

# Comparison of Employment Policies regarding Teachers with Disabilities in Japan and South Korea

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## 1. Social Context and Purpose

- Teachers with disabilities can play a unique and important role in the realization of inclusive education.
- The hiring of teachers with disabilities has been sluggish and a longstanding issue in both Japan and South Korea.
- We compare employment policies regarding teachers with disabilities in Japan and South Korea and look for policies that are effective in promoting the hiring of these teachers.

## 2. Method

We compare policies in Japan and South Korea drawing mainly on the following two texts.

- Japan
  - NAKAMURA Masaya, 2020, *On Teachers with Disabilities: New Scopes of Inclusive Education and Teacher Support*, Tokyo: Gakubunsha.
- South Korea
  - Sim Jin-ye/Kwak Jeong-Ran/Nam Young-hyeon/Yun Kyoung-in, 2015, *Education Department Policies to Increase the Rate of Hiring of Persons with Disabilities - Centered on Teachers with Disabilities*, South Korea Persons with Disabilities Employment Public Corporation Employment Development Institute.
  - We also refer to an interview with Lee Jun-ho, President of the Korean Association of Teachers with Visual Impairments (conducted in Daejeon, South Korea, on July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023).

## 3. Comparison of Japan and South Korea

### (a) Training of Teachers with Disabilities.

- South Korea
  - To increase the number of teachers with disabilities, it is necessary to increase the number of persons with disabilities with a teaching license.
  - To increase the number of persons with disabilities with a teaching license, it is necessary to increase the number of persons with disabilities who enter university.
  - A system of special selection of persons with disabilities is stipulated in the higher education law, and universities can designate a fixed number of persons with disabilities to be selected for admittance through a different process from ordinary applicants.
  - During the five year period from 2010 to 2014, 0.2% to 0.3% of university students in South Korea had a disability.
  - 0.4% to 1.0% of students at education universities that aim to train teachers had a disability, a comparatively higher rate than in universities as a whole.
  - All ten education universities implemented special selection for students with disabilities, indicating that special selection increases the number of university students with disabilities.
- Japan
  - In academic year 2019 there were 37,647 students with disabilities at universities, 1.17% of all students.
  - The ratio of students with disabilities is higher than in South Korea, but the number of such students receiving a teaching license cannot be described as high, being only 161 in 2016, 168 in 2017, and 179 in 2018.
  - There are special measures, such as braille tests, for people with disabilities taking university entrance examinations, but no separate selection of a fixed number of persons with disabilities has been implemented.
  - ★ If special selection of persons with disabilities were also implemented in Japan at universities that train teachers the number of persons with disabilities obtaining teaching licenses and the number of teachers with disabilities could be increased.
- South Korea
  - Helper support initiatives for students with disabilities are managed by the government's department of education and allocated a budget from the national treasury.
- Japan
  - Each university implements its own human support for students with disabilities, such as by hiring students to provide support as a part-time job, but there is almost no systemic financial backing for these initiatives.
  - ★ If Japan also had a national system ensuring support for students with disabilities, more thorough student with disabilities support would presumably be implemented.

## 4. Conclusion

- In South Korea, policies regarding teachers with disabilities have been forcefully introduced by the national government, and laws and ordinances on which they are based enacted.
- At the teacher training stage, a system of special selection for persons with disabilities has been established at universities under the higher education law.
- The national government education department has implemented helper support initiatives for students with disabilities with treasury funding.
- At the teacher hiring stage, hiring through a separate persons with disabilities segment of the teacher hiring examinations is carried out in accordance with the law for occupational rehabilitation and promotion of hiring of persons with disabilities.
- Regarding work support after hiring, in accordance with the national government employee law the basis for implementing material and human support for teachers with disabilities has been established, and this support is carried out nationally by the Persons with Disabilities Employment Public Corporation.
- In Japan, no fundamental laws and ordinances have been put in place regarding support for teachers with disabilities, and this is left up to measures taken by each school and independent policies of each local government.
- Problems with the South Korean policies have been pointed out by teachers with disabilities, but they address issues common to Japan and can serve as a reference point for Japanese employment policies regarding teachers with disabilities.

### (b) Hiring of teachers with disabilities.

- Both South Korea and Japan have a quota hiring system regarding the hiring of persons with disabilities, and teacher is one of the professions subject to mandatory hiring.
- The legally mandated hiring ratio for public school hiring bodies is 3.0% in South Korea and 2.5% in Japan.
- South Korea
  - The law for occupational rehabilitation and promotion of hiring of persons with disabilities stipulates hiring 6.0% persons with disabilities through teaching hiring examinations, and designating 6.0% of recruited personnel as persons with disabilities with separate recruiting from the general population.
- Japan
  - There is no legal mandate for hiring persons with disabilities at the stage of hiring examinations.
  - Special selection of persons with disabilities is carried out at teacher hiring examinations, but no set number of hirings for persons with disabilities separate from the general population has been established.
- South Korea
  - Regarding the separate persons with disabilities segment of the teacher hiring examinations for academic years 2011 to 2015, persons with disabilities were 0.4% to 1.1% of the total number of those who passed the examination in primary education schools and 1.7% to 3.2% in secondary education schools.
- Japan
  - In the teacher hiring examinations for academic years 2015 to 2019 for all public schools, the total number of hires was 31,961 to 34,952, the number of applicants who were persons with disabilities was 305 to 340, and of these the number who passed the examination was 55 to 73, meaning that persons with disabilities made up 0.2% of total hires.
  - ★ Initiatives to increase the number of persons with disabilities hired, such as setting clear numerical targets at the hiring stage, are also needed in Japan.

### (c) Work support for teachers with disabilities

- South Korea
  - Under laws concerning the prohibition of discrimination against persons with disabilities and preservation of their rights, the duty to provide reasonable accommodation is stipulated, and teachers with disabilities have the right to receive reasonable accommodation such as assistance devices and assistance personnel.
  - In May of 2015 the national government employee law was revised, and the basis for material and human support for government employees with disabilities was stipulated.
  - Support in the form of assistance devices and work support personnel also came to be provided for public school teachers with disabilities by the Persons with Disabilities Employment Public Corporation.
- ▼ What we were told by Lee Jun-ho, President of the Korean Association of Teachers with Visual Impairments
  - In the past, local government education departments independently provided assistance devices and assistance personnel, but recently they have been moving to support from the Persons with Disabilities Employment Public Corporation.
  - Most of the educational affairs support personnel provided by departments of education are full-time employees on a monthly salary, but the work assistance personnel dispatched by the Persons with Disabilities Employment Public Corporation are part-time employees paid by the hour, and as the number of hours they spend at the school is limited adequate support is not being received.
  - Educational affairs support personnel provided by departments of education have skills corresponding to the needs of teachers with disabilities, but work assistance personnel dispatched by the Persons with Disabilities Employment Public Corporation are low-skilled and cannot meet these needs.
- Japan
  - Occasioned by the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in addition to the existing quota hiring system both South Korea and Japan introduced a framework banning discrimination and made the provision of "reasonable accommodation" by employers mandatory as policies regarding the hiring of persons with disabilities.
  - In Japan there is no system for implementing support for teachers with disabilities, and no funding has been secured.
  - Support for teachers with disabilities is carried out by each school and local government independently, and is both insufficient and unstable.
  - ★ It is necessary for a government system of support for teachers with disabilities to be established and funded in Japan.