

Issues in Support for Students in “School as a Team”: Examination of School-Based Teams in the U.K. and Japan

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Recently, “Team School”(School as a Team) has been proposed as a new image of schools in Japanese educational reform. Team School is an organizational model where teachers and non-teaching professionals (e.g., school counselors and school social workers) collaborate in order to respond to the increasingly complex and diverse issues the school faces. Considering the long history of Japanese schools where teachers alone manage all educational activities for students, this new school model based on more involvement of non-teaching professionals seems necessary for the school to expand support for diverse students as well as to keep education sustainable.

However, there are several issues for the progress of Team School, such as the lack of new professionals and the existing teachers’ workstyle. In this article, the author focuses on school-based collaboration for student support as an aspect of Team School and examines the issues for its implementation. To clarify these issues in Japan, the author examines the case of “Safeguarding Teams” in UK schools. Also, findings from the author’s field research at a Japanese junior high school are used to examine how to realize Team School and improve collaborative support for students.

Keywords: School as a Team / School Reform / Student Support / Safeguarding / Collaboration

1. Introduction

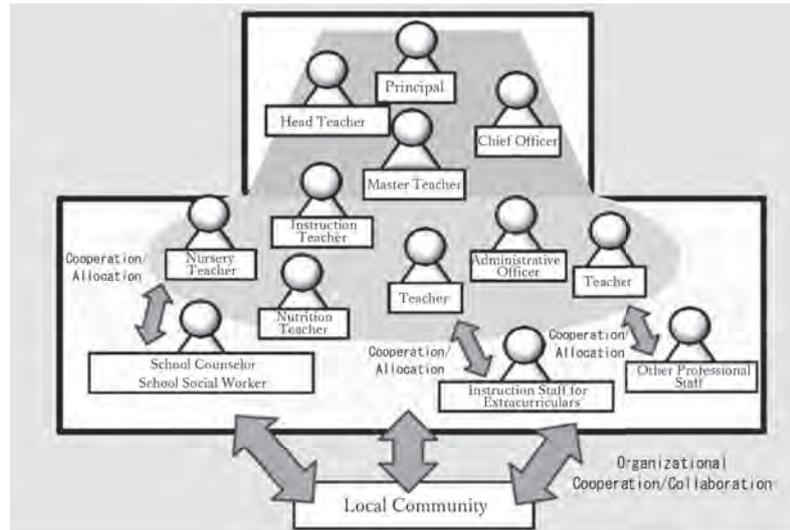
1.1. “Team School” as a New School Image in Japan

Since the mid-2010s, “School as a Team” has been proposed as a goal of school reform in Japan, and policies to realize this goal have been gradually proceeding. The “School as a Team” (hereafter “Team School”) is a new image of school organization. It reexamines the

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Figure 1. Image of “Team School”

Note: Created by the author from the Japanese diagram used by the Central Council for Education (2015).



Japanese school organization mostly maintained by teachers, and proposes a system where teachers and other staff/professionals work together under the leadership of the principal to solve the complex and diverse issues the school faces and to achieve its educational goals. Here, the goal of this article is to examine the challenges of Team School as a school-based team to support students with various disadvantaged backgrounds. In short, the main research question is “Can ‘Team School’ really work?”. To examine this question, the author will examine the system of Team School in Japan in comparison with “Safeguarding Teams” in UK schools. Also, the author will introduce some findings from a case study in a Japanese public junior high school to consider how Team School can function effectively.

Firstly, let us examine the government’s idea of Team School and its policy context. Team School was proposed in the Central Council for Education’s report on “School as a Team and Measures for Improvement of Education” in 2015 (Central Council for Education 2015). The report identified three aims of Team School: (1) to develop a system to realize curricula that nurture the qualities and abilities required of students in the new era, (2) to develop a system to solve increasingly complex and diverse issues, and (3) to develop a system to ensure time for teachers to fully respond to their students. In order to achieve these goals, a new organization for schools that actively utilizes professionals/staff other than teachers must be developed.

In the light of history, until the end of the 20th century, almost all educational activities in Japanese schools were carried out by a single professional, the teacher. While school counselors (SCs) have been introduced since the 1990s, the situation in which teachers constitute most of the school organization has not changed much. According to a document in 2013 created by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in preparation for the Team School policy⁽¹⁾, the “ratio of non-teaching professional staff to total teaching staff” at the elementary and junior high school level was only 18% in Japan, compared to 44% in the United States and 49% in the United Kingdom. Due to the long history of teachers as the only educational professionals in schools, teachers have become com-

prehensively involved in the teaching and guidance of students, and the “boundarylessness” (Sato 1997) of their duties and responsibilities has become characteristic. This “boundarylessness” is also thought to have contributed to the prominent busyness of Japanese teachers. Responding to this problem, MEXT has maintained that promotion of Team School can also become “workstyle reform” (*hatarakikata kaikaku*); that is, teachers’ educational workload would be reduced by the support of other professionals/staff. Considering that the educational issues facing schools are becoming increasingly complex and serious, it is fundamentally desirable to rebuild the structure of schools through collaboration between teachers and other professionals/staff in order both to extend support to students and to ensure the sustainability of schools.

Although Team School’s goal does not focus on specific educational problems (e.g., bullying, truancy, or child abuse), what is mainly expected of Team School in general is that the collaboration of school teachers with other professionals will help solve the problems on students’ guidance, which so far have been handled solely by teachers. In the Central Council report (2015) mentioned above, this corresponds to the second objective of Team School, “to develop a system to solve increasingly complex and diverse problems.” According to the explanation of the report⁽²⁾, since the beginning of the 2010s in particular, the social and economic changes in Japan have rendered student problems such as bullying, truancy, child poverty, and child abuse more serious. Also, due to the recent implementation of special needs education in Japan, the various educational needs and learning difficulties of students are now being met more thoroughly at schools. There is also an urgent need to build a support system for the increasing number of students with foreign backgrounds. In short, all these factors have made the issues facing schools “more complex and difficult,” and “it is becoming increasingly difficult for teachers to cope with them alone, both in terms of quality and quantity” (p. 7).

Under these circumstances, the report asserts that the Team system “can be expected to improve educational activities with the participation of professionals from psychology, welfare, and other fields by the supplementation of their expertise and experience required to solve the problems” (p. 11). The report also states that in order to promote the “establishment of a team system based on expertise,” MEXT should clarify the roles of the new professionals at schools and fiscally promote their allocation. MEXT has in fact increased the assignment of SCs within Team School to expand support for students and families. In addition, MEXT has been promoting fiscal support for the utilization of school social workers (SSWs), professionals who approach students/families from a welfare perspective, so that they can be assigned to all junior high school districts across the country.

Stimulated by MEXT’s Team School vision and its promotion, a wealth of studies and methodologies on school-based child support utilizing SCs and SSWs have been proposed from the research areas of social work and school psychology. Local governments are also expanding the creation of systems to support students/families in need of support, including those at risk of abuse, through collaboration between schools and administrative welfare departments, using personnel such as SCs and SSWs as a link (Nishino 2018).

1.2. Can “Team School” really work?

In this way, responding to MEXT’s Team School proposal, there are growing expectations for those new school-based initiatives to support students with diverse backgrounds.

However, as far as can be discovered through the author's field research at elementary and junior high schools, in many municipalities SCs and SSWs still have limited opportunities for involvement in the support of students. The realization of Team School faces various issues; it is difficult to say that thorough collaboration among groups of teachers and other staff has been realized at most of the schools. Yamano (2018) points out that for Team School to function so as to support students with disadvantaged backgrounds, such as those facing abuse or poverty, it is not enough for SCs and SSWs to provide additional support to students who are beyond the reach of teachers, and that it is essential to establish a radically new mechanism to collaboratively provide support. However, as discussed below, the current number of hours allocated to professionals such as SCs and SSWs is not sufficient to realize the construction of a new system such as Yamano proposes. Also, in terms of the organizational aspect of Team School, there is another fundamental problem in staffing of schools: the shortage of teachers. Some local governments are now facing a chronic shortage of teachers, with teachers' poor working environments viewed as one of its causes.

Recently, students' issues, such as truancy, bullying, child abuse, and child poverty, have become more serious than when Team School was proposed in 2015. In particular, the COVID-19 crisis ongoing since 2020 has left truancy and child suicides at record highs. Therefore, the construction of a school system to collaborate to provide necessary support is becoming imperative.

Under these circumstances, can Team School really be an organizational structure that supports students' learning and well-being? This article focuses on the aspect of school-based student support through cooperation/collaboration among various professionals in a Team School and examines its issues. To reflect on effective school-based support for students, the article also introduces the initiative of Safeguarding in United Kingdom (UK) schools. Based on data from a research visit to the UK, the article clarifies the characteristics of Safeguarding teams as an example of school-based collaboration to support students and examines the issues of Team School in Japan in comparison with this UK system. The article then examines measures to realize Team School for providing more effective support for students, referring to findings from the author's field research at a junior high school in West Japan.

2. Team Support for Students in UK Schools

2.1. Approaches to Safeguarding Children

First, this article discusses the initiatives of safeguarding at a state school in the UK, based on a research visit⁽³⁾. Below, the author briefly explains the UK policy of safeguarding.

Since the late 1990s, the UK government has reinforced its child protection policies in the wake of some serious child abuse cases. After the government's Green Paper "Every Child Matters" in 2003, the concept of "Safeguarding of Children" (hereafter "safeguarding") was proposed and the responsibilities and practices of schools and other institutions for safeguarding were clearly defined. Subsequently, legally binding guidelines were developed on the responsibilities of schools regarding the safeguarding of children. "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018," the latest guideline for schools, defines "safeguarding and promoting children's wellbeing" as "protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development, ensuring that children grow up in

circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes” (HM Government, pp. 6-7).

The guideline also requires schools to appoint Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), who are responsible for organizing and managing the safeguarding of children in the schools⁽⁴⁾. The DSLs work in cooperation with the “Local Child Safeguarding Committees” of each local authority for responding to students at high risk for child abuse or other child safety risks. The guideline also stipulates that the safeguarding practices must take a “child-centered approach,” respecting the child’s own voice in all decision-making and working collaboratively with the child and his/her family in determining measures of support.

2.2. The Safeguarding Team at Carpenters Primary School

The following is a case study of Carpenters Primary School, a public elementary school visited in 2016 and 2017. The Newham district, where this elementary school is located, is a Borough of London with a very high percentage of poor residents and racial minority groups, mainly immigrants from Asia and Africa. In the school, the students have a wide range of difficulties or needs connected to their disadvantaged backgrounds, and the school faculty respond to delinquency, truancy, child abuse and various other problems on a daily basis. Despite this difficult context, Carpenters Primary School is highly evaluated by Ofsted (a third-party school evaluation organization) for its appropriate safeguarding initiatives.

In the school, the Safeguarding Team (hereinafter SGT) takes a central role in discussing multifaceted support for students. The team consists of nine members: the principal, vice principal, three assistant principals, an art therapist (school psychologist), a special education coordinator (SENCO), a learning mentor (counselor), and a “thrive/behavior” leader. This team meets once a week for two hours to assess the needs of students, discuss methods of support, and report on the progress of ongoing support.

Based on these discussions within the SGT, individualized support plans are developed for students who present needs or difficulties in school life, utilizing resources both inside and outside the school. For example, the therapist, a full-time school staff member, routinely provides counseling and therapy using play- or expression-activities in the school’s therapy room. In addition, the school also actively connects individual student to mental support or sports activities outside the school. Also, for students with behavioral concerns, teachers often provide brief counseling individually or in groups. In addition to providing this support within/outside the school, the DSL members deal with child abuse in cooperation with the local authority staff⁽⁵⁾.

The SGT also includes a learning mentor (counselor), SENCO (special needs education leader), and the thrive/behavior leader. The thrive/behavior leader is the person in charge of the educational activity “Thrive” (mainly classroom-based educational activities to help students’ social adaptation and self-understanding)⁽⁶⁾. By including the thrive/behavior leader, the SGT expands its support measures to developmental and preventive student guidance practices within the classroom lessons rather than limiting them to therapeutic assistance. In the national curriculum of the UK, PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) is a subject area that corresponds to special activities and moral education in Japan. The PSHE education at Carpenters emphasizes educational activities to enhance students’ wellbeing like Thrive activities, which are seen as part of the school’s safeguarding children.

2.3. Characteristics of SGT in the UK

The SGTs in UK schools as described above can be considered an organizational model for Team School in Japan, and their characteristics can be seen as hints for Japanese schools to improve their school-based support for students. The first characteristic of SGT is the presence of full-time (psychological) professionals such as therapists and counselors as non-teaching staff, involving team-work on a daily basis. For example, the therapist is involved in schools' daily activities through their counseling and therapy for students and can also observe students in their school lives. In this way, teachers and non-teaching professionals can engage in assessment of students and determination of specific support based on shared daily observation⁽⁷⁾. In addition, it is important to note that both teachers and psychologists are also involved in preventive and developmental guidance activities for students within the school curriculum⁽⁸⁾. Finally, the SGTs in the UK are characterized by the clearly-defined responsibilities of the school as a team to achieve the goal of "safeguarding of children."

3. Problems with Team School Policy in Japan

Now, keeping in mind the image of SGT in UK schools above, let us examine again the problems of the Japanese Team School policy and its implementation.

3.1. Lack of Professionals for Team School

The first and most obvious problem of Team School is the lack of non-teaching professional staff. Due to budgetary limitations, the number of hours assigned to SCs and SSWs in schools is still low, far from a full-time assignment. This is the weakness of the policy, which can make the new school image "pie-in-the-sky."

Even for SCs, who were introduced to schools relatively earlier, according to statistics from MEXT in FY2020⁽⁹⁾, the percentage of schools with SCs for 4 hours or more per week was 22.5% for elementary schools, 66.9% for junior high schools, and 42.1% for senior high schools. This data indicates that a substantial proportion of schools still have less than 4 hours per week for SC allocation. As far as can be discovered through the author's field research, even in the junior high schools, where SCs are most actively utilized, the schools generally assign SCs once a week. However, with only a once-weekly SC assignment, it is difficult for SCs to perform school work other than counseling some students referred from the school.

How about SSWs, for whom MEXT is striving to expand placement? MEXT FY 2020 statistics⁽¹⁰⁾ show that approximately 80% of the junior high school districts reported the allocation of SSWs. However, according to the same report, SSWs worked less than 20 days per year in most of the schools, which means only one or two school visits per month. If this is the reality of SSWs' jobs in most schools, they can serve only a few cases of students/families at each school.

As described above, SCs and SSWs, who are expected to act as pillars of Team School, are still professionals who visit schools only occasionally. From the teachers' perspectives, they are entrusted with a limited part of the students' support within the school (Yamano 2018).

3.2. Ambiguity of Team School Goals and Complexity of Related Policies

In the UK school SGTs described above, it is clear the goal of the school-based team is safeguarding of children. Also, in their work, a “child-centered approach” is emphasized, and assessment of students’ wellbeing and needs is central. In comparison, the goals and principles of Japan’s Team School policy are quite ambiguous.

The Central Council for Education’s Report (2015) states that the ultimate goal of Team School is to “enable teachers, staff, and the diverse human resources within the school to use their respective expertise and capabilities to ensure that students acquire the necessary qualities and abilities”. However, as MEXT has claimed in recent years, one of the goals of Team School is to promote “workstyle reform” of teachers. In sum, the goal of Team School is unclear as to whether it is to support students or to reduce the workload of teachers.

In addition to the above, what makes the understanding of Team School difficult for school faculty is the complexity of related policies. While Team School is a policy regarding cooperation/collaboration within and outside of schools, there are also many other educational policies on cooperation/collaboration including “a curriculum open to society,” “community schools,” and “platforms for poverty reduction.” According to MEXT’s explanation, they are all related to Team School, but from the school faculty’s point of view, their interrelationships are extremely complex.

The ambiguity and complexity of the policy thus makes it difficult for principals and teachers to share a clear vision of how to construct Team School for supporting students.

3.3. Problems with the Teachers’ Community as the “Core of the Team”

The third problem concerns the community of teachers. Although the new role of non-teaching professionals is attracting attention in Team School, the core of Team School is still the teachers, in terms of the real composition of the faculty. However, what has been missing from the discussion of Team School to date is a whole-school organizational model or methodology on how the community of teachers should be involved in the education and support of students in a collaborative way (Hamamoto, Yabuta, and Kinnan 2020).

As Sako (2008) points out, the main factor hindering intrinsic improvement of Japanese schools is “individualism” of teachers’ work. In other words, the problem is that each teacher tends to be responsible for all matters related to students and classrooms. Therefore, how to promote collaboration among teachers and foster collegiality has been pointed out as a crucial issue for Japanese school reform even before the proposal of Team School. Moreover, as Yasuda (2014) points out, Japanese teachers conduct “gate-keeping” of the in-school roles of newly-entering professionals (e.g., SCs) based on a “culture of guidance”(shido no bunka) that emphasizes the relevance of total educational activities for students’ social development and teachers’ trust-building with students. According to Yasuda, on the basis of this culture, “compartmentalization” of professional roles often occurs, whereby the new professionals are asked to be involved in some of the work that only psychologists can do, and the teachers themselves take on the rest of the work.

Considering the problems described above, it is necessary for the teachers’ community to share the organizational model and methodology that will promote understanding of how they are to revise existing views of their jobs and work together with new professionals to support students. Recently in Japan, Kurihara (ed., 2017), inspired by the student guidance systems in Europe and the United States, has proposed a “multi-level approach” as a whole-

school methodology for student guidance (Kurihara ed., 2017). In the multi-level approach, the emphasis is on collaborative work based on an assessment of the child's issues and needs, and the roles of non-teaching personnel are also stressed. These theories can play an important role in helping teachers and other staff share the road map for collaboration toward Team School.

4. Case Study of Team School in Japan: A Junior High School's Approach

Given the issues identified in the previous section regarding Team School, the author examines how Japanese schools can collaboratively work to support students with various needs effectively, based on a field research at one junior high school.

The school introduced here is Minamo Junior High School (hereafter "Minamo Junior High"), located in a large city (X City) in West Japan. The school is in the bayside area of the city and serves about 260 students (in FY2020) with 32 teachers. The neighborhood where the school is located has historically had a large number of blue-collar residents, and many of the students live in municipal low-income housing. This neighborhood context results in a very high rate of students with financial aid for schooling compared to the city average. In addition, a portion of the students reside in local children's homes. Given this local context, many of the students in Minamo Junior High have disadvantaged backgrounds, with stress or needs which manifest themselves in various behavioral problems at school. In the past there were many cases of child delinquency and truancy with which teachers of the school struggled. However, due to the building of "teamwork" to support the students through the leadership of a principal who arrived in the late 2010s, the students' school life has become more settled. In addition, the results of the AISES survey regularly conducted in all classrooms confirm that many of the students feel safe and comfortable participating in school life. The following is a summary of the school's team initiatives, based on the author's field research conducted at the school over the past two years⁽¹¹⁾.

The goal of the initiatives at Minamo Junior High is, in the words of the principal, to "create a school where all students can achieve self-fulfillment." As a foundation for this students' self-fulfillment, a "team" of teachers, staff, and various non-teaching professionals has been established. The core of the team is the teachers, but other professionals such as an SC, a community coordinator, and volunteers (college students, neighborhood residents, etc.) are also involved in supporting the daily activities of the school.

Also, the teachers learn together about assessment of students' well-being, educational consultation or classroom activities (e.g., guidance for positive behaviors) through professional development based on the multi-level approach (described above), which the principal has introduced. The principal referred to this school system, consisting of diverse adults including teachers, staff, and many volunteers, as a "Team School Minamo".

At Minamo Junior High, the emphasis is on enhancing daily collective activities such as classroom lessons, special activities, and extracurriculars for students' social development. On the other hand, in accordance with the multi-level approach, the school actively collaborates to provide individualized support for various students in need. Below is an overview of the approaches to students who have a tendency toward non-attendance, students with mental health issues, and students who are economically deprived or suspected of being abused.

First, with regard to students who have a tendency toward non-attendance, one of the unique initiatives of Minamo Junior High is the “non-attendance outreach” program⁽¹²⁾. During the school day, when teachers are not available to make home visits, college student volunteers (after a certain amount of training) visit the homes of students who have a tendency toward non-attendance, have conversation with them, and accompany them to school if they are able to attend. The school also has a “free classroom” where students, who have difficulty learning in the class group for various reasons can study at their own pace, with those outreach staff providing learning support. Also, in this room, teachers, the school nurse, and the SC talk with students during the breaks between lessons. These staff and volunteers are frequently in direct contact concerning the condition of students using the room.

Next, regarding support for students with mental health problems, each class conducts a questionnaire called AISES⁽¹³⁾ about once a semester to grasp the students’ adjustment to school life and their sense of support. Through analysis of AISES data, teachers at each grade level identify students who are experiencing high levels of stress or are highly maladjusted. Based on this analysis, the teachers consider how to communicate with and support these students in the classroom. In these assessments of students of each grade, the lead teacher in charge of student guidance plays a coordinating role. In addition, homeroom teachers, special education teachers, and the nursing teacher are also actively checking through daily conversations if any students are suffering from mental health issues or being bullied, and sometimes they refer students to once-weekly SC counseling.

The nursing teacher in particular plays a major role in connecting students to the SC, often identifying their mental health needs through daily conversations with students in the infirmary and connecting them to the SC. In addition, the principal encourages teachers to listen to the advice of the SC as a psychological professional. The SC also actively converses with teachers in the staff room about the condition of the students during non-counseling hours.

The final point is regarding students in poverty or students suspected of abuse. In particular, for those students with serious family issues, support is provided in collaboration with an SSW and staff of the municipal welfare departments. X City has established the so-called Municipal Child Support Net Project for each ward, providing outreach support for students and families who are considered to need support in partnership with schools. The targets of outreach support are determined by the screening of students at each school. Although the number of cases handled is very limited (approximately 2 or 3 households at each school), SSWs, in cooperation with the teacher in charge of student guidance, conduct home visits and provide ongoing support while building trust with parents. Generally, the households thus targeted are those that is difficult for teachers alone to grasp the situation at home and communicate effectively, so this SSW’s role is important.

Reflecting on this school-based support at Minamo Junior High, why can the teachers at this school effectively collaborate with various non-teaching staff to support students? The most important factor is the leadership and coordination of the principal, who has recruited the necessary volunteers to support students with diverse needs and created a system to link these staff to ongoing support for the students. In addition, the principal has brought about active communication with the staff so that the volunteers or the SC can work smoothly with teachers to support students.

Moreover, a multi-level approach is effectively utilized for teachers and staff to share the

vision and methodology of the “team” system. Through ongoing training in educational activities and educational consultation based on this approach, the importance of collaboration to support students has been shared among the staff. In addition, once the school’s support system got on track, the principal entrusted the role of coordination to the student guidance teachers and the community coordinator⁽¹⁴⁾, considered important for the sustainability of these initiatives.

On the other hand, there are also issues for Team School efforts in Minamo Junior High. When considering the activities of education and support of students at the school as a whole, the number of students (and families) that can be supported by the work of the SC and SSW is still limited. Therefore, despite the importance of their work based on expertise, their contribution to the whole-school efforts is still considered small. In addition, similar to what Yasuda (2014) points out, even though there is some information sharing between teachers and SCs/SSWs, there seems to be no opportunity for SCs and SSWs to share information with each other. To overcome these challenges on collaboration, for example, SCs and SSWs should collaboratively involve in assessments of the AISES or contact and observe students in situations other than counseling and outreach. These practices can increase the knowledge and information shared by those staff, which provide the base for collaboration. In any case, ensuring more time allocated for these professionals in the school is an essential condition for improvement the Team School system.

5. Conclusion

This article examines the issues for Team School, using the cases of a primary school SGT in the UK and a junior high school in Japan as examples. Based on this comparison, the article points out several issues hindering the Team School policy: lack of professionals for Team School, ambiguity of Team goals and complexity of related policies, and problems with the teachers’ community as the “core of the Team.” In spite of these problems, the case of Minamo Junior High exemplifies that even Japanese schools can effectively extend support for students by utilizing various staff/professionals other than teachers. However, considering that the effective support at Minamo Junior High largely depends on the principal’s individual skill of leadership and coordination, the widespread implementation of Team School for effective support of students requires fundamental changes in Japanese educational policy. Then, what should be done to avoid rendering Team School “pie in the sky”? The following are some recommendations for the current policy.

First, non-teaching staff involved in counseling and supporting students, such as SCs, should be deployed on a full-time basis. This would allow them to have more contact with students, to assess their well-being from the same perspective as the teachers, and to flexibly plan the support they need. Also, by expanding the allocation time of these professionals in schools, they would have a wider range of support available than simply counseling, as well as more opportunities to be involved in preventive/developmental student guidance with teachers within the curriculum.

Second, it is necessary to develop a more relaxed work-environment where teachers can collaborate smoothly with other professionals to support students. To this end, some reforms to directly reduce the workload of teachers (e.g., increasing teachers, expanding the assign-

ment of support staff for administrative jobs or extracurriculars) are essential. On the other hand, the introduction of SCs, SSWs, and other psychological specialists is basically for building a collaborative educational system that support students; it should not be easily assumed that these allocations will directly promote teachers’ workstyle reform.

Third, as shown in the case of the SGT in the UK, in order to provide a wide range of support suited to individual students as well as to increase the opportunities for professional development for collaboration, the school needs more flexibility to ensure time for them all within the schedule. In other words, for Team School to function, the national curriculum framework should be modified to reduce the number of instructional hours for subjects (especially academic subjects) so that the schools can more flexibly manage school faculty time to provide individual student support, collaboration for assessment, or professional development. This may also contribute to teachers’ workstyle reform.

The fourth point deals with the leadership and coordination needed to make Team School work. In order for Team School to operate effectively to support students, professional development opportunities for principals, positioned as the core of the organization, must first be expanded to provide them with the knowledge and skills to manage it. On the other hand, the average work term of a Japanese principal for a school is short, around four years, which is an issue for the sustainability of the effective organization efforts. To sustain and develop a system of student support through Team School in the long term, each school must promote organizational learning on collaboration for students’ support as well as enhancing collegiality among all faculty, including non-teaching professionals. Moreover, to ensure the sustainability of the initiative, it is essential to have a person other than the principal who can serve as another core of leadership and coordination of Team School. For example, Nishiyama (2017) proposes the assignment of an “educational consultation coordinator,” a teaching staff member who is responsible for the assessment of students and the total coordination of various support. Also, as shown at Minamo Junior High, the utilization of the community coordinator for the coordination of volunteers as school supporters is important for bridging the school and the community, and can also underpin the sustainability of the Team School initiatives.

The last issue is the philosophy and vision of the Team School. As already mentioned, especially in the current explanation by MEXT, various policies and concepts related to Team School overlap each other and seem to lack sufficient organization for local implementation. This complexity of the policies as well as the ambiguity of the goals of Team School are also hindrances to effective collaboration at schools. Therefore, it is urgent to reorganize the philosophy and the reform image so that the school faculty can share an understanding thereof. In doing so, the Safeguarding Teams in the UK provide hints about focus on students’ wellbeing and collaboration among teachers and other professionals to create an environment in which students can learn safely. With the “Team” at the organizational core, the school must aim to build a school community where all students feel included and can safely participate in learning. In brief, Team School should aim to collaboratively support *all* students’ participation in learning and inclusion. To help school staff develop and implement this vision, the government needs to reexamine the vision and goals of Team School.

Notes

(1) Materials related to Team School created by the Team School Working Group of the Central

Council for Education, Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee on June 12, 2015 (https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chukyo/chukyo3/052/siryo/___icsFiles/afieldfile/2016/01/05/1365626_03.pdf).

- (2) According to the same report, some characteristics of the social and economic changes that underlie the educational issues were noted (p. 7). First, the report pointed out the changes in family patterns, lifestyles, and values as well as the weakening of ties and safety-net functions in local communities. In addition, changes in human relationships surrounding children due to the widespread acceptance of ICT and the worsening of child poverty were also explained.
- (3) As a joint research study, the author and other researchers visited the school for two days in 2016 and two days in 2017. See Harada and Hamamoto (2017) for an overview of the research. Although the main theme of the research was inclusion of children in schools, the study provided much information about the efforts of safeguarding through interviews because of the strong link between inclusion of children and safeguarding practices. Researchers also visited several other primary and secondary schools in Newham.
- (4) For a more detailed description of the role of DSLs in UK schools, see Okamoto, ed. (2019).
- (5) The borough's guideline stipulates that any signs of child abuse or other events that show a high risk for child safety must be promptly reported to the borough's bureau, and that social workers and other staff must take specific protective actions quickly.
- (6) See Harada and Hamamoto (2017) for a description of "Thrive" activities and other PSHE activities at Carpenters.
- (7) These roles of non-teaching professionals were also found in other public schools visited in Newham Borough. Although the type and number of professional staff was decided based on the budget allocated to each school and the needs of the school, all of the schools had some psychological professionals working within the school on a full-time or near full-time basis to provide care and support for the children.
- (8) In fact, not limited to the therapists at Carpenters Elementary School, psychologists in schools overseas play a wide range of roles in addition to individual therapeutic counseling for children. For example, according to a study by Nishiyama (2017) on the role of SCs in the US, SCs are not only responsible for counseling but are also deeply involved in the assessment and screening of children throughout the school, the development of support plans, and the implementation of preventive/developmental student guidance in the school.
- (9) Based on the "Status of Counselors and School Counselors" from the "FY2020 School Health Survey" of MEXT.
- (10) Based on the "Number of days of school social worker activities (public schools)" in the "Survey of School Health Statistics, FY2020" from "Survey of Student Guidance Issues, Including Problematic Behavior and Truancy of Students."
- (11) Since FY2020, the author has been involved as a collaborator in school improvement in this school, and has visited the school about once a month to observe classes and other educational activities and interview teachers and staff. The research is still ongoing (September 2022).
- (12) The non-attendance outreach is a unique project (Outreach-type Support Program for Students of Truancy) that has been implemented since FY2017 by the X City ward where Minamo Junior High is located.
- (13) The AISES is a questionnaire for students, also known as the "School Adjustment Scale," that measures students' needs in school life from multiple perspectives and is used to provide better guidance for students. See Kurihara (2017) for details of this assessment.
- (14) In Minamo Junior High, a municipal project for promotion of school-community partnership has enabled the placement of community coordinators in each school, who play a coordinating role to promote the partnership between the school and the community (e.g., recruiting of volunteers to support school activities).

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