Regarding the Utilization of Special Exceptions in Curriculum Standards at Unified Lower and Upper Secondary Education Schools

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Abstract

Drawing on the results of a field study at unified lower and upper secondary education schools conducted in the 2005-2006 fiscal year (research commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology), this paper sorts through the circumstances regarding the utilization of special exceptions in curriculum standards at unified lower and upper secondary education schools. At the same time, it considers the relationship between the utilization of special exceptions and the characteristics of the schools’ structure. The key points that resulted from sorting through and considering the study results are as follows:

The results of the study were: 1. Examples of the utilization of special exceptions in connection with elective subjects at lower secondary school can be found at joint type lower secondary school, but the exceptions are not utilized much at schools of other forms. Where special exceptions relating to school-designated courses and school-designated subjects at upper secondary school are concerned, they are not utilized much even at joint type upper secondary school. Furthermore, hardly any of the exceptions are utilized at cooperative type upper secondary school. 2. Regarding a special exception on the transfer or replacement of some teaching content between lower and upper secondary school, some examples involving transfers from upper secondary curriculums to lower secondary curriculums at secondary school type can be seen, but there are not many cases of it being utilized at joint school type.

Concerning the circumstances behind result one, this probably shows that in a situation where definite academic achievement is demanded, there was no leeway to establish distinctive elective subjects at the expense of reduced hours for compulsory subjects. Similarly, it probably shows that there was not enough leeway to broadly establish school-designated courses and school-designated subjects at upper secondary school. Concerning result two, the lack of examples of the special exception being utilized at joint school type is probably the result of the fact many joint type upper secondary school are made up of students enrolling from joint type lower secondary school and students enrolling from upper secondary school. Furthermore, regarding the fact it is not utilized at cooperative type, one could assume, for example, that in many cases one upper secondary school and a number of lower secondary schools are linked, or that not all those at cooperative type lower secondary schools go on to upper secondary school.