

05 Compulsory Education



A General Information

The infrastructure of a country and the development of its economy are a function of the country's cultivation of manpower and talent. This requires long term, continued investment and needs to start from the very bottom. The government set the length of compulsory education at 9 years in SY1968, and will further extend it to 12-year Basic Education in SY2014, which will help nurture and develop the manpower needed for economic growth.

Ensuring that all toddlers receive proper preschool education is a major objective of our educational policy. Kindergartens are preschool institutions set up in accordance with relevant legislation for children aged 4 and above up until the eligible age for elementary school, and are supervised by education administrative authorities, whereas nurseries are welfare organizations set up in accord with Children and Youth Welfare Act that accept toddlers aged 2 to 6 and are supervised by social administrative authorities. The talks and negotiations for merging nurseries and kindergartens started in 1997, and culminated in the Early Childhood Education and Care Act passed on June 29, 2011, to be put in place beginning Jan 1, 2012.

B Preschool and Compulsory Education Structure

The Early Childhood Education and Care Act is a revolutionary move in our preschool system. After the bill was enacted on Jan 1, 2012, nurseries and kindergartens were redesignated "preschools", in which toddlers from the age of 2 onwards are given complete and thorough education and care in the preschool until they enter elementary school. This bill consolidated the education and care of toddlers under a single administrative system, putting into practice a toddler-centered strategy that focuses on the toddler's best interests. Taiwan is also the first country in Asia to consolidate the two systems.

According to statistics by UNESCO, there are over 40 countries in the world that have a basic education system that exceeds 10 years. The main reason for this is that many non-developed countries have noticed that basic education is directly connected to national competitiveness.

Put into practice in SY1968, Taiwan's 9-year Compulsory Education system is compulsory, free and obligatory. Legislation states that citizens from the age of 6 to 15 should receive compulsory education; which is divided into two stages – the first 6 years at the elementary school level, and the latter 3 in junior high school. However, this system has been in place for over 4 decades. When first put in place, there were fewer than 10 countries worldwide with more than 9 years of compulsory education in place, making us one of the forerunners. Compared with developed countries, however, the number of years was not that high. To solve the current educational conundrum and enhance the development of national manpower, a 12-year Basic Education system was adopted in SY2014, a new landmark for our education system.

C Preschool and Compulsory Education Policies

Under Taiwan's educational setup, preschool education is not compulsory. The education and care of preschool-aged toddlers was originally provided by, respectively, kindergartens and nurseries, largely consisting of privately-established institutions. As the two systems were separate and had different supervisory administrative units, they evolved different set-up standards and have different regulations regarding personnel and curriculum. Thus toddlers of the same age often received inconsistent education and care at different institutions. Also, internationally, the trend of offering education service has become a common scene. We thus started to promote the integration of early childhood education and care. The integration is aimed to be completed within 14 years.

To stimulate the development of junior high and elementary school education and improve its quality, and lay the groundwork for course planning, fundamental research in the development of elementary and junior high school curricula was carried out and added to the 12-year Basic Education policy strategic plan in 2012 to allow the National Academy for Educational Research to complete the Proposal for 12-Year Basic Education

Curriculum Development and Guidance for 12-year Basic Education Curriculum Development to ensure consistency.

With increasing globalization in recent years, many nations are experiencing a growing income gap between the wealthy and the poor as well as unequal resource distribution between town and country. Geographical factors and rapid changes in society can lead to uneven distribution of educational resources, causing an educational imbalance between town and country and depriving minority groups of equal access. To solve these regional education issues and bridge the resource gap between different locations, we are working to put the following into practice: reasonable distribution of educational resources, equality in educational opportunity, and realization of equal education and a just and fair society.

Another key strategy is the idea of social care and assisting in the education of children from economically disadvantaged families. Currently there are 3,440 schools participating in the Promoting School Education Savings Account project nationwide, which authorizes the schools to receive charitable donations. Many philanthropists in both business and society have been long term donors to children in the program, a testament to the generosity of the people of Taiwan. ▀



Young Inventor Saves Vision with Reading Correction Device

Chen Po-juei, 13, Kaohsiung Municipal Sih-Wei Primary School

As phubbers are everywhere nowadays, eyesight protection has become an urgent issue. Sixth grader Chen Po-juei from Kaohsiung Municipal Sih-Wei Primary School has invented a reading correction device, offering a solution to the widespread phenomena and won the Golden Award of the International Exhibition for Young Inventors held in Jakarta, Indonesia in 2014.

The device will alarm with LED lighting when the reader's overly lowering head is detected by the incorporated Infra-Red Radiation, and a vibration reminder will be activated in case the reader falls asleep accidentally.

Chen's brainchild originates from his personal experience as he often forgets to keep appropriate distance while doing homework. Throughout the entire inventing process, to



incarnate a mere idea into reality is the most difficult yet the most unforgettable part when it gradually took form, said Chen.

Stepping into the realm of invention, the young inventor is inspired by his father, who always encourages Chen to "invent it yourself" whenever the young inventor got some questions popped out in his mind.

Participating the international event, Chen was impressive with the variety of creation from many different countries. "Every single contestant was creative, which inspired me with many ideas for my next invention," he said.

Chen is not the only one who's advantaged from such an event. It's an unusual experience to lead students to an international competition, which turned out to be a very rewarding one, said instructor Yang Kuang-yu. Not only students were able to interact academically and culturally with peers from other countries, teachers also seized the chance to exchange ideas on education and culture issues with one another, recalled Yang. ▀



Curiosity-led Scientific Fun Enriches Schoolchildren's Life

Tsai Yun-Yun, Wu Chen-Yu, Lin Cheng-Yi, Hsu Chien-Te, Chen Tsung-Chun, Taipei Fuhsing Private School, Elementary School Division

The diligent elaboration into the phenomena of liquid being solidified as well as solid being liquidized won the five-member team the 1st place at the Primary School Division of 54th National Primary and High School Science Fair.

"Sufficient preparation beforehand has made the final work more sophisticated, which is one of the keys to win," said Instructor Chang Hsen. "When we encountered difficulties in experiments, we brainstormed for solution. Repetitive correction, practice, and reflection has enabled the team to submit a detailed research result. Camaraderie among team members built up over the yearlong preparing is another strength to outperform other contestants, said the instructor.

Despite the long-term preparation exhausted us, we've acquired a great deal of knowledge



and learned how to deal with setbacks, said participating students, who all were 6th graders then. Competitive presentations from other groups didn't hold them back, instead, they went straight forward to meet the challenge.

"Our eyes were welled with joyful tears when our names were announced on the declaration day and had the feeling that all our effort were paid at last," recalled these young scientists.

Chang contributes the triumph to the team's hardworking and support from their parents, the school and her colleagues. "I expect students to personally experience the fun of learning," said Instructor Cheng, continuing that "and feed their curiosity." The capabilities and confidence built through the process will become invaluable treasure in their future. ■