

Act on the Partial Revision of the Act on the Organization and Operation of Local Educational Administration (Summary)

While securing political neutrality, continuity, and stability in education, aiming for the clarification of responsibilities in local educational administration, prompt establishment of risk management systems, and strengthening of partnerships with heads of local governments and also aiming for the review of the national government's involvement with local governments.

Effective date: April 1, 2015



文部科学省

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
CULTURE, SPORTS,
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY-JAPAN

Q & A

Q1: While current chairs and superintendents of boards of education are to be integrated into the new category of superintendents of boards of education, are they to be appointed on April 1, 2016?

The superintendents of boards of education who were in office on April 1, 2015, the effective date of the Act, shall continue in office as superintendents under the current system until the expiration of their terms of office as board members or until they voluntarily resign; note that the shift to the new system will be gradually implemented. In the meantime, superintendents and part-time chairs shall coexist as in the past.

Previous chairs of boards of education (part-time) shall be terminated as chairs at the time of the expiration of the terms of office of the previous superintendents or at the time of the resignation of the superintendents, but until the expiration of the terms of office for the chairs as board members, they shall continue in office as board members.

Q2: This Act prescribes that full-time superintendents shall be the officials presiding over the meetings of boards of education. Then does the concept of “layman control” remain in effect under this Act?

The revision made this time will strengthen the leadership of superintendents as officials in charge of educational administration, but the system in which the decisions of a board of education composed of a full-time superintendent and part-time board members are made by majority vote remains the same. Furthermore, the provisions that prescribe that it should be kept in mind to select board members from among diverse human resources in terms of their occupations and the like will also remain the same after the revision, and so-called layman control, which is the concept that the intentions of ordinary residents who are not education experts should be reflected in educational administration, remains in effect under this Act.

Therefore, it is important to enhance the quality and abilities of board members, and the improvement of the means for the selection of board members, the enrichment of training, and the like are anticipated.

Q3: How is the new system to respond to suicide cases due to bullying and the like?

In the event that bullying cases and the like arise, first, full-time superintendents shall promptly respond to such cases as the officials who have the primary responsibility. Also, the decisions of superintendents will enable the prompt provision of information for members of boards of education and the calling of meetings of boards of education.

Furthermore, according to the decisions made by the heads of local governments, meetings on comprehensive education can be urgently held to conduct consultations and coordination on measures to be taken with boards of education.

Q4: Are heads of local governments to specify the objectives of educational administration in response to the results of meetings on comprehensive education?

Meetings on comprehensive education are opportunities for heads of local governments and boards of education to discuss and coordinate outlines of educational administration and measures that should be taken in a focused manner, and heads of both local governments and boards of education are expected to share their directions for educational policies to collaboratively execute such policies.

In addition, as for matters for which coordination has been completed at the meetings, heads of both local governments and boards of education shall perform their duties while respecting the decisions on such coordination for each case.

Q5: At the meetings on comprehensive education, are only matters subject to the authority of heads of local governments such as budgets and proposals for bills for municipal and prefectural ordinances among the affairs under the jurisdiction of boards of education to be discussed? Also, are only matters subject to the authority of heads of local governments described in the outlines?

At the meetings on comprehensive education, it is assumed that matters subject to the authority of heads of local governments such as child care and welfare in addition to budgets and proposal for bills for municipal and prefectural ordinances are to be coordinated and discussed, and it is also assumed that matters subject to the exclusive authority of boards of education are also to be discussed (unfettered opinion exchanges). Note that, because textbook adoption and individual educational personnel affairs are matters that require great political neutrality, they should not be treated as matters to be discussed at the meetings on comprehensive education.

Also, as for what is to be described in the outlines, it is assumed that matters subject to the authority of heads of local governments such as budgets and proposal for bills for municipal and prefectural ordinances are to be focused on. But it is also assumed that, for example, heads of local governments are to describe matters such as the guidelines for textbook adoption and the criteria for the reassignment of educational personnel, which are matters not subject to the authority of such heads, in the outlines if the boards of education decide that it is appropriate to do so.

In addition, it is prescribed that heads of local governments shall formulate the outlines, and the obligation to place proper regard on matters for which the heads of local governments and boards of education have completed coordination shall arise.

Q6: Are the outlines to be formulated every year? There may be cases where the objectives for educational administration are shown in the Basic Plans for the Promotion of Education formulated by local governments and comprehensive plans formulated by municipalities. Even in such cases, is it necessary to separately formulate the outlines?

The target period for the outlines is not provided for in any laws. But in light of the fact that the term of office for heads of local governments is four years, and the target period for the national government's Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education is five years, the target period for the outlines is assumed to be set at about four or five years.

Also, in cases where local governments formulate their Basic Plans for the Promotion of Education and in cases where the goals of the measures and the objectives that are the basis of the measures specified in such Plans can be classified as corresponding to the outlines, and the heads of local governments consult with the boards of education to determine that such Plans can substitute for the outlines, it is not necessary to separately formulate the outlines.

Detailed information on this Act has been described on the MEXT website. Please be sure to read it.

Details of this Act: http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houan/an/detail/1346352.htm

History of discussions, etc.: http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chukyo/chukyo1/