

Status of Educational Gap Through Statistics

January 2021

An illustration of a family consisting of a father, a mother, and two children. The father is on the left, wearing a yellow shirt, and the mother is on the right, wearing a pink shirt. They are surrounded by educational icons: a pencil, a magnifying glass, a book, and a question mark. The text "Does family background create educational gap?" is written in a cursive font across the top of the illustration.

Does family background create educational gap?

Focusing on the actual conditions of educational opportunities for different vulnerable social groups, from economically disadvantaged to multi-cultural families

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The logo for KEDI (Korea Education Development Institute) is located at the bottom center of the illustration. It features a stylized human figure in blue and red, followed by the text "KEDI" in a bold, sans-serif font.

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The World Education Forum 2015, held in Incheon, newly proposed “inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all” as the Sustainable Development Goal for the education sector (SDG4). SDG4 is composed of 7 detailed goals and 3 implementation methods, and emphasizes guaranteeing of educational opportunity for all (박성호 et al., 2019). Analyzing the status of the educational gap must precede the implementation of such inclusive education. In this <Educational Issues Focus>, I intend to look into the status of Korea’s educational gap focusing on the different academic achievement based on family background and the actual conditions of educational opportunities for different vulnerable social groups (students from multicultural family, North Korean migrant youths, students with disabilities).

1) Status on the Educational Gap Based on Family Background

[Diagram 1] below shows the changes in math academic achievement according to the household income by school level. In case of the 3rd cycle survey of middle school, the household income of “6 million won or higher” group showed exceptionally high level of math achievement, as compared to the “less than 4 million won” and “less than 6 million won” groups. Overall, the math achievement for higher income group tended to be higher. This gap in math achievement between income bracket was the highest in middle school, and showed a trend of gradually intensifying recently (4th cycle).

[Diagram 1] Difference in Math Achievement Based on Income-Level by School Level



Source Reconstruction of <Table III-2> from 박경호 et al. (2017: 68).

<Table 1> Ratio of Achievement Level Depending on the Ratio of Students Receiving Public Assistance (Middle and High School)

(Unit: %)

Middle School	Less than 2%				2% or higher ~ less than 5%				5% or higher ~ less than 10%				10% or higher			
	Excellent	Competent	Basic	Below Basic	Excellent	Competent	Basic	Below Basic	Excellent	Competent	Basic	Below Basic	Excellent	Competent	Basic	Below Basic
Korean	49.5	38.2	9.2	3.1	41.2	42.2	12.5	4.1	36.7	45.0	14.4	3.9	33.3	46.1	14.7	5.9
Math	32.1	42.6	18.3	7.0	19.8	46.1	23.9	10.2	13.4	43.0	30.9	12.7	9.3	40.1	33.4	17.2
English	41.8	41.5	15.0	1.8	26.8	49.2	21.2	2.8	18.3	50.5	27.6	3.6	13.2	50.3	31.4	5.1
High School	Less than 2%				2% or higher ~ less than 5%				5% or higher ~ less than 10%				10% or higher			
	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1	Level	Level	Level 2	Level 1	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Korean	41.4	41.5	14.4	2.7	30.5	49.4	17.0	3.2	24.8	51.1	20.0	4.2	18.5	47.8	25.7	7.9
Math	43.9	32.2	18.0	5.9	32.9	37.1	22.9	7.1	23.1	38.3	28.4	10.2	16.6	30.1	36.2	17.0
English	54.8	31.9	11.4	2.0	43.1	39.4	14.6	2.9	34.9	40.4	20.9	3.9	25.3	41.0	25.6	8.1

Source Reconstruction of 서민희 et al. (2020a: 38) and 서민희 et al. (2020b: 38)

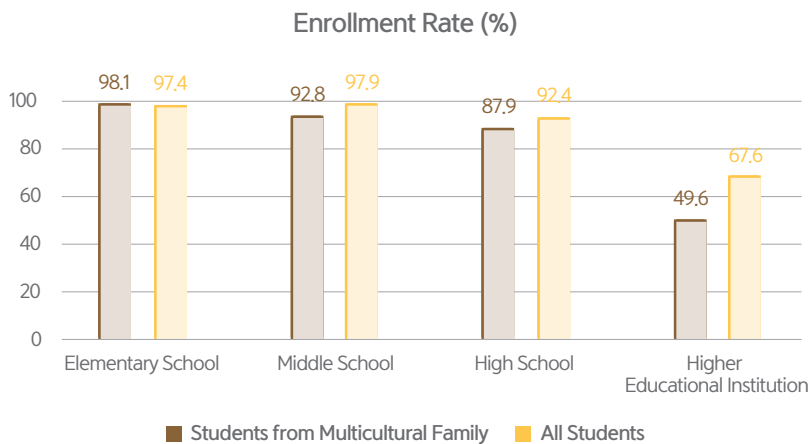
<Table 1> below shows the result from analyzing the difference in academic achievement level depending on the family background based on the ratio of students receiving public assistance by school. Specifically, when comparing the ratio of students by achievement level of middle schools with less than 2% of students receiving public assistance and middle schools with 10% or higher ratio of students receiving

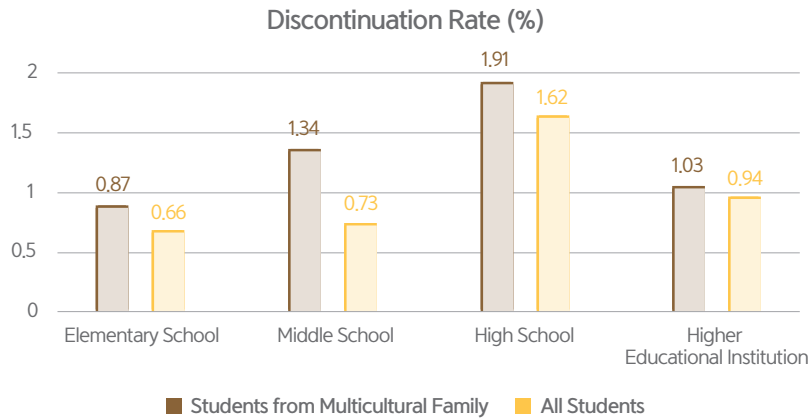
public assistance, the ratio of students below basic level were 3.1% and 5.9% in Korean, 7.0% and 17.2% in math and 1.8% and 5.1% in English, respectively. On the other hand the ratio of students receiving excellent level were 49.5% and 33.3% in Korean, 32.1% and 9.3% in math and 41.8% and 13.2% in English, respectively. Moreover, when comparing the students' performance of high schools with less than 2% of students receiving public assistance and high schools with 10% or higher ratio of students receiving public assistance, the ratio of students receiving Level 1 (below average) were 2.7% and 7.9% in Korean, 5.9% and 17.0% in math, and 2.0% and 8.1% in English, respectively. On the other hand, the ratio of students receiving Level 4 (excellent) were 44.1% and 18.5% in Korean, 43.9% and 16.6% in math and 54.8% and 25.3% in English, respectively. Meaning, schools with high ratio of students receiving public assistance had comparatively lower ratio of students receiving excellent academic achievement (Level 4), but had comparatively higher ratio of students receiving below average achievement (Level 1). This was opposite of the schools with low ratio of students receiving public assistance.

2) Status on the Educational Gap of Students from Multicultural Family

The number of students in Korea is continuously decreasing, but the number of students from multicultural families is steadily increasing. According to the Ministry of Education (2020a), the total number of students from multicultural family is 137,225, accounting for 2.5% of the total students, as of 2019. [Diagram 2] shows the status of educational gap of students from multicultural family, focusing on the school enrollment rate and discontinuation rate.

[Diagram 2] Enrollment and Discontinuation Rate of Students from Multicultural Families





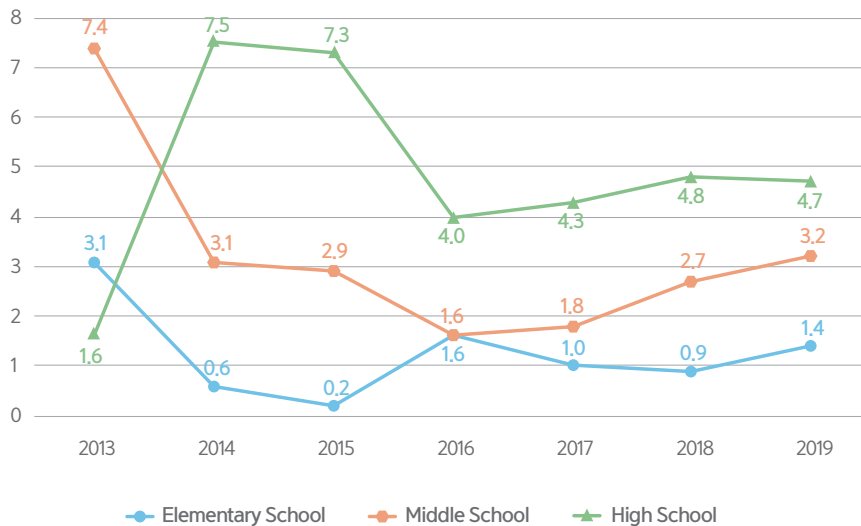
Source Reconstruction of Data from 최윤정 et al. (2019: 49) (Enrollment Rate) and Ministry of Education (2020a: 4) (Discontinuation Rate).

The enrollment rate of students from multicultural family is 98.1% for elementary school, 92.8% for middle school, 87.9% for high school and 49.6% for higher educational institution (as of 2018), and the gap with the overall student becomes greater as the school level progresses. Moreover, the discontinuation rate of students from multicultural family is 0.87% for elementary school, 1.34% for middle school, 1.91% for high school (as of 2018), which is slightly higher than the average for the entire students.

3) Status on the Educational Gap of North Korean Migrant Youths

The North Korean migrant youths are a vulnerable class that reflects Korea’s special context and demand. In order to guarantee educational opportunities and the right of education for the North Korean migrant youths, the government is implementing various programs, such as special screenings for high school and college admissions, providing tuition support, etc. However, many North Korean migrant youths still experience difficulty in adapting to school (박성호 et al., 2019). [Diagram 3] below shows the trend in North Korean migrant youths’ school discontinuation rate.

[Diagram 3] Trend in North Korean Migrant Youths’ School Discontinuation Rate



Source Website of North Korean Migrant Youth Educational Support Center

The number of North Korean migrant youths have increased rapidly from 421 in 2005 to 2,531 in 2019. The school discontinuation rate of the North Korean migrant youths is 1.4% for elementary school, 3.2% for middle school and 4.7% for high school, as of 2019, and is very high as compared to the overall students (0.7% for elementary school, 0.7% for middle school and 1.6% for high school). Especially, the discontinuation rate for the North Korean migrant youths increases as the school progresses from elementary and middle school to high school.

4) Status on the Educational Gap of Students with Disabilities

Notwithstanding various efforts to guarantee education and employment opportunities of people with disabilities, many students with disabilities still are not guaranteed of legal, social and educational opportunities and accessibility to high-quality school education and vocational studies (박성호 et al., 2019). <Table 2> below shows the accessibility to educational opportunities and gap in employment opportunities for the students with disabilities, focusing on the college entrance rate and employment rate.

**<Table 2> College Entrance Rate and Employment Rate of Students with Disabilities
(High School and Postgraduate Course Graduates)**

(Unit: person, %)

Classification		No. of Graduates No. of Graduates	Entrance		Employment		No. of Not- College Attending and Unemployed
			No. Attending College (College/ Major)	College Entrance Rate (%)	No. Employed	Employment Rate (%)	
High School	Special School	2,386	1,366	57.3	64	6.3	956
	Special Class	3,796	1,705	44.9	716	34.2	1,375
	General Class	1,157	664	57.4	65	13.2	428
	Total	7,339	3,735	50.9	845	23.4	2,759
Postgraduate Course	Special School	2,247	17	0.8	929	41.7	1,301
	Special Class	113	3	2.7	75	68.2	35
	Total	2,360	20	0.8	1,004	42.9	1,336
Total		9,699	3,755	38.7	1,849	31.1	4,095

College Entrance Rate = (No. of graduates from the current year attending college/ No. of graduates from the current year) X 100

Employment Rate = No. employed/ (No. of graduates – No. attending college) X 100

Source Ministry of Education (2020b)

As of 2020, the entrance rate from high school to postgraduate course, junior college and university was 50.9%, but the entrance rate from postgraduate course to junior college and university remains at 0.8%. The employment rate for students with disabilities was relatively low, at 23.4% for high school graduates and 42.9% for the graduates from postgraduate courses.

Through the actual statistical data, we were able to verify the gap in educational achievement based on household income level and the gap in educational opportunities, such as enrollment rate and discontinuation rate, college entrance rate and employment rate between the general student population and students from vulnerable groups. In the future, we hope to resolve educational gap and for an equal starting line for all students through policies that consider the characteristics of various vulnerable groups.

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