

**THE DEVELOPMENT
OF
EDUCATION IN JAPAN**

National Report of Japan

by

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)

August 2004

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part I: OUTLINE OF EDUCATION IN JAPAN

Chapter 1. Fundamental Principles of Education in Japan

Chapter 2. Japanese Educational System in the Beginning of the 21st Century

1. Institutions of Formal Education

- (1) Kindergartens
- (2) Elementary Schools
- (3) Lower Secondary Schools
- (4) Upper Secondary Schools
- (5) Special Schools and Classes for the Disabled
- (6) Institutions of Higher Education
 - a. Universities
 - b. Junior Colleges
 - c. Colleges of Technology
- (7) Special Training Schools and Others

2. Process for Admission to Schools and Universities

- (1) Admission to Kindergartens
- (2) Admission to Elementary and Lower Secondary Schools
- (3) Admission to Upper Secondary Schools
- (4) Admission to Universities and Junior Colleges

3. Social Education

- (1) Citizens' Public Halls
- (2) Public Libraries
- (3) Museums
- (4) Facilities for Youth Education
 - a. National Olympics Memorial Youth Center (independent administrative institution)
 - b. Independent Administrative Institution National Youth Houses
 - c. Independent Administrative Institution National Children's Centers
- (5) Women's Education Centers
- (6) Audio-visual Centers and Libraries

Chapter 3. Quantitative Development of Education

1. Number of Institutions and Enrollment Therein
2. Proportion of the Age Group Enrolled in Schools and Going On to the

Next Stage of Education

3. Enrollment Classified by Sex
4. Enrollment Classified by Type of Establisher of Schools
5. Enrollment Classified by Type of Course
6. Facilities for Social Education

Chapter 4. Curriculum and Textbooks

1. Curriculum in Kindergartens and Elementary and Secondary Schools
 - (1) General Framework
 - (2) Curriculum in Kindergartens
 - (3) Curriculum in Elementary, Lower and Upper Secondary Schools
 - (4) Education at Schools for the Blind, the Deaf and the Otherwise Disabled
 - a. Composition of Subjects at Schools for the Blind, the Deaf and the Otherwise Disabled
 - b. Learning Hours at Schools for the Blind, the Deaf, and the Otherwise Disabled
2. Textbooks for Elementary and Secondary Schools
 - (1) Authorization and Adoption of Textbooks
 - (2) Distribution of Textbooks
3. Curriculum in Institutions of Higher Education
4. School Calendar

Chapter 5. School Teachers

1. Number of Teachers and Other Personnel by Type of Institution
2. Composition of School Teachers in Japan
 - (1) Number of Teachers Classified by Type of Establisher of Schools
 - (2) Number of Teachers Classified by Sex
 - (3) Number of Teachers Classified by Academic Background
3. Work Load of Teachers
4. Training and Certification of Teachers
5. Appointment of Teachers
6. Economic Status of Teachers

Chapter 6. Educational Administration and Finance

1. Educational Administration
 - (1) Educational Administration at the National Level
 - (2) Educational Administration at the Prefectural Level
 - (3) Educational Administration at the Municipal Level
2. Educational Finance
 - (1) Educational Expenditures of the National Government
 - (2) Educational Expenditures of Prefectural and Municipal Governments

- (3) The Share of Education in National Income and in Public Finance
- (4) Distribution of Public Expenditures for Education by Source
- (5) Sources for School Expenditures
- (6) Financial Aid to Private Educational Institutions
- (7) Scholarship Programs

Chapter 7. International Educational Exchange and Cooperation

1. Educational Cooperation through International Organizations.
2. Exchange of Students
 - (1) Acceptance of Students from Overseas
 - (2) Sending Japanese Students Abroad
 - (3) Exchange of Upper Secondary School Students
3. Exchange of Teachers
 - (1) Sending Teachers Abroad
 - (2) Invitation of Assistant Language Teachers, etc.
4. Exchange of Young People and Women
 - (1) Exchange of Young People
 - (2) Exchange of Women
5. Teaching of the Japanese Language to Foreigners
6. Education for Japanese Children Living Overseas, Returnee Children and Foreign Children in Japan
 - (1) Enhancement of Education for Japanese Children Living Overseas
 - (2) Improving Education for Returnee Children from a Long Stay Overseas and Foreign Children in Japan

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

Chapter 1. Trends in Educational Reform

1. Progress in Educational Reform (Education Reform Plan for the 21st Century and Human Resources Strategy Vision)
2. Efforts for the Amendment of the Fundamental Law of Education and the Formulation of the Basic Promotional Plan for Education
 - (1) Efforts for the Amendment of the Fundamental Law of Education
 - (2) Efforts for the Formulation of the Basic Promotional Plan for Education
3. Comprehensive Five-Day School Week System

Chapter 2. Impending Issues and Governmental Policies

1. Lifelong Learning
 - (1) The necessity of lifelong learning

- (2) Measures taken by MEXT
- 2. Elementary and Secondary Education
- 3. Higher Education
 - (1) Guarantee of the Quality of Universities
 - (2) Incorporation of National Universities
 - (3) Support of University Education Reforms through National, Public, and Private Universities
 - (4) Professional Graduate Schools
- 4. Private Educational Institutions
- 5. Social Education
- 6. Health Education
- 7. Sound Development of Young people
- 8. Physical Education/Sports
- 9. Coping with Internationalization
- 10. Coping with the Age of Information
 - (1) Correspondence of Elementary and Secondary School Education to the Computerized Society.
 - (2) Correspondence of Higher Education to the Computerized Society
 - (3) Correspondence of Lifelong Learning and Social Education to the Computerized Society
 - (4) Correspondence of the Technological and Scientific Fields to the Computerized Society.
 - (5) Correspondence of Cultural Fields to the Computerized Society
 - (6) Corresponding to Cross Sectional Assignments
- 11. Buildings for Educational Facilities
 - (1) Approach to the Educational Facilities in Response to the New Era
 - (2) Establishment of Environmentally-Friendly Educational Facilities
 - a. Promoting the establishment of environmentally-friendly facilities (Eco-schools)
 - b. Securing a Satisfactory Educational Environment
 - (3) Establishment of School Facilities in Cooperation with Communities
 - a. Schools as a local base for the community
 - b. The promotion of barrier-free educational facilities
 - (4) Establishment of Characteristic Educational Facilities
 - a. Laying down the Guidelines for Upgrading of School Facilities
 - b. Utilization of vacant classrooms
 - (5) Improvement of Disaster Prevention Measures for School Facilities
 - a. Promotion of earthquake-resistant measures
 - b. Implementation of Measures for Disaster Restoration
 - (6) Promotion of Safety Control of School Facilities
 - (7) Creation of an Educational Research Environment for the Future
 - a. Developing and enhancing the educational research environment

b. Facility management of universities as “intellectual bases”

Chapter 3. Qualitative and Quantitative Achievements and Remaining Issues

1. Access to Education and Equity in Education
2. Quality (in terms of Relevance) of Education
3. Content of Education (Major Trend and Challenges for Curriculum Development Processes)
4. Partnerships and Participation by Civil Society in the Process of Educational Change (through Town Meetings, Public Comments, and Cooperation with Non-government Bodies)
5. Main Problems and Challenges Facing the Education System at the Beginning of the Twenty-first Century

Chapter 4. High-Quality Secondary Education for All Youth

1. Education and Gender Equality
2. Education for Participation in Society (Special Support Education, Education for Foreign Students)
 - (1) Special Support Education
 - (2) Education for Foreign Students in Japan
3. Education and Ikiru Chikara (Zest for living) (New Course of Study)
4. Quality Education and the Key Role of Teachers
 - (1) Improvement of Teachers' Qualities and Abilities
 - (i) Improving teachers' qualities and abilities through integrated measures
 - a. Developing teachers
 - b. Recruiting teachers
 - c. Training teachers
 - (ii) Evaluating teachers' performance and reflecting it in their treatment
 - (iii) Taking strict measures for teachers with teaching ability problems
 - a. Measures for “teachers who lack teaching ability”
 - b. Strict punishments for teachers who have committed illegal acts
 - (iv) Recruiting people other than teachers
 - (2) Redressing the Complement of Teachers
5. Education for Sustainable Development (Environmental Education)

Part I: OUTLINE OF EDUCATION IN JAPAN

Chapter 1. Fundamental Principles of Education in Japan

Basic principles for Japanese education are defined in the Constitution of Japan enacted in 1946 and the Fundamental Law of Education enacted in 1947.

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 Fundamental Law of Education sets forth the basic national aims and principles of education in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution. The Law defines the central aim of education as "the full development of personality, striving for the rearing of people, sound in mind and body, who shall love truth and justice, esteem the value of the individual, respect labor and have a deep sense of responsibility, and be imbued with an independent spirit, as builders of a peaceful state and society." To achieve this aim, the Law sets forth national principles of education such as equal opportunity of education, nine-year compulsory education, coeducation, and prohibition against partisan political education.

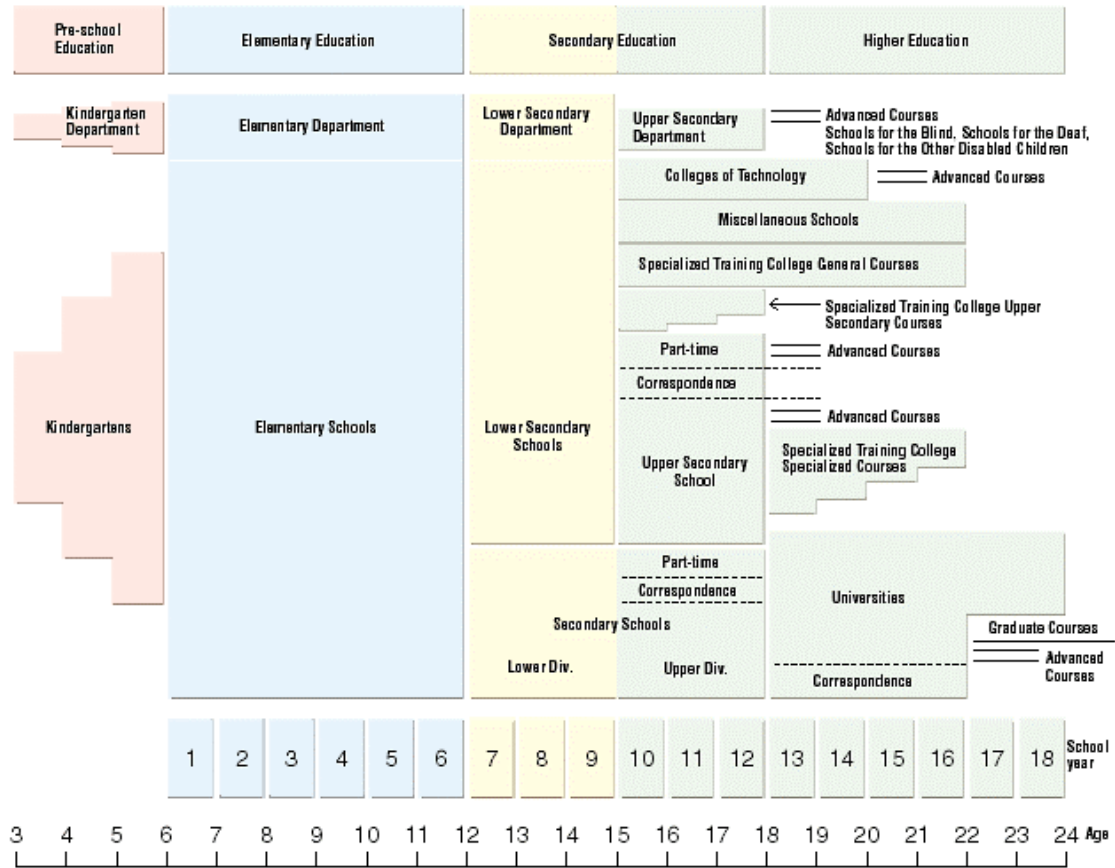
More specific provisions relating to the school system, educational administration, financial support and other matters are specified in the School Education Law and many other education laws and regulations which were enacted based on the spirit of the Fundamental Law of Education.

Chapter 2. Japanese Educational System in the Beginning of the 21st Century

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



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 by providing them with an appropriate educative environment. They cater for preschool children aged three or 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 between the ages of 6 and 12 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 general and specialized secondary education suited to their level of mental and physical development, 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 may be classified broadly into three categories, general, specialized and integrated. 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. There were 516 schools of this kind in 2003.

(5) Special Schools and Classes for the Disabled

Disabled children, who have trouble in fully developing their abilities from the teaching provided in ordinary classes alone, must be given appropriate education based on special considerations according to the type and degree of the individuals' disabilities in order to bring out their maximum ability and potential, and develop the ability to support themselves and participate in society. Therefore, they are provided with special educational treatment in accordance with the kind and degree

of their disorder either at special schools for the disabled (schools for the blind, schools for the deaf and schools for the otherwise disabled) or at special classes or in supplementary courses in ordinary elementary or lower secondary schools. The special educational treatment includes special educational curriculums, small classes, specially prepared textbooks, teachers with specialized knowledge/experience, and facilities/equipment that give consideration to disabilities.

There are three types of special schools for the otherwise disabled: schools for the intellectual disabilities, schools for the physically disabled, and schools for children with health impairment. Special schools for the disabled aim to provide children with comparatively serious disabilities with education equivalent to that available in ordinary kindergartens, elementary or secondary schools, and at the same time, to provide necessary knowledge and skills so as to make up for the students' deficiencies.

Special classes in ordinary elementary and lower secondary schools cater to disabled children whose disabilities are not so serious. These special classes are classified into seven kinds according to the disabilities of children enrolled: the intellectually disabled, the physically disabled, the health impaired/physically weak, the sight impaired, the hearing impaired, the speech impaired, and the emotionally disturbed.

Supplementary courses are for children with relatively less serious disabilities in regular elementary and secondary school classes, in which they can take standard subjects in regular classes and receive special instruction in special classes according to their disabilities. They are provided to children with six types of disabilities: the speech impaired, the emotionally disturbed, the sight impaired, the hearing impaired, the physically disabled, and the health impaired/physically weak.

(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 and provide students with broad knowledge. 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 medical, dental and veterinary courses).

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 course is two years), doctoral degree courses (the standard length of course is five years, except for medical, dental or veterinary courses which 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) Special Training Schools and Others

In addition to the above-mentioned elementary and secondary schools and institutions of higher education, there are a great number of educational establishments called “special training schools” and “miscellaneous schools”.

Special training schools are educational institutions of a new type which were created in 1976. Under the new system introduced in that year, a large number of miscellaneous schools offering systematic educational activities of an optimum standard have been legally designated as “special training schools”.

Special training schools 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 schools 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 special training schools may be classified into three categories: upper secondary courses admitting lower secondary school graduates; advanced courses admitting upper secondary school graduates; and general courses that do not require a specific academic background. Those special training schools offering upper secondary courses may be called “upper secondary special training schools”, while those offering advanced courses may be called “special training colleges”.

In particular, special 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 20% of upper secondary school graduates go. In light of this, the title of “Technical Associate” 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 special training colleges that satisfy certain requirements have been allowed to transfer to universities. They 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 Law prescribes that kindergartens may admit preschool children who have reached the age of three and have not attained 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 attained 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 both 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 2003, 97.3% 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 merely on the basis of the recommendation from upper secondary school principals and a thesis or an interview, without giving scholastic achievement tests, or have come to admit adults or students returning from abroad.

In order to enter school in April 2003, approximately 850,000 upper secondary school graduates of the previous fiscal year applied for admission to universities or junior colleges. About 720,000 students were successfully admitted to these institutions. Of these entrants, about 130,000 (18%) had graduated from upper secondary schools one or more years ago.

The total number of entrants to special training schools (advanced courses) in FY 2003 was about 338,000, of which, about 97,000 entrants (28.8%) are those who graduated from upper secondary schools one or more years ago. The percentage of the total number of entrants accounted for 23.2% 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 public facilities for social education include “citizens’ public halls”, public libraries, museums, “youth houses”, “children’s centers” 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. At present, citizens’ public halls exist in more than 90% 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 2002 there were 17,947 citizens’ public halls in Japan. (Of these, 17,936 were run by local governments and the remaining 11 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 2002 there were 2,742 public libraries throughout the country. (Of these, 2,714 were run by local governments and the remaining 28 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 2002 there were 1,120 museums in Japan. (Of these, 31 were operated by the national government or independent administrative institutions, 608 by local governments, and 481 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 2002, there were 197 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 (94 centers) and by non-governmental bodies (102 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. Of these facilities, larger ones with extensive functions are designated as "audio-visual centers". In April 2003 there were 53 audio-visual centers and 777 audio-visual libraries throughout the country.

Chapter 3. Quantitative Development of Education

1. Number of Institutions and Enrollment Therein

Table I-1 shows the number of educational institutions and enrollment therein at different school levels as of May 2003. As indicated in this table, total enrollment in schools and universities in Japan reached approximately 20.7 million, which accounted for 17.1% of the total population of Japan.

Table I-1 Number of Institutions and Students by Type of Institution (May 2003)

Type of institution	Number of institutions	Number of students		
		Male (%)	Female (%)	Total
Total	62,086	10,747,453 (51.8)	9,986,897 (48.2)	20,734,350
Kindergartens	14,174	891,753 (50.7)	868,741 (49.3)	1,760,494
Elementary schools	23,633	3,697,341 (51.2)	3,529,569 (48.8)	7,226,910
Lower secondary schools	11,134	1,915,040 (51.1)	1,833,279 (48.9)	3,748,319
Upper secondary schools	5,450	1,927,522 (50.6)	1,882,305 (49.4)	3,809,827
Unified secondary schools	16	2,716 (57.3)	2,020 (42.7)	4,736
Schools for the blind	71	2,495 (64.3)	1,387 (35.7)	3,882
Schools for the deaf	106	3,714 (55.4)	2,991 (44.6)	6,705
Schools for the otherwise disabled	818	55,152 (64.2)	30,734 (35.8)	85,886
Colleges of technology	63	47,660 (82.3)	10,215 (17.7)	57,875
Junior colleges	525	29,972 (12.0)	220,090 (88.0)	250,062
Universities	702	1,716,549 (61.2)	1,087,431 (38.8)	2,803,980
(Graduate schools)	(534)	(165,196) (71.4)	(66,293) (28.6)	(231,489)
Special training schools	3,439	361,920 (46.0)	424,171 (54.0)	786,091
Miscellaneous schools	1,955	95,619 (50.4)	93,964 (49.6)	189,583

Notes:

1. Based on FY 2003 "School Basic Survey."

2. In addition to the schools listed above, there are two colleges and 38 upper secondary schools (six public schools and 32 private schools) that provide only correspondence courses.

3. The "number of institutions" for graduate schools represents the number of universities that have graduate schools. The "number of students" in graduate schools represents university students enrolled in masters or doctoral courses. (The number of students in universities includes the enrollment in graduate schools.)

4. The number of students taking correspondence courses in upper secondary schools, junior colleges, universities or graduate schools is excluded.

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 96.1% in 2003. The proportion of the age group going on to take higher education has also increased. Although the proportion has remained at the same level since 1999, it came to 49.0% in 2003.

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 (bank-graduate 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	99.20	99.64	99.20	42.5	48.0	36.7	30.3	34.6	17.2	---	---	---	---	---	---	
1951	11.1	99.72	99.47	99.47	45.6	51.4	39.6	23.6	30.1	12.9	---	---	---	---	---	---	
1952	12.1	99.72	99.51	99.51	47.6	52.9	42.1	21.6	26.9	13.0	---	---	---	---	---	---	
1953	14.0	99.75	99.91	99.91	48.3	52.7	43.7	21.5	25.4	15.7	---	---	---	---	---	---	
1954	17.1	99.75	99.91	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	99.90	72.3	73.5	71.2	24.5	28.2	20.6	16.1	20.2	11.8	9.2	3.7	2.3	
1967	47.2	99.83	99.90	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	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	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	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	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	58.5	99.85	99.89	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	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	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	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	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	99.93	93.1	92.2	94.0	33.2	34.3	33.7	41.9	33.3	4.2	5.0	1.6		
1978	64.1	99.94	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	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	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	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	99.98	94.3	93.2	95.0	31.0	28.9	32.8	36.3	39.8	32.7	4.5	5.3	2.1	
1983	63.8	99.99	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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 Fundamental Law of 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 Law, 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" (see Table I-3). Almost all compulsory schools are established by local governments (elementary and lower secondary schools are primarily run by municipal governments and schools for the blind, the deaf, and the otherwise disabled by prefectural governments). On the other hand, private schools play an important role at the levels of kindergarten, upper secondary and higher education (excluding colleges of technology). They also play a major part among special training schools and miscellaneous schools. As is shown in Table I-3, as of 2003, 29.3% of upper secondary school students, 91.0% of junior college students, and 73.5% of university students are enrolled in private institutions. The proportion of national institutions is high among colleges of technology and universities (graduate schools).

Table I-3 Enrollment in Educational Institutions of Each Level by Type of Establisher

(May 2003)

Type of institution	Total	National (%)	Local/public (%)	Private (%)
---------------------	-------	--------------	------------------	-------------

	enrollment			
Kindergartens	1,760,494	6,718 (0.4)	361,136 (20.5)	1,392,640 (79.1)
Elementary schools	7,226,910	47,152 (0.7)	7,111,695 (98.4)	68,063 (0.9)
Lower secondary schools	3,748,319	33,504 (0.9)	3,482,087 (92.9)	232,728 (6.2)
Upper secondary schools	3,809,827	8,886 (0.2)	2,685,783 (70.5)	1,115,158 (29.3)
Unified secondary schools	4,736	1,417 (29.9)	557 (11.8)	2,762 (58.3)
Schools for the blind	3,882	197 (5.1)	3,602 (92.8)	83 (2.1)
Schools for the deaf	6,705	274 (4.1)	6,368 (95.0)	63 (0.9)
Schools for the otherwise disabled	85,886	2,622 (3.1)	82,580 (96.2)	684 (0.8)
Colleges of technology	57,875	50,974 (88.1)	4,650 (8.0)	2,251 (3.9)
Junior colleges	250,062	4,515 (1.8)	17,999 (7.2)	227,548 (91.0)
Universities	2,803,980	622,404 (22.2)	120,463 (4.3)	2,061,113 (73.5)
(Graduate schools)	(231,489)	(142,184) (61.4)	(12,796) (5.5)	(76,509) (33.1)
Special training schools	786,091	12,195 (1.6)	30,583 (3.9)	743,313 (94.6)
Miscellaneous schools	189,583	- (-)	1,488 (0.8)	188,095 (99.2)

Notes:

1. Based on FY 2003 "School Basic Survey."

2. "Total enrollment" means as follows for each type of educational institution: (1) the sum of the students belonging to kindergarten, elementary, lower secondary and upper secondary departments in the case of schools for the blind, the deaf and the otherwise disabled; (2) the sum of the students taking the regular courses, advanced courses and short courses in the case of upper secondary schools; (3) the sum of the students taking the first and second courses in the case of unified secondary schools; and (4) the sum of the students taking undergraduate courses, regular courses, graduate courses, advanced courses, short courses and other courses in the case of universities, junior colleges and special training schools.

3. The enrollment in graduate schools represents university students enrolled in masters or doctoral courses. (The number of students in universities includes the enrollment in graduate schools.)

4. Enrollment in correspondence courses in upper secondary schools, junior colleges, universities or graduate schools is excluded.

5. Enrollment Classified by Type of Course

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

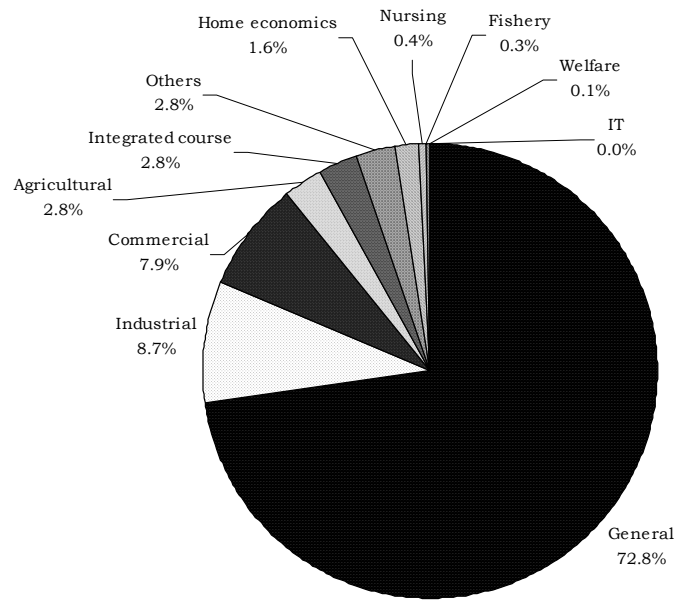
In 2003, 72.8% of upper secondary school students were enrolled in general academic courses, and the rest in specialized or integrated courses. Chart I-2 shows the percentage distribution of upper secondary school students according to type of course.

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 30% 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 24.0% of total enrollment, while the proportion of students enrolled in these courses reaches 50.0% in local public universities, and about 63.1% 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

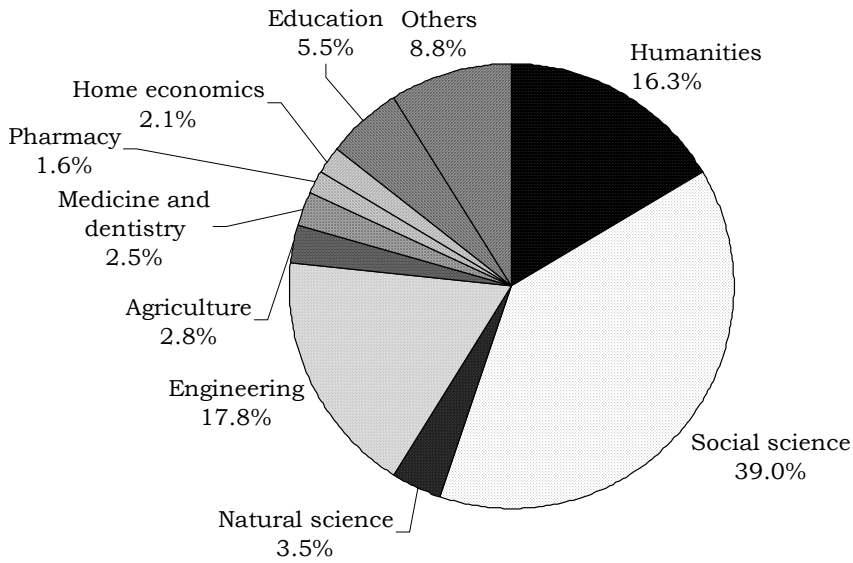
Percentage Distribution of Upper Secondary School Students by Type of Course, as of May 2003



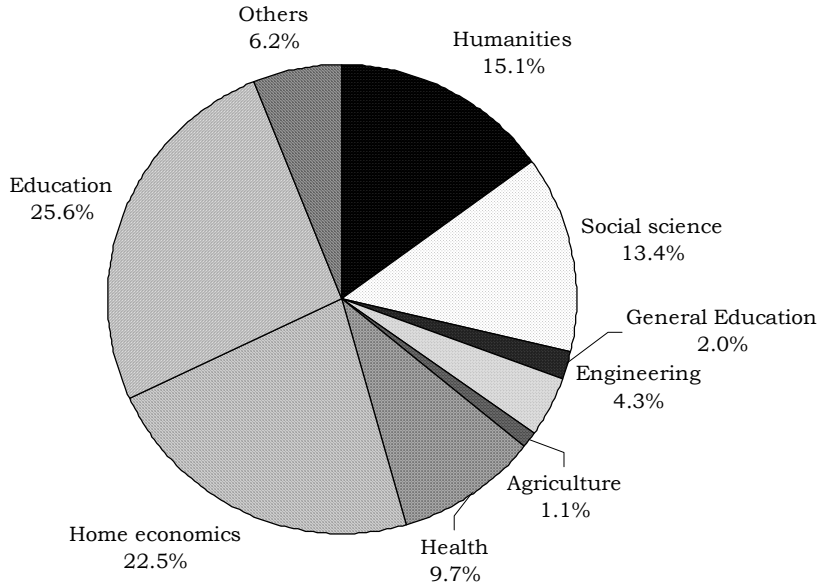
Note: Based on FY 2003 "School Basic Survey."

Chart I-3 Percentage Distribution of University and Junior College Students by Major Field of Study, as of May 2003

(1) Universities (undergraduate course)



(2) Junior Colleges



Note: Based on FY 2003 "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 2002)

Type of facility	Total	National	Run by independent administrative institutions	Prefectural	Municipal (including those run by associations)	Private
Citizens' public halls	17,947	-	-	-	17,936	11
Public libraries	2,742	-	-	64	2,650	28
Museums	1,120	21	10	145	463	481
Youth houses	406	-	13	81	312	-
Children's centers	339	-	14	105	220	-
Women's education centers	197	-	1	8	86	102
Audio-visual centers and libraries	830	-	-	58	772	-

Note: The numbers of citizens' public halls, public 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 FY 2002 "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 be four and that the number of school weeks per year be not less than 39 except under special circumstances.

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

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. 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. The “Period for Integrated Study” indicated in Tables I-5 to I-7 was introduced under the new Courses of Study as a period in which each school may conduct creative and original educational activities on cross-sectional/comprehensive issues beyond the framework of subjects, such as international understanding, information, environment, and welfare and health, as well as topics that draw the interest and preference of the students, according to the circumstances of the community, school, and students. The new Courses of Study for elementary schools and those for lower secondary schools have been implemented in a full-fledged manner since FY 2002, and those for upper secondary schools have been implemented for the entrants in FY 2003 and will gradually

penetrate as these students advance in grade.

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

		1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
		year	year	year	year	year	year
Subjects:							
	Japanese Language	272	280	235	235	180	175
	Social Studies	-	-	70	85	90	100
	Arithmetic	114	155	150	150	150	150
	Science	-	-	70	90	95	95
	Life Environment Studies	102	105	-	-		
	Music	68	70	60	60	50	50
	Art and Handicrafts	68	70	60	60	50	50
	Homemaking	-	-	-	-	60	55
	Physical Education	90	90	90	90	90	90
	Moral Education	34	35	35	35	35	35
	Special Activities	34	35	35	35	35	35
	Period for Integrated Study	-	-	105	105	110	110
Total		782	840	910	945	945	945

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 Lower Secondary Schools

	1st year	2nd year	3rd year
Subjects:			
Japanese Language	140	105	105
Social Studies	105	105	85
Mathematics	105	105	105
Science	105	105	80
Music	45	35	35
Fine Arts	45	35	35
Health and Physical Education	90	90	90
Industrial Arts and Homemaking	70	70	35
Foreign Language	105	105	105
Moral Education	35	35	35
Special Activities	35	35	35
Elective subjects	0-30	50-85	105-165
Period for Integrated Study	70-100	70-105	70-130
Total	980	980	980

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

(3) The number of school hours for elective subjects shall be allotted to elective subjects and may be allotted to additional hours for special activities.

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	2	
	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	

School

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

Homeroom Activities: 35 school hours or more per year
 Period of Integrated Study: 105-210 hours allotted by the time of graduation; 3-6 credits can be granted.

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 Schools for the Blind, the Deaf and the Otherwise Disabled
 a. Composition of Subjects at Schools for the Blind, the Deaf and the Otherwise Disabled

1) Schools for the blind, the deaf, the physically disabled and the health impaired

Education at schools for the blind, the deaf, the physically disabled and the health impaired is composed of the following two sections: regular subjects in compliance with the curriculums at kindergartens, elementary schools, lower secondary schools and upper secondary schools, moral education, special activities, the Period of Integrated Study (divided into each field in the case of the kindergarten department); and "activities for encouraging independence" with the aim of improving and overcoming various problems caused by disabilities.

Departments	Section in compliance with the curriculums at kindergartens, elementary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools	Section for improving and overcoming various problems caused by disabilities
Kindergarten	Fields (health, human relations, environment, language, expression)	Activities for encouraging independence
Elementary	Regular subjects, moral education, special activities, Period of Integrated Study	Activities for encouraging independence
Lower secondary	Compulsory subjects, elective subjects, moral education, special activities, Period of Integrated Study	Activities for encouraging independence
Upper secondary	Regular subjects and courses, special activities, Period of Integrated Study	Activities for encouraging independence

2) Schools for intellectually disabled students

Education at schools for intellectually disabled students is composed of regular subjects, moral education, special activities, activities for encouraging independence and the Period of Integrated Study. In order to offer educational programs according to the actual condition of students with intellectual development of a special nature in terms of ability to memorize, think abstractly, presume and judge as compared to normal students of the same ages, educational goals and contents are suggested with respect to regular subjects in consideration of the disabled students' learning characteristics caused by their disabilities.

Departments	Regular subjects (fields in the case of the kindergarten division)	Education other than regular subjects

Kindergarten	Fields (health, human relations, environment, language, expression)	Activities for encouraging independence
Elementary	Life environment studies, Japanese, arithmetic, music, drawing and handicrafts, physical education	Moral education, special activities, activities for encouraging independence
Secondary	Compulsory subjects: Japanese, social studies, mathematics, science, music, art, health and physical education, vocational education and home economics Elective subjects: foreign languages, other necessary subjects	Moral education, special activities, activities for encouraging independence, Period of Integrated Study
Upper secondary	General courses (compulsory: Japanese, social studies, mathematics, science, music, art, health and physical education, vocational education and home economics elective: foreign languages, other necessary subjects) Specialized courses (domestic science, agriculture, industry, distribution and services), subjects designated by schools	Moral education, special activities, activities for encouraging independence, Period of Integrated Study

b. Learning Hours at Schools for the Blind, the Deaf, and the Otherwise Disabled

- 1) The standard length of daily educational hours in the kindergarten department is 4 hours and the standard number of educational weeks in each academic year is 39 weeks. Each school may decide the actual length of daily educational hours and number of educational weeks as appropriate.
- 2) Total length of learning hours in each academic year in the elementary and lower secondary departments shall be in compliance with that of ordinary elementary schools and lower secondary schools respectively. Each school may decide the actual length of learning hours for each subject in the academic year as appropriate.
- 3) In the case of the upper secondary department in the schools for the blind, the deaf, the physically disabled and the health impaired, each school may decide the number of credits and length of learning hours of classes that should be taken before graduation and the number of credits that should be completed before graduation, in compliance with the curriculums of ordinary upper secondary schools. In the case of the upper secondary department in the schools for intellectually disabled students, each school may decide the length of learning hours for each subject in the academic year under the provisions of the Courses of Study, without adopting the credit system.

2. Textbooks for Elementary and Secondary Schools

(1) Authorization and Adoption of Textbooks

In accordance with the provisions of the School Education Law, 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 authorized 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 authorized by the Minister. Textbooks compiled by MEXT itself are limited to those for certain vocational subjects in upper secondary schools and those for special schools for the disabled, both of which, due to a very limited market existing, no commercial publisher would be willing to publish.

The “authorization” 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 authorization of textbooks is as below. Either the author or the publisher who wishes to publish a textbook applies to the Minister for the authorization of the proposed textbook. The draft of the textbook is submitted to the Minister for the examination by the Textbook Authorization Council, an advisory body to the Minister, and also for the examination by both senior specialists for textbook examination (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, after due consideration of these reports as well as the results of the examination by the Council members themselves. Based on the recommendation of the Council, the Minister approves or disapproves each of the proposed textbooks.

When the Council finds it appropriate to re-examine a proposed textbook after relevant revisions are made to the original draft, the Council will inform the author or the publisher of the Council’s comments on the draft while putting off its decision on acceptance of the textbook, examine the revised one submitted by the author or the publisher and then make a decision on acceptance based on the re-examination.

During the FY 2004, 2,029 authorized textbooks, as well as 301 textbooks published by MEXT, are used in elementary, lower secondary, upper secondary schools, and special schools for the disabled.

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 jointly decide on the same textbook for each subject. At present, there are 578 areas in the 47 prefectures of Japan (as of April 27, 2004).

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

(2) Distribution 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 distribution are met by the national government. MEXT’s budget for the free distribution of textbooks amounted to approximately 40.3 billion yen in FY 2004. The average amount of textbook expense per pupil was 3,173 yen for elementary schools, 4,595 yen for lower secondary schools and 5,706 yen for general courses and 7,005 yen for specialized courses of upper secondary schools in FY 2001.

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						Junior college		College of technology	
	Undergraduate course			Postgraduate course			2-year course	3-year course	Course other than mercantile marine course	Mercantile marine course
	Course other than medicine / dentistry / veterinary science	Medicine and dentistry	Veterinary science	Masters course	Doctoral course	Professional degree course				
Length of course	4 yrs.	6 yrs.	6 yrs.	2 yrs.(1)	3 yrs.(1)	2 yrs. (law school: 3 yrs.)	2 yrs.	3 yrs.	5 yrs.	5.5 yrs.
No. of credits required for graduation	124	188 (2)	182	30 (3)	30 (3)	30 (law school: 93)	62	93 (4)	167 or more	147 or more (5)
Notes:										
(1)	Although the standard length of a doctoral course is 5 years, when the course is divided into the first course (two years) and the second course (three years), the first course (two years) is treated as the masters course. In medicine, dentistry and veterinary science, the duration of a doctoral course is four years. Those students who have shown outstanding academic achievement can complete a postgraduate course in a shorter period, namely one year for a masters course and three years for a doctoral course.									
(2)	When necessary, students are allowed to obtain some credits by taking a class for a certain number of hours determined by the university.									
(3)	In addition to the 30 credits, a student in a graduate course is required to prepare, under the supervision of a teacher, and submit a thesis to be approved by teachers of the graduate school. He or she must also pass the examination given by the graduate school.									
(4)	A three-year junior college evening course only requires 62 credits at minimum for graduation.									
(5)	In addition, a 12-month practical training on the training ship is required for a mercantile marine course (included in the length of the course).									
(6)	The method of counting counting credits adopted in colleges of technology differs from that adopted in universities and junior colleges.									

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, a school year is 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 and schools 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 2003. 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 2003)

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	1,320,438	695,175	625,263	47.4	430,555	5.4	71.6	23.0
Kindergartens	108,822	6,621	102,201	93.9	20,682	0.3	23.7	76.0
Elementary schools	413,890	154,423	259,467	62.7	92,650	0.4	98.8	0.8
Lower secondary schools	252,050	148,949	103,101	40.9	36,500	0.7	94.4	5.0
Upper secondary schools	258,537	188,575	69,962	27.1	56,771	0.2	76.4	23.3
Unified secondary schools	382	255	127	33.2	78	23.3	19.6	57.1
Colleges of technology	4,474	4,271	203	4.5	2,976	87.5	8.8	3.7
Junior colleges	13,534	7,290	6,244	46.1	7,767	2.7	11.9	85.4
Universities	156,155	132,200	23,955	15.3	175,796	39.0	7.0	54.0
Special schools for the disabled	61,094	25,909	35,185	57.6	16,117	2.3	97.2	0.4
Special training schools	39,764	19,389	20,375	51.2	16,510	1.8	6.8	91.4
Miscellaneous schools	11,736	7,293	4,443	37.9	4,708	—	0.8	99.2

Note: Based on FY 2003 "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 schools for the disabled 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 93.9% 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: 40.9% at the lower secondary level and 27.1% at the upper secondary level. At the higher education level, the proportion of women teachers is relatively higher (46.1%) 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 84.5% of the elementary school teachers, 92.4% of the lower secondary school teachers, 97.8% of the upper secondary school teachers, and 98.3% 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 2001)

Academic background	Elementary school teachers	Lower secondary school teachers	Upper secondary school teachers	Unified secondary school teachers
Graduated from university/graduate school	84.5%	92.4%	97.8%	98.3%
Graduated from junior college	15.2%	7.4%	1.5%	0.5%
Graduated from upper secondary school	0.4%	0.2%	0.6%	1.1%

Note: Based on FY 2001 "School Teachers Survey."

3. Work Load of Teachers

The majority of kindergarten and elementary school teachers are assigned to a single class, 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 practical subjects such as music, arts and handicrafts, physical education and home economics, because teaching of 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 2003, the national average number of pupils/students per class was 26.5 for elementary schools and 31.3 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 2003, the average number of pupils/students per teacher (teachers here include the school principal, the vice-principal, teaching staff, nurse teachers, and lecturers) was 17.5 for elementary schools, 14.9 for lower secondary schools, and 14.7 for upper secondary 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

	Elementary school	Lower secondary school	Upper secondary school
FY 1965	31.5 hours	28.0 hours	22.1 hours
FY 2001	17.8 hours	13.6 hours	13.5 hours

4 Training and Certification of Teachers

Elementary and secondary school teachers in Japan are trained mainly in the universities (including graduate schools) or junior colleges approved by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

Most elementary school teachers are trained at 4-year elementary school teacher training courses at national universities. Lower secondary school teachers are trained mainly at national, local public or private universities, while upper secondary school teachers are trained at universities (undergraduate courses) and graduate schools, national, local public and private.

In order to become a teacher of an elementary or secondary school, one is required to obtain a teaching certificate awarded by the prefectural Board of Education under certain conditions. For each level or type of school, teaching certificates are classified into three major categories: regular, special and temporary. The regular certificate is subdivided into three classes: advanced, first and second. In addition, for the lower and upper secondary school levels, each type of certificate is further divided into several categories according to the kinds of subjects.

A regular teaching certificate granted by a prefectural Board of Education is valid in all prefectures for life.

Table I-12 shows the minimum requirements for each type of teacher certificate. In 1998, a modification was made to the requirements to increase teaching subjects.

Table I-12 Minimum Requirements for Teaching Certificates

Types 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 school teacher	Advanced class regular certificate	Masters degree, and acquisition of a regular certificate of kindergarten, elementary, lower secondary, or upper secondary teacher				47		47
	1st class regular certificate	Bachelors degree, and acquisition of a regular certificate of kindergarten, elementary, lower secondary, or upper secondary teacher				23		23
	2nd class regular certificate	Associate degree, and acquisition of a regular certificate of kindergarten, elementary, lower secondary, or upper secondary teacher				13		13
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 is another certificate for teachers for schools for the disabled.

*1 Special certificates: Special certificates are intended to attract working people who have specialized knowledge and techniques to the teaching profession.

*2 Temporary certificates: Temporary certificates are 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 program has been established for appointing people who lack teaching certification 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 optimum 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 special schools 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 FY 2004. 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 FY 2004 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-half 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.

Table I-13 gives the average monthly amount of the starting salary for beginning teachers appointed at national schools in FY 2003.

Table I-13 Average Monthly Amount of Starting Salary of National School Teachers
Appointed in FY 2003

Academic background		Kindergarten teachers	Teachers at elementary, secondary, and special schools	Technical college teachers (lecturers)	University teachers (assistants)
Graduated from junior college		249,300 yen	252,000 yen	231,700 yen	277,200 yen
Graduated from university		278,400 yen	281,600 yen	277,200 yen	277,200 yen
Graduated from graduate school	Masters course	309,600 yen	313,200 yen	314,600 yen	314,300 yen
	Doctoral course	370,600 yen	374,700 yen	378,000 yen	378,000 yen

Notes:

The figures are obtained by multiplying the monthly salary (including the teaching adjustment amount) by 16.4 and dividing it by 12 (i.e., including the term-end and diligence allowances). The allowances include the special allowance for teachers of compulsory educational institutions.

Allowances that are not covered by the above monthly salary include the family-support allowance, adjustment allowance, housing allowance, special duty allowance, cold district allowance, and retirement allowance. These allowances are paid according to the respective payment requirements.

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.

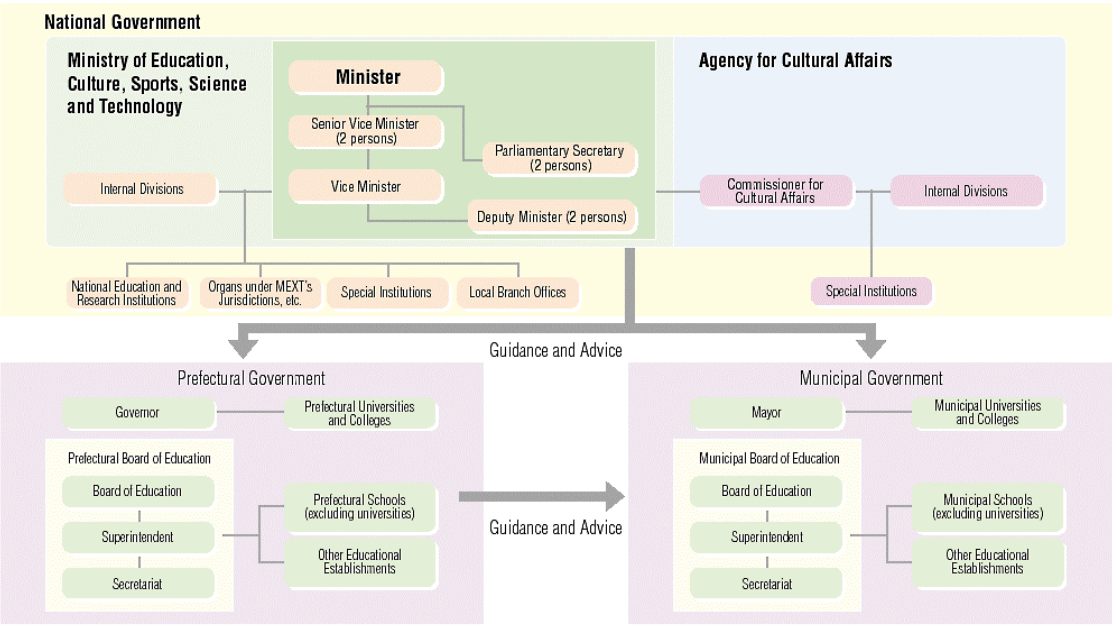
As far as educational fields are concerned, the national government makes plans and projects on school education systems and educational administration systems, and provides various kinds of financial assistance including teachers' salaries and funds for developing school buildings and other educational 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 operated as independent administrative institutions since April 2001.

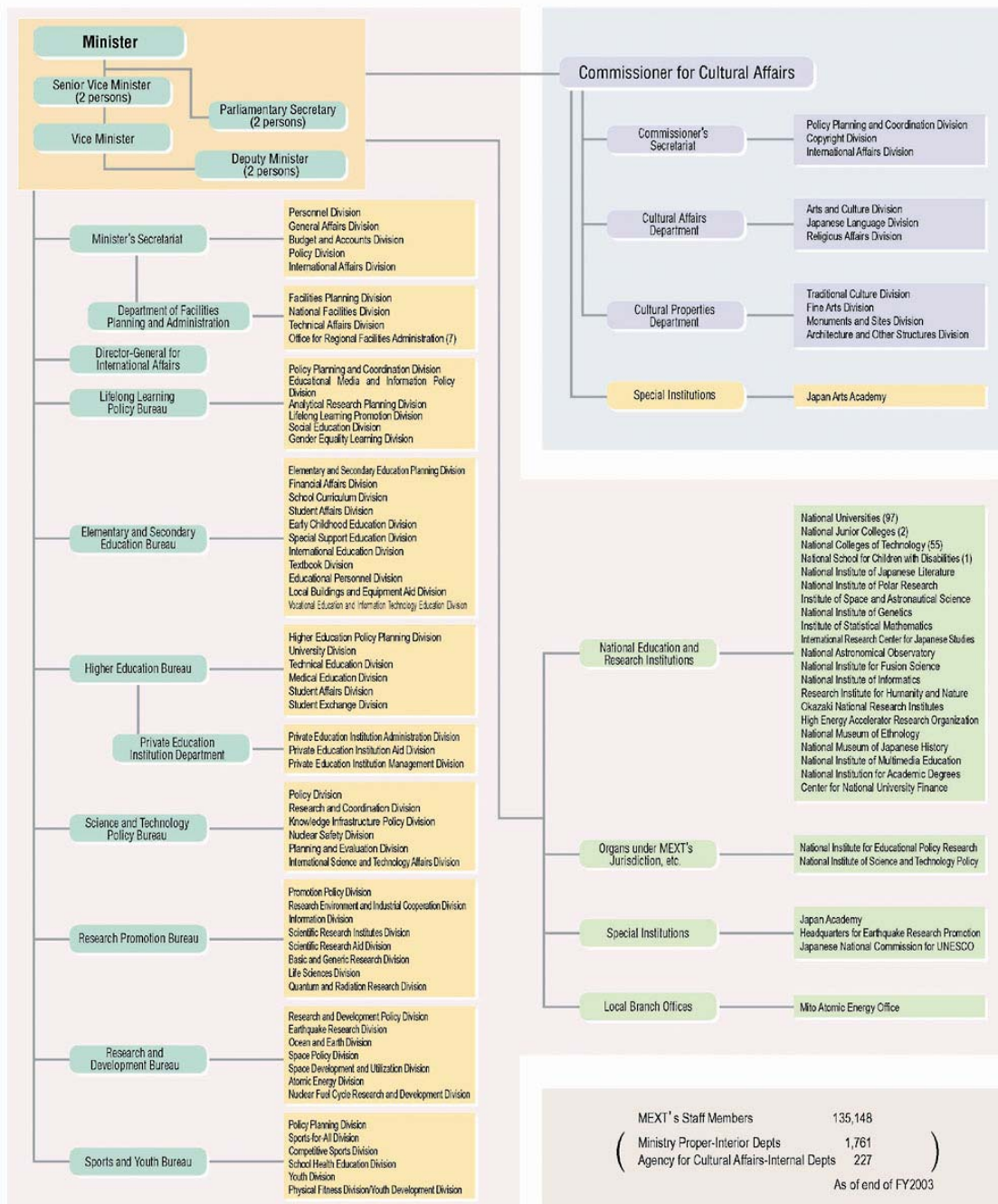
The structure of MEXT as of April 2004 is given in Chart I-5.

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.

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 composed of five or six members 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 schools for the disabled, museums, public libraries, lifelong education 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 schools for the disabled, 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 schools for the disabled 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 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.)
- 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 three members is allowed in the case of towns and villages) 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.

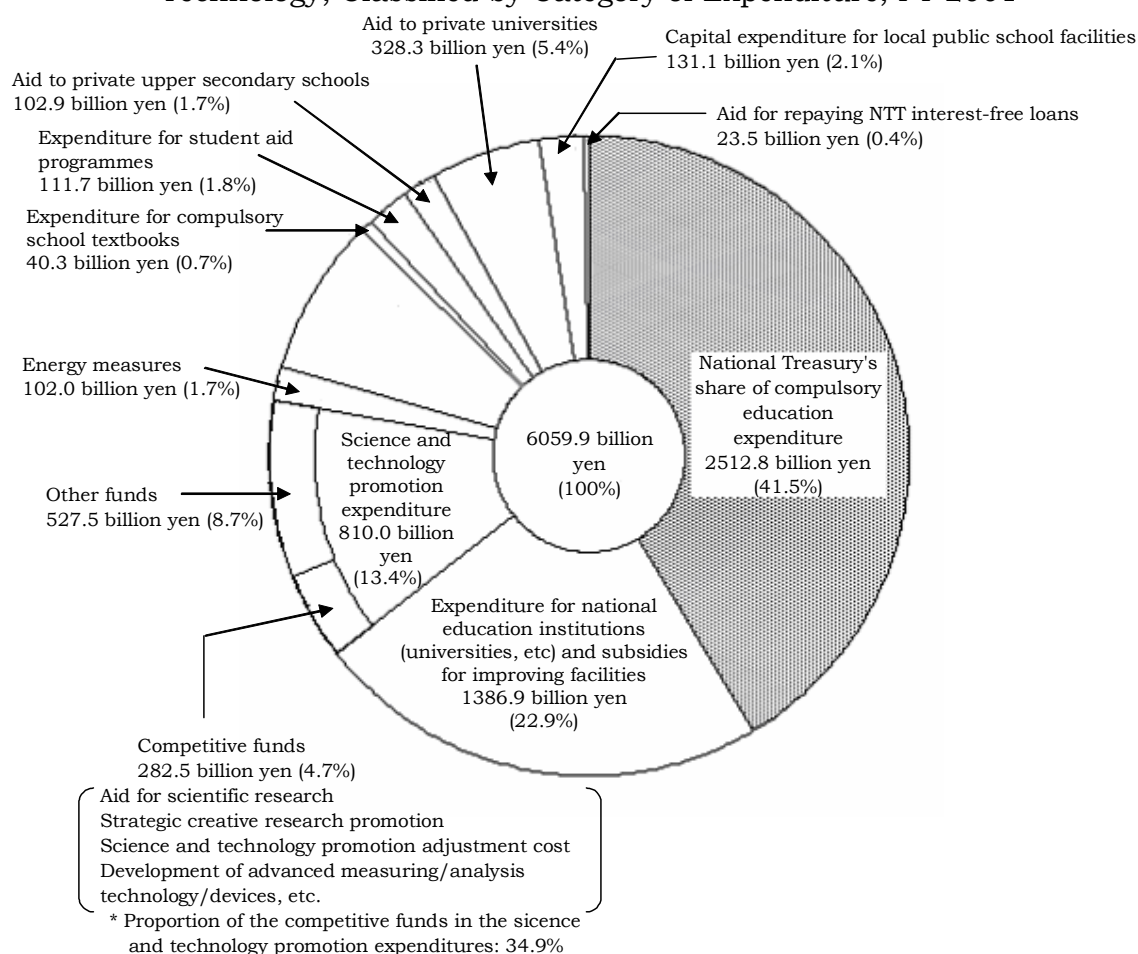
Major national subsidies for education are listed in Table I-14.

Chart I-6 shows the budget of MEXT for FY 2004, 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 pupils	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
10	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, FY 2001



(2) Educational Expenditures of Prefectural and Municipal Governments

The educational expenditures of prefectural government include 1) expenditures for prefectural educational establishments and services, 2) salaries and allowances of teachers at municipal elementary schools, lower secondary schools and part-time courses of upper secondary schools, and 3) subsidies to municipalities for educational purposes.

The educational expenditures of the municipal government include 1) expenditures for managing and operating municipal elementary and lower secondary schools (other than teacher salaries), and 2) expenditures for managing and operating the other municipal schools and educational establishments.

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

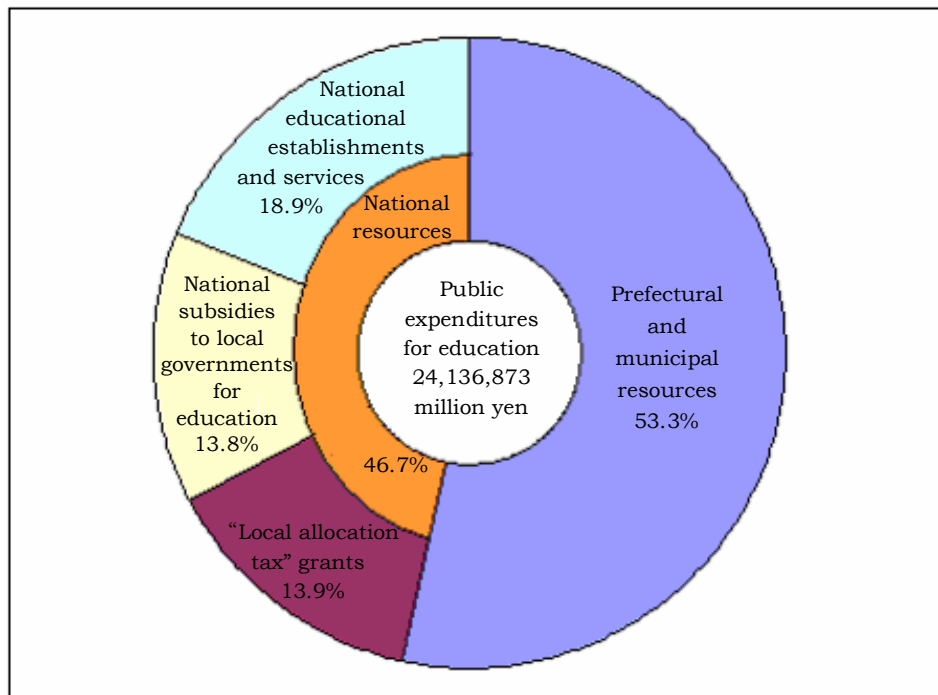
In FY 2001 ending March 2002, total public expenditures for education amounted to 24,136,873 million yen, which accounted for 6.5% of national income and 16.2% of the net total of national and local government expenditures. The proportion of expenditures spent for education to the total expenditures of the national government was 9.2%, and the average proportion of local government expenditures devoted to education to the total expenditures was 20.1%.

(4) Distribution of Public Expenditures for Education by Source

The percentage distribution of FY 2001 public expenditures for education by source is shown in Chart I-7. The chart indicates that approximately one-half of

these expenditures are being borne by the national government.

Chart I-7 Percentage Distribution of Public Expenditures for Education by Source (FY 2001)



Note: Based on "FY 2002 Survey on Local Educational Expenditures -2001 budget year-"

(5) 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 incorporated into revenue receipts of the national university corporation that established the university, and the national government provides fiscal measures for national university corporations regarding necessary expenditures.

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.

(6) Financial Aid to Private Educational Institutions

In Japan, private educational institutions play a great role in the whole system of education. In 2003, about 75% of university students, about 30% of upper secondary school students, and about 80% 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 Law, 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 FY 2003, the national government included 321.75 billion yen of national subsidies to private universities, junior colleges and colleges of technology for their current expenditures. It also included 100.15 billion yen in subsidies to prefectural governments to cover part of their prefectural subsidies to private elementary and secondary schools for their current expenditures. In addition, grants amounting to 23.55 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 2.006 billion yen was also included in the budget as funds required for upgrading the functions of school buildings and facilities 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 FY 2003 amounts to 77 billion yen.

(7) 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 excellent 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 FY 2004, total budget for the scholarship programs of the JASSO amounts to 682 billion yen, and approximately 965,000 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 a specially 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 cooperating with APEID (Asia and the Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development) and APPEAL (Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All) by providing financial assistance and sending experts to regional or other meetings.

Regarding OECD, Japan is cooperating with and participating actively in programs for research and study on educational policy organized by its Education Committee and by the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI).

Japan also implements the UNU (United Nations University)-APEC Education Network Invitation Programme as well as participates and cooperates in the projects of APEC Education Network proposed by other member countries.

Furthermore, the Government is a major contributor 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, which is intellectual international contribution through human resources development, plays a great role in achieving the kind of international, open society that Japan

wishes to achieve. In addition, the formation of human networks and enhancement of mutual understanding and friendship between Japan and other countries will contribute to the stability and peace of the ever globalizing international community. From this point of view, the Japanese government has been actively offering various programs and services for exchange of students with other countries.

In order to develop competent human resources who can respond to the needs of the globalizing society, such as strengthening Japan's international competitiveness and contributing to the international community, Japan established the "Long-term Study Abroad Promotion Program (Japanese Government Scholarship)" in FY 2004 aimed at enabling students to acquire either a masters degree or a doctoral degree at an overseas graduate school, etc.

(1) Acceptance of Students from Overseas

In May 2003, there were 109,508 foreign students studying in institutions of higher education, such as universities, in Japan. (Of this total, 9,746 were students invited under the Japanese Government Scholarship Program and 1,627 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 2003)

Region	Asia	Near and Middle East	Africa	Oceania	North America	Latin America	Europe	Total
Number of students	102,089	629	914	545	1,553	1,019	2,759	109,508
Percentage distribution	93.3%	0.6%	0.8%	0.5%	1.4%	0.9%	2.5%	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 32 major countries for study was about 78,000. 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	15,826	14	2,906	48,288	21	11,096	78,151

Note: Based on IIE "OPEN DOORS" 2001 Edition; and Chinese Ministry of Education and OECD "Education at a Glance" 2001 Edition. However, the figure for Canada is based on the 2000 Editions.

(3) Exchange of Upper Secondary School Students

In order that students may increase their international understanding and improve their proficiency in a foreign language, it is of significance for them to experience a school life or a home stay abroad while in their upper secondary school age.

During FY 2002, 37,400 Japanese upper secondary school students went abroad for study or foreign language training, either long-term or short-term, while 6,464 foreign upper secondary school students were accepted in Japanese upper secondary schools for study or training. 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 help school teachers broaden their horizons in an international perspective, every year the Independent Administrative Institution National Center for Teachers' Development administers a program for providing a large number of elementary and secondary school teachers with an opportunity to visit other countries.

Further, MEXT every year administers a program for sending a large number of university teachers abroad as MEXT's overseas researchers to offer them an opportunity to engage themselves in research work in foreign countries, and thereby contributing to academic development. (See Table I-

17)

Table I-17 Number of Teachers Sent Abroad

(FY 2003)

Elementary and secondary teachers sent abroad	1,438 persons
Teachers sent as MEXT's overseas researchers	732 persons

(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 5,777 as of May 2003.

Further, MEXT every year invites a number of high-ranking foreign officials in the fields of education, science and culture, with a view to contributing to strengthening international exchange in these fields.

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

(FY 2004)

Country of Origin	Assistant Language Teachers	Coordinators for International Relations	Sports Exchange Advisors
U.S.A.	2,709	131	1
U.K.	1,021	39	0
Australia	373	56	2
New Zealand	323	20	2
Canada	847	47	—
Ireland	122	10	—
South Africa	62	—	—
France	10	12	—
Germany	3	21	2
China	12	65	2
Republic of Korea	4	55	8
Jamaica	48	—	—
Russia	1	10	1
Brazil	—	16	1
Singapore	18	4	—
Peru	—	2	—
Spain	—	1	—

Israel	2	1	—
Italy	—	5	—
Finland	1	1	—
India	1	1	—
Holland	1	1	1
Greece	1	—	—
Other	8	14	4
Total	5,567	512	24

4. Exchange of Young People and Women

(1) 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 FY 2003 including leaders of youth activities.

(2) Exchange of Women

MEXT has been promoting various international exchange programs organized by women at the community level. It has also been strongly promoting achievement of a gender-equal society targeted by the International Women's Education Association. Also, MEXT provided a subsidy to the Program to Send Education Advisers on Gender-Equal Society Abroad, which offers a system for learning women's social status and human rights by experience and allowing men and women to jointly discuss and proceed in the direction Japan should take in the future. (42 people were sent to three countries.)

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 126,350 in

Japan (the 2002 survey by the Agency for Cultural Affairs) and approximately 2.36 million abroad (the 2003 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, the Agency for Cultural Affairs is taking various measures by providing internships and consultation for teachers who play a major role in Japanese language education in communities, building a general network system on Japanese education to collect and offer information on the learning of Japanese through the Internet, doing research on development of Japanese language teachers, assisting with the “Japanese Language Proficiency Test for Foreigners” and the “Qualifying Examination for the Teaching of Japanese to Foreigners”, providing satisfactory preparatory education of Japanese to foreign students, improving the quality of Japanese educational institutions and supporting Japanese education to refugees under the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and students who have returned from China. The National Language Research Institute is conducting research on the content and methods of teaching including the training of in-service Japanese teachers.

In addition, in aiming to meet the demand for Japanese language education in other countries and contribute to the globalization of education and promotion of international exchange at the local 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 54,000 Japanese children of compulsory school age lived abroad as of April 2003.

For education of these children living abroad, the local Japanese residents' associations and other organizations have founded Japanese schools (82 schools as of April 2003) and supplementary schools (188 schools as of April 2003) 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 (1,331 in FY 2004). In addition, with the aim of improving the level of education and teaching, MEXT has designated pilot schools with respect to study on

education for children living abroad to implement study on certain problems at overseas educational facilities that should be immediately solved. MEXT also carries out activities such as (1) providing textbooks for compulsory education free of charge, (2) maintaining and expanding educational materials and tools, (3) offering correspondence courses, and (4) providing educational consulting services. Recently, in order to support people living abroad to obtain educational information in Japan, MEXT provides information via its website on overseas education facilities, schools accepting children who have returned from overseas (elementary and secondary schools), and special selection methods at universities for students who have returned from abroad.

(2) Improving Education for Returnee Children from a Long Stay Overseas and Foreign Children in Japan

During 2002, about 11,000 children of elementary and secondary school ages returned from one-year or longer stay overseas.

Meanwhile, approximately 71,000 foreign children were enrolled in Japanese public elementary and secondary schools as of May 2003. Their native languages extend to 63 languages, and about 19,000 of these children need some support in order to be taught the Japanese language.

Foreign children in Japan are not obligated to go to school, but if they wish to go to Japanese public compulsory educational institutions, they are accepted free of charge similar to Japanese children. 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 and to make use of the talents they have acquired through their overseas experiences, and also to promote international understanding education through their interactions with the other Japanese pupils/students. Therefore, MEXT allocates teachers for dealing with returnee and foreign children in Japan, holds workshops for supervisors of school education, carries out research projects for ensuring that these children adapt to Japanese schools quickly and developing their qualities, and takes such measures as developing JSL (Japanese as a second language) curriculums. Furthermore, special consideration is given at schools attached to national universities, including special teaching for returnee children and practical research on such teaching.

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

Chapter 1. Trends in Educational Reform

Since the end of the Second World War, education policies in Japan have succeeded in achieving the goal of ensuring equal opportunity and raised the national educational standard as well as developed human resources that can respond to the needs of the times, thereby serving as a driving force for the development of Japanese society. However, turning our eyes to the current situation, we can see that confidence in education is faltering significantly.

First, we can see a great fall in educational functions in the home and in the community against the backdrop of urbanization and the declining birthrate. Various problems in schools such as bullying, school absenteeism, school violence, and class disruption have become social problems while, outside school, young people frequently commit vicious offenses that had been unimaginable until recently. Also at home, the basic starting point for education, child abuse and other various problems have occurred.

Second, we can also see deterioration in social skills, sense of the importance of keeping rules, and moral consciousness among young people. This situation has clear relation to the changes in the environment surrounding children along with the social trend that has placed too much emphasis on respecting individuals' rights and freedom, and less opportunities for children to improve themselves in terms of the relationship with others and society. Such deterioration in socialization and sense of rules seems to intensify young people's tendency to break away from society and withdraw into their own worlds.

Third, due to uniformed education system that overstresses egalitarianism and cramming of too much knowledge, there has been a tendency not to place sufficient importance on education according to each individual child's personality and ability. It has also been pointed out that the current education system including the school system and examination process does not function properly in terms of developing the personality and ability of individual children.

Fourth, with such rapid changes in the society and economy along with the rapid progress in science and technology, economic globalization, and advancement in the IT revolution, the conventional education system from elementary and secondary education to higher education and the awareness of people involved in this system have not sufficiently responded to such changes of the times and the progress of society.

Thus, the current education system does not seem to successfully respond to the changes in the society and economy or the changes in the environment surrounding children. In order to cope with various education problems, we need to enhance institutional reforms for schools and promote educational reform in the whole society including schools, families, and communities.

1. Progress in Educational Reform (Education Reform Plan for the 21st Century and Human Resources Strategy Vision)

The desirable form of the education system in the drastically changing society was discussed at the National Commission on Education Reform established under the leadership of the prime minister in March 2000, and the commission presented the “Report of the National Commission on Education Reform: 17 Proposals to Change Education” in December 2000. This report, which is based on the two principles of “going back to basics” and “bringing about actual developments in reform,” places importance on carrying out educational reform from the following three perspectives: (i) creating an education system that fosters Japanese people with well-rounded characters; (ii) establishing an education system that improves the ability of individual children and fosters future leaders of Japan with rich creativity; and (iii) developing schools that are suitable for the new age and a support system for such schools.

Based on the Report of the National Commission on Education Reform, MEXT developed the “Educational Reform Plan for the 21st Century” in January 2001, thereby presenting the entire picture of the policies for educational reform and specifying the concrete measures and tasks for such reform. According to this plan, budgetary measures are being taken and institutional revisions are being made as required with the aim of steadily promoting the policies.

Furthermore, at the meeting of the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy in August 2002, the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology compiled the “Human Resources Strategy Vision” as a basic vision for the development of human resources. This vision, in accordance with the spirit of “100 Sacks of Rice” (prioritizing education above all else: referring to the use of the proceeds from the sale of 100 sacks of rice as funds for educational purposes (buying books and other learning tools) instead of eating the rice (although it was a time of poverty)) advocated by the Prime Minister Koizumi and based on the “Human Resource Strategy” proposed in the “Basic Policies for Economic and Fiscal Management and Structural

Reform 2004” published in June 2002, presents important and concrete education measures systematically. This vision indicates four objectives for fostering reliable Japanese people who will pave the way for the new age, and aims at promoting six measures systematically to achieve these objectives.

2. Efforts for the Amendment of the Fundamental Law of Education and the Formulation of the Basic Promotional Plan for Education

(1) Efforts for the Amendment of the Fundamental Law of Education

The Fundamental Law of Education was enacted in 1947 with the objective of establishing the philosophy of postwar education in Japan, and it has never been amended in about 57 years since then. During this period, Japanese society has changed drastically and various problems have occurred throughout the entire area of education. In such circumstances, it is critically important to promote reforms while going back to the basic principles and objectives of education.

To this end, the Central Council for Education compiled a report in March 2003 titled the “New Fundamental Law of Education and Basic Promotional Plan for Education Befitting to the New Times.” This report points out the necessity to amend the Fundamental Law of Education in order to clarify the ideals and principles that are currently regarded as critically important while maintaining the overall philosophy of the existing law.

Following this report and in light of the importance of enhancing far-reaching national discussions regarding the amendment of the Fundamental Law of Education and the promotion of educational reform, MEXT has held, since May 2003, the “Education Reform Forums,” as well as “Town Meetings on Education Reform” in which the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology traveled across Japan and talked with local residents directly.

MEXT will make efforts to further intensify national discussions and amend the Fundamental Law of Education.

(2) Efforts for the Formulation of the Basic Promotional Plan for Education

The report mentioned above stipulates the necessity to formulate a Basic Promotional Plan for Education based on the Fundamental Law of Education, because effective educational reforms cannot be implemented unless both of the following requirements are met: (1) amendments are made to the Fundamental Law of Education, which advocates the basic concepts and principles of education; and (2) the education system is improved and

measures are enhanced in order to succeed in achieving the goals of such concepts and principles. The report states that the plan is to be implemented for about five years, addressing, in principle, education-related issues (including issues necessary for promoting science, sports, culture and art education), and it also recommends that the plan clarifies concrete policy goals that will be easily understandable to the public, investment in education be improved in quality and quantity, and policy evaluation be appropriately carried out.

Furthermore, the Central Council for Education will, after the amendment of the Fundamental Law of Education, further discuss the content of the concrete measures to be included in the Basic Plan from an expert perspective in various study groups concerned, based on the considerations and views presented in this report. The Government as a whole including the ministries and agencies concerned is expected to formulate the Basic Promotional Plan for Education promptly.

3. 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 had been implemented in a phased manner, being adopted once a month since September 1992 and twice a month since April 1995.

The report prepared by the Central Council for Education recommends the implementation of this system for the purpose of enabling children to engage in various activities in everyday life, society, and nature, in order to nurture their *ikiru chikara* (zest for living), which includes the ability to learn and think for themselves and development of well-rounded characters, by providing them through mutual cooperation among schools, families, and communities, with more pressure-free hours.

Following this recommendation, the comprehensive five-day school week system has been implemented since FY 2002.

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 over-dependence on formal schooling

In order to correct adverse effects of people’s over-dependence on formal schooling, it is required to create a society in which individuals can be duly evaluated not in terms of the results of their formal schooling, 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.

The new Courses of Study, which have started to be implemented from FY2002 in elementary schools, lower secondary schools, and from FY2003 in upper secondary schools subsequently, aims to have children completely acquire basic and fundamental knowledge and skills and cultivate children's "solid academic ability," including motivation for learning, the ability to think, and the ability to judge. More specifically, the new Courses of Study limit the contents to be learned by all pupils and students to basic and fundamental matters that are strictly selected so that they will be able to completely understand such contents, and aims to enable each student to engage in learning according to their degree of understanding. The new Courses of Study also place more emphasis on educational programs through experience or solving problems so that students can acquire knowledge while realizing its significance.

In order to achieve the aim of the new Courses of Study, the Government redresses the complement of teachers and takes various measures to improve

children's academic abilities, and thereby supporting Boards of Education and schools in working toward achieving detailed instructions depending on children's personality and improving motivation for learning and the quality of academic ability in children. Thus, the Government is endeavoring to increase children's "solid academic ability" by (succeeding in providing "classes that are easy to understand."

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 schools for the blind, the deaf, and the otherwise disabled for the purposes of:

(1) rightsizing 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.

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 six times since 1959 for schools for compulsory education and five times since 1962 for upper secondary schools and the maximum number of pupils and students is now set as forty.

In FY2001, a five-year-plan called the seventh redress plan for teachers of public schools for compulsory education (total of 26,900 to be redeployed) started from the standpoint of supporting specific approaches of school guidance such as teaching in small group (different from standard classes) of approximately twenty, depending on the subjects, for the improvement of basic academic abilities of pupils and students and for fine-tuned teaching. The sixth redress plan for teachers of public upper secondary schools (total of 7,008 to be redeployed) also started in the same year from the standpoint of enabling diversified education of upper secondary schools by paying regard to schools that adopt various forms and methods of teaching such as unified lower and upper secondary schools and schools with integrated courses or the credit-based system. As a result, the number of pupils and students per teacher will become 18.6 from 19.2 for elementary schools and 14.6 from 16.4 for lower secondary schools in FY2005, becoming the highest level in the world.

The class sizes system was revised to enable prefectures as an exception to set the standard for class sizes below the national standard considering the situation of pupils and students, while the basis of the system, which sets the national standard of the number of pupils and students per class as forty,

remains the same. This revision enables prefectures to set the standard of class sizes as less than forty for the first and second grades, for example, when they decide necessary exceptions to the standard.

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 outlook on professions and labor. Through the whole process of school education, it is required to provide organized and systematic career education in line with the development state of the individual students, to nurture abilities and attitudes to help them to independently select their career.

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. In relation to kindergarten education, it is necessary to enrich educational activities and environment on the basis of building the foundation for life and learning at total school education after elementary schools. And it is also required to enrich the roles and functions of kindergartens as “places of nurturing for parents and children” utilizing the supporting function for parenting as the center of infant education in the community. To realize these things, MEXT has just decided the five-year “program to promote infant education,” in March 2001.

The eighth policy is for the promotion of special support education for the handicapped. In the final report compiled in March 2003, the “Council for Research and Study on the Future Direction of Special Support Education” makes various recommendations for the introduction of “special support education” with the aim of appropriately meeting the needs for education of individual pupils and students in light of changes in the environment affecting disabled pupils and students, such as the severity/multiplication of disabilities and the diversification of disabilities including learning disability (LD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Taking these recommendations into account, MEXT carries out projects aimed at establishing a comprehensive education support system for pupils and students with disabilities including LD and ADHD in elementary and lower secondary schools, and also is working toward laying down guidelines for establishing such a system.

The final report also points out the necessity to consider taking institutional measures such as reviewing the system of schools for the blind, the deaf, and the otherwise disabled and establishing the special support education system. MEXT is now discussing this issue.

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 Fundamental Law of 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 Law 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 Law” 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 improvement of the textbook system. School textbooks play a vital role in formal education as main teaching materials. Under the textbook authorization system, 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. On the basis of the recommendations offered by the National Commission on Educational Reform, MEXT has been improving the existing systems of textbook authorization and adoption. Further, with the aim of helping increase the understanding of the general public towards the significance of the textbook authorization system, MEXT has since FY1991 organized exhibitions of all draft textbooks submitted to MEXT for its

authorization, and all authorized textbooks and other materials related to the authorization system. In FY2002, MEXT made further improvement to allow school textbooks to include “contents for progressive study,” which are not contained in the 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

According to the report compiled by the Central Council for Education in August 2002 titled “Establishment of New System for Guarantee of Quality of Universities,” MEXT amended the School Education Law at the 155th extraordinary session of the Diet, to (i) make more flexible the approval system for the establishment of faculties and universities, (ii) introduce the third-party evaluation system, and (iii) introduce transitional corrective measures for universities in violation of the relevant law. As the approval system has been made more flexible, 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.

Also in FY2004, 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 (authorized 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. 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 FY2003, 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.

Thus, MEXT is endeavoring to guarantee the quality of universities by relaxing ex-ante regulations while conducting ex-post check.

(2) Incorporation of National Universities

In accordance with the National University Corporation Law promulgated in July and enforced in October 2003, 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 framework of national organs, and 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 fundamental reform measures will be taken with respect to the various management issues of national universities:

(i) “Incorporation of each national university” to ensure that they will operate independently and autonomously;

(ii) Introducing the management methods based on “private-sector concepts”;

(iii) Institutionalizing the management system with the “participation of people from outside”;

(iv) Changing the personnel system to a more flexible one that is not constrained by the Government Official Law (non-civil personnel system);

(v) Introducing the ex-post checking system through 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 as well as 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 will be provided from the budget for FY 2004 for the following three programs.

(i) Support for distinctive university education reforms

For the purpose of supporting various projects for university education reforms under the principle of competition among national, public, and private universities, financial support will be provided for selected distinctive and useful education projects, thereby further revitalizing higher education.

a. Support program for distinctive university education (distinctive good practice)

This program aims to support distinctive projects for university education reforms. In FY 2003, 80 projects were selected from a total of 644 applications. Selected projects were published as case studies. In FY 2004, 534 applications have been received and the work of selection is now on going.

b. Support program for contemporary educational needs (contemporary good practice)

This program aims to set subjects in accordance with policy issues that are strongly required by councils and society, and provide support for particularly useful education projects.

c. Support programs for advanced education research overseas

This program aims to support Japanese teachers in carrying out advanced educational methods or cutting-edge research activities to improve their ability in educational research.

(ii) Support for Creation of Law Schools and Other Professional Graduate Schools

Due to drastic changes in the society and economy and intensification of international competition, there is strong demand for professionals who have a global perspective and advanced skills and are capable of playing a leadership role in various fields of society.

To meet such demand, financial support will be intensively provided for useful education projects for developing and enhancing the contents and methods of education at law schools and other professional graduate schools, which will be selected based on third-party evaluation.

(iii) 21st Century COE Program

The “21st Century COE Program” is intended to intensively support the

formation of world-class bases for education and academic research, thereby promoting the creation of universities with the world's highest international competitiveness. During the three years from FY 2002, 274 bases at 93 universities have been selected as world-class bases for education and academic research.

(4) Professional Graduate Schools

“Professional graduate schools” are a new type of graduate schools for fostering professionals who have advanced and specialized vocational skills, by utilizing students’ basic abilities that have been developed during undergraduate school while linking theory with practice.

[Background]

The professional graduate school system was inaugurated in 2003 to meet the demand for professionals who have advanced and specialized vocational skills and are capable of playing a leadership role in various social and economic fields while playing an active role in the international community.

[Details]

Standard term of study: two years or a period not less than one year but not more than two years as prescribed by individual universities

Requirement for completion of study: Earning of at least 30 course credits or completion of the education curriculum as prescribed by individual universities

Composition of teachers: practitioners accounting for at least 30% of full-time teachers as required

Teaching methods: case studies, field studies, and bi-directional or multi-directional discussions and question-and-answer sessions, instead of instruction in essay-writing; strict evaluation of academic performance

Degree: professional degrees (new degrees indicated as “Master of XX (Professional)”

In the case of law schools, one of the professional graduate schools, the standard term of study is three years, the number of course degrees required for completion is at least 93 credits, practitioners account for at least 20% of full-time teachers, and the degree is indicated as “Juris Doctor” In 2011 and afterwards, only law school graduates will be qualified for the bar examination.

Status:

As of April 2004, 93 professional graduate schools are in operation, including laws schools specialized in nurturing lawyers, prosecutors, and

judges, and other professional schools specializing in finance, business, public policy, public health, and welfare management.

Future prospects:

In the future, more professional graduate schools will be established in fields where there is demand for professionals who have advanced vocational skills in particular fields in society or for professionals who can compete with overseas professionals.

4. Private Educational Institutions

In Japan, the ratio of students enrolled in private schools is about 75% for universities and junior colleges, about 95% for special training schools and others, about 30% for upper secondary schools, and about 80% 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 promotive 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

Educational activities other than formal education, which are carried out systematically, are generally called social education, and play a major role in

building a lifelong learning society. 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) Developing instructors for social education, and providing training programs for them on a national, regional, and prefectural basis in order to improve their abilities;

(ii) Improving the functioning of citizen's 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 National Children's Centers;

(iii) Providing youth and adults, irrespective of gender and age, with various learning opportunities, supporting regional activities and volunteer activities that (strengthen the links among local residents, and promoting learning activities with the use of educational media and human rights education.

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 measures to revitalize the educational functions of the community and enhance volunteer activities and experience-based activities, MEXT is working toward fostering the momentum for such activities in the society as well as establishing a nationwide promotion system and implementing model projects with the use of local human resources.

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 the improvement of the counseling system including

the deployment of school counselors, the preparation and distribution of reference materials for teachers, the study and research on mental health and habits in life and the improvement of nurse teachers. Since FY2004, MEXT has also been taking measures to enhance health consultation services through cooperation between schools and regional health agencies, such as dispatching professionals who specialize 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 give dietary guidance to pupils and students with the aim of not only providing them with knowledge on food but also encouraging them to practically acquire a desirable dietary habit with the use of such knowledge, and also provide them with well-balanced school lunches for the purpose of helping them to acquire proper dietary habits. MEXT has been taking and improving measures such as preparing and distributing reference materials for guidance, holding symposiums, and improving the skills of school nutritionists. The “Law for Partial Amendment of the School Education Law, etc.” was enacted on May 14, 2004. According to the amended law, MEXT has established a new system under which nutrition teachers take charge of both dietary guidance and school lunch management, thus working toward enhancing dietary guidance.

The fourth measure concerns the enhancement of safety at school. Schools carry out safety education aiming at developing attitudes and abilities of children to respect the lives of both themselves and others, and to practically understand matters necessary for safety in everyday life and lead a safe life. In light of the fact that incidents and accidents at schools have become a serious problem in recent years, MEXT has been taking and improving safety measures at schools including preparation of contingency manuals. .

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.

Referring to participation in international education for developing countries, personnel education was listed as one of the significant tasks in the “Medium Term Policy Referring to Government Development Aids” announced in August 1999, and a positive approach is now under way. Based upon “Human oriented development” which has become an internationally mainstream idea in recently developing fields, generous support is to be given for basic education in the development of personnel.

10. Coping with the Age of Information

The Government formulated the “e-Japan Strategy” in January 2001 addressing Japan’s goal to become the most advanced IT nation in the world within five years, and also formulated the “e-Japan Strategy II” in July 2003. Having formulated the “e-Japan Priority Policy Program 2004” in June 2004 in accordance with the Basic Law for Formation of Advanced Information Communication Network Society (IT Basic Law), the Government has been working toward promoting information technology and also making positive

efforts to promote the computerization of society in such fields as education, science and technology, sports, and culture.

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

In elementary and secondary school education, it has become a nation wide assignment to prepare students with the necessary qualifications for an advanced information telecommunication network-based society in the future so that they will be able to take appropriate measures for the computerized society.

In information education at schools, children learn how to operate computers, how to select the necessary information subjectively from a considerable amount of information and transmit such selected information as their own (“ability to exploit information”). The revision of the Course of Study also contributes to the generous promotion of information education.

Furthermore, based on “e-Japan Strategies,” the Government has been improving the learning environment to make computers available to students and teachers in all classes. The Government is also enhancing the functioning of the National Information Center for Educational Resources (NICER: <http://www.nicer.go.jp>), the core website on educational information in Japan which has been established to systematically organize and provide information concerning education and learning available on the Internet.

(2) Correspondence of Higher Education to the Computerized Society

For further utilization of IT in higher education, the Government partially revised the Standards for the Establishment of Universities in March 2001 and make institutional amendments to qualify classes using the Internet as formal classes. The Government also promotes exchanges of studies on education through joint classes and workshops between universities that are located far away from one another, by connecting such universities by satellite communication.

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, the Government is implementing necessary research projects for the promotion of lifelong learning so as to make information on formal and non-formal education, training, and educational programs available nationwide with the use of satellite communication.

(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 Agency for Cultural Affairs promotes the establishment of digital archives at museums and is working toward designing the “Cultural Heritage Online System” by which national and regional cultural heritage, whether tangible or intangible, can be browsed via the Internet.

(6) Corresponding to Cross Sectional Assignments

As one of the cross sectional assignments, the Government will take information barrier-free measures to improve the ability of disabled children to make use of information, and will also promote the utilization of information devices such as computers and an information telecommunication network as methods to cover their disabilities and support their learning education. .

Furthermore, to correspond to the “dark side of computerization,” the Government will also take measures to promote information education for developing the ability of information optimization, enhance emotional education, encourage activities based on various experiences such as natural environment experiences, and protect young people from the harmful information that surrounds them.

11. Buildings for Educational Facilities

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

For Japan to continue to make progress as a vital nation in the 21st century, education will play an extremely important role as the foundation of the entire social system. MEXT is reforming the education system to ensure that Japan will achieve this goal.

Educational facilities include local facilities such as elementary and lower secondary schools, libraries, sports and culture facilities, which serve as community bases, as well as facilities such as universities which foster skilled human resources and perform advanced scientific researches. These facilities play a significant role in expanding the foundation of educational measures.

With the aim of maintaining educational facilities to correspond appropriately to changes in society, MEXT carries out the measures according to the following viewpoints.

- (i) Maintaining a comprehensive educational environment corresponding to the diversified needs of lifelong education for the people.
- (ii) Promoting the establishment of environmentally-friendly facilities (Eco-schools) and energy conservation measures in order to reduce the environmental load.
- (iii) Promoting the establishment of facilities that take into consideration the cooperation of the local communities.
- (iv) Promoting the establishment of school facilities in which children can spend their daily lives at ease and which can correspond to the diversification and flexibility of the contents and methods of education.
- (v) Taking measures against earthquake and other disasters at school facilities in order to protect pupils and students from such disasters.
- (vi) Promoting the establishing of school facilities as safe, secure, and enriched educational environments.
- (vii) Establishing facilities as bases for original and advanced scientific research and activities to foster creative human resources.

(2) Establishment of Environmentally-Friendly Educational Facilities

a. Promoting the establishment of environmentally-friendly facilities (Eco-schools)

Environmental issues such as global warming are now becoming a worldwide concern. On the other hand, as educational facilities require a high level of functionality and comfort, their energy consumption will increase accordingly. Therefore, it is important to build and maintain educational facilities while giving due consideration to reducing the burden on the environment. It is also required to promote environmental education in accordance with the “Law for Increasing Motivation to Protect the Environment and Promoting Environmental Education” enacted in July 2003.

With the objective of contributing to reducing the environmental burden and developing environmental education and study, MEXT is working toward establishing and enhancing environmentally-friendly schools by conducting pilot model projects.

b. Securing a Satisfactory Educational Environment

Currently, the total area of school facilities and social educational facilities is over 350 million□ (gross floor area) and this includes those that are deteriorating from age. These facilities must be maintained in safe and good condition, and they should fulfill certain requirements in response to the needs of the times as well as perform their functions in times of disasters. To achieve this, it is important to check for any deterioration to these facilities by means of periodical safety inspections and, if necessary, emergency inspections, and take appropriate measures to repair and refurbish them.

MEXT prepares pamphlets that outline the points of inspection for the maintenance of school facilities and distributes them to schools. MEXT also has advised the prefectural Boards of Education to take appropriate measures to maintain schools facilities depending on the actual condition of the community and the circumstances of individual schools.

(3) Establishment of School Facilities in Cooperation with Communities

a. Schools as a local base for the community

Environmental formation to promote smooth activities aiming at the cooperation of lifelong learning society with schools, homes and the local community, or cooperation through combining of facilities such as the social educational facilities and social welfare facilities will be demanded in school facilities. The facilities must be formed as the local base of the community.

For this, MEXT presented measures to each prefectural Board of Education to promote the formation of school facilities as the base of the local community.

b. The promotion of barrier-free educational facilities

Schools are public facilities which may be utilized for various lifelong learning activities practiced in the local community, and therefore they should be made and maintained as barrier-free facilities.

To achieve this, MEXT has advised the prefectural Boards of Education to make due arrangements to construct school facilities that may be utilized smoothly by the elderly, the disabled, etc. In particular, MEXT provides subsidies for installing facilities such as ramps, toilets, and elevators for the disabled.

Furthermore, MEXT formulated the “Guidelines for Promotion of Barrier-Free School Facilities” to specify the basic concepts concerning the barrier-free policy and the points to be noted for planning and designing school facilities.

(4) Establishment of Characteristic Educational Facilities

a. 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” according to the school types, and expresses the basic concepts for maintaining school facilities and the points to be noted for planning and designing such facilities.

Furthermore, in order to cope with new issues concerning school facilities such as response to the new Course of Study, safety improvement, crime prevention measures, promotion of earthquake-proof construction, and symbiosis with the environment, MEXT has revised the Guidelines for Upgrading of School Facilities as appropriate and notified the prefectural Boards of Education of the revised guidelines.

b. Utilization of vacant classrooms

Recently, corresponding to the decrease in the number of pupils and students due to the falling birthrate, there are vacant classrooms in public elementary and lower secondary schools. These vacant classrooms are being utilized as “relaxation” spaces or as special classrooms or classrooms for emotional education, or they are opened up for community use. These

classrooms are also utilized for purposes other than school education, as facilities for social education and for welfare services for the elderly.

MEXT formulated the “Guidelines for Utilization of Vacant Classrooms” to indicate the points to be noted and specific methods for utilizing vacant classrooms, and distributed them to the prefectural Boards of Education. MEXT also simplified and clarified the procedures to utilize the vacant classrooms as facilities other than schools, thereby promoting the utilization of such classrooms.

Furthermore, MEXT also is working toward publicizing example cases of utilized vacant classrooms by preparing and distributing pamphlets that present such example cases, and collecting cases of utilizing such classrooms as nursery schools, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, and publicizing them on the MEXT website.

(5) Improvement of Disaster Prevention Measures for School Facilities

a. Promotion of earthquake-resistant measures

As school facilities must secure safety of pupils and students in times of disasters and serve as emergency evacuation areas for local residents, it is important to take positive measures to improve the earthquake resistance of these facilities.

MEXT formulated the “School Facilities Earthquake-resistance Promotion Guidelines” to indicate the basic policies for promoting earthquake-resistant measures for school facilities, methods of designing specific promotion plans of earthquake-resistant measures, and methods of utilizing earthquake motion prediction maps. MEXT also provides subsidies to cover expenses for measures to reinforce earthquake resistance.

b. Implementation of Measures for Disaster Restoration

In the event of a typhoon, local heavy rain, earthquake, or volcanic eruption, MEXT is endeavoring to collect precise information on damage promptly, and instructs the Boards of Education concerned to take measures to secure the safety of pupils and students, prevent the spread of damage, and prevent secondary disaster.

MEXT provides public school facilities affected by such disasters with subsidies to cover part of the expenses incurred for disaster restoration in order to secure smooth operation of school education.

MEXT also is working toward establishing a system to dispatch, upon the request of the parties in charge of affected educational facilities, investigation teams to the affected areas to detect the degree of danger of damaged buildings.

(6) Promotion of Safety Control of School Facilities

School facilities are places where pupils and students, who are in the process of mental and physical growth, engage in study and other activities. Therefore, these facilities must also be protected from crime.

In light of the recent increase in the number of crimes committed in school facilities, MEXT designed the basic policy of safety control and crime prevention for school facilities. MEXT also revised the Guidelines for Upgrading of School Facilities to include provisions concerning the points to be noted for planning and designing specific crime prevention measures and notified the prefectural Boards of Education of the revised guidelines. MEXT will continue to work on this issue systematically.

(7) Creation of an Educational Research Environment for the Future

a. Developing and enhancing the educational research environment

In Japan, educational facilities such as universities have been developed in line with educational research responding to the progress in higher education and scientific research as well as various needs of the times, and have formed a foundation for educational research activities.

MEXT believes that the development of these facilities will contribute to the development of Japan's future, as they are the infrastructure through which intellectually creative activities are carried out to foster personnel capable of conducting original and advanced scientific research and intellectual properties are created and utilized. Based on this belief, MEXT is taking positive measures to develop and enhance these facilities.

Currently, the national universities possess a building area of about 2.5 million m². However, these facilities have deteriorated in conditions and functions due to aging, and along with university reforms including the establishment of new graduate schools, revision of faculties and courses, and changes in educational research as well as the increase in the number and size of research equipment in response to the progress in scientific research, these facilities have lacked enough space.

The Second Science and Technology Basic Plan, with the objective of developing the infrastructure for science and technology promotion, regarded the correction of aging of and lack of space in universities as one of Japan's priority policy issues. According to this basic plan, MEXT, with the aim of securing the world's highest level of education research results, announced the "5-Year Program for Emergent Renovation and Building of National Universities, etc." in April 2001. MEXT is currently implementing measures in a selective and planned manner to improve national universities, etc. facilities for effective and flexible use.

b. Facility management of universities as “intellectual bases”

For the purpose of extending globally-competitive educational research vigorously, national universities should strive to maintaining or improving their infrastructural facilities and achieving effective use thereof, by not only developing new facilities but also appropriately managing and operating a large amount of existing facilities. From such a perspective, MEXT presents to national universities the basic viewpoints for introducing facility management, basic concepts of targeted facility standards, and specific management measures. Thus, MEXT requests and encourage national universities to actively work toward implementing facility management.

Chapter 3. Qualitative and Quantitative Achievements and Remaining Issues

1. Access to Education and Equity in 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 Fundamental Law of 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 Fundamental Law of Education and as provided by the School Education law 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 satellite broadcasting
- 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. Quality (in terms of Relevance) of Education

The important things for assuring the quality of education are evaluation and information provision. In Japan, according to the "Standards for the Establishment of Elementary Schools" (MEXT Ordinance), since April 2002, elementary schools, lower secondary schools, upper secondary schools, and kindergartens have been required to make efforts to conduct self-evaluation and publish the evaluation results and to provide students' guardians with information on the management of schools.

With the objective of grasping the progress of study among pupils and students in light of the goals and contents of the Course of Study and identifying problems in teaching each subject, thereby contributing to setting guidelines for future educational curriculums and improving study guidance, the National Institute for Educational Policy Research conducts surveys on the implementation of curriculums.

The institute conducted surveys on the former Course of Study targeting elementary and lower secondary schools in FY2001 and upper secondary schools in FY2002 and FY2003. In May 2003, the institute also conducted detailed analysis on each subject targeting elementary and lower secondary schools, and published reports indicating improvements that should be achieved in teaching each subject at schools. Furthermore, the institute has just conducted a survey on the new Course of Study targeting elementary and lower secondary schools in January and February 2004.

Since FY2004, the institute has also started to conduct surveys at designated experimental schools regarding subjects that cannot be fully addressed in the surveys on the implementation of educational curriculums, such as life environmental studies, music, fine arts, health and physical education, and industrial arts and homemaking.

3. Content of Education (Major Trends and Challenges for Curriculum Development Processes)

MEXT has revised the Course of Study about once every ten years. In the future, for the purpose of quickly responding to the drastic changes in society, MEXT will review the Course of Study constantly at the standing committee on educational curriculums established in the Central Council for Education in 2001, based on the results of nationwide and comprehensive surveys on academic performance including the surveys on the implementation of educational curriculums mentioned in 2 above.

In order to obtain empirical materials that will be useful for improving the Course of Study and guidelines for curriculums, MEXT also allows, under exceptional circumstances, some schools to organize and implement curriculums that are not in accordance with the existing guidelines and carries out research by implementing new curriculums and teaching methods at pilot schools for research purposes.

4. Partnerships and Participation by Civil Society in the Process of Educational Change (through Town Meetings, Public Comments, and Cooperation with Non-government Bodies)

In such a drastically changing society, citizens must participate in broad and close discussion on the desirable form of the education system. In Japan, the following measures are being taken to this end.

(Town meetings)

Since June 2001, the Government has held “town meetings” throughout Japan in order to increase understanding among citizens of various government policies and enhance citizens’ movements for participating in policy-making, through direct exchanges of opinions between Cabinet members and citizens. By November 2001, the Government had held town meetings in all prefectures, and since then, it has continued to hold such meetings addressing different policy subjects. As of December 2003, town meetings have been held 100 times in total.

MEXT has held “Town Meetings on Education Reforms” three times since FY2003 until May 2004. The Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and citizens had a frank exchange of opinions at these meetings.

(Education Reform Forums)

With the objective of intensifying national discussions concerning the promotion of educational reform and the amendment of the Fundamental Law of Education, MEXT held “Education Reform Forum: Promotion of Educational Reform and Amendment of the Fundamental Law of Education” at five sites in May and June 2003. In October 2003, MEXT also held this forum at three sites linked by L-Net (MEXT’s information communication network using communication satellite) and broadcasted the meeting to 986 sites.

(Public comment procedure: procedure for submitting opinions concerning the formulation or abolition of regulations)

Through the public comment procedure, the administrative authorities publish proposals for government policies and provide citizens and businesses with opportunities to submit opinions and information concerning such proposals, and then make final decisions by giving due consideration to the submitted opinions and information. In Japan, this procedure has been implemented since April 1999.

The purpose of this procedure is for the administrative authorities to obtain various opinions, information, and specialized knowledge from citizens and businesses and to assure fairness and improve transparency in the process of making decisions at the administrative authorities.

(Cooperation with non-government education providers)

In addition to local public bodies, non-government social education providers such as culture centers flexibly respond to the learning demand of local residents and provide them with diverse and original learning opportunities.

In the section titled “Experience in everyday life and nature will nurture the minds of Japanese children” in the report compiled by the Lifelong Learning Council in June 1999, it is stated that non-government education providers are required to play a role of providing learning opportunities that are different from school education, in response to the diverse learning demand of children. The report also recommends the future direction of non-government education providers including cram schools, while encouraging them to provide a variety of educational programs through experience in nature and society, through creative activities, and through support for a problem-solving approach to learning.

5. Main Problems and Challenges Facing the Education System at the Beginning of the Twenty-first Century

According to the report compiled by the Central Council for Education titled “New Fundamental Law of Education and Basic Promotional Plan for Education Befitting to the New Times” (see Part II, Chapter 1. 2, “Efforts for the amendment of the Fundamental Law of Education”), Japanese society faces various crises such as a loss of confidence and pervading sense of there being no way out, while being troubled with a number of education problems including deterioration in the sense of importance of keeping rules, moral consciousness, and self-discipline among young people, bullying, non-attendance at school, dropping out from school, class disruption, decreased motivation for learning, and decline in educational functions at home and in the community.

The report states that, under such circumstances, it is required to review the Japanese education system and reconstruct it so that it becomes one that is suitable for the new age, and the future education system in Japan should aim at “fostering reliable Japanese people who will pave the way for the new age.” More specifically, the report indicates the following goals:

- (i) Fostering Japanese who aim at achieving self-fulfillment;
- (ii) Fostering Japanese who are mentally and physically sound;
- (iii) Fostering Japanese with strong creativity who will lead Japan in the age of knowledge;
- (iv) Fostering Japanese who will create a new “public sector” and voluntarily participate in forming the state and society in the 21st century;
- (v) Fostering well-cultured Japanese who live on the basis of Japanese tradition and culture in the international community.

In order to accomplish these goals, it is necessary to carry out educational reforms by reviewing the Fundamental Law of Education and other education-related laws, including effective reforms through formulation of the Basic Promotional Plan for Education that stipulates specific measures comprehensively and systematically. Based on such recognition, MEXT is working on educational reforms while intensifying national discussions (see Part II, Chapter 1. Trends in Educational Reforms).

Chapter 4. High-Quality Secondary Education for All Youth

1. Education and Gender Equality

Promotion of lifelong learning is critically significant for both men and women to make the most of their own individualities and abilities and participate in various activities in society. In particular, for the purpose of meeting diversified and the advanced learning demand of women and contributing to their empowerment, MEXT strives to enhance learning opportunities available to women throughout the course of their lifetime. To this end, MEXT promotes learning programs provided by municipal governments and women's groups addressing various problems facing women in everyday life, and encourages prefectural governments to provide them with opportunities to learn advanced and specialized study in cooperation with universities.

With the aim of improving the status of women and developing their abilities and skills, MEXT also promotes learning programs through classes for women who have finished child rearing to provide them with the knowledge, skills, and mental preparation that are necessary for reemployment. Furthermore, while developing partnerships between women's groups and men and carrying out, from the perspective of gender equality, community-building projects in which women are involved, MEXT supports learning activities aimed at encouraging women to participate in various activities in society.

In addition, MEXT supports Boards of Education and women's education groups in holding training programs for fostering women's education instructors and aims to promote involvement of women in planning and management of leaning activities.

2. Education for Participation in Society (Special Support Education, Education for Foreign Students)

(1) Special Support Education

In December 2002, the Cabinet adopted the Basic Programs for Persons with Disabilities, which indicated the basic direction of measures to be taken for the disabled in the ten years from FY2003 to FY2022, and also adopted the Five Year Plan for Implementation of Priority Measures that specified priority measures to be implemented in the five years from FY2003 to FY2007. The Basic Programs for Persons with Disabilities includes the following targets: (i) development of a consistent consultation system; (ii)

enhancement and diversification of functions of specialized institutions such as schools for the blind, the deaf, and the otherwise disabled; (iii) improvement of teachers' abilities and promotion of research on the development of advanced teaching methods and systems; (iv) promotion of social and occupational independence; (v) promotion of accessible school facilities. The Five Year Plan for Implementation of Priority Measures provides the measures to establish systems for providing continuous and effective support and to develop systems for providing educational support for students with LD and ADHD in elementary and lower secondary schools, with specific targets and time schedule.

In October 2001, the "Council for Research and Study on the Future Direction of Special Support Education" was established. The Council prepared its final report titled "Future Direction of Special Support Education" in March 2001. According to the recommendations made by this report, MEXT carries out various measures while following the basic direction of shifting education for the disabled from "special education," which means providing education at special places depending on the degree of disability, to "special support education," which means providing appropriate educational support depending on educational needs of individual disabled pupils and students. Thus, MEXT promotes education for disabled children so that they will be able to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to achieve their independence and participate in the society.

(See Part I, Chapter 1.1(5))

(2) Education for Foreign Students in Japan

As of September 2003, 6,495 students who needed to learn Japanese were enrolled in 2,000 public secondary schools. Most of these students had not learnt Japanese before coming to Japan where they have to use and follow a language and culture different from their own. Therefore, it is important to improve the system for providing them with appropriate guidance for learning Japanese and adapting to Japanese school life.

MEXT takes various measures to this end.

(See Part I, Chapter 7.6(2))

3. Education and *Ikiru Chikara* (Zest for living) (New Course of Study)

With the goal of fostering people who have the quality and ability to respond to social changes in a spontaneous and creative manner, Japan's education policies place importance on the development of *Ikiru Chikara* (Zest for living) in children in schools, families, and communities. The zest for

living is regarded as total human power including (i) the quality and ability to find the problem by oneself, learn by oneself, think by oneself, judge and act independently, and find a better solution; (ii) good human nature such as self-discipline, a sense of cooperation with others, and consideration for others; (iii) the health and physical fitness necessary for a better life.

In particular, secondary education is required to enable all students, irrespective of their future directions, to acquire a certain level of knowledge and skills, while appropriately responding to their diversified abilities, aptitudes, and interests. In light of this, the New Course of Study has increased the choices of optional subjects while maintaining the balance between optional subjects and compulsory subjects. Thus, the New Course of Study aims to encourage schools to work toward developing the individuality of students and implementing educational programs for cultivating the zest for living in them.

4. Quality Education and the Key Role of Teachers

(1) Improvement of Teachers' Qualities and Abilities

(i) Improving teachers' qualities and abilities through integrated measures concerning fostering, recruiting, and training of teachers

Quality school education depends enormously on the qualities and abilities of teachers who directly take charge of providing such education. Therefore, for the purpose of improving teachers' qualities and abilities, MEXT promotes related measures for the stages of developing, recruiting, and training teachers in an integrated manner.

a. Developing teachers

In order to develop competent teachers, MEXT made partial amendments to the Teacher License Law in 1998, and reviewed the university curriculums for developing teachers by enhancing the "subjects required for the teaching profession."

MEXT also develops cooperation between universities that develop teachers and Boards of Education, for the purpose of developing teachers in response to needs of schools.

b. Recruiting teachers

From the perspective of recruiting unique and diversified people who are qualified as teachers, prefectural Boards of Education have improved the methods for selecting and recruiting teachers while placing emphasis not only on candidates' academic performance but also their personalities. MEXT

encourages Boards of Education to apply conditional recruitment for a fixed term as appropriate) to examine the competency of newly-recruited teachers.

c. Training teachers

In order for teachers to receive necessary training depending on their experience, specialized fields, and professional ability, MEXT systematically provides various training programs including those for new teachers.

In April 2001, the National Center for Teachers' Development was established for the purpose of implementing national training programs in a centralized manner. The Center provides training programs for teachers who are to play a leadership role in prefectural educational policies, and training programs addressing urgent tasks concerning school education.

(ii) Evaluating teachers' performance and reflecting it in their treatment

In many regions, the results of evaluation of teachers' performance have not appropriately or sufficiently been reflected in their treatment. In order to correct such situation and improve the teacher evaluation system, MEXT has entrusted Boards of Directors of all prefectures and designated cities with practical survey and research on this issue since FY2003.

(iii) Taking strict measures for teachers with teaching ability problems

a. Measures for "teachers who lack teaching ability"

Boards of Education of all prefectures and designated cities have developed systems to provide constant guidance and training for teachers who lack teaching ability.

b. Strict punishments for teachers who have committed illegal acts

In order to prevent scandals involving teachers, Boards of Education should aim to ensure that teachers comply completely with service regulations and employ painstaking methods for recruiting and training teachers. It is also important to impose strict disciplinary punishments on teachers who have committed illegal acts.

(iv) Recruiting people other than teachers

In order to make schools more open to society and diversify and revitalize school education, recruitment of people other than teachers is critically important. Therefore, MEXT promotes measures to appoint people other than teachers as lecturers and business people as principals.

(2) Redressing the Complement of Teachers

With the aim of rightsizing classes, which are the basic units of the learning and school lives of pupils and students and providing educational conditions to secure the teachers required for smooth teaching, MEXT 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 schools. To this end, MEXT also formulated the seventh redress plan for teachers of public schools for compulsory education and the sixth redress plan for teachers of public upper secondary schools.

5. Education for Sustainable Development (Environmental Education)

Based on Japan's proposal submitted at the Johannesburg Summit in September 2002, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the resolution on the "Decade of Education for Sustainable Development," and decided to develop a draft international implementation scheme, under the initiative of UNESCO, as guidelines for specific measures to be taken by member states. Japan is preparing for the commencement of its implementation in 2005.

Following the adoption of this U.N. resolution, the Government is taking advanced measures particularly in the field of environmental education compared with other educational fields. In July 2003, the "Law for Increasing Motivation to Protect Environment and Promoting Environmental Education" was enacted, which provides that opportunities and information concerning promotion of environmental education and preservation of the environment should be made available to citizens and businesses so as to increase their understanding and motivation for preservation of the environment. More efforts should be made toward achieving this goal in various fields. Through developing close cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and other ministries and agencies concerned as well as NPOs and other non-government groups, MEXT provides subsidies for measures to solve regional issues and satisfy learning demand, and also provides support for environment learning programs to resolve regional issues concerning preservation of the environment.