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NISE's Activities

Recent Policy and Status on Special Needs Education in Japan

Research Paper

Paper presented here is an English translation of research paper selected from the latest issue of
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NISE's Activities

Research Projects for FY 2012-2013

I. Research Themes

Category	Research title	Research unit	Principal researcher	Research period
Specialized Research A	Study on curriculum development and implementation for schools and classes for special needs education	Promoting Unit	TAKIGAWA Kuniyoshi	FY 2012-2013
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	Research for teacher's professional standards and development of teacher training program in inclusive education systems [Medium-term specific research (research on inclusive education systems)]	Perspective Unit	SAWADA Mayumi	FY 2011-2012
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Specialized Research B	Study on effective use of teaching materials and devices for schools for special needs education (visual impairments) and sharing of relevant information - With emphasis on roles of ICT - [Medium-term specific research (research on application of ICT in special needs education)]	Visual Impairments Unit	KANEKO Takeshi	FY 2012-2013
	Study on effective use of AT by taking advantage of the function of schools for special needs education (students with physical/motor disabilities) as a resource center [Medium-term specific research (research on application of ICT in special needs education)]	Physical/Motor Disabilities Unit	NAGANUMA Toshio	FY 2012-2013
	Study on improvement in teaching children with speech and language delays as their main needs from the stage of early childhood - Classification of the actual state of children and assessment of effectiveness of teaching methods -	Speech and Language Disorders Unit	KUBOYAMA Shigeki	FY 2012-2013
	Study on understanding of characteristics of children with autism in classes for special needs education for children with autism and emotional disturbances in terms of learning in arithmetic and mathematics classes	Autism Unit	OZAWA Michimasa	FY 2012-2013
	Study on specific support for high school students who have special needs involving developmental disabilities: LD, ADHD, and HFA etc. - How to provide effective instruction on classes -	Developmental Disabilities and Emotional Disturbances Unit	SASAMORI Hiroki	FY 2012-2013
Collaborative Research	Development of accessible design teaching materials using Braille transliteration techniques and tactile drawing techniques concurrently used with handwriting for children and adults with visual impairments	-	DOI Kouki	FY 2011-2012
	Developmental study on handwriting evaluation system that takes into account the characteristics of children with amblyopia	-	OOUCHI Susumu	FY 2011-2012

II. Outlines of Ongoing Studies

Specialized Research A

Study on curriculum development and implementation for schools and classes for special needs education

[Research unit]   Promoting Unit
[Principal researcher]   TAKIGAWA Kuniyoshi
[Research period]   FY 2012-2013
[Outline]

In Specialized Research A (key research) "Practical study on curriculum development based on the new national curriculum guidelines for schools for special needs education" conducted in FY 2010 - 2011, a questionnaire survey was conducted in all the schools for special needs education in Japan, which amount to some 1,000. As a result, we identified the overall status of implementation of curriculum development and issues that need to be addressed in the transitional phase to the New National Curriculum Guidelines at Schools for Special Needs Education.

In the study for FY 2012 - 2013, based on the results from the previous questionnaire survey, we will identify the current status of issues or concerns that were raised in the previous survey, such as the development of curricula specially designed for each type of disabilities at schools for special needs education, types of curricula and the course system, vocational education at upper secondary departments, interactions and collaborative learning in curricula, and relationships between activities to promote independence and activities for other educational objectives and

individual subjects in developing curricula. This study will be conducted through repeated visits to schools for special needs education and, with the cooperation from those involved in schools participating in the survey, we will discuss how curricula should be developed in order to address identified issues and concerns.

We will also discuss the development of "special curricula" for classes for special needs education at elementary and lower secondary schools, which can be developed based on the National Curriculum Guidelines for Schools for Special Needs Education. More specifically, questionnaire and visit surveys to education boards will be conducted to identify the current status and issues, including the presence or absence of manuals for developing curricula for classes for special needs education and procedures for developing curricula at schools, with types of disabilities taken into account.

Based on results from the surveys and discussions above, the status of the development and implementation of curricula based on the current National Curriculum Guidelines at Schools for Special Needs Education will be reviewed comprehensively so as to prepare basic materials for the next revision to the curriculum guidelines.

Specialized Research A

Study on how the school management and principals' leadership should be in order to promote special needs education

[Research unit]   Promoting Unit
[Principal researcher]   OOUCHI Susumu
[Research period]   FY 2011-2012
[Outline]

Schools for special needs education are required to provide appropriate guidance and support that meet individual needs of children with various kinds of disabilities. In managing these schools, it is necessary to take a perspective that is not required for ordinary schools. The objective of our study is to provide findings on effective management of schools for special needs education from a perspective of promoting special needs education.

More specifically, previous studies on the concept behind the school management in Japan and its implementation, and examples of the school management will be analyzed and findings through this analysis will be organized. Based on the findings on school management, surveys on the actual use of the concept of the school management and attitudes toward efforts in the field of special needs education will be conducted in education boards of prefectures and major cities, and the principals' association of schools for special needs education.

It is planned, through this survey, to understand and organize information on the current situation of school organizations that

incorporate the concept of school management, current efforts of school executives to improve the school management, and relevant issues to be addressed.

In addition, based on the analysis result of this survey, schools undertaking leading-edge efforts will be selected, where a visit survey will be conducted. Based on the results from the surveys above and information on the leading-edge efforts made by the selected schools, we will organize information on the use of school management techniques to address important issues facing schools for special needs education, in the context of school evaluation,

such as "further promotion of special needs education," "improvement of their role as a local resource center for special needs education" and "improvement of expertise of teachers in charge of special needs education."

We also gathers and analyzes information, mainly from literature, on overseas efforts in relation to special needs education and school management, and research trend on relevant issues so as to provide findings that contribute to managing schools for special needs education in Japan.

Specialized Research A

Research for teacher's professional standards and development of teacher training program in inclusive education systems

[Medium-term specific research (research on inclusive education systems)]

[Research unit]　Perspective Unit
[Principal researcher]　SAWADA Mayumi
[Research period]　FY 2011-2012
[Outline]

What is important to create and improve an inclusive education system is that teachers and other staffs related to education understand necessity of inclusive system and make continuous efforts to improve their professional skills. In addition, a strategic system to ensure that organizations and local communities can maintain professional skills are necessary.

All teachers of special needs education schools and mainstream schools should develop professional skills on inclusive education system. It is important for the teacher training in this education system to carry out by in-service training. This training program

must contain two contents. One is fundamental contents such as the principle of an inclusive education system and the knowledge of disability, another is the advanced knowledge and skill which should be learned by practice.

It is also important for a teacher to carry out mutual promotion of the learning for such knowledge and skill within the teacher group in the same school. In that case, a teacher who acquire experience in educational practice may bear a big role.

The purposes of this research are as below
・Defining teacher's professional standard which is required towards inclusive education system
・Developing a teacher training trial program in consideration of teacher's professional standard in an inclusive education system
・Reviewing strategic systems that help organizations and local

Specialized Research A

Study on consideration and special guidance to children who need special support in developing an inclusive education system

[Medium-term specific research (research on inclusive education systems)]

[Research unit]　Perspective Unit
[Principal researcher]　FUJIMOTO Hiroto
[Research period]　FY 2011-2012
[Outline]

The government curriculum guidelines for elementary and lower secondary schools notified in March 2008 clearly requires schools

to make opportunities for exchange and joint learning between students with and without disabilities. Such educational activities will become significantly associated with establishment of the inclusive education system, which is being discussed by taking into account the formation of a coexisting society in the future and particularly in response to the ratification of the Convention on the

Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The full-scale implementation of the government curriculum guidelines will start from FY 2011 and it is expected more educational activities recommended by the guidelines will be conducted. In this context, examples from such activities involving all kinds of disabilities will be studied, based on which we will discuss desirable consideration and teaching methods in preparation for the establishment of the inclusive education system. In this study, more than one team will make survey visits to gather information on exchange and joint learning activities covering all kinds of disabilities, based on which we will discuss desirable consideration and teaching methods. Results from the survey and discussion will be presented in the form of a report.

Through this study, we will provide "good practice for consideration and teaching methods to establish an inclusive education system" covering all kinds of disabilities.

Specialized Research A

Creation of prototype digital textbooks and materials and assessment of guidelines

- Aiming at developing accessible digital textbooks -

[Medium-term specific research (research on application of ICT in special needs education)]

[Research unit]   ICT/AT Unit
[Principal researcher]   KANAMORI Katsuhiro
[Research period]   FY 2012-2013
[Outline]

In this study, a prototype digital textbook will be created based on the guidelines for the use of digital textbooks (draft) developed in FY 2011 and through its assessment, effectiveness of the guidelines will be verified and the contents will be improved.

In this study, a prototype digital textbook will be created based on the guidelines for the use of digital textbooks (draft) developed in FY 2011. In the process of creating a prototype, its functions will be assessed by research collaborators and their assessment results will be reviewed in details by discussing with them. The functions will also be assessed at schools where students and teachers use the developed digital textbook on a trial basis. Through these assessments, the effectiveness of the guidelines (draft) will be evaluated and results will be reflected on improving the guidelines.

We believe that, through this study, we will be able not only to present a specific example of a digital textbook that can meet extensive special education needs but also to propose guidelines for digital textbooks whose effectiveness will have been verified.

Specialized Research B

Study on effective use of teaching materials and devices for schools for special needs education (visual impairments) and sharing of relevant information

- With emphasis on roles of ICT -

[Medium-term specific research (research on application of ICT in special needs education)]

[Research unit] Visual Impairments Unit
[Principal researcher]   KANEKO Takeshi
[Research period]   FY 2012-2013
[Outline]

Schools for special needs education (visual impairments) are required to provide specialized and high quality education for visually impaired students at their own schools and, at the same time, to serve as a regional center for education for visually impaired children to focus their efforts on increasing external support.

In this study, we will identify the current status and issues concerning maintenance and effective use of teaching materials and devices for visually impaired students, which are specialties of schools for special needs education (visual impairments). In addition, we will also discuss measures to improve teaching materials and devices and promote their use as well as a system to share information on maintenance and effective use of teaching materials and devices.

In the discussion, emphasis will be placed on the role of ICT, whose usefulness has been particularly acknowledged in education of the visually impaired.

Specialized Research B

Study on effective use of AT by taking advantage of the function of schools for special needs education (students with physical/motor disabilities) as a resource center

[Medium-term specific research (research on application of ICT in special needs education)]

[Research unit]　Physical/Motor Disabilities Unit
[Principal researcher]　NAGANUMA Toshio
[Research period]　FY 2012-2013
[Outline]

At schools for special needs education (students with physical/motor disabilities), it is particularly important to use assistive technology (AT) effectively according to a wide variety of disabling conditions of students. It is hoped that AT will be used more effectively and systematically and that relevant knowledge and findings will be used more effectively to help improve the role of these schools as a resource center.

In the study, knowledge and findings (information, technology, etc.) concerning the effective use of AT by schools for special needs education (students with physical/motor disabilities) will be organized and reviewed. Based on organized and reviewed knowledge and findings, we will also discuss measures for schools for special needs education as a resource center to take in order to promote the effective use of AT in assisting students with physical/motor disabilities at elementary and lower secondary schools.

Our emphasis in the study will be particularly on e-AT (electronic and information technology based Assistive Technology) among AT, one of the roles of ICT.

Specialized Research B

Study on improvement in teaching children with speech and language delays as their main needs from the stage of early childhood

- Classification of the actual state of children and assessment of effectiveness of teaching methods -

[Research unit]　Speech and Language Disorders Unit
[Principal researcher]　KUBOYAMA Shigeki
[Research period]　FY 2012-2013
[Outline]

"Language classrooms for young children" and "language classrooms" provide children with speech and language delays as their main needs and their parents with counseling and assistance services. However, while there are many different factors that cause speech and language delays, there have been no sufficient efforts to understand the relationships between these factors and actual state of these children. It has also not been clarified in a well-organized manner how to teach and assist these children. In this study, we will discuss what to teach and how to teach and assist, from the early childhood, children who need special education for speech and language needs based on results and findings from research that has recently been advanced in other fields, such as LD education and instructions on social skills.

We will identify the actual state of children with speech and language delays as their main needs who are receiving instructions and assistance at "language classrooms for young children" and "language classrooms." We will also identify what instructions and assistance are provided to these children according to the growth of these children and will organize collected information.

*The term "language classrooms" is used to collectively call resource rooms for children with speech and language needs, and special classes for children with speech and language needs.

Specialized Research B

Study on understanding of characteristics of children with autism in classes for special needs education for children with autism and emotional disturbances in terms of learning in arithmetic and mathematics classes

[Research unit] Autism Unit
[Principal researcher] OZAWA Michimasa
[Research period] FY 2012-2013
[Outline]

In our study of FY 2010 - 2011, we focused on Japanese language classes, which are particularly associated with the characteristics of autism. We carefully identified how children with autism acquired the language and set goals for Japanese language classes according to students' acquisition levels. We then discussed the development of curriculum for teaching the language and annual teaching plans for Japanese language classes, and presented how to teach the language according to the characteristics of autism. Providing classes based on the understanding of the students' levels of acquisition serves as a basis for teachers in charge of each subject. We considered this method also plays an important role in teaching autistic students in

arithmetic and mathematics classes where numbers, amounts, graphics and other basic knowledge and skills that are needed for daily living and learning are taught.

Because some autistic students are good at arithmetic, it is expected that there are some gaps among students in arithmetic and mathematics classes in their learning according to different sub-disciplines and approaches. In addition, some autistic students use their own theory to answer arithmetic questions. In such a case, the teacher in charge should try to understand each student's way of approaching the question.

The objective of our study is to first identify characteristics of autistic students in classes for special needs education for students with autism and emotional disturbance in learning arithmetic and mathematics and then discuss appropriate teaching approach for them.

Specialized Research B

Study on specific support for high school students who have special needs involving developmental disabilities: LD, ADHD, and HFA etc.

- How to provide effective instruction on classes -

[Research unit] Developmental Disabilities and Emotional Disturbances Unit
[Principal researcher] SASAMORI Hiroki
[Research period] FY 2012-2013
[Outline]

Students who have special needs for their developmental disabilities and so forth are not given sufficient accommodations and modifications in general classes at junior and high schools, because, unlike elementary schools where one teacher is responsible for each student's daily living activities in general, secondary schools adopt a system where each teacher is only responsible for teaching his/her specialized subject. This makes it difficult for secondary schools to establish a system similar to that of elementary schools. Particularly at high schools, due to differences of courses and disciplines, there are many serious

issues that need to be addressed, such as the necessity of ingenuity in arranging classes for these students, accommodations given to these students on examinations, assessment methods, and career guidance. It is therefore necessary to adopt a different approach at high schools from that at elementary and lower secondary schools.

At high schools, while there are some students who lack motivation because of their self-image that they are not good at learning, there are quite a few whose motivation for learning can be raised if they are given accommodations and modifications to help them understand lessons easily, assigned subjects easier for them to learn, and an individually tailored assessment method, which can help them become more independent. In implementing these efforts, it is necessary not only to provide careful accommodations and modifications to those with learning difficulty but also to pay careful attention to the whole classrooms.

As students of high schools are in adolescence, it is also necessary to address issues unique to the adolescent stage because a self-awareness of being different from others may serve as a factor associated psychological and behavioral problems. It is required for those involved to consider the effective use of services and functions (e.g. education in like a resource room) to provide individually-adapted assistance, including psychological care.

In the study, we will discuss how instruction and support, mainly in classes, should be provided to students who have special needs for their developmental disabilities and so forth at high schools according to characteristics of disabilities. This discussion will be based on onsite experience at schools participating in our study and from the viewpoints of "methods to assess the actual state," "development of class curricula," "organization of curricula," "test format and other materials," "test implementation and evaluation methods," "teaching systems/setting for teaching" and "support system in school."

Collaborative Research

Development of accessible design teaching materials using Braille transliteration techniques and tactile drawing techniques concurrently used with handwriting for children and adults with visual impairments

[Principal researcher]   DOI Kouki
[Research period]   FY 2011-2012
[Outline]

Braille characters, which can be read by touch, and tactile graphics, which serve as a tool to help understand spatial information and illustrations, are used by both children and adults with visual impairments. However, it takes many years to learn Braille and many hours to understand one tactile graphic. For this reason, it is necessary to improve the learning environment for Braille reading students and tactile graphics themselves, and to develop teaching materials containing a system to assist tactile reading. This means that teachers of Braille and students learning Braille at schools and Braille classes need new Braille learning materials. Tactile graphics teaching materials that are easy to understand are also needed by teaching staff. In this context, we will develop Braille learning materials and tactile graphics teaching materials that meet the needs of teachers as well as children and adults with visual impairments. It is our hope to contribute to providing teaching materials accessible by people with or without visual impairments.

In this study, a Braille transliterator and a tactile drawing device using transparent and colorless ink that can be concurrently used with handwritten and printed characters are used to make teaching materials. Systems and interfaces that convert handwritten and printed characters, photographs, and figures into not only Braille and tactile graphics but also audible information and provide them to users will also be developed. These systems and interfaces with accessible design will be incorporated into teaching materials so that anybody with or without visual impairments can used them.

We believe that our development of teaching materials based on the accessible design concept will help promote adoption of the accessible design approach in learning.

Collaborative Research

Developmental study on handwriting evaluation system that takes into account the characteristics of children with amblyopia

[Principal researcher]   OOUCHI Susumu
[Research period]   FY 2011-2012
[Outline]

Major problems facing students with amblyopia who still can use their sense of vision are difficulty in visually perceiving two-dimensional patterns, including Chinese characters and graphics, and difficulty in correctly writing these patterns based on their visual perception. To address these problems, various teaching methods have been developed. In writing Chinese characters, many students have difficulty in writing them in a well-balanced manner. Teachers therefore place emphasis on teaching how to write well-balanced Chines characters. Such writing problems may be caused by their difficulty in visually perceiving lines and shapes. However, there are also students who

can write well-balanced and legible characters. This indicates that difficulty in writing two-dimensional patterns and characters in a well-balanced manner may not only be due to difficulty in seeing clearly but also due to experience of writing without paying sufficient attention to details and overall balance. In this study, we will develop an objective evaluation system to help raise the awareness of such problems in students with amblyopia themselves.

In our joint research for FY 2009 - 2010 with Tokyo Polytechnic University, we developed an evaluation system using ICT for figure tracing by blind children, which allows objective evaluation of figure tracing by children with visual impairments and can be used easily at schools for special needs education for visually impaired students. In this study, by applying the method used for the system to evaluate the figure tracing ability of blind children, we will develop a system to objectively evaluate the size and shape of characters and two-dimensional patterns handwritten by children with amblyopia. The developed system will be used on a trial basis to verify the usefulness of the system in improving children's handwriting skills for legible characters.

It is expected that the system to be developed will allow teachers to evaluate characters and two-dimensional patterns handwritten by students with amblyopia more objectively than conventional systems and will help these students learn how to write characters and patterns legibly.

H23-A-01 (Specialized Research A)

Study on the Use of ICF-CY in Special Needs Education

- With a Focus on Demonstration and Dissemination of Proposed Methods for the Use of ICF-CY -

[Research period] FY 2010-2011
[Principal researcher] TOKUNAGA Akio

[Summary]

   The objective of the study is to apply the "concept behind the ICF (International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health)" described in the National Curriculum Guidelines for Schools for Special Needs Education in practical settings for special needs education. First, the effectiveness of the support tool for using the ICF and ICF-CY (Children and Youth Version) in special needs education that had been developed in our previous studies for the purpose of trial was assessed based on opinions collected from participants of the in-service training sessions and users in school settings. Based on assessment results, the tool was improved to make them easier to use at schools. An interview survey was also conducted at schools that had experience in using the ICF and ICF-CY. The survey confirmed that, under the current system that requires schools to develop individualized educational support plan, the tool was effective in helping them understand not only the major disability in children and their behavior at school but also more diversified aspects of them. In this study   , information on cases where the tool was used for multidisciplinary cooperation, cases where students themselves used them, and cases where many different types of disabilities are involved was gathered and analyzed. As a result, it was confirmed that it was effective   for each case to apply the ICF and the ICF-CY. Since our emphasis was on spreading study results, the results have been disseminated widely on websites, at scientific meetings, in magazines, at lectures within the research institution, external training sessions, forums, seminars, and other occasions.

[Keywords]

Special needs education, ICF-CY, ICF, Tool, Effectiveness, Cooperative efforts involving multiple jobs, Participation of students themselves

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H23-A-02 (Specialized Research A)

Practical Study on Curriculum Development Based on the New National Curriculum Guidelines for Schools for Special Needs Education

[Research period] FY 2010-2011
[Principal researcher] TSUGE Masayoshi

[Summary]

  The aim of the study is to discuss how education curricula should be designed in such a way as to respond to the needs of individual students at schools for special needs education under the New National Curriculum Guidelines. In preparation for the discussion, a questionnaire survey was conducted at all the schools for special needs education in Japan (about 1,000 public, national and private schools). The survey was about the following issues in relation to the latest revision to the New National Curriculum Guidelines: the development of a desirable curriculum taking into account the specific needs of children with disabilities, the current state of development of teaching plans for individual students and advantages of the latest revision, how to plan self-supporting activities and associated issues, positioning of joint activities and learning in terms of curriculum development, the current state of the development of a curriculum for classes for children with multiple disabilities and associated issues, the current state of foreign language activities, and assessment of curricula. The questionnaire survey revealed the state of the curriculum development in fiscal 2010, the transitional period. In addition to the result from the questionnaire survey, we studied how curriculum development should be based on the actual implementation at eight schools that participated in our study and through research meetings with collaborators of our project.

[Keywords]

National curriculum guidelines, Curriculum, Schools for special needs education, Development, Actual implementation

Development of Support Programs for Career Guidance and Vocational Education Provided at Upper Secondary Departments of Schools for Special Needs Education (Advanced Courses)

[Research period]　FY 2010-2011

[Principal researcher]　HARADA Kimihito

[Summary]

A questionnaire survey focused on "cooperation within a school," "cooperation with various other relevant organizations," "support after graduation" and "support to parents (families)" that are associated with career guidance and vocational education was conducted in staff of upper secondary departments of schools for special needs education who are in charge of career guidance and vocational education. This study identified the above four issues through the survey. The survey result indicates four points. (1) the importance of personalized career guidance and vocational education, (2) the necessity for systematic career guidance and vocational education, the necessity for raising the entire school's awareness of the importance of being involved in career guidance and vocational education and improving the level of their expertise, (3) the necessity for support taking into account post-graduation life and improvement of the system in school for transferring students, and (4) the necessity of considerations for the circumstances of individual parents (families). Based on these issues raised in questionnaire responses and taking into account the efforts currently made by institutions that participated in our study and support tools used by them, we identified particularly important issues in addressing the raised issues above. Our proposals regarding the identified issues are compiled and reported in the "Support Programs for Career Guidance and Vocational Education."

Our report comprehensively includes the positioning of career guidance and vocational education in a curriculum, how career guidance and vocational education should be from the perspective of school management, and reports on regional support programs, and discusses the outlook of career guidance and vocational education at schools for special needs education and future issues.

[Keywords]

Schools for special needs education, Upper secondary department, Career guidance, Vocational education, Support programs

Basic Survey/Study on the Use of Digital Textbooks/Teaching Materials and ICT

[Research period]　FY 2011

[Principal researcher]　KANAMORI Katsuhiro

[Summary]

This study is positioned as a start-up study of the medium-term specific research on the "Use of ICT in Special Needs Education." In preparation for the use of ICT as an important tool for children with disabilities to access education, we formulated guidelines (draft) for the use of digital textbooks, which is expected to serve as the core of ICT education. In addition, basic information necessary to improve ICT-based education was gathered and research subjects for the next five years were identified. In the study for the preparation of the digital textbooks guidelines, we defined three types of digital textbooks and identified the overseas trend of the development of digital textbooks. Through discussion with those concerned, we reconfirmed that there are issues concerning copyrights and the use of digital data in Japan. In the study on issues relating to the use of ICT in special needs education, we proposed research themes that need to be addressed for different types of disabilities. (In this study, the term "digital textbook" is also used for digital teaching materials as any digital textbook includes "teaching materials".)

[Keywords]

Digital textbooks/teaching materials, Use of ICT, Guidelines, the vision for ICT in education, access to education, accessibility

H23-B-01 (Specialized Research B)

Practical Study on Educational Guidance and Support for Children with Visual Impairment Enrolled in Primary and Lower Secondary Schools

[Research period]　FY 2011

[Principal researcher]　TANAKA Yoshihiro

[Summary]

This is a one-year follow-up study to the "Study on Educational Guidance and Support for Children with Visual Impairment Enrolled in Primary and Lower Secondary Schools," which was conducted in fiscal 2010 (hereinafter referred to as "the 2010 study). Based on the fact-finding survey on efforts of schools for the blind to play a role as a local resource center, which was conducted in the 2010 study, we selected and compiled some advanced approaches by some schools for the blind. We also made some specific proposals for each school for the blind to improve their role as a local resource center.

As for support for children with visual impairment who are enrolled in primary and lower secondary schools, we selected and compiled information on three individual cases from the view points of a support system and use of sensory substitution devices.

The overall review of the study results above was focused on the role in which each school for the blind should play in offering guidance and support to children with visual impairment enrolled in primary and lower secondary schools.

[Keywords]

Schools for the blind, The role as a local resource center, Visual impairments, Support system, Sensory substitution devices

H23-B-02 (Specialized Research B)

Study on Guidance and Support for Children with Mild to Moderate Hearing Impairment

[Research period]　FY 2010-2011

[Principal researcher]　HARADA Kimihito

[Summary]

A questionnaire survey focused on guidance and support for children/adults with mild to moderate hearing impairment at educational institutions and treatment and education institutions was conducted. Its aim was to identify the current status and issues that need to be addressed at special needs education schools for hearing impaired, institutions of information and rehabilitation service for hearing impaired persons, classes for children with hearing and speech impairment, and classes for special needs services in resource rooms throughout Japan. In addition, we assessed issues and concerns raised in the national survey at special needs education schools for hearing impaired, classes for special needs education and special needs services in resource

rooms for children with hearing impairment in regular elementary schools, regional health and rehabilitation centers, institutions of information and rehabilitation service for hearing impaired persons and other surveyed organizations. Results from this assessment combined with reports from external collaborators on cases of guidance and support for children with mild to moderate hearing impairment were comprehensively reviewed to discuss how educational support for children with mild to moderate hearing impairment should be.

[Keywords]

Mild to moderate hearing impairment, National survey, Special needs education schools for hearing impaired, Institutions of information and rehabilitation service for hearing impaired children

H23-B-03 (Specialized Research B)

Study on Curriculum for Children with Mild Intellectual Disabilities who Belong to an Upper Secondary Department of a Special Needs School (Intellectual Disabilities)

- Study on the Most Necessary Teaching Contents -

[Research period]　FY 2010-2011
[Principal researcher]　INOUE Masashi

[Summary]

In recent years, the number of students with mild intellectual disabilities has been significantly increasing at upper secondary departments of special needs schools (intellectual disabilities). The objective of the study is to assess curricula for these students and to provide findings beneficial for assessing and improving these curricula.

In the study in fiscal 2010, preceding studies including literature research were conducted, "intellectual disability" and "mild" were defined, and information on the criteria for physical disability/rehabilitation certificates in different municipalities was gathered and organized. In addition, a study of various curricula that are actually used at schools was also conducted in cooperation with the National Association of Principals of Schools for Special Needs Education for Children with Intellectual Disabilities.

Results from the 2010 study identified the following four keywords in association with what need to be taught to students with mild intellectual disabilities: "interpersonal communication," "rules for social life," "fundamental lifestyle habits" and "occupational skills development." In the study in fiscal 2011, a survey was conducted on specific teaching contents on these issues and their positions in a curriculum. As a result, the most necessary teaching contents consisting of 22 items were identified.

An interview survey was also conducted at institutions that participated in our study and other special needs schools (intellectual disabilities) to gather information on cases of teaching "the most necessary teaching contents" to students with a mild intellectual disability in order to study the positions of these contents on curricula and specific teaching methods.

"The most necessary teaching contents" that were identified in our study can be included in each subject or in a combination of different subjects in such a way as to put the focus on them as contents that should be taught to students with mild intellectual disabilities and to put a particular emphasis on them when each subject is taught. We have concluded that, in such cases, it is also necessary to take into account the relationships between different teaching styles and teaching methods, rather than only putting the focus on teaching contents, in developing a curriculum.

In the future, it is necessary to conduct practical research more often in school settings, based on "the most necessary teaching contents," to identify a better position in a curriculum and find out an effective teaching method. It is also necessary to assess the state of learning in regard to "the most necessary teaching contents."

H23-B-04 (Specialized Research B)

Study on Subject Teaching for Students with Physical/Motor Disabilities Considering the Characteristics of the Disabilities

- To Develop the Ability to Express -

[Research period]　FY 2010-2011
[Principal researcher]　NAGANUMA Toshio

[Summary]

In order for children with physical/motor disabilities to develop "zest for living," consideration and ingenuity taking into account difficulties in learning due to lack of experience because of their disabilities and characteristics of each disability are necessary in teaching any subject. The recently revised National Curriculum Guidelines indicates that it is important to develop abilities to think, judge, and express through enriching language activities and, particularly in children with physical/motor disabilities, to develop the ability to express themselves. In this study, from the standpoint of developing the ability of children with physical/motor disabilities to express themselves mainly through their language activities within the teaching subjects, information on teaching methods and materials and documents on

considerations and creative ideas and other relevant issues were collected and organized. In addition, we also identified the current state and relevant issues to be solved both of special needs education schools and classes for special needs education in regular schools. We then identified considerations that should be taken into account and creative ideas or ingenuities that should be employed according to disability characteristics. Effective ideas for teaching subjects were presented along with practical examples. Specific considerations and ideas for teaching were examined mainly in Japanese language classes, which is the basis for language activities.

[Keywords]

Physical/motor disabilities, Language activities, Ability to express oneself, Subject learning, Characteristics of disabilities, Considerations and ingenuities

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H23-B-05 (Specialized Research B)

Study on Creating Support Networks for Children with Health Impairments and Information-sharing Using the Functions of Schools for Special Needs Education (for Health Impairments) as a Resource Center

[Research period] FY 2010-2011
[Principal researcher] NISHIMAKI Kengo

[Summary]

The objective of the study was to establish a system to gather and use information on educational activities conducted by schools for special needs education (for health impairments) so as to strengthen the role of these schools as a local resource center and facilitate at national level daily information sharing among teachers involved in education of children with health impairments, with the hope that the system would serve as a means for addressing various current issues concerning education for children with health impairments. We concurrently developed a format for "case presentation and description" that facilitates information sharing between teachers in charge of education for children with psychiatric disorders. This format provided a common direction to help those involved develop their form to be used to share information needed to support children with psychiatric disorders.

[Keywords]

Schools for special needs education (for health impairments), Use of ICT, The role as a local resource center, Information sharing system, Psychiatric disorder

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H23-B-06 (Specialized Research B)

Study on Development of the Contents and Methods of Guidance and Support in Regular Classes for Children with Speech and Language Disorders according to the Characteristics of the Disabilities

- Through Collaboration between Regular Classes and Special Needs Services in Resource Rooms -

[Research period] FY 2010-2011
[Principal researcher] MAKINO Yasumi

[Summary]

The objectives of the study were to assess and organize findings and methods that facilitate learning and school life of children with speech and language disorders in regular classes with focus on cooperation between regular classes and classes for special needs services in resource rooms, and to provide these findings and methods to classes for special needs services and other educational institutions. In the study, information on the current efforts with an eye to school life of children with speech and language disorders in regular classes and the current state of cooperation between regular classes and classes for special needs services in resource rooms was collected through literature research, questionnaire and interview surveys, and other means as well as by conducting practical research. We also assess guidance and support according to disability characteristics that are provided to reduce difficulties facing children with speech and language disorders in regular classes, efforts that can be made by homeroom teachers of regular classes and those of

classes for special needs services within their respective capacity, and more functional collaboration between regular classes and classes for special needs services. As a result, we identified findings regarding considerations that can be easily given by homeroom teachers of regular classes, practical activities that can be conducted by homeroom teachers of classes for special needs services in cooperation with homeroom teachers of regular classes, and factors that help homeroom teachers of classes for special needs services achieve better results in cooperation with homeroom teachers of regular classes.

[Keywords]

Speech and language disorders, Classes for special needs services in resource rooms, Regular classes, Collaboration, Fulfilling life

H23-B-07 (Specialized Research B)

Actual Situation of Japanese-Language("Kokugo-ka") Teaching to Students with Autism in Classes for Special Needs Education

- With Main Focus on the Assessment of the Level of Acquisition, and Coordination and Use of Teaching Contents at School -

[Research period]   FY 2010-2011
[Principal researcher]   HIROSE Yumiko

[Summary]

  The objective of the study is to assess the learning of students with autism who are enrolled in classes for special needs education for autism and emotional disturbance to identify the acquisition levels of the learning and, based on the results, to study how teaching contents of the Japanese language subject are composed and how the language should be taught at classes for special needs education for autism and emotional disturbance.

   In the first part of the study, in reference to examples of assessment criteria for the Japanese language subject proposed by the National Institute for Educational Policy Research (2002), the "Japanese Language Acquisition Assessment Sheet" was prepared and used as a tool to identify the level of acquisition of the language of students with autism. Teachers in charge of classes for special needs education for autism and emotional disturbance at seven schools that participated in our study reported that the sheet helped them clarify otherwise difficult-to-grasp levels of acquisition of the Japanese language of their students with autism. In the second part of the study, data from the Japanese Language Acquisition Assessment Sheets collected in the previous year were organized into the following categories: 1) decision on principles of teaching Japanese language, 2) composition of the teaching hours and specific teaching contents, 3) development of an annual teaching plan for the Japanese language subject, and 4) practice of specific teaching of each unit of the subject. Through the practices of teaching, three kinds of formats to determine principles of teaching Japanese language (self-check sheets for homeroom teachers to determine teaching principles and for other purposes) were identified as important. It was also revealed that the teaching of the Japanese language taking into account cognitive characteristics of individual students with autism is important.

[Keywords]

High functioning autism and other developmental disorders, Classes for special needs education for autism and emotional disturbance, The Japanese Language Acquisition Assessment Sheet, Principles of teaching Japanese language subject, Composition of teaching contents of the Japanese language subject

Practical Study on Support in School Education for Children with Developmental Disabilities

- Continuity of Support from Early Childhood Education through Upper Secondary School Education -

[Summary]

While basic symptoms of developmental disabilities last throughout one's life, the states change with each life stage from infancy to adulthood. At schools, it is necessary to adapt their support to children with developmental disabilities according to age and developmental stage and to consider the continuity of the support based on a long-term perspective. In this study, we assessed the efficacy of the "class support plan," a support tool that was developed in our previous studies, at elementary and lower secondary schools. In addition, we also studied how support should be designed in such a way as to adapt to each life stage from kindergarten to upper secondary school from the perspective of continuity of support.

The class support plan, which is designed to be used to improve classes based on reviews made by teachers themselves, was in effect to make easy-to-understand instructions according to the actual conditions of children. It can also be used for workshops on instructions and teachers' meetings of the entire school. The plan is expected to be used effectively also at kindergartens and upper secondary schools in terms of planning support programs based on common understanding among teachers.

In order to maintain the continuity of support from kindergarten to upper secondary school, support programs should be planned for the whole life from a long-term perspective and based on the developmental stage of the child. In addition, it is also important that the objective and meaning of support according to characteristics of individual disabilities are commonly understood among different schools.

Study on Relationship and Educational Support between Developmental Disabilities and Emotional Disturbance

- To be Prepared for Preventing Secondary Disabilities -

[Summary]

Children with developmental disabilities have difficulty in learning, controlling their behaviors, interpersonal relationships, but the characteristics of disabilities themselves do not necessarily cause maladaptation at school. Repeated experiences of failures, enforcement, caution, reprimand by other people, and uncomfortable environment may worsen the original symptoms and result in new maladaptive behaviors. These secondary disabilities need to be comprehensively addressed along with the original symptoms, concomitant disabilities, and worsened accompanying symptoms.

The study revealed that, in order to prevent secondary disabilities in school settings, it is important to have better understanding not only of the characteristics of individual disabilities but also of the whole being of each child, and to pay attention so as not to miss even a slight change in his/her symptoms and conditions, and to focus on identifying the relationship between the change and his/her surrounding environment.

It is also important that, because the home environment has a significant impact, both the school and parents should understand the importance of ensuring a comfortable environment for children with developmental disabilities in terms of human relationship and a living environment, and should work together to solve issues.

Report on FY 2012 National Institute of Special Needs Education Seminar

FY 2012 National Institute of Special Needs Education Seminar entitled "Current Situations and issues on Special Needs Education –Thinking on Special Needs Education Leading to the Creation of Cohesive Society-" was held for two days from January 29 (Tuesday) to January 30 (Wednesday), 2012. The venue of the seminar with the total of over 700 participants was the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center, Yoyogi, Japan.

In the afternoon of the Day 1, Ms. OOYAMA Mami, Director of Division of Special Needs Education, Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) provided an explanation from the administrative perspectives, followed by the Symposium entitled "Thinking on Special Needs Education towards Cohesive Society." In this Symposium, the Presidents or the delegates of the national associations of each school category such as kindergarten, elementary schools, lower-secondary schools, elementary and lower-secondary schools in which one or more special needs education classes or resource rooms are attached, schools for special needs education were invited as panel members. First half of the symposium, each of the panel members gave their presentation followed by the discussion session. Topics covered include the situations for the present and the past five years since the partial legal reform of the School Education Law in April, 2007 as well as the perspectives of tomorrow's Special Needs Education.

During the first part of the Session 2 of Day 2, two ongoing research projects of NISE regarding development of inclusive education system were presented. One is entitled "Study on consideration and special guidance to children who need special support in developing an inclusive education system" and another is entitled "Research for teacher's professional standards and development of teacher training program in inclusive education systems." The second part of the Session 2 focused on topics and research issues on two disability categories: the education for children with hearing impairment and the education for children with developmental disabilities/emotional disturbance.

In the afternoon on Day 2, poster presentation session was held followed by the Session 3. In the poster session, results of research projects that finished in previous year were presented. The Session 3 consisted three workshops such as "Use of ICF (International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health) for betterment of understanding, teaching, and support of children with disabilities", "Career guidance and vocational education towards independence and participation to the society for children with disabilities", and "Supports for the students with mild intellectual disabilities who belong to upper secondary department of Special Needs School (Intellectual Disabilities)." In each of workshops, the participants and panel members have exchanged ideas through presentations, Q&A, discussions with discussants and panels.

Records of the two-day seminar will be updated on the website of NISE.

Other Topics

World Autism Awareness Day 2012

On December 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution, tabled by the State of Qatar and supported by Consort of the Emir, to declare April 2 as World Autism Awareness Day, encouraging Member States to take measures to raise awareness about autism, in cooperation with NPOs, etc.

In response to this, the Japanese government established the executive committee for promoting World Autism Awareness Day and, as a joint host organization, the National Institute of Special Needs Education (NISE) is actively playing a role in promoting the awareness for autism. April 2 to 8 was designated as the developmental disabilities week and events to educate the public about developmental disabilities were held in various locations.

As a part of World Autism Awareness Day 2012 events, a symposium titled 'Believe in and love the way we grow' was held on April 7 at Nadao Hall in Kasumigaseki. There was an artwork exhibition at Tokyo Tower from March 23 to April 8. Tokyo Tower was also the venue of the Light It Up Blue event on April 2 from 6:15 PM, where it was lit up in blue along with other famous buildings around the world.

World Autism Awareness Day in Yokosuka 2012

World Autism Awareness Day 2012 was celebrated in Yokosuka, entitled 'Let's get to know about autism -spread small connections-' at Yokosuka Sogo High School with the aim of educating the general public about autism.

To promote understanding of autism in local communities, NISE and Kurihama Special Needs Education School for Children with Autism, University of Tsukuba hosted the event with the cooperation of the Kurihama school's PTA and the parent group for autistic children in Yokosuka, Tanpopo-no-kai. This year saw an increase of visitors compared to the year before, with 251 people participating. Many families came with children, relaxing at specially set up family seats where the children were seen sitting next to their siblings or even lying around. The recovery rate of the questionnaire distributed to the visitors was high at more than 80%, with many people responding that they deepened their understanding about autism. Also, they praised the speech by Mr. Tai, with regard to 'expanding the parent's world through the development of my child', who accompanied his autistic son on the stage.

FY 2012 Workshop for Good Practice of Schools for Special Needs Education at Dormitories

The Workshop for Good Practice of Schools for Special Needs Education at Dormitories was held on July 25 to 26 at NISE. The workshop has been held every year to improve the professional expertise of the leaders in residential school settings in prefectural special needs educational institutions as well as to share the knowledge to lead the school, and support and train teachers.

Seventy five leaders and staff members from all over the country participated this year. On the first day, there was a briefing on administrative matters from the Special Needs Education Division of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), followed by a lecture by personnel from

NISE. On the second day, case studies about leading practice at certain residential schools were presented, followed by working group sessions of different disabilities, based on the reports submitted in advance, where active discussions were observed.

FY 2012 Workshop for Education of Developmental Disabilities

The Workshop for Education of Developmental Disabilities was held on August 2 to 3 at NISE. The workshop has been held every year since 2008, to improve the skill and expertise of the leaders, who are in the position of supporting and training the teachers for the children with developmental disabilities in prefectural levels as well as to strengthen the support and assistance of local government organizations.

This time, 117 faculty members from all over the country, who are in the position of leading other teachers in kindergarten to high schools, attended the workshop. On the first day administrative briefings and lectures with regard to the present situations and issues on support for children with developmental disabilities were held, as well as case study presentations on how best to support such children in a school education system. On the second day, the participants were divided into 2 working groups (continuity of support in nursery school to elementary school ages and junior

high school to high school and after), where case study presentations by the lecturers in associated organizations were followed by active small group discussions, based on pre-submitted reports.

On participating in the 35th Workshop of Principals of Japanese Schools in the East Asia and Pacific Region

NISE's Department of Educational Support, Counseling and Consultation Section has been supporting special needs education in Japanese Schools overseas. This time, I attended the 35th Workshop of Principals of Japanese School in the East Asia and Pacific Region, held November 9 to 11 in 2011. The workshop has been held annually in the region at one of the schools in rotation, with the aim of improving the education standard as well as the management efficiency, the topics included issues regarding the education programs, teaching, and administrative problems in the Japanese schools in the region. This time it was held in the Singapore Japanese School, Primary School Changi Campus, with 37 principals in the region as well as officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and the Japan Overseas Educational Services.

The Primary School Changi Campus has 610 pupils in 22 classes. It is a middle size school among overseas Japanese schools

with its wide difference in sizes (for example, the Bangkok campus of the Thai Japanese Association Schools has 2,571 pupils in 73 classes while Kinabalu Japanese School in Malaysia has 13 students in 4 classes). As for the special needs education in the school, a tailor-made program for each children, based on 'individual educational support plan' and 'individual teaching plan' is carried out in 3 courses, Challenge 1 (support based on hands-on learning), Challenge 2 (support on subjects on individual bases in a separate classroom), and Growing (extra tuition on subjects on individual bases in a separate classroom). In this year's workshop, a tour of the school was conducted on the 1st day and we had an opportunity to observe the Growing Course where children with developmental disabilities were learning. The way the children were concentrating on the tasks in a relaxed atmosphere gave me a very good impression.

On the 2nd and the 3rd day, the principals were divided into working session groups according to the year of the placement and

the size of the school, with discussions ranging from issues in each school and creativity and measures to deal with the problems. I participated in all the group discussions and found them invigorating. The topics covered included how to deal with the new curriculum guidance, how to strengthen training for locally employed teachers, how best to secure human resources, and the collaboration with local Japanese Societies. What was interesting for me was the topic regarding special needs education which was

the second most talked about topic after the new curriculum guidance, showing the high degree of concern with regard to special needs education in overseas Japanese Schools. It was also a very fruitful experience for me to be able to collect concrete information with regard to special needs education at each locality, by interviewing the principals face to face, in order to strengthen the support for Japanese Schools overseas.

On attending the 12th KNISE-NISE Seminar

We visited the Korea National Institute of Special Education (KNISE) from July 2 to 5, 2012 by the invitation of the 12th KNISE-NISE Seminar committee. The theme of the seminar was 'Current situation of managing educational programs for children with severe and/or multiple disabilities'. The situations with regard to the curriculum development and educational reality of children with severe and/or multiple disabilities in both Korea and Japan were presented in front of approximately 300 delegates mainly from special needs school teachers in Korea.

We discussed the characteristics and future issues on special needs education curriculum, being able to clarify the positioning of special needs education in both countries, such as in Korea the education for such children is based on a standard subjects based program while in Japan a more flexible approach for each children to gain independent life activities is more common.

We also visited a national special needs school for children with physical disabilities. The school and the classrooms are in good educational environments with the latest facilities including ICT equipment. Through this visit, by observing classes and the

facility, we could learn a lot about the education system of Korea, the current situation of integrated education, and educational initiatives for children with severe and/or multiple disabilities.

The KNISE-NISE Seminar has come to the end. However, we will continue to communicate and exchange ideas on a research by research basis with KNISE, as well as to reflect the knowledge gained from them into our own research efforts.

Introduction

Special Needs Education Division,
Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau,
Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)

1. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted at the 61st Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 2006 and became effective in May 2008. Japan signed the Convention in September 2007, and is currently moving ahead with consideration of its ratification. In December 2008, the Ministerial Board for Disability Policy Reform was established, comprising all members of the Cabinet, including the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, and headed by the Prime Minister. The initial five-year period has been designated as an intensive period for promoting systemic reforms for persons with disabilities, and during this period, general coordination for the promotion of reforms, the preparation of drafts for basic policy reforms, and studies for implementing them are being carried out. In order to seek views regarding the promotion of measures for people with disabilities, a Committee for Disability Policy Reform was established under the Ministerial Board, and on June 7, 2010, the Committee issued its First Opinion report of its findings.

2. A Cabinet decision on June 29, 2010, approving the above-mentioned First Opinion report directed that each individual field should be investigated by the relevant ministries. In the area of education, the following two points were indicated.

・Based on the concept of developing an inclusive education system, as called for by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in which children with disabilities receive education together with children without disabilities, MEXT was charged with framing a conclusion for the basic direction of the reform of the system in terms of the revision of the Basic Law for Persons with Disabilities within fiscal 2010 concerning the overall educational system, including systemic and financial aspects.

・A conclusion will be reached on the basic direction of reform within fiscal 2012 for developing specific measures for securing appropriate teachers, including persons with hearing impairment who can communicate in sign language and persons with visual impairment who can communicate in Braille, and for improving the expertise of teachers in order to provide education that

responds to the special needs of children with developmental disabilities and intellectual disabilities and education that can utilize sign language and Braille.

3. Within this context, on July 12, 2010, MEXT made a request for deliberations to the Subdivision on Primary and Secondary Education of the Central Council for Education, and under this subdivision, the Special Committee of the Future Directions of Special Needs Education was established. In December 2010, this Special Committee issued an interim report as an "discussion points," based on its discussions of studies carried out by the Advisory Committee for Promotion of Special Needs Education which were set up by MEXT in August 2008 and the Committee for Disability Policy Reform. After the issuance of its interim report, the Special Committee sought views from the wider public, and it further deepened its deliberations, using the views gained from the public as reference.

4. During this period, the Committee for Disability Policy Reform issued its Second Opinion report. In August 2011, the Basic Law for Persons with Disabilities was revised, based on the Second Opinion report and the "discussion points." In regards to education, the following revisions were made in Article 16 of the law.

(1) In order to enable persons with disabilities to receive adequate education in line with their age and abilities and based on their special characteristics, the national and local governments shall give due consideration to enabling, as far as possible, school children with disabilities to receive education together with school children without disabilities, and shall take necessary measures, including the improvement and enhancement of the contents and methods for education.

(2) In order to achieve the purpose stipulated in the preceding paragraph, the national and local governments shall provide sufficient information to school children with disabilities and their guardians, and shall respect their intentions as far as possible.

(3) The national and local governments shall actively develop joint activities and learning between school children with disabilities

and those without disabilities, thereby promoting their mutual understanding.

(4) With regard to the education of persons with disabilities, the national and local governments shall carry out surveys and research, secure human resources and improve their professional qualities, provide appropriate teaching and training materials and others, and improve and maintain school facilities and other environments.

(*Reference: Basic Law for Persons with Disabilities [excerpts])

5. In addition, the Special Committee on Special Needs Education established the Working Group for Reasonable Accommodation in May 2011, and after deliberating over eight sessions, the Working Group issued its report in February 2012.

6. Based on the above-mentioned report, this report was compiled as a result of the discussions conducted at the Subdivision on Primary and Secondary Education. We strongly hope that, based on this report, the steady promotion of special needs education for developing an inclusive education system leading to the creation of a cohesive society will prove greatly beneficial for children with disabilities, children whose disabilities are not known by those around them but who have difficulties in learning and daily life, and for all other children.

7. At present, Disability Policy Reform, including discussions on the enactment of legislation regarding the ban of discrimination based on disabilities, are continuing to be pursued. It will be incumbent on MEXT to promote collaboration with the measures taken by other government ministries based on this report.

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Outline of Report on the Promotion of Special Needs Education for Developing an Inclusive Education System Leading to the Creation of Cohesive Society

Special Needs Education Division,
Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau,
Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)

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I. Introduction

This report describes the Government of Japan's efforts in regards to Disability Policy Reform, deliberations regarding the same at the Central Council for Education, revisions to the Basic Law for Persons with Disabilities, and other related matters in light of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at the United Nations.

II. Towards the Creation of Cohesive Society

1. Development of an inclusive education system for the creation of cohesive society

An "cohesive society" is one in which persons with disabilities, who have not necessarily had access up to now to an environment that would allow them to adequately participate in society, can actively participate in and contribute to such a society. It is a totally inclusive society in which all persons mutually respect and support the individuality and personality of each person and mutually recognize the diversity among members of the society. Striving to build this kind of society is one of the most important issues that Japan must actively pursue.

Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that the aims of an inclusive education system are to: strengthen respect for human diversity, develop the mental and physical capabilities of persons with disabilities to their fullest potential, and enable persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society. To realize these aims, States are required to ensure that persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system and can learn together with persons without disabilities, are given access to primary and secondary education in the communities in which they live, and are provided with "reasonable accommodation" of their individual requirements.

For the creation of cohesive society, the concept of an inclusive educational system based on the precepts of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is essential, and Japan believes that the steady promotion of special needs education is necessary for building such a system.

An inclusive educational system seeks to: allow pupils and students with disabilities to learn together in the same space with pupils and students without disabilities, provide guidance that most appropriately responds to the educational needs of pupils and students with disabilities to ensure both their independence and social participation, and prepare varied and flexible mechanisms and arrangements to meet these needs. It is also necessary to prepare "diverse places of learning," with connectivity, such as regular classes in elementary and lower secondary schools, special support services in resource rooms, classes for special needs education, and schools for special needs education.

2. Promotion of special needs education for development of an inclusive educational system

Special needs education is indispensable for the development of an inclusive educational system leading to the creation of cohesive society. For this, it is necessary to develop special needs education based on the concepts described in subsections (i) to (iii) below. The promotion of special needs education under this framework ensures that the educational needs of each and every child will be ascertained and appropriate guidance and necessary support will be provided. It is believed that promoting education from this perspective will prove greatly beneficial and effective for children with disabilities, children whose disabilities are not known by those around them but who have difficulties in learning and daily life, and for all other children.

i. So that children with disabilities can expand their capabilities and possibilities to their fullest potential and became

independent and participate in society, it is important to strengthen collaboration among medical, health, welfare, and labor organizations, and to enhance education for children with disabilities so that these children can receive adequate education utilizing the various functions of the entire society.

ii. So that children with disabilities can play active roles in their communities and lead fulfilling lives as members of them, it is essential that a foundation for their daily lives be created in their communities through exchanges with children of their own age and other persons. For this, it is important to consider how to let children with disabilities learn with other children as much as possible.

iii. In regards to special needs education, it is important to build a foundation whereby equitability is ensured and people with disabilities can function as integral members of society, as people in the community learn and live with people and children with disabilities through the promotion of understanding and acceptance of disabled persons.

A basic direction for reform should aim at having children with disabilities learn in the same space as much as possible with children without disabilities. In such cases, the most important viewpoint is whether each child can develop a zest for living as he/she spends a fulfilling learning experience by feeling a sense of accomplishment in understanding the contents of lessons and participating in learning activities. It is thus vital to prepare an appropriate environment for this.

3. Proceeding to the creation of cohesive society

After the formulation of short-term (until ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) and mid-term measures (ten-year period after the ratification of the Convention), a phased implementation will be carried out.

Short-term: Reform of system for receiving counseling and determining school for enrolment; enhancement of teacher training; preparation of immediately necessary learning environment; efforts for "reasonable accommodation" of individual needs. The funding necessary for these reforms will be secured, and the reforms will be sequentially implemented.

Mid-term: Additional preparation of learning environments and measures for further enhancing the expertise of teachers will be considered based on the progress of the short-term measures. The final aim will be the development of an inclusive educational system leading to the creation of cohesive society, as called for by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

III. Guidance and Decision about Schools for Enrolment

1. Early-stage educational consultation and support

It is essential to provide adequate information to children with disabilities and their guardians by offering educational consultation and guidance from an early age, even as early as infancy, about possible schools for enrolment, in order to ensure that assistance is provided that responds to the individual educational needs of each child. Deepening mutual understanding of each child's educational needs and required support among the relevant parties, including guardians, at kindergartens and elsewhere will lead to a better acceptance of the disability by the guardian and smoother subsequent provision of assistance. It will also be important to form consensus among the children with disabilities, their guardians, the municipal boards of education, schools, and others on the educational needs and required support for the children.

It is also necessary to promptly establish a system ensuring that children can receive educational counseling and support throughout their childhood from infancy in collaboration with medical, health, welfare, and other organizations. Through these efforts, a high level of educational effectiveness can be expected.

2. Mechanisms for deciding schools for enrolment

It will be necessary to reform the mechanisms for deciding schools for enrolment, which hitherto have, in principle, called for children with disabilities, who come within the purview of the enrolment criteria, to be enrolled in schools for special needs education. The appropriate goal is to establish mechanisms that will decide the school of enrolment based on the condition of the disability, the educational needs of the child, the opinions of the child and the guardians, and the views of educational, medical, and psychological specialists. During this process, the municipal board of education should respect to the greatest degree possible the opinions of the child and his/her guardians while providing appropriate information to them. In principle, a consensus agreement should be reached among the child and his/her guardians, the municipal board of education, and the school about the child's educational needs and necessary assistance; the final decision should be made by the relevant board of education.

In regards to the "School Attendance Guidance Committees," which many municipal boards of education have established, a more appropriate naming would be "Educational Support Committee" (provisional name) since such committees not only decide the school of enrolment and provide educational advice and support to the child from an early stage but should also extend continuous support after that. These Educational Support

Committees are expected to expand their functions and play an important role for providing continuous support to children with disabilities.

The "place of learning" decided at the time of initial enrolment is not necessarily permanently fixed; an important aim will be a common understanding among all relevant parties about the possibility of flexible school transfers based on consideration of the stage of development of each student and the state of his/her adaptability.

It will be necessary to explain beforehand at the initial stage of school enrolment guidance to the student and his/her guardians about the flow of the procedures for deciding the school of enrolment and the possibility of flexible transfers after the enrolment decision (school enrolment guidance).

If a consensus of agreement cannot be reached among the student, his/her guardians, the municipal board of education, school, etc., based on, for example, a request from the municipal board of education originating from a request from the student and his/her guardians, the prefectural board of education could add a third-person expert to the prefectural board of education's Educational Support Committee (provisional name) to utilize this expert's advice as part of the guidance/advice given to the municipal board of education.

3. Mechanisms for continuous support

Also necessary is the sharing and utilization of information by related organizations as needed regarding the child's record of growth and guidance so that continuous guidance and support can be given from as early an age as possible until the child reaches adulthood.

4. Role of central government and prefectural boards of education in guidance and selection of schools of enrolment

Functions for guidance and advice by prefectural boards of education regarding selection of schools of enrolment should be strengthened.

Since there are limitations to leaving all efforts regarding guidance for selection of schools of enrolment to local government boards of education, it is incumbent on the central government to prepare a model framework for such guidance and to promote concrete examples for sharing this expertise.

IV. For the Adequate Education of Children with Disabilities: The Concept of Reasonable Accommodation and the Preparation of a Fundamental Environment for its Implementation

1. "Reasonable Accommodation"

In accordance with the definition given in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in this Report, "reasonable accommodation" is defined as: "the necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments carried out by establishers of schools and schools themselves where necessary in particular cases and depending on the circumstances of children with disabilities in order to ensure to children with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise of the 'right to education' on an equal basis with other children." "Reasonable accommodation" shall not "impose a disproportionate or undue burden or lack of balance on school establishers and schools on a fiscal or systemic level." Also in accordance with the Convention, due attention must be paid so that the negation of "reasonable accommodation" shall not constitute discrimination based on disabilities as a reason.

Regarding assistance to children with disabilities, the central government on a national scale, prefectural governments within the prefecture, and city, town, and village governments at the local level are respectively preparing an educational environment for these children based on the law and through appropriate fiscal measures. The preparations of these environments become the basis for "reasonable accommodation," and they are called the "preparation of basic environments." The preparation of these environments will differ according to circumstances, but with these environments as the basis, schools will offer "reasonable accommodation" at each school to children with disabilities in accordance with their circumstances.

In deciding "reasonable accommodation," consideration must be given from the viewpoint of whether it conforms to the goals of strengthening respect for human diversity, developing the mental and physical abilities of persons with disabilities to their fullest potential, and enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society, as stated in Article 24(1) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in regards to the rights of persons with disabilities.

"Reasonable accommodation" is decided based on the state of the disability of each and every child, their educational needs, and so on. Based on the perspective of "reasonable accommodation," the widest possible consensus is reached regarding the "reasonable accommodation" between the school side and the student and his/her guardians, considering the stage of the student's development. This agreement should then be clearly stated in an

individualized education support plans. Should the school side and the student and his/her guardians not reach an agreement, the matter should be resolved by recommendations from the Educational Support Committee (provisional name). It is also important that there should be a common understanding that schools, families, and communities should be united in conducting education, with adequate collaboration and mutual support ensured. Moreover, after "reasonable accommodation" is decided, common understanding should also be ensured so that it can be flexibly reviewed and modified while taking into consideration the process of the development of each child and student and the state of his/her adaptability.

If a student moves to another school, information about the student should be transferred, and assistance should be seamlessly provided.

2. Preparing the "fundamental environment"

Preparing the "fundamental environment" is indispensable for realizing "reasonable accommodation." For this, necessary financial resources must be secured. The national government and prefectural and local governments must enhance their preparation of a "fundamental environment" for the developing of an inclusive educational system.

A common understanding should be further promoted for the creation of cohesive society, and higher priority should be assigned to measures for developing an inclusive educational system.

3. The perspective of "reasonable accommodation" in schools

Disability-specific "reasonable accommodation" and adjustments from the perspective of "reasonable accommodation" exemplify what can be considered representative concerns. However, concerns other than those indicated must also be addressed, and it is desirable for "reasonable accommodation" to be decided based on the situation of the disability of each and every child and their educational needs.

A common understanding must also be reached among relevant parties regarding what "reasonable accommodation" is required at present, what should be provided as priority accommodations, and so on.

If a child should have multiple disabilities, "reasonable accommodations" for each type of disability should be flexibly combined.

4. Enhancement of "reasonable accommodation"

Although consideration has been given to students with disabilities at schools up to now, "reasonable accommodation" is a new concept, and understanding the need for the ensuring of it is not sufficient at present. Both the school side and the child/gurdians side have insufficient information. Accordingly, research studies for enhancing "reasonable accommodation" should be promptly carried out, and a national "reasonable accommodation" database based on the results of such surveys and research should be created, which can then be used as reference by schools and students with disabilities and their guardians. Enhancement of "reasonable accommodation" and the "preparation of a fundamental environment" should be carried out based on these studies over the mid- and long-term. The perspectives of "reasonable accommodation" in schools and representative examples should be reviewed depending on the need.

Evaluations are also necessary from the perspective of whether "reasonable accommodation" is being offered so that children with disabilities can receive adequate education, and research should be carried out regarding these evaluations. For example, concerning individualized educational support plans and individualized teaching plans, a PDCA cycle should be established at schools so that the results achieved based on these plans can be evaluated and regularly reviewed.

V. Preparation of Diverse Places of Learning and Promotion of Collaboration among Schools

1. Preparation of deverse places of learning and securing teaching staff

It is necessary to enhance the various environments of regular classes, special support services in resource rooms, classes for special needs education, and schools for special needs education, all as diverse places of learning.

As far as regular classes, efforts should be made to reduce class size and to improve teaching methodology, such as teaching by multiple instructors.

There are limits to responses only by teachers for accurately meeting the needs of a diverse range of children by special needs education. A support structure should be established within schools under the leadership of school principals, and it goes without saying that the school as a whole must respond. Moreover, in addition to regular teaching staff, the number of which is stipulated by the Act on Legal Standards for Class Size and Staffing Levels of Teachers and Other Personnel at Public Compulsory-Education Schools, for example, support for children with disabilities should

be improved by utilizing school counselors, school social workers, speech-language-hearing therapists (ST), occupational therapists (OT), physical therapists (PT), and other specialists.

From the viewpoint of medical care, nurses and other health professionals should be secured as needed.

The teaching personnel system for providing special support services in resource rooms should also be strengthened.

In order to boost the preparation of suitable environments at kindergartens and upper secondary schools, it is important for prefectural boards of education to enhance these environments, for example, by conducting teacher training through the utilization of the function as a resource center of schools for special needs education.

2. Promoting collaboration among schools

An inclusive educational system should be built up within each community that can respond to the educational needs of each and every child within the community by the tying together of community school clusters.

Schools for special needs education possess function as a resource center for: support to teachers at elementary and lower secondary schools, consultation and the provision of information regarding special needs education, guidance and support to children with disabilities, collaboration and coordination with related organizations, training for teachers at elementary and lower secondary schools, and providing children with disabilities access to facilities and equipment. From now, they will be required to play a major role within the inclusive educational system, including fulfilling coordinating functions for the school clusters within communities and expanding their guidance and support functions to children with developmental and other disabilities through special support services in resource rooms. For this, efforts must be made to further enhance their function as a resource center and enhance their expertise.

In order to effectively fulfill their function as a resource center

as schools for special needs education and coordinators for school clusters, the clarification of the division of roles for each school for special needs education according to community and function is desirable. For this, networks of schools for special needs education should be created.

3. Promotion of exchanges and collaborative learning

Joint activities and learning between schools for special needs education and elementary, lower secondary schools, upper secondary schools and between classes for special needs education and regular classes are extremely meaningful for children with disabilities enrolled in schools for special needs education or classes for special needs education and for children without disabilities by widening their experiences, cultivating their social nature, and developing their humanity, which will help lead to the creation of cohesive society. These joint activities and learning can greatly foster a deep-seated respect for diversity.

It is necessary to promote more organized and systematic joint activities and learning between schools for special needs education and elementary, lower seconrady schools, upper secondary schools by including them in the school curriculum, preparing annual teaching plans for them, and so on. During this process, the collaboration between prefectural and municipal boards of education is important. Moreover, in regards to the joint activities and learning between classes for special needs education and regular classes, the aims should be clarified at each school, and they should be promoted in an organized and systematic way by including them in the school curricula and preparing annual teaching plans for them.

4. Collaboration with related organizations

Appropriate collaboration with medical, health, welfare, labor, and other related organizations is important. For this, the formation of coordinated networks for broad-based area support under the mutual collaboration of relevant administrative organs is effective.

VI. Raising the Level of Expertise of Teachers for the Enhancement of Special Needs Education

1. Ensuring the expertise of teachers

All teachers are required to have a definite level of knowledge and skills regarding special needs education in order to develop an inclusive educational system. It is particularly necessary for teachers to have the requisite knowledge and skills in the area of developmental disorders since many children who may have developmental disabilities are enrolled in regular classes. For this, teachers should acquire this knowledge during the teacher training

stage, but in the case of current teachers, they should enhance their basic knowledge and skills through training workshops, etc.

Since it is difficult for all teachers to acquire specialized knowledge in a wide range of areas, outside human resources should be utilized as need arises to ensure the expertise of the school as a whole.

2. Expertise of teachers, training and development systems

For ensuring the expertise of the school as a whole, capable leadership by the school principal and other school managers is essential. The role of supervisor of school education from local boards of education who support school teachers is also important. Accordingly, appropriate training must also be carried out targeting school principals and other managers and supervisor of school education from local boards of education.

Around 70 percent of the teachers at schools for special needs education have obtained certificate for teachers of schools for special needs education (either a teaching certificate for the relevant school level or a certificate for special needs education). From the standpoint of improving the educational quality in schools for special needs education, it is necessary to promptly ensure the expertise of responsible teachers by raising the certification acquisition rate. For this, certification should be given greater attention during the training and employment stages. Particularly for current teachers, efforts should be advanced for promoting their participation in training courses for acquiring this certification, as well as encouraging them to heighten their level of expertise through further training after receiving the certification.

Teachers in charge of instruction for classes for special needs education and special support service in resource rooms are important actors for special needs education, and their expertise exerts a great influence on other teachers in the school. Because of that, it is important for teachers in charge to promptly ensure their expertise by receiving specialist training, and to continue to improve their expertise through further training.

3. Recruitment and deployment of persons with disabilities as teachers

An "cohesive society" is one in which persons with disabilities, who up to now have not necessarily been able to participate sufficiently in society, can actively participate in and contribute to society. In schools as well, it is important to make environments in which persons with disabilities can have the option of choosing to become teachers.

<u>Recent Data on Education for Children with Disabilities in Japan</u>

This document is a translation from the Data on Special Needs Education in 2011, edited and published in 2012 by the Special Needs Education Division of Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology with permission. Statistical data are collected as of August 1, 2011 for schools in Fukushima and as of May 1, 2011 for the rest of schools.

(1) Number of schools for special needs education, number of classes, number of children enrolled, number of teachers and staffs - totals for national, public and private institutions -

	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of children enrolled				
			Kindergarten dept.	Elementary dept.	Lower secondary dept.	Upper secondary dept.	Total
Total	1,049	32,175	1,543	36,659	28,225	59,696	126,123
Sub total of schools for unique disability category	847	24,209	1440	27852	21703	46877	9,787
(1) Visual impairment	66	1,263	218	622	497	1,999	3,336
(2) Hearing impairment	91	1,883	1,115	2,058	1,325	1,683	6,181
(3) Intellectual disabilities	490	15,458	60	18,506	15,720	38,553	72,839
(4) Physical/motor disabilities	137	4,565	47	5,692	3,335	3,732	12,806
(5) Health impairment	63	1,040	-	974	826	910	2,710
Sub total of schools for multiple disability category	202	7,966	103	8,807	6,522	12,819	28,251
(1)+(2)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(1)+(3)	1	41	7	88	68	-	163
(1)+(4)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(1)+(5)	1	21	1	7	4	21	33
(2)+(3)	8	207	40	163	144	314	661
(2)+(4)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(2)+(5)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(3)+(4)	117	5,021	7	5,717	4,147	8,854	18,725
(3)+(5)	14	518	-	551	503	863	1,917
(4)+(5)	17	661	13	677	459	532	1,681
(1)+(2)+(3)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(1)+(2)+(4)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(1)+(2)+(5)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(1)+(3)+(4)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(1)+(3)+(5)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(1)+(4)+(5)	1	28	2	24	20	20	66
(2)+(3)+(4)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(2)+(3)+(5)	1	49	9	52	30	84	175
(2)+(4)+(5)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(3)+(4)+(5)	24	809	5	956	662	1,233	2,856
(2)+(3)+(4)+(5)	1	37	4	39	40	39	122
(1)+(3)+(4)+(5)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(1)+(2)+(4)+(5)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(1)+(2)+(3)+(5)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(1)+(2)+(3)+(4)	1	63	2	79	50	47	178
(1)+(2)+(3)+(4)+(5)	16	511	13	454	395	812	1,674
Total							89,477
Number of teachers							74,854
Number of staffs							14,623

*This table is classified by the type of disabilities which each school specifies according to their school regulations.

(2) Number of schools for special needs education, number of classes, number of children enrolled based on disability categories established - totals for national, public and private institutions -

	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of children enrolled				
			Kindergarten dept.	Elementary dept.	Lower secondary dept.	Upper secondary dept.	Total
Visual impairment	86	2,215	246	1,794	1,042	2,800	5,882
Hearing impairment	118	2,810	1,189	3,117	1,937	2,357	8,660
Intellectual disabilities	673	27,156	222	32,475	24,857	53,914	111,468
Physical/motor disabilities	314	11,860	177	13,639	8,076	9,720	31,612
Health impairment	138	7,262	30	7,508	5,379	6,672	19,589

*In this table, the number of schools, classes and children enrolled were counted based on disability category respectively, so that these numbers were multi-counted if they are related to two or more disabilities.

(3) Number of classes for special needs education, number of children enrolled, number of teachers in charge, number of ordinary schools in which classes for special needs education are established
- totals for national, public and private institutions -

	Elementary schools		Lower secondary schools		Total	
	Number of classes	Number of children	Number of classes	Number of children	Number of classes	Number of children
Intellectual disabilities	15,303 (48.6%)	55,352 (51.4%)	7,652 (53.5%)	28,419 (69.6%)	22,955 (50.1%)	83,771 (54.0%)
Physical/motor disabilities	1,899 (6.0%)	3,221 (3.0%)	705 (4.9%)	1,079 (2.3%)	2,604 (5.7%)	4,300 (2.8%)
Health impairment	887 (2.8%)	1,608 (1.5%)	384 (2.7%)	662 (1.4%)	1,271 (2.8%)	2,270 (1.5%)
Low vision	245 (0.8%)	292 (0.3%)	77 (0.5%)	93 (0.2%)	322 (0.7%)	385 (0.2%)
Hard of hearing	550 (1.7%)	913 (0.8%)	228 (1.6%)	369 (0.8%)	778 (1.7%)	1,282 (0.8%)
Speech and language disorders	426 (1.4%)	1,373 (1.3%)	77 (0.5%)	118 (0.2%)	503 (1.1%)	1,491 (1.0%)
Autism/ Emotional disturbance	12,197 (38.7%)	44,838 (41.7%)	5,177 (36.2%)	16,918 (35.5%)	17,374 (37.9%)	61,756 (39.8%)
Total	31,507	107,597	14,300	47,658	45,807	155,255
Number of teachers in charge	33,729		15,519		49,248	
Number of schools established	15,611		7,499		23,110	

* Special needs education classes for Autism/Emotional disturbance was substituted for ones for Emotional disturbance since 2009.

(4) Number of children receiving special needs services in resource rooms, number of teachers in charge, number of ordinary schools in which resource rooms are established - public institution -

	Elementary schools	Lower secondary schools	Total
Speech and language disorders	31,314 (52.0%)	293 (5.6%)	31,607 (48.4%)
Autism	9,007 (15.0%)	1,335 (25.7%)	10,342 (15.8%)
Emotional disturbance	5,218 (8.7%)	1,114 (21.4%)	6,332 (9.7%)
Low vision	111 (0.2%)	19 (0.4%)	130 (0.2%)
Hard of hearing	1,710 (2.8%)	341 (6.6%)	2,051 (3.1%)
Learning disabilities	6,455 (10.7%)	1,358 (26.1%)	7,813 (12.0%)
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder	6,312 (10.5%)	714 (13.7%)	7,026 (10.7%)
Physical/motor disabilities	6 (0.01%)	3 (0.06%)	9 (0.01%)
Health impairment	31 (0.05%)	19 (0.4%)	50 (0.08%)
Total	60,164	5,196	65,360
Number of teachers in charge	4,596	644	5,335 *1
Number of schools established	2,576	425	3,061 *2

*1 The data includes 95 teachers of schools for special needs education.

*2 The data includes 60 schools for special needs education.

(5) National demographic data for schooling of children

		Compulsory education stage (elementary and lower secondary)		All stages (kindergarten to upper secondary)	
Number of children enrolled (all)		10,545,844	(100.0%)	15,559,420	(100.0%)
Number of children receiving special needs education		285,499	(2.7%)	346,738	(2.2%)
Breakdown of above	Enrollment in special schools	64,884	(0.6%)	126,123	(0.8%)
	Enrollment in classes for special needs education	155,255	(1.5%)	155,255	(1.0%)
	Number accessing resouce rooms	65,360	(0.6%)	65,360	(0.4%)
Number of children postponed or exempted schooling because of their disabilities		56	(0.0005%)		
Breakdown of above	Blind/visual impairment	0			
	Deaf/hearing impairment	1			
	Intellectual disabilities	7	56		
	Physical/motor disabilities	10			
	Health impairment	38			
	Enrolled in children's facilities/corrective institutions	76			
	Others	3,762			

*The number of children enrolled in schools for special needs education and special classes include all national, public and private institutions while those of resource rooms came from the data of public institution only.

(6-1) Trend of the enrollment rates belong to the classes for children with multiple disabilities counted by disabilitiy categories among all children in the schools - totals for national, public and private institutions -

①Elementary and lower secondary department

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total (%)	31.0	36.6	38.3	43.8	45.1	44.6	43.4	43.5	43.3	43.1	42.8	42.5	41.2	41.2	41.1	40.1
Visual impairment		26.6	30.9	35.4	41.9	43.3	43.8	42.3	44.5	46.4	46.0	47.0	48.8	46.5	44.3	45.3
Hearing impairment		12.7	12.7	15.7	17.9	17.4	17.9	17.9	18.4	19.4	18.8	19.6	26.1	24.9	24.7	24.8
Intellectual disabilities		34.1	34.0	37.2	37.6	36.7	34.9	34.9	34.3	34.3	34.3	35.9	34.9	34.5	34.2	33.3
Physical/motor disabilities		53.9	59.9	71.4	75.0	74.9	74.4	74.8	75.3	75.4	75.3	66.1	64.5	63.8	59.7	61.7
Health impairment		33.3	33.0	31.4	32.5	34.1	35.9	37.9	38.5	39.5	39.3	44.4	44.8	45.5	45.5	43.3

*The ratios are calculated by the type of major disability of the child after 2007, though they were calculated by the type of school they belonged to until 2006. Furthermore, in previous cases, cace count might be dubbled or more for the child with multiple disabilities.

②Upper secondary department

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total (%)			15.6	18.8	23.9	23.2	23.0	23.1	22.4	22.4	22.0	22.1	21.3	21.0	19.9	19.5
Visual impairment			7.2	8.0	7.6	7.9	8.3	8.0	7.5	7.7	7.9	8.1	15.8	15.6	15.4	16.8
Hearing impairment			5.3	6.0	7.9	7.3	7.2	8.0	8.9	9.5	7.9	8.0	18.8	18.3	16.9	15.9
Intellectual disabilities			9.0	13.6	17.9	17.1	16.5	16.8	16.2	16.5	16.3	17.8	17.4	16.8	15.9	15.6
Physical/motor disabilities			32.3	51.1	60.5	59.5	60.8	60.8	59.6	58.1	57.9	46.9	43.7	41.8	38.0	37.9
Health impairment			28.8	30.6	45.1	45.0	44.5	44.5	41.6	44.2	39.5	39.5	37.7	39.1	33.9	31.6

*The ratios are calculated by the type of major disability of the child after 2007, though they were calculated by the type of school they belonged to until 2006. Furthermore, in previous cases, cace count might be dubbled or more for the child with multiple disabilities.

(6-2) The number of children belong to the classes for children with multiple disabilities counted by disability categories and their enroll rates among all children in the schools - total for national, public and private institutions -

	Elementary and lower secondary dept.		Upper secondary dept.		Total	
	Number of children	Enrollment rate	Number of children	Enrollment rate	Number of children	Enrollment rate
Total	26,048	40.1%	11,660	19.5%	37,708	30.3%
(1) Visual impairment	540	48.3%	250	12.5%	790	25.3%
(2) Hearing impairment	666	19.7%	200	11.9%	866	17.1%
(3) Intellectual disabilities	9,785	28.6%	4,838	12.5%	14,623	20.1%
(4) Physical/motor disabilities	7,218	80.0%	2,585	69.3%	9,803	76.8%
(5) Health impairment	560	31.1%	359	39.5%	919	33.9%
(1)+(2)	-	-	-	-	-	-
(1)+(3)	31	19.9%	-	-	31	19.9%
(1)+(4)	-	-	-	-	-	-
(1)+(5)	5	45.5%	1	4.8%	6	18.8%
(2)+(3)	58	18.9%	26	8.3%	84	13.5%
(2)+(4)	-	-	-	-	-	-
(2)+(5)	-	-	-	-	-	-
(3)+(4)	4,770	48.4%	2,312	26.1%	7,082	37.8%
(3)+(5)	354	33.6%	194	22.5%	548	28.6%
(4)+(5)	911	80.2%	351	66.0%	1,262	75.7%
(1)+(2)+(3)	-	-	-	-	-	-
(1)+(2)+(4)	-	-	-	-	-	-
(1)+(2)+(5)	-	-	-	-	-	-
(1)+(3)+(4)	-	-	-	-	-	-
(1)+(3)+(5)	-	-	-	-	-	-
(1)+(4)+(5)	35	79.5%	10	50.0%	45	70.3%
(2)+(3)+(4)	-	-	-	-	-	-
(2)+(3)+(5)	22	26.8%	6	7.1%	28	16.9%
(2)+(4)+(5)	-	-	-	-	-	-
(3)+(4)+(5)	639	39.5%	287	23.3%	926	32.5%
(2)+(3)+(4)+(5)	23	29.1%	15	38.5%	38	32.2%
(1)+(3)+(4)+(5)	-	-	-	-	-	-
(1)+(2)+(4)+(5)	-	-	-	-	-	-
(1)+(2)+(3)+(5)	-	-	-	-	-	-
(1)+(2)+(3)+(4)	89	69.0%	21	44.7%	110	62.5%
(1)+(2)+(3)+(4)+(5)	342	40.3%	205	25.2%	547	32.9%

*This table is classified by the type of disabilities which each school specifies according to their school regulations.

*The enrollment rates were calculated as 'the number of children belonged to the classes for children with multiple disabilities' divided by 'the total number of children in the school'.

(7) Situations after graduation

①Situations after graduation from lower secondary department of schools for special needs education or classes for special needs education of lower secondary regular schools

- totals for national, public and private institutions -

		Number of graduate students	Number of students who entering higher education	Number of students who entering training institutions	Number of students who entering work life	Number of students who entering institutions or medical institutions	Others
Schools for special needs education	Total	9,103 (100.0%)	8,923 (98.0%)	25 (0.3%)	1 (0.01%)	81 (0.9%)	73 (0.8%)
	Visual impairment	168 (100.0%)	166 (98.8%)	-	-	-	2 (1.2%)
	Hearing impairment	418 (100.0%)	414 (99.0%)	- -	-	-	4 (1.0%)
	Intellectual disabilities	6,520 (100.0%)	6,415 (98.4%)	14 (0.2%)	1 (0.02%)	53 (0.8%)	37 (0.6%)
	Physical/motor disabilities	1,558 (100.0%)	1,538 (98.1%)	-	-	13 (0.8%)	17 (1.1%)
	Health impairment	439 (100.0%)	400 (91.1%)	11 (2.5%)	2 (0.5%)	15 (3.4%)	13 (3.0%)
Classes for special needs education		14,143 (100.0%)	13,251 (93.7%)	324 (2.3%)	112 (0.8%)	456 (3.2%)	

*Upper columns are for the number of students and lower columns are for its share (%) to the total. The total of all the rates above does not reach 100% because of the round off.

②Situations after graduation from upper secondary department of schools for special needs education

- totals for national, public and private institutions -

		Number of graduate students	Number of students who entering higher education	Number of students who entering training institutions	Number of students who entering work life	Number of students who entering institutions or medical institutions	Others
Schools for special needs education	Total	16,854 (100.0%)	480 (2.8%)	447 (2.7%)	4,096 (24.3%)	10,905 (64.7%)	926 (5.5%)
	Visual impairment	490 (100.0%)	113 (23.1%)	13 (2.7%)	80 (16.3%)	238 (48.6%)	46 (9.4%)
	Hearing impairment	534 (100.0%)	210 (39.3%)	46 (8.6%)	184 (34.5%)	79 (14.8%)	15 (2.8%)
	Intellectual disabilities	12,562 (100.0%)	77 (0.6%)	257 (2.0%)	3,440 (27.4%)	8,145 (64.8%)	634 (5.1%)
	Physical/motor disabilities	2,778 (100.0%)	47 (1.7%)	88 (3.2%)	332 (12.0%)	2,150 (77.4%)	161 (5.8%)
	Health impairment	490 (100.0%)	33 (6.7%)	43 (8.8%)	60 (12.2%)	293 (59.8%)	61 (12.4%)

*Upper columns are for the number of students and lower columns are for its share (%) to the total. The total of all the rates above does not reach 100% because of the round off.

(8-1) Trend of the enrollment rates in upper secondary department of schools for special needs education after graduation from lower secondary department of schools for special needs education or classes for special needs education of lower secondary regular schools - totals for national, public and private institutions -

[As of March in each year]

		1980	1985	1990	1995	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Schools for special needs education	Total	% 59.7	% 61.4	% 67.2	% 77.5	% 90.1	% 90.7	% 92.0	% 91.3	% 92.1	% 92.7	% 94.2	% 93.7	% 94.7	% 95.0	% 95.6
	Visual impairment	89.6	92.5	90.8	91.4	94.4	92.5	95.4	94.2	95.3	93.6	96.3	99.4	97.6	98.4	97.6
	Hearing impairment	94.8	96.8	95.6	95.2	95.4	94.5	93.8	96.6	94.6	96.9	96.0	92.0	96.9	94.2	95.7
	Intellectual disabilities	49.9	56.7	66.8	81.2	94.5	94.4	95.8	95.1	95.8	96.9	97.4	97.0	97.8	97.5	98.2
	Physical/ motor disabilities	71.9	74.5	78.1	84.6	94.1	95.5	95.0	94.3	95.5	94.6	96.7	96.7	96.9	95.9	9.6.3
	Health impairment	24.0	22.8	28.5	31.0	42.9	46.4	42.9	45.3	45.0	47.7	49.9	50.0	50.4	52.4	53.1
Classes for special needs education		11.5	25.9	39.7	52.1	62.2	64.9	73.1	62.6	64.6	64.8	65.5	70.2	69.7	70.0	67.3

(8-2) Trend of the rates of the students who going to the work from the upper secondary department of schools for special needs education (regular course) - totals for national, public and private institutions -

[As of March in each year]

Type		1980	1985	1990	1995	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Schools for special needs education	Total	% 42.7	% 33.0	% 35.7	% 29.2	% 22.0	% 20.5	% 19.4	% 20.4	% 20.5	% 22.7	% 23.1	% 24.3	% 23.7	% 23.6	% 24.3
	Visual impairment	30.2	25.5	27.6	18.3	12.6	13.3	11.9	11.9	17.0	14.4	12.4	15.3	19.1	21.4	16.3
	Hearing impairment	49.7	48.5	47.6	37.0	31.4	29.3	25.5	31.5	34.4	32.4	35.4	42.4	35.1	33.5	34.5
	Intellectual disabilities	57.9	37.8	40.7	33.4	25.5	23.7	22.4	23.2	23.2	25.3	25.8	27.1	26.4	26.7	27.4
	Physical/ motor disabilities	24.5	19.2	20.2	13.0	6.5	6.6	6.0	6.4	6.1	7.7	7.7	11.8	11.0	9.7	12.0
	Health impairment	5.8	8.5	18.6	18.0	8.0	6.1	10.1	13.0	10.3	15.4	18.5	16.4	12.1	11.0	12.2

(9) The status of homebound education in the upper secondary department
　of schools for special needs education - national, public and private institutions -

	Prefectures	Number of schools	Number of children
2001	All the prefectures	261	895
2002	All the prefectures	269	1,012
2003	All the prefectures	266	1,038
2004	All the prefectures	257	936
2005	All the prefectures	249	934
2006	All the prefectures	235	923
2007	All the prefectures	248	929
2008	All the prefectures	248	948
2009	All the prefectures	244	942
2010	All the prefectures	248	894
2011	All the prefectures	238	931

(10) Expenditure of school education per one child - public institution -　　　　　　　　[FY 2009]

Public	Expenditure of school education	
Schools for special needs education	7,879,125 ^{Yen}	Expenditure per child enrolled in schools for special needs education is
Elementary schools	905,251	8.7 times as high as those of children in ordinary elementary schools
Lower secondary schools	1,056,624	7.5 times as high as those of students in ordinary junior high schools

Practical Tasks and Approaches to School Evaluation Based on the Characteristics of Special Needs Schools

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Abstract: Guidelines for school evaluation issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology indicate that discussion of methods of school evaluation based on the characteristics of special needs schools is on the agenda. Special needs schools throughout the country have been built up school evaluation activity for many years in this country. Accordingly, we conducted a survey questionnaire of all special needs schools in Japan with the purpose of investigating the evaluation procedures used, based on the characteristics of special needs schools. Further, to examine the characteristics of special needs schools in detail, we analyzed the evaluation items on the self-evaluation sheets used by each school. It was found that characteristics of special needs schools were embedded in the school self-evaluation sheets while the evaluation items themselves provided only a general evaluation. The results suggest that in conducting self-evaluation of special needs schools, the evaluation items should be specific and have a clear focus on the actual condition of students with disabilities and the characteristics of the communities in which they live.

Key words: School evaluation, special needs school, self-evaluation

I. Introduction:
Background and purpose of this research

1. Existing efforts for school evaluation

With regards to the evaluation of schools in compulsory education in Japan, the origin of such public efforts can be found in the Standard for Elementary School Establishment, which came into effect in April 2002 and required each school to endeavor to conduct self-evaluation and publish the results. This standard called for the proactive provision of information to guardians, etc.

Then in March 2006, the School Evaluation Guideline for Compulsory Education was issued, mainly aimed at compulsory schools (elementary schools and lower secondary schools (including the lower division of secondary schools), and elementary schools and lower secondary schools for the blind, deaf and otherwise) run by cities, wards, towns and villages, and was provided as a reference for each school and provider. Furthermore, in order to promote school evaluations, provisions were made concerning the implementation of self-evaluations, evaluations by school-related parties and the publication of the results, and reporting of the evaluation results to providers in the School Education Law in June 2007 and the Enforcement Regulations for the School Education Law in October in the same year. Since then, based on these new provisions of laws and discussions at the Research Committee on the Promotion of School Evaluation, which was set up within the Primary and Secondary Education Bureau of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and

Technology (MEXT), the Guidelines for School Evaluation (Revised) were issued, which also referred to the methods of school evaluation for high schools and special needs schools. Then, on July 20, 2010, the Guidelines for School Evaluation (2010 revision) was issued, which kept the basic structure of the Guidelines for School Evaluation (Revised), but with added descriptions concerning the third-party evaluation of schools.

Even before school evaluations as a new structure started to be implemented, each school was setting targets at the beginning of the year, reflecting on them at the end of the year, and carrying out surveys to review the implementation. However, such existing "school evaluation" did not respond to current trends. In the existing method, priority targets and priority tasks for the year were set but did not require clarification of specific measures for improvement, which means the evaluation results were examined but the focus was not on the implementation process (Nagao, 2007). Therefore, it was unlikely to lead to moves for deliberate efforts to utilize the evaluation results and subsequent reflection in the next implementation process, and as a result, the effect of improving school approaches has been limited considering the amount of effort made to formulate the annual plan and end-of-year reflection on the achievements. This is not limited to compulsory schools, but is the same for special needs schools.

2. Special needs schools and school evaluation

With regards to school evaluations of special needs schools, the Guidelines for School Evaluation (2010 revision) stipulate as

Table 1. Efforts for school evaluation in Japan

Year	Month	Efforts	Details
2000	Mar.	National Council on Educational Reform was established under the Prime Minister	
	May	Emergency appeal was made by the chairman of the National Council on Educational Reform	
	Dec.	17 Proposals for educational reform were set forth by the National Council on Educational Reform	Three perspectives for educational reform: "Realizing education that fosters Japanese people with a rich sense of humanity" "Realizing an educational system that develops the talent of individuals and fosters creative leaders" "Creating new schools for the new age and realizing a system to support them"
2001	Jan.	MEXT Education Reform Plan for the 21st Century	"Create open schools by establishing a self-evaluation system and introducing the school councilor system"
2002	Mar.	MEXT established the "Standard for Elementary School Establishment" and the "Standard for Lower Secondary School Establishment"	"Elementary schools (lower secondary schools) must work to implement self-evaluation concerning their educational activities and other aspects of school management and disclose the results in order to improve their educational standards and achieve their aims."
	Apr.	"Rules for Self-Evaluation at Elementary and Lower Secondary Schools" came into force from April 1	
2002 – 2004		MEXT "Investigative Study on Establishment of School Evaluation System"	
2005	Oct.	Report of the MEXT Central Council for Education	"Redesigning Compulsory Education for a New Era"
	Dec.	Report of the MEXT Central Council for Education	"System for Promoting Special Needs Education"
2006	Mar.	MEXT issued "School Evaluation Guideline for Compulsory Education"	
	Mar.	MEXT carried out "Practical Research on Evaluation based on the School Evaluation Guideline"	
	Mar.	MEXT carried out "Practical Research on Third-Party Evaluation of Schools"	Third-party evaluation of schools was tested at 120 schools in 2006 and at 160 schools in 2007.
	Dec.	Fundamental Law of Education was revised	
2007		School Education Law was revised	Evaluation and provision of information at elementary schools was defined and also applied to special needs schools.
2008		Methods of third-party evaluation of kindergartens were deliberated	
		Guidelines for School Evaluation (2008 revision) was issued	"Response to characteristics of high schools and special needs schools"
2010		Guidelines for School Evaluation (2010 revision) was issued	"Items that should be included in the Guidelines for Third-Party Evaluation of Schools"

follows.

○ Special needs schools are expected to provide education equivalent to schools such as elementary and lower secondary schools, and under the law, provisions for schools such as elementary and lower secondary schools are applied to basic matters of school operation. Therefore, descriptions so far are valid in principle with regards to school evaluation and the provision of information.

○ However, since special needs schools provide specialist education in response to different levels of disability and development of pupils, etc., these schools have certain characteristics, including the necessity to deal with curriculum formulation, educational materials and tools, facilities and equipment, and collaboration with relevant bodies such as medical and welfare organizations in light of the actual condition of a wide spectrum of pupils, and the expectations to provide advice and support with regards to special needs education in response to requests from elementary and lower secondary schools (function as a resource center). Therefore, it is important in proceeding with establishing the way to evaluate schools as well as specific evaluation items and benchmarks to consider the appropriate methods in light of these characteristics.

○ Further deliberation is needed on a method of school evaluation that takes into consideration the characteristics of special needs schools, etc., and the findings should be reflected in these guidelines as necessary.

As shown above, existing guidelines are applicable, in principle, in implementing the evaluation of special needs schools and the provision of information, and the importance of proceeding with efforts taking into consideration the characteristics of special needs schools is evident. Deliberation on the methods of school evaluation in light of the characteristics of special needs schools is deeply relevant to this research.

3. Aim of this research

The School Education Law was revised in June 2007 in light of the need to review the achievements of educational activities by schools from the perspective of improving and developing school operations and the need for schools to achieve accountability and to advance cooperation with parents and the local community. Article 42 of the Law stipulates that schools should be evaluated, and based on the results of these evaluations, efforts should be made to improve school operations and raise educational standards. In addition, Article 43 of the Law provides for the proactive provision of information concerning educational activities and school operations. These provisions are also applied to special needs schools, but it is hard to say that the situation of

special needs schools are sufficiently understood in comparison to elementary and lower secondary schools. In particular, an important task is proceeding with discussions on methods of school evaluation that take into account the characteristics of special needs schools.

Therefore, this research focuses on the response to the characteristics of special needs schools with the aim of understanding the status of the implementation of school evaluation at those schools. Toward this end, we shall conduct a nationwide fact-finding survey by sending questionnaires to all special needs schools in Japan and analyze the self-evaluation sheet in order to understand the status of dealing with the characteristics of special needs schools.

II. Fact-finding survey on school evaluation at special needs schools

1. Aim of the survey

In order for special needs schools to utilize school evaluations to improve the management of the school and raise the educational standards, it is important to pay attention to the characteristics of special needs schools when establishing evaluation items and benchmarks.

Accordingly, a nationwide survey of special needs schools was conducted to determine the status of school evaluations, with a focus on the response to the characteristics of special needs schools.

2. Method
(1) Scope of survey

The survey was intended for special needs schools and their branches across Japan. Branch classes were excluded from the survey as schools are evaluated by school.

There were 850 prefectural special needs schools, 120 municipal special needs schools, 45 special needs schools affiliated with national universities, and 14 privately-run special needs schools for a total of 1,029 schools surveyed, of which 938 schools were main schools and 91 schools were branch schools.

(2) Survey method
1) Implementation procedure

The survey was conducted by sending a questionnaire by post. The following procedure was followed in conducting the survey.

With regards to prefectural special needs schools, the questionnaire was sent directly to the schools, and at the same time a notice letter was sent to the board of education of the prefecture. With regards to municipal special needs schools, the questionnaire was also sent directly to the schools with a notice letter to the

board of education of the municipal area. With regards to special needs schools affiliated with national universities and privately-run special needs schools, the questionnaire was sent directly to the schools without a notice letter to the school providers.

2) Survey period

The questionnaire was sent out in the second half of November 2008. The survey period was from December 1, 2008 to January 9, 2009. The survey base date was November 1, 2008.

(3) Survey content

The questionnaire contained survey items in the following five main areas in order to understand the status of school evaluations at special needs schools and to find implementation examples of utilizing the evaluation results. Items in common with school evaluations at elementary and lower secondary schools were omitted, and items that cater to the characteristics of special needs schools were included.

1. Status of implementing school evaluations at special needs schools

2. Responses in the self-evaluation to items that are characteristic to school evaluations of special needs schools

3. System of utilizing school evaluations in the management of special needs schools and the status of utilizing school evaluations to obtain specific examples of application of the results

4. Other (disclosure of school evaluations, collaboration with guardians, evaluations concerning boarding houses, etc.)

3. Results

(1) Number of responses

736 schools responded, of which valid responses were obtained from 735 schools and invalid responses were received from one school. Eight schools carried out the school evaluation for the main and branch schools together, thus the number of schools covered by the survey was 1,021. The response rate was 72.0%.

(2) Results by item

1) Status of implementing school evaluations at special needs schools

The largest number of schools (411 schools) carried out the
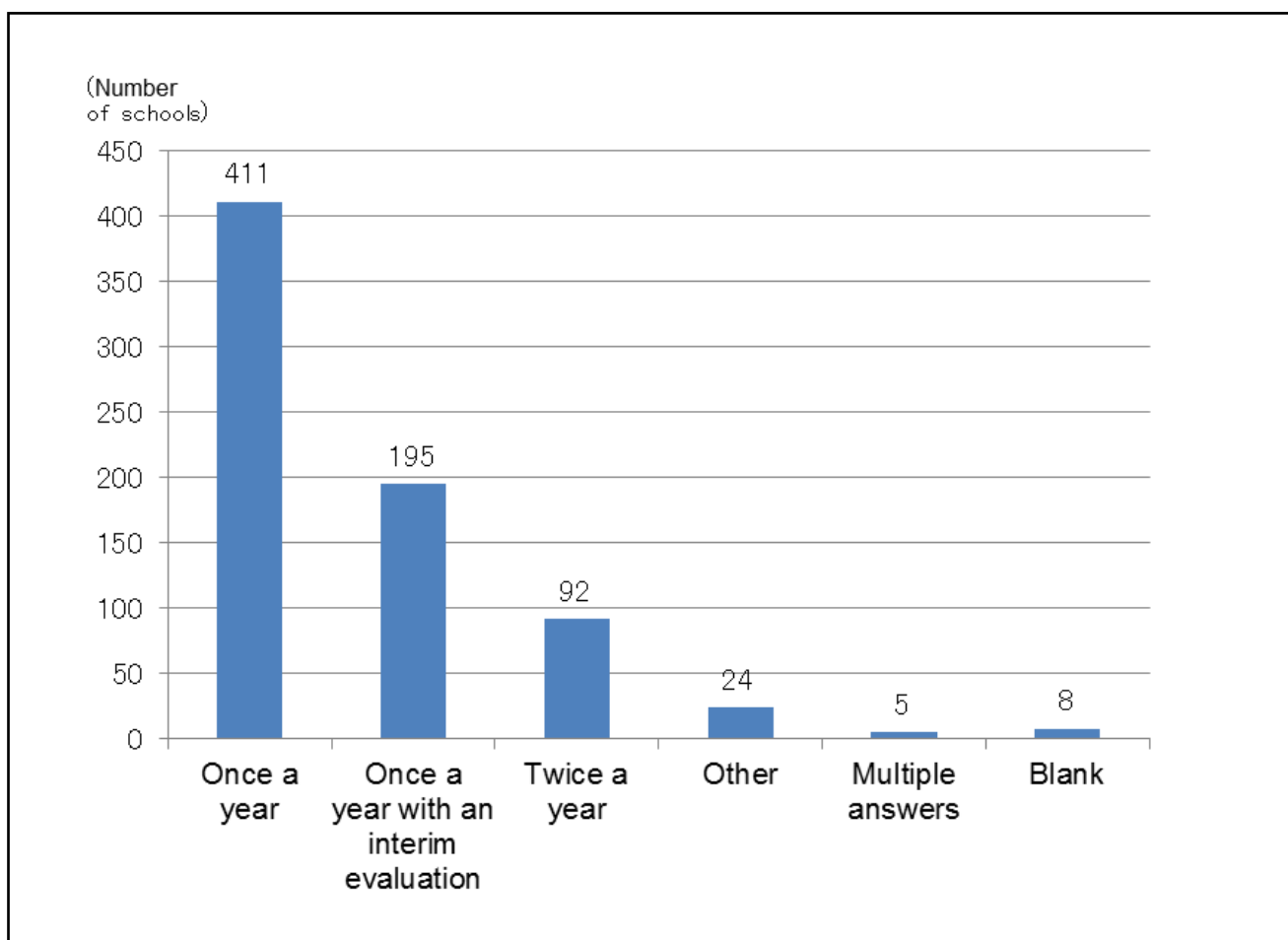
Figure 1. Frequency of school evaluations (n=735)

school evaluation once a year, followed by 195 schools which carried out annual school evaluations plus an interim evaluation. 92 schools carried out the evaluation twice a year (Figure 1).

2) Self-evaluation of school at special needs schools

Efforts to self-evaluate the school at special needs schools were surveyed from five perspectives: "Evaluation concerning the special needs school," "Evaluation concerning the expertise of the school personnel in special needs education," "Evaluation relating to the effectiveness of special needs education," "Evaluation concerning the relationship between the special needs school and the local community," and "Evaluation concerning the development of systems at the special needs school."

(1) Evaluation items in the school evaluation relating to special needs schools

In accordance with descriptions such as "Promoting special needs education," respondents were asked to answer regarding the status of implementing the following ten items: a. Individualized

teaching plans, b. Individualized education support plans, c. Functioning as a resource center, d. Special needs education coordinators, e. Joint activities and learning, f. School committees, g. Collaboration with relevant organizations, h. Community liaison council, i. Transition support, and j. Improving the environment (Figure 2).

a. Individualized teaching plans

459 schools (62.4%) evaluated individualized teaching plans using broad items only, 144 schools (19.6%) used detailed items for evaluation, and 124 schools (16.9%) had no evaluation item.

b. Individualized education support plans

419 schools (57.0%) evaluated individualized education support plans using broad items only, 118 schools (16.1%) used detailed items for evaluation, and 189 schools (25.7%) had no evaluation item. Overall, more than 70% of the schools had individualized teaching plans as an evaluation item.

c. Functioning as a resource center

The function of special needs schools as a resource center may
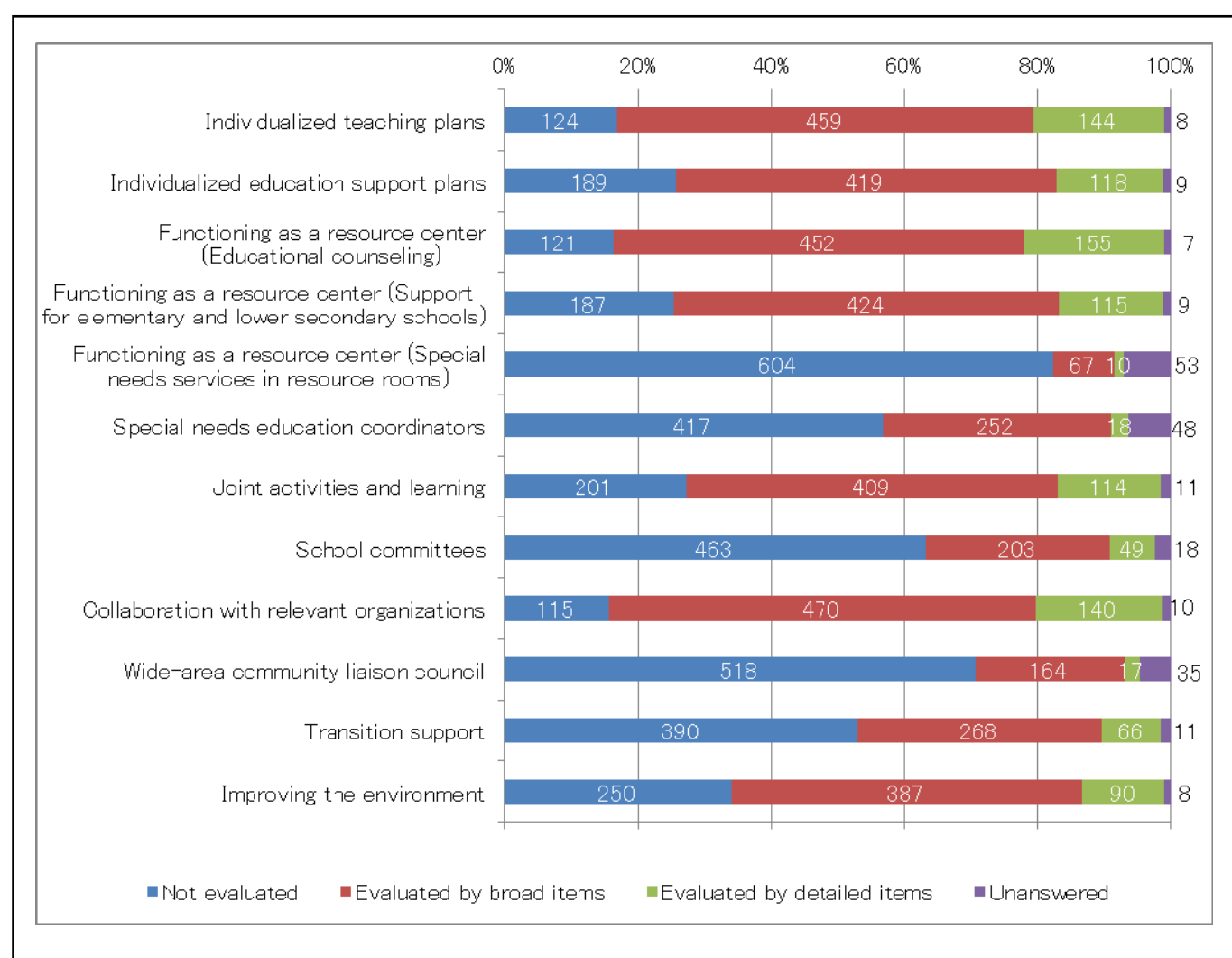
Figure 2. Status of implementing evaluation concerning characteristics of special needs schools

include: provision of consultation to the parties concerned, teachers who are responsible for the child, and schools (educational consultation); provision of support in training of teachers at elementary and lower secondary schools and holding training workshops; provision of information to elementary and lower secondary schools; provision of facilities, equipment, teaching materials, and tools to elementary and lower secondary schools; provision of consultation to children and guardians; and collaboration with medical, health, welfare and labor organizations to enhance the school's function as a resource center. These are sorted in this research, and the response status is surveyed from the three perspectives of (i) educational counseling, (ii) support for elementary and lower secondary schools (on-site support outside special needs schools) and (iii) special needs services in resource rooms (visits to special needs schools).

(i) Educational counseling

452 schools (61.5%) evaluated educational counseling using broad items only, 155 schools (21.1%) used detailed items for evaluation, and 121 schools (16.5%) had no evaluation item. Overall, more than 80% of the schools had educational counseling as an evaluation item.

(ii) Support for elementary and lower secondary schools

424 schools (57.7%) evaluated support for elementary and lower secondary schools using broad items only, 115 schools (15.6%) used detailed items for evaluation, and 187 schools (25.4%) had no evaluation item. Overall, more than 70% of the schools had support for elementary and lower secondary schools as an evaluation item.

(iii) Special needs services in resource rooms

67 schools (9.1%) evaluated special needs services in resource rooms using broad items only, 10 schools (7.2%) used detailed items for evaluation, and 604 schools (82.5%) had no evaluation item. One response from one school was unclear.

d. Special needs education coordinators

252 schools (34.3%) evaluated special needs education coordinators using broad items only, 18 schools (2.4%) used detailed items for evaluation, and 417 schools (56.7%) had no evaluation item. Overall, just under 40% of the schools had special needs education coordinators as an evaluation item. It can be assumed that special needs education coordinators are not included as an evaluation item because special needs education coordination is often provided by individuals and the school evaluation is not for the evaluation of individuals.

e. Joint activities and learning

409 schools (55.6%) evaluated joint activities and learning using broad items only, 114 schools (15.5%) used detailed items for evaluation, and 201 schools (27.3%) had no evaluation item. Overall, more than 70% of the schools had joint activities and

learning as an evaluation item.

f. School committees

203 schools (27.7%) evaluated school committees using broad items only, and 49 schools (6.7%) used detailed items for evaluation. Answers from two schools were unclear. 463 schools (63.2%) had no evaluation item. Overall, approximately 30% of the schools had school committees as an evaluation item. Considering the school structure, the ratio of schools which did not evaluate school committees was high.

g. Collaboration with relevant organizations

470 schools (63.9%) evaluated collaboration with relevant organizations using broad items only, 140 schools (19.0%) used detailed items for evaluation, and 115 schools (15.6%) had no evaluation item. Overall, more than 80% of the schools had collaboration with relevant organizations as an evaluation item.

h. Community liaison council

164 schools (22.3%) evaluated community liaison council using broad items only, 17 schools (2.3%) used detailed items for evaluation, and 518 schools (70.6%) had no evaluation item. There was one unclear answer from one school. Overall, approximately 20% of the schools had community liaison council as an evaluation item.

i. Transition support

268 schools (36.5%) evaluated transition support using broad items only, 66 schools (9.0%) used detailed items for evaluation, and 390 schools (53.1%) had no evaluation item. Overall, just under 50% of the schools had transition support as an evaluation item.

j. Improving the environment

387 schools (52.7%) evaluated improving the environment using broad items only, 90 schools (12.2%) used detailed items for evaluation, and 250 schools (34.0%) had no evaluation item. Overall, more than 60% of the schools had improving the environment as an evaluation item.

k. Items other than the above

With regards to other self-evaluation items suited to the characteristics of special needs schools, the largest number of schools (96 schools) evaluated their schools in terms of educational targets and teaching. This was followed by school evaluation in terms of organization, management, risk management, and health and safety, which was carried out by 62 schools. The third evaluation item was academic and career counseling and collaboration with guardians and the local community.

(2) Evaluation concerning the expertise of school personnel in the special needs education

Special needs schools are expected to provide more expert advice about various disabilities as a core part of special needs

education in the community and thus personnel at special needs schools are expected to further improve their expertise. Therefore, the status of evaluating the expertise of the teachers was surveyed from the perspective of specialist understanding and teaching skills relating to the disabilities concerned, and specialist understanding and teaching skills relating to disabilities in general.

a. Specialist understanding of the disabilities concerned

448 schools (61.0%) evaluated specialist understanding of the disabilities concerned using broad items only, 117 schools (15.9%) used detailed items for evaluation, and 159 schools (21.6%) had no evaluation item. Overall, just under 80% of the schools had specialist understanding of the disabilities concerned as an evaluation item.

b. Teaching skills relating to the disabilities concerned

447 schools (60.8%) evaluated teaching skills relating to the disabilities concerned using broad items only, 117 schools (15.9%) used detailed items for evaluation, and 160 schools (21.8%) had no evaluation item. Overall, just under 80% of the schools had teaching skills relating to the disabilities concerned as an

evaluation item.

c. Specialist understanding of disabilities in general

316 schools (43.0%) evaluated specialist understanding of disabilities in general using broad items only, 47 schools (6.4%) used detailed items for evaluation, and 362 schools (49.3%) had no evaluation item. Overall, about half of the schools had specialist understanding of disabilities in general as an evaluation item.

d. Teaching skills relating to disabilities in general

304 schools (41.4%) evaluated specialist teaching skills relating to disabilities in general using broad items only, 42 schools (5.7%) used detailed items for evaluation, and 379 schools (51.6%) had no evaluation item. Overall, about half of the schools had teaching skills relating to disabilities in general as an evaluation item.

e. Networking with other schools and other areas

345 schools (47.0%) evaluated networking with other schools and other areas using broad items only, and 72 schools (9.8%) used detailed items for evaluation. Overall, just under 60% of the schools had networking with other schools and other areas as an evaluation item.
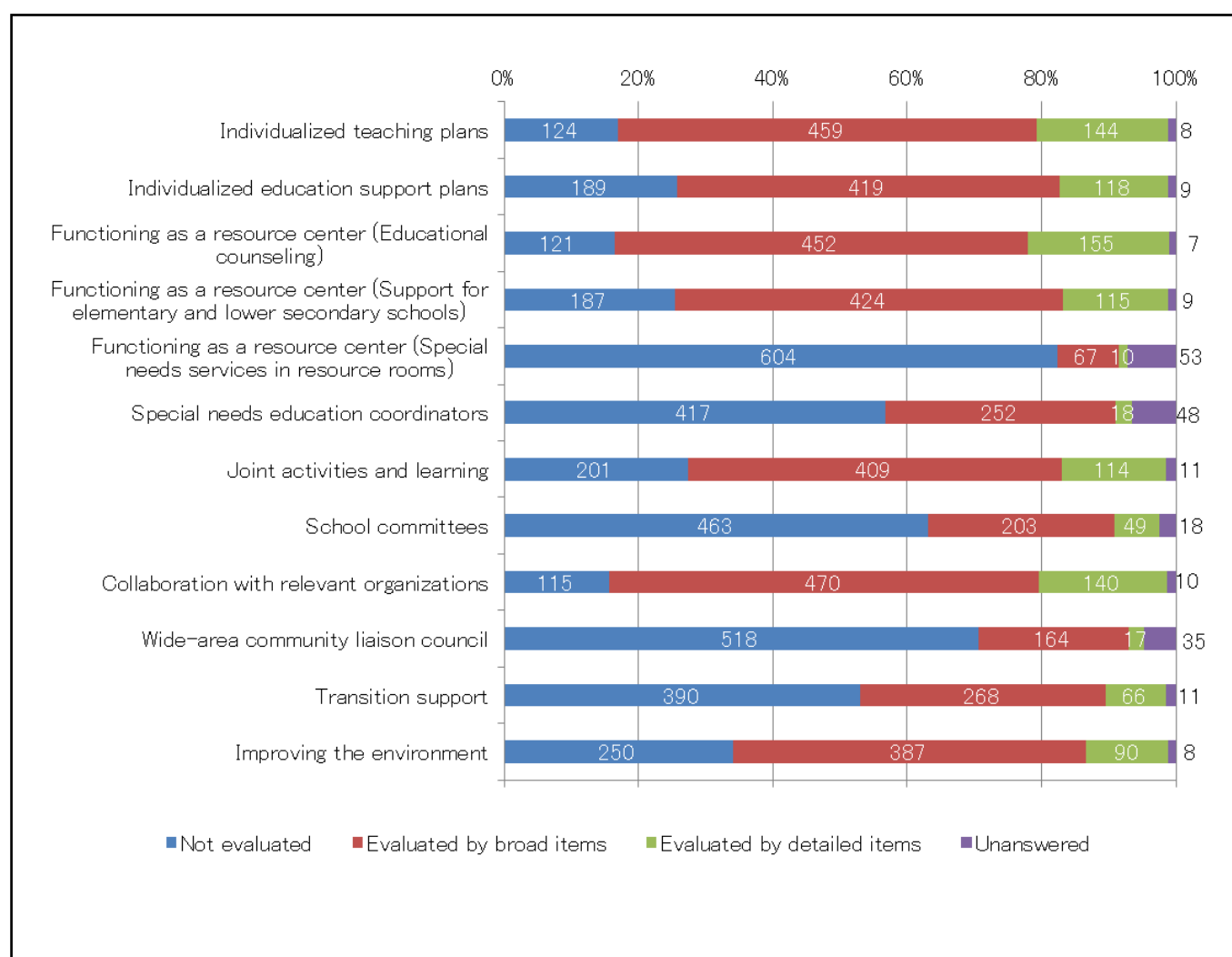
Figure 3. Status of implementing evaluation concerning the expertise of personnel at special needs schools

f. Other perspectives concerning the expertise of teachers at special needs schools

Some schools had "Training system" and "Improving the ratio of certificate holders for teaching at special needs schools" as other perspectives. The content of the training included "career education" and "medical care". "Ability to grasp the status of each pupil" and "Ability to structure lessons" was also mentioned by some other schools.

(3) Evaluation items concerning effects of special needs school education

a. Concerning effects of education on pupils

The following responses were obtained as evaluation items concerning the effects of special needs school education.

・Perspective concerning academic abilities obtained by pupils

・Perspective concerning teaching responding to individuals such as whether individualized teaching plans are reflected in the lessons

・Perspective concerning motivation in life and QOL of the pupils

・Perspective concerning independence in day-to-day living

b. Concerning graduates

As evaluation items relating to the effect of special needs school education, the following responses were mainly obtained with regards to specific evaluation items for understanding the status of the graduates.

・Perspective concerning aftercare

・Perspective concerning employment rate, percentage of those

going onto further education and retention rate

・Perspective concerning obtaining qualifications

・Perspective concerning alumni activities

・Perspective concerning collaboration after graduation

Compared to the evaluation of the effects of education on pupils, the evaluation of graduates had more perspectives that can measure changes in concrete terms. Some schools evaluated collaboration with other relevant organizations.

(4) Evaluation items concerning the relationship of the special needs school and the local community

Building a close relationship with the local community is an important aspect of special needs schools. The status of responding to this through self-evaluation was as follows (Figure 4).

a. Role in local community activities

254 schools (34.6%) evaluated role in local community activities using broad items only, 43 schools (5.9%) used detailed items for evaluation, and 423 schools (57.6%) had no evaluation item. Overall, approximately 40% of the schools had role in local community activities as an evaluation item.

b. Participation in local events

186 schools (25.3%) evaluated participation in local events using broad items only, and 24 schools (3.3%) used detailed items for evaluation. Overall, approximately 30% of the schools had participation in local events as an evaluation item.

c. Open school events

266 schools (36.2%) evaluated open school events using broad
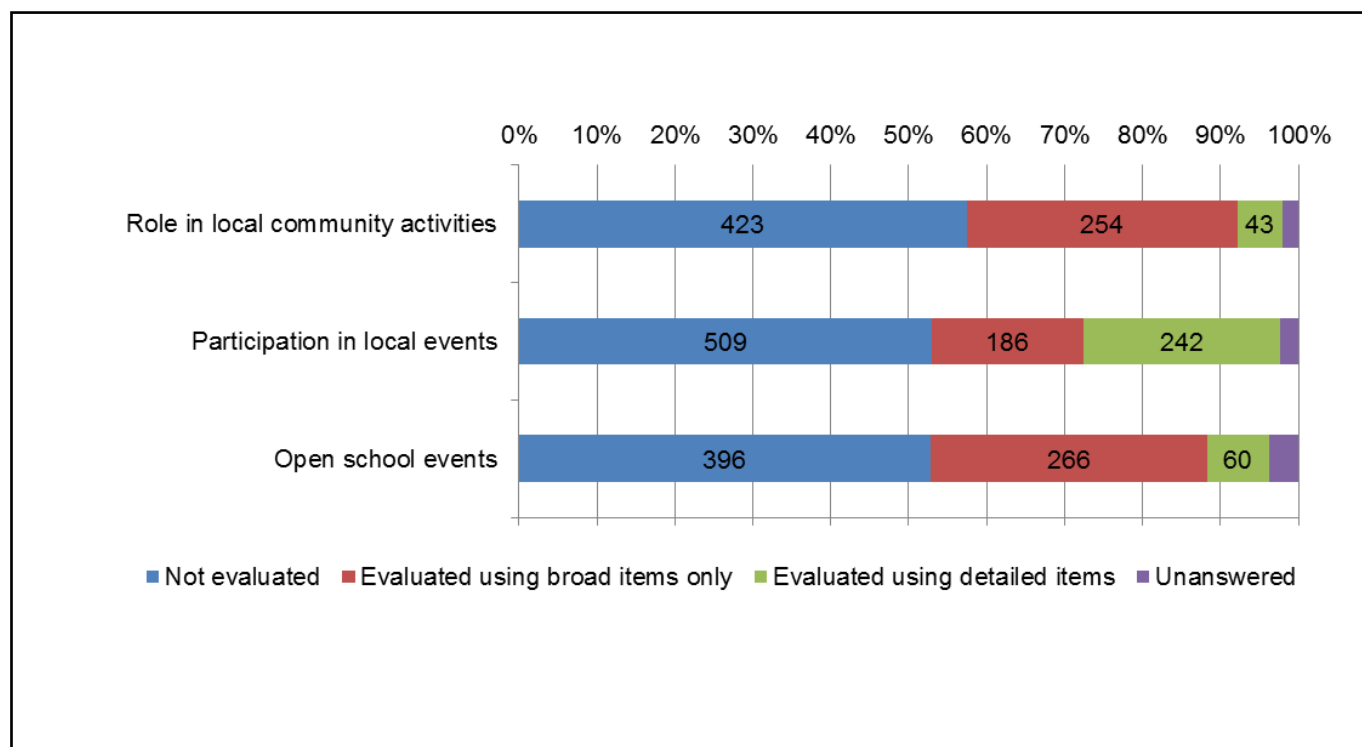
Figure 4. Status of implementing evaluation concerning openness of the school

items only, and 60 schools (8.2%) used detailed items for evaluation. Overall, approximately 40% of the schools had open school events as an evaluation item.

3) Evaluation by school-related parties and third-party evaluations

(1) Evaluation by school-related parties

The ratio of implementing evaluation by school-related parties was high at more than 80%. When asked about the persons who were entrusted with evaluating the schools which implemented evaluation by related parties, more than 70% of the schools entrusted guardians and those involved in healthcare, labor and welfare.

According to the survey on the status of implementing school evaluation in 2008 by MEXT, 36,777 schools (70.4%) out of 53,246 public and private schools across Japan (excluding universities and specialized vocational high schools) implemented evaluation by school-related parties. This ratio was exceeded by

the implementation ratio by school-related parties among special needs schools.

(2) Third-party evaluations

More than 80% of the schools did not implement third-party evaluations. Third-party evaluation is included in the Guidelines for School Evaluation; however, the implementation of third-party evaluations was not clearly defined at the time of conducting the survey, and this may have been reflected in the ratio.

4) Disclosure of evaluation results

(1) Disclosure method

a. Internal disclosure

Internal disclosure of evaluation results was carried out at many schools (701 schools). Only 9 schools (1.3%) replied that the results were not disclosed internally. In terms of the disclosure method, the highest number of schools (197 schools) disclosed the results in writing, followed by via the website and in writing (182 schools), via the website, in writing, and verbally (107 schools), and in writing and verbally (98 schools).
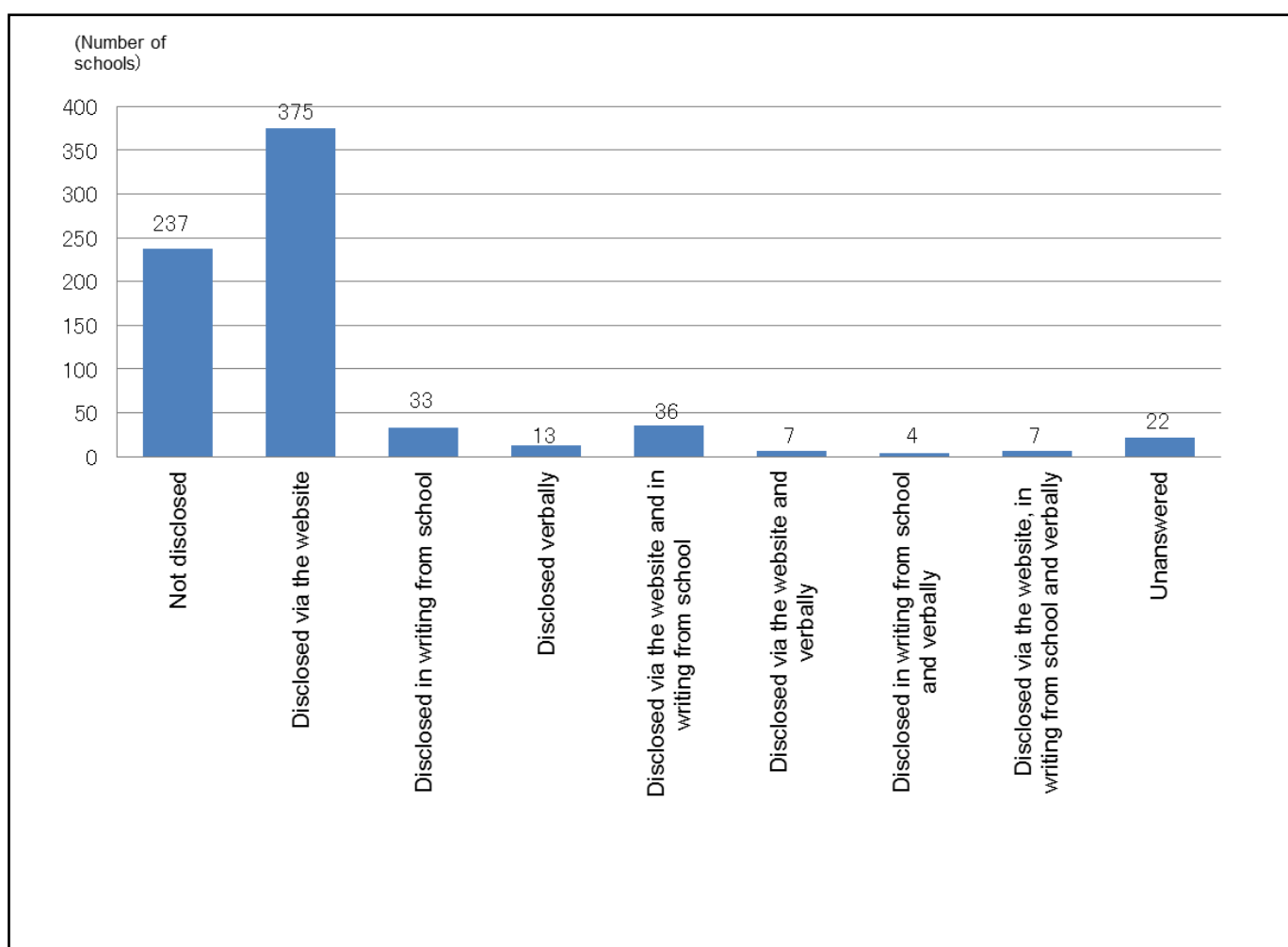
Figure 5. Status of disclosure of the evaluation results

b. Disclosure to school-related parties

Disclosure to school-related parties was also carried out at many schools (690 schools). Only 26 schools (3.6%) did not disclose the results to school-related parties. In terms of the disclosure method, the highest number of schools (184 schools) disclosed the results via the website and in writing from the school, followed by in writing from the school (193 schools), via the website, in writing and verbally (92 schools), and in writing and verbally (91 schools).

c. Disclosure to local residents

475 schools disclosed the evaluation results to local residents, whereas 237 schools did not, which accounted for 33.3% of all the schools. This indicated that the view on disclosure to local residents differed by school and region. In terms of the disclosure method, an overwhelming number of schools (375 schools) made the disclosure via the website, followed by disclosure in writing (33 schools) and via the website and in writing (36 schools)(Figure 5).

5) Collaboration with guardians, etc.

Considering that opinions and demands from guardians and local residents may highlight issues, the Guidelines refer to the importance of reflecting these issues in targets and educational plans. The status of response from this perspective was surveyed.

a. Collecting guardians' opinions

702 schools collected opinions from guardians. This accounted for 95.6% of the total. Only 23 schools (3.1%) did not collect opinions. Overall, most schools collected opinions from guardians.

b. Surveying guardians

Of the schools which collect opinions from guardians, 655 schools (92.8%) created surveys for guardians. It can be concluded that most schools collected opinions by surveying guardians.

6) Evaluation concerning boarding houses

After confirming the presence or absence of boarding houses, schools with boarding houses were asked about evaluation concerning boarding houses. 259 schools (35.2%) had boarding houses.

211 schools (81.5%) of the schools with boarding houses had evaluation items concerning boarding houses. 46 schools (17.8%) did not evaluate boarding houses. Many schools with boarding houses included evaluation concerning boarding houses in the school evaluation items. Some schools responded that they provided comments sections for opinions on the school and ensured anonymity to help implement the evaluation of boarding houses.

4. Discussions

As self-evaluation items at special needs schools, 70 to 80% of the schools included individualized teaching plans, individualized support plans, educational counseling and support to elementary and lower secondary schools, joint activities and learning,

collaboration with relevant organizations, and improvement of environment. Many schools included the characteristics of special needs schools in the school evaluation; however, the evaluation was limited to a broad level evaluation, and thus it was inferred that they might not have a system for reflecting evaluation results directly into improving the school. In addition, some of the characteristics that are deemed highly important for special needs schools, such as special needs education coordinators, were not reflected in the evaluation items well. A review of self-evaluation from the perspective of school evaluation that contributes to the improvement of schools is desired. Since system of school evaluations was prepared for compulsory schools, it is at the stage where it needs to be improved for special needs schools and high schools, and further adjustments are expected.

With regards to the expertise of the personnel at special needs schools, partly in response to suggestions from various directions (for example, a report by the Central Education Council in January 2008), proactive responses were confirmed in terms of school evaluation as well. The quality of evaluation will be an agenda item for the future. On the other hand, only about half of the schools had evaluation items concerning networking with other schools and relevant organizations. From a similar perspective, more than half of the schools did not have an evaluation item concerning the relationship with the local community. From the perspective of functioning as a resource center in the area, a proactive response is deemed necessary for this evaluation item.

With regards to evaluation by school-related parties, more than 80% of the schools implemented such evaluations, of which more than 70% designated guardians and those involved in healthcare, labor, and welfare, respectively, as evaluation commissioners. This appears to reflect the intention of the school evaluation.

With regards to third-party evaluation, more than 80% of the schools did not implement such evaluations. It became clear that third-party evaluation had not been fully implemented at the time of the survey. However, third-party evaluation is being reviewed in terms of the Guidelines and coordination with the Board of Education is also required, thus it is partially dependent on future developments (MEXT, 2010).

With regards to the disclosure of school evaluation results, most schools disclosed the results, and the most popular method was in writing from the school and via the website. In addition, most schools created a questionnaire survey for guardians. It was recognized that many schools were aiming to create an open school, and the challenge will be how to bring in opinions from outsiders and guardians.

Among schools with boarding houses, more than 80% of the schools had evaluation items concerning boarding houses. Meanwhile, there were some schools, though not many, which did not disclose the results to the local community. Improvement is desired from the perspective of creating schools that are open to the local community.

III. Status of reflecting the characteristics of special needs schools on the self-evaluation sheet and suggestions

1. Problem areas and goals

The Guidelines for School Evaluation presented the points to keep in mind in setting evaluation items and benchmarks (MEXT, 2010).

・Should be specific and clear for achieving priority targets and selected to enable conscious efforts by teachers.

・Specific evaluation items and benchmarks should be established by each school at their discretion, but it is important to establish evaluation items and benchmarks that are needed in light of priority targets, etc.

Self-evaluation items that reflect the characteristics of special needs schools should be established according to the above principles; however, school evaluation with particular attention to the characteristics of special needs schools does not have a long history compared to elementary and lower secondary schools, thus sufficient materials concerning establishing self-evaluation items are not available.

In order to ensure appropriate evaluation, the appropriateness of the evaluation approach–the meta-evaluation–is needed.

As the standard for the meta-evaluation of evaluations, four evaluation standards of "utility," "feasibility," "propriety," and "accuracy" can be considered (Stufflebeam, 1999). One of the check items for effectiveness is "the appropriateness of evaluation questions" (Minamoto, 2009).

In this research, elements are extracted from the descriptions of questions concerning the items relating to the characteristics of special needs schools on self-evaluation sheets in actual use by schools and categorized from the perspective of the appropriateness of the self-evaluation sheet.

2. Methods
(1) Targets

In the nationwide survey in AY 2008 concerning school evaluations, each school was asked to provide a copy of the self-evaluation sheet actually in use at the school. Of the 737 schools that responded, the school evaluation sheet was supplied by 665 schools.

In order to understand the status of responding to the characteristics of special needs schools from the evaluation items, the items on the school evaluation sheets were organized and analysed in the following procedure.

(2) Procedure

With regards to items on the self-evaluation sheets for AY 2008, which were supplied by special needs schools across Japan, all descriptions of the evaluation items on the self-evaluation sheets of all 665 schools were analysed in detail, and evaluation items that refer to the following five aspects were extracted.

i.   Cooperation between different departments

ii.   Response to individually-tailored teaching

iii.   Improving expertise for various disabilities

iv.   Response to functioning as a resource center

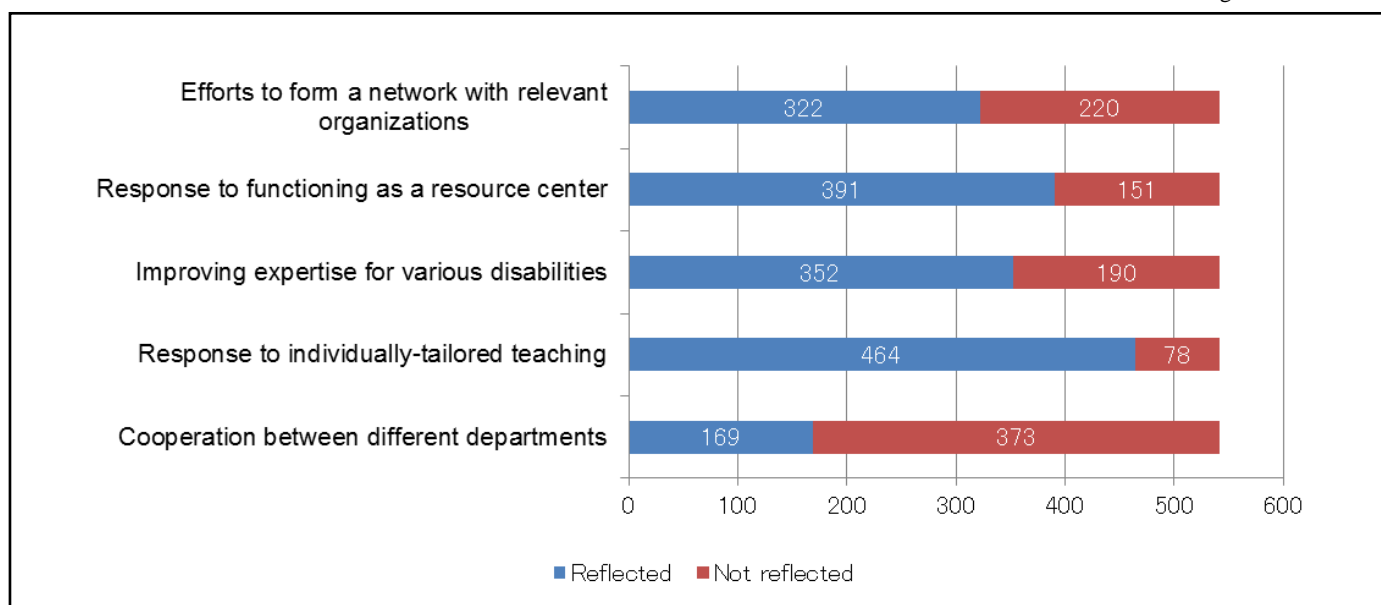v.   Efforts to form a network with relevant organizations

Figure 6. Reflecting the characteristics of special needs schools on the school evaluation sheet

Table 2. Specific perspectives for evaluating cooperation between departments

Evaluation item	Evaluation perspective
(1) Interaction with pupils across departments	"Observing" and "talking to pupils" in other departments
(2) Observation of lessons in other departments	Observe lessons, etc. in other departments
(3) Interaction between different departments	Interactive activities between pupils through visiting other departments
(4) Handover	Handover across departments
(5) Teaching plans across departments	Cooperation between different departments in formulating individualized teaching plans and individualized education support plans
(6) Consistent activities	Developing consistent educational activities with emphasis on vertical continuity from elementary to lower secondary to upper secondary school

In addition, self-evaluation sheets that contain more than three of these aspects were extracted for further analysis in detail.

These five aspects were determined by referencing "Survey research on the promotion of school evaluation based on the characteristics of high schools and special needs schools" (Mitsubishi Research Institute, 2010), sponsored by MEXT.

3. Results

(1) Status of reflecting the characteristics of special needs schools on the school evaluation sheet

The status of reflecting the characteristics of special needs schools on the school evaluation sheet is shown in Figure 6. 169 schools clearly included cooperation between different departments in the self-evaluation sheet. This accounted for only 25.4% of the schools which provided the evaluation sheets.

Response to individually-tailored teaching for each pupil included individualized teaching plans and individualized education support plans, and 464 schools included this in the self-evaluation sheet, which was 69.8% of the schools which provided the evaluation sheet. 352 schools included improving expertise for various disabilities in the self-evaluation sheet, which was 52.9% of the schools which provided the evaluation sheets.

391 schools included response to functioning as a resource center, which was 58.7% of the schools which provided the evaluation sheets.

322 schools included forming a network with relevant organizations, which was 48.4% of the schools which provided the evaluation sheets.

(2) Extraction of self-evaluation sheet that reflect the characteristics of special needs schools and analysis thereof

Based on the above results, self-evaluation sheets that include more than three aspects concerning the characteristics of special needs education were extracted, resulting in sheets from 77 schools. These evaluation sheets are referred to as "characteristic evaluation sheets" for descriptive purposes, and these sheets were grouped using the KJ method.

1) Cooperation between departments

Out of the 77 schools, only 5 schools included "cooperation between departments" for evaluation in detail. It was observed that the schools that included "cooperation between departments" were limited. Specific perspectives to evaluate cooperation between departments are shown in Table 2.

2) Response to individually-tailored teaching

Attention to detail is required to respond to individual needs in special needs education, and thus evaluation from such a perspective should be given importance as characteristic to special needs schools. The schools which evaluated this aspect included evaluation items as follows.

a. Individually-tailored response

This item was organized using the following keywords: improve academic achievements, develop teaching materials, shared understanding of status of each pupil, understand the current status of pupils, response to pupils, response to worsening condition, improve lessons, and team approach (Table 3).

b. Utilizing individualized teaching plans and individualized education support plans

The main content was concerned with whether planning, implementation and evaluation of individually-tailored teaching are promoted. More specifically, the descriptions extracted included: planned efforts, organizational and planned support, involvement of guardians, cooperation with relevant organizations, utilization at boarding houses, formulate and utilize individualized transition support plans, understand the reality of the situation in detail, and response to human rights (Table 4).

Table 3. Individually-tailored teaching

Evaluation item	Evaluation perspective
(1) Improved academic achievement	・Lessons that utilize individualized teaching plans were promoted and each pupil's academic achievement was steadily improved.
(2) Development of teaching materials	・Teaching materials are developed and utilized creatively to suit each pupil's disability and development level. ・Study environment is prepared to suit each pupil's disability and development level.
(3) Shared understanding of the current status of each pupil	・Opportunities are available to check each pupil's study status among teachers based on "individualized teaching plans". ・Opportunities are available to check each pupil's study status and life at school between teachers.
(4) Understanding of the current status of pupils	・Teaching methods and formats are researched in view of life beyond school, and even better support is provided to suit the individual's status. ・Necessary information is exchanged smoothly with organizations before joining the school and after graduating from the school while taking into consideration the protection of personal information. ・Efforts are made to teach in response to the development stage and the level of disability of the pupil. ・Attention is paid to creating a learning environment that is appropriate to the disability status. ・Attention is paid to individual and group learning activities in the lesson. ・Attention is paid to encourage being motivated to learn and voluntary activities. ・Pupils who have stumbled in learning are not overlooked and efforts are made to teach them with care. ・Attention is paid to giving pupils a sense of accomplishment.
(5) Response to pupils	・Pupils are taught with the sense of empathic understanding in the spirit of counseling.
(6) Response to aggravation condition	・Efforts are made to enhance education in response to individual needs as diversification, aggravation and overlapping of disabilities.
(7) Improved lessons	・Efforts are made to enhance teaching how to relate to other people and in a group, improve and contrive ways to communicate, and improve self-fulfillment abilities and adaptability to social living.
(8) Team approach	・According to "team approach" (teaching method) based on "individualized teaching plans", lessons that are appropriate to each individual's needs are provided. ・Efforts are made to take advantage of team teaching in teaching.

3) Improving expertise

The self-evaluation sheets of schools which have characteristic practices for improving expertise were organized using the KJ method as follows.

a. Improve expertise in practical aspects

More specifically, this refers to improving practical skills through research on the learning-teaching process and accumulating research findings (Table 5).

b. Training to improve expertise

Descriptions covered included improving skills in specialist areas through training, expertise to enable teaching that is appropriate to the characteristics of each disability, holding briefing sessions and sharing information, training at own school, utilizing external study groups and workshops, and training systems for newly-recruited teachers (Table 6).

Table 4. Utilization of individualized teaching plans and individualized education support plans

Evaluation item	Evaluation perspective
(1) Planned efforts	・Annual education guidance plan is formulated based on individualized education support plans, implemented and evaluated. ・Explanatory meetings and surveys are conducted to promote understanding and the establishment of individualized support education plans and individualized teaching plans.
(2) Organizational and planned support	・Organizational and planned support are provided based on "individualized education support plans" and "future direction support record". ・Entire staff has gained a better understanding of the formulation of individualized education support plans.
(3) Involvement of guardians	・ Opportunities to discuss "individualized education support plans" and "individualized teaching plans" with guardians are available. ・Subjects, etc. are individualized by using individualized teaching plans and taught while gaining a common understanding with guardians.
(4) Cooperation with relevant organizations	・The school collaborates with relevant organizations in response to individualized transition support plans.
(5) Utilization at boarding houses	・"Individualized education support plans" are formulated in cooperation between the school and the boarding houses, and efforts are made to improve the quality of boarding houses.
(6) Formulation and utilization of individualized transition support plans	・Activities for experiencing the future beyond school are arranged in a planned manner while utilizing the individualized transition support plans, and support for the future is enhanced to suit individual pupils.
(7) Understanding the reality of the situation	・Curriculum that is appropriate to the current status of each pupil is prepared. ・Based on individualized education support plans and individualized teaching plans, pupils receive a fine-tuned education according to their individual levels of disability, development status, enthusiasm to learn and progress in learning.
(8) Human rights	・Based on individualized teaching plans, efforts are made to provide fine-tuned and planned teaching appropriate for the current status of each pupil from the perspective of human rights education.

Table 5. Improve expertise in the practical aspect

Evaluation item	Evaluation perspective
(1) Improved practical skills through research on learning-teaching process	・Pupils are taught appropriately according to each pupil's current status and educational needs. ・Teaching is fine tuned to suit individuals. ・Challenges faced by pupils are understood appropriately and teaching materials are prepared accordingly, and these are utilized in lessons. ・Learning-teaching process is researched to improve practical teaching skills that are appropriate for disabilities, and these are utilized to improve lessons.
(2) Accumulation of research findings	・Research findings are assembled in the form of research papers or collections of cases to accumulate and assimilate information. ・Efforts are made to share data on teaching materials (enhance teaching materials and teaching tools).

Table 6. Training to improve expertise

Evaluation item	Evaluation perspective
(1) Improved skills in specialist areas	・Workshops are provided from the perspective of improving skills in specialist areas, for example in terms of visual impairment education, expertise in walking, Braille, life skills, multiple disability education, low vision education and information education.
(2) Improved expertise to enable teaching that is appropriate to the characteristics of a disability	・Training is provided not just in specialist areas but for overall special needs education relating to the five disability types and developmental disabilities. ・Specialist knowledge is deepened concerning the characteristics of the disabilities of pupils.
(3) Briefing sessions and sharing of information	・Efforts are made to hold briefing sessions and share information so that the benefit of external training is not limited to individuals.
(4) Training at own school	・Various workshops, etc. are held to improve specialist quality and ability concerning special needs education. ・Efforts are made to improve and enhance workshops. ・Records of workshops are compiled. ・Each teacher is making efforts to accomplish his or her own goals through specialist training. ・Workshops are held that invite visiting lecturers, and these workshops are helpful in improving expertise. ・Workshops are held which are advertised externally to invite participants.
(5) Utilization of external study groups and workshops	・Workshops concerning special needs education in cooperation with education centers, etc.
(6) Training system for newly-recruited teachers	・Training system is in place for newly-recruited teachers.

4) Response to functioning as a resource center

Responses to functioning as a resource center were organized into the following descriptions.

a. Support for elementary and lower secondary schools

Evaluation items that contain support for elementary and lower secondary schools were extracted. These were organized into perspectives as follows (Table 7).

b. Enhance counseling function

The enhancement of the counseling function of special needs schools is also greatly expected, and the evaluation items of the schools which are making distinct efforts were organized in terms of response to external counseling requests, response to those seeking advice, and utilization of counseling as in Table 8 below.

c. Enhance function as a resource center

The following descriptions were extracted as perspectives for evaluation items to enhance the function as a resource center concerning special needs education in the local area (Table 9).

1. Response to workshops and guidance
2. Prepare framework
3. Evaluate level of cooperation
4. Hold informal meetings
5. Promote understanding
6. Peripatetic consultation
7. Efforts to open school
8. Involvement with human rights issues
9. Hold workshops
10. Prepare internal framework of school
11. Utilize special needs education coordinators
12. Interaction with alumni and disabled children and individuals in the local area
13. Effective use of personnel

Table 7. Support for elementary and lower secondary schools

Evaluation item	Evaluation perspective
(1) Level of cooperation	・Cooperation with elementary and lower secondary schools is carried out as planned, and the level of cooperation is understood appropriately.
(2) Provision of information	・Information about local support is conveyed to elementary and lower secondary schools. ・Information on workshops and teaching materials is provided to elementary and lower secondary schools.
(3) Utilization of individualized education support plans and individualized transition support plans	・ Individualized education support plans and individualized transition support plans are utilized as a tool to facilitate shared understanding and collaboration among teachers at elementary, lower secondary and high schools.
(4) Common understanding among teachers at school	・Common understanding about joint activities is ensured among teachers and actively promoted.
(5) Provision of advice, support and lecturers	・Advice and support is given to pupils who are in need of special needs education at schools such as primary and lower secondary schools. ・ Pupils are received and lecturers are dispatched for comprehensive learning and welfare experience. ・Requests for educational counseling to support guardians and teachers of pupils in special needs classes at local schools such as elementary and lower secondary schools, and for dispatching lecturers and advisors to internal workshops are being fulfilled.
(6) Function as the coordinator in special needs education	・The role as the special needs education coordinator is fulfilled in support of schools such as elementary and lower secondary schools.
(7) Understanding and enlightenment	・Activities to promote understanding of special needs education is provided for schools such as elementary and lower secondary schools. ・Understanding of special needs pupils is promoted through interaction with neighboring schools such as elementary and lower secondary schools.
(8) Peripatetic support	・Visits are made to local schools such as elementary and lower secondary schools as needed to provide fine-tuned support. ・Support for the area is provided smoothly via peripatetic support for schools such as elementary and lower secondary schools.
(9) Hosting workshops	・Support such as workshops and counseling concerning special needs education is provided to local schools such as elementary and lower secondary schools. ・Lessons are provided upon request from schools such as elementary and lower secondary schools to promote understanding of pupils enrolled at the school.
(10) Cooperation with and making use of local liaison councils	・It cooperates with and makes use of local liaison councils in the school district, etc.

Table 8. Counseling

Evaluation item	Evaluation perspective
(1) Response to counseling about external pupils	・Its function as a resource center is exercised by providing educational counseling and support for external pupils in response to requests in the community. ・External requests for advice by telephone and email are responded to. ・Educational counseling is provided according to requests by the Board of Education.
(2) Attention to needs	・Educational counseling and advice on starting schooling are given in accordance with the needs of the disabled children and those seeking advice in the area.
(3) Utilization of counseling	・The results of counseling and support are compiled and analyzed to improve the expertise of counselors. ・Role as a support center for schools and disabled children in the area is fulfilled in cooperation with other organizations by enhancing educational counseling activities.

Table 9. Enhance function as a resource center

Evaluation item	Evaluation perspective
(1) Response to workshops and guidance	・The role is fulfilled as a resource center concerning special needs education in the area. ・It cooperates in workshops and mentoring as a special needs center. ・With regards to functioning as a resource center, support for schools such as elementary and lower secondary schools and joint activities and learning are promoted while common understanding is sought. ・As a center for special needs education in the area, efforts are made to promote understanding of special needs education and to enhance community support.
(2) Prepare framework	・In order to further the function as a resource center, improvement is being made to the internal framework, for example for consultation for the future, enhancement for community support, and nurturing constituent members and personnel. ・The framework is being improved to enhance the function as a resource center.
(3) Evaluate level of cooperation	・As a school that functions as a resource center, it closely collaborated with families, the local community and relevant organizations. ・Cooperation was promoted with relevant parties and organizations such as health nurses and nursing teachers at schools.
(4) Hold informal meetings	・Informal meetings are held to promote the function and role as a local resource center.
(5) Promote understanding	・In order to further the role as a resource center, activities to promote understanding and enlightenment of guardians, the local community and other schools are carried out. ・Information is effectively and efficiently disseminated via leaflets, notices, publishing a newspaper, and websites. ・Opportunities at school council meetings and local joint committees for special needs education are seized to deepen local residents' understanding and awareness of special needs education, and the foundation is being laid for networking with relevant parties and organizations.

Table 9(continued).　Enhance function as a resource center

Evaluation item	Evaluation perspective
(6) Peripatetic consultation	・Specialist peripatetic guidance is provided to local children with disabilities. ・Peripatetic guidance that sufficiently responds to requests from the community is given.
(7) Efforts to open school	・Opening the facilities and school grounds and class observation days were promoted. ・Information regarding support for the local community was provided.
(8) Involvement with human rights issues is considered	・In addition to special needs education, educational activities concerning human rights and discrimination issues are promoted.
(9) Hold workshops	・Efforts are made to promote and enhance workshops to improve expertise concerning special needs education. ・Workshops are enhanced to promote special needs education, and workshops and research on learning-teaching progress, etc. are planned and implemented in a systematic manner. ・Understanding of the needs of elementary and lower secondary schools in the area is actively sought, and open workshops are held.
(10) Prepare internal framework of school	・The school proceeded with establishing support systems through cooperation and cooperation between other departments and relevant departments within the school.
(11) Utilize special needs education coordinators	・Counseling and support function was enhanced by placing special needs coordinators. ・Community support and cooperation with relevant organizations was promoted led by special needs education coordinators.
(12) Interaction with alumni and disabled children and individuals in the local area	・Necessary support was given to the family and teachers at the school where the pupil is registered through activities such as summer school.
(13) Effective use of personnel	・Collaboration and interaction with local volunteers, lower secondary and high school student volunteers is substantial. ・Activities to nurture volunteers are carried out. ・Specific measures to utilize external personnel are considered in an organized manner, for example by utilizing external volunteer training courses. ・External personnel are actively utilized in lessons and other school activities.

5) Efforts to network with relevant organizations

With regards to cooperation with relevant organizations, it is difficult to set specific targets for improvements when there is only a broad item such as "collaborated with relevant organizations." Therefore, items with more specific descriptions were extracted and organized by relevant organization. With regards to cooperation with relevant organizations, frequency of contact, quality of information gathering, realization of collaboration, and utilization of collaboration results, etc. were listed (Table 10).

With regards to characteristics by organization, cooperation with medical and welfare organizations was organized from the perspective of not only the "exchange of information" but also of whether it was "utilized in providing guidance at school" for the improvement of the school. In terms of cooperation with labor organizations, perspectives such as "organize information," "publicize within the school," and "utilize in guiding the future path beyond school" were extracted (Table 11).

Overall, it would have to be said that many of the evaluation items lacked specific descriptions.

In terms of collaboration between schools, objective perspectives were extracted including "utilize as an opportunity to learn together in the community," "better understanding and intercommunication among pupils and staff," "nurture social skills," "positioned as part of curriculum," and "level of satisfaction of guardians." Simple evaluation of whether there was interaction with other schools or with the local area does not lead to further improvement; perspectives that show the level of quality and quantitative level are needed (Table 12).

Table 10. Cooperation with relevant organizations

Evaluation item	Evaluation perspective
(1) Frequency of contact	・To what extent preparations are made for close contact and reporting. ・Efforts are made to avoid misunderstanding and cross-purposes with relevant organizations. ・Frequency of support meetings.
(2) Information gathering	・Necessary information for making decisions for the future is gathered through cooperation with relevant organizations and exploring new contacts for the future path.
(3) Materialize the substance of cooperation and development	・Cooperation is made to enhance support for the pupils at the school and other pupils in the area.
(4) Materialize network	・Meetings are attended as requested by relevant organizations.
(5) Cooperation with relevant organizations and publication in the school	・Information about cooperation with relevant organizations is passed onto the teachers and persons in charge of independent activities.
(6) Distribute information	・School information is accurately passed on in cooperation with relevant organizations.
(7) Provide guidance based on cooperation	・Cooperation with external specialists was promoted and utilized in teaching. ・External specialists' guidance and advice was effectively used in teaching.
(8) Utilize the cooperation with individualized education support plans	・Cooperation with relevant organizations is utilized in formulating individualized education support plans.

Table 11. Consideration to characteristics by organizations concerned

Evaluation item	Evaluation perspective
(1) Cooperation with medical and welfare organizations	・Cooperation with medical specialists was utilized in providing guidance. ・Guidance and advice from external ST and PT were effectively used in enhancing implementation. ・Individualized education support plans were formulated in cooperation with medical and welfare organizations. ・Information was exchanged with medical organizations, etc. that were involved with the pupils. ・With regards to newly transferred pupils, the teacher or person in charge of the pupil visited relevant organizations and exchanged information. ・Efforts were made to gather information by visiting welfare organizations, etc. in the area.
(2) Cooperation with labor organizations	・Conferences hosted by Hello Work (public employment security office) and other meetings in the area about future career counseling were attended to gather information on higher education and employment, and necessary information was publicized in the school. ・Future career activities were carried out in cooperation with Hello Work. ・Information about welfare and employment was gathered in contact with the local welfare policy office, and the information was organized before conveying it to relevant personnel in the school and to guardians. ・Efforts were made to strengthen the cooperation with Hello Work and liaison councils for employment for the disabled toward vocational independence and to support independence after graduation and social participation.

Table 12. Collaboration with other schools in the area

Evaluation item	Evaluation perspective
(1) Joint activities and learning are enhanced	・Opportunities to learn with the local community are valued through promoting joint activities and learning with elementary and lower secondary schools in the area. ・Friendship among pupils and staff is deepened through joint activities. ・Targets for joint activities were met by both schools. ・Joint activities between schools, with schools in the residential district, and with the community helped develop social skills of the pupils. ・Understanding of people with disabilities and mutual understanding was promoted in collaboration with the joint activity schools by promoting joint activities between schools, with schools in the residential district, and with the community. ・Pupils' ability to interact with people and to live in the community was nurtured by deepening the collaboration with schools and people in the area and actively promoting joint activities and learning (development of social skills). ・Teachers and staff had a common understanding of the significance and the policy of joint learning and activities and implemented them (understanding of the teachers). ・Position in the curriculum of the school of enrollment is clear and joint activities were carried out in a planned and continuous manner (curriculum). ・Guardians understand the content and method of joint activities with schools in the residential district and joint learning, and are satisfied with joint activities and learning (level of satisfaction of guardians).
(2) Response to needs of schools such as elementary and lower secondary schools in the area	・The needs of schools such as elementary and lower secondary schools were understood, and the support structure to respond to the needs was enhanced. ・Appropriate support was provided, for example by carrying out psychological tests and dispatching lecturers for internal workshops, in response to requests from schools such as elementary and lower secondary schools. ・Efforts were made to understand the needs for support at schools such as elementary and lower secondary schools.
(3) Send information to schools in the area	・Information on the school is sent to schools such as elementary and lower secondary schools in the area and in the residential district, and indirect interaction such as via letters is implemented in a continuous manner. ・Courses for teachers at neighboring nurseries, kindergartens, and schools, as well as for guardians, are held and the role as a local training center is fulfilled. ・Information is provided to guardians about the state of joint activities with other schools, with the community around the campus, and at locations for external learning.

4. Discussions

(1) Collaborations between departments

A limited number of schools included collaboration between departments as an object for self-evaluation, but the following descriptions (Table 2) were extracted from the self-evaluation sheet of these schools as the perspectives to evaluate collaboration between departments.

Collaboration between departments is one of the most important tasks at special needs schools from the perspective of providing consistent teaching and guidance. According to the analysis of the evaluation sheets, implementation of collaboration between departments from the perspective of joint activities between pupils, joint activities between teachers and pupils, and joint activities between teachers is emphasized, and it is desirable to include self-evaluation items that evaluate these activities appropriately.

(2) Individually-tailored teaching and guidance

As a response to individually-tailored teaching and guidance, over 70% of the schools had "individualized teaching plans" and "individualized education support plans" as evaluation items. However, most of them only asked about whether or not these were implemented.

The analysis of the evaluation sheets of 77 schools showed specific perspectives for those shown in Table 3 such as "understanding of the current status of each pupil and shared understanding among teachers" in terms of deeper understanding of pupils, "improved academic achievement," "development of teaching materials," "individual response to pupils," "response to worsening conditions," and "improvement of lessons" in terms of teaching, and "team approach" in terms of teaching structure.

In order to grasp the state of individually-tailored teaching at the school, it is desirable in self-evaluation to select and include specific items as clarified in the analysis of the survey sheets in cross-checking with the priority target at each school, rather than vague items such as "individually-tailored teaching was provided."

(3) Improving expertise to respond to a variety of disabilities

With regards to evaluation of the expertise of teachers at special needs schools, the nationwide fact-finding survey showed that approximately 70% of the schools had evaluation items concerning the specialist understanding of disabilities concerned and the teaching skills. Again, most evaluation was limited to a broad level. The analysis of evaluation sheets found, as shown in Table 5, that specific perspectives such as improving practical skills by research on the learning-teaching process and the accumulation of research findings were reflected in the evaluation items for the improvement of expertise in the practical aspect. With regards to

training to improve expertise, specific items were extracted such as improve skills relating to specialist areas, expertise to respond to the characteristics of disabilities, training reports and information sharing, implement the school's own training, utilize external research groups, and training system for newly-recruited teachers.

The ratio of special needs school teaching certificate holders is used as a benchmark to grasp the expertise of the teachers. However, with the purpose of improving schools, it is also desirable to establish evaluation items derived from the analysis of the evaluation sheets and implement self-evaluation that is more suited to the actual situation.

(4) Functioning as a resource center

The nationwide fact-finding survey found again with regards to functioning as a resource center that an overwhelming number of schools only evaluated the standard of implementation.

The function as a resource center covers a wide variety of functions, and more than 10 descriptions were extracted as perspectives for effective evaluation in the analysis of the evaluation sheets. Careful self-evaluation for all these descriptions will require more time and effort. Therefore, with regards to evaluation of aspects such as "functioning as a resource center" which cover a wide area, it is desirable to select items with consideration for their importance as the school's priority targets and implementation tasks, and focus on evaluating selected items.

A majority of the schools did not include special needs education coordinators, school committees, community liaison councils, or provision of transition support, which is worrying considering the importance of the role of special needs schools as a regional center. In addition to the above items, some schools included "safety checks" and "creating a school with openness."

(5) Networking with relevant organizations

The nationwide fact-finding survey found that more than 80% of the schools self-evaluated cooperation with relevant organizations, but an overwhelming number of schools evaluated it only at a broad level.

The analysis of evaluation sheets found that frequency of contact, quality of information gathering, realization of collaboration, utilization of collaboration results, organization of information gathered, publication within the school and utilization for consultation for the future were selected as specific evaluation items with regard to cooperation with relevant organizations.

Each item was organized from the perspective that the evaluation in relation to its contribution to teaching and guidance at school leads to the improvement of the school. Similarly with regards to the cooperation with relevant organizations, specific evaluation items that will lead to further improvement based on current

cooperation status and issues are desirable over broad evaluation about whether or not the school cooperated with relevant organizations.

Many evaluation items remained lacking in specifics.

With regards to cooperation between schools, specific perspectives extracted included "opportunity to learn jointly in the area," "better understanding and intercommunication between students and teachers," "nurture social skills," "positioned as part of curriculum" and "level of satisfaction of guardians." Simple evaluation of whether or not joint activities were carried out between schools or in the residential district does not lead to further improvement; perspectives showing the qualitative or quantitative level are needed.

IV. Overall discussions

(1) Self-evaluation at special needs schools

According to the nationwide fact-finding survey, 70 to 80% of special needs schools included individualized teaching plans, individualized support plans, educational counseling, support for elementary and lower secondary schools, joint activities and learning, cooperation with relevant organizations, and the improvement of the environment as perspectives for self-evaluation. It was recognized that many special needs schools included the characteristics of special needs schools in the self-evaluation. However, the evaluation in the overwhelming number of cases was limited to a general evaluation. Close examination of self-evaluation sheets also found that evaluation was limited to broad items, thus many evaluation sheets did not offer specific clues for improvement.

In addition, some items that may be considered highly important as characteristics of special needs schools, such as special needs education coordinators, were not sufficiently reflected in the evaluation items. A review of self-evaluation would be desirable from the perspective of school evaluation for the purpose of school improvement.

School evaluation started at compulsory schools and has been expanded to special needs schools and high schools. However, there is still much work to be done at elementary and lower secondary schools where the history is longer (Kioka, 2008), and meetings of collaborators of the survey continue at MEXT. Many aspects in the discussion are applicable as school organizations, but some aspects do not sufficiently cover the characteristics of special needs schools. These are presented below.

Special needs schools are often comprised of different departments, ranging from nursery school to high school. Close cooperation between departments is strongly desired to provide

consistent support, but with regards to cooperation between departments, the issue of insufficient cooperation within schools has been highlighted (Mitsubishi Research Institute, 2010). School evaluation is a continued effort to improve the school as a whole, as well as providing a function as a communication tool within the school and between the school and local residents and guardians, as shown in the Guidelines for School Evaluation (2010 revision) (MEXT, 2010). The process of all the teachers and staff considering ways to improve the school with the school evaluation as an opportunity is thought to bring together efforts to improve the school across different departments and responsibilities as an organization. It is necessary to promote the significance of cooperation between departments in the context of self-evaluation. In this respect, "cooperation between departments" is an item that merits being actively included in self-evaluations as a characteristic of special needs schools.

1) Response to individual needs

Response to individual needs occupies an important part of teaching at special needs schools (Mitsubishi Research Institute, 2010). Therefore, it is necessary to include the process of formulating individualized teaching plans and the efforts to enhance teaching based on the plan in the school evaluation. It is important in providing such support for the entire school to work together through the collaboration of all of the teachers to endeavor to provide appropriate teaching and necessary support in a planned manner. This leads to the development of children and the assurance of guardians, and eventually to the improvement of the school. It is necessary to proceed with school evaluation from such perspectives.

2) Improving expertise

In addition to expertise concerning education according to disabilities, other specialist knowledge such as medical knowledge may become needed in some cases at special needs schools, thus improving expertise has an important bearing. Evaluating the ability to consult local residents, guardians, guidance counselors in the Board of Education, in addition to the usual relevant parties at welfare, medical and labor organizations, will lead to the improvement of expertise. In this respect, the relevance with evaluation by school-related parties is also significant in addition to self-evaluation.

The nationwide fact-finding survey found in self-evaluation that efforts are actively made to improve the expertise of teachers at special needs schools; however, having examined the description of evaluation items on actual self-evaluation sheets, there were some which would have difficulty leading to the kind of evaluation that contributes to school improvement. In evaluating expertise, the quality needs to be assessed.

3) Functioning as a resource center and school

evaluation

The analysis of self-evaluation sheets found that the function as a resource center covers a wide range of descriptions. From the perspective of utilizing the evaluation results to improve the school, it is desirable to select evaluation descriptions in consideration of the priority target and priority implementation tasks of the school and focus evaluation on these aspects.

It would also be effective to divide the function as a resource center into "information gathering and analysis," "specific support activities for schools such as elementary and lower secondary schools," "educational counseling," etc., and evaluate each aspect separately.

4) Structure of self-evaluation sheet and the challenges in quantifying and qualifying the degree of attainment

It is not necessary to quantify the evaluation of all targets. Quantification may not be the best method in light of the purpose of education. Nagao (2007) wrote that evaluation by numbers can give teachers and pupils a sense of achievement, and guardians find it easier to understand in some cases; therefore, benchmarks that are appropriate for quantification should be examined and quantification should be implemented under a shared understanding of all teachers involved. It has also been pointed out that it would be effective to group evaluation items into those that can be quantified and those that should be examined qualitatively depending on the evaluation description (Mitsubishi Research Institute, 2010). Evaluation items should be organized into those for quantifiable evaluation and those appropriate for qualitative evaluation in the planning phase before preparing the evaluation sheet.

5) Networking with other schools and relevant organizations

Only about half of the schools included this aspect for evaluation. Similarly, more than half of the schools did not have evaluation items concerning involvement with the community. Considering the schools' function as a regional center, this is an evaluation item that should be actively dealt with.

6) Improving the structure of the special needs schools

Over 80% of the schools had evaluation items concerning internal training and curriculum, indicating that each school is actively dealing with this aspect. On the other hand, about half of the schools did not have evaluation items concerning setting conditions for budget implementation and governing structure. From the perspective of the management of the school organization, it would be meaningful to reflect these aspects on the evaluation items for use in school improvement.

(2) Efforts and the effects expected from school evaluation

It is important that each school endeavors to make improvements based on the school evaluation results, along with reporting the evaluation results to school providers, etc., to share the awareness of the challenges. Based on the results, the school providers, etc. need to provide appropriate support such as budgetary and personnel measures and sending supervisors.

In the process of evaluation by school-related parties, it is important for teachers, guardians and local residents to exchange opinions about the management of the school and gain an understanding of the current status of the school and the efforts made to share awareness of the challenges faced so that mutual understanding is deepened. By using school evaluations as a communication tool between the school, families and the local community, participation in school management by guardians and the local community is encouraged and the creation of more open schools is expected to progress based on a common understanding supported by families and the local community.

In addition, the educational abilities of the school, families and the local community are expected to improve through the promotion of information sharing, collaboration and cooperation centering on the school evaluations.

(3) Evaluation by school-related parties and third-party evaluations

With regards to evaluation by school-related parties, more than 70% of the schools delegated guardians, and medical, labor or welfare workers to be evaluation panel members. This also reflects the intention of school evaluations.

With regards to third-party evaluations, more than 80% of the school did not implement such evaluations. It became clear that third-party evaluations at special needs schools had not reached the full-fledged implementation stage at the time of the survey. However, considering that third-party evaluations are under review in the Guidelines and adjustment with the Board of Education is also needed, they will depend on future developments to some extent.

With regards to publishing the school evaluation results, most schools published the results, and mostly in writing or via their website. Most schools implemented a questionnaire survey directed at guardians. Of the schools that have boarding houses, more than 80% of the schools had evaluation items concerning boarding houses. On the other hand, a small number of schools did not publish the evaluation results to the local community. An improvement in this is desirable from the perspective of schools that are open to the local community.

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