

# An Overview

Taiwan's education system has the following components: basic education, intermediate education, advanced education and returning education. Basic education includes kindergartens, primary and junior high schools. Intermediate education includes vocational schools and senior high schools.

The Ministry of Education is headed by the Minister who is supported by one Political Vice Minister and two Administrative Vice Ministers. The MOE organization includes the Departments of Higher Education, Technological and Vocational Education, Secondary Education, Elementary Education, Social Education, Physical Education and several other agencies. They are in charge of the

promotion and implementation of school education at all levels, adult education, physical education and other educational affairs.

In Taiwan, there are more than 5 million students studying in over 8,000 schools of all levels, including 1.3 million students in more than 100 institutions of higher education.

Basic compulsory education consists of 6 years of elementary education and three years of junior high school education, but the curricula of the two educational levels have been connected and integrated into a New 1-9 Curriculum. Upon completion of compulsory education, students may choose an academic track or a vocational track.

The academic track includes three years of senior high education, college/university education and post-graduate programs. The educational goal at these levels is to nurture high-quality professionals with a global outlook.

The vocational track includes vocational high schools, junior colleges, institutes of technology and universities of technology. Its purpose is to develop technical manpower for economic development.

In addition, the MOE actively promotes supplementary education and community education, providing everyone abundant opportunities to pursue life-long learning. Gifted students and physically or mentally handicapped students can enjoy special

education adapted to their needs.

In 15 years, the illiteracy rate in Taiwan has dropped from 7% in 1991 to less than 3% at present. Since 1976, the enrollment rates in elementary and junior high schools have remained at a level of more than 99%.

The Ministry plans to extend the compulsory education to cover both the senior high education and early childhood education in hope of creating a more complete educational structure.

Along with knowledge development in the new century, lifestyles and social structures in Taiwan have undergone great changes. It is inevitable that education will undergo great changes as well.

