

# On Integrated Reforms in High School and University Education and University Entrance Examination Aimed at Realizing a High School and University Articulation System Appropriate for a New Era —Creating a Future for the Realization of the Dreams and Goals of all Young People—

This report raises the issue of high school and university articulation system, which, despite having been the biggest issue in educational reform, has been difficult to realize, and proposes sweeping reform policies for high school and university education and the university entrant selection system that articulates the two in order to make this reform a reality for the first time.

(1) Reforms of high school education, university education, and university entrance examination that support the diverse dreams and goals of young people

## (Toward a New Future)

- For each and every young boy and girl who is working hard to make their dreams for the future a reality, we aim to help them realize a happy life, full with success and a great sense of self pride.

We aim to equip today's children and those to be born in the future with the sufficient knowledge and skills and help them further build up for themselves the requisite individuality and skills in intellection, decision making, and self-expression as tools for making their way in the society of the future, working both inside and outside of Japan, and building a full life. Through cooperation with a diverse selection of people while using the above tools we aim for them to achieve enjoyable and rich lives.

We aim to help them embody the qualities of effective thought and action and become people that shape society and the state.

In order that our country, Japan, achieves these goals in the future, we must put our full strength into educational reforms.

- In Japan, too, as we approach a difficult era, squeezed between the rough waves of a decline in working age population, a slump in labor productivity, and globalization/multi-polarization, there is a high possibility that the future environment of the workplace will be completely removed from what the adults of today imagine.<sup>1</sup> Amidst such changes, the continued use alone of the education system we have had up until now will not allow us to raise children with strengths translatable to the future era.

In order to overcome this severe era, and have the citizens and the nation of our children and grandchildren live out a future full of hope, the government must proceed with decisiveness in promoting educational reforms that have a careful eye on a new era.

<sup>1</sup>American researchers are even reported as estimating that 65% of children that entered American elementary schools in 2011 will, after graduation from university, find work in fields that don't presently exist.

(Issues that must be overcome)

- Policies for the realization of high school and university articulation system should be understood as an important contributor to realizing the sort of future that is discussed above. However, the present high school and university education and university entrance examination systems tend to favor the rote memorization and recall of information, and taking an attitude of proactive cooperation with a diverse cross section of people using intellection, problem solving, and self-expression—that is to say, **true scholarly ability**—has not been cultivated or recognized.
- Again, the system has been inclined to cut down and fail to value high school students who take special interest in a specialized area and who devote themselves to working toward their dreams, or those who have the energy and enthusiasm to proactively tackle global issues with a spirit of taking on the world, or those who take well thought out, thorough, and direct action on local issues.

Against this backdrop, young people cannot fulfill their dreams and hone their skills while also bringing out their latent abilities. Their dreams are cut off at the root when they aim, for example, to be the Edison or Einstein of the future, when they try to bring out their hidden talents while using the world as their stage, or when they try to come up with inventions and solutions to problems that may become the key to invigorating regional production.

(Unified reforms in high school education, university education, and university entrance examination)

- We aim to overcome this situation by creating a new system through reforms in high school education, university education, and the university entrant selection process. By properly recognizing the cumulative efforts made by every boy and girl to realize their individual dreams and goals—the seeds for which were sown through their high school education—in the university entrant selection process, we aim to allow those dreams and goals to come to fruition through university education and involvement in society.
- To that end, we seek to promote integrated action on the following reforms.
- ◆ In regard to high school education, we aim to provide an environment where students are able to absorb the sort of learning and guidelines for self conduct that will allow them to become people that shape society and the state in addition to allowing them to proactively pursue their studies in line with their own individual dreams and goals. To that end, while pacing change with the reforms in high school and university articulation system, we are planning to **completely reevaluate curriculum guidelines**, reevaluate structures from the perspective of the sorts of qualities and skills that are the desired outcome of education, and to seek to massively improve proactive and cooperative learning and instruction methods focusing on the discovery and resolution of issues, which is the basis of active learning.

Additionally, in planning for the securing and improvement of educational quality and to be of use in enriching the scholastic ability of students, we will introduce the “[Fundamental High School Scholastic Abilities Test \[provisional name\]](#).”

- ◆ In regard to university education, in order to further expand and improve the strengths that were cultivated through high school education, we aim to establish curriculum management (numbering, etc.) that addresses university education as a whole, going above the level of individual courses. Concurrently with this, we also aim to promote a qualitative transition to active learning, where students can study while proactively cooperating with a diverse variety of people.
- ◆ In the area of university entrance examination, we aim to do away with the present university entrance exams, and introduce the “[Prospective University Entrant Scholastic Abilities Evaluation Test \[provisional name\]](#),” a new test which, among the skills needed for university study, places particular emphasis on evaluating intellection, decision making, and self-expression.
- ◆ In regard to individual screening, we aim to make clear the specific items in regard to selection methods for each university on the basis of an administration policy that respects that university’s individual characteristics. This will allow for a multifaceted selection methodology based on the three key scholastic skills※, in order to allow for the selection of people with outstanding skills in a specialized area and to foster access for students from a multitude of backgrounds without prejudice to age, gender, nationality, culture, presence or not of a disability, regional differences, and family environment, etc. To this end we aim to improve the individual aspects of the implementation process for university entrant selection while putting into law the necessary administration policies, etc.

※In regard to points that require reforms in line with differences in selectiveness, see the attached “Overview of Reforms to University Entrance Examination (image)”

- Further, in order that each university may be able to proceed with reforms that conform to the new rules based on the required items for the implementation of the new university entrant selection process, we aim to provide financial support structures, etc. that can act as a means of incentive to the universities.

## (2) Cultivating and evaluating communication skills for a globalized world

- With the spread of globalization, in order to cooperate proactively with people of different cultures and languages, it is necessary to improve the level of skill in English, as the global lingua franca, and for Japan to take an attitude of deep understanding toward its own traditional culture as well as understanding that of other countries and interacting with others without trepidation, etc.
- In order to properly learn truly useful English it is not good enough to simply have the passive skills of “reading” and “listening”—it is important to foster and evaluate the four key skills comprehensively, including “writing” and “speaking,” so that students can assertively make use of their English skills, think independently, and express themselves.

The “Prospective University Entrant Scholastic Abilities Evaluation Test [provisional name]” will include questions that can comprehensively evaluate the four skills and incorporate commercial qualifications and skill level tests. Also, in terms of goals for education in English in high schools, focus will be put on what precisely it is that English can be used for in aiming to shape what achievements should be focused on from elementary through to high school. Revisions will be made to curriculum guidelines in order to shape the content to make it consistent with the goal of addressing the four skills.

### (3) Realizing high school education reforms including revisions to curriculum guidelines

- High school curriculum guidelines are to be **comprehensively reevaluated** (i) not from the perspective of “what can we teach?” but rather “**what kinds of skills/strengths** do people need to learn,” in order to realize a high school education that is able to support the dreams and goals of a diverse group of youths. In order to properly foster those skills/strengths, in addition to instructional content, we also aim to (ii) reevaluate the curriculum from the perspective of clarifying the appropriate **learning methods and environments**.

- In concrete terms, we aim to make the following reevaluations while clarifying what sorts of qualities and skills we are trying to foster through the high school curriculum guidelines.

Moreover, when it comes to the sorts of qualities and skills that we are trying to foster, considerations will be made while continuously making reference to ways of thinking in regard to the cultivation of inquisitiveness, etc., seen for example in the OECD Key Competencies and the logical thinking and self-expression skills aimed at in the International Baccalaureate—in addition to reference to the aims and intentions of the Japanese Fundamental Law of Education and the School Education Act.

- ◆ Sweeping and full implementation of proactive and cooperative learning and instruction methods aimed at the discovery and resolution of issues in order to foster the key skills of intellection, decision making, and self-expression.
- ◆ The full implementation of a curriculum that allows the practical absorption of guidelines for learning and conduct that will give students the necessary skills for successfully living an independent life within society and for becoming people that can shape society and the state.
- ◆ The consideration of new subjects and courses for the purpose of fostering and evaluating high level intellection, decision making, and self-expression skills.
- ◆ Reevaluations focused on further improving the level of integrated, concentrated learning periods where research is made into particular topics, in, for example, university graduation theses.

◆Reevaluations targeted at improving the quality of specialized educational support systems.

(4) Reforming society's understanding of the idea of "fairness"

- In the present university entrance exams, particularly in standardized universal exams, questions are designed to elicit the recitation of knowledge in regard to a series of pre-established correct answers. However, we aim to reform the conception that selection based on the result of those scores alone should be considered as "fair." Thus, it is necessary to deepen the understanding of this societal issue in order to allow each young person to have their own dreams and goals and for them to be able to attain the skills necessary to realize such. We aim to do this from the perspective of supporting young people's individual studies in order to encourage people to **understand the importance of a process that selects entrants based on a multifaceted methodology that "fairly" evaluates the skills that individuals have built up for themselves.**

(5) Formulating the "Implementation Plan for Reforms in High School and University Articulation System [provisional name]" for the purpose of the realization of reforms

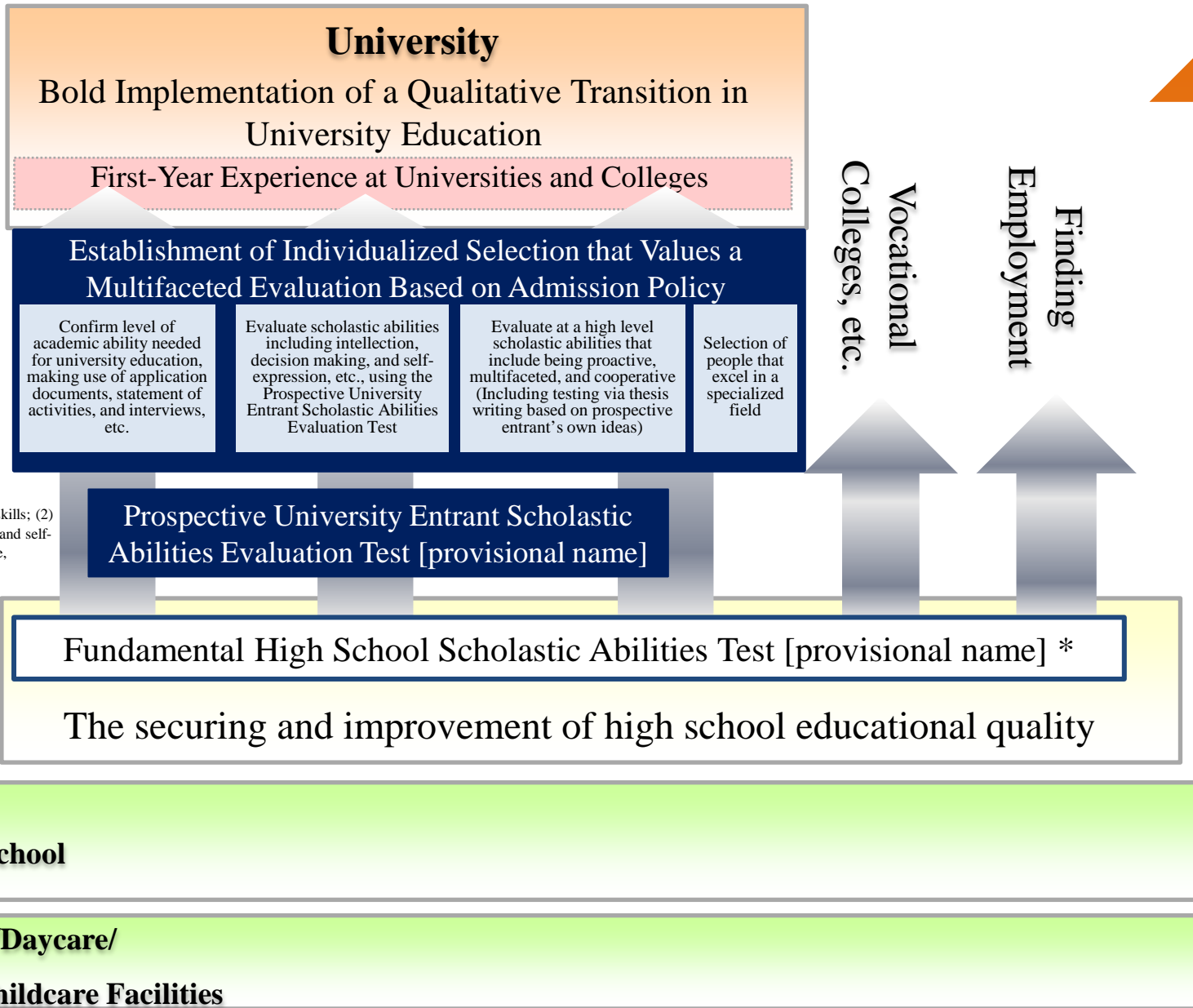
- The government of Japan, based on this report, plans to summarize the details of the reforms and the schedule for such in the **"Implementation Plan for Reforms in High School and University Articulation System [provisional name]"** and to quickly formulate, announce, and vigorously implement said reforms.  
In regard to reforms in evaluation methods, etc., in the case of each university, there will be realistic and effective policy measures designed to realize reforms in individual selection processes and a qualitative change in education style—including strengthening admissions offices and clarifying admission policy. In the case of high schools, there will be reforms in education including addressing structures for proactively establishing and implementing the new testing process and high school curriculum guidelines. The possible concrete measures and the future schedule for discussing the above will be indicated in the plan, which will be shaped while observing the condition of the discussion as it evolves in the Central Council for Education.
- In regard to points that require further consideration in response to the desired shape of education in a new era, considerations will be made in accordance with the schedule indicated in the plan, and results obtained from this process will be made public in the order in which they were addressed.

# Overview of Reforms to University Entrance Examination (image)

\* Note that the “Fundamental High School Scholastic Abilities Test [provisional name]” was not intended primarily for its use in university entrance examination. Rather, when students are moving on to a higher level of education the scores from such will be noted in the application forms, etc., and it will merely form one section of the overall reference materials submitted in order to give an outline of the prospective entrant’s scholastic achievements in high school.

It is important that, in regard to scholastic ability, heed is paid to the three key scholastic skills in making a comprehensive evaluation based on the admission policy without prejudice to the degree of selectiveness. The points that are in particular need of reform can be seen on the right.

\* (1) Knowledge and technical skills; (2) intellection, decision making, and self-expression; (3) being proactive, multifaceted, and cooperative



<b>Overall Name</b>	<b>New Test for the Evaluation of Scholastic Abilities</b> [provisional name]	
<b>Implementation Body</b>	<b>Fundamental reforms of university entrance centers in terms of organizational structure in order to carry out integrated support for implementation, methodological development, and evaluations for the “New Test for the Evaluation of Scholastic Abilities [provisional name].”</b>	
<b>Individual Names</b>	<b>Fundamental High School Scholastic Abilities Test</b> [provisional name]	<b>Prospective University Entrant Scholastic Abilities Evaluation Test</b> [provisional name]
<b>Aims/Application Strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To allow students to be able to understand for themselves their level of achievement in learning via their high school education and to be able to objectively display their scholastic ability. Through this, to motivate students to want to learn and improve the quality of that learning.</li> <li>&lt;Application strategies in addition to the above&gt;</li> <li>○ Utilize results in improving educational instruction in high schools.</li> <li>○ As a form of certification and indication of basic scholastic abilities when progressing to a higher level of schooling or full time work, results may also be utilized by universities, etc.</li> <li>* In terms of use in progressing to higher schooling, results will be used as one form of reference material in ascertaining academic achievements obtained in high school level education by entering those results in application forms, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In order to <u>ascertain whether prospect university entrants have the necessary skills to go on to undertake university level education.</u></li> <li>Not to merely value “knowledge and skills” in isolation as aspects of “solid scholastic abilities,” but rather to value as most important the abilities of “intellection, decision making, and self-expression” that are needed in order to make use of knowledge and skills to identify issues on one’s own, to research ways to resolve those issues, and express the findings, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Targeted Groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Participation as desired</li> <li>* Consider strategies to allow <u>as many students as possible to participate.</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Prospective university entrants</u></li> <li>* Testing open to anyone wishing to confirm their skills for studying at university level, including adults, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Contents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In the beginning of implementation, it is projected that high school required course subjects such as the following will be included: “Japanese language,” “mathematics,” “world history,” “contemporary society,” “fundamentals of physics,” and “English communication,” etc. (Selected testing also possible.)</li> <li>○ While paying attention to “solid scholastic abilities” that should be fostered in high school, there will be questions that highly value intellection, decision making, and self-expression. However, from the perspective of securing the quality and quantity of fundamental scholastic abilities, there will be a particular focus on the assured acquisition of “knowledge and skills.”</li> <li>* A varied degree of difficulty, from high level to lower level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In addition to course-based evaluation, in order to recognize intellection, decision making, and self-expression that exceeds the boundaries of particular courses and subjects, <u>questions will be included that involve “interdisciplinary skills” and “holistic skills.”</u></li> <li>* In the future, it is aimed that evaluations will be solely interdisciplinary and holistic and “knowledge and skills” and “intellection, decision making, and self-expression” will be evaluated holistically.</li> <li>* A spectrum of difficulty levels. In particular, questions of a high level of difficulty will be included in order to allow highly selective universities to use the testing as one tool in effectively assessing the level of prospective entrants.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Grades to be displayed in rankings</u> for each school and student.</li> <li>* Percentage of correct answers, etc. for each will also be displayed alongside.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Grades will be made available via display in ranking groups</u> for universities and prospective university entrants.</li> </ul>
<b>Answer Format</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Based on multi-choice, aiming to also introduce written format.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Not only multi-choice, but written format also to be introduced.</li> </ul>
<b>Review Framework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The following will be considered in an integrated manner: the introduction of CBT and the level of difficulty and scope of both tests; question compiling methods; question creation methods; methods for the introduction of written answer questions; and the exact form in which grades will be displayed, etc.</li> </ul>	
<b>Implementation Method</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Make the test available to be taken multiple times each year while at school (for example, around twice a year) for second and third year of high school.</li> <li>○ Implementation timing based around summer–fall season, but to be considered while taking into account opinions of those on the ground in schools.</li> <li>○ Develop on the presumption that it will be implemented via CBT format.</li> <li>○ In regard to English, etc., also make active use of commercial qualifications and certification exams.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Implementation multiple times yearly.</li> <li>○ In regard to implementation frequency and timing, there will be cooperation with high school and university staff in considering the impacts on the provision of high school education, while placing the highest priority on allowing the prospective entrants to decide for themselves and take the challenge for themselves.</li> <li>○ Develop on the presumption that it will be implemented via CBT format.</li> <li>○ In the case of English, in particular, make use of questions that are able to holistically evaluate the four areas of skill and commercial qualifications and certification exams.</li> <li>* In regard to other subjects and “interdisciplinary skills” and “holistic skills,” too, consideration will be given to looking toward developing and making use of commercial qualifications and certification exams.</li> </ul>
<b>Creation of Questions</b>	<p>Questions which survey the condition of nationwide scholastic abilities and learning are envisaged for high school level, involving: Type A questions (focusing on knowledge-based questions); and, Type B questions (knowledge implementation-based questions).</p>	<p>PISA-type questions are envisaged that evaluate the implementation of knowledge and skills in identifying issues on one’s own, researching ways to resolve those issues, and expressing the findings, etc.</p>