

**Abstract****KEDI POLL 2017**

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KEDI POLL 2017 was undertaken to investigate how the public feels about the nation's schools and education policies, what the public thinks schools in future need to prepare, and what the society expects from educators and policymakers. This is the 12th annual KEDI POLL in a series that began in 1999, and this year's poll primarily focuses on the public's attitudes toward new government's education policies.

The results presented here are based on nationally representative, stratified sample of 2,000 adults(age 19~75) in Korea. Results are subject to a maximum sampling error(MSE) of  $\pm 2.19\%$  at the 95% confidence level. This online poll consists nine subcategories and 52 questions. The subcategories used in this poll are following: 1. Education Policy and School Evaluation, 2. Teachers, 3. Student Life, 4. Curriculum and Learning Contents, 5. High School Policies and College

Admission, 6. Educational Welfare Service and Education Finance, 7. Higher Education, 8. Current Issues in Education and Education for the Future, 9. Viewpoint on Education.

Major findings of KEDI POLL 2017 includes:

<Education Policy and School Evaluation>

- Among the policies of which last government implemented, those that respondents rate as most effective includes Nuri curriculum(early childhood education and care), after-school care at elementary school, and national scholarship. The public demand for new K-12 policies such as free Nuri curriculum, expansion of after-school care in elementary school, and free high school education is high. For higher education and lifelong education policies, people want a reduction on college tuition and simplifying the college admission process.
- Most Koreans(52.3%) give C's to schools in primary and secondary levels, which also leads to the conclusion that more Koreans give a negative evaluation of schools in general. Koreans believe personalized advising and teaching, an improvement on the quality of coursework, and strengthening career education and educational guidance would help to improve the assessment of schools. The results reveal that character education, school environment, and education program's specialty are the influential factors on school choices. Also, suggested tasks for improving public education are the diversification of teaching method and educational content and change of 'Hakbeolism' oriented society.
- Koreans believe education policies in Korea are not consistent, nor having a long-term vision, while they view education policies are somewhat suitable for conditions in Korea and reflect public opinions moderately. Thus consistency is required for the long-term policy planning.

### <Teachers>

- When the public was asked whether they trust teacher's competency and qualification, in general, the answer was neutral(average 2.82 on a 5-point Likert scale), although parents consider teacher as a preferred occupancy for their children(64.0%).

One of the essential skills for teachers to have in elementary school is life guidance skill, for teachers in middle school to have is study guidance skill, and for high school teachers to have is advisory skill on career and college admissions.

### <Student Life>

- The public perceives 'students' efforts and eagerness' is the leading factor which influences academic achievement, rather than 'learning environment' or 'economic status of students.' Koreans admit that the level of students' stress is still high, and the level of students' morality/character is evaluated as low. The respondents believe that 'family' is the most influential factor on students' level of morality/character. The public thinks school violence got worse compared with past because 'lack of home education' and 'violent media' have critically impacted school violence.

### <Curriculum and Learning Content>

- One of the primary things that school should teach is social skill and morality. The strong emphasis on social studies(history and ethics) at all levels of a curriculum is consistent with and expands upon the findings from KEDI POLL 2016 survey. Also, the public believes character education and creativity education should be more emphasized in elementary and middle school education, while career education and character education need to be accentuated in high school education.

<High School Policies and College Admission>

- More Koreans support free education for high school and reformation policy on a high school system, while neutral opinion is appeared on implementing credit system at high school level. Expansion of vocational education at high school level(not only at Meister high school, vocational high school but also at general high school) is strongly supported.
- Among the factors mentioned, those that respondents rate as most importantly considered for college admission include specialty and aptitude(26.7%), personality and volunteer experience(25.9%), and CSAT(College Scholastic Ability Test) scores(24.4%).

<Educational Welfare Service and Education Finance>

- The public observes high school education is the most urgent with an expansion of educational finances. When respondents are asked to prioritize where to spend public fund, free childcare and free education for infants and toddlers, strengthening childcare service at elementary schools, and reducing college tuition or offering more scholarship for college students are mentioned in the order. Koreans believe elementary schools need public fund the most for a meal plan, middle schools need public fund the most for an after-school program, and high schools need public resource the most for enrollment deposit, tuition, and school management. The public considers government should maintain the proportion of current educational finances in current condition to ameliorate the quality of education, although the number of students may decrease in future.

<Higher Education>

- The plurality of respondents thinks higher education institutions in Korea do not educate students well enough to be prepared for a life after the graduation.

Results reveal that the public does not trust the competency of professors in general, nor confident that professors do a good job teaching students. Also, responses on what should be considered for the evaluation of higher education institutions represent transparency in management, appropriateness of curriculum, and professors' competencies. As the public has a negative perception on higher education overall, more efforts on improving higher education are in need.

<Current Issues in Education and Education for the Future>

- Among the factors mentioned, those that respondents rate as most effective in reducing individual's educational expenses include linking EBS courses to the CSAT and after-school programs. However, the public believes that there is no significant change in individual's educational costs compared to prior years. Survey results explain that parents spend money on private tutoring(private education in general) because they would feel insecure when they do not offer private education to their children, though the results also reveal that most parents(80%) feel overwhelmed by the educational expenses they spend.
- In preparation for the future society, Koreans believe elementary school and middle school need to focus on teaching students self-management and problem-solving skill, while high school education needs to focus on career education. Moreover, respondents chose creative thinking competency as the primary competency for students to have in future.

<Viewpoint on Education>

- It is believed that discrimination formed by academic background and 'Hakbeolism' is still significantly recognized(62.0%) in Korean society. And people suppose that a hierarchical ranking structure of higher education

institutions in Korea would not change.

- When children of the respondents refused to go to regular schools, 60% of respondents will look for an alternative schooling program. The majority of people continue to view getting a good job as a successful outcome of education, and most parents wish their children to have a good relationship with people surround them and live an affluent life as they grow up. People perceive that the more education they receive, the more affluent life, the higher social status, and the more satisfaction they gain.

Based on the survey results summarized above, the following policy recommendations are made.

- As the demand for childcare service is growing, Nuri curriculum and expansion of after-school childcare service in elementary school level should be critically considered.
- Koreans view high school education is in need of reformation the most(e. g. , improve the quality of regular high schools, allocate more public funds, and simplify the process of college admission), policy makers have to focus on setting the practical and clear goals and helping the public and parents comprehend the policies thoroughly.
- There is a growing need for character education overall. Thus, political strategies, which can enhance a collaborative effort from both schools and families, need to be suggested.
- Policies on higher education need to find a clear and purposeful direction to ameliorate the quality of education. To critically analyze and establish policies regarding higher education policies, utilizing the results of current evaluation of HEIs is suggested.
- To satisfy the public regarding education policies in general, policy makers and researchers should place the consistency at the center and put more

effort to reflect the public opinions at the policy planning and implementing stage.

□ **Key words : education poll, education policy, public opinion trend**