

About the Outline of the Study on the School System at Elementary and Secondary Education, Report 2: Survey Research on the Outcomes and Issues in Unified Primary and Lower Secondary School Education

1. Objectives and outline of the survey research

(1) Objectives of the survey research

In the Council for the Implementation of Education Rebuilding and Central Council for Education, etc. “educational system reforms” have become a theme of discussions, and an urgent policy issue. The objectives of this project research “Study on the School System at Elementary and Secondary Education” are to provide the basic materials for the issue of “educational system reforms” taking this current situation into account, and to search for findings that contribute to more medium to long-term educational system reform discussions.

Due to the revision of the School Education Act, etc. this summer, compulsory education schools, a new school type offering unified primary and lower secondary school education, were institutionalized; furthermore the plan is for primary/lower secondary unified type elementary and lower secondary schools (provisional name) offering unified education in a form compliant with compulsory education schools to be institutionalized as well. In response to these policy trends, and with the objective of contributing to the smooth and effective introduction of institutionalized unified primary and lower secondary school education, the Unified Education Examples Team of this project implemented survey research on the outcomes and issues in unified primary and lower secondary school education.

(2) Outline of the survey research

The survey research targeted the schools implementing unified elementary and lower secondary education (hereinafter referred to as “unified schools”) and boards of education, etc., and mainly examined the following three perspectives.

(i) Secondary analysis of the “Fact-Finding Survey about Unified Primary and Lower Secondary School Education, etc.” by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

The survey made secondary use of the school data from the “Fact-Finding Survey about Unified Primary and Lower Secondary School Education, etc.” implemented in the summer of 2014 by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (hereinafter referred to as the “Fact-Finding Survey”) to perform an analysis of the relationship between the implementation status of a variety of initiatives in public unified schools and the self-evaluations of the outcomes from each initiative and unified primary and lower secondary school education, by facility type.

(ii) Interview surveys to schools and boards of education implementing pioneering initiatives for unified primary and lower secondary school education

The survey conducted interview surveys of schools and boards of education implementing pioneering initiatives for unified primary and lower secondary school education, and compiled examples based on the surveys. Here, we take up examples of wide-ranging unified primary and lower secondary school education in 26 examples from 20 municipalities nationwide, and showed the special characteristics, outcomes and issues of those initiatives.

(iii) Discussion based on the Fact-Finding Survey and interview surveys

Based on the findings obtained from the above Fact-Finding Survey and interview surveys, and the expertise and interests of the core members who participated in this survey research, we compiled a discussion about the initiatives and issues in unified primary and lower secondary school education. Here, we present a discussion taking up seven points of contention: the process of introducing unified primary and lower secondary school education, education courses, the organization and operation of

the schools, the support of the boards of education, collaboration and cooperation with regions, alleviation of the burden of teachers, and facility development.

As seen above, outcomes and issues in unified primary and lower secondary school education are compiled in this report understood from the diverse perspectives of an analysis of the initiatives and outcomes by facility type based on the Fact-Finding Survey, summarization of the special characteristics, outcomes and issues in the pioneering examples, and discussion of the points of contention related to the introduction and implementation of unified primary and lower secondary school education.

[Research period: fiscal year 2014 and fiscal year 2015, lead researcher: Keiko Watanabe (Director of Department for Educational Policy and Evaluation Research)]

2. Outline of the research outcomes

Part I: Status of initiatives and outcomes in public unified schools seen by facility type

— Secondary analysis of the “Fact-Finding Survey about Unified Primary and Lower Secondary School Education, etc.” —

The survey performed a secondary analysis of the data from the “Fact-Finding Survey about Unified Primary and Lower Secondary School Education, etc.” implemented in the summer of 2014 by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (hereinafter referred to as the “Fact-Finding Survey”) to look at the relationship between the implementation status of a variety of initiatives in public schools offering unified primary and lower secondary school education and the self-evaluations of the outcomes from each initiative and unified primary and lower secondary school education.

When doing so, we took into account the ease of exchanges involving the movement of people between schools and liaison and coordination to perform the analysis for each of three facility types: (i) the facility integration type and adjacent type, (ii) the facility separation type involving a combination of one secondary school and one elementary school (one-to-one), and (iii) the facility separation type involving a combination of one secondary school and multiple elementary schools (one-to-many).

Here, we primarily looked at initiatives that could be easily implemented at schools implementing unified primary and lower secondary school education (hereinafter referred to as “unified schools”). Specifically, we discussed initiatives related to education courses and guidance, initiatives related to solidifying human relationships, initiatives related to teacher exchanges, and initiatives related to collaboration with regions and guardians.

A tendency was seen for most of the initiatives we discussed to be easily to implement at facility integration type and adjacent type schools, where exchanges involving the movement of people and liaison and coordination are comparatively easy, and difficult to implement at one-to-many facility separation type schools where exchanges involving the movement of people and liaison and coordination are often difficult.

Furthermore, regarding most of the initiatives we discussed, in the schools that implemented the initiatives the tendency for the outcomes of unified primary and lower secondary school education to be comparatively easily felt was seen in all of the facility types.

Moreover, when we looked at the requirements for offering unified primary and lower secondary school education within an institutionalized framework (clarification of the nine-year educational goals and design of unified systematic education courses), it was clear that regardless of the perception of the outcomes or the facility type, and even though it was a time before consideration of institutionalization, in the schools that satisfied the institutional requirements it was easier to feel the outcomes related to unified primary and lower secondary school education.

Part II: Pioneering examples of unified primary and lower secondary school education

In Part II, in order to obtain hints regarding specific initiatives as a part of implementation of unified primary and lower secondary school education, before institutionalization we conducted interview surveys targeting examples of tackling unified primary and lower secondary school education, and summarized and presented the results of the surveys. When doing so, we took into consideration the facility status such as whether the facility was the facility integration type or facility separation type, the regional balance, etc. and endeavored to cover initiatives for unified primary and lower secondary school education which have special characteristics which are likely to provide a useful reference nationwide, collecting 26 examples in unified schools in 20 municipalities.

In the interview surveys, we conducted interviews regarding seven points: (i) outlines of the local governments and the locations, (ii) the background leading up to the introduction of unified primary and lower secondary school education, (iii) the format for the implementation of unified primary and lower secondary school education, (iv) the design and operation of education courses, (v) the organization and operation of the schools, (vi) the collaboration of the schools and regions, and (vii)

outcomes and issues. As a general rule we performed the summarization and analysis in accordance with those items, and compiled each example by region in each chapter.

In that process examples in which unified primary and lower secondary school education contributed to the maintenance and improvement of the education environment of downsizing schools were seen, such as the Ojika area of Nagasaki Prefecture which implemented unified primary and lower secondary school education within the framework of unified primary, lower and upper secondary school education developed from unified lower and upper secondary school education, and Hokuzan School, an unified elementary and lower secondary school in Saga City, which used unified primary and lower secondary school education to partially eliminate the combined classes of the elementary school.

Part III: Discussion about the initiatives and issues in unified primary and lower secondary school education

In Part III, based on the findings obtained from the above Fact-Finding Survey and interview surveys, and the expertise and interests of the authors, we compiled a discussion about the initiatives and issues in unified primary and lower secondary school education divided into chapters. The outlines of each chapter are as follows.

Chapter 1: Aims and procedure of introduction

Ko Takahashi (Aomori Chuo Gakuin University)

According to the Fact-Finding Survey of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the main aims of the implementing municipalities in promoting unified primary and lower secondary school education are “outcomes in terms of pupil guidance,” “outcomes in terms of study guidance,” and “reforming the awareness of teachers,” with each of these items getting high scores of about 95%. On the other hand, “ensuring a fixed number of child pupils” scored no more than 26%.

These results largely match the tendencies seen in the examples, but there are some subtle differences. Furthermore, the procedure and methods of introduction when seen through specific examples are actually diverse, so simply summarizing them is difficult. However, if we take on the challenge of summarizing the rough series of steps in the introduction, there are many examples of the procedure of (i) discussions about unified primary and lower secondary school education arising from consideration of educational issues, etc., (ii) consideration by establishing a research consultation organization regarding concepts and plans, etc., (iii) deciding basic concepts and policies and disseminating and publicizing their content, (iv) establishment of an implementation plan based on the concepts and policies, (v) introduction of unified education, and (vi) evaluation and verification of the initiatives.

In order to obtain outcomes from unified primary and lower secondary school education, clarifying the aims and steadily following the necessary procedure is essential.

Chapter 2: Design and operation of education courses

Bunzo Kudo (Osaka University of Health and Sport Sciences)

This chapter places the focus on the design of education courses in unified primary and lower secondary school education and the integration and systematic qualities in the operation of the courses, with the aim of discussing their value and issues. Firstly, we discuss the results of the Fact-Finding Survey implemented by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, and focused on the design of unified primary and lower secondary school education curricula, implementation of the system in which different teachers present different subjects, and implementation of classes taught by teachers from the other schools, and the effects of these approaches. For all of the items the results are that improvements in academic ability, the firm establishment of good study habits, and improvements in other aspect were seen in the implementing schools. From these results, we can infer that a special characteristic of the initiatives for unified primary and lower secondary school education which started with the focus on the aspects of education courses is that there is great value in the system in which different teachers present different subjects and the classes taught by teachers from the other schools.

Next, regarding the value of dividing the nine years into multiple academic year grades, we presented a discussion referencing the composition of the subjects, etc. as the basis of the education courses, the composition of the content of the subjects, and practical examples. From the results we could infer that the division into academic year grades is not necessarily strictly established in terms of education courses; rather it is established and operated for diverse aspects such as study aspects, living aspects, etc. Taking into account these discussions we summarized the issues, etc. related to education courses in unified primary and lower secondary school education across five points.

Chapter 3: Organization and operation of schools

Kazuyoshi Yashiki (National Institute for Educational Policy Research)

In this chapter, we ascertained the actual state of the organization and operation of unified schools, and explored the internal structure of the organization and operation.

Firstly, regarding the concurrent post orders of teachers, it became clear that there are cases limited to some of the teachers and cases in which the orders are issued to all of the teachers, the organization for the division of school duties in facility integration type schools can be broadly divided into the combined type, the parallel type, and the individual type, and innovative techniques such as establishing unified primary and lower secondary school education promotion organizations to energetically hold consultations, research, and training are seen at facility separation type schools.

Furthermore, we can understand initiatives for unified primary and lower secondary school education in three stages, (i) implementation of teacher exchanges, (ii) implementation of daily classes taught by teachers from the other schools, and (iii) deepening of inclusion in connected separators, and the development of conditions is required for proceeding to the next state, no matter what the facility format is. Moreover, we can conclude that the initiatives for unified primary and lower secondary school education are making progress in the schools that are proceeding with the integration of their organization in terms of the structure of the principal, the organization for the division of school duties, concurrent post orders, etc.

In addition, in schools at the stage of “(iii) deepening of inclusion in connected separators” as well, guidance in which separators of academic year grades are thoroughly implemented is not necessarily provided, suggesting that the conventional elementary and secondary school guidance structure and the new separators of academic year grades should be skillfully combined.

Chapter 4: Support of the boards of education

Midori Ueda (National Institute for Educational Policy Research)

In this chapter, we summarized the issues in the implementation of unified primary and lower secondary school education based on the results of the Fact-Finding Survey implemented by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, etc., and then aimed to solve the issues while elucidating, based on the initiatives in local governments to date, the nature of the support of boards of education that develop the conditions necessary for continuously promoting unified primary and lower secondary school education.

Based on the Fact-Finding Survey, we were able to summarize three kinds of issues, issues related to human matters, issues related to physical and financial matters, and issues related to education courses and education guidance. Regarding human matters, we showed that the development of conditions, namely the methods of the deployment of additional teachers, concurrent post orders, and personnel deployment, is necessary. Regarding physical and financial matters, while taking into consideration the differences depending on whether the facility is the facility integration type or the facility separation type, we showed that securing school business support systems and means of transportation such as utilization of official vehicles, etc., deployment of joint staff rooms, and joint implementation of school administration, etc. is necessary. Moreover, regarding education courses and education guidance, we showed that guidance and advice by supervisors, the accumulation and dissemination of the outcomes, enhancement of training, etc. is necessary as the development of the conditions of the boards of education. And finally, we indicated regarding the best approach of the boards of education when carrying out these kinds of initiatives that positioning the promotion of unified primary and lower secondary school education in measures such as basic policies, etc., and the development of a guidance structure, etc. are necessary.

Chapter 5: Collaboration and cooperation with regions

Ko Takahashi (Aomori Chuo Gakuin University)

According to the Fact-Finding Survey of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and

Technology, as matters related to initiatives for collaboration and cooperation with the regions for promotion of unified primary and lower secondary school education by municipal boards of education “establishment of promotion councils, etc. by local residents, etc. and people involved in the schools” scored highest with 34%, followed by “promotion of community schools” with just 26%.

Furthermore, as matters related to initiatives by schools with the objective of strengthening cooperative relationships with the regions and guardians, “establishment of councils, etc. by local residents, etc. and people involved in the schools” scored highest at 44%, and both the “school support regional headquarters project” and the “introduction of community schools” were no more than 15%. It can be inferred that essentially this means that people are somewhat negative in the case that the content of the initiatives is decided by supplementary guidelines or laws and regulations, etc.

Now that a long period of time has passed since the necessity of collaboration and cooperation with the regions was pointed out, diverse initiatives are being carried out at each municipality and school. The issue going forward is devising ways to ensure that those initiatives do not lose substance and are sustained, and probably one effective way of achieving that is the introduction of community schools.

Chapter 6: Alleviation of the increased busyness and feeling of burden of the teachers

Satoru Miyazaki (National Institute for Educational Policy Research)

We took up the problems of increased busyness and growing feeling of burden generated by initiatives for unified primary and lower secondary school education, and considered what could be done to eliminate these problems.

According to the results of the Fact-Finding Survey of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, initiatives to alleviate the volume of work, in particular reducing the number of meetings have only been taken at about 20% of the schools, so it is thought that such initiatives are not very widespread.

Furthermore, at the schools which have implemented initiatives to alleviate the burden of the teachers, outcomes with respect to the job satisfaction of the teachers and the streamlining of the operation of the school were more strongly felt. Moreover, schools that had implemented these kinds of initiatives to alleviate the burden of teachers more strongly felt the comprehensive outcomes due to unified primary and lower secondary school education and the outcomes such as improved academic ability and reduced truancy which are the expected effect on the child pupils.

The relationship between these kinds of initiatives to alleviate the burden of teachers and the effect due to unified primary and lower secondary school education on has been confirmed from pioneering examples as well. It is thought that reverting to the original philosophy of unified primary and lower secondary school education for child pupils, steadily implementing the doable initiatives, and sharing the outcomes from unified primary and lower secondary school education among the teachers will result in alleviating the increased busyness and feeling of burden of the teachers.

Chapter 7: Facility development

Kazuyoshi Yashiki (National Institute for Educational Policy Research)

We clarified the actual situation of facility development by unified schools centered on the problems of facility configuration and facility functions, which are the key points when municipal boards of education carry out school facility development, and considered the issues.

Firstly, the actual situation is that facility development in unified schools is being carried out concentrated on the facility integration type. Looking at facility development by development method, in the most common method of “building an extension,” in most cases repair work is carried out at the same time. Furthermore, there are many examples of building an extension onto the school buildings of secondary schools.

Examples of issues regarding facility development are that it should be perceived as the issues of facility configuration for entire local governments not limited to the schools that have introduced unified primary and lower secondary school education and the overall concept of unified primary and

lower secondary school education, and that securing school sites with plenty of space is necessary, especially in urban areas. Furthermore, it is necessary for the facility functions to meet the requirements of nine-year unified educational activities and the operation of the schools, but regarding the zoning of the school buildings, but a flexible approach based on the actual operation of the separators of academic year grades is required.