

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Special Education Law was amended in 2009 to enhance the development of special education and move toward the goal of taking care of both gifted and disabled students. The emphasis is on both quality and quantity in education, and protecting these students' right to a proper education. A report published in 2011 laid out the rules for implementing adaptive teaching and developing the full potential of these students to enhance the quality of special education.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has announced that all governments should adopt the concept of inclusive education. All students should be permitted to study in public schools except for those who have special individual conditions. Inclusive education means that students should be placed in a least restrictive environment (LRE, i.e., in public schools near the students' homes, so that they may attend classes with peers of the same age, and receive appropriate support from the government). As of 2011, 93.3% of pre-school disabled students in Taiwan are attending regular public schools. The figure is 86.5% for elementary schools, 83.22% for junior high schools and 71.37% for senior high schools.

The budget for special education has increased from NT\$ 5.876 billion in 2002 to NT\$8.8 billion in 2012. The percentage of the total education budget allotted to special education



rose from 3.84% to 4.62%. In 2011, the number of disabled students in secondary and elementary schools was 94,156, while that of gifted students was 38,080. There were 10,659 disabled students in universities.

Key achievements during 2002-2012 include:

1. Completion of legislation for special education; establishment of guidelines for special education policy.
2. Strengthening of multiple-route placement system for students with special needs; promotion of inclusive education.
3. Enhancement of quality and quantity of special education classes.
4. Increase in availability of pre-school special education; emphasis on early intervention for children.
5. Improvements in primary and secondary school special education; providing more flexible alternatives.
6. More opportunities for students to receive tertiary education; making available more special education classroom resources.
7. Encouragement and subsidies for schools that help students with special needs complete full education.
8. Adjustment of teaching methods in special education curricula and training of special education teachers.
9. Establishment of least restrictive environments and support programs on campus.
10. Promotion of multiple education alternatives for gifted students so as to fully develop their talents.
11. Digitization of special education administration and establishment of administrative support networks.
12. Establishment of special education evaluation system so as to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of special education.

In the next decade, we hope to take the following measures to improve special education:

1. Continue amending and putting into practice applicable laws.
2. In line with the integration of kindergartens and nursery schools, to extend special education to children as young as two years of age.
3. Strengthen the promotion of inclusive education in junior high schools and elementary schools.
4. Establish a roadmap for disabled students in the 12-year Basic Education system.
5. Encourage universities to set aside places for disabled students in its entrance screening or hold separate entrance examinations for disabled students.
6. Establishment, in phases, individualized support systems for disabled students in universities.
7. Plan 2012~2017 promotion program for gifted students.
8. Actively improve accessible facilities on campus so as to give disabled students equal rights to education.

