

# School Unification Education for the Peace on Korea Unification with peace! Peace with Unification!

Do-young Kim (Cheomdan High School Teacher, S. Korea)

## Abstract

After the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics, Korean Peninsula got in the mood for peace, prosperity, and unification with the South–North Panmunjom Declaration and the Pyongyang Joint Declaration after a long time. The President Moon spoke in front of the people in Pyongyang for the first in history and won thunderous applause. In line with this atmosphere, South Korean educators are actively responding to it and making constant efforts for inter–Korean education exchanges, such as field trips to North Korea. In this article, I'd like to examine the unification education from the extra–curricular perspective(e.g. students' clubs and creative experience activities), not from the curricular perspective, such as ethics, and social studies.

### Key words :

the Pyongyang Joint Declaration, the unification education from the extra–curricular perspective

After the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics, Korean Peninsula got in the mood for peace, prosperity, and unification with the South–North Panmunjom Declaration and the Pyongyang Joint Declaration after a long time. The President Moon spoke in front of the people in Pyongyang for the first in history and won thunderous applause. In line with this atmosphere, South Korean educators are actively responding to it and making constant efforts for inter–Korean education exchanges, such as field trips to North Korea. In this article, I'd like to examine the unification education from the extra-curricular perspective (e.g. students' clubs and creative experience activities), not from the curricular perspective, such as ethics, and social studies.

The followings are the characteristics of the extra-curricular unification education. First, it is carried out continuously on a monthly basis, focusing on topics such as democracy, human rights, ecology, peace and unification. With the introduction of the Innovation Schools<sup>1)</sup> The followings are the characteristics of the extra-curricular unification education. First, it is carried out continuously on a monthly basis, focusing on topics such as democracy, human rights, ecology, peace and unification. With the introduction of the Innovation Schools<sup>2)</sup>, schools are trying to reform the curriculum at the level of grades, subjects or schools, and integrate the related topics by student-led methods of teaching. For example, the curriculum reconstruction and student-led school activities are planned under the theme of "Life" in April, when there were Jeju April 3 Tragedy and Ferry Sewol, the theme of "Democracy and Human rights" in May, when there was the May 18 Democratic Movement, and the theme of "Peace and Unification" in June, when the June 15 South–North Joint Declaration was held. Second, it is highly influenced by the regime and the relationship between South and North Korea. Sometimes, teachers' enthusiasm for unification education cools down or students' negative

perception and indifference toward North Korea, leading to a contraction in overall school unification education. Therefore, the recent Panmunjom Declaration and the Pyongyang Joint Declaration are a very positive sign in terms of promoting school unification education. Third, school unification education is mainly conducted by voluntary teachers' meetings. The Unification Committee within the Korean Teachers and Education Workers' Union, which was formed after the June 15 South–North Joint Declaration in 2000 makes efforts to produce, distribute materials related to the summit conference. In addition, voluntary efforts stand out by the unification education meetings, supported by the Ministry of Education and the Office of Education, and by teachers running democracy, human rights, peace, and unification student clubs. Fourth, emphasis is on peace as the method and purpose of unification. In other words, unification education as a means of realizing peace on the Korean Peninsula based on mutual understanding and respect, reconciliation and cooperation rather than hostility and hatred, and confrontation. This is in line with the students' recognition of unification, backed by the 2018 survey on unification education<sup>3)</sup>. According to the results, the students answered that both the first image that comes to mind when it comes to "unification" and the reason for unification was "resolving the anxiety of war threats through peace."

Based on the above characteristics of school unification education, the efforts for extra-curricular education in Gwangju in the first half of 2019 are as follows.



▲광주교육과 천교호 광주지부는 26일 광주시교육청 기자 브리핑실에서 평화번영통일의 연속적 발전을 담은 6·15광주교육본부 출범 기자회견을 가졌다(사진=우현미 기자)

1) a public education school that is operated experimentally by breaking away from the one-way knowledge-providing curriculum of existing teachers in order to develop students' autonomous and self-directed learning skills. (Wickiacea)

2) The free semester system for innovative schools and middle schools is a system that provides students-participating classes and operates curriculums based on various hands-on activities that can develop students' abilities and aptitudes, moving away from the focus of knowledge and competition during middle school courses, one or two semesters (the website of the Ministry of Education, introduction of the free semester system)

3) 2018 survey on unification education was conducted from October 22 to December 10, 2018 to identify students and teachers' perceptions of North Korea and accurately diagnose the status of unification education in schools, and was conducted on 82,947 students, 4,166 teachers, and a total of 87,113 students out of 597 schools nationwide," said the Unification Education Center of the Ministry. 2019. 2. 12 Press Release)

**광주 교총-전교조 광주지부 '평화통일교육' 손잡아**  
 광주 대자초·무진중서...4·27 판문점 선언 1주년 맞아 공동 공개수업



**"수영선수권대회 북한 참가해야"**

6·15 남북공동선언 19주년  
 교총전교조 손잡고 평화선언

입력시간 : 2019. 06. 14. 00:00

서로 다른 이념과 성향을 가진 광주 양 교육단체가 평화통일 공동수업 성과와 공동 평화선언으로 두 손을 맞잡았다. 광주교총과 전교조 광주지부가 평화통일 공동수업을 연 후 6·15 남북공동선언 19주년을 맞아 소속 교원들이 참가한 가운데 공동 평화선언을 발표. 귀추가 주목된다.



First of all, the Gwangju Korean Federation of Teachers Association(KFTA) and the Gwangju Korean Teachers and Education Workers' Union(KTEWU) made 'Gwangju 6·15 Education Headquarter' together to evoke local attention and create an atmosphere for school unification education and held a press conference on March 26, 2019. In this regard, the local media and the Gwangju Metropolitan Office of Education expressed great interest("Opposing Two Educational Groups, KFTA and KTEWU Cooperate" 「2019.03.26 | No Cut News」). The headquarter has carried out the following activities to mark the first anniversary of the April Panmunjom Declaration.

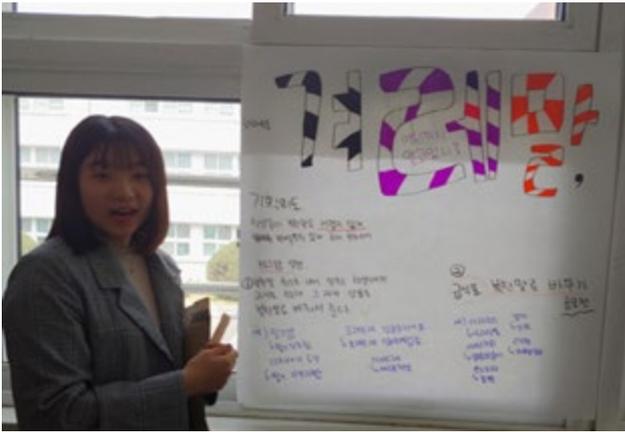
Plans for the unification education for the anniversary of the Panmunjom Declaration

- Period: April 22 (Mon) to 4.30 (Thursday) 2019
- Post a banner in front of the school
- Let's achieve peace, prosperity and unification with the Panmunjom Declaration!
- Let's open a new era of peace, prosperity and unification with the power of Gwangju teachers!
- The 1st Anniversary Textbook of the Panmunjom Declaration
- Reading materials, 30 Korean peninsula bag rings, and 1 Korean peninsula flag (120cm\*90cm)
- Educational material development and open classes : April 25 (Thursday)
- Elementary school: 10:50 Daeja Elementary School
- Secondary school: Mujin Middle School 13:30

In June, more around 300 teachers and students joined the Gwangju Teachers' Peace Declaration and the Peace Handling Event in the region at the World Swimming Championships to mark the 19th anniversary of the June 15 South and North Korea Joint Declaration.

학생주도 학교통일교육 계기교육 자료 개발 학생회 연수





Next, "the student council training for student-led unification education material development" was held to support 80 students in 30 elementary, middle and high schools students' councils in Gwangju. Formerly, the "student-led school unification education" used to be planned by the teachers and then operated and participated by the students. This one, however, students could take the lead from the planning stage. The "policy market" was fun to make the school's unification education programs(policies), explains their purpose, method, and effects, and sells them to each other. Later, the students proposed and implemented their own programs at the schools to get a prize to encourage their participation.



Finally, teachers who are in charge of the seven schools' school unification clubs have been running a joint education course and sharing their experience once a month. Meanwhile, in June, they visited historical sites of unification literature with students. 80 elementary, middle, and high school teachers and students from seven schools participated. They visited the places that was the background of the novel "The Taebaek Mountains," and shared the travel documents.

It is a good season for South and North Koreans even though they have suffered from long division and war threats. Korean educators also pledged to make efforts to realize the peace and unification. To this end, two opposing teachers' groups started to cooperate. At the same time, our students, as the future generation, have been striving to realize a student-led school unification education. Without peace, no democracy and no human rights. Likewise, without reunification, no permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula. Unification with peace! Peace with Unification! School unification education should follow this direction.

Receiving Date : January 15, 2020

Reviewing Date : January 22, 2020

Reporting Date of Article Appearance: January 29, 2020