



# 1. Introduction

The establishment of the Republic of China in 1912 by Dr. Sun Yat-sen was based upon three important concepts. These were called the Three People's Principles and they focussed on nationalism, democracy and the livelihood for the people. To support these principles, an updated system of education was required in order to help build a new China.

At the time of the implementation of this system, the country was an agricultural society. The illiteracy rate was high and the political situation unstable. Educational development at the local level was relatively limited. In 1922, the central government promulgated a new school system, the 6-3-3-4 regime, which set the base for the subsequent development of national education.

In 1928, the government began to establish schools and enroll large numbers of students from all over the country, in an effort to carry out programs and reach as many students as possible. However, success often could not be reached overnight. This was especially so with a country whose boundaries were vast, as was its population.

The Japanese invasion into China and the eruption of World War II caused heavy losses. The schools, which were in the Japanese occupied areas, were all devastated. Shortly, after World War II ended, in the fall of 1945, a national program was launched to revitalize the schools and the education system. This reform attempt was short-lived. The Chinese Communist advancement caused destruction, especially to most of the newly rebuild educational facilities. The Central government was forced to relocate to Taiwan, in 1949. Since then, it has accomplished remarkable political, economic and social achievements for Taiwan, Kinmen and Matsu. These achievements

have contributed to the steady rise in the national standard of living and the advancement of education for all citizens and at all levels of the society.

Over the years, because of the improved quality of education and the continuing education reforms, many talented individuals have been able to take advantage of numerous educational opportunities. In return, these individuals have been able to make great contributions to the social, economic, political and cultural aspects of society.

Meanwhile, Taiwan has encountered an accelerated economic growth rate and social changes. Political change has involved more democratic changes. Economic growth saw a shift in the industrial structure and an impact on the "value" of goods. The access to information via technology was another important shift for Taiwan society. New ideas were constantly replacing old ideas. It soon became clear that more education reforms were needed in order to help Taiwan to keep up with the times.

Currently, our country, the Republic of China is undergoing another Taiwan Experience. The Ministry of Education has launched an innovative and challenging program for education reform. This reform program has been designed to assist Taiwan citizens in receiving recurrent education, so that they can be better prepared to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The current five-year reform program, implemented since 1998, will cost a total of NT\$157 billion. It consists of 12 reform mandates. They are:

1. Revamping national education projects, K-12;
2. Fostering pre-school and kindergarten education programs;

3. Renovating teacher education and in-service training programs;
4. Promoting impeccable diversified vocational education;
5. Pursuing excellence in higher education and its development;
6. Advocating lifelong learning projects;
7. Strengthening educational programs designed for the handicapped;
8. Invigorating educational programs for the indigenous people;
9. Expanding access to colleges and universities;
10. Creating a new system integrating teaching, guidance & counseling;
11. Increasing the educational budget for the enhancement of educational research;
12. Accelerating the pro-motion of family values/ethics through parental education.

These policies are being implemented by upgrading the quality of instruction by reducing class sizes at the Primary and junior high school levels, implementing an integrated curriculum for a nine-year compulsory education program, raising the professional standards of primary and junior high school teachers by promoting lifelong learning advanced study programs, replacing the conventional senior high school joint entrance examination with an academic proficiency examination, promoting vocational education and redirecting it back into the mainstream of the education system, raising the quality of higher education and education institutions, promoting lifelong education through establishment of community colleges and building a learning society, creating an infrastructure for information technology education and the development of special

education programs for the physically and mentally challenged students, along with development of five year aboriginal education programs, and creating a new system of guidance programs, which includes teaching, discipline and guidance instruction.

