Points of the Second Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education

Four Basic Policy Directions

While the contents of the First Basic Plan were designed vertically by school stages, the Second Basic Plan focuses on creating smoother pathways and linkage among schools or between school education and working life, and sets four educational directions in each life stages, such as “developing social competencies for survival”.

Eight Achievement Targets

In order to establish a check and improvement cycle (the PDCA cycle), this plan sets achievement targets and indicators to assess the attainment of such targets objectively lacking in the First Plan (see the inside pages for details).

30 Basic Measures

Based on the critical situations facing our country, including the declining birthrate, the aging population and globalization, 30 Basic Measures required to materialize this vision are organized systematically in this plan.

[Process Leading to the Establishment of the Plan]

December 2006: The revised Basic Act on Education was promulgated and came into effect.

June 2011: The Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology consulted the Central Council for Education about establishing the Second Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education.

April 2013: The Central Council for Education released the report titled “Regarding the Second Basic Plan for Promotion of Education”.

June 2013: The Second Basic Plan for Promotion of Education was decided by the Cabinet.

◆Basic Act on Education (Act No. 120 of 2006 established on December 22)
(Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education)

Article 17: In order to facilitate the comprehensive and systematic implementation of measures for the promotion of education, the government shall formulate a basic plan covering basic principles, required measures, and other necessary items in relation to the promotion of education. It shall report this plan to the Diet and make it public.

1. In order to formulate a basic plan on measures to promote education corresponding to regional circumstances.

2. Local governments, referring to the plan set forth in the preceding paragraph, shall endeavor to formulate a basic plan on measures to promote education corresponding to regional circumstances.

The Second Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education (during the period between FY2013 and FY2017) has been established. The Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education is a comprehensive plan for education formulated by the national government based on the Basic Act on Education.
Four Basic Policy Directions of the Educational Administration

In order to rebuild education based on the principles of the revised Basic Act on Education, the government sets directions in each life stage, and systematically organizes specific measures as well as achievement targets and indicators.

1. Developing social competencies for survival:
   Active abilities for independence and collaboration in a diversified and rapidly changing society
   Setting conditions to ensure educational achievements

2. Developing human resources for a brighter future:
   Human resources to initiate and create changes and new values through leadership in various fields in society
   Increasing diverse experiences and opportunities for friendly competition with each other to develop creativity, challenging spirits, leadership, Japanese identity, language and communication skills
   Establishing environments to enhance excellent abilities and various personality

3. Building safety nets for learning:
   A wide range of learning opportunities accessible to everyone
   Provision of safe and secure educational and research environments, as well as learning opportunities such as reducing the burden of educational cost

4. Building bonds and establishing vibrant communities:
   A virtuous circle where society nurtures people, and people create society
   Enhancing society-wide educational abilities such as forming social systems and networks to gather various people and collaborate with each other through learning
   Establishing environments for social participation in people’s own initiative and supporting each other

Critical situations in our country

Linked to each other

- Rapidly declining birthrate and aging population
  - A decrease in the productive age population (In 2060, Japan’s total population will have decreased to 90 million by a decrease of 30 percent from 2010, 40 percent of which will be people aged over 65)
  - Reducing economic scale and tax revenues, and increasing social security expenditure

Advancing globalization

- Mobilization of human, commercial, economic and information resources
- Full-blown a knowledge-based society
- Escalating international competition triggered by the rise of developing countries
- Industrialization caused by corporations moving their production bases abroad

Declining social vitality

- The danger of a declining Japan’s international profile
- Changing the employment environment
  - Changing Japanese traditional work system including the lifetime employment and security system
  - Declining of the traditional corporate function of nurturing human resources through in-house education and training

On the other hand...

【Japan’s Various Strengths】

- Rich and diversified culture and art, as well as superior sensitivity
- Science technology and basic manufacturing technologies
- The population’s diligence, cooperation and consideration
- High-level of basic knowledge and skills

Changing local communities and family structures

- Weakening of the safety net mechanism supported by human bonds and connections within local communities
- Diversified values and lifestyles

Increasing isolation of individuals and weakening normative consciousness

Reproducing and immobilizing disparities

- Widening economic disparity —Educational inequality
- Reproducing and immobilizing educational inequality (between or among generations)

Lower individual motivation and less social stability

Global challenges

- We are facing numerous global issues including environmental, food and energy problems, as well as ethnic conflict and religious disputes. In the process of resolving these issues, we must depart from the conventional pursuit of material affluence and strive to build a sustainable society.

[Lessons from the Earthquake]
(Insights into ways to overcome the crises)

- The ability to grasp a situation accurately, to think critically, and not to give up
- To restore and build a future-oriented society with innovation
- Improving the educational environment for acquisition of necessary knowledge and skills in a safe atmosphere
- Importance of connections among people, communities and countries, as well as coexistence with nature

Evaluation of the First Basic Plan

The accomplishment of the “Educational Vision for the Next 10 Years”. In the First Basic Plan is in progress

- In spite of various efforts, there remain challenges including motivation for learning, learning hours, the number of low academic performers, coping with globalization, young people who are not interested in studying or working abroad, and fostering normative consciousness and sociality
- On the other hand, new methods for solving problems through community collaboration, and new issues such as educational inequality have emerged

The causes of these issues are:
- Lack of attitudes for drawing out various individual abilities
- The light situation to create smoother pathways and linkages among schools or between school education and social life
- Insufficient PISA cycle

(Common principles)

- Respect for diversity in education
- Vertical connections according to life stages
- Horizontal cooperation and collaboration throughout society
- Collaboration between the national and local governments for revitalization of the educational sector

(Methods of educational investment)

- Considering the various current issues in education, the future directions of investments in education focus on improvements in the following three areas mainly:
  - Establishing environments for high quality education, such as collaborative and interactive learning
  - Reducing the burden of educational cost on household budgets
  - Establishing safe and secure educational and research environments (such as strengthening the earthquake resistance of school facilities)

- Rebuilding education is one of the high priority political issues, and it is required materializing high quality education that surpasses levels in the major European countries and the United States. Therefore, in the Second Plan, we need to ensure indispensable educational investments by securing financial resources for necessary budgets to attain the Achievement Targets and implement the Basic Measures mentioned in Part 2 of the Plan, referring to the situations of educational investments such as public expenditures in OECD members and other countries.

(Scenario to prevent crises)

- Encouraging self-fulfillment, increasing in the number of active social players, and reducing disparities (to maximize individuals’ abilities for a society of lifelong engagement with the participation of all citizens including youths, women, seniors and persons with disabilities).
- To improve social productivity (including innovations for globalization)
- To establish human networks (to build social capital)

Each citizen will regain pride and confidence, and a wide range of the population will be able to appreciate their own achievements
Basic Policy Direction 1
Developing social competencies for survival:
Active abilities for independence and collaboration in a diversified and rapidly changing society

Solid cultivation of zest for life (from Kindergarten to Upper secondary school)
- Cultivating abilities to learn, think and act by oneself as the basis of lifelong learning.

Examples of Achievement Indicators
- Averages at the top level in international student assessment surveys.
- Improvement of bullying situations, decrease in students’ non-attendance and dropout rates in upper secondary school.
- Aiming to surpass the level of children’s physical fitness from 1985 level in the next decade.

Examples of Measures
- Improvement of language activities under the new Course of Study, which serves as the fundamental standards for school curriculum.
- Promotion of collaborative and interactive learning with ICT.
- Promotion of educational activities on Saturdays according to local circumstances.
- Improvement and enhancement of upper secondary school education, including introduction of a new exam that assesses students’ learning achievements.
- Promotion of moral education (improvement and distribution of the book Koko no Note [Notebook for Moral Education] and study of the ideas to make moral education a subject taught).
- Thorough approaches to bullying and acts of violence.
- Improvement of teacher quality and ability (comprehensive reform for initial teacher education, teacher employment, and teacher training).
- National Assessment of Academic Ability (the government continues to monitor the results of all).
- Consideration of developing flexible education system according to student growth, including modalities for the 6-3-3-4 system.

Acquisition of the ability to explore and tackle issues (undergraduate or above)
- Developing abilities to find the best solutions for unsolved issues in any circumstance.

Examples of Achievement Indicators
- Increase in student study hours (aiming at same level as the Europe and the US).
- Improvement in the curriculum system across all universities (e.g., systematization of the curriculum, improvement of syllabus).

Examples of Measures
- Establishment of better learning environment in university, such as increasing and enhancing educational support staff and active learning, and strengthening the function of libraries.
- Change of the start period of job hunting and employment activities to ensure students’ learning hours and opportunities for various experiences such as studying abroad.
- Establishment of a comprehensive system for quality assurance of university education (e.g., the Standards for the Establishment of Universities, Approval System of the Establishment of Universities, and Certified Evaluation and Accreditation).
- Drastic reform of university entrance exams, including the use of achievement test results.

Basic Direction 2
Developing Human Resources for a Brighter Future:
Human resources to initiate and create changes and new values through leadership in various fields in society

Development of global human resources, as well as human resources to create new values

Examples of Achievement Indicators
- 30% of all secondary school students achieve the expected English skills.
- Doubling of the number of research universities that are internationally competitive in the next 10 years.
- Improvement of universities’ international reputation.
- Increase in the number of universities that set targets for students’ English skills at graduation, and students who achieve such targets.
- 75% of lower secondary school and 75% of upper secondary school English teachers have the expected English skills.
- Increase in the number of Japanese students studying abroad and international students studying in Japan.
- Doubling of the number of Japanese students studying abroad by 2020 (University students: 60,000 to 120,000; Upper secondary school students: 30,000 to 60,000).
- Realizing the “100,000 International Students Plan”.

Examples of Measures
- Discussion of early graduation from upper secondary school.
- Discussion of English education as a school subject in elementary schools.
- Launch “Super Global High School” program.
- Provision of new programs to reduce the financial burden for Japanese students studying abroad through collaboration of the government and private sectors, and promotion of the strategic acceptance of excellent international students.
- Primary support focused on universities that address thorough internationalization.

Basic Direction 1
Development of competencies for independence, collaboration, and creativity over one’s lifetime
Enabling every person to develop social competencies for survival over his/her lifetime

Examples of Achievement Indicators
- Increased efforts to improve employment rate and early job-leaving rate (as following).
- Improvement of implement situation of internship projects.
- Greater adult student enrollment in universities, junior colleges, colleges of technology, and specialized training colleges.

Examples of Measures
- Promotion of learning as a means to solve current social issues.
- Promotion of various experiential activities and reading activities.
- Promotion of learning quality assurance and assessing using learning outcomes.

Basic Direction 4
Development of competencies for independence, collaboration, and creativity over one’s lifetime
Enabling every person to develop social competencies for survival over his/her lifetime

Examples of Achievement Indicators
- Enhancement of career education to develop the abilities required for social and vocational independence.
- Promotion of vocational education in each school (from preschool to higher education).
- Enhancement of reeducation opportunities (including development of practical programs in collaboration with educational institutions and industry, and flexible administration of scholarship loan programs).

Examples of Measures
- Promotion of learning as a means to solve current social issues.
- Promotion of various experiential activities and reading activities.
- Promotion of learning quality assurance and assessing using learning outcomes.
Basic Policy Direction 3

Building safety nets for learning:
A wide range of learning opportunities accessible to everyone

Achievement Target 6
Provision of learning opportunities for all who are motivated

Examples of Achievement Indicators
- Decrease in the influence of differences in household economic condition on academic achievement
- Increase in the percentage of students who successfully receive scholarship loans among those who apply and meet the standards
- Increasing the percentage of students from low-income households who receive tuition and enrollment fees support

Examples of Measures
- Promotion of efforts for free early childhood education
- Promotion of financial support for upper secondary school students from low-income households
- Regarding the interest-free scholarship loan program, consideration of a transition to the new repayment system determined annually according to post-graduation income, and reviewing the rate of delinquent charge
- Provide more opportunities for children and young people, who face difficulties and setbacks, to gain reeducation

Achievement Target 7
Provision of safe and secure educational and research environments

Examples of Achievement Indicators
- The completion of earthquake resistance of public school facilities by 2015
- Making child fatalities zero and decreasing student injuries in accidents, disasters, and other incidents under the supervision of schools

Examples of Measures
- Seeking to strengthen the earthquake resistance of school facilities and disaster protection functions, including earthquake resistance measures for nonstructural members, and pursuing countermeasures against deterioration
- Promotion of school safety education including disaster prevention education

Basic Policy Direction 4

Building bonds and establishing vibrant communities:
A virtuous circle where society nurtures people, and people create society

Achievement Target 8
Establishment of vibrant communities through support and cooperation

Examples of Achievement Indicators
- Building a system of organizational coordination and act in concert within administrative office, schools and communities in all school districts
- Transitioning 10% of all public elementary and lower secondary schools (approximately 3,000 schools) to community schools (School Improvement Council System)
- Enhancing support for education at home (e.g., increasing the number of support team for home education)

Examples of Measures
- Dissemination of community schools and the School Support Regional Headquarters
- Promotion of the Center of Community (COC) framework in university
- Strength of home education support and practices for enhancing learning of parents who are primary responsible for their children’s education

Establishment of environments for the Four Basic Policy Directions

Drastic reform of the boards of education
e.g., consideration of drastic reform for establishing system of accountability in the board of education

Establishment of an educational staff guidance system for detailed and high quality education
e.g., promotion of class size reduction, and enhancement of achievement-based teaching and specialized instruction in elementary schools

Enhancement of university governance
e.g., establishment of organizational management for allowing proper decision making by exercising the university president’s leadership

Enhancement of university’s financial base and improvement of facilities in universities
e.g., enhancement of financial base, such as expenses grants for national universities and private educational institute aid, and distribution of funds in a clearer and more balanced way

Promotion of private schools
e.g., enhancement and promotion of public financial supports, including foundational expenses, and other measures, as well as reduction of educational financial burden for students, etc.

Strengthening of the system for promoting social education
e.g., support for advanced local public organizations that are making efforts to resolve community issues with cooperation between social education public administration and various entities

* In addition, efforts of recovery and reconstruction assistance for the Great East Japan Earthquake are also described in every Four Basic Directions.