

# Teacher Training and Development Policy in Korea

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The quality of education depends on the quality of teachers. Therefore the securing of qualified teachers is the most important factor in determining the success or failure of education. From a historical point of view, however, the teacher training policy in Korea has only focused on quantitative aspects. In particular, the secondary school teacher training system has failed to attract a selected manpower to the teaching profession.

Since the middle of 1980's, every attempt has been made to enhance the quality of education. The Presidential Commission on Education Reform announced education reform plans four times. Among them total 16 reform tasks are related to teacher training policy.

For the successful accomplishment of education reform, we should overcome the discontinuation of the education reform activities. We should not break with the existing education reform activities by establishing a new education reform organization whenever a new president appears. Also, the teachers, who are the main body of education reform, must participate actively in the reform movement. In order to motivate teachers to take part in the education reform, evaluation and accreditation system for teacher training institute should be introduced as soon as possible. The improvement of socio-economic status of teacher and the reduction of their burdens must be realized simultaneously in order for teachers to conduct their teaching profession with pride. As a part of the effort for this, raising the main body of secondary teacher training to the graduate school level should also be considered.

**KEY WORDS** : teacher training system, teacher training policy reform, the Presidential Commission on Education Reform

## **I. Introduction**

From a historical point of view, the teacher training policy in Korea has only focused on quantitative aspects. Therefore, because of the insufficient efforts to enhance teacher's quality and profession, the teacher training institute was built and the freshman quota was determined. As a result, sometimes there

were a large number of teachers unappointed owing to the oversupply of teachers and sometimes there was a shortage of teachers.

Primary school teachers have been produced mainly from eleven education universities since Han Sung Normal School was built in 1895. On the other hand, secondary school teachers have been produced mainly by national institutes since the College of Education in Seoul National University was established in 1946. In 1951 private education colleges were approved as a nongovernmental educational institute to complement the national teacher training system. In 1955, by establishing a course of study for the teaching profession in the general university, an open teacher training system was introduced. At present, the colleges of education which form the keynote of secondary school teacher training are composed of 13 public institutes and 29 private institutes.

Pluralistic secondary teacher training institutes have weakened the specialty of teaching profession and upset the plan of teacher demand and supply by producing too many reserved teachers. As there is no definite law enforcement that specify *their curriculum*, there exist *great qualitative differences among teacher training institutes in their completeness, condition, and staff*. Also as there is no national control over qualification requirements of new teachers, the quality of teachers and the authority of the teacher certificate has declined. Moreover, this has lead to the lowering of teacher public confidence about teachers and the contempt of teacher's professionalism.<sup>1)</sup>

The quality of education depends on the quality of teachers, so securing qualified teachers is the most important factor that determines education success or failure. In order to secure qualified teachers, we should start with attracting qualified teacher applicants to teacher training institutes and let present teachers, satisfied with their profession, give themselves to their work. However, it is difficult to say that the teaching profession is attracting competent teachers. Many high-school graduates won't apply for teacher training institutes and even if students do apply and finish their course and finally graduate, many of them try to obtain other jobs and as a second choice they might choose to be a teacher. For these reasons, general public's evaluation of teacher's professional quality is low, and teachers

themselves evaluate their educational enthusiasm and professional qualification as low.<sup>2)</sup>

The major reason for this kind of failure to attract a select manpower to the teaching profession is the lack of an incentive system. The teacher training institute is also very weak. Moreover, bad working conditions like overpopulated classes, overloaded class hours, too much unnecessary chores, poor school facilities, and unreasonable personnel administration have a disheartening effect on the morale of teachers. Teachers' complaints and dissatisfaction has increased. Teachers underestimate themselves and are reluctant to recommend the teaching profession to anybody.<sup>3)</sup> Especially in 1992, by adopting an open recruitment policy without the distinction of public or private institute, graduates of education university or education college of national university came to feel frustrated and uneasy. This has made excellent students avoid teacher training institutes and has resulted in lowering the teacher applicants' academic achievement level greatly.

Korea has witnessed several attempts at educational reform by the organizations' establishment, and each of them has presented its reform plan which is related to teacher training. The Presidential Commission on Education Reform which operated from 1985 to 1987 presented more than 20 reform tasks related to teachers. The Presidential Commission on Education which was set up from 1989 to 1993 presented eleven teacher related reform tasks. This paper will focus on the education reform tasks of the Presidential Commission on Education Reform which is now being operated.

## **II. Teacher Training Policy Reform Plan**

The Presidential Commission on Education Reform has announced education reform plan four times so far. Among them the first report included 7 reform tasks related to teacher training,<sup>4)</sup> and the third report presented 9 reform tasks related to teacher policy.<sup>5)</sup> The 16 reform tasks will be classified into five categories in this paper, and major reform items will be presented in summary.

### *A. Reorganization of Teacher Training System*

1. **Introduction of the Evaluation and Accreditation System for Teacher Training Institutes:** The evaluation and accreditation system for teacher training institutes and programs is expected to induce an overall quality improvement. The objects of evaluation are the existing teacher training institutions, such as national and private colleges of education, Korea National University of Education, departments of education at general universities, education universities, graduate schools of education and teaching certificate programs offered by universities. Universities with satisfying evaluation results will receive concentrated administrative and financial support to become high-quality training institutions. The rest of the universities will be encouraged to convert into general academic institutions or those that provide training for other professions.

2. **Transformation of Recruitment Policy for Secondary School Teachers:** The evaluation results of teacher training institutions and programs should be effectively used to bring out a select group of secondary school teachers. Teaching certificate programs at general universities should concentrate upon training teachers in the areas that are considered inadequate for colleges of education or more effective if offered at general universities.

3. **Reform of Education University Training System:** To promote the quality improvement of teacher training and to assist the establishment of "National Standard Core Curriculum" in school education, depending on regional situations and characteristics, education universities should be affiliated or consolidated to universities or colleges of education. Education universities and colleges of education can be consolidated to create independent teacher training institutions.

4. **Transformation into Graduate School-Level Teacher Training and In Service Training Systems:** To comply with the overall social trend of high educational level and to aim at the qualitative improvement of teacher training, the core institutions should be upgraded from an undergraduate to a graduate level, which requires long term planning. Excellent institutions among the existing colleges of education should be allowed to upgrade the training programs to a graduate level. Action research and in

service training should be activated, focusing upon those graduate schools of education with excellent evaluation results.

5. Reform of the Curriculum for Teacher Training: The curriculum will be reformed to make it more relevant to the practice of teaching and learning at school and for teachers to be equipped with more practical knowledge about daily school life. In response to the increase in the number of teachers in charge of particular subjects, e.g., science, music, art, and physical exercise in primary schools, and with the diminishing size of classrooms in high schools, the double major system seems necessary to broaden the knowledge base and horizon of teachers.

#### *B. Opening and Diversification of the Teaching Profession*

1. Reform of the Recruitment System: The recruitment system will be reformed so as to place a greater emphasis on competency. Private schools will be encouraged to recruit their teachers publicly, and the recruited teachers will receive training for a period of time.

2. Improvement of Teaching Certificate System: The teaching certificate system should be improved to inspire the teaching profession to become a more flexible, open-system. Multiple subject teaching certificate programs and training programs for integrated subjects, such as social studies and science should be expanded.

3. Diversification of Contract Teachers: Contract teachers, which are limited to "temporary teachers" currently, should be diversified to include "the joint faculty of academic and vocational education," "invited teachers," and "invited principals." The category and number of the teachers affiliated to a local office of education instead of individual schools, such as "itinerary teachers," should be expanded.

4. Improvement of Qualification Requirements and Recruitment Procedure of Education Specialists: Education specialist system is currently divided into two areas of supervision and research, which should be unified as supervisory. Supervisors should be selected through a public screening via a recruitment test among the qualified candidates who have a first class teaching certificate and a minimum of five years of teaching experiences.

5. Introduction of Teacher Exchange System between Training Institutions and Primary/Secondary Schools: Primary and secondary school teachers as well as education specialists can be dispatched to universities and research institutes and conduct teaching or research activities for a certain period of time. University professors can be dispatched to primary and secondary schools and can acquire firsthand experiences in student instruction and counseling.

### *C. Promotion and Reward System Based on Merit*

1. Promotion Based on Competency: A new promotion scheme which attaches great importance to the merit principle will be designed, and competent teachers will be given preferential treatment in promotion.

2. Special Allowance for Extra and Difficult Work: The optimum number of hours of classes per week will be stipulated so that teachers will not be overburdened with lessons. Teachers whose hours exceed the stipulated optimum number of hours will be compensated in the form of a special allowance.

### *D. Strengthening the In-Service Training of Teachers*

1. Reorganizing the In-Service Training System: Teachers will receive in-service training periodically, and the programs will be continuously updated. Through the use of advanced technology, in-service training at a distance will be introduced to make the training available to more teachers. Advanced degree programs in the respective discipline or diploma courses offered by social education institutes may also be regarded as in-service training. The accumulated credits from in-service training will be considered for promotion and compensation.

2. Choice of In-Service Training Institutes: The new in-service training system for teachers will allow participants to select the training institute of their choice, and this will encourage competition among the in-service training program providers leading to a sustained effort for qualitative improvement.

3. Offering of Special In-Service Training Course for Excellent Teachers: Special in-service training courses should be offered to secure teachers with excellent qualifications who can be future leaders in the profession. This special training course should include programs to enable the trainees to reside at

outstanding foreign schools and universities for a certain period of time to improve their professionalism and capacities.

*E. Better Working and Research Conditions for Teachers*

1. Introduction of Action Research Fund and Research Support System for Teachers: Research grants should be also awarded to primary and secondary school teachers to motivate research, to encourage field studies, and to revitalize the teaching profession. Primary and secondary school teachers should be dispatched to domestic and overseas universities and research institutions for research related activities.

2. Expansion of Study Rooms and Offices: Teachers will be encouraged to engage in research related to their subject matter or problems common to a particular grade level. Space will be secured to provide adequate working conditions for teaching and research.

3. Office Automation: Software will be developed to lessen the burden of clerical work and to provide easy access to information. This will help relieve teachers of administrative chores.

4. Activation of Teachers Welfare Programs Offered by Provincial Office of Education: The remaining facilities of the closed schools in mountainous and seaside areas could be renovated to be utilized as training and recreation sites, such as seminars and local programs for individual schools or teachers and their families. Housing allowances for teachers stationed at islands and remote areas should be considered. To reduce financial burdens of those teachers stationed in the country, rural areas, dormitories can be provided for their children who want to study in large cities.

5. Introduction of a Special Card for Teachers: A special card for teachers could be issued that will entitle them to a 10 to 50% of discount when they participate in activities to enrich their capacities and performance, such as book purchasing or educational and cultural programs.

6. Establishment of Support System for School Accidents: Institutional devices should be initiated to allow teachers to concentrate on education free from violations of their rights, psychological and financial burdens, or disadvantages to their status, which school accidents can cause. National and local

governments should procure a safety fund gradually, and develop the existing small-scale School Safety Corporation into a liability insurance system for schools and teachers.

### **III. Evaluation of Teacher Training and Development Policy**

To accomplish education reform with responsibility, the Ministry of Education has appointed a responsible department for each task each time the education reform task was announced. The responsible departments have planned basic schemes for education reform and strategies and implemented them. However, it's been two years since the first Education Reform was announced and it's been only one year since the third Education Reform plan was announced, so it seems rather difficult to evaluate the Education Reform. Therefore, this paper will focus on the evaluation of teacher training and development policy reform plan rather than that of the result of its implementation

For the successful accomplishment of Education Reform, it is most needed to motivate and raise the morale of teachers to participate in the education reform actively. However, the current education reform just places burdens on teachers and emphasizes their responsibility and obligations without providing any working conditions or welfare systems. The development of Individualized material for open education, student evaluation and recording task according to the introduction of School Life Recording System, revitalization of after-school activity, training and material development for Early English Education, preparation for committee of school management, and so on are examples of the burdens that add to many teachers' work load.

Reform plans on the treatment of teachers, work loads, welfare system are included in the Education Reform plan, and these policies are under implementations. However, they are still conducted as a model, or owing to the lack of legal institutional devices, they are not implemented in the actual field. For these reasons, teachers feel that treatment and working conditions have not improved and this has made teachers participate in the education reform in a formal and passive way.<sup>6)</sup>

### *A. Over-all Evaluation*

#### 1. Discontinuation of Education Reform Activity

Education is an activity that goes on independent of political changes. Nevertheless a new education reform organization has been born whenever a new president is inaugurated. A new president would make a new education reform organization ignoring the previous reform plan and formulate a new one trying to finish it off during the president's tenure of office. So reform plans have been made in a raw haste and without the procedure of experiment, test, or public opinion gathering. That is why our education has not changed a lot in spite of the several education reforms that were carried out recently. The Presidential Commission for Education Reform<sup>7)</sup> and the Presidential Commission on Education Reform<sup>8)</sup> have proposed 21 tasks and 11 tasks respectively. If the tasks for education reform were administered successfully, the education field would have a great change. However, the education society has not changed much. Many of the teacher policy reform plans which the Presidential Commission on Education Reform has proposed through the first and third education reform plans overlap with previous plans.

#### 2. Narrow Scope of Teacher Policy Reform

Teacher policy includes policy on and for teachers. Policy on teachers includes teacher training, qualification, recruitment, promotion, in-service training, and evaluation of their performance, and it aims to improve the professionalism of teachers. Policy for teachers is the policy for the improvement of the quality of teacher's life. The focus is on enhancing the degree of teacher's satisfaction with their profession. It concerns the working condition of teachers, salary and additional benefits, the relationship of principal and teacher, participation in decision making and so forth. Therefore the reform plan of the teacher policy should be comprehensive to accomplish the improvement of the teaching profession as well as the enhancement of the degree of teacher's satisfaction with their profession.<sup>9)</sup> The reform plan concerned with teachers which the Presidential Commission on Education Reform proposed was mostly policy on teachers and a few policy "for teachers." So it defines the

teacher policy in narrow terms and limits its object only to the personnel of the individual teacher.

### 3. Disagreement of the Goal and the Means of the Policy

The first reform plan has proposed "Qualified and Competent Teacher Training," and the third reform plan has presented "Revitalization of Teaching Profession" as its goal. However, the explanation of what these objectives mean and why these objectives are needed is missing. Furthermore, it is difficult to find consistency of the policy objectives and means. Eleven tasks were presented to foster respectful and competent teacher, but most of them are not concerned with the goal of the policy. The tasks include the rearrangement of curriculum, the improvement of teacher recruitment system, flexible time, *honorable retirement and so forth*. This is also the case in the policy of "Revitalization of Teaching Profession." When the objective of the policy is not defined clearly and the means for it is not appropriate, the successful accomplishment of education reform will not guarantee the accomplishment of the goal of the policy.

### *B. Evaluation of the Major Reform Tasks*

#### 1. Reform of the Curriculum of Teacher Training Institute

The Ministry of Education has notified the colleges of education about "recommendations on the improvement of the curriculum of secondary school teacher training institutes" to extend the professionalism of teachers, to improve teaching ability, and to relate the teacher training curriculum with school.<sup>10)</sup> This recommended plans are related to "Minimum Required Credits for Major Courses" which reduces its required credits of major courses to 1/4~1/6 of the total credits required for graduation to allow students to major in more than one field of study.

The introduction of Minimum Required Credits for Major Courses has led most colleges to reduce the total credits required for graduation from 140~150 credits to 130 credits, and credits of major courses were also reduced. Teacher training institutes have also reduced their credits required for graduation like the other colleges. While the credits for graduation are largely reduced, if subjects for general education and liberal arts are increased and new courses are established which teachers

virtually need, the total education credits increase, the present education courses which aim to cultivate a comprehensive knowledge and theory on teaching will be reduced. But this is not a desirable change.

In a teacher training institute, if professors of the subject matter education are not secured and the materials undeveloped and the emphasis is put on the subject matter education, it is most likely that it would be conducted just formally. Considering that each teacher training institute doesn't have an attached secondary school for itself, and that secondary schools have to prepare for the college entrance examination, strengthening the teaching practice is a scheme that doesn't take the present condition into account.

## 2. Introduction of Promotion and Reward System Based on Merit

Promotion and Reward System Based on Merit is in other words a merit pay system. A merit pay system is a general term for the method of rewarding or settling on a salary for high level of achievement. Teacher's merit pay system, which was first practiced in the Newton education district of Massachusetts in America, is controversial today since it was successful in some areas but not in others.<sup>11)</sup> A supporting argument says that merit pay system will attract excellent teachers and provide a reward for improvement in teaching therefore stimulating teachers to have interests in the effectiveness and efficiency in teaching, and by extending the professionalism of teachers, it can reconsider the effectiveness of school education. An opposite opinion argues that it is difficult to measure the quality of instruction, and that it would foster compliance rather than professionalism. Also, merit pay would lower teachers' morale and weaken the cohesion of group. So it cannot enhance the general level of school education.<sup>12)</sup>

Merit pay has been granted to primary and secondary teachers since 1996, but several problems were exposed in the process of its implementation. Whether the merit pay should be given to an excellent teacher according to the result of the existing evaluation or to the one chosen by a new evaluation system is a problem. It is problematic because the existing evaluation system gives extra credits to a teacher with a long career record. It is also problematic whether the principal, or colleagues should

evaluate and whether the merit pay should be given to the qualified teachers every year or the chance of getting merit pay should be equal and therefore not given every year to the one who was once evaluated as qualified.

It should be reconsidered whether to apply the principle of economy or the law of the survival of the fittest to education is appropriate. If the educational institute or school or teachers were evaluated as qualified are given a reward, it will facilitate the phenomenon of "the poor get poorer, the rich get richer." The continuous enforcement of this system would deepen the disproportion, and consequently students would not be guaranteed of the equal opportunity of education.

### 3. Introduction of the Evaluation and Accreditation System for Teacher Training Institutes

The major aim of college evaluation and accreditation system is to improve and guarantee college education. The process of evaluation is composed of four steps: establishing a standard or criterion for evaluation, diagnosing the college, publishing the list of colleges which passed the standard, a long-term inspection of the accredited colleges to examine if it is satisfying the standard continuously.<sup>13)</sup> Therefore the college evaluation and accreditation system is a process of determining whether a higher education institute or a program satisfies the established standard or criterion.

The evaluation and accreditation system for teacher training institutes can take different form according to what the objective or ideology the introduction and administration of this system ultimately aims to. This system must pursue efficiency, publicity, and autonomy of teacher training as a basic goal. This means that the quality of education must be enhanced through the competition among teacher training institutes and these institutes should have publicity and be evaluated autonomously based on its professionalism. The five concrete objectives of the evaluation and accreditation system for teacher training institute are as follows: official recognition of the teacher licensing institutes, enhancement and maintenance of the quality of teacher education, acquirement of the social reliability of teacher education, provision of the basic data for teacher training policy, construction of an autonomous cooperation system between teacher training institutes.<sup>14)</sup>

However, the purpose of introducing college evaluation and accreditation system by the Presidential Commission on *Education Reform* is significantly different. Its purpose is that colleges that have a good evaluation are supported by the administrative and financial aid, and colleges which don't have a good evaluation will be converted to a general college or institute for other vocation areas. This is not consistent with the purport and general purpose of the evaluation and accreditation system.

#### 4. Graduate School Level Teacher Training

There are arguments for and against the secondary school teacher training in graduate school. The supporting argument is that high levels of cultural and professional knowledge are required of teachers in a highly educated society and to comply with the open education market and compete with foreign teachers. By adjusting teacher education to a high level, we can form an environment in which teachers will be proud of their profession. A Carnegie Report once proposed that all the teacher training institutes should be graduate school level institutions.<sup>15)</sup>

The opposing argument is that there must be six years' *systematic knowledge and that extending the years of study* won't guarantee the quality of the education automatically. Finding the reason for extending the period of teacher training process not from the educational need but from the overall social trend of high educational level is not convincing. What is more important is that if the overall socio-economic status of the teaching profession is not enhanced, *extending the years of study* without guaranteeing the employment would make the recruitment of competent manpower more difficult.<sup>16)</sup>

The knowledge base in modern medicine is said to double every seven years or so. However, education knowledge grows slowly, and practice changes hardly at all. The belief that everyone can teach, and the fact that in reality most of the teachers are women are lowering the status of the teaching profession.<sup>17)</sup> Extending the years of study, disregarding the current situation, would reduce the valence of teaching profession by requiring more time and money for graduation. However, if we give teacher certificates to the students who completed their undergraduate course and went on to complete a course of study for the teaching profession, subject matter

education, and student teaching in their graduate course, we are making use of the advantage of having a teacher training institute in the university. Furthermore, this will relatively enhance the social status of teachers and extend the professionalism of teachers.

#### 5. Improvement of In-Service Training System of Teacher

The problem of the present in-service training system is that the consideration of the educational needs of teachers is insufficient, and the division of their functions and roles, and their connections among the in-service training institutes are unsatisfactory. In-service training courses that are helpful for promotion are taken exclusively by senior teachers, and the other courses that have nothing to do with promotion are usually taken by younger teachers. So the present in-service training is conducted with no regards to the trainees' educational need. Many in-service training programs in various in-service training institutes are isolated and not connected or developed into the next program. Therefore, a lot of times programs are redundant. At present there are primary teacher in-service training institutes, secondary school teacher in-service training institutes, National Institute for Training of Administrators, Comprehensive In-Service Teacher Training Institute, and local teacher in-service training institute in Korea. There has been an adjustment procedure of their functions, and in the meantime, there were duplications of functions, which led to a dissipation of manpower and economic resources.

The facilities, financial resource, trainers of the in-service training institutes are insufficient, and the educational programs are not substantial, and there are significant qualitative differences among the in-service training institutes. Therefore, there must be efforts to enhance the quality of training institutes in order to increase the efficacy of in-service training. So evaluation and accreditation system for in-service training institute is also required along with college evaluation and accreditation system for teacher training institutes.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

In order to accomplish education reform successfully, we

should overcome the discontinuation of the education reform activities. We should not break with the existing education reform activities by establishing a new education reform organization whenever a new president appears. To do this, education reform organization must be established as a legal organization rather than a provisional one. Also the teachers, who are the main body of education reform, must participate actively in the reform movement.

In order to motivate teachers to take part in the education reform, evaluation and accreditation system for teacher training institute should be introduced and settled as soon as possible, thereby improving the educational condition. In addition, the function of teacher training institute must be reestablished, and the incentive system for the teaching profession must be strengthened. Without revitalizing the stagnant teaching profession and improving the quality of teachers, we cannot see the improvement in school education. The ultimate effect of education reform will be found in the schools themselves, and education reform that doesn't make change in school cannot give satisfactory results. The change and reform of schools is ultimately dependent on the teachers who actually teach and guide.

The improvement of socio-economic status of teacher and the reduction of their burdens must be realized simultaneously in order for teachers to conduct their teaching profession with pride. As a part of the effort for this, raising the main body of secondary teacher training to the graduate school-level should also be considered. The farther away from the center of education reform the teacher become, the less likely the education reform is to succeed. The reform of teacher training and development must be conducted with top priority.

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