

OECD Thematic Review of Initial Teacher Preparation
Country Background Report for Japan

National Center for Teachers' Development (NCTD)

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
Chapter 1: Outline of the School Education System	8
1-1. Teachers and Educational System.....	8
1-1-1. Structure of Schooling and the Number of Students.....	8
1-1-2. Current State of Teachers	9
1-2. Structure of Initial Teacher Preparation (ITP)	12
1-2-1. Pre-Service ITP	12
1-2-2. In-Service ITP: Induction Trainings.....	13
1-2-3. Teacher Trainings.....	13
1-2-4. Challenges.....	13
1-2-4-1. Improving ITP Program	13
1-2-4-2. Overwhelming Workload of Teachers	14
1-2-4-3. The influence of mass retirement and mass recruitment	14
Chapter 2: Attracting Candidates into ITP Programs.....	16
2-1. University Based ITP and the Establishment of the “Open-System”	16
2-1-1. Backgrounds	16
2-1-2. Current Condition	16
2-1-3. Challenges.....	17
2-2. Improvement of Teacher Status	17
2-2-1. Backgrounds	17
2-2-2. Current State.....	18
2-2-3. Challenges.....	18
Chapter 3: Selecting the Most Suitable Candidates for ITP Programs.....	19
3-1. Selecting Teacher Candidates for ITP Programs	19
3-2. Selection through Hiring	19
3-3. Non-Traditional Pathway	20

Chapter 4: Equipping Prospective Teachers with the Right Mix of What Teachers Need to Know and Do	21
4-1. The Structure of ITP Curriculum.....	21
4-2. Field Teaching Practice, Hands-on Activities and Welfare/Nursing Care Experience	23
4-2-1. Field Teaching Practice	23
4-2-2. Other Hands-on Activities and Welfare/Nursing Experience.....	24
4-3. Autonomous Quality Assurance Practice in University-Based ITP	24
4-3-1. General Trend and Some Examples	24
4-3-2. Quality Assurance Measures	25
4-4. Establishment of Professional Graduate Schools for Teacher Education	26
4-5. Additional Measures	26
Chapter 5: Ensuring Quality Delivery of ITP Programs	28
5-1. Ensuring Quality Delivery for Pre-Service ITP Programs	28
5-1-1. Ensuring Quality through Accreditation Structure at the Point of Implementation of the ITP Curriculum.....	28
5-1-2. Ensuring Quality through Accreditation Structure after the Establishment of the ITP Program	28
5-1-3. Challenges.....	29
5-2. Professional Graduate Schools for Teacher Education: Connecting between Pre-Service and In-Service ITP.....	29
5-3. Ensuring Quality in Induction Stage (In-Service ITP for the First-Year Teachers).....	29
Chapter 6: Certifying and Selecting New Teachers.....	31
6-1. Issuing a Teacher's Certificate.....	31
6-2. Alternative Route to Become a Teacher	32
6-3. Hiring of New Teachers.....	32
Chapter 7: Supporting Beginning Teachers	33
7-1. Structural Framework on Induction Program	33

7-2. Present State and Challenges.....	33
7-3. Reform Measures.....	34
APPENDIX	36
Appendix 1: Total Number of Students: 1953-2015.....	36
Appendix 2: Total Number of Schools: 1953-2015.....	37
Appendix 3: Educational Background of Teachers	37
Appendix 4: Total Number of Teacher’s Certificates Issued in 2013: Categorized by the Types of ITP Institutions	38
Appendix 5: Total Number of Teachers in Induction Training: 2004, 2009-2014	38
Appendix 6: Total Number of Teachers Hired in 2015: Categorized by the Types of ITP Institutions	38
References	39

TALIS INITIAL TEACHER PREPARATION STUDY

Country Background Report for Japan

Executive Summary

Initial Teacher Preparation (ITP) Study explores both preparation and induction trainings for teachers in the primary and the secondary schools. In Japan, schools have three types of establishment: national schools, public (municipal) schools, and private schools. This report places primary focus on the teachers in public schools since an overwhelming majority of teachers works at public schools unless otherwise noted.

There are three stages in ITP in Japan. First, there is the pre-service ITP, which is implemented as the teacher preparation programs that are built within the curriculum of universities and university departments. Second, there are teacher employment examinations administered by the Boards of Education in each prefecture and/or ordinance-city (cities with population over 500,000). Third, there are induction trainings for new teachers with a regular contract. The Boards of Education administer and deliver the induction trainings. Teachers in Japan must complete the first stage to be certified. Yet, they have to complete all three stages to become full-fledged teachers.

This report offers an overview of teacher preparation, hiring practice and induction trainings. This report also intends to elaborate the problems and challenges surrounding Japan's ITP and its structure.

Teachers and Teacher Education in Japan

For pre-service teachers, it is universities and university departments with teacher preparation programs/courses that provide the ITP programs. For in-service teachers, the local Boards of Education (BOEs) hold responsibilities for organizing and delivering the ITP programs. For the last decade, many efforts have been made to build an organic collaboration between pre-service ITP providers (universities) and in-service ITP providers (BOEs) as an initiative to pursue higher standards for teacher preparation and training.

Reconstruction of Education and Economic Recovery have been the nation's priorities; and thus an integrative curriculum reform is underway for preparing and developing teachers with higher standards of knowledge and skills. Many efforts have been made to bring a comprehensive design for ITP that is connecting the pre-service preparation, hiring practice and in-service trainings.

Today, the nation's ITP faces a need for the pursuit of higher standards. There is forever increasing amount of expectations to teachers in today's fast changing society, and teachers play a role more than teaching and classroom management. Furthermore, the mass retirement of baby boomers in recent years has forced the BOEs to hire large number of new teachers. These circumstances require the transformation of the previous ITP structure in order to ensure quality delivery of ITP in Japan.

Attracting Candidates into ITP Programs

In Japan, the ITP structure has contributed in attracting competitive candidates into ITP programs in two approaches: (1) through incorporating the ITP to universities and university departments, and (2) through diversifying the ITP providers through the “Open-System”. Immediately after the Second World War, Japan has incorporated its ITP into universities and university departments to elevate the professional status of teachers. Today, because a large portion of population earn bachelor’s degrees, the nation's ITP has begun to be incorporated into graduate programs to keep the professional and prestigious status of teachers. Furthermore, the “Open-System” has contributed to prepare teachers with strong scholarly backgrounds by allowing diverse university departments to be ITP providers.

Selecting Candidates into ITP Programs

In order to become teacher candidates, individuals need to be admitted and enrolled as students at universities or one of their departments that are either specialized for teacher preparing or specialized in other scholarly disciplines with ITP programs.

There are limited number of enrollment capacity in each university and university department, and thus individuals have to pass admission examinations. The universities and university departments not specialized in teacher preparation still offer teacher preparation credits as an option in addition to their own degree requirements. In these universities and university departments, the candidates register for their specialized subjects, in addition to the teacher preparation courses. Some universities set eligibility requirements for registering of teacher preparation credits.

At the completion of taking all required courses for teacher preparation program, the candidates need to apply for teaching certificates with the local BOEs. The candidates who have obtained the certificate are eligible to take the teacher employment examinations at the BOEs of their choice.

The selection of teacher candidates is done primarily at the time of hiring, and the BOEs administer the examinations and interviews for selecting the most suitable candidates. The candidates who passed the employment examinations become a teacher, but they are put on a probationary status in their first year of employment. This period is longer than the period set for the non-teaching civil service positions.

Equipping prospective teachers with the right mix of what teachers need to know and do

For pre-service ITP, in addition to an associate or a bachelor’s degree, the candidates who seek to be a teacher need to complete all required teacher preparation courses and a field-practice.

In 2004, the government made all national universities into the Independent Administrative Institutions, and it has granted all national universities greater fiscal and administrative autonomy. Most universities (national universities, public universities and private universities) had introduced the university-level reforms, which typically included the reforms on the ITP programs. Those universities that

have attained visible outcomes from the reforms have had a common approach to the reform: (1) established a concrete teaching philosophy to cut across the curriculum, (2) actively engaged in the structural reorganization of university programs, and (3) placed substantial resources for curricular improvements.

For in-service ITP, the BOEs are responsible for the quality delivery of ITP, which includes induction trainings. The Law for Special Regulations Concerning Educational Public Service Personnel (EPSP) sets the minimum guideline for the induction trainings, but the contents and quality of induction trainings vary heavily across the BOEs. In 2008, however, the government has introduced the Professional Graduate Schools for Teacher Education for advanced professional trainings. The professional graduate schools also offer a dialectic space where the in-service teachers and those who have just completed their pre-service teacher preparation jointly generate new ideas on the issues concerning education and schooling.

Ensuring Quality Delivery of ITP Programs

The Educational Personnel Certification Law monitors the universities and university departments that offer the ITP programs by regulating the curriculum contents, institutional organization, faculty credentials and other issues pertaining to teacher preparation. The law, in other words, sets the minimum standards for the pre-service ITP, and the minister of MEXT has the responsibility to administer the standards. In practice, the MEXT sets the Inspection of Teacher Training Program to regularly review the pre-service ITP providers and their program operations.

The MEXT sets the minimum requirements for induction trainings, and the BOEs have autonomy over the delivery and contents of the induction trainings. The EPSP sets the minimum requirements of 10 hours of in-school trainings every week (300 hours or more in the first year), as well as the minimum of 25 days of offsite trainings to the new teachers with a regular contract in their first year.

Certifying and Selecting New Teachers

Teacher candidates completing all required coursework and field practice at the universities and university departments with ITP program would be able to attain teacher's certificates. There is no additional examination at the point of certification, and the BOEs issue the certificate upon a request submitted by the teacher candidates with the proof of their completion of all ITP courses and field practice.

Besides the certification, anyone who wishes to work as a teacher in the public school systems must pass the teacher employment examinations administered by the BOEs. Each BOE sets its specific standards and requirements independently, and the examinations are often very competitive.

Supporting Beginning Teachers

The EPSP defines the structure for providing necessary supports for new teachers. The induction trainings aim to give the new teachers a sense of mission as a teacher and to equip them with practical

instructional skills needed in classrooms. The ESPS mandates the BOEs to organize and provide for the new teachers set throughout their first year.

Chapter 1: Outline of the School Education System

1-1. Teachers and Educational System

1-1-1. Structure of Schooling and the Number of Students

In Japan, the structure of schooling constitutes of three stages: six years of elementary school, three years of junior high school and another three years of senior high school. The first nine years of education (elementary school and junior high school) is compulsory. These three stages of education are structured independent from each other, but there are some schools that have combined multiple stages together in order to strengthen the coherence between different stages of education. Furthermore, the nation's schools are categorized by the body of establishment: national, public (municipal), and private schools.

The Annual Report on School Basic Survey issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) shows that, in 2015, there are 20,601 elementary schools with 6,543,000 students, and 10,484 junior high schools with 3,465,000 students throughout the nation (Table 1 & 2).

Table 1. Total Number of Schools as of 2015

	Elementary Schools	Junior High Schools	Senior High Schools	Secondary Schools*	Special Need Education Schools
National	72	73	15	4	45
Public	20,302	9,637	3,604	31	1,056
Private	227	774	1,320	17	13
Total	20,601	10,484	4,939	52	1,114

* Secondary Schools are the six-year schools introduced in the 1998 revision of the Japanese School Education Law.

Source: Annual Report on School Basic Survey 2015 (MEXT 2015)

Japan is experiencing a shift to an aging society with a consistent decline of birthrate. It is also expected to have a rapid decline of the working population. The population of 18 years old, for example, has decreased almost by half between 1992 (2,050,000) and 2014 (1,180,000). The number of schoolchildren has also been consistently decreasing (Appendix 1), and it has brought restructuring and reorganization of school systems. (Appendix 2).

While the number of students is consistently in decline, the Annual Report on School Basic Survey conducted by MEXT has revealed that the number of foreign students has been increasing. In 2015, there were 45,267 foreign students in elementary schools, and the number was 21,437 in junior high schools. It was 4.4% increase (2,840 students more) from the previous year's statistics.

Table 2. Total Number of Students as of 2015

Type of Schools		Male	Female	Total
Elementary Schools	National	20,030	20,238	40,268
	Public	3,294,164	3,131,590	6,425,754
	Private	33,102	43,980	77,082
	Total	3,347,296	3,195,808	6,543,104
Junior High Schools	National	15,600	15,426	31,026
	Public	1,641,386	1,549,413	3,190,799
	Private	115,832	127,558	243,390
	Total	1,772,818	1,692,397	3,465,215
Senior High Schools	National	4,469	4,154	8,623
	Public	1,135,014	1,133,148	2,268,162
	Private	531,842	510,487	1,042,329
	Total	1,671,325	1,647,789	3,319,114
Secondary Schools (First Stage)	National	746	841	1,587
	Public	5,141	6,078	11,219
	Private	2,379	1,439	3,818
	Total	8,266	8,358	16,624
Secondary Schools (Second Stage)	National	731	824	1,555
	Public	4,664	5,583	10,247
	Private	2,270	1,621	3,891
	Total	7,665	8,028	15,693
Special Need Education Schools	National	1,100	575	1,675
	Public	44,557	23,447	68,004
	Private	153	101	254
	Total	45,810	24,123	69,933

Note: Part-time students are included in High schools and Secondary education schools.

Note: Special need schools includes elementary and junior high school students.

Source: Annual Report on School Basic Survey 2015 (MEXT 2015)

1-1-2. Current State of Teachers

The Boards of Education of prefectures and the ordinance-designated cities¹ (BOEs) is responsible for hiring teachers to work for schools within their jurisdiction. Teachers are employed by the BOEs, and they are commonly assigned to teach in different schools within the BOE's jurisdiction every few years. A teacher's responsibility includes, but not limited to, subject teaching, student guidance, class management, leading school events, leading club activities, career guidance, and other educational affairs. Monitoring and managing student behaviors, even outside a classroom teaching, are also considered to be a part of teachers' responsibility.

¹ The ordinance-designated cities have population roughly over 500,000, and those cities have special rights granted by the government ordinance. Today (2016), there are 20 ordinance-designated cities: Osaka, Nagoya, Kyoto, Yokohama, Kobe, Kitakyushu, Sapporo, Kawasaki, Fukuoka, Hiroshima, Sendai, Chiba, Saitama, Shizuoka, Sakai, Niigata, Hamamatsu, Okayama, Sagami, and Kumamoto City.

New teachers usually start their teaching career as homeroom teachers and/or as subject teachers of their specialized area(s). After gaining more experiences in classroom teaching, those teachers play a role of chief-teachers of a grade who are responsible of managing the group of teachers. Then, they would be promoted to senior teachers who work in support of principals and vice principals. From this point onward, however, teachers must pass the managerial class examinations in order to be promoted to vice principals, head teachers and principals.

MEXT's Annual Report on School Basic Survey shows that, in 2015, there are 417,152 teachers in elementary schools and 253,704 teachers in junior high schools. Furthermore, in 2015, the senior teachers make up 9.8% of teachers in elementary schools, and 8.2% in junior high schools. The breakdowns of teachers by the types of schools and school administrations are shown in Table 3 and 4.

Table 3. Total Number of Teachers as of 2015

Type of Schools		Male	Female	Total
Elementary Schools	National	1,188	632	1,820
	Public	153,544	256,853	410,397
	Private	2,395	2,540	4,935
	Subtotal	157,127	260,025	417,152
Junior High Schools	National	1,084	542	1,626
	Public	134,681	102,266	236,947
	Private	9,397	5,734	15,131
	Subtotal	145,162	108,542	253,704
Senior High Schools	National	405	178	583
	Public	117,649	55,824	173,473
	Private	43,325	17,589	60,914
	Subtotal	161,379	73,591	234,970
Secondary Schools	National	123	81	204
	Public	1,050	572	1,622
	Private	482	201	683
	Subtotal	1,655	854	2,509
Special Need Education Schools	National	718	798	1,516
	Public	30,773	48,342	79,115
	Private	140	134	274
	Subtotal	31,631	49,274	80,905
TOTAL		496,954	492,286	989,240

Note: The number of students for the Senior High Schools includes schools with full-day courses and those with part-time courses

Source: Annual Report on School Basic Survey 2015 (MEXT 2015)

Table 4. Total Number of Teachers in Public Schools by Job Titles

	Elementary Schools	Junior High Schools	Senior High Schools	Secondary Schools	Special Need Education Schools
Principal	19,753	9,263	3,526	30	952
Vice principal	1,765	913	730	17	243
Head teacher	18,592	9,173	4,742	44	1,396
Senior teacher	9,482	6,432	3,457	74	1,209
Instruction teacher	926	588	438	7	163
Teacher	307,678	182,016	144,681	1,334	62,602
Assistant teacher	1,414	343	162	0	298
Nursing teacher	19,762	9,459	4,719	48	1,615
Assistant nursing teacher	1,564	622	516	4	221
Nutrition teacher	3,866	1,208	2	4	358
Instructor	25,595	16,930	10,500	60	10,058
Subtotal	410,397	236,947	173,473	1,622	79,115

Note: Senior High Schools include schools with full-day courses and those with part-time courses.

Note: Besides regular teachers, schools have nursing teachers and nutrition teachers. Nursing teachers are responsible of health education and take care of students' mental and physical health. Nutrition teachers are responsible of nutrition education.

Source: Annual Report on School Basic Survey 2015 (MEXT 2015)

MEXT's survey data (2014) also reveals that 283,000 teachers are over 50 years old, while 185,000 are 40-49 years old, 150,000 are 30-39 years old, and only 84,000 are 20-29 years old in age. The issues surrounding the aging society are also evident amongst the body of teachers in nation's schools. Furthermore, the aging population of teachers has contributed in making the average monthly salary of teachers in high end because teacher's salary is typically on seniority by length of service (Table 5).

Table 5. Average Monthly Salary of Teachers in Public Elementary and Junior High Schools

Job Titles	Monthly Salary (1,000 JPY)	
	Elementary Schools	Junior High Schools
Principal	432.1	434.3
Vice principal	441.9	442.3
Head teacher	409.3	408.7
Senior teacher	400.2	409.0
Instruction teacher	400.1	403.9
Teacher	319.1	328.6

Note: This figure is based on the monthly salary for September 2013, and allowances and adjustments are not included.

Note: In addition to the regular salary, principals and vice principals receive the allowance for their senior positions, which is typically 15-20% of their salary for principals, 15% of their salary for vice principals, and 12.5-15% of their salary for head teachers.

1-2. Structure of Initial Teacher Preparation (ITP)

The Initial Teacher Preparation (ITP) aims to build both pragmatic and theoretical knowledge, as well as practical skills, to teacher candidates. It is also expected to the ITP program to prepare teachers who are able to meet all the responsibilities, such as subject teaching, student-guidance and classroom management, from the first day. There are roughly two stakeholders of ITP: universities and university departments are responsible for the pre-service ITP, and the in-service ITP is held by the BOEs.

1-2-1. Pre-Service ITP

The pre-service ITP is set in the universities and university departments, and thus the bachelor's degree is a standard requirement in addition to the completion of all required ITP courses for anyone to get their teacher's certificate. Individuals with teacher's certification need to pass the teacher employment examinations that are administered by the BOEs if they wish to work in public schools. In order to work in a private school, individuals also need to take the employment examinations, but those examinations are typically administered by individual schools.

Japan adopts the principle of "Open-System" to its pre-service ITP policy (see, 2-1). The Open-System aims to ensure that all universities and university departments, regardless of whether or not they are specialized in teacher preparation or teacher education, can be an ITP provider so long as they meet the minimum requirements set for providing the ITP programs (Appendix 3). In fact, there are 228 universities and university departments (52 national universities, 4 public universities, and 172 private universities) that have been approved to offer ITP programs for preparing elementary school teachers. For preparing junior high school teachers, there are 520 universities and university departments (70 national universities, 41 public universities, and 409 private universities) as of 2014 (Appendix 4).

In 1998, there were the revisions of the Educational Personnel Certification Law (EPCL) and the Ordinance of MEXT in order to make the ITP programs more accountable to prepare quality teachers. In order to respond to the increasing number of cases of school bullying and truant children in the nation, there was a severe public pressure to prepare teachers with a new set of abilities necessary to meet new challenges both in schools and a society. Given such social circumstances, the pre-service ITP curriculum has secured a domain of courses that can be applied to diversify the curricular contents in order to meet complex realities and needs in a society. Furthermore, there was a shift in ITP curriculum from the subject matter knowledge to the learning of the skills and knowledge for counseling and building effective interaction with students. Moreover, the course in psychological and physical developmental process of children with special needs became a mandatory for prospectus teachers to take. Finally, the length of teaching practicum at junior high school was extended from 2 weeks to 4 weeks.

1-2-2. In-Service ITP: Induction Trainings

The Law for Special Regulations Concerning Educational Public Service Personnel mandates the BOEs to provide new teachers with the induction trainings during their first year of appointment. New teachers are placed under a conditional employment during their first year, and the induction trainings are given in this period to give new teachers fundamental knowledge and skills necessary during their first year of teaching. MEXT's annual survey identifies that 13,183 elementary school teachers and 7,894 junior high school teachers were newly hired in 2014; and thus, there were 21,077 teachers who had had their induction trainings in that year. Recent mass-retirement of teachers (see, 1-2-4-3) has led to the mass-recruitment of new teachers. In consequence, the number of teachers participating in the induction trainings has been increasing every year for the last 10 years (Appendix 5).

The recent and prominent trend of the in-service ITP is that there is a shift toward building greater collaboration between universities and the BOEs as a means to advance more coherent ITP. There are examples like the BOEs taking a role in the pre-service ITP, and the university-based ITP programs to offer some of the induction trainings for new teachers.

1-2-3. Teacher Trainings

Fundamental of Educational Act states that teachers are expected to continuously investigate and learn to meet the responsibility as teachers. Therefore, the BOEs offer various trainings, so that teachers can choose the appropriate and necessary trainings depending on their experiences, abilities, and expertise. EPCL mandates all teachers the induction trainings and the 10th-year trainings. There also are the training programs with a long-term social experience, as well as off-school trainings, which include the enrollment to a graduate program to advance one's knowledge and skills.

In 2009, the Certification Renewal System for Education Personnel was introduced to require all teachers to renew their teacher's license every 10 years. Teachers are required to complete the minimum of 30 hours of coursework to renew their certificate. This system aims to give teachers an opportunity to obtain the cutting-edge knowledge and skills to perform well in fast changing society.

At national level, National Center for Teachers' Development (NCTD) plays a role to provide trainings for building core school leaders. NCTD also offers school management trainings for school leaders, such as principals, vice principals, and head teachers. It also provides trainings for instructors and leaders to become able to plan and implement the trainings by the BOEs.

1-2-4. Challenges

1-2-4-1. Improving ITP Program

National efforts have been put on the revitalization of education and economy. There are efforts on reforming the current ITP structures by 2020 to have much more comprehensive ITP structure that links the

teacher preparation, hiring, and the in-service trainings. Immediately after the Second World War, Japan had incorporated the ITP into universities and university departments. This incorporation had substantially contributed in elevating the social status of teaching profession in the past. However, when there has been a dynamic increase in the number of people who go on to higher education, the profession of teaching has been losing its relative status in a society. It is the national priority to secure the social status of teachers in order to attract best candidates into the profession of teaching, and it must be accomplished a priori to other educational reform programs.

In a fast changing complex society, it is expected to schools to play a role in responding to the sophisticated issues and diverse needs of learners. Teachers, therefore, need to build much greater abilities and higher qualifications to meet the demands of fast changing society. Teachers thus are expected to be not only specialists of the subject they are teaching, but also the specialists in learning of teaching and learning.

1-2-4-2. Overwhelming Workload of Teachers

The changes in society and economics in Japan affected the changes in children, families, and communities. These changes complicated and diversified the problems associated with student guidance and special need education at schools.

The number of violent behaviors at elementary schools reached the highest number in 2014. The number of school refusal at elementary and junior high schools has been increasing. Moreover, the number of students who are enrolled in or subject to special need schools or classes or in correspondence courses (about 6.5 of them are found to be special need students) has been increasing.

With these students in a class, the class teachers have been having a difficulty in running the class alone while providing appropriate custom-made education to each individual special need student.

The research results (TALIS2013) show that teachers in Japan spend as much time in teaching as teachers in other countries, but teachers in Japan spend much more time in doing other than teaching, such as students guidance or leading club activities, compared to teachers in Western countries, who spend their majority of time for teaching.

Give the teachers' overloaded work and diversities in classroom, Japanese government sees the need of collaboration and sharing of tasks as a team among teachers and specialists in various fields to improve the educational and organizational forces. The government found it urgently necessary to improve the school environment, where each individual teacher improves their skills and can play their active parts in the team.

1-2-4-3. The influence of mass retirement and mass recruitment

One of the most serious challenges in recent Japanese teacher education is that, due to the influence of mass retirement and mass recruitment, the numbers of teachers with different levels of work experience are

not in balance any more. As a result, the succession of knowledge and skills from senior teachers to newer teachers became to be difficult.

After 1979, the number of newly hired teachers was lowest in 2000 and has been continuously increasing since then. In 2015, the total of 32,244 teachers were hired at public schools, which was 3.2% increase from the previous year.

One out of 5.4 applicants were hired in 2015. After 1979, this acceptance rate was lowest in 2000, and it has been getting better since then.

The research results of TALIS2013 shows that teachers in Japan showed their great interests in participating in the training sessions, while many of them also expressed that their busy work schedule does not allow them participating. The long working hours prevent teachers from developing their skills.

Japanese government finds it urgently necessary to improve the current situation, so that teachers can continuously participate in trainings with high satisfaction. While fully aware of teachers' strengths, we will work on the integral reformation of pre-service teacher education, hiring teachers, and in-service teacher education.

Chapter 2: Attracting Candidates into ITP Programs

2-1. University Based ITP and the Establishment of the “Open-System”

2-1-1. Backgrounds

The nation’s defeat in the Second World War was the pivotal point where Japan made a major reform of its ITP structure. Before the war, the normal schools and the higher normal schools were the only providers of ITP, and they were generally called teachers’ schools. However, these teachers’ schools became a target of criticisms after the war’s end. Teachers under the war have failed to demonstrate their ability to challenge and/or question the nation’s war and wartime propaganda. Having demonstrated an overly uniform thinking in teachers under the war, the postwar reform of the ITP structure focused on bringing diversity into the teaching structures. Hence, the postwar reform of the ITP structure brought two important changes: (1) incorporating the ITP into universities and university departments, and (2) diversifying the ITP providers through “Open-System”.

Through incorporating the ITP program to universities and university departments, the postwar reform aimed to prepare teachers with diverse and rich academic backgrounds. It follows that the general principle of the “Open-System” is to ensure that all universities and university departments meet the minimum requirements to become an ITP provider. In other words, the “Open-System” is applied not only to the universities and university departments specializing in education, but also to any university departments to become an ITP provider. In this respect, the “Open-System” guarantees the ITP programs with diverse scholarly emphasis and backgrounds.

2-1-2. Current Condition

Anyone completing all required ITP coursework receives a Teaching Certificate, and there is no discriminatory hierarchy across the ITP providers. Those who have completed their ITP coursework in one of those universities and university department specializing in education (most of which has a teachers’ school as their predecessor organization) or those who have taken their coursework with the ITP program at other types of universities and departments will be equally certified, without any distinction between the types of ITP providers. In the 2014 fiscal year, for instance, approximately 60% of certifications were issued to those who had completed the ITP program set by the universities and university departments not specializing in education.

Incorporating the ITP to universities and the “Open-System” have contributed in preparing teachers with rich and diverse backgrounds in scholarly knowledge and in personality. Recently, approximately 10% of people who have passed the teacher employment examination have a master’s degree, and the number of teachers with advanced degree is growing. These all contribute in elevating the status of teachers as the profession that is responsible for building up the citizens for a better future.

2-1-3. Challenges

The university-based ITP and the “Open-System” have widened the pathway to become a teacher. However, the greater accessibility to the ITP curriculum has caused a mass-production of teacher candidates, many of whom have no or very little intention to be a teacher. Because the teaching certificate comes after the completion of all required ITP coursework, there has been a practice of registering into the ITP courses merely for collecting the certificate along with their bachelor’s degree (the amount of tuition remains the same regardless the number of credits a student registers in a semester). Therefore, the ITP providers face a challenge to identify and select the candidates who are committed to be teachers in order to deliver a high quality ITP curriculum efficiently.

Research on teacher candidate has confirmed that the ITP coursework has contributed to building a sense of responsibility and a necessary attitude to be a teacher. However, another body of research identified that the learners in the ITP share a sense of shortage in the practical knowledge and skills needed to handle the issues in classroom teaching. These issues are, for example, the method and application of student evaluation, bullying, truancy, classroom management and so on. Furthermore, the studies on the first-year teachers exposed the need for making the ITP more practical. Those studies showed that the majority of the novice teachers feel that they are not well equipped with the practical skills and techniques needed for classroom teaching, and they also lack the knowledge of classroom management and the appropriate practice for student counseling.

As an additional note, the rate of enrollment in higher education has seen a notable increase over the last decade; and many professions began making an advanced degree a requirement at the point of job entry. In consequence, the status of the teaching profession has been experiencing a relative downturn amongst other professional occupations in recent years.

2-2. Improvement of Teacher Status

2-2-1. Backgrounds

Teaching Personnel Development Law (TPDL) was enacted in 1974 as the way to attract the most suitable candidates into the teaching profession. From the late 1950s to the first half of the 1970s, Japan had experienced a rapid economic growth. In consequence, the teaching profession lost its competitiveness in the job market. The TPDL therefore raised the teacher salary by ensuring that the payroll level of teachers is higher than all other equitable levels of civil service positions. The fundamental idea of the TPDL was to defend the quality of the nation’s schools by securing the inflow of teachers who are talented and also competitive in the job market.

2-2-2. Current State

Following the enactment of the TPD, there was a national reform of the payroll system for teachers. The number of applicants in the teacher employment examination increased, and thus the profession of teaching once again regained its competitiveness in the job market. In the fiscal year of 1974, there were 3.5 applicants for every teacher hired, but the number had increased to 5.9 in the fiscal year of 1979.

It is also important to note that the profession of teaching has been one of the rare and substantial professions of choice for the people with higher education who are seeking jobs outside the metropolitan cities and suburbs. Hence, the job security, particularly in rural areas and regional cities, has been one of the greatest attractions that makes the teaching profession competitive in the job market.

2-2-3. Challenges

The TPD sets a preferential condition to the profession of teaching and it made a contribution in increasing the number of teacher applicants. However, the TPD is beginning to lose its impact in attracting the talented and strong teacher candidates in the job market in recent years. The payroll difference between teachers and workers in other civil service positions has been shrinking. People with higher skills and talents seek jobs outside of teaching profession as the job vacancy rate in private sectors has been favorable to job seekers. Furthermore, the growing negative publicity on the working condition of teachers, such as long overtime work, which includes holiday work, has been a major detractor in attracting people into the profession of teaching.

The difficulty in securing talented teachers is severe in metropolitan cities, where their job market offers jobs that are far more competitive than teaches in terms of wages and opportunities. To make the matter worse, the mass retirement of teachers in recent years requires these cities to fill a large number of teacher vacancies. To summarize, there is a growing difficulty in attracting a top candidate to a teaching profession, particularly in metropolitan cities in recent years.

Chapter 3: Selecting the Most Suitable Candidates for ITP Programs

3-1. Selecting Teacher Candidates for ITP Programs

Individuals who wish to enroll into the universities and university departments specializing in ITP have to pass the admission examination(s) organized by each university and/or university department. Those universities and university departments specializing in ITP set a limit to the number of students they admit annually; and thus the competitive admission process serves as the bar for selecting quality candidates for ITP programs.

However, the universities and university departments that are not specializing in ITP can still offer their own ITP programs under the principle of "Open-System (2-1-2)" in Japan's ITP Policy. This type of ITP programs commonly accepts all registered students who wish to take the ITP credits, although they have to pass the general admission examination to the universities. In this type of ITP programs, students would evaluate themselves whether they have the aptitudes needed to be a teacher while completing the ITP coursework. Individuals who have come to realize that the job of teaching is not for them would seek jobs other than teaching, and thus they won't take the teacher's employment examination(s).

ITP programs have a large number of courses, but the number of credits a university student can register for is recommended to be 50 credit-hour or less per year. Therefore, universities and university departments, particularly those not specializing in ITP, usually have a tough work trying to structure the ITP program in a systematic manner while asking their students to fulfill the requirements for their degree program.

ITP provides most commonly a structure for the course of work that starts with theoretical contents, and then moves into practicum and field-teaching. Yet, while there are laws and regulations to put certain standards to the ITP curriculum, the individual ITP providers still have their freedom to organize and develop a unique and/or innovative program to prepare teachers with higher standards.

3-2. Selection through Hiring

The BOEs examine the aptitudes and talents of teacher candidates through the teacher's employment examination(s). This examination takes place once a year, and every BOE sets the evaluation criteria independently, although the set criteria have been quite similar across the BOEs. There are two stages to this examination. First, there is a written examination on scholarly knowledge and skills. Then, the second stage evaluates the aptitudes by simulating lessons, oral interviews and so on. Each BOE sets age restrictions to the examination (Table 6), but the restrictions are being steadily mitigated in recent years.

In 2015, there were 174,976 applicants for teaching positions in public schools (including elementary, junior and senior high schools, schools for special needs, school nurses and school nutritionists). The number of applicants declined by 1.6% (2,844) from the previous year. Appendix VI shows the number of teachers hired by the BOEs categorized by the types of ITP provider.

The Law for Special Regulations Concerning Educational Public Service Personnel (EPSP Law) places the first-year teachers under a conditional employment status. During this period, the BOEs have to evaluate the new teachers before removing their conditional status. In the fiscal year of 2014, 1.07% of teachers under the conditional employment status had failed to meet the standards, and the BOEs revoked their contract by the end of the fiscal year.

Table 6. Age Restrictions for Teacher Employment Exam Applicants

Age Restrictions	No. of BOEs
None	25
Set between 51yo and 58yo	1
Set between 41yo and 50yo	24
Set between 36yo and 40yo	18
Set between 30yo and 35yo	0

MEXT. January 2016

ESPS Law mandates the induction training to all new teachers with a regular-term contract while they are still placed under the conditional employment status. The law also requires the assignment of a mentor teacher for every new teacher with a regular-term contract. Mentor teachers are selected from vice principals, head teachers, or veteran teachers who work at the school where a new teacher is placed.

3-3. Non-Traditional Pathway

Almost 35% of the new teachers come straight from the university-based ITP programs. Individuals who have work experience in private sector and/or professions other than teaching constitute approximately 5% of new teachers. The rest of 60%, of new teachers come with teaching experience (most of them had worked as a teacher with temporary- or non-regular contract before passing the teacher's employment examinations).

Chapter 4: Equipping Prospective Teachers with the Right Mix of What Teachers Need to Know and Do

4-1. The Structure of ITP Curriculum

Universities with an ITP program is responsible for offering the pre-service trainings consisting of a set of classes authorized by law. By taking these classes, prospective teachers are expected to grow and earn necessary knowledge and skills. The classes listed under the ITP program can be largely classified as “subjects matter,” “educational theory and pedagogy,” “subject matters or pedagogy,” and “other required (e.g. the Constitution of Japan)” classes. Table 7, 8 and 9 show the numbers of credit hours that prospective teachers have to take depending on types of schools (elementary, junior or senior high schools) and licenses (first class, second class, or special).

Table 7. Requirements for Attaining Teacher’s License (Elementary Schools)

License	Basic Requirements	Required minimum credit hours		
		Subject Matters	Ed Theory & Pedagogy	Subject Matters or Pedagogy
Specialization License	Master degree	8	41	34
First Class License	Undergraduate degree	8	41	10
Second Class License	Degree from 2-year colleges	4	31	2

Source: MEXT. Educational Personnel Certification Law and Its Enforcement Regulations

Table 8. Requirements for Attaining Teacher’s License (Junior High Schools)

License	Basic Requirements	Required minimum credit hours		
		Subject Matters	Ed Theory & Pedagogy	Subject Matters or Pedagogy
Specialization License	Master degree	20	31	32
First Class License	Undergraduate degree	20	31	8
Second Class License	Degree from 2-year colleges	10	21	4

Source: MEXT. Educational Personnel Certification Law and Its Enforcement Regulations

Table 9. Requirements for Attaining Teacher’s License (Senior High Schools)

License	Basic Requirements	Required minimum credit hours		
		Subject Matters	Ed Theory & Pedagogy	Subject Matters or Pedagogy
First Class License	Undergraduate degree	20	23	40
Second Class License	Degree from 2-year colleges	20	23	16

Source: MEXT. Educational Personnel Certification Law and Its Enforcement Regulations

The classes that are offered as a part of the subject-matter classes should allow prospective teachers to earn necessary knowledge and skills as teachers. Here is the break-down of the class contents.

➤ Significance and Purpose of Being a Teacher:

Courses under this category should cover “significance and purpose of being a teacher,” “teachers’ jobs and responsibilities (including trainings, duties, and status, and so on),” and “the job to provide students with opportunities associated with career choices.” These classes are designed to be taken at the fairly initial stage of ITP program and encourage prospective teachers to deliberate their motivation and fit as teachers.

➤ Theories on Teaching and Learning:

Courses under this category should cover, “fundamental principles of education and education history and philosophy,” “students’ physical and psychological development and the learning processes (including students with special needs),” and “social, institutional, and managerial matters in relationship with education.” Together, these classes focus on theories based on pedagogy and educational psychology.

➤ Curriculum and Pedagogy:

Courses under this category cover, “curriculum organization and design,” “pedagogical knowledge for teaching subject matter contents,” “pedagogical knowledge for teaching moral education,” “pedagogical knowledge for extra-curricular activities,” and “methods and technology for teaching.” The instruction of these courses employs mock lessons and other methods to develop practical skills and knowledge for classroom teaching.

➤ Instructional Guidance, Educational Counseling and Career Guidance

Courses under this category should cover “theories and methods of student guidance,” “theories and methods of educational counseling (including the basic knowledge about counseling)” and “theories and methods of career counseling. Prospective teachers not only learn how to approach bullying, school refusal, and delinquency, but also learn theories and practices that support students’ noble and healthy developments.

➤ Field Practice / Teaching Practice:

Prospective teachers experience the subject guidance and student guidance at schools and earn practical knowledge and skills. The length of teaching practice varies from 2 to 4 weeks, depending on school types and methods of teaching practice.

➤ Practicum on Teaching Profession:

Practicum is the conclusive class of the ITP that is set before the certification. This class should cover “mission, responsibilities, and educational affection expected to teaching profession,” “sociality and interpersonal relationship skills,” “understanding children and class management,” and “abilities to teach subjects or nurse children.” Each university develops its original system in which the prospective teachers make a good use of the “credit record (a list of ITP courses)” and the “self-evaluation sheet (self-evaluation on necessary knowledge and skills)”, so that the prospective teachers can review their progress while completing the ITP requirements. These seminars function as a transit for prospective teachers to smooth into the teaching job.

4-2. Field Teaching Practice, Hands-on Activities and Welfare/Nursing Care Experience

4-2-1. Field Teaching Practice

The prospective teachers typically complete their teaching practice at the schools with an affiliation to the universities and university departments with the ITP programs or at the public schools in the cities or prefectures where the prospective teachers’ universities are at, or at schools where they are graduated from. During the practice, the prospective teachers are assigned to specific classes.

Teaching practice consists of observation practice and teaching practice. The prospective teachers observe the model classes as well as writing lesson plans and giving lessons. There is no set number of class hours that prospective teachers have to teach, and it is the host schools and advising teachers’ discretion. Typically, at the end of teaching practice, the prospective teachers give “demonstration lessons,” which quality is highly associated with the evaluation of the entire teaching practice.

The prospective teachers not only teach their specialized subjects, but also play a role in class management, student guidance, moral education, special activities, comprehensive learning hours, guidance for school lunch, cleaning, and club activities, and all other daily works.

Educational Personnel Certification Law required prospective teachers to do “teaching practice” for 2 to 4 weeks, depending on school types and methods. To maximize the learning both at universities and teaching practices and theoretical connection between them, universities offer a pre- and a post- teaching practice classes (1 credit per class) at universities.

Universities typically have a joint council that functions to maintain close, positive, and collaborative relationship between universities and host schools (and boards of education, in case the host schools are public schools) where prospective teachers complete their teaching practices. University faculty members often visit the host schools to support the prospective teachers’ learning.

Some local governments and the boards of education choose to specify the policies and requirements that schools in their community have for accepting prospective teachers as student teachers. This is a beneficial choice for local governments as it results in securing the excellent personnel especially when we are facing mass hiring.

Universities have the last word in evaluating the teaching practices, while they will refer to the evaluation done by advising teacher at hosting schools. There is no specific qualification or training to complete to be appointed as advising teachers. However, teachers of medium standing to veterans tend to play a role of advising teachers.

4-2-2. Other Hands-on Activities and Welfare/Nursing Experience

Given the fact that teachers have been expected to have higher abilities and resources, universities offer original hands-on activities that allow prospective teachers to develop their abilities in staged and systematic way from the entrance to graduation, in addition to teaching practice set by School Teacher's License Act. These activities include a semi-teaching-practice at public or chartered schools or educational activities at schools other than regular subjects (e.g. after-school programs to support students' learning) or at social educational facilities. They can also be activities sponsored by private organizations or NPOs where prospective teachers are expected to understand children and cultivate social recognition through interactions with children.

Starting in 1998, "Welfare/Nursing Experience" are required for prospective teachers. This requirement was introduced by the National Diet members in order to build compassion for others and awareness of diverse values. The ideal numbers of days spent for hands-on activities are set as 2 days at special need education schools and 5 days at social welfare facilities.

4-3. Autonomous Quality Assurance Practice in University-Based ITP

4-3-1. General Trend and Some Examples

The National Institute for Educational Policy Research (NIEPR) has identified in its 2013 Report that the universities that autonomously make efforts to reform on their ITP program generally performing better in terms of preparing high quality teachers. It is particularly true for those universities making concerted efforts on reforming (1) the program organization, (2) curriculum relevance, and (3) the contents of their ITP curriculum.

First, the structural (re)organization of ITP program often deliver notable improvements to the outcomes of their ITP program. Due to the principle of "open system," many universities have multiple ITP programs that are independently organized and operated by individual departments. The structural (re)organization generally means to place all ITP programs within the university under one administrative body as an umbrella; so that it is possible to allocate limited resources and yet attain an effective and efficient delivery of ITP curriculum.

Second, there are efforts to make the ITP curriculum relevant to developing the kind of teacher needed in classrooms. Many universities set standards to define the competencies required for high quality teachers, such as: (1) Teachers with an ability for higher level of learning that is based on the theoretical and empirical

understanding of learning and learners; (2) Teachers with pedagogical content knowledge that are supported by the higher content knowledge of the subjects they teach; and (3) Teachers who are continuous learners and who have an ability to reflect on their own teaching practice.

Third, the universities with a high performing ITP program commonly engender autonomous reform efforts by developing additional, sometimes unique, curriculum contents for ITP program beyond what is required by law. In fact, there is no legislative regulation to forbid the ITP providers from adding on additional requirements to their ITP curriculum. Some universities and university departments set up additional courses/requirements in their ITP program in order to better equip their students with advanced skills and knowledge needed for teachers in the fast changing society. Some ITP programs put more practice hours to their ITP curriculum to prepare teachers who are ready to teach in a classroom.

The followings are some examples of university-initiated efforts to ensure the preparation of high quality teachers: Miyagi University of Education, for example, has introduced several programs emphasizing certain areas of education in order to exhibit a concrete and organic link between theory and practice in their ITP curriculum. The education for disaster prevention, as an additional program in the ITP curriculum, for example, gives a space to think about teaching and learning in post-Tohoku Earthquake reality. Furthermore, today's teachers need to teach in a global society where diverse value-systems are present. Hence, Shimane University is making an effort to internationalize its ITP curriculum in order to equip teachers with a critical thinking skill. Okayama University has successfully brought together all independently organized ITP programs within the university under one umbrella system through employing the concept of "Education for Sustainable Development". Then, Shinshu University has implemented an internship program to cultivate awareness that reflection is a vital tool for teaching. This internship program also serves for faculty development when the faculty members help their student-teachers sublimate their internship experience into the abstraction of knowledge.

4-3-2. Quality Assurance Measures

The ITP providers commonly employ two approaches to ensure the quality of their own practices and the outcome: curriculum management and faculty development. Every ITP provider is expected to observe and analyze what is needed for the teachers, particularly in a fast changing society. Therefore, each ITP provider is responsible for evaluating the curriculum on whether or not the current practices can adequately equip teachers to meet a challenge when teaching in a classroom. The previously mentioned examples of four universities suggest that each university-based ITP provider makes independent efforts in reforming their ITP curriculum and its delivery approach, according to what they saw necessary to tomorrow's teachers.

The Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation is mandated to all universities every seven years. The university-based ITP programs are also evaluated as a part of this institutional evaluation.

However, it must be noted that this institutional evaluation is not specifically designed for evaluating the ITP programs. Therefore, it does not provide a sufficient measurement to examine whether a particular ITP program is adequate enough in equipping teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge.

For regulating the ITP providers at the entry point, there are the accreditation standards that settle the minimum requirements for providing the ITP. In addition to the accreditation standards, there is an effort to introduce the peer-review system in evaluating the ITP programs. This peer-review system aims to improve the overall quality of ITP programs by making all ITP providers accountable for evaluating each other's practice and outcomes.

Moreover, there are three independent associations for the university-based ITP providers: Japan Association of Universities of Education (for the ITP providers of national universities), the National Council for Research on Teacher Preparation Programs of Private Universities (for the ITP providers of private universities), and Japan Association of Municipal and Prefectural Colleges and Universities (for the ITP providers of municipal and prefectural universities). These associations meet to exchange policy information and make policy proposals on ITP.

4-4. Establishment of Professional Graduate Schools for Teacher Education

In 2008, the MEXT initiated the introduction of the Professional Graduate Schools for Teacher Education to supplement to the existing ITP programs. It was intended to (1) offer advanced learning and practical experience to apply the knowledge and skills obtained in the university-based ITP, and (2) prepare the in-service teachers to take a leadership in both schools and community. It is also important to note that the graduate schools work as a medium that brings together both the in-service teachers and pre-service teachers (who just earned their teaching certificates). Graduate schools thus provide a space where they collaborate to advance their knowledge and skills and become high quality teachers.

There are 45 Professional Graduate Schools for Teacher Education, and they are located in 38 prefectures (out of 49 prefectures). A large majority of them is set in the national universities, and only six are set in private universities. The total enrollment capacity for the Professional Graduate Schools for Teacher Education is 1,224 (1,054 at the national universities and 170 in the private universities) in 2016.

4-5. Additional Measures

There is a set of standards for the individuals teaching in the ITP programs. These standards include, but are not limited to, academic credentials, research records (publications, presentations and other related practices in their teaching areas). If faculty members' records fail to satisfy the standards, those ITP programs will not be accredited (or will not have their accreditation renewed). Therefore, all university-based ITP providers are highly concerned about applicants' credentials when hiring new faculty personnel.

Faculty development efforts are also critical not only for supporting faculty intellectual productivity but also for strengthening their academic and instructional skills for a better delivery of ITP. Some ITP providers also provide the field-learning experiences in schools as a part of faculty development programs. In fact, the number of practitioners in the ITP programs has been rising rapidly, part of faculty development efforts to make a stronger connection between theory and practice in teaching.

In addition to the university-based ITP, some BOEs have introduced a prep-school for teacher preparation as a supplementary ITP program. This prep-school style ITP program offers to students who are currently enrolled in the university-based ITP programs an additional opportunity to gain practical and pragmatic skills for classroom instruction.

For in-service novice teachers (with a regular contract), BOEs provide systematic induction training programs, which include both on-site training and off-site trainings. Every novice teacher has a mentor teacher assigned to work together with during their first year of teaching (see Chapter 5 & 7). However, the mass retirements of baby boomers have resulted into a large inflow of new teachers in recent years. Therefore, every BOE is currently facing difficulties in finding veteran teachers to work as mentors to novice teachers.

For an additional note, there is no legal provision that defines explicitly what should constitute a teacher's talent or skills. The issue has been discussed in the Central Council for Education, and the Council's Report has elaborated what are the talents and skills required for teachers. Recently, however, there is a political pressure for making explicit standards for teachers in different career stages, and the BOEs and ITP providers work in collaboration to draft these standards.

Chapter 5: Ensuring Quality Delivery of ITP Programs

Universities and university departments are responsible for providing the Pre-Service ITP, while the Board of Education (BOE) of each prefecture is responsible for the In-Service ITP.

5-1. Ensuring Quality Delivery for Pre-Service ITP Programs

5-1-1. Ensuring Quality through Accreditation Structure at the Point of Implementation of the ITP

Curriculum

In 1953, the Educational Personnel Certification Law (EPCL) was reformed, and it introduced the Accreditation Structure to the Pre-Service ITP. EPCL requires universities and university departments offering the ITP program to have their courses pertaining to teacher preparation to be approved by the Minister of MEXT. The accreditation structure ensures the minimum standards for the pre-service teacher preparation program that are shared by all ITP providers. Today, the Minister of MEXT gives the final approval of the application for setting up the ITP program after it is being reviewed by the Accreditation Board within the Subcommittee on Teacher Preparation, which is set under the Central Council for Education.

The Accreditation Board constitutes of 21 members, and all of them are university professors (four of them are temporary members) as of May 29th, 2015. The board members evaluate each application submitted by the universities and university departments intending to set up an ITP program, based on the criteria listed on Table 10.

Table 10. Major Evaluation Criteria for the Pre-Service ITP Program

Relevance between the institution's goals and the types of teaching certificate the proposed ITP program intends to issue.
Proposed ITP curriculum and the apparatus for its delivery.
Faculty organization for the appropriate delivery of ITP curriculum
Institutional facility (including the library)
Structural condition and feasibility of providing the field practice of teaching
Institution's rules and regulations

While the accreditation structure has contributed to maintain the minimum standards for the ITP curriculum to ensure its quality, it is neither designed to control the number of ITP providers nor to select quality candidates at the entry point of the program. In 2014, for example, the number of universities offering the ITP program reached to 607, and it represented over 80% of all 752 universities in the nation.

5-1-2. Ensuring Quality through Accreditation Structure after the Establishment of the ITP Program

MEXT sets the Inspection of Teacher Training Program (ITTP) to regularly review the Pre-Service ITP providers and their operation. ITTP aims to maintain and improve the quality of ITP curriculum and its

delivery, and the inspection is carried out by two board members from the Accreditation Board of the Subcommittee on Teacher Preparation. The inspection reports are made available on MEXT web (www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/koutou/kyoin/).

To ensure the quality delivery of the Pre-Service ITP under the accreditation structure, teacher preparation programs are encouraged to offer faculty development trainings. Professional Graduate Schools for Teacher Education, for example, push the efforts in hiring teacher educators with a rich experience in field-teaching as an approach to ensure the quality delivery of ITP contents.

Furthermore, implementation of external review to examine and thus ensure the quality of ITP programs is its underway. In 2014, MEXT has revised its ordinance that has mandated all Pre-Service ITP providers to disclose the following information to the public: (1) goals set for the ITP program, (2) the number of faculty and its organization for ITP program, (3) credentials and professional achievements of each faculty members, (4) courses offered in the ITP program, (5) the number of graduates attaining teaching certificates, and (6) the ratio of graduates hired as a teacher.

5-1-3. Challenges

The accreditation structure, while it aims to secure the minimum standards for ITP curriculum, has also cultivated a notion that ITP is an appendix curriculum to bachelor's degree programs. Hence, universities were not enthusiastic about making teacher preparation as a part of full-fledged bachelor's degree program. Consequently, little internal efforts were made in critiquing and building the higher standards for ITP within the ITP providers; and instead, it became a habit for many ITP providers to obey the external guidelines given and/or to respond the transitory social atmospheres.

5-2. Professional Graduate Schools for Teacher Education: Connecting between Pre-Service and In-Service ITP

The 2007 Ordinance of MEXT introduced the Professional Graduate Schools for Teacher Education as a new type of ITP provider that brought together the Pre-Service ITP and the In-Service ITP. The Institute for the Evaluation of Teacher Education (IETE) evaluates the Professional Graduate Schools every five years, and the evaluation reports are published on IETE's website. IETE has 26 members (as of January 2016): 16 from universities, 6 from schools and BOEs, and 4 members are from PTA and other social, cultural, economic sectors.

5-3. Ensuring Quality in Induction Stage (In-Service ITP for the First-Year Teachers)

The Induction training for new teachers is organized by the Board of Education (BOE) of each prefecture. MEXT sets the guideline for the minimum hours required for induction training: that is, 10 hours/week or more for on-site training (a total 300 hours or more in the first year of teaching) and 25 days

or more for off-site training. Because every BOE is autonomous when planning its induction training, there are no criteria or a set standard common across the nation.

Furthermore, the majority of BOEs provides induction trainings only to the teachers with a full appointment. Therefore, those teachers with a contract-based appointment (teachers who have not passed the hiring examinations) usually have no or little systemic induction training in their first year of teaching.

Chapter 6: Certifying and Selecting New Teachers

6-1. Issuing a Teacher's Certificate

The BOEs issue teaching certificates to all individuals who have met all the following requirements: (1) have an associate's, bachelor's or higher degree, (2) attained all ITP credits required by the Educational Personnel Certification Law (EPCL), and (3) applied for a teaching certificate to the appropriate BOE office. The BOEs gives no additional qualification examination to the applicants at the time of applying for the certificates.

There is a distinguished teaching certificate for each school level/type: kindergartens, elementary schools, junior and senior high schools, and the "special needs" education. For junior and senior high school teachers, the certificates are also classified by subject areas of teaching. Furthermore, depending on the number of courses completed or on the academic degree earned, there are three levels of certification: Specialized, First-Class and Second-Class Teaching Certification. In the fiscal year of 2013, the BOEs issued 208,237 certificates throughout Japan. There were 28,307 (13.6%) certificates issued for teaching in elementary schools, and 52,873 (25.4%) certificates were issued for teaching in junior high schools (Table 11).

The BOEs, upon receiving the application materials, examine the propriety of the applicant's degree and ITP course credits to check if all the requirements are met to grant the types of teaching certificate(s) requested in the application. The accreditation structure (see 5-1), however, ensures that all Pre-Service ITP providers have met the minimum standards required; and thus, except very rare cases, everyone who completed their ITP courses at the accredited institutions would receive their teaching certificates along with their degree certificate.

Table 11. Total Number and Types of Teacher's Certificate Issued in 2013

	Specialized	First Class	Second Class	Total
Kindergarten	234	15,777	28,423	44,434
Elementary School	1,680	22,454	4,173	28,307
Junior High School	5,168	45,478	2,227	52,873
Senior High School	6,625	60,484	—	67,109
Schools for Special Needs Ed.	263	4,372	4,842	9,477
Nursing (School Nurse)	119	2,953	1,623	4,695
School Nutritionist	19	1,377	825	2,221
Special Programs for Assisting Self-Reliance for Special Needs Education	—	58	4	62
TOTAL	14,108	152,953	42,117	208,237

Note: Not including the number of special certificates and temporary certificate
[Data checked by the Educational Personnel Division, MEXT]

6-2. Alternative Route to Become a Teacher

In order to enrich school education with diverse learning opportunities in the fast changing society, a unique set of requirements is established, so that people with excellent knowledge and rich experiences in teachings are encouraged to apply and be hired, even when they have no formal pre-service ITP. Two alternative pathways are set for those people without a formal training required by the EPCL to become a teacher.

The Special Certification Measure is one of the alternative pathways to work as a teacher. Individuals applying for the special certificate must pass the certification examinations administered by the BOEs. The applicants also need to meet the following conditions to be considered as candidates for the special certification examinations: (1) have professional knowledge, skills and experiences in the field of which they will be teaching, and (2) having respectable character and social confidence. In 2002, the requirement of having a bachelor's or higher degree was removed from the list of requirements.

MEXT sets another alternative pathway to become a teacher by offering an opportunity to take a licensee examination for the teaching certificates. The applicants must have both knowledge and skills needed to be teachers. Then, they need to pass a written examination, a practical examination and an oral examination to earn the teaching certificate. The applicants passing the examinations can earn the Second-Class Teaching Certificates for teaching in kindergarten and elementary schools or the First-Class Teaching Certificate for teaching in the Schools for Special Needs Education on the subject of Special Programs for Assisting Self-Reliance.

6-3. Hiring of New Teachers

Teachers in Japan are categorized into three groups based on their employment status. The largest in proportion is the teachers with a regular appointment, who have passed the hiring examinations given by BOEs. Hiring examinations includes, but are not limited to, a written examination, a practical examination and interviews. Hiring is a prerogative of each prefecture's BOE, and thus every BOE gives its own hiring examinations. In contrast, both the national schools and private schools allow a direct hiring of teachers by schools themselves. In recent years, the selection of new teachers began shifting to emphasize on social skills and personality more than their academic excellence. As noted in 3-2, new teachers will be put on probationary status in their first year of employment.

Lecturer is the second category of teachers and they have a full-time employment as teacher yet only with a one-year appointment. Their appointment, therefore, is reviewed and renewed every year. Lecturers are hired when schools need more teachers than the nationally regulated number of teachers in each school for the effective delivery of their curriculum.

The third category of teachers are the part-time lecturers, who are working hourly. Their work hours and responsibilities are individually arranged by the needs and conditions of the schools.

Chapter 7: Supporting Beginning Teachers

7-1. Structural Framework on Induction Program

Law for Special Regulations Concerning Educational Public Service Personnel prescribes the structure for providing supports for newly recruited teachers. Teachers gain knowledge and skills throughout their career, and thus professional development programs need to be coherently set to support teachers in various stages of their career. Therefore, the induction program for newly recruited teachers is organized as a part of larger coherent professional development programs.

Teacher induction trainings aim to prepare newly recruited teachers with practical instructional skills and a sense of mission as teachers. The BOEs in each prefecture provides a year-long induction training, and newly recruited teachers must complete the program while teaching classes in their schools.

MEXT sets following guidelines for teacher induction trainings:

- The BOEs needs to provide the onsite (in-school) training/workshop for newly recruited teachers at least 10 hours/week and at least 300 hours/year. Furthermore, the BOEs provides approximately 25 days of off-site (outside the school setting) trainings to new teachers by the end of their first year.
- OJT (on the job training) and lesson study are the common methods applied for onsite trainings.
- The off-site trainings are: 1) theoretical and practical courses offered at the Center for Education of each prefecture; 2) occupational experience at social service sectors and/or business sectors; 3) volunteer service experience and so on. The BOEs of each prefecture also sets various types of training programs independently.

7-2. Present State and Challenges

Japan is currently undergoing the mass retirement of teachers of baby-boomers. This situation hinders the occupational culture of induction practice provided by senior and more experienced teachers to novice teachers. In 2013, teachers with less than five years of teaching experience constitute approximately 20% of all teaching staffs, and it was 2.5 times larger than the percentage of teachers with 11 to 15 years of teaching experience (approximately 8%).

The proportion of novice teachers is increasing in Japan. It is thus said that novice teachers are shouldering far too much of a burden than they can handle in their first year of teaching experience. Since newly recruited teachers need to teach classes and undergo the entire induction trainings, there are concerns on both efficiency and effectivity of the current structure of induction trainings.

For onsite trainings, the BOEs select and assign a base institution as well as an experienced teacher, as a supervisor providing of a guidance and training, to every new teacher. These experienced teachers are

responsible for providing trainings to new teachers in their school and other neighboring schools. However, the following dilemmas are reported about the onsite trainings:

- Many supervisors experience a difficulty in holding a conference with a new teacher. Setting enough meetings to give a timely guidance to new teachers is difficult for both supervisors and new teachers.
- The school administrators sometimes leave the induction trainings and guidance to the supervisors assigned by the BOE for every new teacher. Hence, there are cases that schools are failed to recognize their responsibility in providing institutional supports for newly recruited teachers.

7-3. Reform Measures

Following reform efforts are being considered by the BOE in many prefectures in order to make schools and school administrators conscious of their responsibility in building a support for teacher development and teacher induction trainings.

- Providing tools and resources that would ensure the attainment of know-hows for more effective trainings.
- Providing additional training programs for school administrators and the supervisors who are assigned to support newly recruited teachers.
- Reinstating the need for greater communication and peer guidance among teachers in order to ensure newly recruited teachers much needed opportunity for OJT and reflections of their practice.
- In addition to the improvements made to the onsite training programs, provideing off-site training programs utilizing active learning programs on practical issues in teaching (introducing more programs on mock lesson, practice oriented learning, etc).
- Encouraging collaborations with universities in organizing and delivering teacher induction trainings in order to gain diverse and objective perspectives, as well as to respond the complex issues in global society.

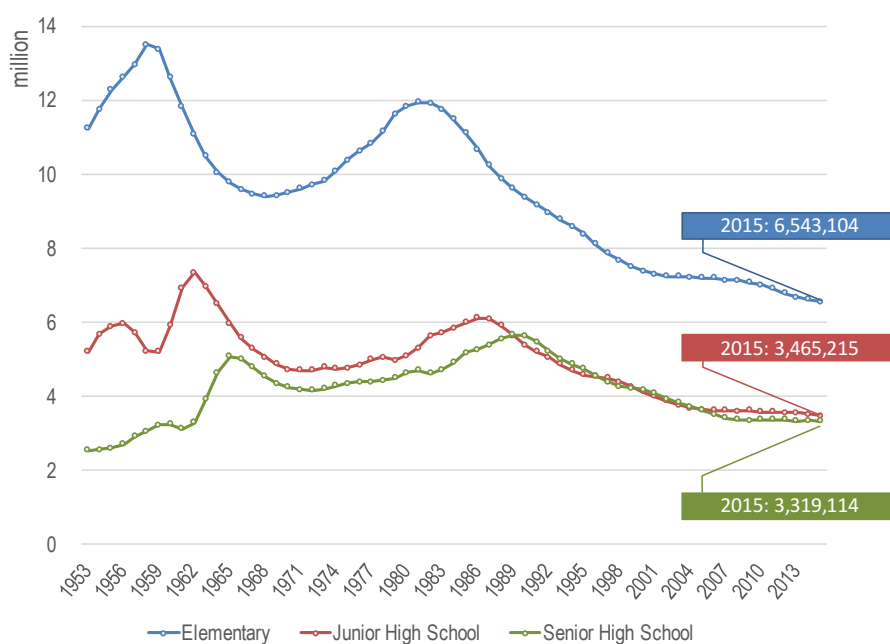
In some prefectures, the BOEs set up the cramming schools for teacher candidates in order to ensure the fundamental knowledge and skills of their teacher candidates and also to ease the induction process from the stage of teacher preparation at the universities. In this process, teacher candidates get a hands-on-experience at the school where they are likely to be assigned after they pass the hiring exam.

Furthermore, in many prefectures, the BOEs have extended the duration of teacher induction trainings from one-year to two to three-year trainings. The extended programs have shown positive effects on the

induction process of newly recruited teachers. In addition to the BOEs and their induction programs, some private organizations and local communities are providing programs for teacher development; and thus teachers today are getting more options than ever before to meet their need for professional trainings.

APPENDIX

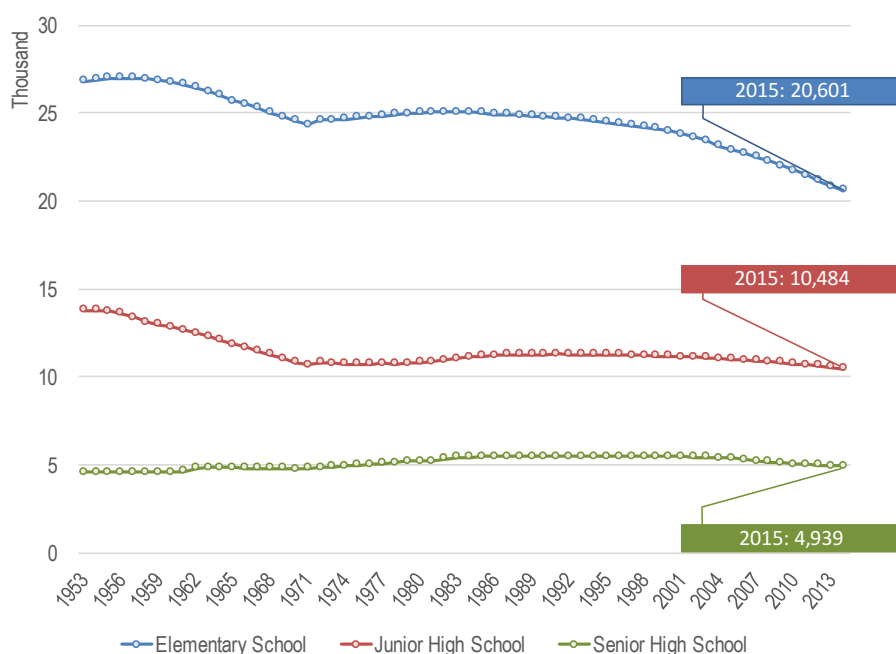
- Appendix 1: Total Number of Students: 1953-2015
- Appendix 2: Total Number of Schools: 1953-2015
- Appendix 3: Educational Background of Teachers
- Appendix 4: Total Number of Teacher’s Certificates Issued in 2013: Categorized by the Types of ITP Institutions
- Appendix 5: Total Number of Teachers in Induction Training: 2004 & 2009-2014
- Appendix 6: Total Number of Teachers Hired in 2015: Categorized by the Types of ITP Institutions



Appendix 1: Total Number of Students: 1953-2015

Total number of students enrolled in national, municipal, and private schools.

Source: MEXT (2016). *Report on School Basic Survey*.



Appendix 2: Total Number of Schools: 1953-2015

Total number of students enrolled in national, municipal, and private schools.

Source: MEXT (2016). *Report on School Basic Survey*.

Appendix 3: Educational Background of Teachers

		Univ. & Univ. Dept. Specialized in T.E.		Univ. & Univ. Dept. Not Specialized in T.E.			
		Graduate	Under-graduate	Graduate	Under-graduate	Junior Colleges	Other
Elementary Schools	National	13.5	66.4	2.8	13.2	3.7	0.3
	Public	2.7	54.7	0.4	30.5	10.8	0.7
	Private	5.3	33.2	6	49.3	5.7	0.6
	Total	2.8	54.5	0.5	30.6	10.8	0.7
Junior High School	National	17.6	45.5	5.6	28.1	2.9	0.3
	Public	3.6	35.4	2.2	52.9	5.6	0.3
	Private	4.1	12.3	18.4	63.3	1.6	0.2
	Subtotal	3.7	34.0	3.2	53.4	5.3	0.3

Note Extraction survey of teachers (Principals, Vice-Principals, Teachers, Lecturers, School Nurses, School Nutritionists)
[Checked by MEXT, Educational Personnel Division]

Appendix 4: Total Number of Teacher's Certificates Issued in 2013: Categorized by the Types of ITP**Institutions**

	Degree Prog.	of Individuals Attained Teacher's Certificate	%	Univ. & Univ. Dept. Specialized in T.E.	Univ. & Univ. Dept. Not Specialized	Other Public & Private Univ.
Certificate for Elementary School Teaching	Graduate School		6.0		5	0.3
	Univ. Dept.	21,618	90.9	41.2	1.4	48.3
	Junior Colleges		3.1	—	—	—
Certificate for Junior High School Teaching	Graduate School		9.1	3.9	1.8	3.4
	Univ. Dept.	47,465	89.2	22.2	6.4	60.6
	Junior Colleges		1.7	—	—	—

Note: Total number of individuals who have attained their Teacher's Certification at the point of completion of their college/university degree programs in the fiscal year of 2013.

[Checked by MEXT, Educational Personnel Division]

Appendix 5: Total Number of Teachers in Induction Training: 2004, 2009-2014

	2004	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Elementary Schools	10,170	11,607	11,841	12,044	12,783	13,072	13,183
Junior High School	4,457	6,270	6,603	7,421	7,603	7,904	7,894

NOTE: Total number of teachers in induction training equals to the number of individuals hired for teaching position in public schools (both elementary schools and junior high schools) with a regular contract. However, teachers who have previous experience in teaching in national, municipal, or private schools more than one consecutive year will be exempt from the mandated induction training when they are approved by the responsible BOEs.

Source: MEXT, Educational Personnel Division.

Appendix 6: Total Number of Teachers Hired in 2015: Categorized by the Types of ITP Institutions

	Graduate School		Univ. & Univ. Dept. Specialized in T.E.		Univ. & Univ. Dept. not Specialized in T.E.		Junior Colleges and Others		TOTAL
Elementary Schools	853	(5.9 %)	4,761	(33 %)	8,376	(58 %)	365	(2.5 %)	14,355
Junior High School	912	(11 %)	2,041	(24 %)	5,361	(64 %)	97	(1.2 %)	8,411

NOTE 1 : Data shown represents the number of teachers hired in the period between April 1st, 2015 and June 1st, 2015.

NOTE 2: The category under the "Junior College" includes individuals who have attained the certificate from Junior Colleges, Designated Teacher Training Organizations, and individuals with high school diploma.

Source: MEXT (2016). *Examples of Efforts for Improving Hiring and Training Practices of Teachers*.

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