

Education spending renders Japan second to last in OECD

Kyodo News

The ratio of Japan's spending on public education to its gross domestic product came to 3.5 percent in 2004, the second-lowest level among the 30 member states of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, according to an OECD report released Tuesday.

The ratio — the second lowest after Greece's 3.3 percent — was well below the OECD average of 5.0 percent and down from 3.7 percent in 2003, according to the report titled "Education at a Glance 2007."

Iceland topped the list at 7.2 percent, followed by Denmark, Sweden and Norway.

Including spending on private education, Japan's educational expenditures against GDP stood at 4.8 percent in 2004, up slightly from 4.7 percent in 1995 but again below the OECD average of 5.8 percent, the report says.

The report also shows that among the OECD countries, Japan has the second-largest average class sizes at the primary level of education.

The nation has 28.4 students per class for primary education and 33.5 students for secondary education, both the second highest after South Korea, the OECD said.

Meanwhile, the Paris-based organization said that a growing number of international students are opting to study in Japan, with nearly 5 percent of foreign students worldwide enrolled at Japanese schools.

This ranks sixth among the OECD states, following 22 percent for the United States, 12 percent for Britain, 10 percent for Germany, 9 percent for France and 6 percent for Australia.

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