



Preventing high school dropouts and supporting youth in transitioning to the world of work in Japan

Atsushi Okabe, PhD.

Associate Professor, Seisen Jogakuin College

Associate Professor, Seisen Jogakuin College

The 2024 Global Youth Research Centre Colloquium Series

National Youth Policy Institute, Korea

14:00 pm,. Tuesday, June 18, 2024, KST, Online



Atsushi Okabe (PhD.)

Associate Professor

Seisen Jogakuin College

Dr. Atsushi Okabe is the Chair of International Exchange Committee of the Japanese Association for the Studies of Career Education (JSSCE), General Director of Asian Association for Career Development (ARACD) . During the past ten years, he has been focusing on vulnerable youths and is interested in how educational programs can be used to foster career development and the collaborative system between local grassroots initiatives and public education system to realize social inclusion.

【Abstract】

Preventing high school dropouts and supporting youth in transitioning to the world of work in Japan.

According to statistics from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, in 2023, 1,700 junior high school graduates (0.2%) are projected to enter the workforce. The percentage of those proceeding to high school stands at 98.7%, which rises to over 99% when considering special training school upper secondary courses. In Japan, the transition from school to the professional world is marked by a system where young individuals secure employment while still in school and commence work immediately following graduation in the spring. Consequently, finding employment after dropping out of high school and becoming unemployed is challenging, particularly in securing full-time positions.

A survey conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology estimates the dropout rate in 2022 at 1.4%, showing a slight upward trend since 2020 with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this figure represents an average, with significant disparities evident across different types of high schools. For instance, when examining dropout rates by course and department, the rate in 2022 is 0.9% for full-time regular courses and 7.6% for regular courses.

In this presentation, the speaker will delve into the issue of high school dropouts, particularly those who are absent from school for extended periods, a situation strongly linked to unemployment and disengagement (*Hikikomori*). The presentation will explore the underlying reasons and backgrounds of such cases, alongside highlighting instances where high schools have successfully implemented tailored curricula and student support programs in collaboration with organizations outside the public education sector to prevent dropouts.

Today's Topic

- 1 Introduction of Japanese School system
- 2 High School Dropouts and the difficulty of transition to the world of work
- 3 Alternative choices of High School education
- 4 Discussion

Atsushi Okabe (PhD.)

1990-2012 Public High School Teacher (English)
Hokkaido, Japan

1996-1998 Exchange teacher at Medicine Hat High
School, Alberta, Canada

2012-2023. Associate Prof. Sapporo Otani Univ.

2023- Associate Prof. Seisen Jogakuin College

Researching on education system at high school level
Focusing on vocational education, work experience,
apprenticeship, educational opportunity for vulnerable youth,
in Japan and Alberta, Canada



1 Introduction of Japanese School system

Education System of Japan

Kindergarten 3y/o – 6y/o
(Nursery School)

Elementary School: 6 years

Junior High School: 3 years

Senior High School: 3 years

College: 2 years

University: 4 years

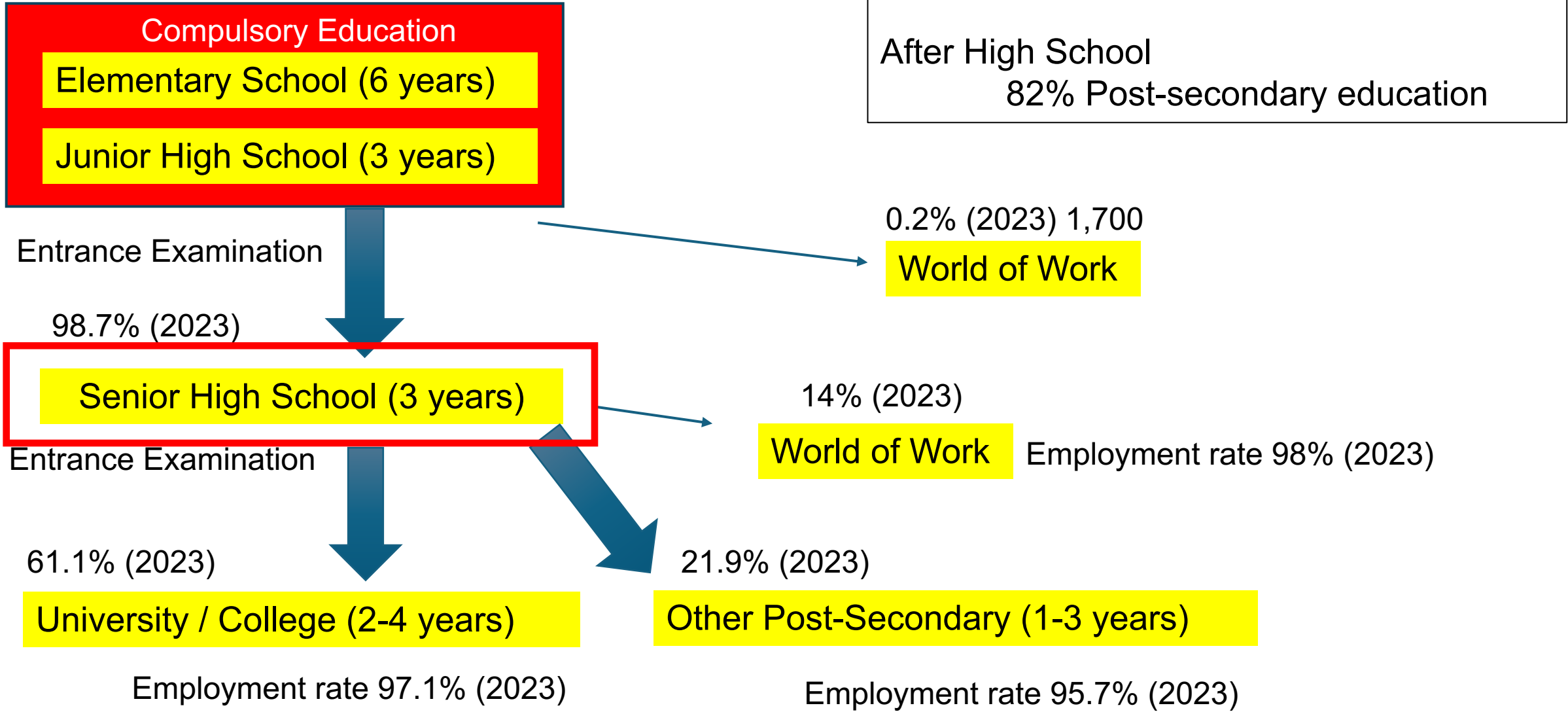
Compulsory Education Constitution Article 26

1. All people shall have the right to receive an equal education correspondent to their ability, as provided by law. 2. All people shall be obligated to have all boys and girls under their protection receive ordinary education as provided for by law. Such compulsory education shall be free.

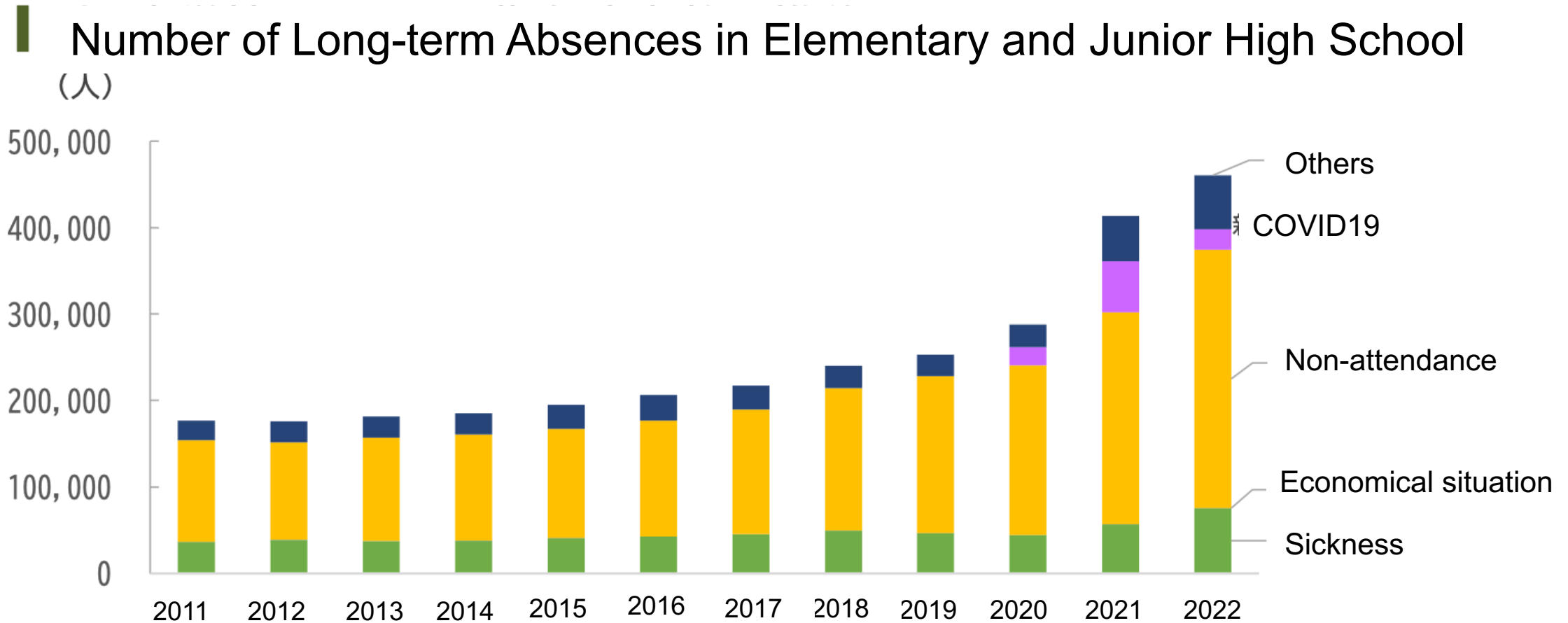
Technical College: 5 years

Compulsory Education → compulsory for parents or guardians

School to Work Transition Process in Japan



Issues in compulsory education level



of no attendance: 299,048 (3.2%, Elementary 1.7%, Junior High 6.0%)

Including Sickness: 374,645 students are not attending for more than 30 days in a year of 2022

MEXT (2023) 児童生徒の問題行動・不登校生徒指導上の諸課題に関する調査結果の概要

Reason for non-attendance

MEXT Survey in 2023

School related (Ijime, relationship with other students and teachers, club....).	20.3%
Family related (Changing family situation, relationship with parent(s).....).	11.6%
Student related (unhealthy lifestyles, lethargy, delinquency...)	63.2%

Katariba (NPO supporting Children and Youth) survey in 2023

Possible factors are...

- 1) Students with special needs or developmental disorder ----- not enough care in schools
- 2) Family issues (Parents' unemployment, divorce, low income)
40% of the households who have students not attending school
annual income is less than 2 million yen. (95% single mother)

MEXT Commissioned research by Institute for Children Developmental Science Research in 2024

Addition to the above factors....

- 1) Relationship with teachers, other students
- 2) Strict school regulation
- 3) Cannot complete homework

Non-attendance is not always an independent choice or positive choice made by student

Non-attendance in compulsory education level

→lack of education, opportunity to communicate with others
but they graduate from junior high school
and enter senior high school



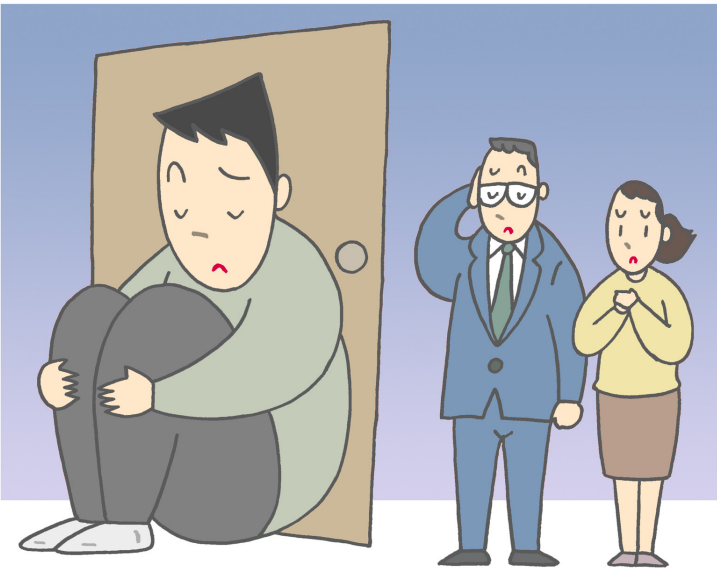
Higher possibility of high school dropouts

Higher possibility of lower income

→unemployment, NEET, Hikikomori

* Hikikomori: person who do not get out of their room, house...

Estimated 650,000 hikikomori
(from 15-65 years old)



2 High School Dropouts and Difficulty of Transitions to the world of work

High Schools need to deal with a variety of issues and roles in Japan.

Take a look at high school in Japan



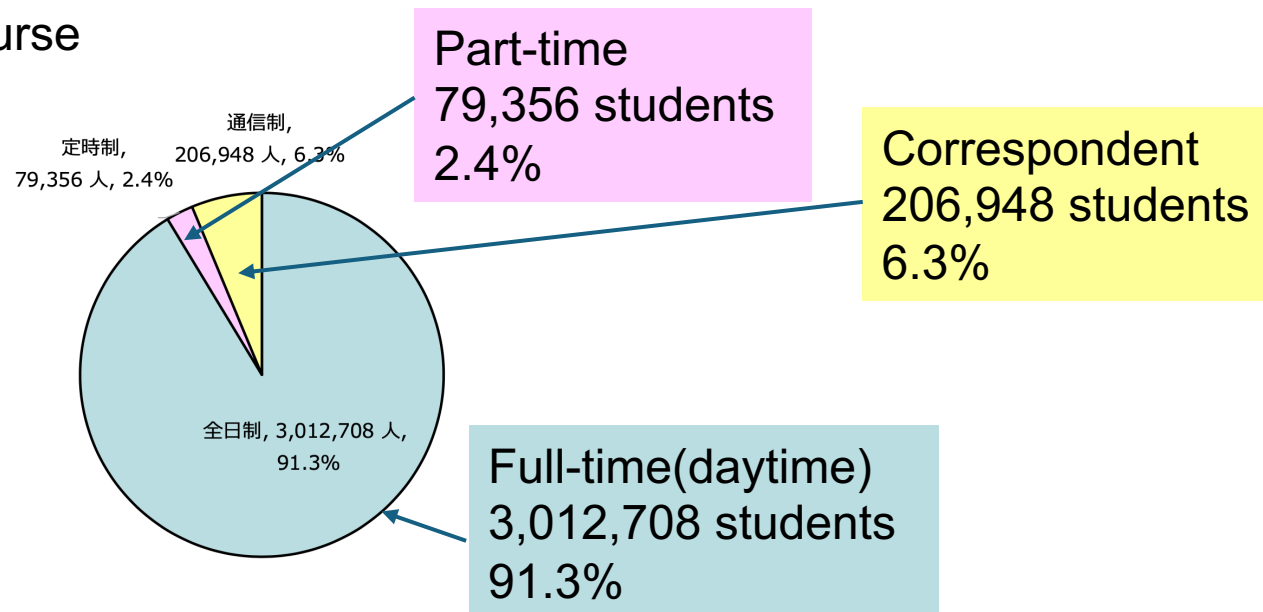
Types of High School

Courses	Full-Time (day time, 3 years to graduate) 全日制 Part-Time (night, half day, seasonal, 3 or 4 years to graduate) 定時制 Corresponding (3 or more years to graduate) 通信制
Departments	General (Academic) principally involving general or academic education 普通科 Specialized principally involving professional education 専門学科 Comprehensive General + Specialized 総合学科
Curriculum	Credit based 単位制 credits are awarded on a course-by-course basis Grade based 学年制 credits are awarded by grade level

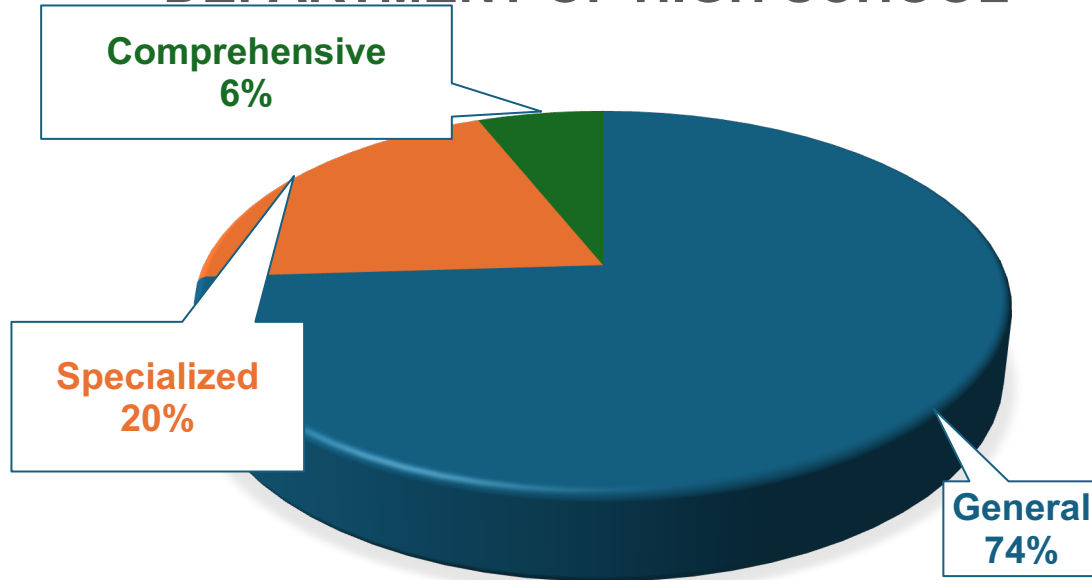
Enrollment in each course

	国立	公立	私立	総数
全日制	8,452	1,989,163	1,015,093	3,012,708
定時制	—	76,817	2,539	79,356
通信制	—	55,427	151,521	206,948
総計	8,452	2,121,407	1,169,153	3,299,012

※専攻科・別科に属する生徒数を含む。



ENROLLMENT IN EACH DEPARTMENT OF HIGH SCHOOL



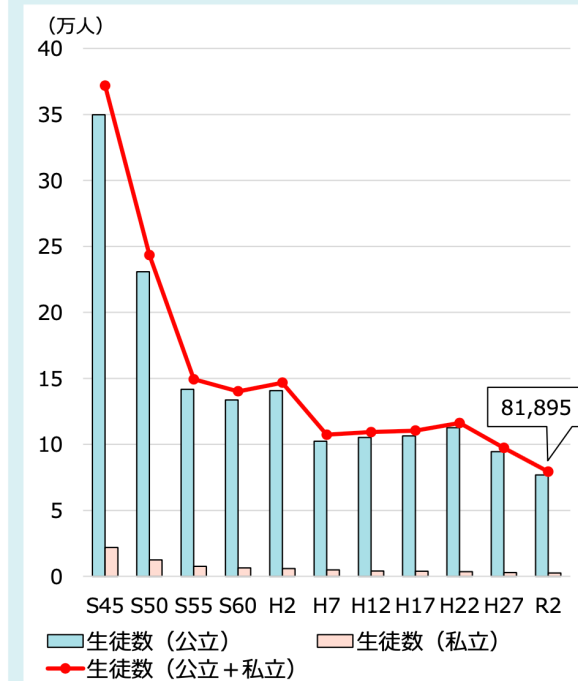
Enrollment in Specialized Departments

Department	Enrolment	Department	Enrolment
Agriculture	23,573	Home Eco.	11,959
Technical	68,757	Nursing	4,042
Commercial	55,502	ICT	1,095
Fishery	2,263	Others	35,534

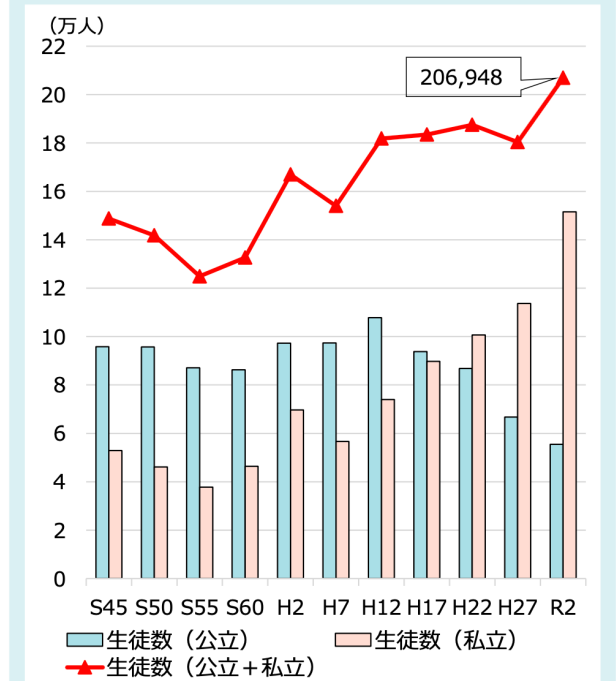
Students who choose non-attendant type of high school is increasing

→relationship with teachers and other students is one of the key factors of non-attendant

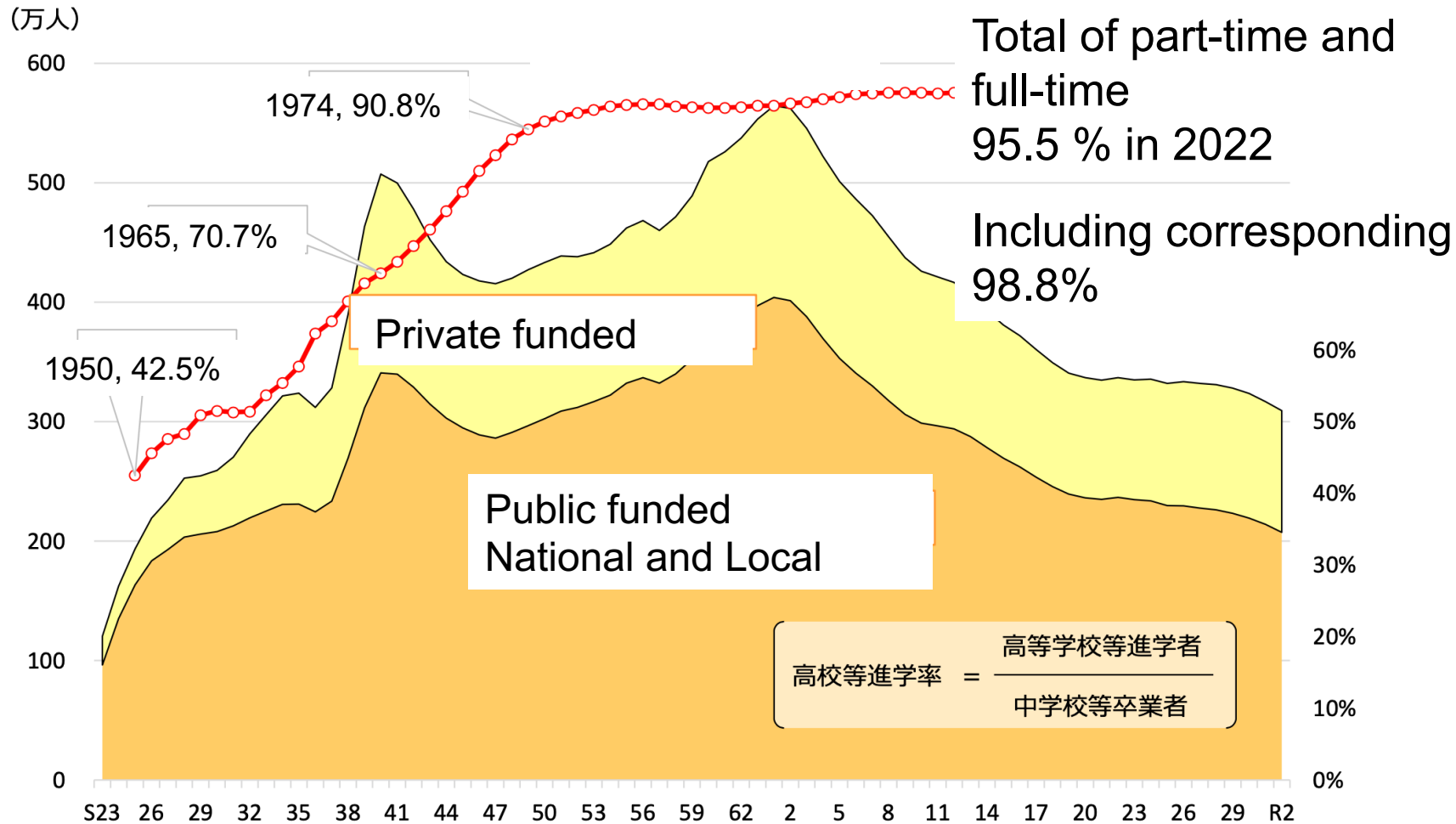
Enrollment in Part-time High School



Enrollment in Corresponding High School



High School Enrollment Rate



Almost 100% of junior high go to senior high school

Students needs various types of support.

But majority of the students choose regular type of high school (full-time and academic)

※「高等学校等進学者」とは、高等学校・中等教育学校後期課程・特別支援学校高等部の本科・別科及び専攻科へ進んだ者。進学しかつ就職した者を含む。

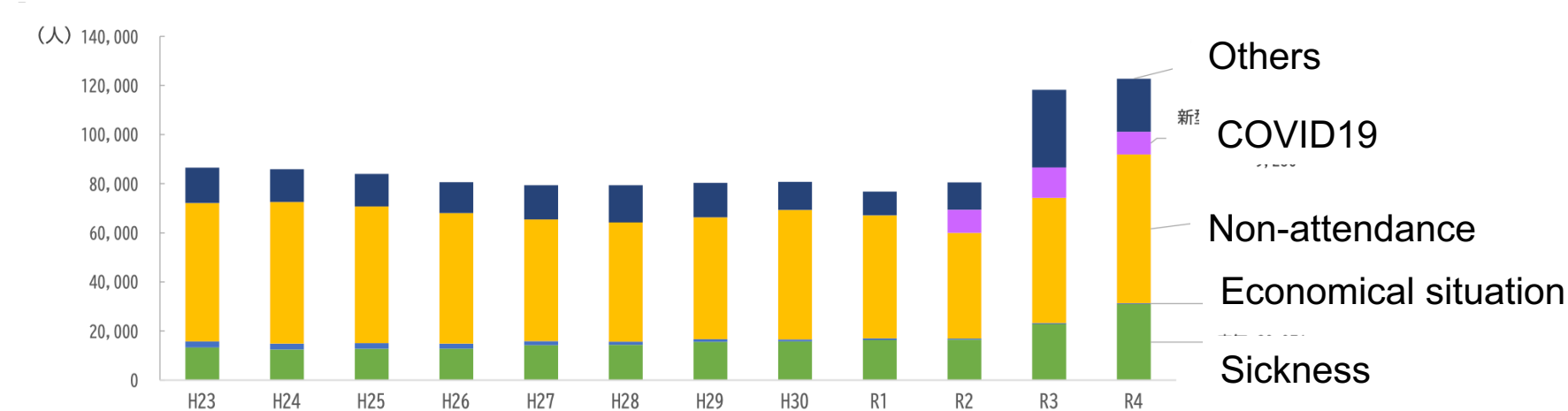
MEXT, https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/kaikaku/20210315-mxt_kouhou02-1.pdf, June 16, 2024

Present Situation of Japanese High School

Number of Long-term Absences in Senior High School

Number of Long-term absences : 122,771 in 2023 (118,232 in 2022)

of school non-attendance: 60,575. in 2023. (50985 in 2022).



	H23	H24	H25	H26	H27	H28	H29	H30	R1	R2	R3	R4
病気	13,277	12,457	12,794	12,821	14,266	14,394	15,632	15,812	16,358	16,521	22,864	30,976
経済的理由	2,464	2,405	2,281	2,044	1,606	1,263	1,036	764	644	429	385	343
不登校	56,361	57,664	55,655	53,156	49,563	48,565	49,643	52,723	50,100	43,051	50,985	60,575
新型コロナウイルスの感染回避	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	9,382	12,388	9,256
その他	14,424	13,357	13,235	12,592	13,922	15,169	14,002	11,453	9,673	11,144	31,610	21,621
計	86,526	85,883	83,965	80,613	79,357	79,391	80,313	80,752	76,775	80,527	118,232	122,771

※ 令和元年度調査までは、年度間に30日以上欠席した生徒について調査。
※ 令和2年度調査から「生徒指導要録」の「欠席日数」欄及び「出席停止・忌引き等の日数」欄の合計の日数
た生徒について調査。
※ 令和2年度調査から、長期欠席の理由に「新型コロナウイルスの感染回避」を追加。

MEXT (2023) 児童生徒の問題行動・不登校生徒指導上の諸課題に関する
調査結果の概要

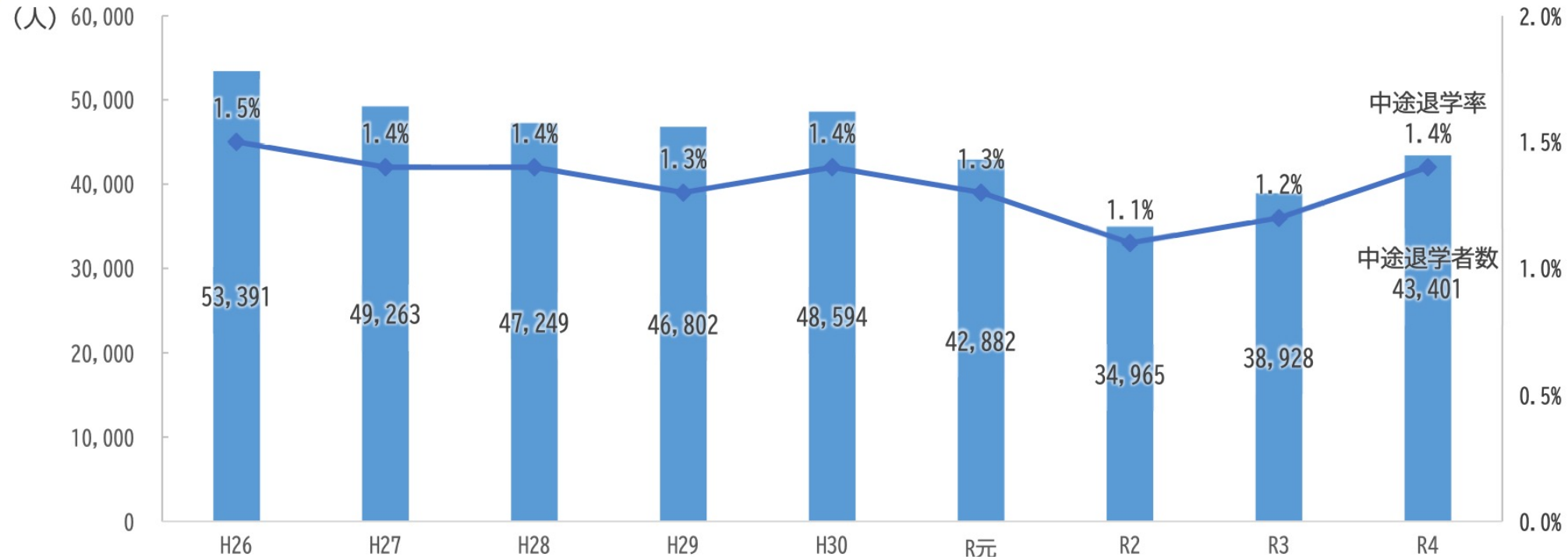
Present Situation of Japanese High School

Situation of High School Dropouts

of high school dropouts is 43,401 in 2022, (38,928 in 2021)

Ratio to the whole enrollment in 2022 is 1.4% (1.2% in 2021)

高等学校における中途退学者数及び中途退学率の推移



MEXT (2023) 児童生徒の問題行動・不登校生徒指導上の諸課題に関する調査結果の概要

High School Dropout rate

Average (all high school) : 1.4% (43,401)

Full-time General/Academic: 0.9%

Specialized courses: 1.2%

Comprehensive: 1.3%

Part-time 7.6%

High School Completion Rate (2020 high school entrance / High school graduates)

Full-time 94.4 %. (uncompleted: 5.6%)

Reason of Dropout

MEXT Survey in 2023 (from teachers)

lower academic performance : 6.0% 、 maladaptation to school: 32.8%,
changing pathways: 43.9%, Economic matter: 1.4%

Saitama Board of Education Survey in 2021 (from students who dropped out)

relationship (teachers, students) : 22.9% High school life doesn't fit: 15.7%

School to Work Transition Process in Japan

simultaneous recruiting of new graduates

Senior High School student

World of Work as an employee

Graduating in March

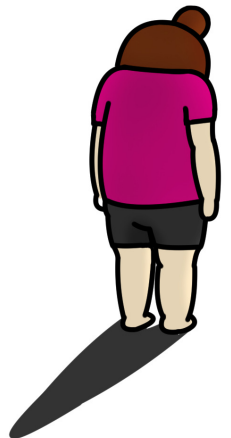


Starting in April

School teacher has the role of job placement
maintaining the relationship with employers
difficult to cancel the job offer (one student one company system)

Employment rate of the students who choose world of work after the graduation = **98%** (2023)

How about the students who dropped out of high school before graduation ?



Issues of School to Work Transitions of Youth in Japan

Freeter Part-time worker between 15 and 34 years old
1,340,000 in 2023

NEET not attending school or not employed between 15-34 years old
590,000 in 2023

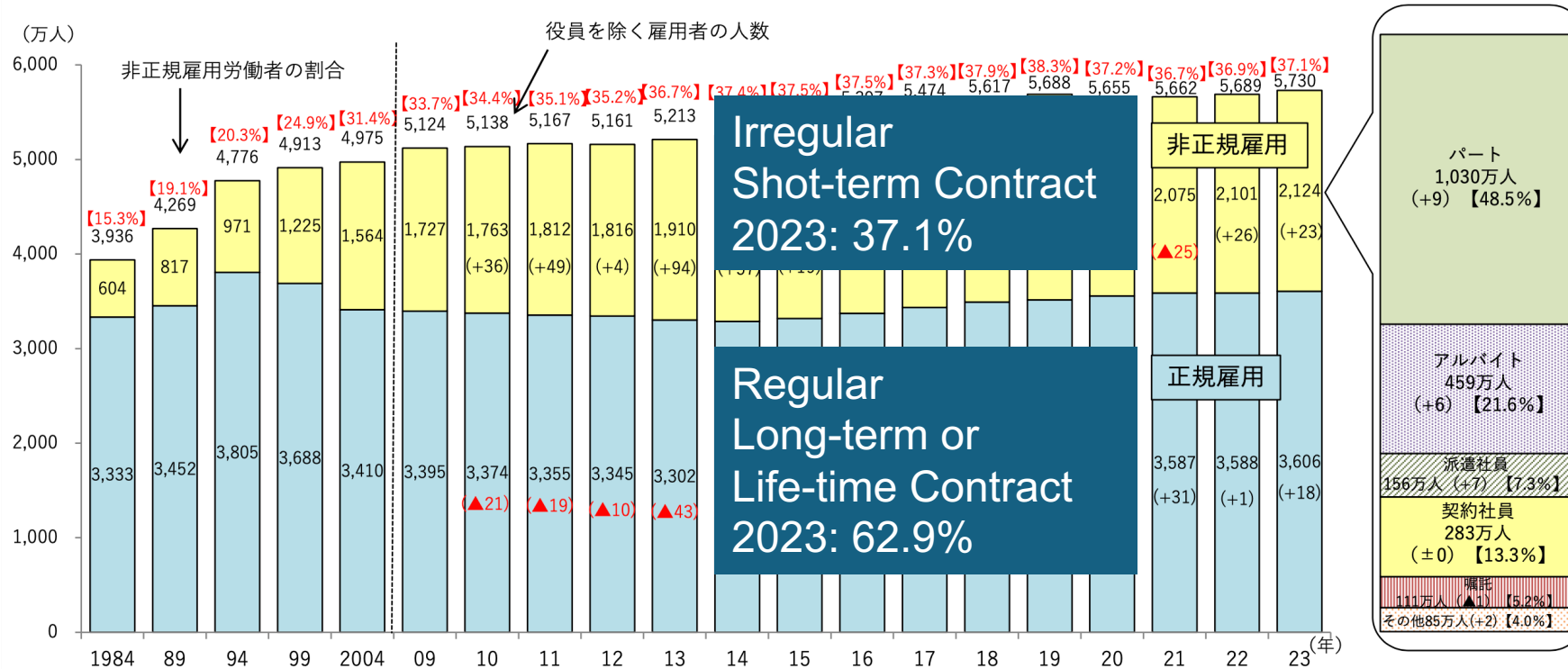
Hikikomori stay in his/her room, house, except for neighbour
convenience store for more than 6 months.
estimated 1,460,000 in 2022

Did he/she choose this independently or positively?

Increasing Irregular employment workers (37%)

【正規雇用労働者と非正規雇用労働者の推移】

- 正規雇用労働者は、2015年に8年ぶりにプラスに転じ、9年連続で増加しています。
- 非正規雇用労働者は、2010年以降増加が続き、2020年、2021年は減少しましたが、2022年以降は増加しています。



(資料出所) 1999年までは総務省「労働力調査(特別調査)」(2月調査)長期時系列表9、2004年以降は総務省「労働力調査(詳細集計)」(年平均)長期時系列表10

- (注) 1) 2009年の数値は、2010年国勢調査の確定人口に基づく推計人口への切替による遡及集計した数値(割合は除く)。
2) 2010年から2014年までの数値は、2015年国勢調査の確定人口に基づく推計人口への切替による遡及集計した数値(割合は除く)。
3) 2015年から2021年までの数値は、2020年国勢調査の確定人口に基づく推計人口(新基準)への切替による遡及集計した数値(割合は除く)。
4) 2011年の数値、割合は、被災3県の補完推計値を用いて計算した値(2015年国勢調査基準)。
5) 雇用形態の区分は、勤め先での「呼称」によるもの。
6) 正規雇用労働者: 勤め先での呼称が「正規の職員・従業員」である者。
7) 非正規雇用労働者: 勤め先での呼称が「パート」「アルバイト」「労働者派遣事業所の派遣社員」「契約社員」「嘱託」「その他」である者。
8) 割合は、正規雇用労働者と非正規雇用労働者の合計に占める割合。

1

Gap of Income

Annual average income
Regular : 5,230,000 yen
Irregular: 2,010,000 yen

Irregular employment
workers

→lower possibility of their
promotion

Higher percentage in 15-
14 year old group and
over 65 years old group.

In 1995 Japan Business federation (Keidanren)
announced new Japanese style employment system

Life-long employment system has been collapsed
because of depression of the economy



Multi layered employment
system

Long-time performance
accumulation type

life-long employment: Regular employment

Worker Dispatching
Part-time Worker (*Free-ter*)
Young age unemployment rate

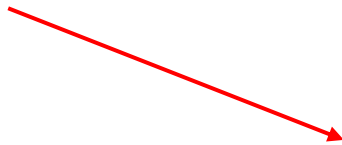
Skill-based type

Intermediate term contract
Up to 10 years ?

Flexible type

Short term contract
Up to 10 years ?

Irregular
employment



- 99% of junior high graduates enter senior high school
- 80% of high school students are in general or academic course
- 90% of students are in full-time (day time) school
- high schools are ranked by the result of entrance examination



Competitive Entrance Exam

Academic > Vocational

Background

Japanese style labour market system

simultaneous recruiting of new graduates

Life-long employment and potential based wage system (=seniority)

→ business needs workers who are flexible and obedient

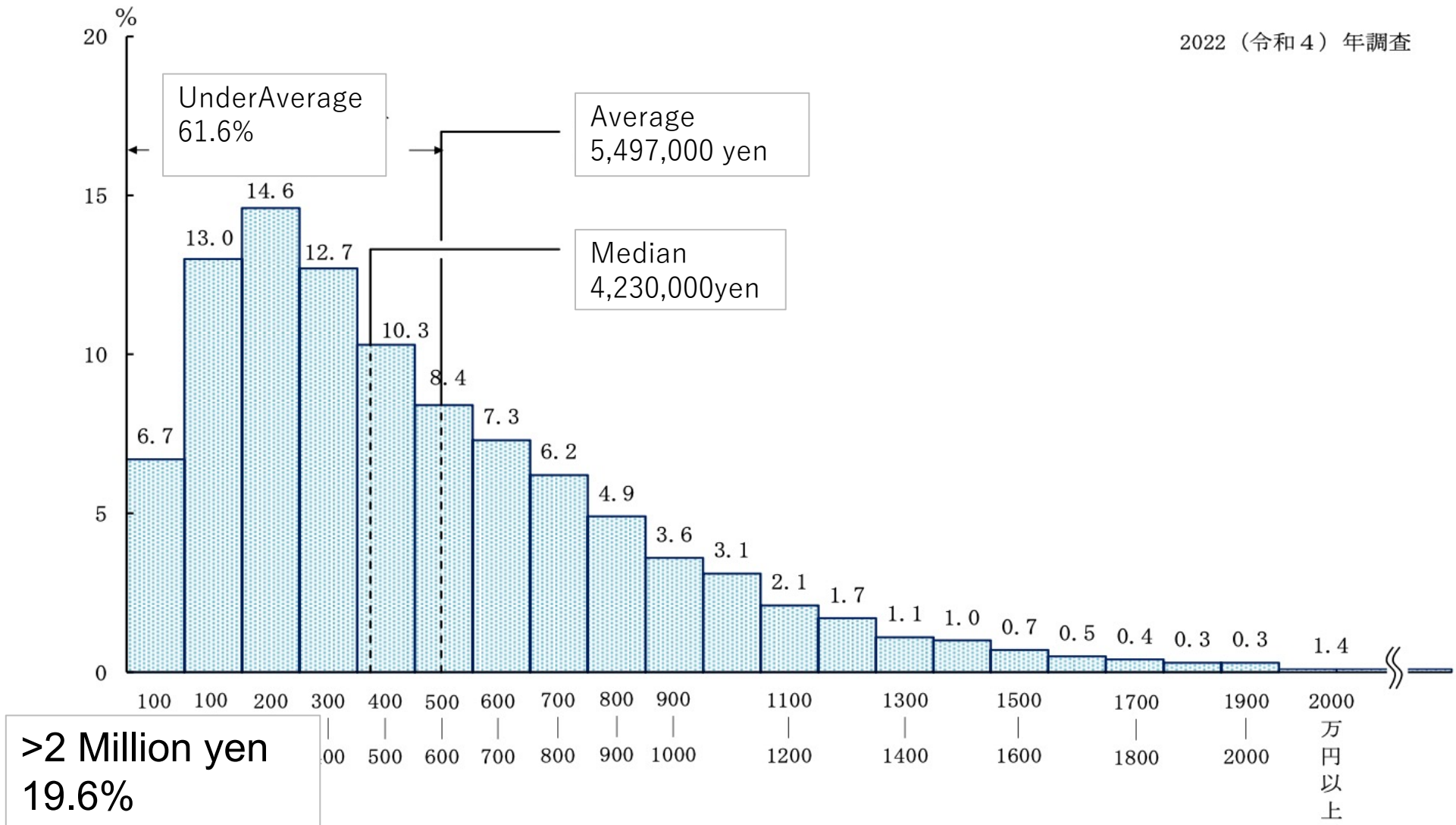
In the late 80s', this system had been changing.....

This system has been collapsed after the bubble economy, in 1995

Relative Frequency of the number of households by the Income Class

図 2-1 世帯の収入階級別世帯数相対頻度

2022（令和4）年調査



Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2023)

National Youth Support Policy

2003 Youth Independence Challenge Plan

Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI)

started Job Café : career counseling mainly for freeter

Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW)

started Young Hello Work: employment centre for youth

2006 Comprehensive Plan to Support Re-challenge

revision of related by-law

for stable employment, reducing Freeter, hiring more
handicapped, female, elders,

- 1) To encourage youth to find a stable job
- 2) To support employment
- 3) To promote career education at school

Wrap-around service

2006 MHLW started Regional Youth Support Station

Wrap-around support for youth-at-risk
focusing on NEET

177 station all over Japan

counseling and outreach based on the networking of
employment, education and social welfare sectors

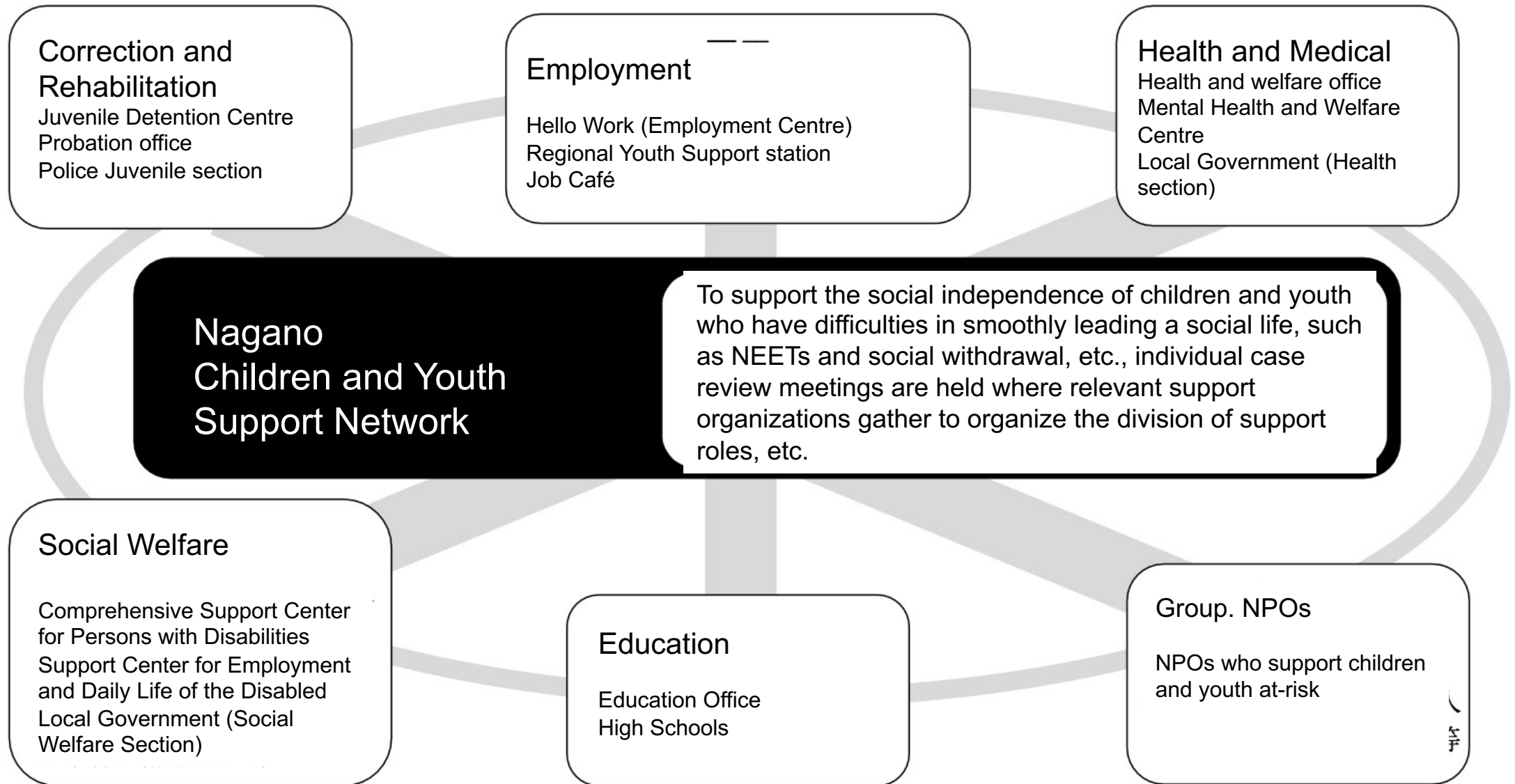
2009 Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-Generation
Children

Children and Youth Support Network

Wrap-around service based on related sections of local
government

including Corrections and rehabilitation, Employment, Health
and Medical, Social Welfare, Education, NPO and other
supporting organization

Wrap-around support in Nagano Pref.



Wrap-around service for multi-layered difficulties

2014 Act on the Promotion of Policy on Child Poverty

2015 Act on the Livelihood for the Independence of the Needy
(生活困窮者自立支援法)

Youth Support became a wrap-around support including disabled, elderly and children.

Focusing on poverty, Hikikomori, Mental health issue, Criminal Justice....

Direction of Youth Support

in the beginning of the year 2000: focusing on youth's motivation

around 2010 and later: Wrap-around support

= it is not always youth's independent choice
to become NEET, Hikikomori, underemployment

99% of the youth goes to High School

→ the only institution with access to all young people

Youth Support at High School

Financial Support

2010 tuition free for all public high school

2014 tuition support for the household whose annual income
is under 9,500,000 yen

2020 support expanded to private high school

Flexibility of High School system

comprehensive high school, Part-time high school whose
classes are providing in the morning, afternoon and night,
Corresponding high school using Virtual Reality, High school do
not require writing entrance exam

Challenge School, Encourage School in Tokyo

Improvement of class content

remedial (or relearning):

learning support for the contents which students should
have learned in junior high school

experiential style of learning

project-based learning,

Period for Inquiry-Based Cross-Disciplinary Study

ICT

Virtual Learning Platform

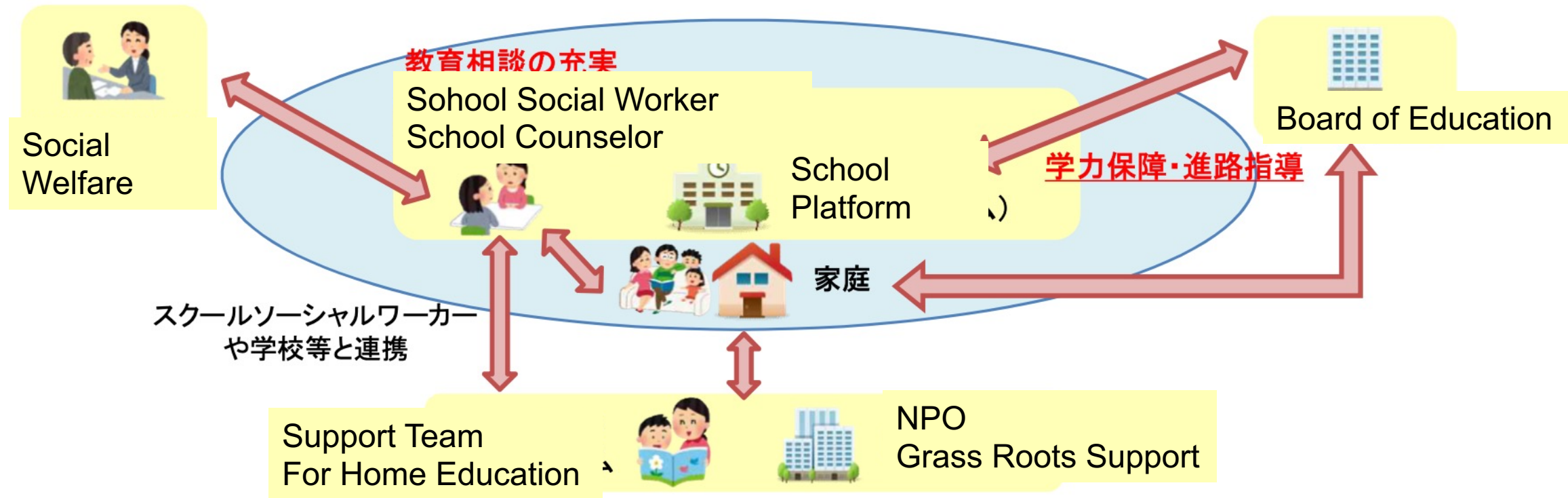
→students do not always have to come to school

Collaborative system both inside and outside of school

Inside: Teachers, Nurse teacher, Student Guidance teacher,
Special Needs Coordinator, School Counselor....

Outside: Child consultation Centre, Health Care Centre,
Psychiatrist, Junior high teacher, Police station....

High School as a platform



High School has the access to all students

High School is the place providing One Stop Service

3 Alternative choices of High School Education

Case1 Part-time High School (Day-time)



Yoshida high school Togakushi branch in Nagano pref.
1948 started as a branch school of Agricultural high school
1956 Agricultural high school turned into Academic high school
Part-time (seasonal, 4 years) → (daytime, 3 years)
Students: experience non-attendance in Junior high
higher percentage of developmental disorder
located in remote area (altitude 1,040)
small number of students



1 year: 13, 2 year: 11, 3 year: 7
10 teachers
Inquiry-Based Cross-Disciplinary Study
work experience with local farm
Japanese Dram
Club activities: Soba

Possibility of High school Education

Case3. Part-time high school (Night time)



Nagano high school in Nagano pref.

1884 started as Nagano Middle school

1948 part-time course started

Part-time (Night, 4 years)

→ (Night + additional course, 3 or 4 years)

Students: experience non-attendance in Junior high

located in downtown area

small number of students

1 year: 11, 2 year: 9, 3 year: 8, 4 year: 0 total 28

Inquiry-Based Cross-Disciplinary Study

Edible garden

through growing vegetables,
communicating with others



Possibility of High school Education

Case3. (Multi-layered support)



Tana high school in Kanagawa pref.
1978 started
2009 Creative school

Full-time (3 years)

Students: experience non-attendance in Junior high
low socio-economic situation

located in downtown area

small number of students(30 students/ a class)

Multi-layered support system

Breakfast service

Ibasho (居場所) café

operated by Youth Support Station

→SSW, SC



What are Japanese cases telling.....

High School Dropouts

→multi-layered difficulty

including poverty, family issues, developmental disorder

To prevent dropouts

1) Alternative choices

Part-time, Corresponding

2) Personalized Learning

small class-size, Project-based = one on one teaching

3) Wrap-around support

one stop support, school as a platform

But what about transitional skills.....?

Do they need vocational courses?

Bibliography

カタリバ(2023)「不登校に関する子どもと保護者向けの実態調査」

Katariba(2023).Fact-finding survey for children and parents on school non-attendance

公益財団法人子どもの発達科学研究所・浜松医科大学子どもの心発達研究センター(2024)「文部科学省委託事業 不登校の要因分析に関する調査研究報告書」

Research Institute of Child Development・Hamamatsu University School of Medicine Research Center for Child Mental Development (2024). Report on Survey and Research on Analysis of Factors of School Nonattendance Commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

佐川宏迪(2022)『定時制高校の教育社会学ー教育システムの境界と包摂』勁草書房

SAGAWA, Hiromichi (2022). Sociology of Education in Tentative High Schools: Boundaries and Inclusion in the Educational System. Keiso Shobo.

厚生労働省(2023)「国民生活基礎調査」

Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare(2023). National Living Standards Survey

文部科学省(2023)「児童生徒の問題行動・不登校等生徒指導上の諸課題に関する調査結果の概要」

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology(2023). Summary of the results of the survey on student guidance issues such as problematic behavior and school nonattendance of students

横井敏郎ほか(2022)『教育行政学ー子ども・若者の未来を拓く』八千代出版

YOKOI, Toshiro (2022). Educational Administration: Paving the Way for the Future of Children and Youth, Yachiyo Shuppan