EDUCATIONAL RESPONSE TO COVID-19 IN REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Challenges to the Continuity of Learning
Faced with the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 was a year in which the entire education community in Korea acted as one in collective vigilance. As the spring semester approached, the confirmed cases of COVID-19 rose steadily, which ultimately led to a delay in school reopening in March 2020. In the following month, full-scale online education began for students of all levels. Looking back on Korea's 70-year-long history of education, we never stopped educating our students even in the midst of war. Considering that they had been taught under refugee tents, the fact that the doors of our schools were closed for months was a telltale sign of the sheer enormity of the challenge we were faced with.

Moving to full-scale online education was an unconventional step for all in the education community. Nevertheless, each student, school faculty and staff member, and parent played their own role in safeguarding students' safety and their right to education.

Teachers developed new teaching and learning content for online classes to ensure continuity of learning, while the public and private sectors worked together to support students in need by providing digital devices and introducing a zero-rating policy. Moreover, in late 2020, the College Scholastic Ability Test, the national college entrance examination in Korea, was administered successfully, demonstrating that "when we work together, even a crisis can be turned into an opportunity.”

School education is a basic right that all children deserve. The learning and communication experienced in school enrich children’s everyday lives. Now, education in Korea is once again concentrating its strengths to achieve a return to the school life that we all enjoyed before the pandemic. The Ministry of Education will continue to work hard to allow our students spend as much time in school as they want by providing a safe and secure learning environment with a strong safety net, while closely communicating with each and every one of the members of our education community. Moreover, the Ministry will work hard to monitor and offer proper support for all students, to not only assist in their attainment of basic education, but also to support their mental and physical development, not to mention their health and safety. In the process, no efforts will be spared to fully prepare our students for the future of education.

As much as I want to see the end of COVID-19 declared by the international community, it would be rewarding if this publication could be of help to countries around the world in their policy-making as part of our collective endeavor to overcome the pandemic.
# COVID-19 Control and Prevention System

## Overview

### The "3T" System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Social distancing in daily life</th>
<th>Regional epidemic</th>
<th>Nationwide pandemic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Stage</td>
<td>Start of regional epidemic</td>
<td>Rapid rise in regional transmission and the start of national transmission</td>
<td>Nationwide epidemic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Stage</td>
<td>Maintaining strict distancing in daily life in regions with high infection rates</td>
<td>Avoiding unnecessary social activities in regions with high infection rates and reducing the usage of public facilities</td>
<td>Nationwide pandemic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Stage</td>
<td>Staying at home if possible, and strictly avoiding social gatherings and the usage of public facilities</td>
<td>Staying at home, and minimizing gatherings with others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Stage</td>
<td>Schools limited to 2/3 capacity for physical attendance with rare exceptions</td>
<td>Schools strictly limited to 2/3 capacity for physical attendance</td>
<td>Schools of all levels strictly limited to 1/3 capacity for physical attendance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Compliance Details

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<th>Concept</th>
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<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>Maintaining daily personal, social and economic activities while observing infectious disease prevention and control rules to prevent COVID-19 infection</td>
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### School/Student Population Density Adjustment (Nov. 7, 2020 - Jun. 1, 2021)

- Small-sized schools (i.e., kindergartens with fewer than 60 children, and elementary, middle and high schools fewer than 300 students), schools in rural areas, and special schools have discretion regarding compliance with the physical attendance rules.
- Emergency childcare service and remedial academic programs for under-performing students exempt from physical attendance rules.

### Disease Control and Prevention Measures in Private Academies and Vocational Training Institution

- Compliance with 3 basic rules (mask-wearing, visitor log, and ventilation-disinfection).
- Following the 4 square meter rule (i.e., there should be at least 4m² of space for each person, or leave a space between seats).
- Food consumption is not allowed.
- Limiting business hours to 9 pm. Social gathering is prohibited. (Online education can be offered.)

- Kindergartens, elementary and middle schools strictly limited to 1/3 capacity for physical attendance.
- High schools strictly limited to 2/3 capacity.
- Schools of all levels strictly limited to 1/3 capacity for physical attendance.

- Limiting business hours to 9 pm.
- Allowing 4m² of space for each person, or leaving two unoccupied spaces between seats.
- Food consumption is not allowed.
- Choosing between ① and ②.
## COVID-19 Status by the Numbers

### Number of confirmed cases in Korea
- **148,647**
- **Number of deaths in Korea**: **1,992**
- **Fatality rate**: **1.34%**

(As of Jun. 15, 2021)

### Number of confirmed cases worldwide
- **175,910,951**
- **Number of deaths worldwide**: **3,800,592**
- **Fatality rate**: **2.16%**

(As of Jun. 15, 2021)

### Additional funding allocated by the Ministry of Education for educational infrastructure for COVID-19 in FY 2020
- **296 billion KRW**

(As of Jun. 15, 2021)

### Number of students enrolled in emergency childcare
- **187,300**
- **Percentage of parents “satisfied” with the emergency childcare service for children with disabilities**: **93.3%**

(As of Jun. 22, 2021)

### Relief allowance to support the childcare of 2.69 million elementary school students (Oct. 2020, one-off assistance)
- **200,000 KRW**

(As of Jun. 7, 2021)

### Agricultural packages provided to the homes of 5.3 million students nationwide
- **45,000 tons**

(As of Jun. 7, 2021)

### Number of students who participated in the public learning management system
- **664,000**
- **675,000**

(As of Jun. 16, 2021)

### Community of 10,000 Representative Teachers
- **2,812**
- **Deaths per 1 million people (cumulative)**: **39**

(As of Jun. 7, 2021)

### Number of students who took the College Scholastic Ability Test (CAST) in 2020
- **421,034**

(As of Jun. 15, 2021)

### Number of confirmed COVID-19 cases among CSAT takers
- **41**

(CSAT held on Dec. 3, 2020)

### Number of students who performed daily self-checks on website
- **6.73 million**

(As of Nov. 23, 2020)

### Number of COVID-19 monitoring daily meetings held by MoE
- **259**

(Jan. 29, 2020 - Jun. 11, 2021)

### Pieces of digital content uploaded by teachers for online classes
- **124,860 million**

(Apr.-Dec. 2020)

### Number of primary and secondary school students from low-income families who received allowance to cover their internet subscription fees (19,250 KRW per month)
- **174,000**

(As of Nov. 23, 2020)

### Satisfaction rates with online learning
- **81%**
- **56.7%**

(Apr.-Dec. 2020)

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COVID-19 Response in Education at a Glance

### Response System
- COVID-19 Response Headquarters established at the Ministry of Education (Feb. 21)
- 1st delay in school reopening of kindergartens, elementary, middle and high schools (Feb. 28)
- COVID-19 response team to support higher education institutions (Mar. 1)

### Academic Operation
- Supplementary budget for FY 2020 in response to COVID-19 appropriated (Jun. 17-Aug. 7)
- Guidelines for School Attendance, Evaluation and Academic Transcript Recording distributed (Apr. 7)
- Students started receiving packages of agricultural produce delivered to their homes (Apr. 29)

### Disease Control Measures in School
- 1st online inspection of school readiness conducted in kindergartens, elementary, middle and high schools (Apr. 12)
- Guidelines for Disease Control and Prevention Measures for Kindergartens, Elementary, Middle, High and Special Schools announced (Mar. 24)
- On-site inspections and consultation meetings held in elementary schools (Jun. 27)

### International Cooperation
- Agreement reached between the Korean and Chinese ministries of response (Feb. 26-Mar. 5)
- Plan for academic operation and support announced (Mar. 1)
- Plan for the Innovation of Lifelong Education and Training in Digital Era announced (Oct. 11)
- Additional school personnel dispatched to allow for flexible operation of academic programs (Aug. 26-Sept. 20)

### Student Management and Childcare Support
- Meeting held virtually (Jun. 27)
- On-site inspections and consultation meetings held in elementary schools (Jun. 29)
- 1st on-site support offered to colleges and universities as part of COVID-19 response (Feb. 23)
- Plan for the Innovation of Lifelong Education and Training in Digital Era announced (Oct. 11)

### Online Semester
- On-site inspection of school readiness conducted in kindergartens, elementary, middle and high schools (Apr. 12)
- Online semester began for senior high school students (May 20)
- On-site inspections and consultation meetings held in elementary schools (Jun. 27)

### Communications
- Meeting held virtually (Jun. 27)
- On-site inspections conducted in special schools, and meeting held between parents and faculty (Oct. 11)
-分数线政策 for handling international students infected with COVID-19 (Apr. 14)
- Online semester began for 4-6th year elementary school students, and 2nd-year high school students allowed to physically attend school (May 27)

### Budget Support
- Supplementary budget for FY 2020 in response to COVID-19 appropriated (Feb. 28)
- Guidelines for budget support for disadvantaged college students developed (Apr. 29)
- On-site inspection of school readiness conducted in kindergartens, elementary, middle and high schools (Apr. 12)
- On-site inspection of school readiness conducted in kindergartens, elementary, middle and high schools (Apr. 12)

### Examinations
- On-site inspections conducted in special schools, and meeting held between parents and faculty (Oct. 11)
- 2021 CSAT schedule confirmed (Jul. 1)
- Supplementary budget for FY 2020 in response to COVID-19 appropriated (Feb. 28)
- Guidelines for School Attendance, Evaluation and Academic Transcript Recording distributed (Apr. 7)

### Future Education
- Dialogue on post-COVID-19 education held (Jun. 17-Aug. 7)
- Dialogue on post-COVID-19 education held (Jun. 17-Aug. 7)
- Regional dialogues on post-COVID-19 education held (Jul. 15-Aug. 11)
- Top 10 Policy Agenda for Transition to Future Education announced (Dec. 15)

### Declaration of 2021 CSAT announcement (Aug. 4)
- Regional dialogues on post-COVID-19 education held (Jul. 15-Aug. 11)
- Plan for Digital World of Higher Education announced (Sep. 20)
- Plan for the Innovation of Lifelong Education and Training in Digital Era announced (Sept. 23)
- Top 10 Policy Agenda for Transition to Future Education announced (Dec. 15)
- Special CSAT (CSAT for 2 weeks) and control measures deployed ahead of CSAT (for 2 weeks)
- CSAT administration (Dec. 3)

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**1st quarter**: 1/4 quarter

**2nd quarter**: 2/4 quarter

**3rd quarter**: 3/4 quarter

**4th quarter**: 4/4 quarter

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*Examinations:*
- Special CSAT (CSAT for 2 weeks) and control measures deployed ahead of CSAT (for 2 weeks)
- CSAT administration (Dec. 3)

*Future Education:
- Top 10 Policy Agenda for Transition to Future Education announced (Dec. 15)
- Dialogue on post-COVID-19 education held (Jun. 17-Aug. 7)
- Dialogue on post-COVID-19 education held (Jun. 17-Aug. 7)**
A COVID-19 response system was established to quickly tackle any emergencies and to make informed decisions in close communication with the relevant ministries and institutions. To this end, a response team was created under the Ministry of Education led by the Minister and Vice Minister, as well as a pan-governmental body that allowed all stakeholders in education to readily communicate, including the relevant ministries at the central government level, and the provincial offices of education, as well as the institutions of higher education.

When COVID-19 was at its initial stage of transmission in January 2020, the Ministry of Education organized the "COVID-19 Prevention Task Force" led by the Vice Minister. After the infection started to spread more broadly and the national alert level was elevated, the Task Force was expanded to the "COVID-19 Response Headquarters," involving 32 divisions of the Ministry of Education, led by the Deputy Prime Minister (Minister of Education) in February 2020.

The Response Headquarters consisted of four departments, which were the "Kindergartens and Primary Secondary School Response Department," "Higher Education and International Students Response Department," "Financial Response Department," and "Social Affairs Cooperation Department."

For example, the Kindergartens and Primary Secondary School Response Department was in charge of managing school disinfection activities, school closure and reopening schedules, and assisting the provincial offices of education to prevent and control COVID-19 infection. The Higher Education and International Students Response Department provided comprehensive support for international students, and was in charge of disease control and prevention measures and academic affairs management in universities. The Social Affairs Cooperation Department was responsible for promoting cooperation among the relevant ministries that manage social affairs policies, which was reflective of the role of the Ministry of Education, as its Minister also serves as the Deputy Prime Minister for Social Affairs. On July 1, the "University COVID-19 Response Team" was expanded to the "Comprehensive COVID-19 School Response Division," and the "COVID-19 Online Education Infrastructure Division" was newly established at the Ministry of Education.
Following three rounds of decisions to delay the date of school reopening due to nationwide transmission, the “Task Force on Preparation of School Semester” was created as a consultative body between the Ministry of Education and the Provincial Offices of Education to readily report on urgent matters and discuss response measures accordingly. The provincial offices of education and teachers’ communities worked closely with this Task Force, which was headed by the Vice Minister of Education. As schools gradually reopened in May 2020, the Task Force changed its name to the “Preparation Task Force for In-Person Education” to support safe school reopenings around the country.

To facilitate close cooperation with 17 provincial offices of education around the country, the Ministry of Education held 37 meetings from March to September 2020. At the meetings, the Ministry provided policy guidance at the national level, while the provincial offices of education discussed and monitored how each region had been responding to local transmissions in their own contexts.

To ensure a safe learning environment and establish a well-functioning monitoring and inspection system to offer students quality education and allow them to return to their daily lives, the “Back to School Task Force” was created at the Ministry of Education. The Back to School Task Force organizes a meeting every two weeks with deputy superintendents from the provincial offices of education and director generals from the Ministry of Education. The meeting aims to monitor six key indicators of the COVID-19 response, to discuss urgent matters that require close consultation between the Ministry of Education and the provincial offices of education, and to reflect the voices of diverse members of the education community to address wide-ranging impacts of the pandemic.

The Ministry of Education phased in measures that were necessary to flexibly manage academic affairs to ensure the continuity of learning while maintaining student health and safety as its utmost priority. Following the first nationwide infection surge, the date of school reopening was delayed and online classes were introduced, accompanied by phasing in face-to-face education in line with local infection trends. After the second and third surge of infections, blended forms of education were offered by combining both online and in-person learning to manage academic affairs flexibly.

### School Reopening Timeline in 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 3</td>
<td>Decision made to delay school reopening and temporarily close 474 schools, including kindergarteners and primary secondary schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 23</td>
<td>Announcement of the 1st delay in school reopening: one week delay in all kindergarteners and primary-secondary-special schools (school reopening date was readjusted from Mar. 2 to 9). It was the first temporary school closure at the national level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 2</td>
<td>2nd delay: additional 2 weeks delay for kindergartners and primary secondary schools (school reopening date: Mar. 23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 17</td>
<td>3rd delay: additional 2 weeks delay (school reopening date: Apr. 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 31</td>
<td>4th delay: announcement of the introduction of first-ever “online semester” (i.e. phased-in introduction from Apr. 9 starting with the 3rd grade secondary school students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May. 9</td>
<td>1st phase of the online semester: first online school reopening for 3rd grade of secondary schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May. 16</td>
<td>2nd phase: 4-6 grades of elementary schools; 1-2 grades of middle and high schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May. 31</td>
<td>3rd phase: 1-3rd grades elementary school online semester officially ended after 49 days of delay to physical school reopening of primary secondary schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun. 4</td>
<td>Announcement of staggered physical school reopening, starting with the high school senior students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun. 11</td>
<td>Decision made to delay physical school reopening by one week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun. 20</td>
<td>1st phase of physical school attendance started with high school senior students (1st physical reopening of school in 80 days of its delay)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun. 27</td>
<td>2nd phase: kindergartener; 1-2 grades of elementary schools; senior students of middle schools; 2nd grade of high schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul. 3</td>
<td>3rd phase: 3-4th grades of elementary schools; 2nd grade of middle and high schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul. 8</td>
<td>4th phase: 5-6th grades of elementary schools; 1st grade of middle schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students allowed to physically go to school after 99 days of delay to school reopening</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

* A close cooperation system was established with health authorities at the central government level, such as between the Ministry of Education and Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency, and between the provincial offices of education and local health authorities at the local government level.

## Management of Academic Affairs

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The academic schedules and programs for 2020 were adjusted promptly before the school reopening to prevent further transmission of COVID-19. All kindergartners, and primary and secondary schools decided to postpone their reopening in order to ensure student health and safety, and ad-hoc academic plans were made accordingly. In preparation for a scenario in which learning could not be carried out in-person even after schools reopen, the Ministry developed guidelines to systematically assist schools of all levels in offering online education. Moreover, all institutions of higher education were advised to delay their schedule for the spring semester, and guidelines were distributed. Events involving gatherings of mass crowds, such as graduation ceremonies and orientation sessions for freshmen students, were canceled, and academic schedules were readjusted.</td>
</tr>
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## Swift Academic Adjustments before School Reopening

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Schools were supported in various ways as they prepared for the first-ever “online semester” (online school reopening). The introduction of the online semester was staggered to allow schools sufficient time to prepare, starting with the third grade high school students and third grade middle school students. In addition, guidelines were developed to give clear instructions to teachers on student attendance, evaluation, and the recording of school transcripts. Teachers and students were offered a code of conduct that they could refer to in their online learning and teaching activities. The provincial offices of education and schools came up with their own protocols and plans to operate online education based on the government guidelines, taking into account local contexts and professional advice from teachers.

### Introduction of Online Learning by Stages for 1st Semester of 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>Apr. 6-9</th>
<th>Apr. 9-10</th>
<th>Apr. 13-15</th>
<th>Apr. 16-17</th>
<th>Apr. 20-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>1°</td>
<td>2°</td>
<td>3°</td>
<td>4°</td>
<td>5°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary Closure (3 days)</td>
<td>Temporary Closure (7 days)</td>
<td>Temporary Closure (7 days)</td>
<td>Temporary Closure (7 days)</td>
<td>Temporary Closure (9 days)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment Period</td>
<td>Adjustment Period</td>
<td>Adjustment Period</td>
<td>Adjustment Period</td>
<td>Adjustment Period</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Semester (Apr. 9-1)</td>
<td>Online Semester (Apr. 9-1)</td>
<td>Online Semester (Apr. 9-1)</td>
<td>Online Semester (Apr. 16-1)</td>
<td>Online Semester (Apr. 20-1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Types of Online Classes

- Real-time Interactive Class
- Content-oriented Class
- Task-oriented Class
- Others

Real-time interactive online classes allow immediate exchange of feedback, including real-time communications and discussions by using video-conferencing.

- Lecture type: Content-oriented classes allow students to watch video-recorded lecture and/or learning content, while the teachers mentor how much students understand and provide feedback.
- Lecture + activity type: After watching the video-recorded learning content, students engage in discussions by leaving comments or asking and answering questions about what they have learned with their peers.

### Supporting Schools with In-person and Online Education

Kindergartens and primary and secondary schools were swiftly assisted in providing in-person instruction in parallel with online instruction. To help schools to transition to in-person education, guidelines for school reopening were distributed which contained instructions on student attendance, assessment and school transcript recording. For example, to ease the burden of assessment on students, the extent to which student assessment outcomes were reflected on their school transcripts was adjusted appropriately. During online classes, teachers were only allowed to carry out student assessments based on their direct observation of students’ activities during the online classes, such as their participation in real-time online debates and discussions. After physical school attendance was allowed, teachers utilized the learning outcomes submitted by their students during the online classes in their in-person classes, while observing students’ progress in learning in order to reflect all these factors on the school transcript. In addition, the Ministry of Education developed plans for flexible management of academic affairs and shared them with schools and the provincial offices of education, to help them better prepare for school reopening. Moreover, in consideration of the national social distancing measures, schools were allowed to decide their level of population density and to choose between in-person and online education that matched their circumstances and better served their needs, so that they could make plans for education in the second half of the 2020 academic year.
Online school reopening was prepared as physical school attendance became difficult with the spread of COVID-19. Public learning management systems (LMS) were established to allow the participation of all primary and secondary school students, and diverse online learning materials were developed. In particular, teachers were encouraged to engage in wide-ranging voluntary activities through the “Community of 10,000 Representative Teachers” and the “Knowledge Spring.”

### Collaborative Teachers

Teachers’ communities such as the Community of 10,000 Representative Teachers and the Knowledge Spring served as channels for real-time communication among teachers to share their challenges with online instruction and engage in troubleshooting. Teachers also used these channels to further develop their own online teaching capacities by working with their colleagues from schools across the country.

### Building Public Learning Management System

#### Public Platforms

The EBS Online Class

**Measures for Stable Operation of Online Classes**

- **E-learning Site**
  - 7-fold expansion of infrastructure in 2 weeks (Mar. 23-Apr. 8)
  - 470,000 visitors                 3 million
  - 300-fold expansion of infrastructure in a month (Mar. 2-Apr. 8)
  - 10,000 visitors                 3 million

- **The EBS Online Class**
  - 664,000 visitors
  - 675,000 visitors

#### Collaboration of Teachers

This community gathers relevant institutions such as representative teachers from schools in 17 provinces, the Ministry of Education, the provincial offices of education, and Korea Education & Research Information Service (KERIS) to assist teachers in better adapting to the online teaching environment.

- **School-On**
  - School-On is an integrated platform designed to support online learning by allowing access to information for teachers to create online classrooms, support their students’ learning and provide counseling.
- **Teacher-On**
  - Teacher-On is a voluntary group of teachers that offers online teaching support, including how to make e-classrooms and teach online by using digital tools, to help their fellow teachers.
- **The Knowledge Spring**
  - This website allows teachers to share knowledge about what they need to prepare for online teaching by interacting with one another.

### Online Classes Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Channels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary 1-2nd</td>
<td>Korean, Math</td>
<td>EBSPlaza, EBS TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary 1-6th</td>
<td>Korean, English, Math, Social Studies, Science</td>
<td>e-Learning + EBS Online Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School 1-3rd</td>
<td>Korean, English, Math, Social Studies, Science</td>
<td>Content from cyber middle schools curriculum (e-Learning &amp; EBS Online Class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Common subjects and 41 Types of elective subjects in line with the curriculum</td>
<td>Content from cyber high school curriculum (e-Learning &amp; EBS Online Class)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Outcome of Online Education

As more students, teachers, and parents got used to online education, and online learning platforms became more technically stable, schools made appropriate use of online tools to blend with the school curriculum. The Ministry of Education developed the “Plans to Strengthen Education Safety Net for all Students” and the “Plan for Quality Assurance of Online Education and Education Safety Net” on August 11 and September 15, respectively, to improve the overall quality of online education. In primary and secondary schools, the percentage of real-time interactive online classes used in the second semester increased dramatically compared to the first semester among all types of online classes (i.e., 14.8% in 1st semester, 55.7% in 2nd semester). The percentage of teachers using educational content that they had developed on their own rose from the first to the second semester (20.3% in 1st semester, 25.3% in 2nd semester).

#### The Outcome of Online Education and Communication between Teachers and Students in 2nd Semester of 2020

- **40.9%** of the parents who participated in a survey by Real Meter said: “Online classes have been helpful in preventing learning loss.”
- **62.5%** of the parents who participated in a survey by NEIS said: “I will continue to use online tools in my child’s future.”
- **14.8%** of the teachers participated in a survey by NEIS said: “The use of online learning tools will contribute to students’ future.”
- **56.23%** of the secondary school students said: “I found the online learning helpful.”

#### Diverse Online Learning Content for Primary and Secondary Education

With the full-scale introduction of online education, a profound effort was made to ensure teachers have access to abundant online teaching materials. Such online content included 5,500 materials on the E-learning Site and 43,000 materials on the EBS (Korea Educational Broadcasting System) website, including the EBS Premium Lectures for middle school students, 497 e-books, and 134 digital textbooks. In addition, 28 of the EBS TV channel programs and 41 educational materials from cyber high schools were broadly shared. Online education was offered to meet the demands of various learners and to cater to their specific needs. For example, in order to support students with disabilities, online learning materials were provided in Braille and/or with subtitles, while students from multi-cultural families received assistance with their Korean language learning. For vocational high school students, specially designed online learning materials were offered to assist in their vocational training. In addition, cooperation with the private sector was also strongly encouraged to provide wide-ranging learning content. For example, 3,000 audio textbooks were offered free of charge by NAVER, a Korean online platform operator, via its educational platform, while 306 video clips were broadly shared in the idea-sharing series, “15-Minute Lecture to Change the World.”
The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic gave birth to a new school disease control and prevention model. In line with the varying infection trends and severity of local transmission, measures were taken to promptly provide guidelines that match the different contexts of educational institutions. Schools made sure they were stocked up on personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks and thermal imaging cameras, whereas private academies frequently visited by students were required to follow strict health guidelines.

Disease Control and Prevention System in Schools

The Guidelines on COVID-19 Control and Prevention in Kindergartens, and Elementary-Middle-High Special Schools (by the Ministry of Education, March 24)

Disease Control and Prevention in Institutions of Higher Education

A series of guidelines on the operation of higher education institutions in response to COVID-19 was developed and distributed to colleges and universities around the country. In particular, a guideline for the academic management of institutions of higher education for the 1st semester of 2020 was published which advised the use of online lectures over face-to-face lectures. The Ministry of Education worked closely with higher education institutions and local governments to strengthen disease control measures in neighborhoods around the campuses, and established an emergency contact network to closely monitor the health conditions of infected students, school staff and faculty. Moreover, students were required to avoid gathering in large groups on campuses, and visitors’ access to buildings and multi-use facilities was strictly restricted.

Disease Control Measures in Private Academies

The Ministry of Education and the provincial offices of education worked together to strengthen the disease prevention capacities of private academies. On-site inspections were regularly held to ensure that safety measures were properly carried out. In cases of local transmission, private academies in that region were advised to temporarily close their business as part of the disease control measures, and those infected were tracked and traced thoroughly. In line with the national social distancing measures, the Ministry of Education also distributed COVID-19 response guidelines to private academies.

Disease Control and Prevention Measures in Private Academies

(As announced by the Central Disaster Management Headquarters on May 28)

Business Owners and Employees

- A visitor log must be kept (which contains names and phone numbers, confirmed by ID cards, etc.) for four weeks after the visitor’s last visit.
- All business owners and employees must wear a mask at all times. Business owners and employees should be checked for symptoms at least once a day, and those displaying suspected symptoms should be sent home (and a log should be kept).
- Staff members identified as a COVID-19 carrier should implement necessary measures to temporarily limit the access to school facilities if a confirmed case occurs in school.
- All visitors must record their name and contact number in a visitor log, and if they fail to comply with the above restriction, they may be fined up to three million KRW, or be banned from operating the business temporarily as stipulated in the Infectious Disease Control and Prevention Act.
Securing Personal Protective Equipment

The Ministry of Education promptly took stock of the personal protective equipment (PPE) in reserve and other items for disease prevention measures. A budget plan for purchasing PPE was appropriated and executed. In consultation with health authorities, masks were reserved for those in need, including emergency childcare service workers, international students, kindergartners and primary and secondary school students, in order of priority. In addition, thermal imaging cameras were installed at school entrances to avoid any crowding when students have their temperatures checked before entering the school building.

School Reopening Readiness (as of Apr. 22, 2020)

| Support for Psychological Health |

In recognition that not only those infected or quarantined, but also many students, teachers and school staff in general showed high levels of anxiety and stress due to the pandemic, psychological support was provided to promote mental health and well-being. To this end, a team of 60 psychiatrists and a 24-hour mobile counselling system were established to offer individualized psychological support. For schools where confirmed cases occurred, online training programs led by psychiatrists were provided for homeroom teachers, professional counselling teachers, etc.

Support is provided at the school level (by homeroom teachers, professional counselling teachers, etc.)

Psychological Support System in School

Everyday Mental Health Support and Management
- Mental health education and counseling are offered
- Support is provided at the school level (by homeroom teachers, professional counselling teachers, etc.)
- Teachers and staff of elementary and secondary schools will be vaccinated, along with senior high school students and prospective CSAT test-takers.

Early Discovery
- Mental health condition is screened based on questionnaires
- Support is provided at the school level (by homeroom teachers, professional counselling teachers, etc.)
- Staff are guided to check children’s health conditions for a week before school reopening

Mental Health Counseling and Management
- Psychological consultation and treatment are offered
- Psychological support system organized by the Ministry of Education, as well as the Wee Class and Wee Center, etc.

Risk Management
- In-person/ online
- Progress tracking and follow-up
- Individuals confirmed as having COVID-19 are contacted in a timely manner
- Those suspected of infection receive psychological support for 7 days

COVID-19 Vaccination

In Korea, COVID-19 vaccinations began on February 26, 2021. In consideration of the infection trends and capacity of the national medical system, the first vaccinations were given to medical workers treating COVID-19 patients. Vaccinations for workers in schools and childcare facilities began in the second quarter of 2021.

Vaccination Schedule

In the education sector, vaccinations began in April 2021 for workers in special education schools and childcare facilities, as well as school nurses. They were considered the top priority recipients of vaccinations as students with disabilities require in-person learning, and special education teachers often find it hard to wear a mask when closely interacting with their students. Likewise, school nurses are at higher risk of infection as they have to make close contact with those suspected of infection in school.

Starting in July and August, those who work in kindergartens and daycare centers, as well as the teachers and staff of elementary and secondary schools will be vaccinated, along with senior high school students and prospective CSAT test-takers.

Plan for Vaccination

The Ministry of Education drew up a vaccination priority list of individuals from the provincial offices of education and schools of all levels, and received their consent. With this list, the public health centers established a plan to match available vaccines with schedules, and contacted the individuals on the list to make vaccination arrangements.

Leave of Absence due to Vaccination

The Ministry of Education ensures that all those vaccinated are entitled to a paid leave of absence on the day of vaccination, and allows those who experience discomfort after inoculation, such as fever or muscle pain, to take a sick leave without having to submit a medical certificate.

Inventory of PPE in the 2nd semester of 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Recipients</th>
<th>Number of schools</th>
<th>Number of installed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 12 – 30, 2021</td>
<td>Special-education school staff and nurses of kindergartens, elementary·middle·high schools</td>
<td>742,913</td>
<td>7,362</td>
<td>28.253 billion KRW*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July – August 2021</td>
<td>Senior high school students, teachers and staff of childcare centers, kindergartens, primary·secondary schools, prospective test-takers of CSAT</td>
<td>1.078 billion</td>
<td>742,913</td>
<td>28.253 billion KRW*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The Ministry of Education took stock of the personal protective equipment (PPE) in reserve and other items for disease prevention measures. A budget plan for purchasing PPE was appropriated and executed. In consultation with health authorities, masks were reserved for those in need, including emergency childcare service workers, international students, kindergartners and primary and secondary school students, in order of priority. In addition, thermal imaging cameras were installed at school entrances to avoid any crowding when students have their temperatures checked before entering the school building.

Support is provided at the school level (by homeroom teachers, professional counselling teachers, etc.)

Psychological consultation and treatment are offered
- Support is provided at the school level (by homeroom teachers, professional counselling teachers, etc.)
- Staff are guided to check children’s health conditions for a week before school reopening

Availability of a temporary observation team
99.8%

Desinfection by professional cleaning companies
97.3%

Availability of thermometers (more than 1 for each class)
99.9%

Number of installed Thermal imaging cameras
6,964

Number of installed Desks are spaced out in the classroom
7,362

Parents are guided to check children’s health conditions during the week before school reopening

Emergency childcare service workers, international students, kindergarteners and primary and secondary school students will be vaccinated, along with senior high school students and prospective CSAT test-takers.

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### Emergency Childcare Service to Meet Real-life Needs

As schools delayed the beginning of the spring semester, the government made an announcement of its plans for emergency childcare service. The bottom line was to ensure the health of all students, school faculty and staff, and to offer childcare service in a safe environment, under the emergency response system for childcare service. Surveys were conducted to identify the demands for the service, to which all those requested were entitled. As part of the service, lunch was provided, and the service hours were also extended to meet the demands of parents who requested longer hours of daycare service.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Emergency Childcare Service by the Government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>“The Government will Provide a Safe and Reliable Emergency Childcare Program”</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Press release shortly published by relevant ministries on Feb. 20, 2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Emergency childcare as a follow-up measure to the delay in school reopening&lt;br&gt;  - Period: March 2-6 (for one week)&lt;br&gt;  - Recipients: 48,685 elementary school students (1.9%, 4,166 schools)&lt;br&gt;  - Operating hours: 9:00-17:00 (based on local contexts and demands from parents)&lt;br&gt;  - Class size: around 10 students&lt;br&gt;  - Personalized care; all school faculty and staff to serve as part of the emergency childcare system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Emergency childcare was offered accordingly. In particular, during the school closure, childcare service was expanded to cater to the needs of more kindergartners and primary school students in emergency childcare, and parents were not only allowed to take parental leaves, but also were provided with allowances to cover their children’s tuition fees.”</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### With the adjustment of the academic calendar to allow for flexible schooling, childcare service was also offered accordingly. In particular, during the school closure, childcare service was expanded to cater to the needs of more kindergartners and primary school students in emergency childcare, and parents were not only allowed to take parental leaves, but also were provided with allowances to cover their children’s tuition fees. In addition, guidelines for emergency childcare were distributed to kindergartens, primary and special schools to assure the quality of service. The relevant ministries worked together to develop a joint plan for childcare service at the central government level. For example, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family came up with a plan to expand daycare service, while the Ministry of Health and Welfare took charge of operating childcare service facilities. Also, the Ministry of Employment and Labor developed plans to encourage the use of parental leaves, while the Ministry of Education and the provincial offices of education organized regular meetings to coordinate and promote wrap-around emergency childcare service.

### Emergency Childcare in Connection with Academic Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Emergency Childcare (positioning the school reopening)</th>
<th>Emergency Childcare (during the online semester)</th>
<th>Childcare After Resuming Physical Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children due in school reopening (temporary closure)</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Mar. 2-Apr. 15)</td>
<td>Children care is provided for elementary school students in line with the school reopening of elementary schools (Apr.16-May 26)</td>
<td>Childcare service is provided in line with the physical school reopening (May 27 onwards)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children 4th and 5th graders in need of service</strong>&lt;br&gt;(May 27-now)</td>
<td>Children are in charge.</td>
<td>All students eligible for the service, including those from dual-income low-income, and single-parent families</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Agricultural Produce Delivery Service for Students

To address the concerns over the discontinuation of school lunch service with school closures, the Ministry of Education established a plan to use the budget for school lunches to deliver fresh agricultural produce to the homes of primary and secondary school students free of charge. To ensure the quality of the produce, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs performed inspections before sending the packages off. The Ministry of Education, the provincial offices of education and local governments worked together to provide this service either by delivering the actual packages of produce to students’ homes, or by giving vouchers with which food could be bought, depending on the local context.
Depending on the threat of COVID-19, various exams were cancelled or postponed. Where tests were administered, strict precautionary measures were taken to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. After putting together a guideline for infection prevention and control at testing sites, tests could be organized more systematically. In particular, the nationwide administration of the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT) for the 2021 school year involved rigorous preventive measures before and after the test, while encouraging public participation in the infection prevention and control campaign.

At the early stage of the COVID-19 pandemic, the measures most commonly applied were advising test takers to cancel their test registration or cancelling or postponing exams. Details of the advice were contingent upon the specific situations of the exams concerned, and these exams included the Korean History Proficiency Test, Bachelor’s Degree Examination for Self-Education, Elementary, Middle, and High School Graduation Equivalency Examination, Test of Proficiency in Korean, National Assessment of Educational Achievement, and Teacher Employment Test. In case of postponement, while the number of test-takers per test was minimized and some of the test appointments were rescheduled, the spread of the virus was closely monitored. In order to ensure a safe environment for test-takers, tests could be further delayed depending on the threat of the coronavirus.

After the guideline for infection prevention and control at test sites was put into place, more systematic test administration became possible at each stage of testing. A collaborative system between relevant entities was set up for COVID-19 control, and an infection prevention awareness campaign was performed. All types of testing were subject to the basic precautionary measures, which included body temperature check before entering testing premises, spacing out, minimizing crowds, wearing a facial mask, and furnishing hand sanitizers for general use. Other measures applied were contingent on the nature of a test, the spread of the coronavirus, and other relevant factors.

The College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT) is the most widely used standardized test in Korea, with a total of 421,034 test takers for the school year 2020 CSAT. In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, beginning in June 2020, the Ministry of Education pushed forward the creation of an infection prevention and control directive for a safe test environment for CSAT. Such endeavor was made possible through the operation of the CSAT Infection Prevention and Control Task Force (TF) in consultation with the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (now the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency), the Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation, the 17 Provincial Offices of Education, and infectious diseases experts. Two guiding principles were at play, which were ‘building an infection prevention and control system to minimize community transmission and test-takers’ infection’ and ‘ensuring the opportunity for all students including those with confirmed cases to the maximum extent possible’. On August 4, 2020, the ‘Guidance on College Entrance Management for School Year 2021’ was announced and contained different measures to prevent transmission in both settings of the CSAT and group evaluation for college admission. These measures included lowering the number of test takers per test room, assigning test takers with COVID-19 symptoms to separate rooms, diagnosing in-person elements in college admission, and advising colleges to come up with disease control plans.

### Infection Control before and after the CSAT

The Ministry of Education employed different ways and means to safely administer the CSAT. Firstly, a safe environment was created by categorizing test takers into ‘Ordinary,’ ‘Under Self-isolation’ and ‘Confirmed’ groups and assigning those with symptoms to separate test rooms. Secondly, 1,383 test centers were provided with an increase of 718 centers from the previous year. These were comprised of ordinary centers, separate centers for test takers under isolation, and hospitals and community treatment centers for those confirmed of COVID-19. About 10,000 more test rooms were provided for a total of 31,291 test rooms. Thirdly, the number of supervisory staff was also increased from the last year by about 21,000 to a total of 120,708.

On the CSAT day (December 3, 2020), 41 confirmed test takers and 456 test takers under isolation were able to take the CSAT at the designated centers or hospitals, as planned. After the CSAT, cleaning and disinfection were completed at all schools used for the CSAT by December 6. In addition, through collaboration with the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency, intensive monitoring was carried out until December 17 for two weeks after the test. Preventive actions were planned in advance to prevent further spread, but no cases related to the CSAT were found.

### Management of College Entrance Examination for School Year 2021

#### Roadmap for College Scholastic Ability Test Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>September</th>
<th>October</th>
<th>November</th>
<th>December</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guidance on College Entrance Management (Aug. 4)</td>
<td>Registration (Sept. 18)</td>
<td>CSAT Management Base (Sept. 23)</td>
<td>Infection Prevention and Control (1 week)</td>
<td>Admissions: Recruiters (Oct. 3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Enrollment Management</td>
<td>Analysis of Risk Factors by Metropolitan/Provincial Area</td>
<td>Screening Testing (1 week)</td>
<td>Facility Measures (1 week)</td>
<td>Admissions: Applicants (Nov. 10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary</td>
<td>Status management for movement restrictions by Metropolitan/Provincial Area</td>
<td>Facility Measures (Oct. 22)</td>
<td>Facility Measures (Nov. 22)</td>
<td>Facility Measures (Dec. 2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under Self-isolation</td>
<td>Prevention measures for test takers with symptoms</td>
<td>Preventive actions for test takers</td>
<td>Preventive actions for test takers</td>
<td>Preventive actions for test takers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmed</td>
<td>Movement restrictions for movement restrictions</td>
<td>movement restrictions</td>
<td>movement restrictions</td>
<td>movement restrictions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Precautionary Measures by Testing Stage (for ordinary test center)

#### Testing Stage

- **Test Preparation**
  - Device a test administration system together with countermeasures (division of work) by stage
  - Install separate testing rooms for test takers with symptoms and devise operation plan
  - Implement infection prevention and control measures such as disinfecting testing sites and installing partitions.

- **Test Day**
  - Control entry/exit within the premises and arrange separate test rooms when a test taker with symptoms is found
  - Ventilate at every recess period depending on the condition of the testing sites
  - Eat lunch at a designated seat and make sure to ventilate after lunch
  - For separate test rooms, additional measures should be taken, including protective actions for supervisory staff and collecting answer sheets

- **Afterwards**
  - Manage the exit pathways from ordinary test rooms and from separate test rooms
  - Dispose items utilized at the testing sites
  - Monitor clinical symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days after the test day

### Category | CSAT Testing Sites and Supervisory Staff (as of December 2, 2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Ordinary</th>
<th>Under Self-isolation</th>
<th>Confirmed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Testing Centers</td>
<td>Testing Rooms</td>
<td>Testing Rooms</td>
<td>Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>1,241</td>
<td>23,373</td>
<td>7,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>1,195</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td>7,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2021 CSAT Testing Sites and Supervisory Staff (as of December 2, 2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2020 CSAT Testing Sites and Supervisory Staff (as of December 2, 2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In a pandemic such as COVID-19, it is important not only to promptly share accurate information among the different levels of crisis response - personnel, organization, and system - but also to reduce stress and anxiety among the general public by disclosing the relevant information. The Ministry of Education consistently worked with the press and used social media to publicize the major precautionary measures being applied in the education sector. Site visits and meetings both offline and online were also frequently conducted to devise a response strategy for COVID-19, reflecting difficulties and opinions gathered on site as much as possible.

Fully aware of the importance of conveying a coherent message to the public from the central government in the fight against the COVID-19, a wide array of efforts was made to this end. After the National Infectious Disease Risk Alert level was raised to Level 3 (Vigilance), the existing countermeasures teams were expanded and reorganized. These teams monitored educational institutions and discussed how to effectively respond to the crisis. Daily meetings were held to check the implementation status of the pandemic response. In addition, while sharing the guidelines from the Central Disaster Management Headquarters (CDMH) and the Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasures Headquarters (CDSCHQ), the Ministry of Education made sure that educational institutions took stronger preventive measures and carried out awareness programs. The measures by CDMH and CDSCHQ were taken into consideration in the Ministry’s decision-making on matters of school operation such as suspending and resuming in-person classes. With the aim of maintaining consistency in the response to COVID-19, the Ministry developed various guidelines and shared them with the educational institutions.

As the COVID-19 pandemic became prolonged, multiple issues related to teaching methods and procedures were raised, such as how to offer distance learning and when to return to in-person class. On these issues, the Ministry of Education made continued efforts to interact with teachers and parents through frequent site visits, online seminars, and meetings. Efforts were also made to incorporate the voices from schools into its measures by gathering opinions from teachers, parents, and students on difficulties in online learning, future academic scheduling and teaching methods, and more.

Press briefings were one of the outlets the Ministry of Education used to share the central government’s COVID-19 countermeasures with the public. Each time a major measure in the COVID-19 response was to be implemented, the Ministry briefed the press. Briefings were given on a range of affecting aspects of education such as the academic calendar, supports for international students, timing and guidance of physical attendance, childcare service, and the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT). A publicity campaign was actively carried out with the media. When the beginning of the school year 2020 was delayed, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Vice Minister of Education appeared on different media channels and provided various explanations to the public. They explained the academic affairs policy for the postponed new semester, the temporary closure and support plan for private academies, and measures for educational personnel. COVID-19 countermeasures were also shared and publicized via the Ministry’s website, Social Networking Services (SNS), and so on.

The Ministry of Education constantly communicated with those working at educational sites by way of stocktaking meetings of the countermeasures teams within the Ministry of Education. Constant consultations were also carried out with the 17 offices of education. A communication channel with the Ministry has remained open throughout the crisis to share the pan-government countermeasures with stakeholders. In addition, the Ministry consulted with private academies advocating temporary closures in line with the government-level social distancing policy, and actively sought ways to support those academies that were experiencing difficulties due to the closures.
Right after the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Korea, the government started to systematically support international students to ensure their health and safety. Both domestic and international efforts were made to respond proactively to the pandemic. For example, the Special Entry Procedure was introduced at the airports to assist international students, and the Ministry of Education came to an agreement with the Chinese Ministry of Education to advise students to avoid entering each other’s countries until the pandemic situation stabilized. In addition, through cooperation between the Ministry of Education, institutions of higher education and local governments, international students were managed effectively and thoroughly from the moment they arrived at the airport.

The Ministry of Education tracked international students from the point of their arrival. An information-sharing system was established to allow relevant ministries to access international students’ arrival and departure information, which was followed by close monitoring by colleges and universities of their international students to report any symptoms of infection to health authorities as well as to the Ministry of Education. In addition, guidelines were distributed to institutions of higher education to help them provide a safe learning environment and ensure the safety of international students.

At the initial stage of the pandemic in mid-February, the Ministry of Education systematically supported students from China by adjusting their arrival timing, implementing enhanced screening at the airport, and disallowing them to attend lectures for two weeks after arrival. In mid-March, with the worldwide spread of the pandemic, the Special Entry Procedure was introduced at the airport and stronger measures were applied to assist all international students, including close monitoring of their health. Since April 1, all those arriving from overseas have been required to self-quarantine for 14 days, and colleges have been requested to give clear guidance to their students.

An international student support system was created, led by the Ministry of Education, to serve as a coordinator and supervisor for the institutions of higher education and local governments. In addition, the institutions of higher education and local governments implemented measures to ensure the safety of international students in accordance with government protocols as part of a whole-of-government endeavor.

* Ministry of Education cooperated with the Ministry of Health and Welfare, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior and Safety, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, and the Ministry of Food and Safety.

### Progress of Protection and Management of International Students

| Protection and Management of International Students from China (Feb. 16+) | Protection and Management of International Students from Around the World (Mar. 19+) | Protection, Management and Self-quarantine of International Students from Around the World (Apr. 1+)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plan for the management of international students from China developed. Mutual agreement reached between the ministries of education in Korea and China to advise their students not to depart for each other’s countries until the pandemic situation stabilizes. Information health to assist Chinese students is set up at Incheon International Airport. International students provided with transportation service to and from the airport. Students displaying symptoms tested for COVID-19. Students’ health condition monitored at least once a day. Development and operation of the international student management system.</td>
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### Pan-government Cooperation System

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### Management of International Student Arrival Schedules

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<tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>Institution of Higher Education</td>
<td>Coordination of relevant agencies to adjust visa information and flight schedules, etc.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arrival dates of international students are shared with relevant agencies</td>
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Global Solidarity and Joint Response to Education Crisis

On May 6, the Ministry of Education of Korea had an opportunity to present the "Korean's Online School Reopening and Preparation for Return to School" at the "Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Idea Exchange: COVID-19 and the impact on education." At the "OECD Online Meeting on Implementing Education Policies Project" (June 10–11), the Ministry introduced Korea's COVID-19 response based on the vision of "openness, transparency, and democracy," resource utilization via public-private partnerships, and voluntary organization of teachers' communities. At the "OECD 2020 Education Policy Reform Dialogues" (October 26), the "Strategy for Capacity Building for Teachers and School Leaders" was presented.

A multitude of online forums was hosted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Such virtual meetings included "UNESCO Ministerial Conference on COVID-19" (March 10), "Webinar on the COVID-19 Response" (once a week from the week of March 20), "Online International Conference for COVID-19 Response in Asia-Pacific" (July 18), "Extraordinary Session of the 2020 Global Education Meeting" (October 20) and "High-level Segment of the 2020 Global Education Meeting" (October 22), among others. Through these UNESCO forums, the international community continued to share information on the COVID-19 response and jointly sought effective countermeasures.

Tasks for Cooperation and Adoption of Joint Statement

On June 27, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education of Korea Yoo Eun-hae joined the "G20 Extraordinary Education Ministers' Meeting" and shared Korea's pan-governmental efforts for uninterrupted learning as well as Korea's experience of online school reopening and in-person class operation in the midst of the pandemic. Also presented were the steps the Korean government is taking for future education in the COVID-19 era. Leaders from the participating countries shared the impacts of the pandemic on education along with their countermeasures and discussed the response policies and collaboration plans for education. At the meeting, the "G20 Education Ministers' Statement on COVID-19" was adopted, which emphasized global cooperation to tackle the COVID-19 crisis. Held virtually on September 5, the "G20 Education Ministers' Meeting" covered three topics, which were "ensuring education continuity and safety for all in times of crisis," "improving access to quality Early Childhood Education (ECE)" and "fostering internalization in education." Producing a joint declaration, the meeting further strengthened the foundation for international cooperation among G20 members, which is vital to resolving issues such as education discontinuity, education gaps, and inequality in education in the ongoing crisis.

To combat COVID-19, Korea partook in joint efforts by the international community via bilateral and multilateral cooperation. The international efforts were carried out by sharing best practices and policies of the COVID-19 response in each country, aiming to find ways to collaborate in the field of education.

### Bilateral Cooperation (2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Major Outcomes</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 20</td>
<td>Virtual meeting between Ministry of Education of Korea and Ministry of Education of China Agreeing on Joint Advisory for International Students not to Travel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 21</td>
<td>Virtual meeting between Deputy Minister of Korea and Minister of Education of United Arab Emirates (UAE) (UAE Ambassador to Korea participated) Virtual meeting requested by Minister of Education of UAE (Follow-up measures) Korea-UAE Virtual Conference for Teachers (July 29)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 27</td>
<td>Telephone conversation between Ministry of Education«International Cooperation Bureau» and Ambassador of Argentina to Korea</td>
<td>Telephone conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 11</td>
<td>In-person talk between Minister of Education of Korea and Ambassador of Argentina to Korea</td>
<td>In-person meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 17</td>
<td>Virtual meeting between Minister of Education of Korea and Minister of Education of Argentina (Korean Ambassador to Argentina participated)</td>
<td>Virtual meeting</td>
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To counter the unpredictable adverse impacts of COVID-19 across society, additional funding was secured and emergency assistance was arranged. Necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) was purchased based on the demands identified via allocation of the special grants for disasters and safety management. Utilizing the governmental supplementary budget, funding for the online learning infrastructure was secured, and additional assistance was provided to students, faculty members, and those employed in the education service sector. In the first quarter of 2020, the Ministry of Education swiftly identified the demands for the special grants for disasters and safety management. A total of 180.3 billion KRW was granted to the 17 offices of education via six rounds with the aim of assisting infection control activities and purchasing PPE such as facial masks, thermometers, sanitizers, gloves, and so on. The education offices funneled the financial resources obtained from the disaster relief reserves and adjusted local project budgets together with those special grants into securing PPE to fight COVID-19.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allocation of Special Grants for Disaster and Safety Management (Unit: one million KRW)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st COVID-19 Prevention (Feb. 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd COVID-19 Prevention (Mar. 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd COVID-19 Prevention (Mar. 26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th COVID-19 Prevention (Jun. 30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th COVID-19 Prevention (Jul. 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th COVID-19 Prevention (Dec. 7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the governmental supplementary budget, the Ministry of Education provided assistance for online learning in the primary, secondary, and tertiary education sectors, and budgetary support for private kindergartens. In particular, the financial support was mainly focused on laying the infrastructure for online learning in primary and secondary education and for developing educational content for online classes in higher education. To take advantage of the COVID-19 response as a stepping stone for the future, the Ministry of Education set out to shift and develop the future of education Post-COVID-19. The Ministry announced policies on urgent matters identified at the school level. The "Top 10 Initiatives for Future Education" were made public to show the national direction. The Ministry gathered opinions from all sectors of society and carried out in-depth discussions in order to seek the policy direction for the future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2020 Supplementary Budget for COVID-19 by Ministry of Education (Unit: one million KRW)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temporary support on kindergarten operation (New)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building online education infrastructure for primary and secondary schools (New)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Learning Management System (New)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot project operation for textbooks using online content (New)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National schools: green-smart transition (New)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishment of K-EdTech integrator platform (New)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational steering for vulnerable groups of primary and secondary schools (New)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance in purchasing PPE (New)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a sense, the COVID-19 pandemic functioned as a catalyst for innovations in education. The Ministry of Education initiated the "Dialogue for Great Transition to Post-COVID-19 Education" in order to lay the foundation for future education and carry out in-depth discussions on the environmental changes in education instigated by COVID-19. The dialogue made use of various channels, ranging from "on-site open communication by sector" and "regional forum" to "debate within the Ministry of Education."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flow chart for “Dialogue for Great Transition to Post-COVID-19 Education”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-site open discussion by sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify topics for dialogue and forum and main issues, and conduct preliminary discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss policy actualization of the opinions gathered and follow-up measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposals for future education policy by region and necessary tasks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Preparation of Special Grants for Post-COVID-19 Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2020 Supplementary Budget for COVID-19 by Ministry of Education (Unit: one million KRW)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Support for University Online Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reducing student loan interest rates, postponing repayment for those who undergo job loss or business closure, lowering interest rates for late payments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Assisting 237 universities with an increased budget of 100 billion KRW to enhance the quality of online classes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Preparation "Top 10 Initiatives for Future Education"

On October 5, 2020, the Ministry of Education announced the "Top 10 Initiatives for Transition to Future Education in Post-COVID-19 Era. The initiatives consolidated outcomes from all the communications and dialogues conducted since 2019. This was the result of the discussions from the Future Education Committee, the Policy Advisory for Distance Education, and the Dialogue for Great Transition to Post-COVID-19 Education. The initiatives covered previous policies including “Measures to Strengthen Education Safety Net” (August 11), “Support Plan for Digital Innovation of Higher Education” (September 9), and “Innovation Plan for Open Life-Long Education in the Digital Era” (September 23). It also includes the policy direction for future education and tasks in response to the demands from the educational community. The specific goals of the Initiatives are set out based on the conviction that "what matters in education is direction not speed.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 10 Initiatives (draft)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>1. Reforming the curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Considering a comprehensive reform of the teacher management system</td>
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<td>3. Building future-oriented schools by prioritizing students</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Establishing a safe education system to ensure student learning and development</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Promoting the advancement of universities and local communities based on collaboration and sharing</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Fostering students equipped with qualities that meet the future needs of society</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Offering advanced vocational education to make graduates job-ready</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Guaranteeing lifelong learning for all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Launching the "Task Force for Transformation to Future Education"

In June 2021, the Ministry of Education launched the "Task Force for Transformation to Future Education." The task force aims to holistically respond to industrial and demographic changes, and to identify tasks needed for future education reforms. For personalized capacity building, blended learning and innovation in teaching and learning will be promoted. To back up policy reforms for inclusive and sustainable education, the task force will operate a response system which integrates three-fold efforts in the areas of digital infrastructure (K-edu platform), facility (Green Smart School), and institution (modifying relevant laws and regulations for future education). It will also communicate with educational stakeholders at schools to discover new policy agendas and prepare for the future of education.

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For a Healthy School Life in the Academic Year 2021

How to Prevent COVID-19

At home (before going to school)
- Wash hands for 30 seconds
- Self-check every morning
- Contact screening center and school if you suspect you have symptoms

At school
- Always wear a mask
- Check temperature before entering the classroom and cafeteria
- Disinfect the desk
- Open windows during break time
- Keep distance from friends
- Avoid talking while eating

On the way home from school
- Wear a mask
- Avoid gathering outside of school
- Go straight home from school

Challenges to the Continuity of Learning
EDUCATIONAL RESPONSE TO COVID-19 IN REPUBLIC OF KOREA