

## Fifteen Senior High Schools Selection Mechanism for an Exam-Free Learning Zone in the Academic Year of 2017

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To put the “Entrance Exam Free, Enrollment in Near-By Schools” policy into place step-by-step, the Ministry of Education has selected some public high schools for implementation during the academic year of 2017. The selected high schools shall be able to accommodate most, if not all, junior high school graduates who are willing to pursue high school education in their communities in an exam-free manner. Without the need of referring to their test scores in the Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High Schools, the pressure from taking the senior high school entrance exam on junior high school students can be alleviated, and the concepts of equal opportunity education as well as adaptive developmental can be realized. A six-year academic program will be developed with students at the core in a systematic way to enable all citizens to enjoy their learning rights, thereby achieving the goal of the 12-year national compulsory education step by step.

The Ministry of Education conducted a comprehensive assessment of high schools by evaluating metrics, such as background information, current development, relative independence or integrity of geographical location, acceptance rate, enrollment rate, accommodation rate, and the community enrollment rate. In the academic year of 2017, a total of 15 high schools were selected for the pilot program with 2,306 openings in total. The information, including who to recruit, the number of openings, guidelines for exam registration, and the schedule, for each selected school were included in the application guideline and posted on the official websites of those schools on 16<sup>th</sup> of January, 2017.

The Ministry of Education implemented the exam-free learning zone during the academic year of 2017 based on six major principles: phasing out the entrance exam, gradual progress, ensuring the learning rights for all, investing resources, and democratic communication. The focal points of this pilot project are stated below:

1. Registration and announcement of the result will be completed before the Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High Schools is held this year. (The schedule of this pilot project in

the academic year of 2017 is stated in the following: registration for the project on 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> of May, 2017; announcement of the result on 17<sup>th</sup> of May, 2017; reporting to school on 14<sup>th</sup> of June, 2017; those who decided to give up their slots shall do so on 15<sup>th</sup> of June, 2017.)

2. With the complete removal of the relevant exams as its goal, the exam-free learning district zone does not take into account the test scores of the Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High Schools, and allows students to register for one of their selected high schools directly. When the number of registering students does not surpass that of the openings released by the selected schools, the students will all be admitted based on their selection of major subject, each school can set out their own waiting list policies as their back up plan. On the other hand, if the number of students who enroll in the schools exceeds that of the slots offered, those schools will rely on selection mechanism and rank their incoming students; in case there are still some of the extra students who are rated at the same level, they shall all be admitted. If that happens, the schools may increase the original openings by no more than 5%.

3. The shortfall in the admission of students in this pilot project can be kept and filled by the students who participate in the current exam-free school admission program. In addition, the Ministry of Education will spare no effort to invest in the selected schools with a focus on supporting them in developing their own teaching styles of the courses, helping these schools to improve their quality and efficacy of teaching, upgrading their teaching devices and equipment, and strengthening their partnership with junior high schools. Meanwhile, it will go all out to develop a teaching advancement program to help match high schools and junior high schools in the learning zone, which will ensure the learning ability of junior high school graduates, and encourage them to pursue high school education in the same learning zone.

The Ministry of Education started this pilot program with the public high schools in the academic year of 2017 on a trial basis, and will gradually expand, after the academic year of 2018, to include more schools after evaluating process. It will continue to plan for an expansion of this exam-free learning

zone to incorporate adaptive learning communities, special municipalities, administrative districts of cities and counties, school districts, and so on.