

Foreword



Minister of Education, Culture,
Sports, Science and Technology

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The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) annually publishes a White Paper on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in order to introduce any new policies MEXT is implementing for education, culture, sports, science and technology. This FY 2004 version features “a mind and body sustaining a zest for living.”

Among the more prominent facets of this “zest for living” are “a healthy body,” “a well-rounded character,” and “solid academic prowess.” Zest for living is deeply connected with both mind and body. In order for people to maintain mental and physical soundness and live a more substantial life, it is necessary to foster sound mind and body from childhood. MEXT therefore implements measures to improve children’s physical fitness and maintain and promote their health.

The marvelous performance of Japanese athletes at the Athens Olympic Games held in August 2004 greatly excited the entire nation. The promotion of sports is essential for the formation of a bright, rich, and vigorous society. MEXT is committed to the achievement of a lifelong sports society to enable everyone to enjoy sports in their neighborhood and the training of top-level athletes who can compete on a world stage.

To nurture sound minds and bodies in children, it is important to provide them with the proper knowledge about diet and instill in them good eating habits. Accordingly, MEXT is carrying out

measures for the smooth implementation of the diet and nutrition teacher system and promoting food education at schools in cooperation with households and local communities.

Also, in order to develop considerate, social, ethical, and well-rounded children, MEXT is making efforts to provide young people with more natural experiences and social experiences and is promoting reading activities for the youth. In recent society, there seems to be no end to incidents threatening the safety of children, and in response to this situation MEXT is enhancing safety control measures at schools. Also, MEXT is building even better environments, where children can grow soundly and develop benevolence, and promoting the prevention of juvenile delinquency and crimes, which are pointed out as becoming crueler and more violent, in connection and cooperation with related governmental agencies.

The 2004 white paper will introduce these measures, and I would like to solicit your kind understanding and cooperation with MEXT.

In the second part, the White Paper describes the overall trends in educational reform and introduces education, science and technology, academic, and culture-related measures by area, as it does every year.

In order for Japan to further develop into a truly rich and cultured nation amid changes in time and society, it is necessary for the country to foster educational reform as a national strategy and form a mentally rich and strong Japanese society by improving human abilities in every areas of education.

We will make every possible effort to make Japan “education and culture-oriented nation” and a “nation based on creativity in science and technology.”

I hope that this white paper will be widely utilized by citizens and help them deepen their understanding of our general policies on education, culture, sports, science, and technology.

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