

## The 2<sup>nd</sup> National Education Department Commissioners Meeting in the School Year of 103: Quality, Adaptivity, and Takeoff

(Photos and texts were provided by Xu Li-Juan from the Division of Junior High School, Elementary School and Preschool Education)



The Ministry of Education (MOE) hosted the 2nd National Education Department Commissioners Meeting in 2014 (the school year of 103) at Nantou County on August 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. According to the MOE, the 12-year compulsory education will be officially implemented, starting from the school year of 103. Through the implementation of this educational policy, it is expected that all junior high school students can develop balanced learning based on individual need; each and every junior high schools can settle for its own positioning; teaching quality can be enhanced; students' basic academic competences can be safeguarded, and diversified potentials can thereby be developed, so as to cultivate students into energetic, creative and competitive individuals.

The MOE pointed out that with “Quality, Adaptivity, and Takeoff” as the core value of the meeting, which incorporate two key aspects: “the promotion of art and aesthetic education” and “the accommodating measures of 12-year compulsory education by local governments.”

Important educational projects including “the promotion of outdoor education,” “the promotion of junior high and elementary school teacher evaluation system,” “subsidies to local governments for the evaluation on the effectiveness of counseling instructors,” and “sports policies” were all featured as special topics.

One of the core aspects of this meeting was “Introducing Civil Resource—the Promotion of Art and Aesthetic Education through the Collaboration of the Industry, Academia and Government.” The concept is to introduce, combine and utilize civil resources in art and aesthetic education with the assistance from local communities and schools at all levels, with the hope of developing consensual strategies for aesthetic education and art activities to achieve win-win outcomes for the government, industry and academia. The Department of Education of Kaohsiung City and the Department of Education of New Taipei City were also invited to the meeting to share their respective experience on “Seeing Art Life in Kaohsiung—Ways to Promote Secondary and Primary School Aesthetic Education through Civil and Cross-Sector Cooperation” and “Heritage and Innovation of New Taipei City Art Education.” It is hoped that through civil and cross-sector cooperation, art and aesthetic education can be further promoted and fulfilled.

The other core aspect of this meeting was “the accommodating measures to 12-year compulsory education by local governments.” The concept behind 12-year compulsory education was a step upward from the 9-year national education, with the following five values as its basic line references: “education for all,” “teaching based on students’ aptitude,” “individualized education based on students’ need,” “diversified accesses,” and “high quality transition.” 12-year compulsory education is considered to be a major breakthrough of educational policy, and can be summed up in seven featured dimensions: tuition policy, school excellence and regional homogenization, curriculum and teaching, individualized counseling and civil competence, legal system, promotion and admission. In sum, there are a total of 29 tasks and supportive packages that underpin the implementation of this policy.

To respond to the implementation of 12-year compulsory education starting from August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014, the K-12 Education Administration elaborated on the activating teaching and individualized counseling for the junior high school, as well as admission, homogenization and school excellence for the senior high and vocational high school. It is hoped that the joint effort

of the MOE and local governments can facilitate the policy's implementation and promotion.

Yilan County Government, Department of Education of Kaohsiung City, and Pingdong County Government were also invited to the meeting to share their experiences in “the promotion of outdoor education—Yilan Experience,” the implementation of “Kaohsiung City Junior High and Elementary School Principals and Teachers’ Professional Development Center” and “Pingdong County’s Pilot Evaluation of Teachers—the Project of Establishing Principals and Teachers’ Professional Development Center.” It is hoped that the goal of promoting outdoor education and enhancing teachers’ professional growth can be achieved through the joint efforts of municipal governments and county/city governments that are tailored to address regional conditions. The experience and relevant impacts of “Creating ‘Counseling Golden Triangle’ and Strengthening Schools’ Three-level Counseling System” were shared and much discussed. Due to the enhancement of teachers’ professionalism and the inspiring of students’ potential, kids could eventually explore a suitable path of their own, and select a school that matches their needs and aptitudes through the admission process.

During this two-day agenda, the MOE communicated with national education department commissioners on educational policies in order to forge their consensus with local governments on the implementation of educational policies; to facilitate the implementation of national educational policies; and to establish a complete educational support network. We hope that everyone can make an effort to make our kids’ future better and usher in the new era of the development of the 12-year compulsory education policy.