



The Revisions of the Courses of Study for Elementary and Secondary Schools

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

Outline of the Revised Basic Act on Education (Enacted December 2006)

Chapter I Aims and Principles of Education

(1) Specification of the aims and principles of education

- ① The **full development of character** and **nurturing of citizens, sound in mind and body, who are imbued with the qualities necessary for those who will form a peaceful and democratic state and society**, as the aims of education
- ② To achieve these aims, issues considered critical today are stipulated as the **Objectives of Education**

Objectives of Education include:

- attainment of wide-ranging knowledge and culture, cultivation of a rich sensibility and sense of morality, and development of a healthy body
- development of the abilities of individuals, fostering a spirit of autonomy and independence, and emphasizing the connections between career and practical life
- Fostering an attitude of valuing justice and responsibility, mutual respect and cooperation, equality between men and women, and a civic spirit
- Fostering an attitude of respecting life and nature, and contributing to the protection of environment
- Fostering an attitude of respecting our traditions and culture, loving the country and region that nurtured them, respecting other countries, and contributing to world peace and the development of the international community

(2) Concept of Lifelong Learning Equal Opportunity in Education is stipulated

Chapter II Basics of Education Provisions

In addition to revising the provisions concerning **Compulsory Education, School Education, Teachers, Social Education, Political Education, and Religious Education**, which are laid down in the original Basic Act on Education, this Chapter also provides new provisions regarding Universities, Private Schools, Education in the Family, Early Childhood Education, and Partnership and Cooperation among Schools, Families, and Local Residents.

Chapter III Education Administration

The shared role of the state and local governments in education administration, formation of Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education, etc. are prescribed.

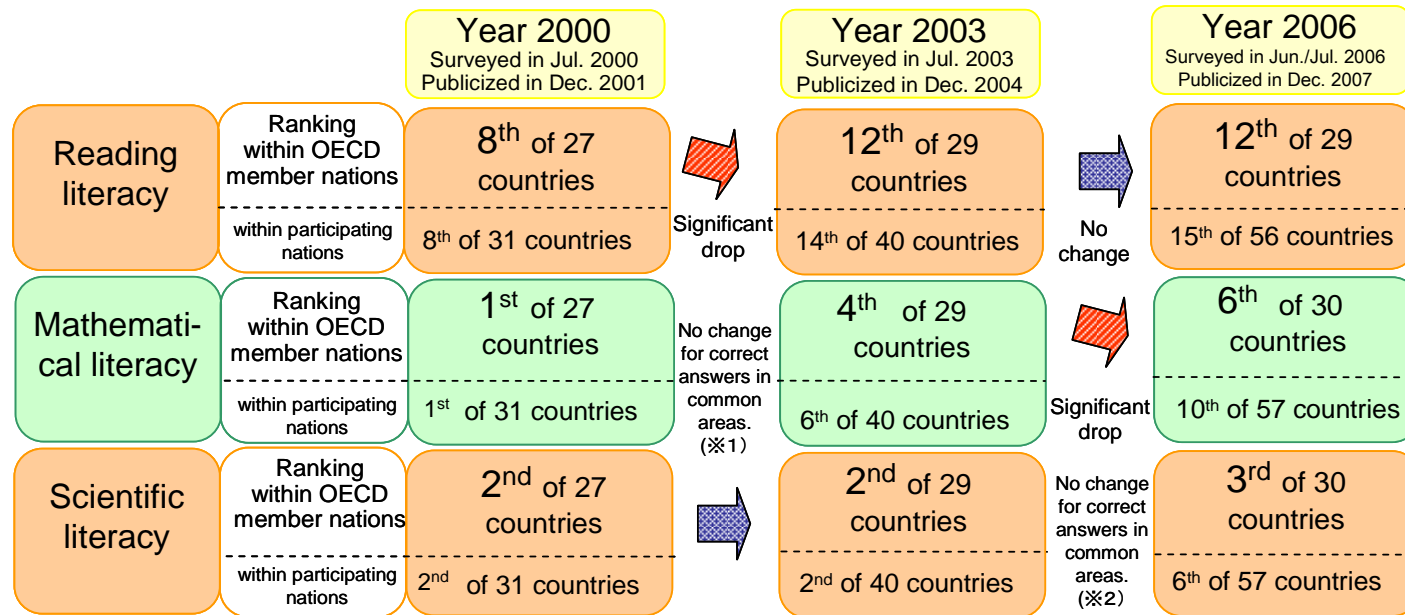
Chapter IV Enactment of Laws and Regulations

Enactment of laws and regulations necessary to implement the provisions in this Act is stipulated.

(The underlined words represent terms/provisions newly added to the revised Act.)

Current State of Education and Learning in Japan

◆ From the results of the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)



The OECD conducts the PISA study on 15 year-olds (1st year high school in Japan)

※1 Compared with results of common areas for 2000 and 2003.

※2 Comparison based on results of common questions because test framework changed.

◆ Results of the IEA Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS 2007)

Primary School		
	Arithmetic	Science
2007	568 4 th of 36 countries	548 4 th of 36 countries
2003	565 3 rd of 25 countries	543 3 rd of 25 countries

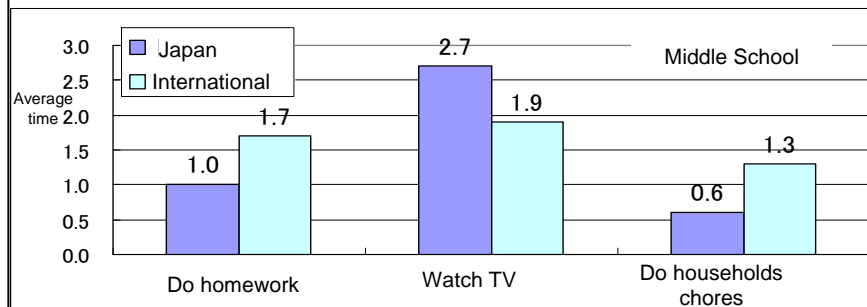
Middle School		
	Mathematics	Science
2007	570 5 th of 48 countries	554 3 rd of 48 countries
2003	570 5 th of 46 countries	552 6 th of 46 countries

• The IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) has been conducting the TIMSS study since 1964. In 2007, the study was conducted on 4th grade primary and 2nd year middle school students in Arithmetic, Mathematics, and Science.

• Unlike the application-oriented PISA study, the IEA study is oriented toward knowledge attained through the school curriculum.

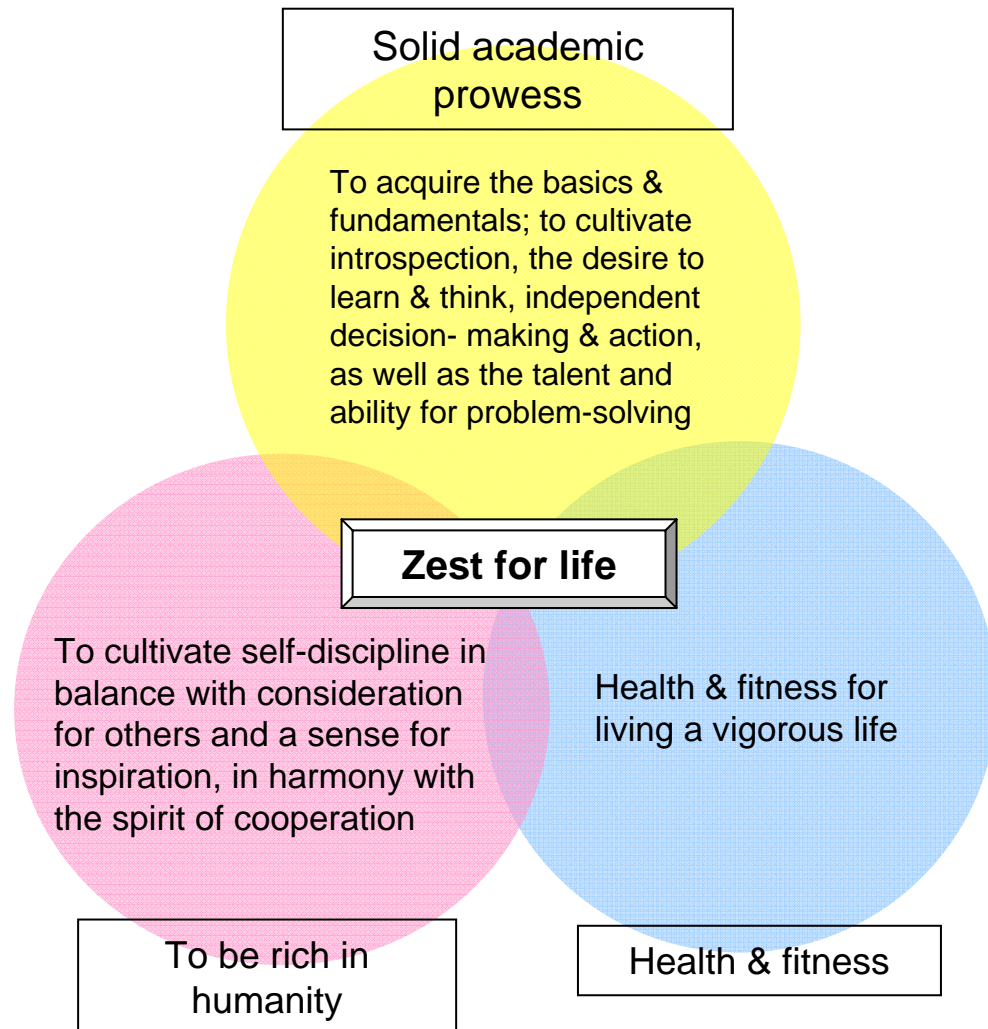
• Japanese students are at an overall high level internationally. All average scores are higher than before. But when considering statistical errors, they are around the same level as before.

• Some improvements have been seen at elementary schools. But, some issues that were raised were the lack of the desire to learn; poor study habits; too little time spent on domestic chores; too much time spent on TV and entertainment.



	Think study is enjoyable (Primary School)	
	Arithmetic	Science
2007	70%	87%
2003	65%	81%
International Ave.	80%	83%

Principles behind the Courses of Study



(Reference : the Central Council for Education's report)
(January 2008)

- As society undergoes various changes in line with the shift to a “knowledge-based society” it is as important as ever to cultivate principles based on a zest for life.
- We can raise 5 issues that have been made apparent from the assertion that the heretofore specific methods for realizing curriculum guidelines were insufficient.
 - [1] MEXT did not sufficiently clarify the significance and necessity of the “zest for life” concept, resulting in a lack of general recognition and understanding
 - [2] The possibility that teachers over-valued the autonomy of their pupils resulting in their hesitance to discipline some children
 - [3] Poor implementation of the gradual link between knowledge/ skill attainment in each subject and exploratory activities/problem-solving lessons in the Period of Integrated Study.
 - [4] There are not enough classes to cultivate application-based learning within each subject such as observation, experimentation, reporting, and dissertation.
 - [5] There was insufficient attention paid to the fact that homes and communities no longer had enough educational capacity to nurture a rich spirit and healthy body.

Revision of the Courses of Study (March 2008/2009)

(1) Basic ideas behind revisions

Cultivate the “zest for life” based on the principles indicated in the curriculum guidelines

Increase the number of classes with the an emphasis on balancing the attainment of knowledge and skill with thinking capacity / decisiveness / expressiveness

Cultivate a rich and wholesome heart and body through solid moral and physical education

(2-1) Boost number of classes (Primary and Middle school)

Primary school

- Boost Japanese, Social Studies, Arithmetic, Science, and P.E. classes by approx. 10%
- Add 2 classes per week in the lower grades, and 1 class per week in the middle & upper grades

Middle school

- Boost Japanese, Social Studies, Arithmetic, Science, Foreign Language, and Health/P.E. classes by 10%
- Add 1 class per week in each grade year

(2-2) Change of the general prohibition (High school)

High school

- The number of credits students are required to earn for high school graduation is at least 74 as it is now.
- The importance of balancing commonality and diversity in curriculum (Making Japanese language, Mathematics and Foreign language required subjects while making scientific subjects more flexible to choose from).
- Providing students with opportunities for remedial study of what they should have mastered in middle school if necessary.

(3) Main points of revision in educational content

Enhancement of verbal activities

- In addition to Japanese, the enhancement of record-keeping, explanation, critique, dissertation, and debate learning in various subjects (Primary / Middle / High)

Enhancement of math & science education

- To enhance the curriculum from the standpoint of international acceptance and academic consistency [Area of a trapezoid (Primary arithmetic), quadratic formula (Middle school math), Ions, Hereditary regularity, Evolution (Middle school science)]
- To enhancement of teaching through repetition (spiral), observation/experimentation, and assignments (Arithmetic/Math, Science)
- Statistics should be taught as a required element to the high school student.
- Some contents were reviewed and changed based on the new scientific knowledge (High school)

Enhancement of cultural/traditional education

- To enhance the learning of proverbs, Japanese/Chinese classics, and oral reading/recitation (Japanese)
- To enhance the learning of history (hunter-gatherer lifestyle and country formation; emphasis on modern history, etc.), religion, cultural heritage (national and world treasures, etc.) (Social Studies)
- To emphasize the abacus, Japanese musical instruments, choir, art culture, and the handling of Japanese clothing (Arithmetic, Music, Art, Technical skill/Household)
- Martial arts as compulsory (Middle school Health/PE)
- To add lessons on local culture & traditions to Integrated Lessons curriculum (Primary)

Enhancement of moral education

- Focused teaching based on developmental stage [Don't do what isn't right, follow rules (Primary), Participate in formation of society, etc. (Middle school)]
- To promote experiential activities (Primary / Middle)
- To inspire young pupils through the use of biographical and nature-oriented teaching materials (Primary / Middle)
- To enhance leadership through the use of teachers that promote moral education (Primary / Middle)
- Each high school should make its comprehensive plans of moral education.

Enhancement of activities for experience

- To promote providing rich experiences for students such as overnight school trips, experiential learning activities in nature, experiential workplace activities, volunteer work, based on developmental stages of the students, etc. (Special Activities, etc.)
- A long term internship program at work places should be included in the curriculum in vocational education. (High school)

Enhancement of foreign language education

- To introduce foreign language activities into primary schools, with teaching centered on listening & speaking (Primary grades 5&6).
- Well balanced teaching of 4 skills (listening / speaking / reading / writing) in middle school.
- To increase words to be taught by 300 words from 900 to 1200.
- English classes should be conducted principally in English in high school.
- To increase words to be taught by 500 words from 1300 to 1800.

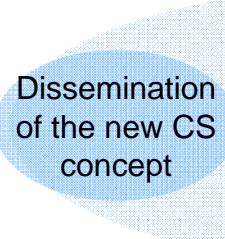
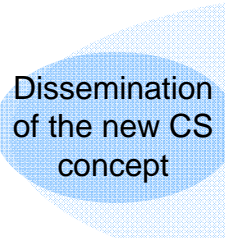
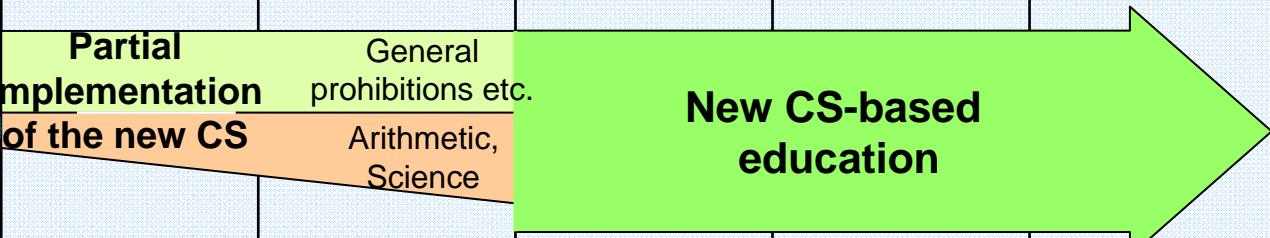
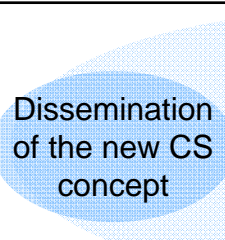
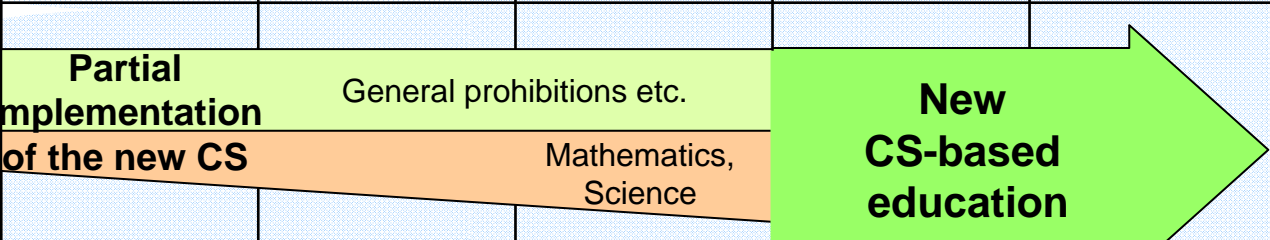
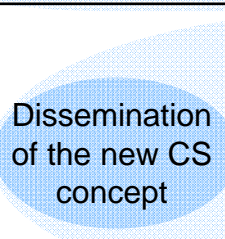
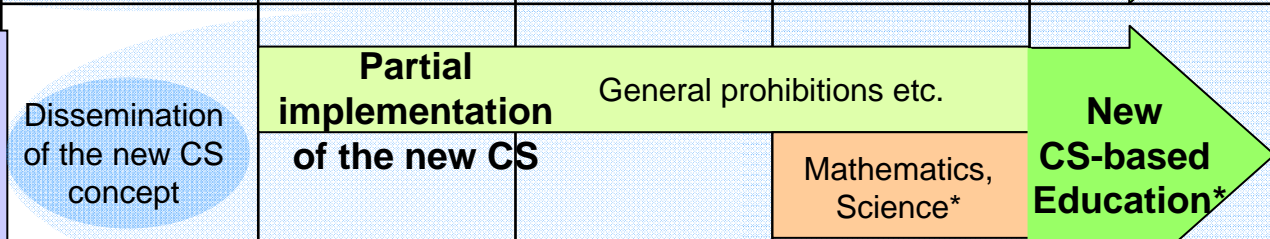
Improvement of vocational education (High School)

- Reshuffling of subjects and improvement of contents in vocational education in order to develop knowledge, skills and abilities which are required for people to be an important part of the work force in industry; moral, ethics, consideration to the technical development, environment and energy, etc.

Other points

- To promote kindergarten-primary coordination, attention to kindergarten-household continuity, promote day care and child care assistance (kindergarten)
- To enhance learning on the environment, consumers, food cultivation, safety, and family & the home
- To enhance information education regarding the morals and use of information
- To stipulate the significance & important points of extra-curricular activities
- To develop teaching methods for disabilities (Special Needs Education)
- To eliminate the “Hadome (limit) Stipulation” (points to exclude when teaching various subjects)

Time Schedule

	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013
Kinder- garten	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">CS revision</div> 	New CS-based education 				
Primary School	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">CS revision</div> 	Partial implementation of the new CS	General prohibitions etc. Arithmetic, Science	New CS-based education 		
Middle School	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">CS revision</div> 	Partial implementation of the new CS	General prohibitions etc. Mathematics, Science	New CS-based education 		
High School	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">CS revision</div> 	Partial implementation of the new CS	General prohibitions etc. Mathematics, Science*	New CS-based Education* 		

*Although the CS is to be applied fully for the students who enter high school in 2013, the content relating to Math and Science is to be applied in advance for the students who enter in 2012.