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Privatization and Marketization in Secondary Education in Japan: Introduction of the unified secondary education

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In this article a new tendency in educational policy in Japan, which has sought to deregulation and privatization since 1980s' and has been accelerated especially since about 2000, will be discussed in the context of educational policy and school management. After the end of the World War, the educational system in Japan had kept a vision that all children in Japan should have a right and an equal opportunity to access education, supported by the Constitution and the Fundamental Law of Education. And they had arranged a school system of uniformity.

However this landscape of education seems to be gradually changing after the introduction of the unified secondary education in 1999. The purpose of this reform was originally to provide an alternative learning experience to students, who hoped to learn more widely or more deeply, using the time needed to prepare for the entrance examination to a high school. Recently we can recognize a new tendency that prestigious high schools establish their attached junior high schools and change themselves as the unified secondary education, which aim tacitly to accomplish a high standard of the scholastic achievement in order to pass the entrance examination for university. Under the climate or atmosphere surrounding the education in Japan, the unified secondary education will work as one of factors to strengthen the tendency of privatization and maketization in education.

Keywords: the unified secondary education, secondary education, neo-liberalism, privatization, marketization

1. Introduction

Japan has been a relatively equal society after 1945. In order to make up an equal society, the function of schooling has been very important. The Constitution of Japan and the Fundamental Law

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of Education, which were lunched after the World War , have provided all children an equal opportunity to access to the compulsory education. Even if children cannot hope their parental supports due to their poor backgrounds, they can climb up the school ladder when they get good performance in schooling. Donald Dore, a sociologist of education, had pointed out that although Japan was known as a classless society, children were stratified in one day of 18-year-old; a day of the entrance examination. In other words, he considered Japan as a meritocratic society. This discussion of this sociologist may sound somewhat symbolic. However it is true, when we think of the educational system in Japan at least until 1980s'.

In 1980s', the Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, who was regarded as one of the most conservative politician and hoped to reconstruct the social structure of Japan, called a conference about education; the Interim Council of Education. This conference, which had a mission of deregulation or marketization based on the idea of a neo-liberalism, issued 4 reports. These reports are milestones of the educational policy after 1980s'. In the first report published in 1985, we can find a vision of the unified secondary education as well as emphasis on traditional culture of Japan. After these reports, educational landscape of Japan has gradually begun to change; deregulation of 'uniformity' of the educational system.

In 1998, the Law of School Education was revised and gave a legal framework of the unified secondary education. Supplementary resolutions in the Lower House and the Upper House told us the purpose of the unified secondary education was to provide an alternative learning to students, who hope to learn more widely or more deeply, using the time needed to prepare for the entrance examination to a high school, and they warned that the unified secondary education school should not be special institutions for entrance examination for university.

However recently we can recognize a new tendency that prestigious high schools establish their attached junior high schools and change themselves as the unified secondary education schools, which aim tacitly to accomplish a high standard of the scholastic achievement in order to pass the entrance examination. Now the landscape of education is going to change radically. In 2009 the Democratic Party followed the Liberal Democratic Party, which had been power since 1955. However the Democratic Party cannot announce its educational policy clearly. Due to the lack of clear policy of education, the trend of the marketization in public schools is increasing in strength.

By the way, there are three main functions in schooling in modern society in general. The first function is the integration of nation through national symbol of the state. Children learn the 'public value', which is authorized by socio-political powers, and acquire tacitly the way of thinking, or sometimes feeling, as a nation. It may say the indoctrination. The second is the social selection or redistribution. Children are measured only by their achievements in school and can get their social status regardless of their family backgrounds. And the third is the qualification, or allocation of

working power. Children get their occupations through the learning in schools.

Although this ideal type is a useful tool when we analyze education or educational policy statically or sociologically, we need another viewpoint in order to discuss the current educational policy; who is the stakeholder or who is the decision-maker? Michel Apple gives us some useful suggestions to understand the educational policy. According to him, education is a site of struggle and concession, in which we have to choice educational policies, resources, curriculum, pedagogy, evaluation, ideology and power. And analyzing the educational context in the USA, which is controlled by rightists, he argues that there are 4 main hegemonies which decide what we should do in education; (1) neo-liberalism, (2) neo-conservatism, (3) authoritarianism and (4) professional and managerial new middle classes. Sometimes these hegemonies are conflicting with each other, and sometimes they reinforces reciprocally. And they make up a new landscape of education; basically 'consumers model'. We can adopt his framework, when we observe the educational reform in Japan.

In this article we will discuss (1) what policy of the unified secondary education is, (2) how it is introduced and (3) what parents, hope; they are consumers of this new type of education.

2. the unified secondary education in Japan

We investigated for the ideal unified secondary education from various angles to support a public girls' High School which founds a coeducational school as a juxtaposition type and makes an effort to develop an unique curriculum.

The procedure of our study is to make the basic idea of the unified secondary school clear by investigation from Ministry of Education and Board of Education Miyagi Prefecture. In addition, we visited a junior High School / the High School and made a hearing to the principal and the teacher at the public B coeducational school that founded a juxtaposition type as the first unified secondary education school in Miyagi prefecture 4 years ago. Moveover, we visited C girl junior High School / High School, private institution which gave itself a new characteristic as the unified secondary education school and made interviews to the vice-principal and some teachers. We also visited D public senior High School / junior High School which was going to found a 6-year unified secondary school. We want to clarify present conditions and problems of the unified secondary school through these inrestigations.

The unified secondary education program means the systematic education method that it can avoid wasting of time needed for preparing for the entrance examination, and can keep consistency in its 6-year education. It coordinates with the first half of secondary education (education performed in a junior high school) and the course of the latter middle-grade education (education performed in a high school). There are 3 types of the unified secondary program education school.

First, as the 1st actual form of implementation, the form can be considered where the same operator (prefecture, municipality, and school corporation etc.) jointly establishes lower and upper secondary schools, and education is carried out continuously without requiring a selection for examiration to high school. In this regard, besides (a) the joint establishment of independent lower secondary and upper secondary schools, as a further development, from the point of view of securing continuity in school operation between the lower secondary school and upper secondary school levels, (b) the establishment and operation of schools on a 6-year system (in other words, 6-year secondary schools) can also be considered. The current system of compulsory education is stable, and for this kind of 6-year secondary school, under this system, lower secondary education and upper secondary education each has its educational content requirements, and what is considered is providing this together in one school. We are not envisioning something of the character that would entail change in the system of compulsory education.

Second, as the 2nd actual form of implementation, cases could be considered where one or multiple municipal lower secondary schools and prefectural upper secondary schools are coordinated, and education would be carried out in a continuous manner over a 6-year without requiring selection for entry to upper secondary school.

* 6-year Secondary school

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Joint style

The joint establishment of independent lower secondary and upper secondary schools, as a further development, from the point of view of securing continuity in school operation between the lower secondary school and upper secondary school levels.

* Cooperative style

As the 3rd actual form of implementation, cases could be considered where one or multiple municipal lower secondary schools and prefectural upper secondary schools are coordinated, and education would be carried out in a planned and continuous manner over a 6-year period without requiring selection for entry to upper secondary school.

As for the unified secondary education program, the government approved a law to revise the part of the School Education Act in 1998 and introduced it into a public school system from 1999. Until then, there was the viewpoint that the unified secondary education program school, which was introduced by private schools, had conducted the elite education that lets subject contents in advance and cope with examination efficiently to enter a prestigious university.

In contrast, the aim of the public 6-year unified secondarcy school is to offer children an opportunity to enjoy the unified secondary program more widely to enrich their learning and enable them to develop personality and creativity through repeating to make trials and errors, and having various kinds of experiences.

The extent of the public the unified secondary education program school in ten years until 2009 refers to figure 1.

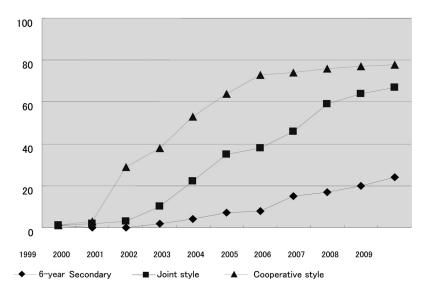


Fig 1. Increasing the number of the unified secondary education school

(1) Ministry of Education

According to Ministry of Education, "contents of the unified secondary education program education took over personality and originality of a student in the school life with "room to grow." A distribution document for public says that the unified secondary school is the school in which the students can learn various things in the unhurried school life. They need to develop premeditated continuous education guidance in school life of 6 years and develop personality and originality of students. That is a purpose of the unified secondary education program. If personality of students can be developed by a certain event, deriving from culture and character of the school, it may be

said that a rich experience is provided.

We heard an explanation from a Chief of senior High School educational reform of Ministry of Education. The Minstry of Education introduced the unified secondary education program school in 1999 school year, aiming to foster individuality and the creativity of students. This type of school should connect 6 years between the junior high school and the high school and develop a premeditated, continuous curriculum in the school life of 6 years.

The advantages are following;

Students can spend 6-year-school life in the secure setting.

Teachers can develop a premeditated, continuous curriculum for 6 years.

Teachers can understand the student for 6 years, and can discover an extension of individuality and an excellent talent.

Students with different grades can promote a sociality and a rich human nature mutually through common activity.

However there are also faults. According to "the model for Japanese education in the perspective of the 21st Century (2nd Report)" by the Central Education Council for Education on June 26 in 1997, it has enumerated the following five points. (a) The fear that examination competition might spread to lower age groups if the proper operation of this system is not aimed for. (b) The fear that education skewed toward for preparation examination might take place. (c) These difficulties might arise at the point of graduation from elementary school with regard to selection of education path. (d) It might be difficult to run a school that covers a wide range of students in terms of their emotional and physical development. (e) The fear that since student groups will tend to calcify with the same members over time, some students might feel excluded from school life, and others, are brought up.

And the Ministry of Education said, "as a problem related to educational content under unified secondary education, we would ask that children and parents in elementary schools, especially parents, understand the purpose of the introduction of unified secondary education, and not choose a school only on the basis of whether it seems useful from the point of view of university entrance examinations. To this end, it is necessary that operators and other persons concerned with unified secondary schools should give sufficient considerations to provide appropriate information, so that parents in particular can make choices suitable for their children."

There is a big problem. At first, though the Ministry of Education said that they don't do an achievement test, they just call it reasonable inspection actually. It is concerned that the examinee prepare for the test before they are 6 grade in elementary school. As a result, this leads to the examination competition among lower aged people.

Second, according to Board of Education of Iwate prefecture, it shows the concrete entrance

aim into a school of higher grade target in a higher grade senior high school / junior high school and also make the curriculum. In "an exception in the unified secondary education program school "in 2008, the next 3 points are enabled as the shift of guidance contents.

the replacement between guidance contents with the High School and that with a junior High School

the shift of the guidance contents from the junior High School to the High School the shift of the guidance contents from the High School to the junior High School

So we are concerned that a demand to request from a parents and a local school will become specialized in entrance into a school of higher grade.

We asked Ministry of Education to enable to stop such an opinion of the parents and they answered, "It is very difficult." Though the ministry can show its attitude as national policy, it is difficult for it to say "NO" to parents' requests.

And the report says" the aim of introduction of the unified secondary program school is to give a wide range of the choice of children or the parents, and the double track of the school system stimulates structure. The unified secondary school should be introduced selectively. "This remark has the further doubt for us.

"Selective introduction" sounds like a merit. Even if a junior high student can choose a high school, an elementary school pupils cannot choose the middle school or junior high. So their parents choose it. It seems that this lets the consciousness of the parents to the examination competition and makes excitement in the low age of the child.

(1) Board of Education Miyagi Prefecture; all things depend on a school

How will the local government start in response to the notification from Ministry of Education? We visited the Board of Education Miyagi prefecture on January 23, 2009.

In Miyagi prefecture, the school had an initiative to push forward the preparations for the unified secondary program education. We asked what kind of positioning Prefecture Education Bureau that stood between country and school and what kind of dilemma they faced. The Miyagi Board of Education was keeping the attitude that they thought about anything with a school.

In Miyagi prefecture, there were two schools that have started as the unified secondary education program school. They are *E High School*, the cooperation type, and *B High School*, the juxtaposition type.

The cooperation type scarcely succeeds if a policy to embody an idea does not establish it well. Because it is the present conditions that there is a difference for the passion of the prefecture and the passion of cities, towns and villages, it is difficult to depend on administration. It depends on the passion in educational front of the school. If schools succeed in their club activity or the

volunteer work, they might not get a scholastic ability. Board of Education Miyagi Prefecture said that it was a big problem.

The ideal of the unified secondary education program of authority accorded with the ideal of Ministry of Education. It is "to grow personality and a characteristic, and a characteristic brings up rich human nature through guidance by a certain course of study, activities by a wide age-grade".

Board of Education Miyagi Prefecture talked about the true intention that they were worried about the slacking of the unified secondary education program school students. The unified secondary education program school students have no chance to acquire the ability of junior high school foundations fixation; the preparations for senior high school entrance examinations. They grasp the problem of *B School* of the said article definitely. The teachers of *B* come to have no time to spare because they develop the school while meeting a parents, a local voice.

Prefecture Education Bureau described it in the following severe viewpoint as follows; "The teachers should do the class that you do not increase supplementary lessons and nominated quality for." Some students plan to take an entrance examination for the other schools. Their opinion is that it was more important to do charm in a certain school than the 6-year-integlated program school make an effort to keep them forcibly.

We had an impression that the prefecture authority stood at a difficult point because of the dilemma between the instruction from Ministry of Education and the school. But they take the stance that we are going to think about with a school. They are the very stouthearted persons for an on-site teacher. They said that they have to talk with the people in the area and maintain scholastic ability and so as not to open difference in six years during the 6-year-integlated program school.

A School has the merit because of the late start following B. A can use the successful point and revise failing points of B. For 4 years after B School setting, it is outlook on scholastic ability, a new course of study that an educational front changed. The environment where there was the education that could extend the characteristic of the student was regulated well to some extent. In such a social atmosphere, their problem is what kind of school they make and what kind of education they give to students.

3. The present conditions of the unified secondary education program school

(1) The Case of A Girls' High School (Junior High / High School)

The new unified secondary education program school, which assumed the original girls' High School a mother's body, was opened in 2010.

On setting, the school has five "powers." The substantiality of basic subject; national language / mathematics / English: the basic scholastic ability is power to continue learning.

Learning of the search of the enlightenment crossing mode (SR/IS/TM). Close application of the student who took an entrance examination from the outside and enter and the student who entered a school of higher grade from the inside: Friendship is only mean to grow up. The learning that is the high level that cooperated with a university and dispatch of the information: Power to open up the future. To value a place to stay such as home/the school: bond of the gentleness is only power to live.

The education policy is "to bring up the person who can contribute to our country and world development with a rich heart and high intelligence, full of character and originality of the enterprise."

Learning of subject crossing type, SR is abbreviation of Scientific Research. It is the class that the students are going to search a global environment while acquiring a scientific intellectual knowledge and skills for problem-solving.

IS is an abbreviation of International Study. It is to deepen cross-cultural understanding through interchange with foreign countries concretely. The aim is to enlarge the field of vision.

They perform both SR and IS as the curriculum from 1st grade in junior high to 2nd grade in high school.

And TM means Thinking Method and is the curriculum the students perform only in junior high school. This feeds power to assemble their own thought and to stream down effectively, demanded in the global community. The school leads the students forward learning by TM in conjunction with SR and IS.

4. A Case Study of the unified secondary education

A School, which was one of the most prestigious public high schools in the prefecture, adopted the the unified secondary education from April in 2010. On 26 July in 2009, it held an explanatory meeting for parents and children (6th grade), who hoped to take an entrance examination next year. We made a questionnaire investigation collaborating with A School. In this chapter we will show what kind of expectations parents have, who are the most influential stakeholders.

4.1. Expectation of Parents as a stakeholder (1)

In this meeting 1,283 pairs took part in and we got 881 effective responses; response rate was 68.7%. Parents with boys were 348 and those with girls were 533.

We questioned 25 items, which were selected from a brochure of A School, and parents mark 5 to 1 point-scale. Fig. 2 shows the average points of main items. Basically expectations in regard to 25 items are fairly high. We point out some characteristic points.

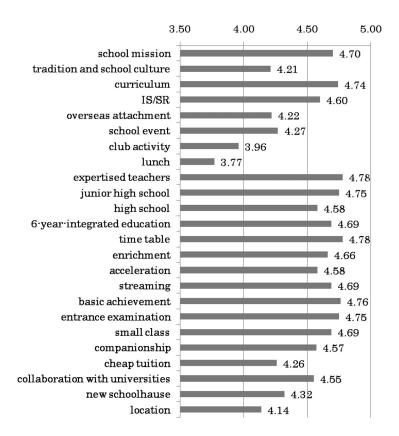


Fig. 2 Attractive Points of A School for Parents

First, expectation to curriculum as a whole is relatively high. Most of the IP schools provide characteristic activities by using the time needed to prepare for the high school entrance examination. However these activities are not necessarily attractive for parents. A School provide a curriculum, including IS/SR, oversees attachment and special time table, which has 130% class hours comparing with other junior high schools. IS/SR is considered as important activities in this school, because A School has a vision that alumini and alumnae will become active leaders in the world; they should be thinkers with a global awareness. To educate students with such awareness and abilities, IS (International Study) and SR (Scientific Research) are keystones in the curriculum.

Second, parents also expect their children will be success in the entrance examination for university. Figure says 'entrance examination' is 4.75. It means that parents tend to think of a university entrance examination is one of the most important indicators when they make their school choice. As above mentioned, the unified secondary education schools should not be a special institution, or shorter route, to a university entrance examination. However there are few parents

who forget the university entrance examination.

Third, on the other hand, 'lunch', 'club activity' and 'tradition and school culture' shows relatively low points. A School cannot provide 'lunch', or school lunch, for students from 7th to 9th grade, because of small facilities for providing meals. 'Club activity' also shows lower point. The site of this school, which is located in the center of the city, is very limited and narrow, and a number of new students is also limited only 80 students. Therefore this school cannot arrange a wide range of club activities. Some parents say 'if you want to enroll boys, you should unconditionally make a baseball club and an association football club'. And 'tradition and school culture' is also lower. The direct ancestor of this school was a girls' high school. Even if it had enjoyed a prestigious fame, a new school is reborn as a coeducation school. Parents with boys do not expect that the tradition and school culture are handed over into a new school.

As a whole we can conclude that parents expect (1) a wide range of experiences, at the some time (2) a high standard of scholastic achievement. It may somewhat contradictory, which will be mentioned below.

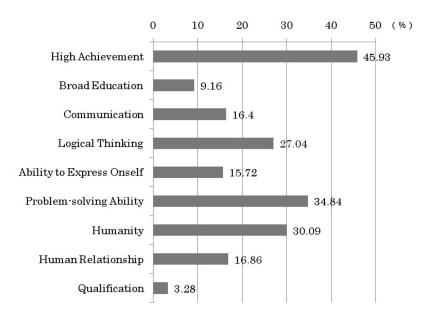


Fig. 3 Desirable Outcomes in A School

4.2. Expectation of Parents as a stakeholder (2)

Figure 3 shows what kind of knowledge or skills parents expect. We prepard 9 items in the questionnaire, and allow ed parents a free choice between these 9 items; they could choose 2 items. 45.93% of parents chose 'high achievement', or high scholastic achievement to pass a univer-

sity entrance examination. Only 3.28% of parents chose 'Qualification', or occupational training, because more that 75% of parents are white-collar workers or professions, and they hope their children will learn at a tertiary institution at least.

4.3. Between boys and girls

Next we divided into two groups: parents with boys (N = 348) and those with girls (N = 533). As mentioned above, expectations of parents show very high expectation in almost every items, and the disparity between the former and the latter is not substantial. Figure 4 shows the difference in average points in 20 items. The numerical values are the difference between the 2 groups. If it is plus, it means parents with boys shows higher interests in its item, and if it is minus, it means parents with girls shows higher interests.

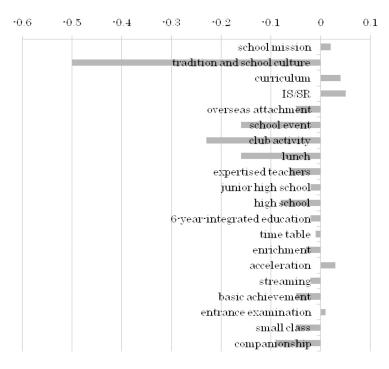


Fig. 4 Disparity between Boys and Girls

As figure 4 says parents with girls show high average points in 15 items. Especially in 'tradition and school culture' and 'club activity' the second group shows higher average points. It means that for this group it is desirable for the new school to keep its tradition and school culture as a girls' high school. On the other hand, parents with boys do not hope for it.

Although the disparity is not substantial, parents with boys show higher average points in 'school mission', 'curriculum', 'IS/SR', 'acceleration' and 'entrance examination'. These items are distinguishing features of this school.

4.4. Between the 'examination orientated' and the 'all-around orientated'

Next we analyze the difference between the 'all-round orientated' and the 'examination orientated'. We divide these 2 groups according to the figure 2; the 'all-around orientated' is a group, which did not choose 'high achievement(for the university entrance examination)', and the 'examination orientated' is a group, which chose 'high achievement'. Figure 5 shows the difference of the average points in 20 items. As fig.4, the numerical values are the difference between these 2 groups. If it is plus, it means that the 'examination orientated' shows higher interests in its item, and if it is minus, it means that the 'all-round orientated' higher interests.

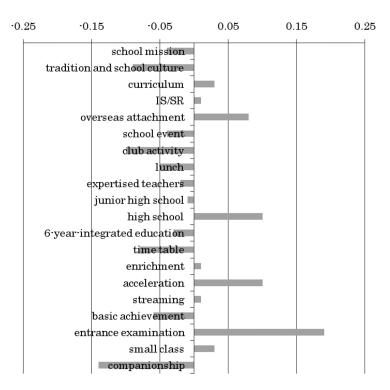


Fig. 5 Disparity between the "examination orientated" and the "all-around orientated"

Figure 5 says that the 'examination orientated' shows higher interests in 'curriculum', 'IS/SR', 'enrichment', 'streaming', 'small class'. But there are minor differences in these items. We can point out relatively major differences in 'overseas attachment', 'high school', or second half of the

6 years, and 'acceleration'. 'Acceleration' means here students learn the contents of high school during the first half.

On the other hand, the 'all-around orientated' expects items such as 'tradition and school culture', 'club activity' and 'companionship'. Of course this group also has a high motivation for the university entrance examination, however comparing with the group of the 'examination orientated', we can find a tendency that they hope that their children to learn or to enjoy a wide experiences in the 6-year-integrated program.

5. Discussion

The reason that the unified secondary education was introduced was to provide a wide range of experiences to students who hope to learn thoroughly by using the time needed for the entrance examination for the high school; and it does not aim to prepare only for the university entrance examination. At present 500 the public the unified secondary education are going to be established in all area in Japan. There are 3 types of the unified secondary education; 6-year secondary school, joint style and cooperative style. In this article, we discussed mainly the joint style, because establishment of this type is increasing recently, and some of these schools are well-known, prestigious high schools in their school districts. And it may change the educational landscape in Japan, which has guaranteed relatively equal opportunity to access education.

However this social infrastructure is going to be revised. The unified secondary education is a symbol of this trend. We can find the roots of this initiative in the Interim Council of Education in 1980s'. The context of this council was called neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism. According to the vision of reports published by this council, the educational policy in Japan had been gradually changed, and the Law of the School Education was revised in 1998. In next year, 1999, the first the unified secondary education school was established in Miyazaki Prefecture. And in this decade, the unified secondary education is changing to work as a preparatory institution leading to the prestigious universities.

The ministry of education cannot stop this drift, because local education authorities establish the new type of school. Local educational authority told us that it depends upon 'consumers' weather the unified secondary education school will be success or not. Therefore the the unified secondary education school should arrange an attractive curriculum and desirable outcomes for the 'consumers'. But who are 'consumers'? Michel Apple enumerates 4 main forces controlling the educational policy; (1) neo-liberalism, (2) neo-conservatism, (3) authoritarianism and (4) professional and managerial new middle classes. the unified secondary education was conceived and launched by the neo-liberal and neo-conservative government, and is warmly welcomed by the 'consumers' who live in the urban area and have a relatively high standard of education; profes-

sional and managerial new middle classes. Actually in order to enter this type of school, parents have a lot of pressure on education of their children; they cannot complain of the expense of education for their children. Some sociologists warn that society in Japan is changing into the 'divided society'. It means that the number of parents, who can stand up with the extra tuition fee, is limited.

The down side is following. First of all, the design of this initiative is made by the 'consumers'; not open to every children. A School gathered more than 1,500 examination candidates and only 79 children could enroll in this year. It is the strait gate. In order to enroll, children must prepare for the examination and parents must have patience with extra fee. It is not deniable to say that professional and managerial new middle classes have an advantage over the average classes. Second, this type of school should be assessed by what kind of experiences the school can instruct to students. Therefore we should develop the assessment method to grasp the outcomes of all activities, without which it will be measured only by how many students can enroll at prestigious universities.

The up side is following. Public school system is getting more diverse, and parents have alternatives to their school choice, even if they live in the provinces. Second, children do not need take an entrance examination for the high school, if they use this new type of school. This is a great merit for children.

Anyway, the outcomes of the unified secondary education schools cannot evaluate at present, because students graduated from this type of schools is very few. In order to evaluate this system, we have to investigate continuously. Now what we can do is to assess the quality of learning of children in the unified secondary education schools, collaborating with the school. When we assess it, the most important is a question for what the public secondary education is.

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