



PEB Exchange, Programme on Educational Building 1999/07

Educational Facilities in Korea

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<https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/461572863513>

or receive light from the central oval courtyard. For example, the documentation and information centre is located above the main entrance to the playground and opens onto the countryside through large windows shaded by metal sunscreens.

Conclusion: the cavern and the lorry

This dualistic project is based on a series of contrasts: earth, mineral, organic, heavy and opaque, on the one hand, and sky, metallic, technological, light and transparent on the other. It combines two environments, the town and the country, each represented by two elements that join and reconcile them, even though, suspended one above the other, they have little or nothing in common. The result is a harmony based on the contrast between the motorway and the rolling countryside, in which the upper part of the building is like a vehicle that has left the motorway and is in suspended motion over the cavern of the building's base.

The school is a most unusual structure but one which is integrated into its surroundings, between town and country and the motorway, and which tries to reconcile the aesthetics of clean lines, movement and tension with the more peaceful beauty of the landscape and its contours.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES IN KOREA

A programme is currently underway in Korea to modernise school buildings and equipment in order to better meet today's teaching needs. During the 1970s and 80s the Korean Government reformed its educational system, making fundamental changes in teaching methods, class time and curricula with a move toward open education in elementary schools and an individualised interactive learning approach in middle and high schools. In 1993, the Korean Institute of Educational Facilities was created to study building designs and equipment, such as computers, which would be suited for the new curricula. Composed of civil servants and experts in education and architecture, the Institute publishes its findings four times a year.

Most school facilities at the primary and secondary levels are not yet adapted to the reformed curricula and lack adequate conditions for a variety of teaching methods, but local authorities have made step-by-step plans to renovate their facilities.

A significant number of schools have introduced the concept of "open education" and every provincial authority is responsible for producing a model for open education. As new teaching programmes involve both individual and group work to respect differing ways of learning, school authorities are opting for classrooms with individual work tables that can be arranged for group discussion. The need remains for multi-purpose spaces, including learning resource centres with a library and video room. One example of flexibility common in Korean schools is classrooms which are open to the corridors, so the latter can be used for teaching if required.

Educational system

Korea's educational system is structured as follows:

- elementary school – compulsory: 6 years, for ages 6-11;
- middle school: 3 years, for ages 12-14;
- high school (general or vocational): 3 years, for ages 15-17;
- college/university: two-year junior college or four-year college/university.

After completing compulsory primary education, nearly all young people continue on to middle school. Students must pass an entrance examination to enter high school, and approximately 90 per cent are successful. High schools are generally divided into two categories, general or vocational schools.

Private institutions make up 35 per cent of secondary schools and 83 per cent of post-secondary institutions. State-owned facilities most often offer more space per student than private ones, and the Government recently laid out plans to expand non-curricular facilities such as dormitories and student cultural centres.

At the level of higher education, in addition to colleges, institutions called "open universities" provide instruction to the adult community and employed youth.

Numbers of Schools and Students in Korea; Available Space

	Elementary schools	Middle schools	High schools	Higher education institutions
Number of schools/institutions	5 721	2 720	1 892	316
Number of students	3 783 000	2 180 000	2 336 000	2 112 000
Floor area per student	5.2 m ²	5.0 m ²	5.9 m ²	9.9 m ²
Site area per student	9.5 m ²	7.5 m ²	12.3 m ²	42.7 m ²

Source: *Statistical Year Book of Education 1997*, Ministry of Education, Korea.

Administrative system

The Korean Government is the policy-maker for primary and secondary education, while local education authorities implement the policies. Within the Ministry of Education, building stock is the responsibility of the Education Facilities Division of the Education Environment Improvement Bureau. The Division finances facilities for schools as well as for institutions of higher education and provides technical support for building construction.

A large part of the educational administration system has been decentralised in an effort to better meet the diverse needs of local education. The Ministry of Education delegates much of its budget planning and major administrative decisions to local authorities regarding school buildings in their area. Korea counts 180 district offices of education along with seven metropolitan and nine provincial offices. Their work is evaluated by the Ministry.

Standardisation of educational facilities

Standards for educational facilities established by the Ministry of Education exist for each school level. They regulate the number of facilities – school buildings as well as classrooms, laboratories, libraries, etc. – according to student numbers. The standards serve to evaluate the capacity of existing schools and determine the need for new ones.

Trends in schooling

Local development planning requires securing adequate sites for city schools in anticipation of the projected rise in the urban student population, a task that is becoming increasingly difficult.

Rural areas on the other hand have suffered a decline in student population as people have migrated to urban areas, leaving behind a surplus of classrooms in primary and middle schools in continual need of maintenance. In response the Government is now replacing every three to five lower level schools with one combined elementary and middle school. The schools to be closed, many of them built 40 or more years ago, will be torn down or where possible converted into special classrooms or facilities.

Newly built or renovated schools in the country are designed with rooms for adult continuing education, thereby providing services for people of all ages in the community.

Facilities for higher education

The Ministry of Education supplies each national institution of higher education with a framework for

detailed planning of campus development and reviews their individual development plans.

There is a growing tendency for universities located in dense metropolitan areas to move their campuses to the outskirts of town. Such a move can offer a more pleasant environment, allow for further expansion and in some cases permit the university to consolidate previously scattered campuses.

In the early 1980s rapid growth in student numbers at the tertiary level created high demand for facilities. As demand has reached a plateau, resources are now being directed toward building maintenance, equipment and generally improving the learning environment.

Information and technology developments

Korean local educational authorities furnish each elementary and middle school with one or two computer classrooms. There are plans to supply computer network systems as well as Pentium-level personal computers to those schools whose computers are out of date.

A number of universities are well equipped in the area of information technology. Some universities, in addition to having advanced computer programs, have computers in every laboratory and professor's office; they are connected to networks used for administrative and instructional purposes. These networks allow students on campus to communicate with people off campus and, via Internet, with others around the world.

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A classroom for "open education" at the Shinchang Elementary School, in the Cheju Province.