have debated from their various standpoints how education in modern-day Japan should be rebuilt. These debates were crystallized into the three reports published to date. We hope that the public, those affiliated with the national and regional administrations, school officials including principals and teachers, university officials, parents or guardians, and community members will take these reports seriously, and we ask for the involvement of society as a whole in the rebuilding of education through every possible opportunity.

While fundamental reforms of the Japanese education system have been proposed through the National Council on Educational Reform and the National Commission on Educational Reform, it is unfortunately difficult to say that these proposals have been sufficiently reflected in educational settings.

In light of this situation, in its final report the Education Rebuilding Council focused on ensuring the effectiveness of the proposals made in the first three reports. We adamantly hope that education rebuilding in which “priority is given to the people”—that is, in which consideration is given to all children, youths and their parents or guardians who are the beneficiaries of education—and education rebuilding that cultivates “self-reliant individuals” with the “spirit to live in mutual cooperation” will be promoted.

Education is a policy and foundation for the nation’s next 100 years. It is the wish of all citizens that the educational environment offers enhancement

of knowledge, morals, and physical health and is well balanced in order to promote sound child development. In light of recent social conditions, the improvement of moral education within school education is particularly necessary. Furthermore, as we are in the midst of an intensely competitive age of “knowledge,” there is fear that unless we invest in education now, Japan will be left behind in this competitive world. Accordingly, it is essential that we secure and invest the funds for the necessary budget allocated for educational rebuilding in a prioritized manner while ensuring thorough efficiency.

1. Toward the realization of proposals

Education rebuilding encompasses a broad range of issues. Focusing on the reform of educational content, the improvement of teacher quality, reform of the education system, involvement by society as a whole, and an emphasis on putting definite reforms into practice, we have narrowed down the issues and made proposals on matters that we feel are important for education rebuilding in Japan in the 21st Century.

The proposals made in the first three reports will only take on meaning once they are all implemented in concrete form. It is important that the practical measures to implement these proposals start in the national and local governments, schools, families, communities, businesses, and society as a whole. Then, these initiatives must be followed up. Below are the main items for implementation and follow up on these proposals.

Educational content

Cultivate moral humans who are mentally and physically healthy

- Designate “moral education” as a school subject, cultivate highly sensitive minds that are self-reflective and considerate of others, and give students a necessary sense of discipline as human beings.
- Cultivate moral humans who are mentally and physically healthy through the involvement of society as a whole by cooperating with families, communities, and schools.
- Promote mental and physical health through physical education.
- Maintain zero tolerance for bullying and violence and create orderly classrooms where children can learn quietly.
- Make it possible for students to have an enjoyable and fulfilling school life by working actively on hands-on activities, sports, artistic and cultural activities and attaching importance to early childhood education, and nurture a spirit of mutual cooperation with people, society, and nature by enhancing volunteer and community service experiences.

Make utmost efforts to improve academic ability

- Take concrete measures in reviewing current education with reduced classroom hours and curriculum content. Improve basic academic ability by establishing flexible hours through arrangements such as the utilization of summer, Saturday, and other vacation periods.
- Improve textbook content toward utilizing advanced learning lessons and supplemental lessons. Encourage advanced students to move ahead and provide patient and individualized instruction to those who need more time to learn. Revise the Teaching Guidelines (Courses of Study) as required.
- Start English education at the elementary school level, and drastically improve English education in lower and upper secondary schools and universities in order to fundamentally reform English education.
- Make classes more understandable and appealing in order to improve children's motivation to learn. Nurture students' appetite for learning and study habits by making use of homework and tests, through morning reading activities, and by introducing classes taught by outstanding senior students, citizens, university professors, and others.
- Reform "standardization" and the "bureaucratic formalism," and encourage each and every child to push their potential to the limit.
- Promote the "University-Launched Education Assistance Consortium", which is a network of universities and boards of education and make use of the wisdom of universities to improve school education.

Educational settings: Building schools that live up to the trust of parents or guardians

- Push each child's abilities to the limit and aim to develop schools from which students can graduate with pride.
- Break down the "lack of transparency" and "opaque decision-making process," disclose information to communities and parents or guardians as much as possible, and make it possible for diverse human resources to support reform through involvement in schools.

- Do away with “false egalitarianism,” encourage friendly rivalry in educational settings, and support outstanding schools and teachers.
- Establish a responsibility scheme for schools, maintain a crisis management system, and build a management system centered on principals.
- The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and boards of education should trust schools and actively support each school’s efforts to make forward-looking reforms and improvement.

Educational support systems

- Clarify “responsibility and authority,” and continually review the division of roles between the national government, boards of education, and schools.
- Reform the “tendency to avoid confronting problems.” Boards of education should fulfill their accountability to local communities and flexibly respond to problems in schools.
- Do away with administrative “sectionalism.” Administrations in all relevant fields including education, welfare, police, labor, and law enforcement should cooperate to promote sound child development.

Fundamental reform of universities and graduate school education: Creating world-class universities and graduate schools

- Universities should guarantee the quality of graduates by raising “the quality of university education” and tightening assessment of academic grades.
- Universities must place priority on liberal arts education, deepen ties with industry, and produce graduates who have the fundamental and technical competencies as members of society.
- Universities should promote reform through the leadership of their presidents, “break down the walls between departments,” and rebuild

their educational organizations in order to contribute to the pioneering and creation of new academic fields and the development of society.

- Graduate schools should make an effort to appoint first-rate teachers through international recruitment and secure high-quality students from within and outside Japan, and pursue world-class educational and research standards that can stand up to international competition.
- Promote the joint establishment of graduate schools by national, public, and private universities and the joint implementation of undergraduate education in local communities through cooperation among national, public, and private universities.
- National university corporations should not be concerned about capacity vacancy and push forward “reorganization and integration” as necessary to improve the standard of education.
- Improve investment in higher education while pushing reforms forward in order to strengthen the international competitiveness of universities and graduate schools. Reevaluate the present way of handling basic expenses at an appropriate time in the future while expanding competitive funding.

Society as a whole

- Each and every member of society—aware of their respective roles as actors within schools, families, communities, businesses, organizations, the media, government, and other groups—should feel a sense of responsibility to get involved actively in education rebuilding.
- The different members of society should cooperate in bringing the above described education rebuilding to fruition by fulfilling their responsibilities.

2. Initiatives to realize the proposals made thus far

The promulgation of laws and ordinances and other institutional reforms, the securing of budgets, and other concrete initiatives have been undertaken by the national, prefectural, and municipal governments, relevant organizations, and society as a whole in order to carry out the proposals made thus far by the Education Rebuilding Council. Community-level initiatives have also been undertaken, including the establishment of “support teams for school problem-solving.”

However, to ensure that these reforms are changes truly made for education rebuilding, it is important that institutions are not merely reformed and budgets secured; these systems and budgets must be implemented in educational fields in accordance with the objectives and purpose of education rebuilding. Specific measures need to be formulated and those measures, including the following main initiatives put into practice at the national government level so far, need to be followed up as to how they are actually being implemented.

(◇ indicates a revision of laws and ordinances)

Education Rebuilding Council's main recommendations	Main items put into practice so far at the national government level
Form well-balanced characters in terms of both strong sense of discipline and sound body through moral education, hands-on activities, parental-learning, and child-rearing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Budget bill for FY2008. • Rural Exchange Project for children (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications; Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries) • Promotion of the After School Hours Plan for Children (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare) • Program for regional headquarters for school support

<p>Response to the bullying problem.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Opened a “24-hour bullying hotline” including holidays (February 2007). ○ Reviewed the teacher instruction directives from the late 1940s on dealing with children who engage in violence or other antisocial behavior. (School Suspension System and Disciplinary Punishment of Children) (February 2007)
<p>Reconsider current education with reduced classroom hours and curriculum content. Improve academic ability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Report on the revision of the Teaching Guidelines (Courses of Study) submitted by the Central Council for Education (January 2008). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase classroom hours by 10% for Japanese language, social studies, arithmetic and mathematics, science, English language education, and physical education. ○ Budget bill for FY2008. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher deployment to enhance the education system to meet special needs. • Utilization of part-time outside lecturers as special teachers in elementary schools.
<p>Improvement of teacher quality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Amendment of the Educational Personnel Certification Law, etc. (approval of three education laws during the last ordinary Diet session). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a teacher license renewal system. • Tightening of personnel management for teachers whose teaching is inappropriate. ○ Budget bill for FY2008. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a well-modulated salary structure (enhance extracurricular club activities allowance, treatment for senior vice principals (fuku-kocho) and managing teachers (shukan-kyoyu).
<p>Establish responsibility scheme for schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Amendment of the School Education Law (approval of three education laws during the last ordinary Diet session). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the new positions of senior vice principal (fuku-kocho) and managing teacher(sukan-kyoyu). ○ Budget bill for FY2008. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand deployment of managing teachers (shukan-kyoyu)

<p>Reform of boards of education.</p>	<p>◇ Amendment of the Law Concerning Organization and Functions of Local Educational Administration (approval of three education laws during the last ordinary Diet session).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection and evaluation of the activities of boards of education. • Instruction of rectification/improvement, and demand of rectification from the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. • Allow flexibility in the number of members of boards of education and obligate the election of parents or guardians. • Transfers within the same municipality based on confidential reports of the municipality's board of education. • Municipalities should promote the joint establishment of boards of education.
<p>Reform of universities and graduate schools.</p>	<p>◇ Abolish the April matriculation principle due to the amendment of the Enforcement Regulations for the School Education Law done to promote September matriculation (December 2007).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Creation of an "Industry-university human resource development partnership" for exchanging opinions between universities and businesses (October 2007). (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry). ○ Budget bill for FY2008. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of the Global COE Program.
<p>Action by society as a whole.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revision of Nippon Keidanren "Outline of the Implementation Guidance for Charter of Corporate Behavior" (countermeasures to harmful information, work-life balance) (April 2007). ○ Enactment of the "Charter for Work-Life Balance" by the Council of Executives of Public and Private Sectors to Promote Work-Life Balance" (December 2007) (Cabinet Office). ○ Request from the Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications to all cell phone companies to expedite the introduction of a filtering function (December 2007).

Modality of educational finance	○ Educational finance reflected in the “2007 Basic Policy for Economic and Financial Reform” (June 2007) and reflected in the budget bill for FY2008.
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3. Toward ensuring the effectiveness of proposals

The Education Rebuilding Council's role concludes with this final report. From now on, the most important thing is to institutionalize and build frameworks for the items proposed in the previous reports and to implement and follow up on the recommendations, considering how to connect the proposals to concrete reforms in educational settings.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and the other relevant ministries need to develop implementation plans and steadily translate the content of the proposals into action.

It is extremely important to establish a new council within the Cabinet to evaluate the status of implementation of proposals in the national government, local governments, schools, and other organizations and to verify their effectiveness so that proposals made in the first three reports do not remain only proposals and to ensure that education rebuilding is truly realized.

With the enforcement of the three education laws and the establishment of the Basic (Promotional) Plan for Education and other actions based on the Fundamental Law of Education, which was revised last year for the first time in 60 years, we will finally enter the full-scale implementation phase of education rebuilding. The key to education rebuilding is in this phase of implementation.

We truly hope that concrete educational rebuilding will be realized for the future of all children and youths, each of who are irreplaceable beings, and for the sound development of our country in the age of globalization.

(Appendix) Follow-up checklist

The proposals made in the first three reports will only take on meaning once they are implemented. Below are the main items that should be checked when following up on proposal implementation.

Checklist items		Actor
Enhancement of moral education and physical education.	<p>【Items that should be implemented immediately】</p> <p>(1) Enhance moral education (designate moral education as a school subject within a “new framework” and prepare a variety of textbooks and teaching materials).</p> <p>(2) Promote hands-on activities (nature experiences and hands-on activities in the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries industries in elementary school, social career experiences in lower secondary school, and community service experiences in upper secondary schools).</p> <p>(3) Respond to the bullying problem (firm instruction, etc., for children who repeat antisocial behavior).</p> <p>(4) Promote child fitness improvement. Provide food education through school lunches.</p>	<p>National government, boards of education, schools.</p> <p>National government, boards of education, schools.</p> <p>Boards of education, schools.</p> <p>National government, boards of education, schools.</p>
	<p>【Item(s) that should be given consideration】</p> <p>(5) Promotion of sports by the national government (creation of Agency for Sports, etc.).</p>	<p>National government.</p>
Improvement of academic ability.	<p>【Items that should be implemented immediately】</p> <p>(1) Reconsider current education with reduced classroom hours and curriculum content and formulate concrete measures to improve basic academic ability (examine the results of nationwide academic achievement and learning status surveys, increase class room hours, make the Teaching Guidelines (Courses of Study) more flexible, increase the content and raise the quality of textbooks, achievement based teaching and small group instruction , strengthen the education system to meet needs</p>	<p>National government, boards of education, schools.</p>

	<p>of children requiring special support, etc.)</p> <p>(2) Deploy special teachers in elementary schools (science, arithmetic, physical education, arts, etc.)</p> <p>(3) Fundamentally reform English and science education.</p>	<p>National government, boards of education.</p> <p>National government, boards of education, schools.</p>
	<p>【Item(s) that should be given consideration】</p> <p>(3) Allow more flexibility in the “6-3-3-4” school system (promote nine-year education at combined primary schools and secondary schools, consider grade-skipping, and promote early university entrance).</p>	<p>National government, universities.</p>
Improvement of teacher quality.	<p>【Items that should be implemented immediately】</p> <p>(1) Review the teacher license renewal system, teacher performance assessment, and add rigor to the process of identifying teachers with little teaching abilities and the changing of their status, offer a well-modulated salary structure, (enhance extracurricular club activities allowance, treatment for senior vice principals (fuku-kocho) and managing teachers (syukan-kyoyu), etc.)</p> <p>(2) Appoint a large number of teachers from among outstanding members of society from various fields (aim to increase appointments by 20% in the next five years using special licenses and part-time teachers).</p> <p>(3) Introduce IT and have clerical tasks jointly handled, to eliminate unnecessary burdens on teachers.</p>	<p>National government, boards of education.</p> <p>Boards of education.</p> <p>National government, boards of education.</p>
	<p>【Item(s) that should be given consideration】</p> <p>(4) Implement a well-modulated salary structure (reconsider the teacher’s salary adjustment)</p> <p>(5) Fundamentally reform teacher training.</p>	<p>National government.</p> <p>National government.</p>

Reform of the education system.	【Items that should be implemented immediately】	
	(1) A responsibility scheme for schools (establishing the positions of senior vice principal (<i>fuku-kochō</i>) and managing teacher (<i>shukan-kyōyū</i>), expand the discretionary authority of the principal regarding budgets and personnel affairs, including how to handle principal's discretionary expenses and system of open recruitment of teachers and extend the principal's term of office; appoint top-caliber private-sector talent as principals, etc., and correct relations with unions).	National government, boards of education, schools.
	(2) A system exploiting people's initiatives directly concerned with education (disclosure of school information, third-party evaluation, and "the school improvement model based on school choice and the budget allocation that takes into consideration number of students").	National government, boards of education, schools.
	(3) Implement appropriate school allocation.	National government, boards of education.
	(4) Reform of boards of education (response to the bullying problem, information disclosure, inspection by the local community and assembly, and expansion of boards of education in small municipalities, etc.).	Boards of education, local governments.
	(5) Establish "support teams for school problem-solving" at every board of education within five years.	Boards of education.
	(6) Prepare and publish a Public Education Expense Map (show the status of measures under the local allocation tax system, including books and teaching materials expenses, IT maintenance costs, and the cost of implementing the After School Hours Plan for Children).	National government.
	(7) Promote the concept of a "university-launched education assistance consortium."	Universities, boards of education, etc.
【Item(s) that should be given consideration】		
(8) Ensure adequate staff allocation on a wide regional scale and transfer authority over personnel issues to municipal boards of education.	National government.	

Reform of universities and graduate schools .	<p>【Items that should be implemented immediately】</p> <p>(1) Guarantee the quality of university education (tighten graduation approval requirements).</p> <p>(2) Implement globally-based reform of universities and graduate schools (widely encourage September matriculation and offer more classes in English (current goal is to have 30% of the classes held in English.)).</p> <p>(3) World-class graduate school education (entrant selection procedures open to all nationalities, course work, early graduate school entrance, financial support for graduate students).</p> <p>(4) Further reform of national university corporations (reorganization and integration of national universities and faculties, management reform including presidential selections, and educational system that “breaks down the walls between departments”).</p> <p>(5) Enhance the level of local university education (consortiums of national, public, and private universities; joint establishment of graduate departments, etc).</p> <p>(6) Appropriately evaluate universities and graduate schools and enhance investment in higher education (ensure the securing of basic expenses, expand and enhance “competitive funding,” provide priority allocation based on evaluations, create a system that enables self-help efforts by universities and colleges).</p>	<p>Universities.</p> <p>Universities.</p> <p>National government, universities.</p> <p>National government, universities.</p> <p>National government, universities.</p> <p>National government.</p>
	<p>【Item(s) that should be given consideration】</p> <p>(7) Reconsider the system of university entrance exams provided in the open enrollment at universities.</p>	<p>National government, universities.</p>
	<p>【Items that should be implemented immediately】</p> <p>(1) Strengthen cooperation between families, communities, and schools (completely implement the “After School Hours Plan for</p>	<p>National government, local governments, families, communities,</p>

Action by society as a whole.	<p>Children” nationwide and establish regional headquarters for school-related assistance nationwide, and encourage parental-learning).</p> <p>(2) Urge the media and their sponsors to exercise restraint regarding harmful information in vulgar TV programs, publications, and games.</p> <p>(3) Promote the development of environments that encourage work-life balance.</p> <p>(4) Build networks by society as a whole.</p>	<p>schools.</p> <p>Businesses.</p> <p>National government, local governments, businesses.</p> <p>Local governments, businesses, various organizations, etc.</p>
	<p>【Item(s) that should be given consideration】</p> <p>(5) Comprehensive support for children, youths, and families through cooperation between sectors of education, welfare, police, labor, and law enforcement, etc.</p> <p>(6) Require filtering function on cell phones.</p> <p>(7) Enhancement of early childhood education (consider offering early childhood education free of charge).</p>	<p>National government.</p> <p>National government.</p> <p>National government.</p>