

Legal Foundation and Goals of Education System

Our's Constitution mandates equal access to education for all citizens, providing extra financial assistance for the poor. It also lists the minimum levels of education funding that the national and various local governments are responsible for.

The "Basic Education Law" was passed in 1999, establishing education as a fundamental right of all citizens, regardless of gender, age, ability, geographic origin, race, religious or political beliefs, or socio-economic status. It declared that the purpose of education was to cultivate in people good character, understanding of democratic principles, law and order, cultural achievement, and judgment and creativity.

The "Law of Educational Budget Allocation and Management," which was passed in 2002, stated that the minimum budget allocation for education at all levels of government should be 21.5% of the average of the government's revenues over the past three years. The law created subsidies for people considered disadvantaged groups or from remote areas; the money for these should be drawn from throughout Taiwan. It also offered incentives and funding to well-performing private schools.

The Constitution and these two laws are the legal basis for comprehensive education in Taiwan. Within this framework, the MOE seeks to bring about improvement in four aspects:

1. Cultivating modern citizens - globalization in the information age places new demands on education. Biotechnology and information technology offer new opportunities and challenges. The MOE prepares students to face those challenges by emphasizing foreign language ability and a balanced education that advances technical thinking while also affirming humanity and rein-

forcing universal values.

2. Building Taiwanese identity - Taiwan is home to many diverse ethnic and cultural groups. The MOE is dedicated to spreading an understanding of and appreciation of these groups and their different values.

3. Global views - Business and trade connect nations today, so a global understanding and increased competitiveness are top priorities for the future Taiwanese work force. The MOE promotes international perspective in Taiwanese education by helping many more Taiwanese students study abroad, and attracting more foreign students to study in Taiwan.

4. Social concern - To pursue social justice and ensure that all citizens receive education equally regardless of their backgrounds, the MOE actively helps disadvantaged students. National resources are channeled to those from socially, economically, culturally, educationally, and regionally disadvantaged groups.

The MOE advances a wide variety of reforms to meet four goals:

- * Cultivating modern citizens by improving literacy, developing Chinese language ability, and encouraging creative and independent thinking.
- * Building a Taiwanese identity by instilling a concern for homeland and an awareness of Taiwan's place in the global order.
- * Embracing globalization and preparing students for the world through aggressive promotion of language learning and attracting foreign students to Taiwan for cultural exchange.
- * Helping disadvantaged students use national resources to pursue social justice.