

5. Report on the Study on Teacher Salaries Overseas

Leader: YANO Shigenori, NIER Director General

(1) Purpose and Aim of Study

In order to respond to a diversity of demands concerning fiscal restructuring, civil servant salary reform, and the continued improvement of teacher quality, MEXT has carried out surveys regarding teacher working conditions, public awareness, and teacher salaries in other countries. In July, 2006, MEXT also established a Working Group on the Modality of Wages for Teachers in the Subdivision on Primary and Secondary Education of the Central Council for Education (CCE) to investigate critical matters concerning teacher salaries, such as methods for securing human resources and school staff salary profiles.

The present study is one of the three research topics outlined above. It was commissioned to NIER by MEXT following an open application process, and the project team is expected to provide MEXT and the CCE Working Group on the Modality of Wages for Teachers with findings for reference when implementing policies for public school teaching staff salaries.

The themes, as presented by MEXT, are as follows.

The study is to target the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Singapore, South Korea, Finland, and Sweden, and comprise the following:

- (1) Determination of survey methods to best understand the systems and standards of teacher salaries in other countries
- (2) The gathering and analysis of basic data
- (3) The accumulation of information on teacher salary systems and standards in other countries, including:
 - Revenue sources for salaries
 - The structure of pay scales
 - Special allowances for teachers
 - Comparison with systems and standards in other career fields
 - Teacher salary benefits

- (4) Surveys of the social standing of teachers in other countries
- (5) Surveys of teacher working conditions and work patterns in other countries
- (6) Surveys of benefits other than salary for teachers in other countries
- (7) Analysis of notable differences and similarities between teacher salaries in Japan and those in other countries.

(2) Outline of Research Results

The study yielded detailed information for each target country, including teacher salaries (whether salary is based on pay standards, ability, or performance, and the processes and incentives that go with them) and working conditions of teachers (working hours, and if there is pay for work beyond regular hours). Taking into account each country's teacher salaries and working conditions, the following overall themes emerged.

- It is very difficult to establish precise baseline standards for comparing teacher salaries to other occupations or between countries.
- Recent trends include the raising of teacher salaries as part of government policy in the UK and South Korea, and a marked increase in teacher salaries in Sweden resulting from changes to the salary system.
- In all the countries surveyed, both experience and performance play roles in determining salaries, but the specific balance between these factors varies from country to country. The UK and Sweden carry out evaluation of teachers' performance against prescribed standards, and the results affect changes in their salary. In Finland, little weight is placed on experience and emphasis is instead given to acquiring certifications and taking part in duties other than teaching. However, evaluations are not carried out. In the United States, standards vary by state and by school district; some regions emphasize experience, while others emphasize performance, particularly one's academic history. Other aspects include bonuses paid according to the results of periodic evaluations (South Korea, Singapore), and in some cases systems were in place but they were not closely followed (Germany, France).

- Regarding teacher's working hours, systems varied by country, including defining working hours as: (a) those spent teaching (Germany, France, Finland), (b) a set amount spent at the school over a semester (The United Kingdom, Sweden, United States [varies by state]), or (c) the entire time spent at work (South Korea, Singapore), which is similar to Japan. In countries falling under systems 1) and 2), teachers are usually not required to report to work during long breaks, such as in the summer.

- In the United Kingdom and the United States, there is a shortage of teachers, especially in the fields of math, science, and information and communications technology (ICT). In Sweden, there is a shortage of qualified teachers, and as a result 20% of all teachers are not professionally qualified (including teachers qualified in subjects other than those they teach) to teach in some or all of their subjects. In contrast, there were no indications of teacher shortages in Germany, France, or South Korea.