



AN OVERVIEW



The Ministry of Education (MOE) is a cabinet-level government entity under the supervision of the Executive Yuan which is charged with formulating educational policies and managing public schools at all levels of education throughout Taiwan.

Headed by a Minister and supported by one Political Deputy Minister and two Administrative Deputy Ministers, the MOE consists of the Departments of Higher Education, Technological and Vocational Education, Secondary Education, Compulsory Education, Social Education, Physical Education and several other agencies that

manage the educational development of citizens in Taiwan.

In addition to the above mentioned central government entities, there are also Bureaus of Education in the municipal and local governments which are responsible for educational administration in local areas.

Compulsory education currently includes 6 years of elementary school education and 3 years of junior high school. By School Year 2014, compulsory education is expected to be extended to 12 years. Preschool education, for example kindergarten, is not included in Taiwan's compulsory education system, and in order to take better care of underprivileged children. Since SY 2010 the MOE has offered free tuition for children living in outlying areas and in indigenous townships, that want a kindergarten education. Currently, the central government is providing subsidy support for private kindergarten students (up to NT\$30,000) and free tuition for children that qualify, at public kindergartens.

January 2011 statistics showed that a total of 4.97 million students, including kindergarten students, received training at 8,196 education institutions throughout Taiwan.

Once a student finishes his/her compulsory education, he/she can decide what his/her next step will be: to either follow an academic track or a vocational track. The academic track involves 3 years of study at senior high school, then 4 years of undergraduate study. If students prefer advanced academic training, they can apply for postgraduate programs. The ultimate goal for all these education tracks is to cultivate citizens as high-quality professionals with global points of view.

On the other hand, the vocational track provides opportunities at senior vocational high schools, junior colleges, technical institutes and technical universities for students to develop their technical talents.

The MOE has arranged a special education program to work with the needs of gifted students, as well as students with special needs. In addition to the above mentioned education levels, the MOE actively promotes

supplementary education and community education to establish abundant educational opportunities and resources in order to provide a healthy lifelong learning environment for all citizens in Taiwan.

From 1999 to 2010, the total number of schools at all education levels increased by 281, while the number of teachers grew by nearly 4% during this period. Since 1976, the gross enrollment ratio at elementary and junior high schools has remained at more than 97%. Meanwhile, the illiteracy rate in Taiwan has declined from 7.1% in 1991 to 2.0% in 2010.

These statistics show that the quality of education within Taiwan is improving rapidly. To further enhance its development, the MOE will be extending the length of time for compulsory education from 9 years to 12 by SY 2014, along with special promotions to raise the standards and quality of teachers.

