

## Cooperative Education Fosters a Win-win-win Situation

(Courtesy of Xin-Yu Lin at the Division of Academic and Vocational Senior High Education)



To encourage schools to launch cooperative education, and to establish a teaching model with a balanced focus on education and employment, the K-12 Education Administration, Ministry of Education, convened the "2018 Academic Year Cooperative Education Application Business Briefing Session." A total of 150 representatives from public and private senior high schools, who are interested in applying, attended this briefing seminar.

This briefing session was mainly focused on the regulations and practical operation, through illustration of some real examples, to showcase the required qualifications, original copies of documents to be enclosed, and the evaluation and review process for those who apply. The application process commences from now till September 13, 2018.

According to the K-12 Education Administration, the cooperative education program had recruited a total of 11,415 students in the academic year of 2017. In addition to the tuition-free measure, miscellaneous fees will be exempted on a nationwide basis in the academic year of 2018, so as to reduce the tuition gap between public and private schools, encourage vocationally oriented students to learn, and develop talents at the grass-root level for each sector. This will motivate more students to pick up their skill, move towards a specialized field, and subsequently develop their future career. This will help take care of disadvantaged students and prevent their skill learning from being interrupted due to economic distress.

The K-12 Education Administration emphasizes that cooperative education can be effectively conducted through many channels, through rotation, internship, a level-based manner, or other methods as deemed appropriated, and approved by the central competent authority. As for "rotation," cooperative education students are divided into two classes and the two classes will rotate as one class of students study in school while the other class will be trained in a cooperative institution. In the "level-based" mechanism, grade 10 and 11 students will study in school while grade 12 students will receive vocational skills training. "Internship" is based on the needs of each professional course at all levels, allowing students to receive vocational skills training during winter and summer vacations or in the middle of a semester, while "others" are specific methods developed by any school and approved by the competent authority.

For cooperative education students, in addition to learning vocational skills in institutions, they will also enjoy a living allowance not less than the minimum wage set by the Labor Standards Act during the training period. Furthermore, students are able to learn the latest skills in the industry through skills training offered by institutions. This will reduce the capital cost for schools. For cooperative institutions, although cooperative education students are learning skills rather than providing labor services, the labor generated by the students in the training process still bears economic value; in the meantime, the cooperative education system will cultivate the

talents needed for each sector, thereby providing a stable supply of a high-quality skilled workforce that address the need of relevant industries. The K-12 Education Administration notes that it will strive to increase incentives for schools to participate in cooperative education on the basis of safeguarding students' rights and interests, while establishing a win-win-win system for students, schools, and cooperative institutions.