

## Wen-Chung Pan, Minister of Education, Calls for “Enhancing Competencies and Striding Towards Excellence” at Northern Taiwan Senior High Schools and Special Education Schools Principals Meeting

(Courtesy of Dong-Ying Chen at the Division of Academic Senior High Education)



An annual Meeting for Principals from National Senior High Schools and Special Education Schools was held this year in northern and southern Taiwan, respectively. The meeting in northern Taiwan was held first at the Keelung Maritime High School Affiliated to National Taiwan Ocean University on August 4, 2020. With Wen-Chung Pan, Minister of Education, presiding over the opening ceremony, a total of 316 people participated in this grand event together, including principals from senior high schools and special education schools in western cities and counties north of Miaoli, Hualien, and Yilan in the east, outlying islands of Kinmen and Lianjiang, and schools for children of overseas Taiwanese businesspeople, as well as representatives from the Ministry of Education, education bureaus of local governments, and relevant scholars. Under the main theme of "Enhance Competencies and Stride Towards

Excellence," reports on special keynote topics were given, major education policies were introduced, and panel discussions on educational topics were conducted, with the aim of further consolidating the school principals' consensus on implementing school affairs and continuing to deepen the contents of students' learning.

Pan expressed his gratitude towards the administrative team led by Shi-Cheng Chen, Principal at the Keelung Maritime High School Affiliated to National Taiwan Ocean University, for planning this meeting, and also thanked all the principals for protecting their teachers' and students' health together with the Ministry of Education against the COVID-19 pandemic this year, so that this year's TVE Joint College Entrance Examinations, Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High School Students, and Advanced Subjects Test all could be proceeded smoothly. The 2019 new curriculum guidelines provide students with more diverse and adaptive exploration courses, as well as opportunities for independent learning; as such, students can understand themselves better. However, this also exposes schools to challenges regarding teachers' professional development and the need to offer more diverse courses. The Ministry of Education will continue to promote the collaboration between colleges and senior high schools. In addition, the Ministry of Education has been discussing the issue of faculty quotas with the Directorate-General of Personnel Administration, Executive Yuan, to allow for the number of faculty to more be in line with prescribed quotas so as to respond to schools' needs for more teaching personnel.

Yu-Chang Lin, Mayor of Keelung City, said in a speech that the new curriculum guidelines place learners at the center, emphasize students' individual differences, and focus on practice and application in daily life. He added that the local government will collaborate with the central government to face challenges and assist schools in implementing the new curriculum guidelines step by step, and that in recent years the Keelung City Government has proactively implemented policies, including smart education, digitization of each class, increased network bandwidth, and makers' classrooms, to improve the quality of education in Keelung. In addition,

he welcomed people from all sectors of society to participate in the Keelung City Expo that will be held in late September and early October 2021.

In response to the new curriculum guidelines, this year's meeting for principals was based on the theme of "Enhance Competencies and Stride Towards Excellence." At this meeting, Pan introduced new and transferred principals and presented awards to excellent schools that score high in school evaluation. In addition, reports were given on four special topics in the morning sessions of the event, namely "The Importance Of Competency-oriented Technology-based Teaching and Evaluation," "Relationship Between Information Security Policy and Personal Data Protection Act," "International and Bilingual Education," and " Student Independent Learning Plan in Flexible Learning Time Stipulated in New Curriculum Guidelines," and the scholars, experts, and principals who participated in the policy formulation were invited to serve as keynote speakers to assist principals in understanding the specific contents of the education policy that are being promoted by the central government, as well as the response measures after the implementation of the Cyber Security Management Act, in the hope of leading the schools to implement the new curriculum guidelines smoothly.

In the afternoon, the "Introduction to Major National Policies" was conducted, including topics of "Application of Digital Distance Learning (Including Cloud Services)," "Crisis Management in the Face of COVID-19," and "Development of Offshore Wind Power," to enable the principals to better understand the key points and trends of education development, enhance their philosophy of running a school, and strengthen their knowledge of how to respond to COVID-19 at school correctly. The panel discussions on educational topics were focused on the four major aspects, namely "Gender Equality," "Anti-drug and Anti-Bullying," "Diverse Learning and Activating Teaching," and "Implementation of CRPD at School," and scholars and experts with relevant research experience were invited to serve as moderators, and the senior high school and special education school principals served as panelists to participate in the

discussions to inspire more innovative educational thinking through professional guidance and sharing of their practical experiences.

The Ministry of Education hopes that: during such an annual meeting for principals, principals could thereby build up a consensus among those running schools, through sharing their practical experiences, and keeping abreast of the latest trends and new thinking in education. In particular, in response to the implementation of the new curriculum guidelines, the principals will thus know how to better implement education policies, and reforms and realize the vision of "Enhance Competencies and Stride Towards Excellence." As such, every child can become a better self in the 12-Year Basic Education.