

Dispatch of Special Needs Education Supporters in Japan

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ABSTRACT

The amended School Education Act, which was enacted in 2007, stipulated the implementation of the education that enables children with disabilities who attend elementary and middle schools to overcome their difficulties that were caused by their disabilities. In 2014, 49,706 of special needs education supporters were dispatched by using 53 billion Yen through local fiscal measures, which is the amount of budget that can dispatch 46,300 special needs education supporters; 5,638 to public kindergarten, 43,586 to public elementary and middle schools and 482 to public high schools. The number of special needs education supporters has increased steadily.

Keywords : Special needs education supporter, inclusive education, local fiscal measures

1. The Theme and Purposes of Study

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (2007) prescribed the good education for children with disabilities in the Notification about the Implementation of Special Needs Education. It was also clearly stipulated that the proper education should be given to the children who have special needs for education from elementary to high schools in the Notification by implementing special needs education in all the schools that have the children who needs special educational support. As the number of children with disabilities has increased in elementary and middle schools, it is estimated that the children who require special supports for their education due to the learning disabilities (LD), ADHD, Asperger syndrome, etc. account for the 6.5 percent in the regular classes (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2012). However, the necessary supports for their special needs for education have not been properly provided because of the short manpower.

Special needs education supporters who have been dispatched to the regular schools have supported the school life of the children who have difficulties in schools due to the disabilities including developmental disabilities by helping their learning and securing their health and safety according to the characteristics of their disabilities and educational needs.

According to the survey on the dispatch of special needs education supporters in elementary and middle schools by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in 2006, 13,616 supporters were working at 8,922 elementary and middle schools. In 2014, 49,706 of special needs education supporters were dispatched by using 53 billion Yen through local fiscal measures, which is the amount of budget that can dispatch 46,300 special needs education supporters; 5,638 to public kindergarten, 43,586 to public elementary and middle schools and 482 to public high schools. The number of special needs education supporters has increased steadily (Table 1).

Children can get assistance and supports for their learning and living from special needs education supporters at School by the dispatch of special needs education supporters (CHAMOTO and KIKUCHI, 2014).

Moreover, the results of the survey on the special needs education supporters also showed that they have positively affected the children and others; there were a lot of responses implying that the performance of special needs education supporters is effective (HOSOYA, KITAMURA and IGARASHI, 2014).

There, however, are also some problems that have been revealed such as the lack of the knowledge about and experience of special needs education and the absence of the nationwide data to scientifically verify

Table 1. Dispatch of Special Needs Education Supporters

(Unit: one million Yen, person)

Year	Kindergarten		Elementary and Middle Schools		High Schools		Total		Local Government Budget
	Budget from local fiscal measures	Number of the Supporters	Budget from local fiscal measures	Number of the Supporters	Budget from local fiscal measures	Number of the Supporters	Budget from local fiscal measures	Number of the Supporters	
2006		3,299		18,200		226		21,725	
2007		3,513	21,000	22,486		278	21,000	36,277	Approx. 25,000
2008		3,437	30,000	26,092		224	30,000	29,753	Approx. 36,000
2009	3,800	3,779	30,000	31,173		219	33,800	35,171	Approx. 38,700
2010	3,800	4,252	34,000	34,132		341	37,800	38,725	Approx. 43,500
2011	4,300	4,460	34,000	36,524	500	367	38,800	41,351	Approx. 44,300
2012	4,500	4,807	36,500	39,371	500	443	41,500	44,621	Approx. 37,600
2013	4,800	5,217	39,400	41,157	500	483	44,700	46,857	Approx. 51,400
2014	5,300	5,638	40,500	43,586	500	482	46,300	49,706	Approx. 53,000

whether the special needs education supporters have properly performed their jobs in the field of special needs education. The situation even happened that the budget that should have been used for the dispatch and utilization of special needs education supporters was used for other projects; for example, in 2008, even though 36 billion Yen (the amount of budget that can dispatch 30,000 special needs education supporters) was allocated for special needs education supporters nationwide, only 29,753 special needs education supporters were dispatched. Furthermore, it could be considered as a problem that the budget of the central government is small; in 2014, the number of public schools was 38,607 including 4,714 kindergartens, 20,558 elementary schools, 9,707 middle schools and 3,628 high schools, but the number of special needs education supporters per school was only 1.29 (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2014).

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