

CHAPTER 1
Educational Reconstruction in Okinawa

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A number of special characteristics can be noted when looking back at post-conflict educational reconstruction in Okinawa.

First, reconstruction began relatively early. This can be attributed to the high level of concern about education among educators and parents. Records show that in 1954, nine years after the war ended, school attendance was 99%.¹¹

Second, one reason that high rates of school attendance were achieved in a short time after the war was that attendance rates had also been high previously, before and during the war. In Japan an educational system was established in 1872 (Meiji 5). Eight years later in Okinawa “educational modernization” was implemented, which was education that trained students in the language and customs of Japan. By 1884 the number of elementary schools in the prefecture had increased to 53, as schools were built in almost every local area, but school attendance rates were said to be low.¹² In 1884 the rate was only 2.4%, but increased to 92.8% by 1906. Reasons for this increase included (1) the awakening to a new age by the samurai class, (2) heightened awareness among the farming class that learning would improve their livelihoods, and (3) a reduction in taxes levied on the farming class.¹³ During the Taisho (1912-1926) and early Showa (1926-1989) Eras, middle and vocational schools were built, and a school of education was established for training teachers.

Third, although living under U.S. military rule, Okinawans adopted a policy from early on of implementing education with much the same regulations and content as in mainland Japan. Japan’s legal system did not extend to Okinawa; nor did its laws in administration, politics, the economy, or in many other areas. But, in the field of education, Okinawans applied the same regulations and systems as in Japan, and conducted teacher training exchanges with the mainland. In the 1960s, the Japanese government provided aid and planning for various aspects of education.

The effort to conduct education the same way as on the mainland derived in part from the enthusiasm of Okinawan educators. However, it can also be explained by a lack of enthusiasm on the part of the U.S. military for making the large budgetary expenditures required for education. For the U.S. military, the purpose of ruling Okinawa was to maintain its bases there. The military forcibly seized land to build military bases despite the strong opposition of local residents. In comparison, U.S. authorities did comparatively little to suppress the efforts of local educators, from the start of the occupation, to implement “education as Japanese citizens” for Okinawan children. However,

¹¹ According to “Ryukyu Seifu Yoran 1955”(Ryukyu Seifu Bunkyo-kyoku,1955), attendance at elementary schools, which was compulsory, was 99.48% in 1940 and 99.58% in 1954. It was 97.4 % at middle schools in 1954.

¹² Okinawa City Board of Education.(1990) p. 16 .

¹³ Okinawa City Board of Education.(1977) p. 16 .

later, when opposition to American military rule and demands for reversion grew among Okinawans, the U.S. military tightened suppression of teachers' organizations.

Fourth, as mentioned in the third point (above), many issues in post-conflict Okinawa involved disputes with the U.S. military. These included adoption of the Four Education Ordinances, establishment of teacher training exchanges with the mainland, and permission to receive monetary aid from the Japanese government, all of which had wide public support.¹⁴

The next section of Chapter 1, "Okinawa's Post-conflict Reconstruction," focuses on the period of U.S. military rule before reversion.

1-1 Phase I (1945-1951) : Emergency Measures and Quantitative Improvements in Education

The reconstruction of education began in some local areas even before the Battle of Okinawa ended, and schools opened soon after the battle. Even with virtually no buildings, facilities, equipment, or textbooks, by late April of 1946 (the year following the battle), 113 schools had opened on Okinawa Main Island and in the nearby islands with a total of 78,000 pupils and 1,173 teachers in response to the will and determination of parents, educators, and others concerned about education.¹⁵

This section describes the period of reconstruction from the chaos and devastation just after the battle until the signing of the Peace Treaty with Japan in 1952.

1-1-1 The Battle of Okinawa and Education

(1) Teacher and student brigades

The Battle of Okinawa, one of the most devastating for the Japanese and American militaries in World War II, was fought over a three month period after the U.S. military landed. Known as the "typhoon of steel," this battle took the lives of 12,500 American forces, 90,000 Japanese forces (including 28,000 conscripted into local defense corps), and more than 100,000 civilians who represented the largest number of victims.

Not only teachers, but also students, including those in their mid-teens, were drafted from their local schools for combat duty. Boys were assigned to units of the "Emperor's Blood and Iron Brigades" or "Communications Battalions," and girls to units of "Military Nurses." Shelling was so relentless during the three months of the Battle of Okinawa that it even changed the landscape. Furthermore, in order to delay a U.S. military landing on Japan's mainland, the Japanese military adopted the strategy of a protracted war of attrition, abandoning local residents in the midst of the

¹⁴ On these issues, see Section 1-2-3, "Formulating education laws", Section 1-3-1, "Enhancing teacher training" and Section 1-2-2, "Financing education".

¹⁵ Okinawa Prefecture Board of Education.(1997) p. 297.

heavy fighting without food or places to evacuate, resulting in large numbers of victims. Many local residents, including teachers, were drafted into the defense corps.

(2) War orphans

The tragic Battle of Okinawa that took so many lives ended in late June of 1945, but life was grueling for the survivors. The number of children orphaned by the battle has never been clearly determined. The U.S. military built more than ten refugee camps in Okinawa for sheltering children and elderly civilians without relatives to care for them. According to histories of child welfare in post-conflict Okinawa, these facilities accommodated approximately 1,000 orphans and children who had become separated from their parents,¹⁶ as well as about 400 elderly persons.

The first school to open after the battle, “The Ishikawa School,” will be discussed below, but of the 4500 students attending in September of 1945, 850 were war orphans.¹⁷ We now turn to the period beginning in 1947 when post-battle confusion was beginning to settle down, and the first post-conflict centralized civilian administrative body, called the “Okinawa Civil Government,” was established for the Okinawa island group. It consolidated facilities for orphans and the elderly who had been housed at scattered locations. In 1953, after the administration of Okinawa had been separated from the mainland, a special child welfare law was enacted and programs for the welfare of orphans were established.

1-1-2 United States Military Rule and Education

(1) US’s image toward Okinawa

In his book *America’s Okinawa Policy*,¹⁸ Miyazato Seigen writes of his impression when he started his research on *Okinawa that American Policy toward Okinawa* was one of “paternalism.” Paternalism is “the authority of a father over a child, or the feelings of superiority toward a person of lower status, who, nevertheless, is treated kindly.” A special feature of U.S. rule in Okinawa was that Americans saw Okinawans as the pitiable victims of Japanese imperialism and as a minority in Japan.

(2) Severance from Japan and residual sovereignty

When the occupation began, opinion was divided in the U.S. government over the rule of Okinawa. It wasn’t until a number of years after the war that a policy solidified for the long-term

¹⁶ The actual number of war orphans was far greater, but precise figures are not available. Because there is an especially strong sense of kinship and friendship in Okinawa, many war orphans lived with friends or relatives who took them in after the battle. Thus, they were not cared for in refugee camps.

¹⁷ Ryukyu Shimpō.(1998) p. 13.

¹⁸ Miyazato.(1986).

retention of Okinawa. The rise of communism with the founding of the Peoples Republic of China in 1949 and the outbreak of the Korean War, along with deepening divisions in the Cold War, were strong factors motivating U.S. policy toward Japan and the establishment of long-term bases in Okinawa. According to the 1952 Peace Treaty with Japan, the United States alone held the right to rule Okinawa, but in consideration of relations with the Soviet Union and other nations, the American government recognized Japan's residual sovereignty there in order to disavow any territorial ambitions.

(3) Training personnel for military government

In 1944 the U.S. Navy Offices of Naval Operations and Strategic Services published "Civil Affairs Handbook--Ryukyu (Loochoo) Islands" and "The Okinawans of the Loochoo Islands: a Japanese Minority Group" as guides for military government in Okinawa. Based on source materials for the years 1935-1940, they presented information about education that included school systems, content, names of schools, their locations, names of principals, numbers of teachers, numbers of students, and even salaries.¹⁹

After America rushed into the Pacific War, the U.S. Army and Navy set up courses for training military government personnel to organize civilian administration in occupied areas. Approximately 3800 military government personnel were assigned to Okinawa, including 630 Navy and Army officers, interpreters, and enlisted men as support troops in such fields as health care and sanitation.²⁰ These military government personnel were deeply involved in the restoration of civilian government in Okinawa. For example, Captain Willard Hanna, chief of the Education Department at Military Government headquarters, set up a textbook editing section²¹ that directed the writing of text materials which, instead of teaching militarism, were closely based on daily life. Mimeographed copies were produced and used as textbooks. In addition, responding to a teacher shortage, the Military Government founded an Okinawa School of Education²² to train teachers for new educational projects and facilities.

After that, most authority in the Military Government resided with the Tenth Army which had been the main invasion force in Okinawa. During the first phase of the occupation, a Military Government (M.G.) operated according to directives in a "Technical Bulletin," which also regulated most local civil affairs just after the war.

Only one in the 122 pages of written orders concerned education, but it stipulated prohibitions on such activities in prewar Japanese education as teaching nationalism and holding Shinto

¹⁹ Naha City Board of Education.(2000) p. 154.

²⁰ Okinawa Times.(1983).

²¹ See 1-1-4, "Compiling textbooks".

²² See 1-1-7, "Training teachers".

Ceremonies, and set a new educational policy in which boards of education were to be appointed locally from each district.²³

Such written documents and policies specified the following issues to be addressed by U.S. military rule of Okinawa in restarting education: (1) dividing Okinawans from Japanese; (2) prohibiting the teaching of prewar Japanese militarism; (3) democratizing education by implementing the school board system and other changes; (4) early restarting of education while people were still in refugee camps. On the other hand, the “Nimitz Proclamation,”²⁴ issued just after the U.S. military landed in Okinawa, declared that “current regulations are to remain in effect,” leaving a basis for applying the Japanese system when education started again after the battle. Later, by the time people moved from refugee camps back to their former places of residence, the U.S. military had established the Education Department in the Military Government, set up the textbook editing section, and begun formulating plans for education and designing the school system. The administrative rights for conducting school in refugee camps resided mostly with the Okinawa Education Department, comprised of civilian educators, and the Military Government’s policies were communicated through this department. In April of 1946, the Okinawa Civil Government, a civilian government which included the Education Department, started functioning. Also in April, the post-conflict educational system began operating with the issuance of an elementary education ordinance and implementation of the early post-conflict 8-4 system in the schools.

1-1-3 Restarting Education Amidst the Burnt Ruins

(1) The first post-conflict school: “The Ishikawa School”

After their April 1, 1945 landing in Okinawa Main Island, the U.S. military set up camps in local areas for combatants of the former Japanese military and separate camps for civilians where refugees were assembled. There were many children among the civilians, and in May of 1945 the Military Government issued an announcement urging that schools begin.

On May 7, 1945, an elementary school opened in the refugee camp at Ishikawa (presently Uruma City), located in the central part of Okinawa Main Island. This was barely one month after the U.S. landing. Fierce fighting was still spreading in the southern part of the island. On May 11 the U.S. military began a full-scale assault on Japanese military headquarters in the basement of Shuri Castle. After that, the Japanese headquarters command began a withdrawal to the south and,

²³ Naha City Board of Education.(2002) p. 154.

²⁴ This first proclamation of U.S. Naval Government declared that the Japanese government’s authority ceased in the occupied Southwestern Islands. It was named the “Nimitz Proclamation” after Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, commander of the occupation. He as now a military governor, who exercised all authority and administrative responsibility for the residents of the Southwestern Islands and in neighboring waters. It also declared that residents’ private property rights were to be respected and that existing laws were to be maintained, which meant that Japanese ordinances were still in effect under U.S. military rule.

considering that the Battle of Okinawa ended on June 23, it was a remarkably early time for the restarting of school.

The elementary school that opened in Ishikawa was first called “Ishikawa Elementary School.” In May of the following year, 1946, Principal Yamauchi Hanmo issued a “Report of conditions for the opening of school.”

Testimony 1-1 Principal Yamauchi Hanmo of the Ishikawa School

Until recently naive teachers taught children according to the nation’s wartime policy that the Americans and British were devil beasts. Frightened by rumors that the M.P.’s would investigate them, they frantically covered up this past history, and some hid in the attics of houses left standing in the burnt ruins. . . .

This was a big problem when Mr. Yamauchi began looking for professional teachers. He went with a Japanese American U.S. soldier to visit a woman teacher hiding in fear of the American military. “I guarantee your safety,” he told her, and brought her down from the attic . . . Fearing retaliation by the Japanese military, male teachers were persuaded that “You will not be educating American children, but protecting your own children.”

Teachers had children sing songs they knew, tell stories they’d heard, play games, do multiplication tables up to nine times nine, and practicing writing characters on the ground. . . . At times we had to run under trees to avoid shrapnel from cannons fired by U.S. warships at Japanese kamikaze planes attacking them.

Excerpted from Sone Shin’ ichi, “Account of the Ishikawa School, the first post-conflict school that opened while gunfire could still be heard,” “*Ryukyuan Culture*, Fifth issue.1974”

Conditions at the time are summarized below from a report published in *History of Post-conflict Education in Okinawa*

Number of pupils when school opened: fourth graders and below, 790 (395 boys, 395 girls)

Number of teachers: 20 (9 men, 11 women)

Equipment and supplies:

There were none of these--no school building, no textbooks, no school supplies, and no chairs or desks.

Conditions:

After school opened, more pupils attended as the number of refugees increased. In late June there were 1,617 boys and 1,127 girls for a total of 2,744. The number reached 4,500 in October when the first elementary sports meet was held with officials of the U.S. Military Government and associated persons attending. Teaching a huge group of 4500 in one place became very difficult, so branch schools were planned, and in October the students were divided into three

schools, two for elementary and one for secondary. Teachers “were paid in rice and canned goods,” and they received more than other civilians.²⁵

Conducting classes

When school first opened, the children’s faces were pale because of food shortages, so the curriculum was minimal. Japanese writing was limited to the two 50-character alphabets, katakana and hiragana. Math covered mental arithmetic and multiplication tables. Reading and writing of the roman alphabet was taught.

After the children gradually recovered their strength, classes concentrated on inculcating a sense of responsibility, kindness toward others, courtesy, and hygiene. Reports indicated that the U.S. military provided assistance for health examinations and small pox vaccinations, as well as for school supplies, including 300,000 sheets of paper, gym and baseball equipment, blackboards, and one organ.²⁶

(2) Schools open one after another

Having looked at conditions for the reopening of schools in Ishikawa, we now turn to conditions in other areas. The following example from Naha City is documented in Naha City’s history.

Naha City was Okinawa prefecture’s prewar capital, its most populous city, and the center of

Testimony 1-2 Recollections of Motomura Tsuru who worked as a teacher when Tsuboya Elementary School was founded

I was assigned to Tsuboya Elementary at the end of January 1951. There were about 150 pupils with a staff of 8, teachers and principal. We were paid in such U.S. military supplies as canned goods, bivouac mattresses, mosquito nets, and army fatigues. The free rations of food we got were never enough, though. So sometimes after class or on Sundays the M.P.’s would lead us out to the Mawashi or Haeburu areas to dig for sweet potatoes. Lying under thick growths of green vines were the white bones of corpses, places where we found lots of sweet potatoes. We gathered the harvest of sweet potatoes to store, and all the families were told about it. . .

In March, the schools received mimeographed teachers’ copies of textbooks, one for each grade. As I recall, they were for Japanese language and math. The first small-scale elementary school sports meet was held around that time. One U.S. military field-use fold-up organ was our only musical instrument, but, with each class using an empty fuel can as a drum, it was a lively occasion. When grade assignments were made in April, I was assigned to the fourth grade class. Teachers were paid in wages, and I remember that my first salary was 240 B-yen.

Motomura Tsuru, “From the Time Tsuboya Elementary School First Opened,” Naha City Educational Research Center, in “Post-conflict Education, Starting from Zero (1) 1988,” excerpted from *Bunka*, 1974, No. 5.

²⁵ Ryukyu Shimpo.(1988) p. 46.

²⁶ Okinawa Prefecture Board of Education.(1977) p. 8.

its commerce and government. In its Tsuboya district, where much of the land was seized for use by the American military, there were about 1,000 neighborhoods with many children, but the adults were so consumed with making a living from day to day and rebuilding their homes that they had little time for the children. Just after the defeat in war, unexploded shells were lying all around the district. "People agreed this was dangerous and something had to be done about it. At first the school was built as a place where someone could look after the children"²⁷.

Tsuboya Elementary School opened on January 27, 1946. This was the result of the strong desires of people in the community who were concerned about their childrens' safety and futures. There were 155 students and a staff of nine, one of whom had been an upper level student in middle school under the previous Japanese system. In April of that year the Tsuboya Kindergarten annex was built.²⁸

The number of pupils increased after people began moving in from northern Okinawa and returning as repatriates from the South Pacific. So in 1946, starting with Tsuboya Elementary, ten schools opened in Shuri, Oroku, Asato, and other locations. Two more schools opened the following year, 1947, six middle schools in 1948, and one more school opened in 1951.

By the end of the 1940s, it could be said that all of the education shut down during the war had been largely restarted.

(3) Reopening schools in northern Okinawa

Many people prominent in the education field before the war had evacuated to Nago in the northern part of Okinawa Main Island, so their leaders gathered in July of 1945 for an "education conference" held under U.S. military rule. At the conference it was affirmed that the basis of education from then on would be such values as "humanitarianism, morality, and respect for work," "education emphasizing the virtues of a shared human community."

The conference drew a public gathering of 400 people that resulted in the opening of an elementary school in the Taira district.²⁹ In July of 1945, American officers brought together the children of Sedaka district to announce that a school would open, and classes began for boys and girls sections of elementary school to the eighth grade, and for a kindergarten section. Each of the three sections had nearly 2,000 pupils.

As seen above in Naha and in Nago to the north, schools opened at a comparatively early date. The account below shows that, rather than course studies, the emphasis was on assuring the children's safety and giving them guidance for their lives.

Nearby the school was a U.S. military supply warehouse, which the children were forbidden to approach, and because it was feared that unexploded shells lay around the

²⁷ Naha City Board of Education.(2002) p. 162.

²⁸ Ibid. p. 164.

²⁹ Editorial Committee for Nago City History.(2003) p. 152.

area, gasoline drum cans surrounding the school grounds served as a fence. That's why this was sometimes called 'the drum can school.'..... Children in the upper grades spent most days leveling earth on the school grounds. Without copy books, desks, or chairs, classes were held with pupils huddled on the floor inside tents."³⁰ (Naha City, Tsuboya Elementary School)

What were called schools were really just open fields shaded by pine and banyan trees where about 400 children gathered to hear childrens' stories and sing songs. To keep the children there as long as possible, the American military distributed dried apples and biscuits, and many children came to school just because they wanted these afternoon snacks.³¹ (Taira, Nago City)

According to the education bulletin issued in April of 1946 by the Okinawa Education Department, the central civilian office of educational administration, in late April of 1946 there were 101 elementary schools on Okinawa Main island and 12 on nearby islands for a total of 78,458 pupils and a teaching staff of 1,173.³²

1-1-4 Compiling Textbooks

Textbooks were needed when education started again, but almost all of them had been destroyed in the battle, so in Okinawa, separated from mainland administration, special textbooks had to be compiled. Compiling textbooks began on August 1, 1945 when the Okinawa textbook editing section was established in the Education Department of the U.S. Navy Military Government.

Although almost all textbooks had been destroyed in the battle and no reference works were available, a few copies of textbooks from the Okinawa School of Education's affiliated elementary school were found in a cave shelter at Ginowan, and compilation began based on these, starting with lessons in arithmetic.³³

The U.S. military strictly ordered that no material could be used in compiling textbooks that was nationalistic, militaristic, or that exalted Japanese culture. Okinawa residents wanted textbooks that would give hope for the future to pupils who had experienced the tragic Battle of Okinawa, and, in 1946, agreed on an "elementary school textbook compilation policy." This policy was meant to "eliminate narrow-minded ideologies, inspire love of all humanity, instill a positive and progressive spirit for building a new Okinawa, and provide high ideals," thereby promoting a spirit to motivate Okinawa's post-conflict reconstruction.

In addition, the policy specified the inclusion of materials (1) on Okinawan ethics, history, custom, geography, industries, hygiene, engineering, etc.; (2) providing a knowledge of world conditions, especially a deeper understanding of the United States; (3) teaching the principles of

³⁰ Naha City Board of Education.(2002) p. 162.

³¹ Editorial Committee for Nago City History.(2003) p. 152.

³² Okinawa Prefecture Board of Education.(1977) p. 297.

³³ Ibid. p. 442.

hygiene; (4) on the value of self-government and respect for the individual; (5) on use of the roman alphabet and for limiting Chinese characters; (6) for teaching English in the upper grades (actually, required from first grade); (7) emphasizing reading and arithmetic. In this policy can be seen an emphasis on Okinawa's special characteristics and the influence of U.S. military rule which resulted in the inclusion of the American military views.

With the continuing shortage of materials and facilities since the end of the battle, the compilation and distribution of textbooks became difficult, and had to be discontinued in January of 1948. However, in June of that year, Allied Headquarters in Tokyo ordered shipments of 1,300,000 school textbooks to Okinawa from the Japanese mainland. Shipments continued in 1949, and, after that, education was conducted from mainland textbooks.

1-1-5 School Construction³⁴

(schools held in blue sky classrooms, stables, tents, Quonset huts, and thatched roof schoolhouses)

With most school buildings destroyed in the fierce ground battle, school started after the war in "blue sky classrooms." Conditions for education just after the battle are described in a history of Naha City.

Army surplus tents or, in some places, one or two sausage-shaped Quonset huts served as classrooms, with one section used as a teachers' room. But there weren't nearly enough of these, so many classes were held under the blue sky in the shade of trees. With no desks or chairs, pupils used empty boxes as desks and stacked wooden boards to sit on. But, when even these things weren't available, they studied squatting on the bare ground. The tents flapped loudly or blew down on windy days. And they leaked on rainy days or flooded inside if rains were heavy. This made learning quite impossible, so school was suspended on rainy days or in other bad weather.³⁵

The following figures illustrate the inadequacy of school facilities: Of the 137 schools operating in April of 1946, 110 held classes in tents or Quonset huts, 80% of the total, 14 (7%) outside, 5 (4%) in Quonset huts, 5 (4%) in wooden buildings, and 3 (2%) in prewar concrete buildings.

Schools moved from blue sky classrooms to stables, and from stables to temporary classrooms. Area residents did the construction labor as a part of their work for the military, relying for materials on cutting down trees, clearing fields, or on supplies from the military. A post-conflict history of education in Okinawa describes how schools were built in Ginoza Village, located in the northern part of Okinawa Main Island.

The work crew put up tent classrooms and thatched roof schoolhouses one after another. Of course, they were the roughest kind of temporary structures. Other than the

³⁴ On the "Restoration and construction of school buildings," see 1-2-1, "School Construction".

³⁵ Naha City Board of Education.(2001) p. 168.

principals, there weren't enough qualified teachers, so faculties were supplemented with competent young men and women. With their dedicated efforts that were truly moving and the cooperation of parents, these meager facilities gradually came to look like real schools with sports grounds and even flower gardens.

Furthermore, it was the unified efforts of schools, parents, and local communities that built these schoolhouses,³⁶ Parents, local residents, and school personnel jointly contributed their labor, using supplies obtained from the American military and wood cut from trees to construct schoolhouses and equipment.

In late 1951 the conditions of available school facilities were as follows;³⁷ for a total of 3,200 classes, 874 (26.3%) were held in permanent concrete block schoolhouses and 2,216 in temporary structures. Even combining these permanent and temporary facilities there was still a shortage of 240 classrooms. Besides destruction during the battle, the two reasons for this shortage were the many returnees from residence overseas and from evacuation on the mainland, and the post-conflict increase in children and pupils in school that resulted from adding more years of compulsory education. Beginning in the 1950s, school construction proceeded systematically according to yearly plans.

schoolhouses change with the times



thatched roof schoolhouses, Oroku Elementary School (1948)



Quonset hut schoolhouses, Naha Middle School (1951)

³⁶ Okinawa Prefecture Board of Education.(1977) p. 295.

³⁷ Editorial Committee for Nago City History.(2003) p. 248-249.

Source: Naha-City Board of Education (2001), p. 70.

Table 1-1 Condition of available schoolhouses in the Okinawa Island Group (April 30, 1951)

			elementary schools	middle schools	high schools	vocational high schools	teacher training and English schools	subtotal	
permanent structure	new construction	wooden construction with tile roofing	280	207	47	20	0	554	
		concrete	15	5	0	0	0	20	
		wooden construction with tin roofing	0	0	2	0	0	2	
		sub total	295	212	49	20	0	576	
	existing school houses	wooden construction with tile roofing	111	55	33	0	4	203	
		concrete	64	29	2	0	0	95	
		subtotal	175	84	35	0	4	298	
	total			470	296	84	20	4	874
	temporary structures	Quonset huts		252	107	45	10	3	
		wooden construction with thatched roofing		1010	354	11	0	1	1376
wooden construction with tin roofing		131	46	23	1	0	201		
wooden construction with tent roofing		70	21	4	12	0	107		
tents		12	21	0	7	2	42		
other		38	17	18	0	0	73		
total		1,513	566	101	30	6	2216		
outdoor classrooms			174	66	0	0	0	240	
total			2,157	928	185	50	10	3,330	

Source: Okinawa Prefecture Board of Education (1977) p.328

Table 1-2 Condition of available schoolhouses in the Okinawa Island Group (status of schoolhouse restorations as of April, 1952)

	number of classes	main construction completed	classroom shortage	% of total classes
Okinawa	3,217	1,203	2,014	37.40%
Amami Oshima	1,272	678	594	53.30%
Miyako	365	309	56	84.80%
Yaeyama	260	203	57	78.10%
Total	5,114	2,393	2,721	46.80%

Source: Okinawa Prefecture Board of Education (1977) p. 421

1-1-6 Local Communities and Education

With the end of the war and the restart of schools in local areas, parents worked together with school staff and faculty to further education. The contributions of parents and local community residents were especially significant in providing labor and collecting materials for school construction. To restore schoolhouses, school support groups were formed for each school that devoted tireless efforts to preparing facilities. In order to coordinate these activities in each locality and create an islands-wide movement, in 1947 education support groups were organized in each district and the Okinawa League of Education Support Groups was founded.

1-1-7 Training teachers

With many teachers killed in the Battle of Okinawa and the number of pupils increasing when education resumed after the war, there was a critical teacher shortage.³⁸ As the civilian agency for educational administration in the early post-conflict period, the Okinawa Department of Education cooperated with the Education Department of the U.S. Military Government to plan a teacher training facility, and in January of 1946 the Okinawa Teacher Training School opened in Gushikawa Village, located in the central part of the main island. The 108 students in its teachers preparatory school division, 60 in its foreign languages division, and 64 in its agriculture division ranged in ages from sixteen to thirty. They were taught by the principals of youth schools and the faculty of the School of Education that had been in operation before the war.

The Teacher Training School started with these three divisions--instructors, foreign languages, and agriculture--and was under the direct control of the U.S. Military Government. It began with courses of two months duration for training elementary instructors, three months for foreign language teachers, and one month for agriculture teachers. Then an Okinawa foreign language school, the "Okinawa School of Foreign Languages," opened in September of 1946 and the Agriculture Division split off to become the independent Central High School of Agriculture in 1947, so the Teacher Training School became a facility exclusively for training regular classroom instructors.

³⁸ Yara Choby, who served as the first post-conflict president of the Okinawa Teachers Association and later as Chief Executive of the Government of the Ryukyu Islands, writes as follows in his published reminiscences. "One-third of the teachers had died in the war. Furthermore, all of the prospective teachers who had been attending the teacher's school were sent to the front lines of the Battle of Okinawa, the girls in the Himeyuri Student Nurses Corps and the boys in the Teachers Youth Corps of the Emperor's Iron and Blood Brigades. None survived. An estimated 4,500 died, which meant the loss of all teachers trained over a four-year period. Many teachers who survived the battle had to change jobs just to make a living amidst extremely impoverished conditions, so there were very few experienced teachers."

To help alleviate the teacher shortage at the time, graduates of middle schools under the former (prewar) system or of the new high schools were employed as “assistant teachers” in Okinawa.³⁹

Trainees were either graduates from high schools under the new system (the 8-4 system), middle schools under the old systems, or teachers preparatory schools. The American military was wary of teachers from the prewar period, and initially ordered their credentials invalidated, restoring their licenses after they had completed a short training course.

Begun in 1946, the teacher training for assistant teachers was two months long for the first group of trainees just after the war, four months long for the second group, and six months long for the third group. The lengthening of courses indicates that, in a time of emergency just after the battle, credentials were granted quickly in two months, but that the training period was gradually extended.

With courses to train working assistant teachers two months for the first entering class, four months for the second, and six months for the third, the length of training time had tripled in the space of one year.

Those completing these courses were granted teachers licenses for elementary school and were

Testimony 1-3 Memories of attending the Teacher Training School

Oshiro (formerly Tomihara) Nobuko (entered the school in 1947)

The school was co-educational with 15 men and 15 women in the First Section.

For English class we relied on Yamashiro Akio and were relieved to have Mr. Fumikazu as our teacher. At my girls school, English had been banned in 1942 as the language of enemy countries. . . .

Next, our principal, Shimabukuro Shun'ichi, earnestly explained democracy. I leaned forward and listened attentively to a lecture entirely different from what we'd heard during the years of militaristic education. Looking back on them, I'd never had any doubts about militarism during my four years at girl's school. I'd burned with the spirit of loyalty and patriotism, believing unquestioningly in certain victory. . . .

From now on, we no longer had to sacrifice ourselves for the nation. It was great for everyone, just getting used to our freedom. After attending Shun'ichi's class on democracy, we were able to feel confident with the new education policy. Furthermore, we were inspired in our daily studies by Mr. Arakaki's science class, especially our outdoor nature observations of things like changing cloud formations, by Mr. Nakaishi's philosophy lectures in Tokyo dialect, by Mr. Maedomari's heartwarming classes on the principles of education, . . . as we tasted the joy of learning about unfamiliar things.

Magazine of the Fumi-no-kai, Okinawa Teachers School, a student of the Okinawa Teachers School, Second Section, second term, 1998

³⁹ In February of 1950 there were 976 assistant teachers in elementary schools, 31% of the total number of teachers. Tamaki.(1987) p. 27.

obligated to teach on the elementary level for one year. Soon after the opening of the Teacher Training School, the affiliated Elementary School was established as an annex. The period for on-the-job training at the affiliated elementary school was two weeks for the first entering class and four weeks for the second and third entering classes.

In April of the following year, 1947, the existing course sections were abolished and replaced by a one-year-long “First Section” admitting graduates of middle schools and the new high schools who had passed a qualifying examination, and a six-month-long “Second Section” admitting working teaching assistants who had passed a qualifying test. Like the former teachers course, these first and section sections were established for the rapid training of elementary school teachers.

In April of 1948, the six-three-three system was implemented and, as part of this reform of the school system, the six-month program to train working assistant teachers was abolished in 1949, replaced by a two-year training program. The purpose of this program was to train middle school teachers. At the same time, a “research course” was created to train middle school teachers in one year. To take the entrance examination for either of these required an elementary school teachers license, and those completing the “research course” were granted a middle school teachers license.

The courses and programs at the Teacher Training School included “education,” “philosophy,” “literature,” “English,” “music,” “art,” “science,” “math,” “physical education,” “school upkeep” “Okinawan culture,” and “home economics” (for girls).

The Teacher Training School operated until May of 1950 when it was absorbed into the University

Testimony 1-4 Yamashiro Akio’s memories of the Teacher Training School as a student in the second entering class of the Second Section

The school began as a coeducational institution to fill the severe post-conflict teacher shortage. It was divided into two sections, one yearlong class and one six-month class. Everyone had to live in the dormitory, and the school provided lodging and meals during the short-term teacher training programs. Along with the six-month class was a yearlong class divided into first and second semesters. It was, in reality, a school where the assistant teachers working there had passed entrance examinations and trained quickly.

It was a time of teacher shortages. Principals had a tough job, I think, to maintain stability by hiring enough teachers and preventing resignations. When principals heard about people who had gone beyond middle school graduation, they always went out right away to recruit them.

Finally, the first day of school arrived. But I was shocked at the school, even though I had heard about it before. In those impoverished circumstances of daily life and without textbooks, school supplies, or other essentials for learning, specialized teacher training courses had to be completed in a very short time, making it hard on teachers and students alike. The students, in particular, devoted themselves wholeheartedly to their studies.

Yamashiro Akio, “The Road to Becoming a Teacher,” Okinawa Teacher Training School Fumi-no-kai, 1995.

of the Ryukyus, founded that year. Professor Tamashiro Tsuguhisa of the University of the Ryukyus described the special characteristics of training at the Okinawa Teacher Training School in his book *Education Policy under the Occupation of Okinawa and Public Education in America*⁴⁰. He explains that the changes in the training program and its variety of courses resulted because it had to be makeshift and improvised, indicating the gap between supply and demand.”⁴¹

Thus, while it was initiated by the U.S. military, the Okinawa Teacher Training School helped alleviate the post-conflict teacher shortage in Okinawa. At the time, the military was intent on promoting American democracy, and had backed a plan for education at the college-level, but the result was a short-term training facility. The two reasons for this were that local residents demanded a rapid response to the teacher shortage and that the military worried about providing the required funds.

The graduates of the Okinawa Teacher Training School were granted licenses as elementary school teachers, and incurred an obligation to work at a school. They studied at the school for periods ranging from six months to one year, received scholarships of twenty-five yen, and were provided with a portion of their school supplies.

When the Okinawa Teacher Training School closed with the opening of University of the Ryukyus, four teacher training facilities were set up on the main island in April of 1950 for assistant teachers working at the time. The training period lasted six months, and those who completed the program’s requirements were granted a certificate of completion and a teaching license from the Central Board of Education. In March of 1953, their purpose successfully accomplished, these facilities were closed.

The Teacher Training School and the Foreign Languages School remained in operation for over four years, graduating a total of more than 900 students. Those graduates worked as schoolteachers and interpreters, continued their studies at the University of the Ryukyus or at universities on the mainland, or attended universities in the United States on GARIOA (Government Relief in Occupied Areas) scholarships. They made enormous contributions to the reconstruction and development of Okinawa that had been devastated by war.

1-1-8 Administrating Education

(from the Education Department of the Okinawa Advisory Council to the Education Department of the Government of the Ryukyu Islands and the Education Department of the Island Group Government)

On August 29, 1945, the first post-conflict centralized government organization, the Okinawa Advisory Council, was inaugurated as an advisory body to the U.S. Military Government. The Advisory Council was comprised of 15 members representing each district of refugee camps, and

⁴⁰ Tamaki.(1987) p. 23.

⁴¹ Ibid. p. 25.

consisted of 13 departments, including agriculture, commerce and industry, health, security, and education. Textbook compilation, which had already started, was now carried out at the Education Department; and, according to records of its meetings between November of 1945 and March of 1946, such issues as teacher training, the opening of schools, and the extent of the Department's authority were discussed in detail.

In January of 1946, according to a directive from the U.S. military, the existing Education Department was absorbed into the Okinawa Department of Education, a central administrative organ that covered not only Okinawa main island, but also the neighboring islands. Structurally, the director of the Okinawa Department of Education came under Military Government Headquarters. However, functionally, the director had the ultimate responsibility for carrying out education, and Military Government Headquarters maintained supervision and provided aid for educational materials.

The military announced to each district that it was planning for the building of school facilities, providing aid to local principals, implementing eight years of compulsory education for children then six to fourteen years old, and compiling textbooks at Military Government headquarters.

Later, in April of 1946, the Okinawa Advisory Council was abolished with the inauguration of the "Okinawa Civil Administration." The Okinawa Department of Education now became part of the Civil Administration and was called the "Okinawa Civil Administration, Department of Education." It declared a new spirit for building Okinawa with promulgation of an "elementary education ordinance" and "regulations for implementing it" that emphasized Okinawan identity and Okinawa's special character. During its existence, the first post-conflict unified school system was established according to the eight-four structure, lasting until 1948 when it was changed to a six-three-three structure one year later than on the mainland. This Department had thus overseen the establishment and local implementation of the post-conflict unified system of education. It remained in operation until the Okinawa Island Group Government was inaugurated in 1950.

1-2 Phase II (1952-1957): Designing Educational Systems

About this time the United States decided to rule Okinawa for the long term, and began massively expanding its military installations there into the largest base in the Far East. The resulting seizures of land, which Okinawans view as physical and spiritual sustenance bequeathed from their ancestors, threatened both their economic survival and their identity, which is closely connected with this vital spiritual support. The United States, however, declared Okinawa to be their essential "keystone," "a base for protection against the communist threat," and accelerated base construction. Okinawans had been deeply disappointed when the San Francisco Peace Treaty severed them from Japan, and now demands for reversion increased.

The civilian administrative body under U.S. military rule had changed from the Okinawa Advisory Council in 1945 to the Okinawa Civil Administration in 1950; and, in 1952, the Government of the Ryukyu Islands (G.R.I.) was inaugurated with three branches of government--legislative, executive, and judicial--whose administration extended to all the Ryukyu Islands until reversion in 1972. With inauguration of the G.R.I., something resembling a civilian administrative structure was finally put in place.

Education also went through systematic changes from a system responding to an emergency to one that could look to the future. Just after the war, the U.S. military controlled almost all aspects, such as systems and budgets, and also monitored content. But, compared with this period, more of education was subsequently entrusted to Okinawans and the content became increasing like education on the mainland as U.S. military involvement loosened.

The U.S. military implemented a policy intended to limit its budgetary expenditures, to suppress, as much as possible, demands for expanded civilian government, and to improve people's livelihoods as much as necessary in order to maintain the functioning of the military bases. In an effort to reduce the increasing burden of expenditures going to Okinawa, it also adopted measures promoting more economic activity and autonomy by fostering productivity with the establishment of the Ryukyu Power Public Corporation in 1954 and the Ryukyu Waterworks Public Corporation in 1958.

In the field of education, along with quantitative increases in the number of schools and students, there was qualitative enrichment in content. Lectures and research conferences were held on improving the content of all courses. As for the school systems, the issuing of Ordinance⁴² 66 (Ryukyu Education Ordinance) established Okinawa's distinctive system of elected local school boards. The University of the Ryukyus opened in 1950. In order to train personnel urgently needed for Ryukyu's reconstruction, the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands (USCAR)⁴³ changed to a system of contract students⁴⁴ and initiated national scholarship study for young Okinawans at Japanese universities on the mainland with funds provided by the Japanese government. Still, with meager school budgets, a critical shortage of school facilities persisted for the growing number of pupils, and schoolhouse construction remained a problem for education in Okinawa even after this time.

⁴² The ordinance was formulated and promulgated under American rule of Okinawa by an agency of the U.S. government.

⁴³ Created in 1950 to rule Okinawa as the local agency of the U.S. government. Officially named United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands, or USCAR for short. It continued operation until reversion to Japan.

⁴⁴ They signed contracts with USCAR agreeing to work for Okinawa's development, and attended colleges on the mainland.

1-2-1 School Construction

(1) Efforts of the G.R.I.

Even after it moved to the G.R.I., school construction continued to be a big problem for education in Okinawa. With the inauguration of the new government, “solving the problem of school construction” was one of the most important missions among those explicitly carried over from the old government.

On April 22, 1952, the Central Board of Education issued a “Statement on Schoolhouse Construction,”⁴⁵ describing the seriousness of the problem.

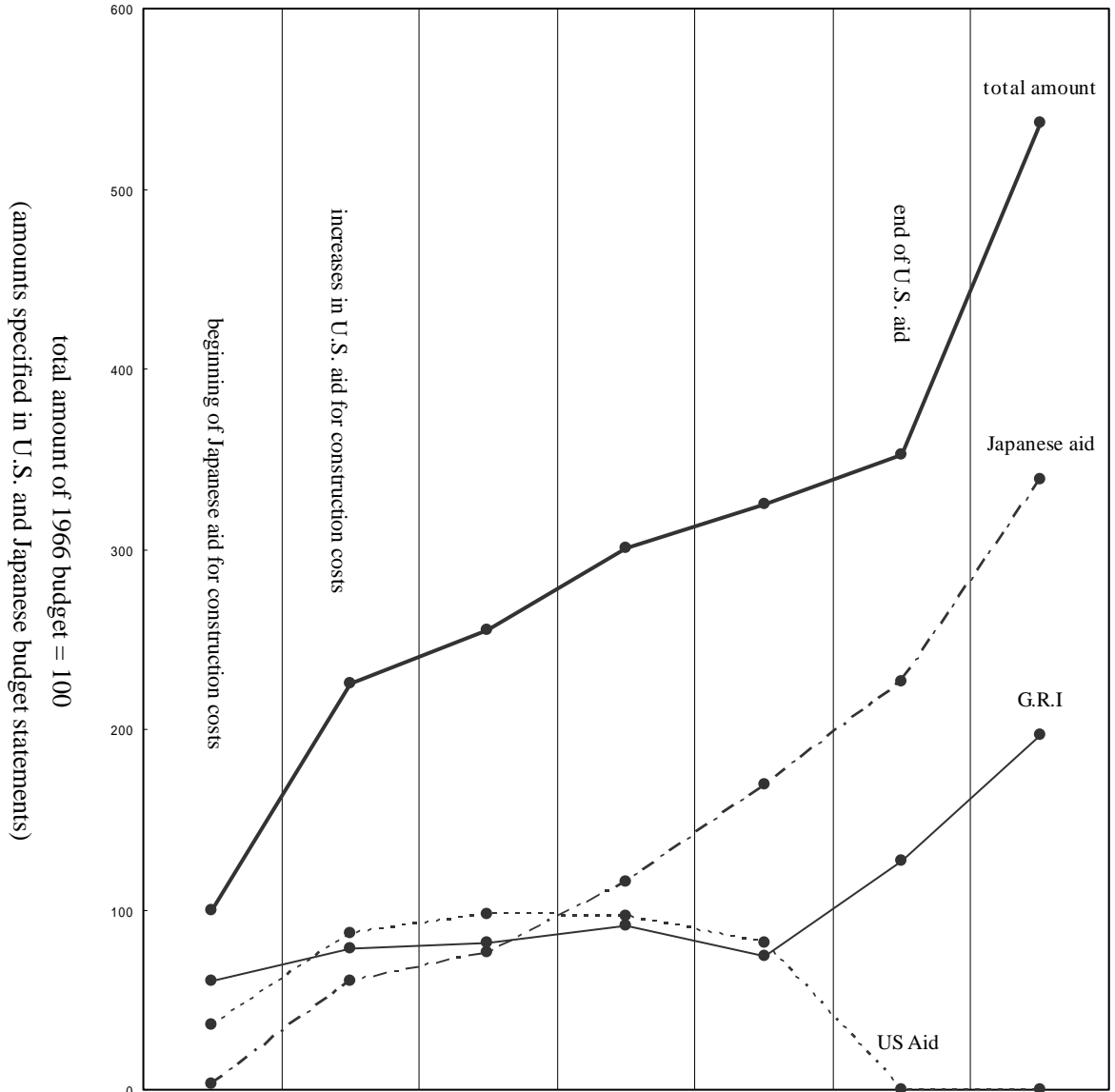
1. 46% of the schoolhouses in all the Ryukyu Islands and 37% of the school buildings on Okinawa Main Island were already constructed.
2. Most of those judged to have inadequate classrooms are thatched-roof or temporary structures.
3. In those classrooms without storm doors, it is impossible to conduct classes in rainy weather.
4. In the Naha district, the lack even of temporary school structures and the shortage of classrooms have forced seven schools to hold double class sessions and two schools to hold triple sessions. In all the Ryukyu Islands, 110,000 pupils learn under these conditions.

Schools were built during this period largely with aid from USCAR. In 1954, 400 classrooms were newly constructed and 120 damaged in the war were repaired. 650 classrooms were newly constructed in 1955 and 596 in 1956.

Construction planned initially under the 1956 budget was nearly completed, but could not keep up with the increase in pupils, so available school buildings that year were at 87.9 % sufficiency. After 1956, construction shifted away from restoring war-damaged schools, and concentrated mainly on special classrooms in order to accommodate the natural increase in young children and pupils. In the 1960s, construction began on middle school classrooms for vocational studies and home economics, as well as on high school dormitories and other facilities. Still, budgets were tight and school building shortages remained a problem for post-conflict education in Okinawa.

⁴⁵ Okinawa Prefecture Board of Education.(1977) p. 384.

Table 1-3 Changes in school construction budgets in amounts from each funding source specified in U.S. and Japanese budget statements



fiscal year	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972
total amount of budget	2,068	4,650	5,282	6,228	6,728	7,287	11,099
U.S. aid	750	1,800	2,000	1,975	1,700	0	0
Japanese aid	73	1,231	1,582	2,377	3,498	4,667	7,016
total of U.S. and Japanese aid	823	3,031	3,582	4,352	5,198	4,667	7,016
G.R.I	1,245	1,619	1,700	1,876	1,530	2,620	4,083

Source: Okinawa Prefecture Board of Education (1977) p. 395.

At this time school construction was funded mainly by USCAR's budget, but, beginning in the second half of the 1960s, assistance from the Japanese government was introduced. Starting in 1965, when the Japanese government appropriated \$78,000 for school construction, allocations from the Japanese and American governments increased in 1966 and 1967, greatly advancing school construction. In 1969, with the decision for reversion, USCAR ended its assistance and, conversely, aid from the Japanese government sharply increased.

(2) "School supplies of love," aid for education from the Japanese mainland

It was not only government efforts that restored school buildings destroyed in the war, but also the active involvement of civilians. 1952 saw the formation of the Association to Promote the Restoration of Okinawa from War Damage, comprised of eight organizations, led by the Okinawa Teachers Association that included the League of Parent-Teacher Associations; the Women's League; the Youth League; the Association of Cities, Towns, and Villages; the Chamber of Commerce and Industry; the Association of Farms, Forests; and Fisheries, and the Okinawa Association of Local Government Council Presidents.

This organization actively promoted the restoration of school buildings destroyed in the Battle of Okinawa. In January of 1953 Yara Chobyō and Kyan Shin'ei of the Okinawa Teachers Association traveled on the mainland for six months to explain desperate conditions in Okinawa and seek assistance.

What motivated these teachers was their belief in the need for restoration of education in Okinawa at the earliest possible date. Yara Chobyō recalls in his published recollections⁴⁶ that "The first task of the organization was protecting our livelihoods, that is, economic concerns, but we also fervently resolved to devote our efforts to restoring the school buildings that were the sites of education. I had concluded from the time I served as Director of the Department of Education (then part of the Okinawa Island Group Government) that school buildings would not be restored without help from all the people of our motherland."

Teachers collected photograph negatives of the buildings from each school, developed them over the next six months, and produced 300-400 copies of an album. They also published three special editions of their organizational newspaper, headlined "An appeal to all Japanese," "An appeal to all teachers in Japan," and "An appeal to all Japanese children and pupils," printing large numbers of copies and distributing them widely on the mainland. Appeals for funds to aid restoration of war-damaged schools were delivered to the governors of every prefecture and municipality, to the presidents of all prefectural assemblies, to school superintendents, to city mayors in prefectural capitals, to prefectural teachers unions, to women's organizations, and to media organs. The results

⁴⁶ Asahi Shimbun-sha.(1961) p. 20-21.

were donations from 10 million people totaling 60 million yen (valued at 20 million “B-yen”⁴⁷, in military script that was Okinawa’s currency at the time).

These were to be combined with 4 million yen collected in Okinawa to fund school restoration, but the American military would not permit this. Because all school construction had to be funded by aid from USCAR or from the G.R.I. budget, these contributions were allocated instead for school supplies. They paid the costs for schoolbooks, music, physical education, cooking, audiovisual equipment, and other materials which, as expressions of love from the mainland to Okinawan brethren, were called “school supplies of love.”

For Okinawans, this movement conveyed the warm feelings of people on the mainland toward Okinawa; and, for mainlanders, it was an opportunity to learn about the conditions Okinawans were living under. This nationwide pilgrimage heightened concern about Okinawa on the mainland, and spurred the planting of seeds for reversion in the soil of both places.



“School supplies of love” Kumoji Elementary School, Naha, 1955



“School supplies of love” Takara Elementary School, Naha, 1955

1-2-2 Financing Education

(1) Funding education in the early post-conflict period

For a time after the war, Okinawa was without monetary currency, and teachers’ salaries were paid in rationed commodities as part of the budgets for education. In May of 1946 currency circulation began, and budgets were compiled for cities, towns, villages, and the Ryukyu Islands as a whole. However, cities, towns, and villages lacked the funds for salaries, school construction, and necessary educational materials. Therefore, expenses for city, town and village schools were paid by the government of all the Ryukyu Islands.

⁴⁷ B-yen was military script issued after the war by the U.S. military. Currency was used from 1948 to 1958 The exchange rate in 1950 was 120 B-yen to one U.S. dollar.

See below the figures for annual government budgets from when they were first compiled in 1947 through 1952, the proportions allocated for education, and itemization of the 1952 budget for the Department of Education.

Table 1-4 Government budgets for fiscal years 1947-1952 and amounts allocated for education (units in B-yen⁴⁸)

fiscal year	total amount of government budget	budget for education	proportion
	yen	yen	%
1947	110,455,290	15,152,779	13.7
1948	75,304,325	17,205,693	22.9
1949	53,610,006	20,367,812	38.0
1950	149,925,462	48,004,944	32.0
1951	130,362,814	56,762,896	49.5
1951	328,033,486	107,669,107	32.8
1952	812,736,813	248,672,665	30.6

Source: Okinawa Prefecture Board of Education (1977) p. 321

As Table 1-4 shows, the changing proportions for education in the total budgets of the Okinawa Civil Administration during its existence (1947 to 1952) were 13.7% in 1947, 22.9% in 1948, 38% in 1949, and 32% in 1950.

Expenses for school construction are not included because, during this period, they were paid by GARIOA⁴⁹ and not appropriated through the budget of the Department of Education.

During the period of Okinawa Island Group Government (1951-52), aid for education from the U.S. military was appropriated through this government's budget. The budget for education in 1952 was 248,627,655 yen (B-yen). A breakdown of these aid revenues shows that approximately 143,600,000 yen came from the Island Group Government and 150,000,000, or about half, came from the U.S. military.

⁴⁸ Government budgets for fiscal years 1947-1952 and amounts allocated for education.

⁴⁹ The Government and Relief in Occupied Areas Fund, aid appropriated from the U.S. government budget. Okinawa received it between 1947 and 1957.

Table 1-5 Extract from 1952 budget for the Department of Education (units in B-yen)

item	government funds	military aid funds	total	explanation
Okinawa Island Group Government	371,373,480,97	450,363,331,94	821,736,812,91	proportion of Okinawa Island Group Government's budget
Department of Education	143,627,665,00	105,000,000,00	248,627,665,00	total amount 31%
school education	142,276,608,26	99,595,772,94	241,872,381,20	administrative expenses 38%
social education	1,351056,74	5,404,227,06	6,755,283,80	military aid funds 23%
teachers' salaries	123,477,600,00	1,329,600,00	124,807,200,00	principals 221, teachers 3,626, total 3,847, proportion of total Island Group Government expenditures for personnel 42%
office employees' salaries	6,177,600,00		6,177,600,00	agents 225, office employees 18, highschools, teacher training, clerical 24, total 267
operating expenses	1,771,035,00		1,771,035,00	1. aid for experimental schools, group studying, etc. 960,000.00 2. lectures and official committees 330,980.00 3. expenses for athletic events 21,855.00 4. paper supplies and printing 20,000.00 5. central board of education 52,200.00 6. local boards of education 367,200.00 7. Council on Education 28,800.00
books	358,000,00		358,000,00	school books, dictionaries, and other books
training	953,000,00		953,000,00	high school of agriculture and forestry, industrial high school fishery high school
office expences	5,644,043,26	1,415,516,94	7,059,560,20	for school use desks and chairs: 3,836,660.00 organs: 3,216,000.00
allowances	288,000,00	32,000,00	320,000,00	allowance for dormitory superindendents 129,000.00 allowance for instructors 191,000.00
construction expenses (undetermined)		96,480,000,00	96,480,000,00	180 buildings of 4 classrooms per building

Source: Okinawa Prefecture Board of Education (1977) p. 322

The largest item among expenditures is teachers' salaries at 124,800,000 yen, accounting for approximately 50% of the Department of Education's budget. The next largest item is construction expenses with 180 buildings of four classrooms each costing 96,480,000 yen, so personnel and construction expenses combined accounted for 94% of the total budget for education. As for funding

sources, monetary aid from the U.S. military paid for almost all school construction and for about half of teachers' salaries.

(2) The G.R.I. period: Budgets for education from 1952 until reversion in 1972

With establishment of the G.R.I., the previous island group administrations in Okinawa were consolidated into one, as were their budgets. The table below shows the changes in the total G.R.I. budgets from 1953 to 1972, and in the budgets for the Department of Education.

Table 1-6 Changes in the G.R.I.'s total budgets (units in dollars)

fiscal year	A	B	C	D	E
	G.R.I.total budgets	USCAR aid	Jpanese government aid	G.R.I.governme nt fund	D/A
1953	12,118,772	3,125,000	0	8,973,272	74.2
54	14,383,205	3,250,000	0	11,133,205	77.4
55	15,051,195	2,500,000	0	12,557,195	83.3
56	16,998,098	3,391,666	0	13,606,432	80.8
57	20,571,386	2,091,666	0	18,479,720	89.8
58	23,568,389	1,005,278	0	22,563,111	95.7
59	22,136,617	1,900,000	0	20,236,617	91.4
60	28,504,233	4,500,000	0	24,004,233	84.2
61	27,633,537	4,575,000	0	23,058,537	83.4
62	31,369,418,	4,600,000	(55555)	26,769,418	85.3
63	41,786,648	7,460,000	2,035,857	32,290,791	77.3
64	51,980,723	8,335,900	4,050,000	39,594,823	76.1
65	57,207,763	7,060,000	4,028,557	46,119,206	80.2
66	65,887,200	8,460,000	6,538,423	50,888,777	77.2
67	88,277,500	14,265,000	13,419,919	60,592,581	73.7
68	119,751,600	16,668,000	23,714,571	79,369,029	66.3
69	145,629,520	12,223,501	31,974,675	101,431,344	69.6
70	170,785,000	20,350,000	47,221,802	103,213,198	60.4
71	200,780,511	13,235,000	68,363,000	119,182,511	59.4
72	263,633,584	8,850,000	116,380,782	138,402,802	52.5
remarks	From 1953 to 1957, the exchange rate was 120 B-yen=\$1.00. The same rate applies for colums B,C and D.		parenthesis indicate funds that did not pass through the G.R.I.budget, but were paid directly to the Ryukyu Scholarship Association for scholarships		

Table 1-7 Department of Education's proportion of total G.R.I. Budgets, and sources of its funds. (Units are in dollars, except for column H which are in thousands of yen.)

fiscal year	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	G.R.I. Total budgets	Dpt.. Of educations total budgets	U.S. aid	Japanese aid	G.R.I	E/B	B/A	Japanese Ministry of Education aid 1000 yen
1953	12,118,272	3,341,368	(490564)		2,850,804	85.3	27.6	2,160
54	14,383,205	3,614,736	620,833		2,993,903	82.8	25.1	5,874
55	15,051,195	4,487,168	1,305,098		3,182,070	70.7	29.8	7,722
56	16,998,098	5,107,982	1,401,867		3,706,115	72.5	30.1	10,259
57	20,571,386	5,399,824	250,000		5,149,824	95.3	26.2	12,804
58	23,568,389	7,122,854	115,000		7,007,854	98.3	30.2	16,174
59	22,136,617	6,739,105	79,116		6,659,939	98.8	30.4	18,326
60	28,504,233	8,683,621	565,000		8,118,621	93.4	30.5	30,544
61	27,633,537	9,484,890	550,000		8,934,890	94.2	34.3	39,320
62	31,369,418	10,404,405	1,763,750	(55,555)	8,640,655	83.0	33.2	58,717
63	41,786,648	13,910,186	1,975,000	287,777	11,647,409	83.7	33.3	77,882
64	51,980,723	16,640,998	2,605,000	298,631	13,737,367	82.5	32.0	142,302
65	57,207,763	18,704,058	2,360,000	289,514	16,054,544	85.8	32.7	183,478
66	65,887,200	22,537,997	2,465,000	1,031,569	19,041,428	84.5	34.2	468,609
67	88,277,500	28,052,386	7,916,000	7,578,662	12,557,724	44.7	31.8	2,870,035
68	119,751,600	34,837,891	9,845,000	9,718,656	15,074,235	43.2	29.1	4,076,019
69	145,629,520	41,774,782	3,816,511	12,889,575	25,058,696	59.9	28.7	4,981,226
70	170,785,000	48,332,169	8,425,000	16,611,710	23,295,459	48.2	28.3	6,367,918
71	200,780,511	54,360,175	0	19,214,523	35,145,652	64.6	27.1	8,173,618
72	263,633,584	71,043,331	0	27,023,275	44,020,056	61.9	26.9	10,457,061
remark	From 1993 to 1957, the exchange rate was 120 B-yen=\$1.00 The same rate applies for columns B and C		This column does not include aid to the University of the Ryukyus. Figures in parentheses did not pass the G.R. I Budget, were paid directly to the Ryukyu Scholarship Association for scholarships.	Budget for 1966 includes \$345,000 in U.S.-Japan aid for the University of the Ryukyus				Figures in this column do not include office expenses in the Ministry of Education

Source: Okinawa Prefecture Board of Education (1977) p. 343.

(Notes)

A: amount of revenues from summary tables of total G.R.I. Budget

B: total expenditures of Department of Education according to itemized records in G.R.I. budget statement

C,D: combined totals of amounts recorded in the "remarks" column of budget statement

H: aid funds dispersed for Okinawa according to Ministry of Education records

Four special features of G.R.I. budgets during this period are summarized below:

1. Initiation of an education tax⁵⁰.
2. Steady growth continuing for twenty years. A large increase from 12 million dollars in 1953 to 264 million dollars in 1972.
3. The large increase in Japanese government aid beginning in the 1960s. The especially sharp increase just before reversion.
4. The gradual reduction of aid from USCAR in the late 1950s, followed by an increase after that when it accounted for between ten and twenty percent of the G.R.I.'s total budget. The reversing proportions after 1968 in the amounts of aid from Japan and the United States.

(3) Education tax

The education tax was a unique feature of educational financing in post-conflict Okinawa. Based on the principle of a levy on users for education, USCAR Ordinance No.66 of "Ryukyu Education Law"⁵¹ promulgated in February of 1952, introduced an "education tax." This education tax system was intended by the Board of Education to create budgetary independence for education, and was a system widely adopted in the United States. The system was also recommended on the mainland when an education observation team from the United States visited Japan in 1950; and, although the idea was praised there, various problems with actually implementing it prevented adoption.

The education tax was imposed on all residents of each school district (city, town, village, etc.) to make up the difference between district budget requirements and the aid funds provided from the G.R.I. Department of Education. There was strong opposition from cities, towns, and villages, both because it increased tax burdens on local residents and because collection was difficult.

Collection rates between 1953 and 1958 started at 75.6% in 1953 and remained around 70% after that, which was not entirely satisfactory, but not conspicuously low in comparison with the collection rate for regular city, town, and village taxes.

After that, thanks presumably to the influence of a Department of Education information campaign for greater acceptance, 100% collection rates were achieved in seven districts by 1966.

⁵⁰ See Section 1-2-2.

⁵¹ See Section 1-2-3.

The collection rate for all education districts also increased annually, reaching 93% by the final year of 1966 and surpassing the rate for collections of regular taxes in cities, towns, and villages.



During the 1960s there was a “campaign to pay all our education taxes,” and payment rates increased. The education tax had been introduced as a progressive idea, like the local election of school boards, to make education budgets independent, but it failed to gain wide public acceptance and was abolished in 1965 in favor of a single local tax. The reasons for abolishment were that the idea of a tax for a specific purpose was insufficiently accepted; and, that continuing it had less meaning when it accounted for a relatively small portion of school district budgets. In 1958 the education budgets for each school district were supplied 83.67% by G.R.I. aid funds and 9.92% by education taxes.

Posters say, “We pay education taxes to raise our children well.” “Weeks to pay all education taxes” May 28 - August 10 “Weeks to pay all education taxes” “Let’s pay our education taxes.”

Table 1-8 Changes in collection rates of education tax

fiscal year Collection Rates by levels	1953	1954	1956	1958	1960	1962	1964	1965	1966
100	2	2			1	2	4	3	7
90 ~ 100	20	18	18	17	20	22	24	29	31
80 ~ 89	12	14							14
70 ~ 79	13	9							3
60 ~ 69	11	8							3
50 ~ 59	1	4							1
40 ~ 49	3	4	3	3	2	1			
30 ~ 39		2	4	1					
20 ~ 29	1	1	1		1				
10 ~ 19				1					
1 ~ 9	1		1						
0		2							
% average rates	75.6	71.5	68.4	78.8	81.7	83	87.7	90.4	93.6
number of cities, towns, and villages	64	64	64	63	63	60	59	59	59

Source: Okinawa Prefecture Board of Education (1977) p. 362

(Notes) from a written report of an education tax survey from Department of Education:

Collection rates are the proportion of taxes assessed for each year that are actually collected.

Average rates are the proportion of taxes assessed for all cities, towns, and villages that are actually collected. Decline in the number of cities, towns and villages results from increasing consolidations.

1-2-3 Formulating Education Laws

According to the Nimitz Proclamation, issued by the U.S. military which landed April 1, 1945 on Okinawa Main Island, the Southwestern Islands, including Okinawa, now came under U.S. military government. Nevertheless, Okinawan educators continued to hope for the maintenance of Japanese education. In the history of establishing education law, there were no disagreements between the U.S. military and local civilian government over democratization, but discord persisted over local residents' determination to move closer to education on the Japanese mainland and the U.S. military's attempts to suppress this.

(1) The Elementary School Order--first post-conflict education law

Issued in 1946 by the Department of Education, the “Elementary School Order” and the “Ordinance to Implement the Elementary School Order” can be called the first post-conflict education laws. The order described “schools where normal elementary education is conducted with a new spirit necessary for rebuilding post-conflict Okinawa,” and where “students will learn the knowledge of development of Okinawan culture, and the world, especially of conditions in the United States; and achievements of the Okinawan people are extolled,” thus affirming Okinawa’s special character while, at the same time, including concerns of the U.S. military occupation.

(2) Basic regulations for education--education ordinances patterned after basic education law

The Okinawa Island Group Government, established in November of 1950, lasted only one year and three months before the G.R.I. was inaugurated on April 1, 1952, but it oversaw the implementation of several important education regulations. First, the “Okinawa Island Group Basic Regulation for Education” was not something imposed by the U.S. military, but education law enacted by Okinawan civilians that was largely patterned after Basic Education Law (1947) already implemented on the mainland. In fact, it was almost exactly the same as Basic Education Law on the mainland, except that, instead of “Japan,” “the state,” and “the nation’s people,” it used the terms “island group,” “Okinawa,” and “Okinawans.”

Its preamble states, “We Okinawans must now assume the mission of creating a rebirth in our history after 1945. For this purpose, it is essential to build a democratic and enlightened society and to contribute to world peace and the welfare of humanity. For the realization of these ideals, we must rely fundamentally on the power of education.

“We pledge to educate people who cherish respect for the individual, and who seek truth and peace. Furthermore, we must overcome the limitations of our circumstances and thoroughly disseminate education to create a universally valid, yet richly distinct, culture.” Thus, on the one hand, the future direction for education is eloquently stated, while, on the other, the tortuous expression necessitated under occupation is reflected, in the words “limitations of our circumstances.”

Also during the period of Okinawa Island Group Government, the “Law for an Okinawa Island Group Board of Education” was implemented. Seven members were designated to form a central board of education, and, at the recommendation of the Director of the Department of Education, they were appointed by the governor with approval of the Island Group Assembly. This law also created district and central school boards and clearly defined the scope of their duties.

(3) Ordinance 66, Ryukyu Education Law--regulations determined by the U.S. military, codified all aspects of education

As inauguration of the G.R.I. approached, USCAR began formulating education laws as the basis for a system of educational administration, and in February of 1952 issued Ordinance 66, “Ryukyu Education Law.” Its concerns were (1) to promote democratization and local authority by district; (2) to establish an education tax that would make education budgets independent; and (3) to follow mainland education laws in content while reflecting conditions in Okinawa. Based largely on fundamental laws regulating education on the mainland, it contained a total of sixteen chapters and 169 provisions, including those covering “basic education law,” “school education ordinances,” “education administration” and introduction of the education tax⁵² Until this time, Okinawa Main Island and the separate islands of Amami, Miyako, and Yaeyama had each implemented different education ordinances, but this new law unified all of them.

Although consolidating everything into one law caused many problems, a unified education law for all of the Ryukyus was achieved for the first time. This law became the basis for education for six years until 1958 when education law reflecting the will of Okinawan people was enacted.

The Ryukyu Education Law is summarized below:

The articles relating to local administration of education established school districts for cities, towns, villages and other areas as independent legal entities. The organization of each school district included a local board of education and a superintendent of schools with a five-member board comprised of four members elected directly by local residents and one member who was a well-informed individual, such as a mayor.

In addition, the law was heralded as the basis for democratic education that would usher in a thoroughly new age through “social education,” “political education,” and “religious education.” For example, in requiring that each district school board include “at least one woman,” it stipulated the responsibility to provide a necessary means for strict adherence to the intent of the law that “at least one woman” be elected. Furthermore, the 1954 revised ordinance directed that, in cases when no woman was among the candidates or elected members, a woman board member was to be appointed temporarily, so a woman’s participation became mandatory.

(4) Enactment of the Four Civilian Laws on Education--”education as Japanese citizens”

Before the aforementioned Ryukyu Education Law became effective, USCAR declared it provisional until such time as a legislature was assembled and the laws governing Ryukyu were determined. Therefore, Okinawans expected that civil law would be determined by Okinawans.

Among laws enacted by civilians relating to education, the four basic laws establishing the independence of education were formulated according to the views of local residents. They were the basic education law, the school education law, the school board law, and the social education law. Their enactment meant abolishing the “Education Law” implemented by proclamation that was already in effect.

⁵² See Section 1-2-2.

The U.S., having asserted that the Ryukyu Education Law enacted by proclamation was “provisional,” declared that civilians would now enact education law. However, the U.S. was wary because people in the field of education were beginning to demand “reversion to the homeland” at this time, so USCAR twice rejected the bill submitted by the G.R.I. before the four civilian laws on education were enacted. With a preface containing the phrase “education as Japanese citizens,” these laws signaled an end to the long period of education by U.S. military proclamation, and the implementation, in name and reality, of education as “Japanese citizens.”

1-3 Phase III (1958-1972): Qualitative Improvement in Education

This section discusses the period between 1958, the year a basic education law was enacted by the will of the people and not imposed by the U.S. military, and 1972, the year of Okinawa’s reversion to the mainland.

During this period, aid for education from the Japanese government continued to increase, and the unification of content accelerated with education on the mainland. Research conclaves and other meetings coordinated plans for improving education quantitatively and qualitatively.

The founding one after another of such institutions of higher education as Okinawa University (1958), Okinawa Christian Junior College (1959), and Okinawa International Junior College (1959) greatly expanded opportunities in higher education for the post-conflict baby-boom generation.

1-3-1 Enhancing Teacher Training

(1) Teacher training program

With the aim of improving educational techniques, teachers in Okinawa urged the Department of Education to start a teacher training program in 1952. Many teachers strongly advocated revival of the prewar system of sending teachers to train on the mainland, and Okinawa’s leaders in the education field mobilized local public opinion and secured continuing cooperation from the Japanese Ministry of Education.

This teacher training program energized local education sites and enhanced teachers’ motivation to train. Returnees from the mainland eagerly offered study sessions and training seminars, contributing much to the improvement of education in their districts.

Beginning in 1960, training was offered to teachers in the vocational field, and the numbers sent to Japan increased. Furthermore, the program was expanded to include principals and education advisors, while another program was implemented for graduates of post-conflict teacher training schools to attend mainland universities where they studied educational theory. This program called

“teachers study abroad,” continued until reversion in 1972, and sent 1,431 people to the mainland for training between 1958 and 1972.

(2) Education Advisors Program

Along with programs sending Okinawan teachers to the mainland for training, another program was established in 1958 inviting distinguished teachers from the mainland to Okinawa. The Ministry of Education began operating what was called the Education Advisors Program in 1959. The letter of request sent to the Ministry in 1958 by the Director of the G.R.I. Department of Education cited the responsibility of the Japanese government and urged the program’s implementation, stating its aims as (1) adopting advanced teaching techniques from the mainland to raise the level of education in the Ryukyus; and (2) deepening mutual understanding through exchanges of teachers from the Ryukyus and Japan, and raising pupils’ consciousness of a Japanese identity.

For the program’s first year, one third of teachers’ living expenses were provided by the G.R.I. Department of Education and the rest by the Japanese government; but, starting in 1960, the Japanese government paid all these expenses. By 1971, 276 people had been invited.

1-3-2 Special Education

Special education in post-conflict Okinawa started late, compared to regular school education. It began after a six-year post-conflict gap with the opening in 1951 of the Okinawa School for the Sight and Speech Impaired. Other facilities opening in 1951 were a school for delinquent youth called the Okinawa Vocational School (later renamed the Okinawa Business Academy) and Airaku Academy, a children’s section of the Airaku Gardens sanitarium for patients of Hansen’s disease, later certified officially as Sumii Elementary and Middle School.”

All of these facilities combined protective care, special assistance, and education, but the Four Education Ordinances, enacted in 1958 by popular demand, required conformity with mainland education law that separated school education from social welfare, resulting in the elimination of the Business Academy from among the schools offering special education. That year special education was implemented at two elementary schools and two middle schools.

Public awareness about social issues began heightening around 1958, and special classes for mentally handicapped children increased at elementary schools, to 29 in 1964 and 85 in 1965. However, with the growing population of children from the post-conflict baby boom and no new school construction to relieve classroom shortages, worries mounted about educating children in special education classes who were graduating from elementary schools. This led to the opening in 1964 of the G.R.I. Ohira School for the Handicapped to continue the education of these children. It was the first school for mentally handicapped children in Okinawa. When it was built, there were

only sixty children in four middle school classes, but a high school division was added in 1968 and an elementary school division in 1979.

For the education of children who were ill, a system of traveling teachers was established in 1958 by Ryukyu education law (Ordinance 66, Ryukyu Education Law),⁵³ and two teachers were assigned at the Naha consolidated school district. They were sent to homes and hospitals where children unable to attend school were being treated.

(1) Education for the sight-impaired

Forced to close during the war, the Okinawa Prefectural School for the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind was reopened by the Okinawa Island Group Government in 1951 as the Okinawa School for the Sight and Speech Impaired. This was the result of a request in 1947 by the Okinawa Association for the Blind to the Military Government and the Civil Administration. The school first operated in two U.S. military Quonset huts, housing 32 children with a staff of four teachers and principal, a secretary, a nurse, and a cook and custodian.

Lacking a building, the school also started with no textbooks or equipment. For general furnishings, it used U.S. military surplus blackboards, desks, and chairs. For school supplies, it used textbooks mimeographed for regular elementary schools and hearing aids for groups and individuals. But the shortage of both school supplies and a building continued until the time of reversion.

The curriculum was divided into an elementary course⁵⁴ and an intensive course, six years for elementary and three years for intensive. The intensive course offered fewer class hours in regular subjects and more in such specialized vocational subjects as woodworking, farming, making clothes, art, and handicrafts, with almost all materials donated by the U.S. military. Later, the intensive course came under the jurisdiction of the G.R.I. Department of Social Services, and the elementary course under the G.R.I. Department of Education.

Subsequently, it was determined that separate schools should be established for the sight and hearing impaired, so in 1959 the “G.R.I. School for the Sight and Hearing Impaired” divided into the “G.R.I. School for the Sight Impaired” and the “G.R.I. School for the Hearing Impaired.”

The Okinawa School for the Sight Impaired opened in 1951 with ten students in an elementary school division. Approximately twenty years later, in 1975, it had both an elementary and middle school division with a combined total of 122 students. According to a G.R.I. survey in 1955 of elementary and middle schools in all the Ryukyu Islands, the number of “blind and sight-debilitated” students registered was 72 in elementary schools and 60 in middle schools. In 1957 the School for the Sight Impaired began a program of local visits and invitations to attend the school based on information from surveys of cities, towns, villages, and public schools and from lists of handicapped persons registered with the Welfare Section of the Department of Public Welfare. This program

⁵³ On this law, see Section 1-2-3 “Formulating Education Laws”.

⁵⁴ When the school opened, this course was established for thirteen students beyond school age.

resulted in a large increase of students at the school between 1965 and 1970. When the school opened shortly after the war, it was clear that most impairments were the result of inflictions. 20% had been caused by external wounds from explosions and shrapnel, and 40% by such contagious diseases as measles with high fevers and malnutrition. Congenital sight impairments were comparatively few. This reflected the disruption and lack of treatment facilities just after the war. However, the proportion of inflicted impairments gradually decreased and the ratio of congenital impairments increased. In 1980, for example, only 9% were the result of contagious diseases while, in contrast, 65.4% were congenital.

(2) Education for the hearing-impaired

As for educating the hearing impaired, particularly noteworthy in Okinawa was education for the children with hearing disabilities resulting from the epidemic of German measles (three-day measles) that spread all over Okinawa between 1964 and 1966.

It became evident in the late 1960s and early 1970s that pregnant women with German measles had given birth to children with such congenital impairments as cataracts, heart disease, and hearing disabilities. The G.R.I. brought medical specialists from the mainland to conduct examinations. The results showed that, among 374 children suspected of contracting German measles, 339 had been diagnosed with hearing disabilities. Never before had close to 400 children with hearing disabilities entered kindergarten and elementary school at the same time. With a total of about 1,000 students in all of Japan entering elementary school classes for the hearing impaired, 400 in Okinawa alone was a huge number.

Recognizing the urgent need for educating children with hearing disabilities, relevant agencies initiated responses. The following measures were implemented by the G.R.I. Department of Education.

1. For training teachers, the Department requested that the Japanese government send specialists, and nine advisors came to train personnel in Okinawa.
2. During 1970 and 1971 the Department sent 45 teachers to the mainland to train in specialized techniques.
3. After completing their training, traveling instructors gave hearing ability training to parents and children in local areas.
4. The Department prepared for the entrance into kindergarten of children with hearing impaired by German measles, and trained specialist teachers.
5. The Okinawa School for the Deaf sponsored informational meetings for parents and children on the early detection and education of children with hearing disabilities.

6. It opened a first-year kindergarten class, revising school rules to lower the required age to three years old, which made it possible to accept children whose hearing had been impaired by German measles.

<The Kitashiro School for the Deaf opens>

In April of 1969 school began for children with hearing impaired by German measles with the start of a kindergarten class. After that, children of school age entered public elementary schools, and were taught in “classes for the hearing impaired by German measles.” But, since hearing ability training consumed most of class time, students were unable to complete the required material in the regular school curriculum. Consequently, the prefectural Department of Education began organizing a six-year middle school program, and in 1978 founded the Kitashiro Prefectural School for the Deaf. With a program of instruction in only one subject for each grade level, the school opened with nineteen classes of 140 pupils from local areas of Okinawa Main Island.

There was debate about which courses to offer in the high school division of Kitashiro School for the Deaf, but parents advocated vigorously for language ability enhancement, and strongly requested establishment of a regular curriculum. Therefore, a regular curriculum was introduced, with vocational training offered only at the second-grade level. 75 students entered regular high schools instead of attending the high school division of Kitashiro School for the Deaf. Attracting attention throughout Japan, Kitashiro School for the Deaf completed its mission and closed in 1984.

Testimony 1-5 Lives of the “German measles children”

German measles children born in 1965 are now in their mid-thirties. . . . I spoke with three mothers of children who had graduated from classes for the hearing impaired. Their children had successfully established independent lives as members of society. Each was married with children. Even in Okinawa with a high rate of unemployment, they had regular jobs and were diligently raising their own children. All three had married class mates with hearing impaired by German measles, and worried there might be problems bringing up their children, but had been able to communicate smoothly with each of them. Their children had fully accepted that their parents were hearing-impaired, and the older children had provided excellent assistance when needed to compensate for their parents’ disability. Still, it was evident that, with both husband and wife hearing impaired, achieving all this as individuals, of course, but also as parents had been extremely difficult beyond anything ordinary people could imagine. Truly admirable are the only words to describe them.

Naha City Board of Education, ed., *Comprehensive history of Education in Naha City*, 2002

(3) Education for the learning disabled

The tentative establishment of special education classes began around mid-1950, but it wasn’t until 1958 that the first school, Naha Municipal Johoku Elementary, was certified to offer special classes for the learning disabled, with seven students in its first class. The teachers starting this

program, who had trained on the mainland, not only taught the students, but also worked to develop special education by presenting classes open to the public, research conclaves, and lectures. In 1961 the Department of Education sponsored a four-week specialists' training seminar with five teachers participating from schools that had applied to begin special education classes. The following year each of these teachers started special education classes at their respective schools.

After that, special education for the learning disabled advanced gradually, but public awareness was lacking, and in 1962 there were only 13 special classes in elementary schools. Then, with increased public awareness, classes increased to 85 by 1965 with 787 children.

However, with only three middle schools offering special education classes, the need was recognized for places where these children could continue their education. In response, the first school in Okinawa for the mentally handicapped, the G.R.I. School for the Mentally Retarded, opened in 1965. Later it changed its name to the School for the Handicapped. It started with a middle school division of 60 students in four classes, but expanded as higher grades were added, establishing a high school division in 1968 and an elementary school division in 1979.

Education for the handicapped advanced rapidly after a system of compulsory education was implemented in 1979. Until then, almost all children with severe learning disabilities were "exempt from school," and did not attend regular schools. Even the children in special education classes at that time had learning disabilities that were far less severe, compared with today.

A system of compulsory attendance at schools for the handicapped was enacted in 1973. A basic policy for its implementation was established in Okinawa Prefecture as part of the Plan for the Economic Development of Okinawa, and was carried out accordingly. As a result, a prefectural school for the handicapped was established at Nago City in northern Okinawa Main Island in 1975, with schools for the handicapped opening on the separate islands of Miyako and Yaeyama in 1977 and 1979.

1-3-3 Reversion to Japan and Education

(1) Improving the conditions of education

Okinawans' fervently hoped-for "Reversion to the homeland" was realized in May of 1972 with the end of the U.S. military's twenty-seven year rule and the return of administrative authority for Okinawa to Japan. All systems the G.R.I had operated in such areas as politics, management, and education now shifted to Okinawa Prefecture and become like systems on the Japanese mainland.

The policies in the first Plan for the Economic Development of Okinawa, set forth at the time of reversion, were to make various improvements in social capital that had lagged behind during U.S. military rule, to implement structural reforms that would move the economy away from dependence on the military bases, and to correct numerous inequalities with the mainland. This plan is now in its fourth phase of ten-year time periods with the continuing aim of improving conditions that would

make possible the independent development of Okinawa. Its planning policies are determined by the Prefectural government, and special consideration is given in the proportion of aid allocated for its projects.

Testimony 1-6 Starting school at Kitashiro Elementary for the first special class of learning disabled children in Okinawa: recollections of teacher

Ikeda Yoko

Of the seven children, three were from children's welfare facilities. Because they were orphans without parents, we started by teaching them daily manners. Based on our experience on the mainland, we did away with the standard class format, changing to a curriculum that concentrated on guiding them through experience how to function in everyday life. We took them for walks up and down a low hill behind the school, counting the trees on both sides of the road and the blades of grass we picked. We had them look up at airplanes flying through the blue sky and gaze out at boats floating on the blue sea to teach them words while we talked about natural phenomena, sometimes spending the whole day this way. Learning by experience became the basis of all instruction, and the children happily pursued their studies....

During individual research presentations in November of 1958 on "Conducting Special Education Classes," which discussed the content of special education instruction and scientific surveys, it was reported that teachers had to create all teaching materials and instructional tools themselves.

Ikeda Yoko, "The first special class of learning disabled children, in Naha Municipal Institute for Educational Research, Post-conflict Education: Starting from Zero, No. 2, 1999.

Regarding education, Okinawa embarked on this plan under the severe post-conflict conditions of extreme shortages in school facilities and teachers; and, while efforts have continued, improvements are still insufficient in many aspects of education, as indicated by the urgent need for a policy to upgrade facilities. For compulsory education, wholesale improvements are needed to equalize school sizes and facilities by dividing, consolidating, or constructing additions; to improve special educations and schooling in remote areas; to equalize the size of high schools; and to construct new high schools. Following the development plan, improvements have been rapid in the "hard" facets of education for kindergarten, compulsory schooling, high schools, and special schools, with buildings on a par with the nation as a whole ten years after reversion. The quality of elementary school buildings has even surpassed the standard nationwide. Gymnasiums and swimming pools, maintained at a very low level before reversion, have also reached the national standard (See Table 1-9).

Table 1-9 Year by year status of improvements in school facilities (comparing Okinawa Prefecture with the nation as a whole)

																								units in percentage
facilities	type of school	May 1972		May 1973		May 1974		May 1975		May 1976		May 1977		May 1978		May 1979		May 1980		May 1981		May 1982		
		nation wide	Okinawa	nation wide	Okinawa	nation wide	Okinawa	nation wide	Okinawa	nation wide	Okinawa	nation wide	Okinawa	nation wide	Okinawa	nation wide	Okinawa	nation wide	Okinawa	nation wide	Okinawa	nation wide	Okinawa	
ratio with school buildings fully meeting standards	kindergartens	48.6	83.9	46.2	82.8	53.1	84.0	60.1	86.0	65.7	86.0	69.6	86.0	73.9	87.3	80.1	88.6	83.5	90.3	88.9	92.0	91.4	92.3	
	elementary school	74.8	95.0	76.1	95.7	67.6	89.0	70.3	88.0	75.1	89.0	81.3	90.0	78.0	82.6	78.5	83.7	82.8	85.5	87.1	87.2	89.5	88.6	
	junior high school	72.1	96.6	75.0	95.5	66.1	90.0	70.3	91.0	74.5	91.0	79.2	91.0	74.7	95.0	79.7	98.1	83.0	89.0	85.6	89.6	89.0	89.7	
	senior high school	51.1	78.0	51.4	80.2	60.4	82.0	65.4	84.0	71.8	95.0	63.0	69.0	67.9	71.3	69.1	72.2	72.6	73.6	73.1	72.6	73.6	86.7	
	special education	65.3	65.0	51.3	67.3	55.2	67.0	59.6	70.0	59.0	72.0	47.0	72.0	67.2	73.8	61.8	63.2	59.1	66.2	61.8	66.4	68.4	69.2	
ratio with gymnasiums	elementary schools	14.5	76.0	20.6	77.0	26.3	79.0	42.3	50.0	57.0	81.0	66.5	83.0	75.3	84.4	79.2	86.6	85.8	88.3	86.9	89.9	89.5	90.8	
	junior high schools	26.5	81.0	33.1	85.8	66.6	87.0	55.4	87.0	65.1	88.0	75.3	89.0	81.8	89.4	85.0	91.0	85.5	91.6	85.1	92.8	88.5	93.2	
	senior high schools	30.0	-	42.5	-	55.0	83.0	68.4	84.0	85.3	87.0	88.6	88.0	95.6	89.0	95.7	92.4	100.0	92.0	96.0	94.7	98.0	96.0	
	special education	33.3	-	33.3	-	33.3	-	44.4	-	40.0	64.0	36.3	64.0	42.9	65.0	52.9	58.7	71.4	66.0	58.8	68.8	58.8	73.0	
ratio with swimming pool	elementary schools	7.9	41.3	8.6	48.2	8.8	52.4	9.1	54.7	8.8	57.5	11.3	59.8	12.1	61.9	15.6	68.7	18.7	66.9	23.4	69.3	28.3	70.8	
	junior high schools	6.6	38.9	6.6	42.7	7.4	46.5	7.4	48.4	8.1	50.0	9.2	52.3	9.6	54.3	10.9	56.9	11.7	58.4	13.5	61.0	16.2	61.4	
	senior high schools	25.0	39.7	5.6	41.4	7.5	45.2	9.7	46.9	11.6	47.8	13.6	48.1	17.8	49.1	19.1	51.1	25.5	51.8	38.0	53.6	47.1	55.4	
	special education	11.1	-	11.1	-	11.1	-	22.2	-	27.3	-	35.7	-	35.7	-	35.3	-	56.0	-	47.1	-	52.9	-	

Source: Okinawa Prefecture Board of Education (1984)

(2) Policies to improve school achievement

By 2003, the last year of the Third Economic Development Plan for Okinawa, the level of school facilities had very nearly reached the national standard, achieving the plan's goal. Currently, the most pressing issues of education in Okinawa are such "soft" problems as the need to improve school achievement and a high school dropout rate above the national average. In 1988 a three-stage plan of three-year intervals each was put in place to raise school achievement to the national average on achievement tests. With completion of this three-stage plan, a "school achievement improvement period" of five years was implemented from 1997 to 2001. At present, efforts continue during a five-year period of new policies to improve school achievement.

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