

An Overview

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

The Ministry of Education (MOE) is headed by the Minister, who is supported by one Political Deputy Minister and two Administrative Deputy Ministers. The MOE organisation 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, as well

as adult education, physical education and other educational affairs.

In Taiwan, there were more than five million students studying in over 8,000 schools of various levels, including 1.3 million students in more than 150 institutions of higher education in the 2007 school year (SY).

Basic compulsory education consists of six 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 to follow either an academic track or a vocational track.

The academic track involves three years of senior



high school education, college/university education and post-graduate programmes. 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 with abundant opportunities to pursue life-long learning. Gifted students and physically- or mentally-handicapped students can benefit from special education that is adapted to their needs.

In 15 years, the illiteracy rate in Taiwan has dropped from 7% in 1991 to less than 2.5% at present. Since 1979, the gross enrolment rates in elementary and junior high schools have remained at a level of more than 99%.

The Ministry plans to extend compulsory education to cover both senior high school education and early childhood education, in the 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.

