

Sharing Korea's online education experiences with the world in response to COVID-19

-Education Ministers of Korea and UAE meet virtually upon UAE's request

□ HE Yoo Eun-hae, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education of the Republic of Korea, and HE Hussain Ibrahim Al Hammadi, Minister of Education of the United Arab Emirates, held a virtual meeting on April 21, 2020 at 3:30 pm (Korean time), upon the request of the UAE.

◦ In this meeting, they discussed ways to strengthen education cooperation between the two countries by sharing Korea's experience in online school year as the two countries are striving to cope with the COVID-19 outbreak.

◦ For Korea and the UAE, this year marks the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties. Thus, this meeting was especially meaningful in that it was the first step towards gathering wisdom to address the unprecedented global health crisis with the two education ministers putting their heads together.

□ On the outset, Deputy Prime Minister Yoo warmly wished Minister Hussain Al Hammadi good health, as well as for the people of the UAE, as the number of infected is on the rise globally.

□ In return, Minister Hussain Al Hammadi extended his gratitude to the Korean Ministry of Education for agreeing to meet virtually.

◦ He noted that he had been informed of Korea's decision to operate an online school year at the national level in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, based on its outstanding educational capacities. He expressed his intention to know more about Korea's handling of online classes and its experience to refer to as the UAE implements nationwide online education.

【Online school year and student participation in online classes】

□ Minister Hussain Al Hammadi inquired about the current status of online education in Korea, and how the government has decided to implement the online school year.

□ Deputy Prime Minister Yoo answered that in order to prioritize students' health and safety and to guarantee their rights to education as much as possible, the Ministry has been working closely with schools around the country to fully prepare for its online school year. As a result, on April 9th, the online year was phased in, initially beginning with the third-graders of middle and high schools.

◦ She also mentioned that because the online school year was never introduced in Korea before, there is room for further improvement, but all in all, the majority of students nationwide participate in online classes and the online school year is working in proper order.

【Sharing information to provide quality online education】

- Praising Korea's management of full-fledged transition to online school year in a short period of time, Minister Hussain Al Hammadi asked what was behind Korea's success.
- Deputy Prime Minister responded that cooperation and understanding of teachers and parents was vital to the implementation of the online school year, as well as Korean students' high level of digital skills and enthusiasm for participation.
- She also shared how the government expanded online learning platforms prior to its introduction of the online classes, and provision of digital devices and the Internet as part of its efforts to ^①lay the foundation for the full-scale online learning.
- ^②Teachers' ICT capacity has been built with the operation of support groups and pilot schools including the "Community of 10,000 Representative Teachers" as well as other teachers' communities. Moreover, ^③customized assistance is offered to students who may lag behind in online classes, and ^④a system of cooperation between the public and private sectors has been established to organically work together to support online classes.

< *Customized support is offered to students in need >

- ❖ **Students with disabilities:** In accordance with the different types and degree of disabilities, student learning is supported in a variety of ways that minimize social contact, in combination of online education and home visits.
- ❖ **Students from multicultural families:** In cooperation of the Ministry of Education, Provincial Offices of Education and local multicultural education support centers around the country, booklets in multiple languages have been distributed, containing information on online education, and Korean language education is provided to those from multicultural families by assigning them with Korean language teachers.
- ❖ **Students from low-income families:** In cooperation of the Ministry of Education and the Provincial Offices of Education, digital devices are rented to all students who apply for them, and the Internet subscription fee is provided to students from low-income families to narrow the gap in students' ICT skills.

【Attendance tracking and evaluation in online school year】

- Minister Hussain Al Hammadi also inquired about how students' attendance is tracked and are evaluated in the online school year.
- In response, Deputy Prime Minister answered that in consideration of the different circumstances of students and schools, online classes are divided into three different types, including the ^①real-time interactive classes, ^②content-oriented classes and ^③task-oriented

classes. She added that the government has distributed its set of guidelines on the management of student attendance and evaluation that match different forms of online classes, and inform him of the more specifics.

❖ **Student attendance criteria:** For real-time interactive classes, the teacher tracks students' attendance in real-time. For content- and task-oriented classes, the teacher utilizes the learning management system to track students' progress in learning, their log-on history, and completion of assignments.

-In cases that the above measures cannot be used to track students' attendance, other means are used including giving them assignments and communicating via SNS. For students who cannot participate in online classes for inevitable reasons, they are given with alternative learning programs for different subjects, based on which their attendance is tracked.

❖ **Management of student evaluation:** A guideline is developed for student evaluation in line with different types of online classes. Paper-based written tests will only take place after all students are allowed to come to school as a means to guarantee transparency, and this test will cover both the online and off-line education content. Student performance evaluation can only take place when teachers can directly and clearly observe students' performance during the online classes.

□ Minister Hussain Al Hammadi said, thanks to this virtual meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Yoo, he was able to gain a deeper understanding of the developments of online education in Korea, as well as some ideas that can also be applied in the UAE for its own implementation of online education.

◦ Deputy Prime Minister Yoo responded that online education is a new challenge, and requires continued improvement, but it will surely serve as an important asset for the future of education.

◦ She added that based on the introduction of online education, by coordinating closely with relevant ministries and private companies, a Korean-style Online Education Model will be developed driven by the advancement of the artificial intelligence and cloud computing technologies to promote innovation in education and produce future talent.

□ Minister Hussain Al Hammadi suggested that it would be a good idea if teachers of the two countries can directly share their experiences by using an online platform.

◦ Deputy Prime Minister Yoo agreed with his suggestion in that it will help improve online learning in the two countries, and proposed to engage in further discussions at the working level to determine the specifics for cooperation.

□ In conclusion, the two ministers agreed to continuously share experiences and knowhow in the field of education to reinforce bilateral cooperation and to jointly overcome COVID-19, a global crisis affecting the entire international community.