

enter elementary school. This act integrates both the education and the care of young children into a single administrative system, putting into practice a toddler-centered strategy that focuses on the children's best interests. Taiwan is also the first country in Asia to integrate the two systems. On April 26, 2017, the "Statute for Preschool Educators" was announced, clearly stating the rules for training, qualifications, rights and interests, administration, and appeals and dispute settlements in order to safeguard the rights of our country's preschool educators.

Kick-started in SY1968, Taiwan's nine-year Compulsory Education system is mandatory, free, and obligatory. Citizens from the age of six to 15 are legally required to receive education. The compulsory education is divided into two stages — the first six years at the elementary school level and the latter three in a junior high school.

C Preschool and Compulsory Education Policies

In accordance with the "Action Plan to Address the Issue of Fewer Children" approved by the Executive Yuan, strategies such as "increasing affordable slots," "reducing tuition fees," and "providing childcare subsidies" are implemented to promote education and care for children under



the age of six. These strategies are adjusted as needed to expand assistance and effectively implement the "Childcare Support for Children Aged 0-6" policy. Responding to parents' calls for more slots at public kindergartens, from 2017 to 2023, a total of 3,295 classes (80,000 slots) were added, with the rate of class expansion being 2.2 times higher than the previous 17 years (2009 to 2022). Additionally, 203 classes were added in SY2023, bringing the total number of public slots to approximately 260,000. Together with 1,949 quasi-public kindergartens providing 228,000 slots, the total number of affordable slots reached 488,000 in SY2023. Furthermore, starting from August 2022, parents of children attending affordable kindergartens pay a maximum monthly fee of no more than NT\$3,000, with additional discounts for second or subsequent children. Low to middle-income families are exempted from fees. For parents taking care of their children or sending them to private kindergartens, they receive a monthly childcare subsidy or an NT\$5,000 subsidy for children starting school at age 5, with additional subsidies for second or subsequent children. The enrollment rate for two-year-olds in SY2023 reached 49%, and the enrollment rate for children aged 3 to the age before entering primary school reached 90%, indicating a substantial reduction in parental burden and an increase in overall preschool enrollment rates.

To enhance teaching effectiveness at elementary and junior high schools and promote effective learning, the MOE continuously helps local governments improve the quality of curricula and professional development mechanisms for teachers. Through subsidies, local governments hold seminars for teachers, develop flexible courses at schools, helping schools implement curriculum guidelines while providing innovative teaching. Teachers are encouraged to join professional learning groups to reinforce teaching knowledge and skills.

The MOE provides tuition and miscellaneous fee exemption, bursaries, stipends, and other measures to assist underprivileged students with enrollment and protect students' right to education. It promotes study aids for elementary and junior high school students to reduce academic gaps. Additionally, through the six tasks of "competency teaching and assessment enhancement," "promoting technological teaching and assessment," "promoting student competency-enhancing learning activities," "reinforcing help for underprivileged students," "tracking and guiding students with lowered motivation," and "international testing trend development," the MOE hopes to increase students' learning abilities, reinforce help for underprivileged students, and improve students' ability to work with information.

Social development has caused the population of the cities to grow, while businesses and



people continue to move out of remote areas. The local economy in these areas has slowed down, jobs are hard to find, and children are often left to the care of grandparents. Education is where the values of social equity and social justice should be embodied. To enable each and every child to enjoy equal opportunities of adaptive development, the president promulgated on December 6, 2017, the "Act for Education Development of Schools in Remote Areas." The Act specifies the length of a full-time teacher's service, a flexible mechanism for hiring acting teachers and contract-based teachers, rewards and incentives to encourage long terms of service, methods of recruiting teachers and guidance counselors where they are needed, the importance of simplifying the administrative burden on schools, professional development opportunities nearby for the teachers, a supply of diverse learning resources for the students, and the provision of necessary facilities and equipment to schools in order to safeguard the students' right to education in remote areas. ■

