

## <Ministry of Education's Policy Priorities in 2024>

### Unveiling Comprehensive Educational Reforms: Introducing Neulbom School, Consolidation of Early Childhood Education and Childcare, and University Reform to Tackle Societal Challenges

- Education reform hits the ground in 2024: Three Key Policy Directions, and 10 Priorities announced
- Neulbom School programs will be introduced to all elementary schools nationwide, operated by dedicated staff separated from teachers
- Universities and colleges will be supported further via breaking down barrier in departments, and greater support to students for tuition and housing
- Introducing the Education Development Zones nationwide, cracking down on private education cartels to reduce the burden on the households

The Ministry of Education (led by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Lee Ju-Ho) unveiled its pivotal policy initiatives for 2024 on January 24. Guided by the overarching vision of "addressing societal challenges through education reform," the Ministry has identified 10 key tasks for the year, aiming to ensure the successful integration of educational reform across the country.

#### 1. Fostering a rebound in birth rates through state-responsible education and care:

(1) Introduction of the nationwide **Neulbom School** programs, improving after-school childcare in elementary schools

The government will expand the Neulbom School initiative beyond the regular elementary school day. This program will offer high-quality educational programs by leveraging diverse educational resources in schools and communities. The plan is to implement this initiative in more than 2,000 schools during the first semester of 2024 and expand it to encompass all elementary schools by the second semester. Moreover, the Neulbom School will be made available to all first-grade elementary school students who wish

to take advantage of it this year, with an expansion plan targeting all grades by 2026.

\* Program availability progression: Elementary 1 (2024) → Elementary 1-2 (2025) → All elementary school students desiring to use it (2026)

This year, special emphasis will be placed on providing first graders with two hours of daily high-quality customized programs after regular school hours, free of charge. By 2025, a separate operating system will be established to alleviate teachers' workload, focusing on supporting first graders' school adjustment and offering play-oriented programs encompassing fine and physical skills, as well as psychological and emotional programs.

To facilitate these initiatives, starting from the first semester this year, dedicated personnel will be assigned to ensure that the Neulbom School responsibilities do not burden existing teachers. Not only that, in the second semester, all nationwide elementary schools will set up and operate Neulbom School Support Offices, with dedicated personnel assigned to further enhance the effectiveness of the programs.

	Up until now (existing after-school & childcare programs)	From now on (Neulbom School)
Recipients	After-school (50.3%) / Childcare (11.5%)	All desiring elementary school students (100%)
Time	From after school to 7 pm at the latest	From 7 am to 8 pm at the latest
Program	Near school	High-quality and diverse programs (in coalition of qualified institutions)
Operation	Teachers burdened by administrative workload	Operation separated from teachers

**(2) Promoting the consolidation of early childhood education and childcare for a responsible public education system from age 0:**

The government will advance the consolidation of early childhood education and childcare systems to achieve a world-class education and care system for infants and toddlers aged 0 to 5. By June, the centralized infant and toddler care and education management system will be consolidated under the Ministry of Education, and local organizations will be streamlined into city and provincial offices of education through the establishment of financial investment plans and personnel and budget transfer plans.

Additionally, to alleviate the financial burden on parents, the support for

kindergarten and childcare center **tuition**, as well as **childcare fees**, will be extended from the age of 5 this year (increasing from KRW 350,000 per month in 2023 to KRW 400,000 per month in 2024). Starting in March this year, 20 pilot schools and three pilot regions will be selected to see firsthand the outcome of the consolidation of early childhood education and care efforts under an initiative.

## **2. Easing excessive competition and reducing the burden of private education costs through the classroom revolution:**

### **(3) Actively supporting teacher-led **classroom revolution** by **elevating teachers' rights****

Building upon the foundation laid by the five pieces of legislation\* enacted last year to safeguard teachers' rights, the government is committed to further enhancing our support for schools and school boards. The objective is to ensure that teachers can lead fulfilling lives and carry out their teaching responsibilities with due legitimacy. Notably, in February, the government will inaugurate an emergency hotline dedicated to addressing teachers' rights violations – accessible at 1395. Additionally, the government will circulate a comprehensive guide to aid in responding effectively to complaints.

\* Teachers' Status Act, Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Early Childhood Education Act, Framework Act on Education, Act on the Punishment of Child Abuse Crimes

### **(4) Systematic **response** and **prevention of school violence****

In an effort to systematically address bullying, the expansion of Zero Bullying Centers, currently in the pilot phase across eight education offices, will be implemented in all education support offices starting from the upcoming school year. Furthermore, beginning in March, the introduction of bullying investigations will play a pivotal role in examining cases of bullying previously handled by teachers. Notably, the number of school police officers (SPOs) will see an increase from 1,022 in 2023 to 1,127 in 2024, with their roles evolving to include supporting and collaborating with fellow SPOs and active participation in the school violence countermeasures review committee.

### **(5) Prioritizing **student mental health** support**

The government is committed to prioritizing students' mental health remains steadfast as it aims to foster their well-being and enhance their social-emotional skills. In the coming year, the government will diligently craft social-emotional education programs tailored for each school level – lower elementary, upper elementary, middle, and high school. The implementation of these programs in the field is scheduled for the following year. Additionally, the government is dedicated to expanding the scope of our existing student counseling and healing program, the Wee Project, originally designed to address school violence. This expansion will encompass comprehensive mental health support to further fortify the overall well-being of our students.

#### **(6) Empowering youth for a [digitally proficient future](#)**

In our ongoing commitment to enhance student's digital capabilities, we are set to expand educational initiatives. The 'Digital Sprout Camp,' a platform offering education on top-notch software and artificial intelligence from both private and public sectors, will continue its operation for elementary, middle, and high school students. Starting from the first semester of the upcoming year, we will introduce AI digital textbooks, providing personalized learning diagnosis and content for each student.

In line with this initiative, we aim to finalize the assessment of digital textbooks for English, math, and information subjects, along with the development of digital textbooks for Korean language (special) subjects by November of this year.

Furthermore, recognizing the pivotal role of educators in this transition, we are dedicated to providing capacity-building training for teachers, totaling 150,000, and school-based leader teachers, numbering 11,500. This training will equip them to effectively implement AI digital textbooks in their teaching methodologies ensuring that students benefit optimally from digital technology.

### **3. Fostering regional growth through audacious university reform:**

**(7) Cultivating an [innovation ecosystem](#) for [shared advancement](#) by breaking down barriers between [regions](#) and [universities](#)**

To introduce RISE, transferring university support authority to local governments nationwide by the next year, we are actively working towards completing the implementation system. This includes the establishment of a dedicated organization slated for the first half of this year.

In the latter half of this year, approximately 10 additional Glocal Colleges, each embracing diverse innovation models, will be carefully selected. Notably, we aim to showcase successful narrative of audacious university innovation, such as governance innovation models (Kangwon National University-Ganneung-Wonju National University) and sustainable financial investment models (POSTECH and Ulsam National University). These success stories, centered around the Glocal Colleges designated last year, will be disseminated to all universities.

#### **(8) Broadening horizons and investments for [youth development](#)**

To amplify growth opportunities for the youth, we are actively promoting dismantling of barriers within and beyond university settings. In collaboration with the Financial Support Projects\*, significant financial backing will be expanded to universities pioneering innovative human resource development systems by breaking down barriers between departments and physical spaces, thereby expanding students' major options. This year, we will guide universities to adequately prepare and implement the program in phases, considering their readiness and prevailing conditions.

\* University Innovation Support Project 2024 (KRW 885.2 billion); National University Development Project 2024 (KRW 572.2 billion)

We are committed to alleviating the financial strain on young people by reducing tuition and housing burdens. In tandem with the expansion of support for national scholarships and the continued provision of low-interest loans, we plan to alleviate housing burdens for approximately 3,200 additional students through the construction of joint dormitories in four locations (Yongsan, Korea University of Sports, Incheon National University, and Seoul National University of Science and Technology) this year.

#### **4. Addressing current challenges**

**(9) Nationwide introduction of [educational development zones](#) to ignite**

## regional revitalization through education

In March and July, local governments and educational authorities will collaborate to designate educational development zones aimed at nurturing local talents and establishing a settlement base tailored to local characteristics. This collaborative effort involves engaging with local institutions such as universities, industries, and public institutions. The government's vision is to create and disseminate exemplary models of regional education development, including reserved integration, spring school, and autonomous public high schools. This initiative aims to catalyze the on-the-ground implementation of education reform tasks.

### (10) Dismantling private education cartels and mitigating private education expenses

In a concerted effort with relevant organizations, we are committed to rigorously addressing private education cartels and irregularities in entrance examinations. We will reinforce the management of examination panel resources and examination verification to sever any links between CSAT and private education. Additionally, in collaboration with the Korea Educational Broadcasting Service (EBS), the Korea Curriculum Evaluation Service, and the Korean Council for University Education (KCUE), the government plans to enhance the AI-based question bank program using CSAT and EBS textbooks. The objective is to facilitate public education-centered college entrance exam preparation by integrating career, academic, and college guidance.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Lee Ju-Ho said, "Social challenges such as the demographic crisis, intense competition in education, and regional depopulation can be surmounted through the transformative power of education. We are steadfast in promoting reforms within the education sector to initiate a virtuous cycle this year – restoring trust in public education, alleviating the burden of private education, and ensuring the successful establishment of education reforms."



**Appendix 1**
**Contact Points at the Ministry of Education**

Contact point <General>	Policy Planning Bureau	Director	Shin Gwangsu	(044-203-6026)
	Planning Division	Senior Deputy Director	Park Bongseo	(044-203-6029)
		Deputy Director	Yoo Gahui	(044-203-6051)
<Neulbom School>	Educational Welfare and Care Support Bureau	Director	Ye Hyeran	(044-203-6603)
	After-school care Program Policy Division	Deputy Director	Nam Yunchul	(044-203-6606)
<Consolidation of early childhood education and childcare>	Taskforce on Consolidation of Early Childhood Education and Care	Director	Kim Taehoon	(044-203-7190)
	Strategy Planning Division	Deputy Director	Yoon Haesu	(044-203-7192)
<Protection of teachers' rights>	Teacher and Parent Support Bureau	Director	Shin Jinyong	(044-203-6480)
	Teacher Policy Division	Senior Educational Supervisor	Kim Myungryun	(044-203-6487)
<School violence>	Student Health Policy Bureau	Director	Kim Dohyung	(044-203-6972)
	School Violence Countermeasure Division	Deputy Director	Jeong Minjae	(044-203-6975)
<Mental fitness>	Student Health Policy Bureau	Director	Kim Minsun	(044-203-6203)
	Socio-emotional Development Support Division	Senior Educational Supervisor	Kim Yongjun	(044-203-6207)
<Digital education>	Digital Transformation of Education Bureau	Director	Song Sunjin	(044-203-7046)
	Digital Transformation of Education Division	Deputy Director	Jeong Hanmoe	(044-203-7047)
<AI digital textbooks>	Responsible Public Education Policy Bureau	Director	Lee Jieun	(044-203-6465)
	Educational Content Policy Division	Deputy Director	Hong Kiwook	(044-203-6470)
<Glocal colleges>  <RISE>	Regional Human Capital Policy Bureau	Director	Yoon Soyoun	(044-203-6232)
	Regional Human Capital Policy Division	Senior Deputy Director	Hwang Jihye	(044-203-6235)
		Deputy Director	Kim Huijun	(044-203-6236)
<Higher education innovation>	Regional Human Capital Policy Bureau	Director	Kim Hyoshin	(044-203-6243)
	Regional Innovation Support Division	Deputy Director	Lee Junhyuk	(044-203-6924)
<Scholarship>	Lifelong and Vocaitonal Education Policy Bureau	Director	Kim Taekyunh	(044-203-6267)
	Youth Scholarship Support Division	Deputy Director	Yoon Eunjung	(044-203-6268)
<Special zons for educational development>	Education Autonomy and Safety Bureau	Director	Choi Sujin	(044-203-6340)
	Education Autonomy and Cooperation Division	Deputy Director	Kim Younhyun	(044-203-6354)
<Private education eradication>	Policy Planning Bureau	Director	Lim Sohui	(044-203-7172)
	Private Education and Admissions Misconduct Response Division	Senior Deputy Director	Shin Minyoung	(044-203-7173)

Vision	Tackling Social Challenges with Education Reform	
Goal	Personalized Education for All	
Direction	Tasks	Challenges
<p>①</p> <p>The government to provide world-class education and childcare services</p>	<p>① Nationwide introduction of <b>Neulbom School</b> programs through the consolidation of after-school programs and childcare service in all elementary schools</p> <p>② Promotion of government responsibility for the <b>consolidation of early childhood education and childcare</b> services, starting from age 0</p>	<p>Responding to low birthrate crisis</p>
<p>②</p> <p>A new semester with the arrival of a novel educational environment</p>	<p>③ <b>Empowering teachers</b> to spearhead classroom revolution</p> <p>④ Systematically <b>responding</b> to and <b>preventing school violence</b></p> <p>⑤ Prioritizing <b>students' mental health</b></p> <p>⑥ Supporting <b>children's digital skills</b> for a brighter future</p>	<p>Easing of excessive competition in education</p>
<p>③</p> <p>Driving dynamic regional community development through university reform</p>	<p>⑦ Creating an <b>innovative ecosystem of shared growth</b> by dismantling barriers between <b>regions</b> and <b>universities</b></p> <p>⑧ Expanding opportunities and investment to better support the <b>development of youth</b></p>	<p>Developing regional growth engine</p>
<p>Challenges at Hand</p>	<p>⑨ Nationwide introduction of <b>Special Educational Development Zones</b> to revitalize regional communities with the power of education</p> <p>⑩ Dismantling private education cartels and tackling high private education expenses</p>	<p>Dramatically reducing financial burden of private education</p>
<p>Support System</p>	<p>Enhancing policy communication, and opening and connecting data</p>	