

Students at experimental schools gain recognition

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The Legislative Yuan on Friday passed amendments to three laws on experimental education, expanding the scope of experimental curricula to cover universities and allow experimental-school students to receive official student status.

The three acts refer to the Enforcement Act for Non-school-based Experimental Education across Levels below Senior High School (非學校型態實驗教育實施法), the Enforcement Act for School-based Experimental Education (學校型態實驗教育實施法) and the Act Governing the Commissioning of the Operation of Public Elementary and Junior Secondary Schools to the Private Sector (公立國民小學及國民中學委託民間經營管理辦法).

Under the amendments, experimental education — which was formerly only offered below high-school level — now includes university education, but is limited to junior colleges, colleges and graduate schools.

The number of students each elementary and secondary school is allowed to recruit has been increased from 480 to 600, and each grade should have no more than 50 students, the amendments stipulate.

Students at experimental institutions should be given student status the same as students at regular schools, meaning that they no longer have to be registered under other schools to enjoy the same rights as students at regular schools, the amendment said.

Experimental schools affiliated with a private high school can hire qualifying foreigners to meet their needs for teaching languages or other subjects, developing curricula, faculty training and promotional events, an amendment said.

The institutions should apply to the Ministry of the Education for a permit to hire foreigners, the amendments stipulate.

Not including institutions designated by the Ministry of Education to focus on the education of

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Aborigines, the proportion of public experimental schools at any given educational level should not exceed 5 percent of the total number of institutions at that level, the amendments said.

A substantial proportion of experimental schools are small, private institutes, which has meant their students have not been awarded student status, Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Legislator Chang Liao Wan-chien (廖萬建) said.

The amendments enable private institutes that have passed safety reviews to be recognized as formal experimental institutions without having to pass new safety reviews, Chang Liao said.

The demand for experimental education has grown rapidly since 2015, and the number of students receiving an experimental education has more than doubled since then, DPP Legislator Rosalia Wu (吳思珍) said.

The passage of the amendments has brought about a more progressive education system, one that is shaped people's — rather than the government's — vision for education, she said.

Additional reporting by Su Fang-ho

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