

서교연 2020 - 36

2020 위탁연구 보고서

# 서울형혁신학교 성과분석 및 운영개선을 위한 국제협력연구

- 2차년 보고서 (국외팀 영문 보고서) -

연구책임자: 이 윤 미

서울특별시교육청교육연구정보원

서울교육정책연구소

교육정책연구소



# 서울형혁신학교 성과분석 및 운영개선을 위한 국제협력연구

- 2차년 보고서 (국외팀 영문 보고서) -

연구책임자 이윤미(홍익대)

공동연구원 성열관(경희대)

이미미(홍익대)

장신미(구로고)

Dennis Shirley

Deoksoon Kim

Stanton Wortham

(Boston College)

연구 협력 서덕희(조선대)

연구 조원 윤지혜(홍익대)

서울특별시교육청교육연구정보원

서울교육정책연구소



교육정책연구소

이 연구는 서울특별시교육청교육연구정보원 연구지원비로 수행되었으나, 본 연구에서 제시된 정책대안이나 의견 등은 서울특별시교육청교육연구정보원 공식 의견이 아니라 본 연구팀의 견해를 밝혀둡니다.

## **Hyukshin Schools in Seoul, South Korea: A Final Report**

Boston College Research Team

Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, USA

February 24, 2021

Dennis Shirley, Deoksoon Kim, and Stanton Wortham

with Clara Shim, Kiah Coflin, Yoonmi Kang, Youjin Kim, Yan Li, Yue Liu, Jingyi Xu, and Ki

Young Song

### Acknowledgements:

We would like to acknowledge former members of our research team. They worked diligently from the fall of 2019 through the summer 2020. We appreciate their dedication to the project. The students are Eunhye Cho, Jieun Lee, Mengru Pu, Sooji Yang, Adam Agostinelli, Hangil Kim, and Taesung Kim. We also appreciate two new students who have joined the team in Spring 2021. They are Shen Xin and Yanzhi Wang.

## Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Overview of the Final Report	5
Introduction to the Case Studies	11
Case Studies of 13 Hyukshin Schools	12
Woolgook Middle School	13
Bongjoong High School	40
Heesung Middle School	67
Namseoul Middle School	90
Ollim Middle School	119
Hyunsa Middle School	143
Dosan High School	177
Samoon High School	204
Hansabong Middle School	231
Waehun High School	256
Moonggok Middle School	300
Yugok Middle School	317
Ryuah Middle School	337
Introduction to the Cross-Case Analyses	376
Whole Person Education: Administrators' Perspectives	378
Educational Innovation: Administrators' Perspectives	410
Professional Learning Communités and Professional Learning Networks: Teachers' Perspectives	444
Whole Person Education: Teachers' Perspectives	496
Educational Innovation: Teachers' Perspectives	531
Discussion	584
Recommendations	591
References	596

## **Introduction**

The Hyukshin School movement in South Korea is a model of educational change that aspires to provide an alternative model of schooling for the country (SMOE, 2016). It is beginning to receive international attention for its breadth of vision, theory of change, and democratic potential (Chung, 2011; Jang, 2019; Sung, Lee, & Choi, 2016). To gain clarity about the nature and scope of this approach to change, and its ramifications for other schools in Seoul, as well as its lessons for educators in other jurisdictions, a research team from Boston College (BC) in the United States, in subcontract with a research team from Hongik University in Seoul, received grant funding from the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education (SMOE) in 2019.

The BC team's task was threefold:

1. To provide new findings on the change architecture of the Hyukshin school network;
2. To document the diverse ways in which innovation is being implemented and refined in the schools participating in the Hyukshin schools in Seoul; and
3. To provide recommendations on next steps in the improvement and sustainability of the Hyukshin schools.

In October 2019 the BC team visited Seoul for two weeks and conducted interviews and classroom observations in 16 Hyukshin middle and high schools. The team presented its initial findings to colleagues from the SMOE at a forum in Seoul on October 21, 2019. The team then submitted a first report to the SMOE in January, 2020. This was followed by a second report sent to the SMOE in November, 2020. An online webinar and discussion convened on November 17, 2021. The various forums, reports, and webinars provided valuable feedback to the BC team. We have used these to guide our data analysis and to pursue new lines of inquiry and interpretation.

We are pleased to provide our final report. It provides:

1. An introduction;
2. A description of our research methodology;
3. Individual profiles of 13 of the 16 Hyukshin schools we have studied;
4. Five cross-case analyses of findings from all 16 schools with regard to whole person education; Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and Professional Learning Networks (PLNs); and educational innovation;
5. A discussion section;
6. Recommendations;
7. A conclusion; and
8. References

We would like to express at this point our gratitude to all of the administrators, teachers, students, and parents affiliated with the 16 Hyukshin schools that we visited, who shared their perspectives, and who opened their classrooms to us for this study. Your hospitality during our visit and honesty in your responses to our questions was essential, so that the research team could gain insight into just how this change strategy is being enacted. We also would like to thank the support staff at the SMOE and our colleagues at Hongik University for their continual engagement and steadfast encouragement of our research.

## **Overview of the Final Report**

This Final Report has been written to provide readers with in-depth descriptions of 13 of the 16 Hyukshin schools studied by the BC research team, along with five cross-case analyses. The case studies enable readers to see both what is specific and general about individual schools in the midst of change. The cross-case analyses provide insight into commonalities and variations experienced by teachers, students, parents, and school leaders across the HSSM.

We are aware that the case studies provide a level of detail about the Hyukshin schools that may be a bit overwhelming. Nonetheless, we hope that readers will read the case studies carefully, because they reveal significant variations across schools. While virtually all of the schools in our sample shared common concerns around democratic innovation, the improvement of teaching and learning, and the promotion of student well-being, for example, they each approached these topics in different ways, with different outcomes. Understanding the range of options available to change agents in the schools, as well as structural and cultural impediments to change, is crucial to secure the sustainability of the Hyukshin school movement.

The cross-case analyses are valuable insofar as they step back from each individual case to identify common patterns distributed across the Hyukshin school movement in Seoul. Every school in our sample, for example, contended with some parents who worried that Hyukshin schools did not prepare students adequately for the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT). Every school likewise had to engage with pedagogical issues as educators wanted to innovate but did not always know practical ways of doing so. Finally, every school had to assess continually whether the promotion of student voice was accompanied by growth of students' sense of responsibility.

Together with our colleagues from Hongik University, we selected 16 schools in Seoul that reflect the diversity of the students served (with regard to socio-economic status). We have aimed to choose schools that are representative of the *Hyukshin* school movement in the city as a whole. Through interviews, observations, and studies of secondary source material we have gathered information on the origins of the school innovation movement and especially its spread amongst diverse schools in the Seoul educational system.

In the interviews, we asked participants to describe their own understandings of the *Hyukshin* school innovation movement. Do they consider the movement to be genuinely democratic? What do they mean when they say that it is student-centered? How do they anticipate that the changes that they are creating in schools will contribute to student voice and to student well-being?

We asked participants to be specific. How are they working to design creative, responsible, participative, and supportive forms of education? What kinds of results are they seeing from their innovation? Do they believe that they have been successful at rallying their entire schools and communities to support the *Hyukshin* movement in Seoul?

We also teased out diverse pressure points in educational change. How do participants think that schools should respond if there is what Michael Fullan (2001, p. 92) calls an “implementation dip,” caused by educators’ uncertainties in trying out new ways of teaching and new curricula? How do they reassure parents that innovations will not damage students’ abilities to succeed in a competitive educational marketplace and society? How do school leaders and teachers cope with colleagues who do not embrace the HSSM and persist with traditional forms of instruction?

Following initial recommendations from our colleagues at Hongik University, the BC team collected preliminary data on Hyukshin schools prior to our visit to Seoul in October 2019. Based on our findings and extensive discussions with our colleagues in Seoul, we selected 16 schools. The criteria for selection included:

- 1) the school's availability during the two weeks in October, 2019 when we were planning to visit and
- 2) the duration of the Hyukshin implementation.

We avoided schools with less than two years' implementation, since these did not seem likely to have had the time to adjust to the ambitious agenda of the Hyukshin school movement. All of the 16 schools in Table 1 satisfied the requirements.

To allow for triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of data, we collected several kinds of data: 1) semi-structured interviews, 2) observations, and 3) artifacts.

- 1) Semi-structured interviews: We interviewed administrators, teachers, students, and parents. Each interview took between 45 minutes and one hour. Questions were constructed to elicit information on the design of innovations, as well as to obtain evidence of educators' perceptions about the implementation and impact of the *Hyukshin* approach. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling, assisted by *Hyukshin* school leaders from Seoul. No conflict of interest, coercion, or undue influence was involved.
- 2) Observation: Members of our research team observed each school for an entire day. We spent about one hour in various classrooms, without interrupting instruction. We also walked through the buildings and observed bulletin boards, libraries, and labs.

After our site visits, we solicited internal memoranda and staff development materials, when we judged that these would be helpful for extending the research.

- 3) Artifacts: We collected artifacts such as curriculum booklets, PowerPoint presentations of the schools' strategic plans, memoranda pertaining to *Hyukshin* innovation projects, as well as guidelines for things like documentation of student learning, student worksheets, website information, and other school documents.

The research team followed informed consent procedures in compliance with the Boston College Institutional Review Board's (IRB) standards for research ethics. Before each interview, participants were given copies of officially approved Informed Consent Forms, translated into Korean. All interviewees indicated their consent to be interviewed by signing the forms.

After completing the interviews, data were transcribed and translated into English. For this final report, we studied and analyzed data from administrators, teachers, students, and parents from the 16 schools. We have provided school profiles of 13 schools here. We used a constant comparative method to identify salient themes within each of the schools – a process which includes actively searching for disconfirming data as interpretations of themes begin to emerge during the analysis.

Once the interview data were translated, team members coded them using a program called "ATLAS ti." The team applied pre-existing codes we had identified, such as academic achievement, changes, challenges, democratic education, and meaning and purpose. We also used open coding, with new categories for the Korean Teachers' Union, assessment, technology, and societal structure. This allowed us to identify newly emerging themes in the data. We found patterns amongst codes. These helped us to understand important dimensions of leaders' roles, teachers' autonomy, and students' voices and civic engagement.

Data analysis involved three stages of coding (Kim, 2018). During “open coding,” we coded key words or concepts to capture what each participant said based on knowledge from the interviews. In analyzing the data at this first stage, we drew in part on themes from previous studies (Hargraves & Shirley, 2009, 2012, 2018). These describe how educational changes occur in various regions globally. We also borrowed from this work in doing the open coding. In addition, we used categories from the literature, like sustainability, cohesion, and disruption, in order to identify newly emergent key words in the data.

During what is called “axial coding,” the second stage, our BC research team sewed together saturated subcategories to form new thematic categories. Axial coding involves relating codes to each other, or “group coding,” as it is described in Atlas.ti. We reviewed emerging concepts like challenges, democratic education, and meaning and purpose and clustered them with similar concepts. We subsequently grouped these patterns into 16 group codes when working with data from administrators’ interviews and 19 group codes from the teachers’ interviews.

At the third stage of “cross-case analysis,” we compared themes across the 16 schools to identify similarities and differences. For example, in each of the schools, enthusiasm about the child-centered and humanistic dimensions of Hyukshin philosophy existed in a complex relationship of tension and sometimes contradiction with regard to near-universal concerns our study participants expressed about the pressures about college entrance and the career prospects of students. To help us to better understand these kinds of comments, we analyzed other sources of qualitative data, including observation notes and reflective journals, using the same coding procedure.

Upon completion of these three stages of coding, we spent many months writing up the school profiles and conducting cross-case analyses. Individual case studies allowed us to gain insight into the transformational processes undertaken in each school, in depth. The cross-case analyses helped us to understand patterns and variations across the 16 schools in our sample. Taken together, the school profiles and cross-case analyses offer a rich panorama of change in the Hyukshin schools of Seoul at a given point of time. These allow us to make inferences about change processes in Korea and elsewhere, which we address in the Discussion section of this Final Report.

## **Introduction to the Case Studies**

As indicated in our original grant proposal, the BC team has written case studies of the Hyukshin schools that we visited in October 2019. We interviewed administrators, teachers, students, and parents in each of the schools, so that we could gain insight into the experiences and interpretations of the four core constituencies that comprise each school community. These interviews enabled us to ascertain what was unique in each school's emphases, as well as to gauge just what kinds of challenges and attainments each school was experiencing.

The value of in-depth case study reports is that they enable scholars to identify just what features give a school its special, signature practices. By considering each school as a case, with its own peculiar ecosystem, it is possible to convey the highly contingent nature of educational change, as educators endeavor to negotiate with and to capitalize upon the assets of the immediate local environment and its demographics. The schools in our sample joined the Hyukshin school movement at school at different times, and the ways in which teachers rotated in and out of the schools presented challenges and opportunities for each of them. With case studies of each of the schools, surprising idiosyncratic characteristics can be brought to light that could be lost when seeking to illuminate nomothetic patterns across schools.

### **Case Studies of 13 Hyukshin Schools**

In 2019, we gathered data at 16 Hyukshin schools in Seoul. Before doing data analysis, all the interviews had to be transcribed in Korean and then translated into English. (For three of the schools, this process took much longer than anticipated. We have draft case studies for these three schools, but there was not time to produce final versions of these to meet the deadline for this report.)

1. Woolgook Middle School
2. Bongjoong High School
3. Heesung Middle School
4. Namseoul Middle School
5. Ollim Middle School
6. Hyunsa Middle School
7. Dosan High School
8. Samoon High School
9. Hansabong Middle School
10. Waehun High School
11. Moonggok Middle School
12. Yugok Middle School
13. Ryuah Middle School

## Woolgook Middle School

### Introduction

*About the School.* Woolgook Middle School has 26 classes, 50 teachers, and 601 students in total. It is a co-ed public school. The school became a Hyukshin school for the first time in 2011 and then was re-assigned as a Hyukshin school every four years after that. It is located in the Geumcheon District of Seoul, Korea. This community has a large population of Korean-Chinese immigrant families and low socio-economic status.

*Student Population.* Many of Woolgook Middle School's students are working to attain proficiency in academic written and spoken Korean. Immigration and the challenges of acquiring a new language place heavy strains upon students and their families. According to Principal Ohyoung Kim, there are a lot of students at Woolgook Middle School with a fourth-grade academic level. As immigrants from China, many do not speak Korean nor understand it. These immigrant students generally come from low-income families and struggle academically. Principal Kim, speaking to the overall tendency for students to have low motivation to participate in class, mentioned several possible factors, including a lack of language proficiency and complex family backgrounds. Ms. Kim stated “한국말인지 중국말인지 의미가 안 통하는 그런 애들이 잡니다” “that students who cannot understand whether course content is in Korean or in Mandarin fall asleep.” (Woolgook M, Administrator Kim, Interview). In other words, immigrant students may have a harder time being motivated to learn in class due to the language barrier. Ms. Kim said that although it is hard to pinpoint specific reasons for lack of motivation in non-immigrant students, teachers know that some of the students have complicated family backgrounds.

***School Emphases.*** The staff at Woolgook Middle School say their school has three areas of emphasis:

1. Open classrooms;
2. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs); and
3. Democratic decision-making.

The emphasis of Woolgook Middle School's Hyukshin model is upon what is called the "open classroom" (공개 수업) approach of peer observation and professional feedback (Shin & Son, 2019). In an open classroom, teachers open up their classroom to other teachers, administrators, and parents for observation and commentary. Teachers, administrators, and parents at Woolgook Middle School concur that their school has worked very hard to develop a finely chiseled approach to classroom innovation through open classrooms.

In preparation for open classrooms, teachers plan a lesson collaboratively with their peers approximately three weeks before it is actually taught. Then, one teacher, designated as an open class teacher (공개 수업 교사), gives a trial run of the class in front of her or his peers. Subsequently, observers provide written and oral feedback. Based on the feedback, the open class teacher then revises the lesson plans.

A formal open class (or open classroom, with both English terms referring to 공개수업) is then taught where parents, other Woolgook Middle School teachers, and even teachers from other schools are invited to observe the instruction. After the open class, the teachers convene and give one more round of feedback to the open class teachers for further improving their lesson plan. Overall, the benefit for teachers in this model is that traditional norms of workplace isolation are replaced with a culture of collegiality that encourages innovation.

Woolgook Middle School's open classroom practice is similar to other schools' open class practices in the sense that it is closely affiliated with the school's PLCs. However, Woolgook's open classroom practices are unique due to their being led by the Head of the Hyukshin Department (HHD) 혁신부장) and a Master Teacher (MT) 수석교사). These two people work to encourage other teachers to join PLCs and support them in preparing for open classes. The HHD and MT provide a higher level of consistency and expertise than is possible when PLCs are organized and led by teachers who already have full instructional loads to manage.

There are two major types of PLCs at Woolgook Middle School. These are PLCs grouped as a whole school, and PLCs grouped by school grade levels (grades 7, 8, & 9). The former PLC consists of all Woolgook Middle School teachers. They meet and discuss open-classroom practices. The grade-level PLCs consist of teachers who are responsible for the same grade. They discuss their teaching practices and create a joint class with a transversal curriculum, which is called an "integrated class."

The facilitators of the PLCs are the HHD and MT. The HHD leads the organization and implementation of all of the curriculum planning and affiliated activities at this Hyukshin school. The MT is a teacher who consults with teachers to develop and refine their instruction. This position, designated by the SMOE, draws on the talents of teachers who have at least 15 years of teaching experience and are known to have a good quality of instruction. Not every school in Seoul has an MT as there are small numbers of the teachers certified as MTs. The HHD and MT constantly give feedback to teachers who participate in the PLCs on ways to improve their instruction.

Woolgook Middle School educators, like all of those in the broader Hyukshin movement in Seoul, believe that democratic practices are important in implementing the open classroom approach, managing their PLCs, and planning school events. School stakeholders say that they highly value teacher, parent, and student voices. The role of the leadership team at the school is to best reflect the full range of stakeholder voices democratically, they say. The leadership team fully respects and recognizes the value of their teachers' open-classroom approach, and there are ample meetings and opportunities for teachers' voices to be heard.

One example of an opportunity for teachers to share their feedback is at the beginning of the year teacher retreat. In this setting, the teachers themselves lead all of the discussions in setting goals and then planning out the academic year. Rather than using a top-down approach, where administrators take the lead, the leadership team at Woolgook wants to be supportive of teachers.

The decision-making process that the school followed regarding school uniform policy is another prime example of the democratic practices that the school favors as part of its affiliation with the Hyukshin School Movement (HSSM). The school has used a teacher, parent, and student survey, and then tapped into student clubs and the student council to gather feedback from students about their uniforms and other issues that have surfaced through many meetings.

The school's Parent Teacher Association (PTA) representatives were also included in all of its schoolwide meetings. Through the incorporation of all such stakeholders' views, democratic protocols were followed and a collective decision was reached on which uniforms should be worn, and for which occasions. In this way the school is enacting "the basic value and principles of free democracy and the democratic way of life called for in official Korean curricular documents (Ministry of Education, 1995, 2015).

## **Principal Kim**

The school's principal, Ms. Kim, has been at Woolgook Middle School since 2018. She worked as a vice principal for Olliim Middle School, another Hyukshin middle school, before transferring to Woolgook Middle School. When she was first appointed as vice principal for a Hyukshin school, she said it was a culture shock. The role of a Hyukshin school principal and vice principal was different from what she expected based on the role of principals in traditional schools. As an example of her worries, she stated, “아는 게 없고 부정적인 소문 때문에 걱정이 많았죠” “I didn't know anything and was worried about negative rumors regarding Hyukshin schools.” (Woolgook M, Administrator Kim, Interview).

However, Ms. Kim soon realized that teachers are at the core of Hyukshin schools. She was able to establish a close working relationship with the teachers at her previous Hyukshin school. This helped resolve the misconceptions regarding Hyukshin schools. In order to improve Hyukshin schools, Ms. Kim said, “학교 변화하려면 지원을 해줘야 된다는 생각이 있었죠” “I wanted to support my colleagues to help the school to change.” (Woolgook M, Administrator Kim, Interview). She hoped people saw that Woolgook Middle School was a space where leaders were not dictating the decision-making process. Rather, she was trying to create a school culture that is supportive of teachers.

***Leadership Style: Adherence to Democratic Administrative Practice.*** The leadership team at Woolgook Middle School prioritizes giving decision-making power to all stakeholders of the school, which include teachers, students, and parents. The principal and vice-principal seek to support the various stakeholders, letting go of the more powerful roles they would play in non-Hyukshin schools. School leaders aspire to promote democratic decision-making process through:

1. Supporting teachers;
2. Valuing student and parent voices; and
3. Incorporating classroom innovation.

In their relationships with teachers, both the principal and vice-principal act as mentors and supporters of teachers instead of leading the decision-making process. In Principal Kim's words, "교장 교감이 리드하지 않는, 그냥 도와주는 서포트하는 학교예요" "it is a school that just supports, and that the principal and vice principal do not lead." (Woolgook M, Administrator Kim, Interview). The leaders accept and appreciate teachers' role in the decision-making process, especially for important decisions regarding the school year. Vice-principal Hasung Jung stated, "올해는 누가 이렇게 돌아가면서 이 행정, 담임 이런 부분을 협의를 해서 토론을 하고 협의를 해서 안을 만들어 내요" "the teachers themselves decide who this year's department head is and decide how to take turns. They discuss and debate on administration and homeroom teachers and create an agenda." (Woolgook M, Vice Principal Jung, Interview). Rather than taking the lead in such matters, the leaders at Woolgook Middle School focus on ensuring teacher voices are integrated into the decision-making process. Vice principal Jung provided an example from a Korean language class:

다른 학교는, 그 국어과라면 국어선생님만 쪽 가고 그러는데 여기는 전 교사가 다 갑니다. 전 교사가 다 참여를 해서 하고 또 전 교사가 다 참여해가지고 한 마디씩 다 하더라고요. 그 수업을 보고 느낀 거, 강평회라고 그러죠. 참여를 다 하고 그래서 여기가 아마 서울시에선 가장 그런 쪽으로는 우수하다고.

In other schools, if it's only the Korean language teachers would go to open classes, but in this school, every teacher participates in giving feedback. They talk about how they felt about the class. It's called a commentary session. Because everyone participates in it, I heard that it's probably the most outstanding school in Seoul in terms of open class participation. (Woolgook M, Administrator Jung, Interview)

Woolgook Middle School teachers are accustomed to playing the role of a leader in the open-classroom process. Meanwhile, school leaders ensure that such a culture of teacher leadership is possible.

Another method Woolgook Middle School uses to ensure teacher support is through teacher-led meetings. The school holds frequent meetings for teachers in order to integrate teachers' voices in all school-level decisions. Every year, teachers go on a task force team retreat for two days. Principal Kim said that the meetings at this retreat are an example of how much of a leading role the teachers play at the school:

새 학기 시작하기 전에 1박 2일로 전 교사가 TF 팀을 가요. 1박 2일로 여행을 가서 거기서 밤새 진짜 토론을 하죠. 올해는 이렇게 해서 이렇게 예산을 얼마 쓰고 이런 프로그램을 올해는 해봤고, 했더니 좋더라, 아니면 안 좋더라.

Before the start of the academic year, all of the teachers go on a task force team retreat for two days. We go on a trip for two days and debate all night. We talk about how this year we used this much budget for what and how we tried this program this year and evaluate if it was good or not. (Woolgook M, Administrator Kim, Interview)

In such a task force meeting, teachers reflect on how to improve their school's culture and practices. The open leadership style is reflected through the active incorporation of parents in schoolwide meetings. Educators report that they are always soliciting the opinions of students and parents for school-level decisions. One parent, Ms. Lee, said that, “어머니들 뭐 회장님이나 이런 거에 꼭 회의에 같이 참석하세요” “the parent representatives always participate in school meetings.” (Woolgook M, Parent Lee, Interview). The Woolgook Middle School staff have made it a general rule for parents to have a say in making school-level decisions.

Another instance of the integration of student and parents voices into school decision-making was when Woolgook Middle School sent out a survey regarding the dress code. Ms. Lee said, “우리 교복이 이런 게 있는데 굳이 없어도 될 게 뭐가 있느냐? 그걸 우리는 다 조사를 했어요” “We surveyed items like ‘We already have the uniform. Why should we not have it?’” (Woolgook M, Parent Lee, Interview). Student and parent voices were actively sought out and respected when making school-wide decisions, including decisions about the school’s uniform policy. Overall, Ms. Lee made a statement that the school “아이들 의견을 따르는 거예요”—incorporates student feedback (Woolgook M, Parent Lee, Interview). Parents confirm that the school culture of Woolgook Middle School truly incorporates parent voices.

Woolgook Middle School incorporates classroom innovation by focusing on teachers’ development of new instructional strategies that are adapted to students’ backgrounds and address low academic achievement. Principal Kim states that a major focus of classroom innovation is on encouraging student motivation to learn. This helps students of all backgrounds receive a quality education. Similar to the practices in other Hyukshin schools, she believes that group work is one major way to ensure that all students participate in classwork, especially for those students with complicated backgrounds.

그 하위권 아이들이 일반학교 같으면 이제 엎어져 자거나 이제 그럴 텐데 여기서 이렇게 협동수업을 하잖아요? 모둠 수업을 하니까 그 아이들이 무슨 말이라도 같이 대화를 하게 되고.

If the academically lower achieving children were in a regular school, they would sleep or something like that, but here, since we are doing group activities, students talk with each other at least. (Woolgook M, Administrator Kim, Interview)

Principal Kim says that classroom innovation does not mean giving up on academic goals. She states that “공부 안하는 게 아니고 공부의 추구하는 바가 다르기 때문에 “it’s not that we do not teach; we pursue different forms of teaching.” (Woolgook M, Administrator Kim, Interview).

In a science class, for example, students used to learn everything from the textbook about genetics. How Woolgook Middle School differs, is that students go beyond rote memorization and are encouraged to dive deeper and become critical thinkers.

이거에 대해서 서로 의견을 조율하면서 친구끼리 몰랐던 거 배우면서 이런 과정을 거쳐서 그거는 이거야,라고 말을 할 수 있게, 저희는 말할 수 있게 하는 게 중요하거든요.

It is important for [students] to mediate among their ideas about a topic, learn from one another that they did not know of, and to be able to say what they think through the process. (Woolgook M, Administrator Kim, Interview).

School leaders encourage teachers to take innovative measures in ensuring students to critically think rather than be passive learners. As a result, the school becomes a learning community that supports a wide range of students and their diverse learning styles, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

### **Teachers' Professional Development.**

At Woolgook Middle School, there are four mediums that help teachers to improve their instruction:

1. Whole-school PLCs;
2. Grade-level PLCs;
3. Supporting other schools' professional development; and
4. Curriculum development.

Teachers at Woolgook Middle School highlight the supportive PLCs that they have developed as the strength of their school. They prioritize the value of cooperation among the teachers. The MT stated that, “교육의 질은 교사 협력의 질에 달려있다” “the quality of education depends on the quality of cooperation among teachers.” (Woolgook M, teacher Hong, Interview).

Teachers at Woolgook collaborate to improve the quality of their instruction by organizing regular PLC meetings. In the PLC, teachers present and discuss teaching practices and discuss a variety of research and pedagogical practices to improve their teaching, such as preparation for open classes and planning integrated classes across their subjects (주제중심 교과간 통합수업). The PLCs at Woolgook Middle School drive classroom innovation.

At Woolgook Middle School, there is one type of PLC that teachers attend regardless of the grade that they teach, which is referred to as the whole-school PLC. In the whole-school PLC, teachers develop lesson plans and strategies for open-classroom practice sessions. For an open-classroom to take place, teachers convene with their colleagues who are going to present their classes in three weeks. As is the case with the lesson study, they develop lesson plans together. Before an open classroom is conducted, the open class teachers have a “prep open-classroom” (사전공개수업) in which they get feedback. Teachers attend their colleagues’ classes to give sufficient feedback, so that they are well prepared.

Teachers share responsibility for successful open classes. Teacher Kim stated that:

전통적인 공개수업의 방법은 어떤 공개수업자가 있고 그래서 이 선생님 이제 수업을 하시면, 선생님들 다 몰려가서 잘하나 못하나 혹은 애들이 집중을 잘했나 못했나 하면서 그걸 끝나면 뭐. 평가를 하잖아요. 근데 저희는 이제 평가라기보다는 그 전에 ‘사전공개수업모임’이라고 해서 그 공개수업을 위해서 물론 그 선생님이 표면적으로 봤을 때는 공개수업자이지만 그 내면적으로 봤을 때는 모든 선생님이 조력자이고 그 수업을 함께 만들어나가는 걸 표방을 하고 있어요.

The traditional way of practicing open classes is that there is one open class teacher who teaches the lesson, and other teachers observe and evaluate whether she is good or bad, or whether students concentrate or not, and then, that’s it. They evaluate. But in our school, rather than evaluating, we have a meeting called “prep open class”. Of course, on surface, for the open class teacher, this may be just the same as a real open class observed, but internally, every teacher is a supporter, and we are pursuing an open class, for which everyone collaborates. (Woolgook M, teacher Kim, Interview)

One major challenge of the PLC model, teachers have reported, is a large workload and limited time for the demanding work of PLCs. Woolgook Middle School teachers have, on average, four classes to teach every day, in addition to the classroom management tasks required of homeroom teachers. Some teachers might also take on after-school activities. It is hard to find a time that teachers can gather for PLCs even though Woolgook Middle School has a well-established PLC culture. But, as one teacher put it, “공개수업 준비하는 건 시간이 많이 필요해요. 하지만 좋아요. 그리고 뿌듯한 보람인 거예요” “it takes a lot of time to prepare an open class, but I feel good and proud for doing it.” (Woolgook M, teacher Kim, Interview).

The whole-school PLC has human resources and physical resources that allow teachers to convene to inquire about their instruction together. In terms of human resources, there are the leaders of the PLC who take the lead on the regular meetings, the HHD, and MT. The HHD and MT give feedback on the lesson plans of teachers who are in charge of the open classroom, based on their teaching skills, experience, and academic knowledge. In terms of physical resources, Woolgook is equipped with teaching tools that teachers consider helpful in catalyzing classroom innovation.

One example is a group chalkboard that students can use when having a group discussion. Ms. Yoo believes that the school budget is used for buying what teachers feel is necessary to improve classroom activities, unlike at her previous school, where too much administrative power was required to purchase teaching tools. In this sense, at Woolgook Middle School, the administrators collaborate with the teachers to innovate and support teachers by purchasing desired resources. They are able to use a specifically-designated HSSM budget provided by the SMOE for such additional expenses.

In addition to the whole-school PLC, there are three additional PLCs at Woolgook Middle School for grades seven, eight, and nine. These PLCs serve to further support teacher collaboration and growth. Each grade-level PLC consists of teachers who teach the same grade level. Woolgook Middle School has a system by which teachers share rooms called a grade level system (학년부체제). This is a new system that the Hyukshin schools tend to implement, as opposed to the layout of traditional schools where teachers share rooms with other teachers who have similar administrative work. The grade level system enables teachers to casually share their instructions, design classes together, and share evaluation techniques, according to Ms. Yoo. The teachers like this system because it also enables teachers to discuss if there is a certain student who needs more attention or support. With these benefits, the grade-level PLC system has three characteristics that teachers focus on: 1) integrated classes, 2) small theme trips, and 3) open-classroom practice.

The grade-level PLCs put an emphasis on interdisciplinary classes (주제중심 교과간 통합수업), which are a major thrust of Korea's recently Revised National Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2015). The grade level PLC is a place where teachers who teach the same grade can share what is taught in their disciplines and collaborate in designing interdisciplinary curricula. Ms. Said that in the last year, students made a historical script in their Korean language class on what they had learned in history class. Then, in an information-technology class, the students coded a software program using the history script that they had created. In music class, they performed a musical based on the script. Four teachers who taught different subjects collaborated on this curriculum. Students were able to integrate what they learned instead of compartmentalizing it by subject. This work by the teachers provided a deep learning experience for the students, the teachers said.

The design of interdisciplinary classes is also applied for small theme trips (소규모 테마여행), occasions when students travel to a location outside of the school. In preparation for small theme trips, teachers open their classes to their colleagues for two days so that they can know what has been taught in other classes and co-design small theme trips. Ms. Kim elaborated on this process:

[소규모 테마여행으로] 통영을 가기로 했다하면 이제 가기 전에 통영에 대해서 각 과목별로 같이 이제 지도가 들어가요. 그래서 뭐 통영이라면 국어 같은 경우에는 그 지역에서 뭐 그 지역 출신의 유명한 문학가. 그리고 사회는 그 통영이 어떤 그런 뭐 국제적인 혹은 국내에서 어떤 위치를 하고 있는지. 그리고 또 가정시간에는 통영에서 전통적인 요리를 만들어본다거나 이렇게 다들 주제를 나눠서.

If we decided to go to Tongyeong [for a small theme trip], each subject teacher teaches about Tongyeong. For Korean language class, the teacher teaches famous local writers from that region. For social studies, the teacher teaches the location of Tongyeong from an international or domestic perspective. And for home-economics, students make traditional dishes from Tongyeong. (Woolgook M, teacher Kim, Interview).

Students created a booklet in their classes before the trip about the location they would visit, and brought it on the trip. Students found the work of the booklet they created meaningful, as they had learned essential background knowledge related to the sites they would visit when they go to Tongyeong.

The third characteristic of the grade-level PLC is its open-classroom practices, which is a different innovation than the small theme trips. In addition to the whole-school PLC, the grade-level PLC is a space where teachers can discuss their experiences with open classrooms. The grade-level PLC mostly operates in collaboration with the whole-school PLC. These two PLCs have the common goal of assisting open-classroom teachers with their lesson development. Each grade-level PLC has one designated teacher who assists an open-classroom teacher.

According to Ms. Kim, who is responsible for supporting the 8th grade PLC, her role “저는 좀 더 필수적으로 참여를 하려고 하는 것 같아요” “pushes me to participate in the community more.” (Woolgook M, Teacher Kim, Interview). Teachers take turns helping others to improve their lessons. Their responsibility on each other shows. In Ms. Kim’s words: “저도 도움을 받았으니까 같이 해드려 되겠다” “I received a lot of help from other teachers, so I should give back to them.” (Woolgook M, Teacher Kim, Interview). The grade-level PLCs involve teachers’ in planning interdisciplinary classes, theme trips, and open classes.

Not only does Woolgook Middle School have strong school-wide and grade-level PLCs, but some of the teachers are also willing to share what innovative lessons and classroom practices they have developed with teachers from other schools. In fact, an MT at Woolgook, teacher Hong, is responsible for disseminating the best practices from Woolgook Middle School to other schools. Woolgook Middle School gets requests from other schools for professional development in the forms of lectures, workshops, or consulting services. MT Hong believes that it is important to cultivate a culture of classroom innovation within and also across schools:

저는 그러니까 가장 중요한 거는 저희 학교에서 수업 문화를 만들어나가고 함께 이제 연구하는 게 가장 중요한데요. 근데 또 다른 학교는 이제 또 이런 사례를 듣고 싶어 하잖아요. 그러니까 또 하나의 일이 다른 학교에 가서 이제 그런 것도 워크샵을 하는 거죠.

I think the most important thing is to create a culture of class in our school and to study together about it. Consequently, another school would want to hear about this case. So, another job would be to go to other schools and hold workshops. (Woolgook M, MT Hong, Interview).

Despite this willingness to help other teachers, there is a limit on the amount of time that an individual can provide without extra support. There are only a few MTs in Seoul who can provide such high-quality consulting to other schools. This is not enough to meet the current demand for professional development, teachers say.

Woolgook Middle School teachers engage in extensive curriculum development where teachers in different subject areas collaborate to create a set of lesson plans that connect multiple disciplines. The open-classroom practice often leads to integrated classes. Teachers found that this particular sequence of school-level curriculum development has been well established at Woolgook. Given teachers' success, as well as their sense of professional responsibility and capacity, Woolgook Middle School teachers are eager to design their own curricula.

Two teachers said that there are “some problems” with the national curriculum in terms of its structure, however, such as the number of lesson hours and the extent of academic content that teachers could change. According to Ms. Yoo, the current national curriculum used to follow the structure of the pre-existing curriculum, when school was open for six days per week instead of the five days a week that school is currently open. Ms. Yoo interpreted this situation as problematic given that the amount of the curriculum that individual schools have to cover is much more than what each school can do. Also, there is a spectrum of Creative Experience Activities” (창의적 체험활동) that a school now should provide.<sup>1</sup>

MT Hong concurred that the top-down curriculum is “problematic” since the teachers don't have the resources to adequately support their students. MT Hong and Ms. Yoo believe that the emphasis on standardized tests and competition for selective high schools distort the curriculum. Because middle school grades are used when schools determine high school placement, particularly for students who aim to go to a selective high school, teachers have to evaluate students' abilities with scores from standardized testing.

---

<sup>1</sup> The ‘Creative Experience Activities (CEA)’ is curriculum added in the 2009 revised National Curriculum with a spirit of endorsing an educational philosophy of the whole education emphasizing “education for life.” The CEA is designed to foster and expand students' school experiences and activities (Ministry of Education, 2009).

지금 현재는 그 점수로 특목고도 가야 되고, 특성화 고, 아니 특성화고 가야 되고 이렇게 때문에 그래서 지금 현재는 중학교는 여전히 점수를 내고 있고 그래서 그렇다 보니 점수나 이런 거를 당연히 아이들이 경쟁심을 느끼죠, 엄청. 불안감을 느끼고.

Students need to go to elite high schools and specialized high schools with those scores, so the middle school grade counts; thus, the students eventually become competitive with grades. They feel very anxious, as well. (Woolgook M, Teacher Yoo, Interview).

To evaluate students rigorously on the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT), the school curriculum often becomes narrowed across classes and schools in order to prepare students equally for the test. Teachers complain that this stifles the individual teacher's freedom to alter the curriculum, even though national curriculum reports state that they want to encourage innovation and creativity. The excessive emphasis on assessment on the CSAT, at least in part driven by teachers' quest for security and status in many schools, thus undermines the 2009 CEA curriculum reform.

**Students.** In addition to the five characteristics captured in the Teacher section, there are five other factors that help students engage in school at Woolgook:

1. Collaborative and interesting class atmospheres;
2. Integrated classes;
3. Career exploration;
4. Student clubs and student council; and
5. Group activities.

The following section explains each of the factors as reported by two students, Taehoon and Sooyoung, that we interviewed.

**Class atmosphere.** The students consider their classes interesting because of the healthy classroom climate. Sooyoung stated why studying at Woolgook Middle School is enjoyable:

되게 잘 가르쳐주시고 근데 재미있게 가르쳐주시고. 영어란 과목이 솔직히 저희 입장에서 되게 지루하거든요. 과목이 되게 지루한 맛이 있는데도 불구하고 제 입장에서는 되게 안 졸리게 가르쳐주세요. 재밌게.

Teachers taught well, but in interesting ways. English as a subject could be actually very boring to students, but despite the boring nature of the subject, the teacher taught interestingly, so that I did not fall asleep. (Woolgook M, Student Sooyoung, Interview)

The student said that teachers used inventive pedagogical methods. Her English teacher made use of popular song lyrics both to attract students, and to explain grammar and bring up other interesting topics instead of solely studying using an English textbook.

Woolgook Middle School emphasizes collaboration between teachers and students. Taehoon believes that students have to make a classroom atmosphere together by cooperating with teachers. He elaborated by saying that if students do not listen, teachers would fall back on traditional teaching approaches. It seems that students at Woolgook recognize that both students and teachers need to play active roles in creating a positive classroom environment.

***Interdisciplinary classes.*** Students at Woolgook Middle School benefit from an interdisciplinary class that teachers developed through the grade-level PLC. The interdisciplinary classes seem to lead students to learn academic concepts while taking an active role in the class. Two students discussed a class that combined the disciplines of history and music by creating a musical based on a historical event, 6.25 Korean War (the June 25<sup>th</sup> Korean War). While creating this class, not only did students learn about a historical event, but also each class created a musical together by writing a script and selecting songs. Taehoon said “6.25 전쟁 관련 뮤지컬을 만들었어요. 흥남부두에서 배를 타고 피난민들이 탈출한 사건을 우리가 스크립트로 짰어요” “We created a musical about 6.25 Korean war. We wrote a script based on the event, in which Korean refugees escaped from Heung-nam Wharf on a ship.” (Woolgook M,

Student Taehoon, Interview). Students decided who would take which role in their musical during class discussions. Then, after a year of practice, the students took to the stage to share their creation with others.

The students valued this experience a lot, imagining that they may not have had this opportunity if they went to non-Hyukshin schools:

저는 우리 학교를 다른 학교 친구들한테 추천하고 싶어요. 너무 저희 학교 너무 좋은 거 같아요. 많은 체험을 할 수 있으니까.

I would like to recommend my school to my friends in other schools. I really like my school. We can gain a lot of diverse experiences here. (Woolgook M, Student Taehoon, Interview)

Taehoon had an enthusiastic response to the learning experiences available at the school.

**Career exploration.** Woolgook Middle School provides extracurricular activities that give their students the opportunity to explore careers, as called for in Korea's revised National Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2015). Taehoon and Sooyoung agreed that their school gave them time to think about their future and career. They discussed how their school doesn't just focus on academic achievement, but exposes students to diverse extracurricular activities related to exploring careers:

[1] 아무래도 너무 공부만 하는 거보다는 우선 학생들의 진로를 찾기 위해서 여러 활동이나 이제 밖에 나가서 체험을 해본다던지 그런 경험을 훨씬 할 수 있어서 그런 점이 더 좋구나 생각을 했습니다.

Rather than just focusing on learning contents, students participate in diverse activities and retreats to find their career pathways. I thought because I could have those experiences here, that was a strength [of our school]. (Woolgook M, Student Sooyoung, Interview)

[2]이 학교는 미래를 추구하는 학교예요, 학생 성적을 중요시하기보다는.

This school pursues competencies necessary in the future, rather than only prioritizing school grades. (Woolgook M, Student Taehoon, Interview)

Some of the activities aimed at facilitating student exploration of career paths that the students mentioned are creating musicals, playing on sports teams, and volunteering. Taehoon thought that even though he has not decided what job he wants to have in the future, the diverse activities that he has done at Woolgook Middle School, such as creating a musical and playing on many sports teams would help him think about what he would like to do in the future. Sooyoung shared a volunteering experience where she read a book to a first grader and second grader at a book festival at a community center. She viewed this volunteering opportunity as what she thinks makes her school unique compared to other non-Hyushkin schools. She learned the value of sharing school activities, which helped her consider what she can give to society in the future.

***Student clubs and student council.*** Students at Woolgook have been encouraged to create autonomous clubs and participate in Student Council. Autonomous student clubs are a type of student club where the students choose the theme of the club. This theme must be approved by a school administrator in order for the club to become an official school club. Once that happens, the students can officially run the club.

The student council is one way that Woolgook Middle School solicits students' voices. In the student council, students can discuss, propose, and vote on ideas that are then sent to Woolgook administrators and teachers. The topics discussed in student council vary, ranging from policies on dress code or makeup, to installing an elevator in the school. As the school staff valued student opinions, Taehoon and Sooyoung said that they felt they were empowered by their school.

***Group Activities.*** Sooyoung said that her teachers organize more group activities than teachers at other schools. However, she also pointed out one drawback of group activities: There are some instances where one student has to lead a whole group, which she perceived as “unfair”

(부당한) for the student with expertise in the subject matter, or with a more disciplined work ethic. In describing this unfairness, she used a saying that the students at Woolgook Middle school used — “give a ride on the bus” (버스 태워준다)—which refers to a more advanced or industrious pupil doing work for other students when it really would be proper for all members in a group to collaborate for an assignment. Other students reported similar experiences as a serious drawback to group activities.

Consequently, Woolgook Middle School staff have collaborated to address the drawbacks of group activities. They have designed lessons and alternative assessments to promote the idea that students should take responsibility for their own learning. Taehoon explained:

선생님들이 누가 참여 하나 안 하나 지켜봐요. 우리학교는 참여 안 하는 학생을 적게 하는 시스템이 있어요.

Teachers do pay attention to who participates in a group activity or not. Our school has a system that students report upon the students who do not participate in a group activity to teachers. (Woolgook M, Student Taehoon, Interview)

Sooyoung talked about the benefits of this alternative grading system, which does not focus on standardized tests, but on the effort that students put into learning the curriculum in small groups. She felt this kind of alternative assessment successfully prompted students to engage in their assignments more actively. She reported that “정말 극소수 몇 명 빼놓고는 다들 열심히 못해도 참여하려는 모습이 있더라고요” “apart from a very few students, most of the students are willing to participate now, no matter what.” (Woolgook M, Student Sooyoung, Interview).

## **Parents**

The authors of this case study interviewed two parents, both of whom serve in a leadership role at Woolgook Middle School. Ms. Heesoo Lee is one of the two parent

representatives for students in eighth grade at Woolgook Middle School. Ms. Aerah Lee serves as the co-op representative of the school. Based on the interviews, it was evident that both parents truly cared about the character development of their children, worried about the tension between Hyukshin values and academic achievement, and appreciated classroom innovation.

There are three themes that emerged from the parents' interviews:

1. Student character development;
2. School vs. hagwon; and
3. Classroom innovation.

***Student Character Development.*** The parents viewed Woolgook Middle School as a place for their children to develop their socio-emotional skills and character. For the parents, character development occurred through specific programs provided by the school that went beyond academic achievement. They appreciated the way that their children formed friendships at school, and were pleased to see that their children were experiencing real joy there. Ms. Lee 1 stated that “1학년 같은 경우에는 인성 교육이나 민주 시민 교육이나 그런 걸 다 한다”— “6<sup>th</sup> grade students develop character through democratic education.” (Woolgook M, Parent Lee 1, Interview). She confirmed that at Woolgook Middle School, “수업을 하잖아요. 근데 인성적인 것도 되게 좋은 거 같아요” “classes are taught well, and the character development is also very good.” (Woolgook M, Parent Lee 1, Interview). Parents appreciate this part of the school.

One specific component of character development was parents' desire for their students to enjoy school and simply have fun through relationships with teachers and friends. They saw that their children enjoyed their school. Ms. Lee 2 remarked,

우리 아이 같은 경우는 학교 가는 걸 되게 좋아했어요. 물론 이제 친구들과하고 놀고 이런 게 재미있어서 그런지 모르겠지만 뭐 학교 가기 싫어하고 뭐 이런 건 없었던 거 같아요. 학교가 일단 좀 재미있는 수업을 유도를 했겠죠.

In the case of my son, he really likes going to school. Of course, he may like going to school because it is fun to hang out with his friends, but I don't think there was ever an instance of him not wanting to go to school. I think the school induced having classes that are interesting. (Woolgook M, Parent Lee 2, Interview)

Whether because of the importance of friendship or fun activities, it is clear that Woolgook Middle School is a place that students enjoy attending. Mrs. Lee 2 saw Woolgook Middle School as a place where her son could become take more initiative in his studies, and could build meaningful relationships with his friends and teachers.

**School vs. hagwon.** In Korea, private academies called hagwons exist to prepare students for the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT). Both parents had very clear ideas of the role that Woolgook Middle School and hagwons played in their children's studying, depicting the tension between their desire for their children to have a wide range of experiences, but also to excel academically. This tension occurs because of parents' desires for their children to go to a renowned college as well as to have fun at school. Ms. Lee 1's ultimate goal for her child pulls this tension tighter—in order for her child to attend a renowned college, she would need to take the CSAT. This leads her to send her child to hagwons, which intensely prepares students to excel academically in school or to push themselves to learn above and beyond what is taught at school.

To support her argument that hagwons are necessary, Parent Lee 1 stated, “문제는 자꾸 어려워지고 학원을 가지 않으면 그걸 커버할 수 없고” “the problem is, tests become harder, and students can't do well on them unless they go to hagwons.” (Woolgook M, Parent Lee 1, Interview). She reiterated this idea with a rather straightforward statement, “좋은 학교를

가려면은 학원을 다닌다는거죠” “in order to go to a renowned university, you need to go to a hagwon.” (Woolgook M, Parent Lee 1, Interview).

In contrast to academically competitive hagwons, parents viewed Hyukshin schools as a place where students can be stress-free and have fun. Ms. Lee 2 stated, “저는 혁신학교가 좋게 학교에서는 좀 스트레스를 풀 수 있지 않을까? 다양한 것들을 경험하고”—I think Hyukshin schools are good, because at school, students can relieve stress and experience various things (Woolgook M, Parent Lee 2, Interview). From her point of view, the intended roles of schools and hagwons have been reversed, where school is a place for fun and hagwon is a place for academics. She acknowledges that this is a problem of Korean education. Ms. Lee 2 articulates her conflicting values underlying Korean education, which is common among parents who desire their children to both excel academically and be happy. They believed that Hyushkin schools in combination with hagwons allowed them to achieve both goals with their children.

**Classroom innovation.** Both parents said that one positive aspect of Hyukshin schools is the innovative teaching. Parents especially appreciated discussion-based classes that allowed students to be critical thinkers. Ms. Lee 1 stated the following regarding the discussion-based classrooms:

토론식 수업을 초등학교 때보다도 더 여기서 집중적으로 하는 거 같아요. 토론식 수업하면 굉장히 힘들어요. 힘들고 1학년 때 그걸 처음 경험해봤고 입론이라는 거 뭐 반론이라는 거 뭐 결론이라는 거 이걸 해본 적이 없는데 그거에 맞춰가지고 교육을 받고.

I think this school focuses on discussion-based classes more than how the elementary school did. Discussion-based classes are very hard. When my daughter first entered the school in sixth grade, it was her first time experiencing arguing, counter-arguing, or concluding. She had never done that before, but she was educated according to the curriculum. (Woolgook M, Parent Lee 1, Interview).

Her daughter was learning to assert her own opinions and to anticipate counterarguments.

In addition to discussion-based classes, Ms. Lee 2 highlighted the benefits of group activities that Hyukshin education provided in developing her son's character and cooperation skills. She stated that, “모둠 활동에서 협력을 친구들과하고 하면 자신이 잘하는 부분이 있으면 더 많이 할 것이고...배려 같은 것도 배우고, 그런 게 좋은 거 같아요”—in group work, he would do more in what he can do well ... he would learn how to be considerate. I think such learning is good for my son (Woolgook M, Parent Lee 1, Interview). Parents felt grateful about class innovation that included many discussion-based lessons and group activities, for that it gave opportunities for their children to proactively participate in class.

### **Discussion**

Findings showed how Woolgook Middle School implemented their Hyukshin school model through: (1) a teacher-led culture of open classrooms; (2) highly developed PLCs; and (3) democratic decision-making. These three components have shown that Woolgook Middle School is a robust democratic community that practices what it preaches. Such a tightly-knit school culture is the product of a leadership team that values stakeholder voices, a teacher professional community that collaborates effectively to implement classroom innovation, a parent community that actively guides student learning opportunities, and students who feel that their voices are heard. Teachers have formed a strong professional network to guide the application of innovative instructional approaches in their classrooms. The leaders attempt to truly support the teachers.

Woolgook Middle School can contribute to other schools in the Hyukshin school movement or a broader school network in the SMOE by teaching the value of (1) encouraging collaboration and support and (2) providing rigorous academic instruction. First, the emphasis on collaboration and support can facilitate an active school community. At Woolgook Middle

School, teachers, administrators, and students value collaboration and support, which leads to the growth of each stakeholder. PLCs help to collaboratively develop open-class practices and integrated classes. The teachers we interviewed stated that this collaboration has been helpful in improving their teaching. The administrators play a supportive role to facilitate teachers' collaboration through constant encouragement. Students recognized that teachers value collaboration through in-class group activities and extracurricular activities. Although some students felt that group activities did not always lead to a fair grade, they believed that group activities had generated better outcomes than they would have achieved through their own individual efforts.

The second main component that Woolgook Middle School values is rigorous academic instruction. Unlike the stereotype that a Hyukshin school doesn't care enough about students' academic achievement, Woolgook administrators and teachers focus on rigorous teaching. The principal and master teacher stated in their interviews that Hyukshin schools prioritize class innovation. The principal elaborated that Woolgook Middle School covers the content of the textbooks and curricula that regular schools do, but that Woolgook teaches this material in different and in-depth ways, where students can discuss their opinions to construct their own knowledge. Two students that we interviewed believed that this teaching approach is "very interesting." Woolgook Middle School challenges the stereotype that the HSSM does not focus on academics.

However, there is one thing that Woolgook Middle School has to overcome related to its pursuit of rigorous teaching. In contrast to what school leaders, teachers, and students stated, some parents worried that Woolgook Middle School might not provide adequate college entrance exam preparation. This anxiety contributes to parents' lack of trust in the school regarding

college preparation, leading some parents to send their children to hagwons to study. These parents view Woolgook Middle School as a place to have fun and relieve stress, whereas hagwons are places to study and prepare for college entrance exams. These exams need to be changed through educational discourse and policy in Korea. In addition to fear about college entrance exams, some parents also express dissatisfaction over a wide range of student activities that these parents view as taking away from opportunities for students to focus on studying. The activities these parents take issue with range from class discussions and collaborative projects to student-led school festivals. Though these activities are a major concern articulated by some parents, ironically, the same activities are sometimes the reason that other parents support Hyukshin schools. Despite parents' mixed feelings toward these activities, these types of innovative school activities are helpful at Woolgook Middle School for the diverse student population. They allow for students of various abilities to learn in nontraditional ways.

One of the approaches that Woolgook Middle School can take in response to this situation is to publicize the positive experiences that students and parents say that they enjoy at the school. It can also share its unique methods with other schools—both Hyukshin schools and others—to share some methods that help students and teachers feel supported in a school community: open-classrooms and successful PLC practices such as having at least two leading members per PLC. Woolgook Middle School has a variety of strengths that other schools can learn from.

## **Conclusion**

Woolgook Middle School includes students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. The school has built a robust class innovation model that benefits their school community and can benefit the communities of other schools as well. This model focuses on,

among other things, creating a strong culture of PLCs led by teachers, building positive relationships between teachers and students, and ensuring that students feel happy in school. Woolgook has also built its own distinct model centered around classroom innovation. Its practices are enabled by their strong PLCs and the supportive climate among teachers and school leaders. Teachers and school leaders have a common goal to improve the quality of teaching and support one another with a firm belief that they are creating a supportive and better community. Students and parents are grateful that teachers consistently try to design group work and discussion-based classes. Classroom innovation is not just limited to academic classes but also extends to various extracurricular activities. For example, each class creates a musical that incorporates multiple subject areas, and each class then presents the musical to the whole school community. Through such interactive and innovative practices, teachers and students build a positive relationship, and students are more motivated and engaged.

Some challenges that Woolgook Middle School encounters stem from the Korean educational system prioritizing the CSAT. Though teachers and students love their schools and enjoy their school activities, they worry that their innovative practices cannot be maintained in high school due to the test. In this regard, Woolgook Middle School can be most beneficial to students in the long term if the overall Korean education system evolves into an alternative model with different kinds of measures capturing different kinds of skills.

## **Bongjoong High School**

### **Introduction**

Bongjoong High School in the Dongdaemun District of Seoul strives for a balanced and integrated education for all of its students. The school consists of 23 homeroom classes, 62 teachers, and 449 students. Mr. Hyunguk Lee, the principal, knows that many of his students come from low-income families and that many parents have high aspirations for their sons and daughters to escape poverty in the future. Mr. Lee's vision of leading a school in this environment is to make sure that students get enough attention to flourish as individuals in a strong school community while also acquiring the academic skills required to have successful careers, ensuring their future economic security.

High schools, in general, face more challenges when transforming than elementary or middle schools do. In the United States, elementary schools can usually cause a significant rise in student achievement or progress with a limited number of interventions (Noguera, 2002). High school teachers, on the other hand, identify strongly with their academic disciplines and hence are more likely to mount resistance to change. In Korea, many teachers traditionally have viewed instructors as relatively isolated individuals who follow textbook materials closely with few deviations from the prescribed content (Choi, 2017). The case of Bongjoong High School is intriguing because the members of its faculty actively work together to create a better school culture and do so in a spirit of care for students' long-term development as whole human beings. The twinning of academic excellence with student well-being is a major feature of this school.

### **School Emphasis**

Bongjoong High school emphasizes the following three components as the most important to the Hyukshin philosophy:

1. Integrated education;
2. A happy learning community; and
3. Democratic and horizontal structures.

At Bongjoong High School, educators aspire to combine components of an integrated education throughout the school year. The term integrated education refers to focusing on character-building education and college preparation at the same time. Principal Lee said, “진학 속에 포함된 인성교육인 것이죠” “that character development is included in college preparation.” (Bongjoong H, Administrator Lee, Interview). Mr. Lee believes that a good Hyukshin school should care about students’ personality development and their next stage of education altogether. Mr. Lee also noted that “혁신학교는 인성만 강조한 게 아니라, 일반학교기 때문에 진학도 굉장히 중요해요. 오히려 진학이 더 중요 할 수 있어요” “that going to college may be more important than other considerations.” (Bongjoong H, Administrator Lee, Interview). This is because it is so necessary for students to achieve a degree of financial security in what the OECD (2018, p. 2) describes as a country with “relatively low wages and high wage inequality.”

In other words, when it comes to academic success and well-being, for Mr. Lee, they are not separate. He said:

그런 얘기는 바로 자율 따로, 민주주의 따로가 아니라는 것과 비슷한 거죠. 자유하고 민주가 같이 들어가야죠. 그게 민주주의지. 대학 따로 인성 따로 해버리면 이것은 교육 본질하고는 거리가 멀어지는 거죠.

Integrated education is similar to an autonomous democracy. We have to be free and democratic at the same time. That's democracy. If you take the college preparation and personality education separately, it will be far from the essence of education, in a way. (Bongjoong H, Administrator Lee, Interview).

This integrated approach, where character education and college preparation are joined, means that teachers have to understand and uphold the value of caring for each individual student in addition to teaching academic content. This integrated approach is evident in many different school activities at Bongjoong—it can be found in academic support for those advanced students aiming to go to elite universities and also in high-quality guidance on how students can develop their identities and increase their well-being. Mr. Lee discussed the academic support system at Bongjoong, saying, "또 최상위권 학생들이 자기 소개서를 쓰거나 할 때는 별도로 또 지도 하세요" "that when high-achieving students write their cover letters, teachers give each one of them individual guidance and mentoring." (Bongjoong H, Administrator Lee, Interview). Another way that teachers at Bongjoong work to both develop students' character and academic skills is by allowing students to participate in differentiated activities in class: "수업 중에는 교과 내용을 중수준으로 간다면, 교과 활동은 상위그룹이 있는 학생들이 모여서 교과 활동도 하고요" "if the teacher explains [a] concept at a basic level in class, then high-achieving students gather for group activities." (Bongjoong H, Administrator Lee, Interview).

In general, our research participants said that the slogan of Bongjoong High School, "creating one's life path and sharing love in this happy learning community," in the words of one teacher, has a positive impact on the students. When a student, Hoerim, was asked if she was happy, she answered "yes" without hesitation. Paradoxically, however, teachers reported that the emphasis on student well-being aligning with traditional standards of academic performance inadvertently entailed additional stress and responsibility for them. Teachers, in general, believe that the workload at Hyukshin schools is more intense. A teacher at the school, Hyunwoo Lee, said, "교사에게 너무 많은 일을 준다" "that Hyukshin schools give too much work to the teachers." (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

At Bongjoong High school, the principal and vice principal respond to this pressure with creative team-building exercises, such as outings in nature, that help the staff build relationships and problem-solve for everyday issues that surface at school. Thus, Bongjoong High School teachers are able to balance the burden of their work with positive relationships with each other and students. And thanks to school leaders' efforts, teachers at Bongjoong High School report feeling relaxed and happy. Sunmin Lee, a teacher at Bongjoong, said, “여기는 선생님들도 행복하고, 그 다음에 학생들도 행복하고. 그런 학교예요. 그러다 보니까 저는 되게 만족도가 높다고 생각합니다” –“that the teachers here are happy, and the students are happy. It's that kind of place, so I think most teachers are satisfied with this school.” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

The teachers at Bongjoong appreciate this overall ethic of care that fosters a democratic environment. One of them said that:

교장, 교감 선생님은 제가 만나본 어떤 그 교장, 교감선생님보다 좋으세요. 인품도 좋으실 뿐만 아니라 선생님들한테 다 권한을 넓게 부여해주시고 상당히 민주적이시고. 그러신 분이예요.

The principal and the vice principal are better than any other principal and vice principal that I've ever met. They not only are outstanding people with genuine integrity, but they also give a lot of power to the teachers. (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Ms. Lee, an English teacher who had known little about the concept of Hyukshin schools previously, stated that the teachers she now works with are very caring. Ms. Lee said, “선생님들이 정말 더 아이들을 하나하나 더 케어 해주시죠... 학교의 그런 분위기, 문화가 훨씬 더 수평적이예요. 민주적이고 수평적이예요” “teachers here pay more attention to the students... they are able to do this because the atmosphere and culture of the school is much more democratic and horizontal.” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

## School Leaders

School leaders at Bongjoong High School had various experiences with the HSSM before being assigned to this school. The principal at Bongjoong previously worked as a vice principal at another Hyukshin high school, and the vice principal was a former school commissioner at the SMOE. While at SMOE, he belonged to the Hyukshin Department, whose job is to support the HSSM in Seoul.

Principal Lee wants his school to help students to “교육 본연의 자세로 돌아가자는거죠. 교육 본연이라고 이야기하는것은 결국은 가까이는 취업이고, 멀리는 개인 행복이 되지 않겠습니까” – “develop a career in the short-term and then finding personal happiness in the long run.” (Bongjoong H, Administrator Lee, Interview). He also said, “교육 본연의 자세로 가는 것은 남을 위해 베풀어주는 것을 배우는거죠” “helping others is what we should learn through education.” (Bongjoong H, Administrator Lee, Interview). Through generosity and industry, we can all then “다른 사람과 더불어서 사는 그 행복을 찾는거죠” – “find the happiness that is experienced by living well together.” (Bongjoong H, Administrator Lee, Interview).

Both the principal and vice principal of Bongjoong are committed to the democratic approach of the Hyukshin movement. Principal Lee stated, “위에서부터 아래로 내려오는 그런식이 아니라 선생님들이 뜻을 위로 올리는. 그야말로 엇다운 방식 반대로 된거죠” – “that unlike having a top-down system, we have a bottom-up system, in which teacher voices are heard.” (Bongjoong H, Administrator Lee, Interview). Other staff agree that Bongjoong High School is democratic. Ms. Lee explained, “상당히 민주적이시고, 그러신 분 이에요” – “that the leaders are very democratic.” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview). Ms. Ahn, the

Hyukshin career manager, said that “봉중은 잘 진행되는 편이에요” –“Bongjoong High School leaders are democratic.” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Ahn, Interview).

Students at Bongjoong High School say that their educators do not make school rules single-handedly, but only in consultation with the students and parents. The principal think that “학교의 주체는 교사와 학생과 학부모잖아요” “the main subjects of the school are not academic concerns but our teachers, students, and parents.” (Bongjoong H, Administrator Lee, Interview). He tries to consider everyone’s opinion.

A recent example of this democratic style concerned a request from students to be able to come to school by motorcycle. The principal stated, “면허증이 있는 아이들은 허가해 달라고 하죠” – “students who have drivers’ licences asked for permission.” (Bongjoong H, Administrator Lee, Interview). School leaders listened to opinions from students, parents, and teachers as they considered the options. Eventually, because of safety concerns, the school decided not to allow students to ride motorcycles to school.

A proposal to change the students’ uniforms is another example of the school’s democratic process. The principal described the event, saying, “학생들이 자기네들이 실제로 입을 교복을 그리기도 해요...전부 다 투표를 하고. 그 선택하는 과정에서 학생들 의사가 반영 된 거죠” “ the students came up with their own designs for new school uniforms. All students had a vote, and their opinions were incorporated.” (Bongjoong H, Administrator Lee, Interview). After that, the school listened to the parents' opinions as well. Once the design of the new uniform was approved, according to the principal, “다 동의가 됐기 때문에 지켜진다는 거죠” “the uniform policy [was] ratified and implemented, because everyone agreed on it.” (Bongjoong H, Administrator Lee, Interview).

Another focus of leaders at Bongjoong High School is providing an integrated education. Principal Lee stated, "학생 대학 따로 인성 따로 해버리면 이것은 어떻게 보면 교육본질하고는 거리가 멀어지는 거죠" "if character-building education and college entrance examination preparation separate, we drift away from the essence of education (Bongjoong H, Administrator Lee, Interview). The principal believed, "공부는 더 해야해요. 그 다음에 또 사람들 됴됨, 자기 발표력, 자기 능력. 그 다음에 자기 소질도 중요하죠" – "that students need to study hard in Hyukshin Schools. Other things are important as well. These include developing students' characteristics, public speaking, confidence, and attitudes." (Bongjoong H, Administrator Lee, Interview).

The school provides career guidance to support each student. Principal Lee said, "애들 실력, 소질에 따라서 개인 하나하나에 맞는 전문가를 불러서 가이드해줘요" "that depending on the students' skills and abilities, we ask experts to customize guidance for every one of them." (Bongjoong H, Administrator Lee, Interview). Through a detailed set of procedures, the school helps students find one area they're talented in and helps to develop their skills in that area.

Student Lee stated, "저희 학교는 공부와 이제 거의 비슷한 비율로해서 아이들이 직업체험, 탐문 같은 것들을 해요" "that our school puts as much emphasis on career education as academic learning. Students can have a job experience or a career exploration." (Bongjoong H, Student Lee, Interview). He added, "다양한 활동들을 통해서 직업을 더 다양하고 넓게 볼 수 있게 되었어요" "through various activities, I get a broader view of my career (Bongjoong H, Student Lee, Interview).

Principal Lee is critical of the prevalence of a competitive ethos in contemporary Korea, especially with regard to schools in undermining a collaborative spirit. He stated, “지금까지 학교가 애들끼리 경쟁을 시키고 학부모까지 경쟁을 시키고” – that the schools have been making students, and even parents, compete with each other (Bongjoong H, Administrator Lee, Interview). Competition is fundamentally contrary to his Hyukshin philosophy, as it is to the larger Hyukshin school innovation movement. The concern is that competition, when taken to an extreme, produces selfishness, which is detrimental to the democratic and communitarian goals of the network.

For Mr. Lee, the purpose of Bongjoong High School is not competition, but higher goals that give students' lives real meaning and purpose. He explained, "오히려 다른 사람을 밟고 일어서면 그런 교육은 저는 교육으로서의 기능이 아니다라고 생각해요" – “if you step on someone else to go further, I don't think that kind of behavior can serve the real function of education.” (Bongjoong H, Administrator Lee, Interview). Instead, education should lay the foundations for all students to find personal fulfillment in their private lives, in their careers, and as engaged citizens. This is the most effective and ethical way to support students' happiness, he says.

### **Teachers**

Three teachers were interviewed to discuss Hyukshin principles and how they are enacted or overlooked at Bongjoong High School. Not only did the teachers reflect on the administration's positive policies and attributes, but they also shared critical perspectives on their school. The teachers discussed: (i) their school's organization, (ii) their perspectives on student democracy, (iii) PLNs, and (iv) the rewards and difficulties of working at Bongjoong High School.

## School Organization

Ms. Lee, an English teacher at Bongjoong, addressed how the school enacts Hyukshin principles by (1) teachers cultivating deep affection for students, (2) allowing students autonomy, and (3) increasing participation for students in the school's many classroom environments. Ms. Lee explained: "일단 선생님들이 정말 더 아이들을 하나하나 더 케어해주시고, 개인적으로 더 신경도 써주세요" "first, teachers take care of each student one by one. They pay much more attention to the students as individuals compared to other schools." (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview). The school's ethic of care means that no student ever should be overlooked or marginalized. This supportive pedagogical ethos and environment enables students to study and act autonomously. Ms. Lee said, "강의식 수업을 탈피해서 모두 그룹 수업 같은 것을 많이 하다 보니까 아이들이 되게 자율성이 성장한 건 사실이에요" "instead of holding lecture-style classes, teachers prefer group learning with options for independent study, and student autonomy has increased." (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview). And finally, teachers ask for a lot of student participation at Bongjoong. Ms. Lee said, "저희가 발표 수업 같은 것을 많이 시키거든요" "teachers require students to give a lot of presentations in class." (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview). With the teachers' encouragement, students have become really good at developing and expressing their opinions and at public speaking.

Bongjoong High School divides the curriculum into 23 different subjects, including Korean, English, and math. Mr. Lee described Bongjoong High School's collaboration with the community:

학교 민주주의에 대해서 다루는 분과도 있고요, 학생 자치, 마을 교육과정이라고 해서 지역 사회 마을의 여러 가지 기관과 함께하는 마을 교육과정이 있고요.

Each teacher is in charge of different parts, such as school democracy or student autonomy. They're also involved in the 'village curriculum,' which involves collaborating with various institutions and nearby villages of the community (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

During their junior year, students can delve into areas that they're interested in. Mr. Lee Hyunwoo explained that, “VR 콘텐츠 제작 이런 거나, 아니면 목공 같은 거나. 관심 있는 애들이 선택해서. 바리스타, 제과제빵 이런 것도 있고요” “students have an opportunity to experience topics such as virtual reality content creation and carpentry. They can learn about what is involved in becoming a barista and also what kinds of programs are available in confectionery training.” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview). Mr. Lee continued, “동대문 수련관이라고. 동대문에 있는 그 기업. 지역 기관하고 연계해서 거기 강사 협조를 받아서 해요” “We collaborate with the Dongdaemun Training Center. Since we're connected with the local institution at Dongdaemun, their instructors are invited to run these classes.” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

### **Student Democracy**

Student democracy refers to creating an environment that allows students to participate in making the classroom a better place to be and to learn in. A teacher at Bongjoong, Mr. Hyunwoo Lee, explained his philosophy regarding democratic education:

배고픈 사람은 일단 밥을 먹어야 그 다음으로 갈 수 있는 것처럼. 기본적인 욕구가 학교가 가진 기본적인 요구가 민주주의였다고 생각하거든요. 근데 그런 게 혁신학교가 좀 실현이 되니까 그 다음을 생각할 수 있는 거 같아요.

Just like how when you're hungry you need to eat before moving on, I think the basic need of schools is a democracy. And because democratic processes happen within Hyukshin schools, [these schools] can proceed to the next level in the process of education. (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Mr. Lee explained that the faculty members at Bongjoong are aware that although some students may lack academic skills, each of them has various talents:

선생님들이 학생들 각각이 재주를 살려서 동아리 활동이라든가 아니면 학생회 활동이라든가 이런 거를 굉장히 적극적으로 열심히 참여할 수 있도록 계획해요.

Teachers design their curricula and lesson plans so the students can utilize their talents and actively participate in clubs or student council. (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

For instance, when an Italian diplomat visited the school, students created a team to plan how they would welcome him. The students divided themselves into teams focused on souvenirs, decorations, placards, and performances. The performance team performed Italian songs, thoroughly impressing the visitors from the Italian Embassy. Mr. Lee elaborated,

그러니까 그런 식으로 아이들이 공부만 하는 것이 아니라 자신의 그런 특기를 살려가지고, 미술하는 애들은 디자인팀, 영어를 좀 잘하는 애들은 MC 팀, 노래를 잘하는 애들은 공연팀 뭐 이렇게 각각 자신의 장점을 살려가지고 행사를 치뤘어요.

That's how Bongjoong students not only study but also live up to their specialties. Artistically talented students were designers, English speakers were event moderators, and the singers were performers for this event. They took advantage of their own strengths and held the event. (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Such an environment increases students' sense of self-efficacy. Mr. Lee said, "아이들의 개성, 아이들의 재주, 아이들이 각각 가진 재능을 살려줄 수 있는 학교예요" –“Our school helps develop children's personalities, their dexterity, and their talents.” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview). For instance, when students take notes in most schools, they don't share them with their classmates. But Mr. Lee proudly affirmed that, "우리 애들은 다 보여주거든요. 그러니까 뭔가 함께 하는 그런 협력이 그런게 아니겠어요" “Our kids show each other everything. That's what working together means.” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview). Mr. Lee said,

우리 학교 아이들은 다 그 자체로만의, 자기 자신의 모습 그대로 사랑을 받는다고 그럴까요? 선생님들한테도 사랑을 받고 또 아이들 자체로 빛나요.

Each one of their students is not just accepted, but also truly loved based on who they are. Our teachers really love them! We feel that they are so endearing and special, just by being who they are. (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Bongjoong High School participates in an unusual external student and alumni network within the Dongdaemun District of Seoul. Mr. Lee Hyunwoo explained,

혁신편을 졸업한 학생들이 혁신편이 계속 사람들에게 공격을 받으니까 이 혁신편에 어떤 가치나 자기네들이 경험했던걸 많은 사람들에게 알리기 위해 졸업생이 연대라는 걸 만들었어요.

Because Hyukshin schools are constantly under attack, our alumni have created a solidarity network. They share their positive experiences and collaborate to promote Hyukshin values. (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Bongjoong hopes to develop a positive public perception of the HSSM in Seoul and in Korea. The presence of this network also indicates that Hyukshin school alumni in this district have acquired a strong sense of social responsibility, suggesting that Hyukshin principles aren't abandoned when students graduate, but are carried on throughout a student's life.

### **PLNs and Teacher Collaboration**

Teachers at Bongjoong High School have frequent interactions with other schools. Mr. Lee Hyunwoo discussed the teachers' network: "자율협의체라고 해서 고등학교는 고등학교끼리 모여요. 중학교나 초등학교는 지역별로 같이 모이는" "We have a system called 'autonomous councils,' where high schools, middle schools, or elementary school educators gather based on their region." (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview). Bongjoong High School teachers are able to exchange information with other Hyukshin school teachers at these once-a-month meetings, where they share the challenges that their school is concerned with.

## Benefits and Difficulties of Teaching at Bongjoong High School

Bongjoong High School's teachers have a hard time dealing with contemporary Korean society's perspective on education. Regardless of various attempts to change this perspective, Korean society still expects students to get good grades and attend prestigious universities. For instance, the Bongjoong teachers tried creating specialized activities, such as after-school classes, for students with lower academic standing. However, the students didn't apply for these activities, to the teachers' frustration. But Ms. Lee noted that, "그렇다고 저희가 또 강제로. 야, 너는 성적이 낮으니까 강제로 너 해 이렇게 또 말은 못하는 거죠" – that we can't just force them to participate in the activities just because their grade is low (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview). Such difficulties cause the teachers to experience the familiar phenomenon of mental burnout that is a common experience in the teaching profession.

Regardless of the Hyukshin Schools' achievements, the school confronts the barrier of the CSAT. Ms. Ahn explained,

입시라는 커다란 벽이 있어요. 이 벽을 넘기가 쉽지가 않아요. 그러니까 이 전체 구조적인 벽이 딱 있는데 우리들의 어떤 활동을 통해서 조금의 변화는 있지만 그것은 진짜 큰 바다에 물 한 방울 떨어뜨리는 변화일 뿐일 수밖에 없는 상황들이 많이 있어요. 그럴 때 오는 정신적인 어떤 피로감. 그것도 큰 거죠. 근데 이건 내가 봤을 때는 어쩔 수 없는 현상인 것 같아요.

The college application process is a massive hindrance. It's not easy to jump over this. Although our movement brings a small change, some situations show how it's just a drop of water in the whole ocean. The mental fatigue that comes at such times is inevitable. (Bongjoong H, Teacher Ahn, Interview).

Ms. Ahn continued, “진로, 진학. 일반계, 대학. 이게 거대한 벽이에요” – “[The preparation for] college and career for an apparently insurmountable obstacle.” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Ahn, Interview). It seems that a restructuring of Korean education is needed to transition to a system and culture that promotes student well-being intentionally.

Bongjoong High School teachers' misgivings were mainly about their students' academic achievement. Ms. Lee said, “좋은 학교, 대학 잘 보내는 학교. 이런 등식이 아직 있거든요” – “The public perception is that a good school is one that sends a lot of students to prestigious universities.” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview). She added “우리 애들이 참 활동은 잘하는데...그런 면에서 학업이 부족하다 보니” “While I am pleased that students are very actively involved in extracurricular activities...they lacked strong academic skills.” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview). This teacher admitted that weak and uneven academic achievement is one disappointing aspect of the HSSM that will require additional attention in the future.

School choice policies in Korea make it hard for schools intending to serve all students to have access to those students who who have the strongest academic records. Ms. Lee said:

기본적으로 학력은 약한 애들이 배정을 받죠. 왜냐하면, 공부 잘하는 애들은 아무래도 자사고, 특목고 이런데로 다 빠져나가다 보니까요.

Basically, students with weak educational backgrounds are assigned to this school because students who are good at studying mostly go to autonomous private high schools or specialized high schools. (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Ms. Lee wished that her school could receive more recognition for attracting pupils who often had not done well in school in the past, and who initially lacked the skills and dispositions that ordinarily are sought out by the most competitive high schools. Parents who are determined to send their sons and daughters to elite universities naturally hold negative perceptions of Bongjoong High School. As a result, Ms. Lee explained, “혁신학교에 대한 인식이 낮다 보니 좀 부족한 애들도 들어오고. 그러다 보니까 더 인식도 안 좋아지고 이런 악순환은 좀 있어요” “These stereotypes eventually bring students who are weak in academics to Bongjoong, which worsens the original perception. It’s a vicious cycle.” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

## Students

Two juniors from Bongjoong High School's student council were interviewed privately about their experiences at the school. One of the students, Chanhyo Lee, is a sophomore and the president of student council. When he was a freshman, he was the vice president of student council. The other student, Hoerim Choi, is also a sophomore who is in charge of a vice president. Both students are satisfied with the school, but they had negative thoughts about the Hyukshin schools when they were assigned to Bongjoong. Choi said, "처음에는 많은 걱정은 있었어요" "that I had a lot of concerns at first." (Bongjoong H, Student Choi, Interview). Another student, Lee said, "뭔가 학업에 집중 못하지는 않을까 이런 걱정이 좀 많았던 것 같아요" that I was worried about a lot of different things, such as not being able to focus on academics." (Bongjoong H, Student Lee, Interview). Her concerns were so great that she cried when she was assigned to this school.

The students' primary concern at that point in time had to do with a perceived lack of academic rigor in the HSSM. Choi explained that when she was first assigned to Bongjoong High School, "처음에는 대학을 못 갈까봐 걱정을 하고, 제가 공부를 안하는 친구들한테 휩쓸릴까봐 걱정을 했어요" "I was worried that I couldn't go to college because I could be affected by those of my classmates who don't study." (Bongjoong H, Student Choi, Interview). Nonetheless, these students' negative first impressions turned positive over time, as they experienced the benefits of Hyukshin schools. The chances of getting better grades, participating in various activities, and winning awards at Bongjoong High School eventually more than compensated for the students' initial concerns about academic rigor, and they both were happy with their choice in the end.

Another benefit of attending Bongjoong High School for Choi is that her grades are high relative to those of her peers. Choi thinks that if she were attending her first-choice school, she would not be able to achieve as high of a GPA as her current GPA because teachers would judge her work more critically in comparison with that of her high-achieving peers. She elaborated, "월등한 친구들이 많고, 다 너무 열심히 하고. 열심히 해도 결과가 잘 안나오고. 저희는 그래도 한 만큼은 나오거든요" "because most of the students in my first-choice school study so hard, it is hard to get high scores in evaluations. But at Bongjoong High School, the results come out based on our efforts." (Bongjoong H, Student Choi, Interview).

Lee echoed Choi's sentiment:

제가 원래 지원했던 학교를 갔으면 내신이 조금 뭔가 낮았을텐데 지금 학교 와서 내신도 괜찮게 받고, 지금 학교 분위기도 좋고, 제가 이렇게 학생회 참여도 하면서 다양한 활동들을 하는 것에 만족해하고 있어요.

If I had gone to the school I originally applied for, my school grades would have been lower. In this school, however, I can get a high GPA, I like the school culture, and I have opportunities to participate in diverse school activities, such as student council. I am satisfied. (Bongjoong H, Student Lee, Interview).

It is intriguing to see how both of these students still see their learning in terms of competitive advantage with regard to future college applications, in spite of the democratic and humanistic values espoused by the HSSM. Lee described another benefit as "다른 학교들보다 상을 받을 수 있는 기회가 정말 많아요" – "having more opportunity to win awards [at Bongjoong] compared to other schools." (Bongjoong H, Student Lee, Interview). Choi and Lee were not only satisfied with their sense of accomplishment at Bongjoong High School. They also saw a strategic advantage in being high achievers in a school where many students have struggled academically.

Students at Bongjoong High School are actively involved in the process of knowledge construction in class. Lee described the system at Bongjoong High School, saying, "학생들이 주도적으로 해서 선생님 대신에 나가서 수업을 진행하고, 선생님이 거기에 더 덧붙여서 해주시고 해요" "Many courses are student-initiated. Students lead the class instead of teachers; teachers guide with detailed feedback." (Bongjoong H, Student Lee, Interview). In geography class, for example, students take charge of each subject-area city and present what they have learned in front of the class. Student Lee said, "맨날 똑같은 선생님의 수업을 듣는 것이 아니라 친구들이 다양한 발표방식으로 해요. 사람마다 다 다를 것 아니에요. 그 발표들을 듣고 흥미도도 더 높아지는 것 같아요" "Instead of a teacher's one-way lecture, each student presents in their unique style. This makes me more interested in the subject." (Bongjoong H, Student Lee, Interview). Choi shared one lesson on democratic education: "저희끼리 모의 투표를 했었거든요. 교육감들의 공약을 한번도 귀 담아 들어본 적이 없었는데, 처음으로 귀 담아 들어보고" – "We had a mock election with the actual information of Seoul educational superintendent candidates. It was my first time listening and reflecting on their election promises (Bongjoong H, Student Choi, Interview).

Lee defined a Hyukshin school as "우리 학생들의 목소리가 크게 들릴 수 있게 도와주는 스피커다" "a speaker that amplifies our voices." (Bongjoong H, Student Lee, Interview). The most distinctive feature of a Hyukshin school for him is that the school supports the students. Lee said, "중학교 때는 못 느꼈는데 확실히 고등학교 오니까 혁신학교와 일반 고등학교 차이를 느꼈을 수 있었던 것 같아요" – "I didn't feel [that way] when I was in middle school. I see the difference between Hyukshin schools and traditional high schools." (Bongjoong H, Student Lee, Interview).

Choi agreed that Bongjoong High School is democratic, saying, "우리 의견을 상당히 수용해주시려고 하는 것 같아요" – that “teachers try to accept [student] opinions.”

(Bongjoong H, Student Choi, Interview). Choi continued, recalling a moment when the school’s democratic values were clear to her:

저희가 다음 년도에 들어올 1 학년부터 교복이 바뀌거든요. 그걸 정할 때도 전교생이 모여서 대토론을 했던 말이에요. 선생님들도 같이 해서 서로 의견을 이야기하고 반박했어요.

The entire student body got together for a discussion about changing the school uniform starting next year. Teachers and students had a big debate. (Bongjoong H, Student Choi, Interview).

As a result of the democratic practices at Bongjoong, Choi concluded that, "많은 사람들 앞에서 자기 의견을 표출할 그런 기회가 많아서, 이런 활동을 고등학교 올라와서 많이 하게 되면서 능숙하게 해결해 나갈 수 있을 것 같다고 생각이 들었어요" “Since we have more opportunity to express opinions in front of other people, I think we can handle these activities very skillfully in the future.” (Bongjoong H, Student Choi, Interview). Students are growing up as democratic citizens at Bongjoong High School.

## **Parents**

Our team interviewed Eunkyong Hong, a mother whose child was a sophomore at the school. Ms. Hong expressed satisfaction with the Hyukshin school principles and practices at Bongjoong. She described positive aspects of the HSSM. She liked its (a) democratic practices, (b) stress on addressing essential social issues, and (c) care for disabled students. To this degree, she was quite clear in her commitment to the social and political dimensions of the HSSM. She saw the Hyukshin schools as important building blocks to the creation of a more just and inclusive Korea.

Bongjoong High School is democratic insofar as its policies are established through a careful process of seeking out the opinions of parents, students, and teachers. For instance, in the case of a proposed change to the school uniforms mentioned previously, Bongjoong High School invited students, parents, and teachers to share their opinions. There were open public debates in which everyone had a chance to share proposed designs, respond to others, and compromise. Of this event, Ms. Hong said, "아이들이 자기가 입는 교복에 대해서 자기가 선택하고 토론하고 그렇게 하는 것들을 볼 때, 우리 학교만큼 열심히 실천하는 학교가 없는 거 같아요" "looking at this example of how students can choose and discuss their school uniforms shows how Bongjoong High School, notably, devotes time and effort to support school democracy." (Bongjoong H, Parent Hong, Interview). She was excited to contribute to the school's decision-making process.

She also said that at her child's previous school, the teachers were quite rigid in their methods:

예를 들면 이제 학생인권조례 라든가 이런 것들을 실행하는 방법을 봤을 때도 아직도 그 중학교는 이름표를 바깥으로 꺼내놓고 다녀야 되고, 정복을 입지 않으면 벌점을 줬어요.

For example, regarding issues related to student rights, the previous school required students to show their name tags on their uniforms, and they would give penalty points if they didn't wear uniforms. (Bongjoong H, Parent Hong, Interview).

However, when her son decided to attend Bongjoong High School, he had many different experiences. She was impressed with the sense of fulfillment her child was learning at

Bongjoong High School:

아이가 자발적으로 움직일 수 있는 동력을 학교에서 주는 것이 좋았어요. 작지만 성취되는 것들에 대한 피드백이 바로바로 오고 가서 아이가 그런 거에 대한 만족도가 높아지고요.

I was touched by how the school motivates students to become autonomous and proactive. Regardless of the level of student achievement, teachers instantly share feedback with students, and my child is pleased with that. (Bongjoong H, Parent Hong, Interview).

Ms. Hong also explained how only Bongjoong High School offers classes about human rights and gender equality:

학교에서 학습만 요구되고 진짜 사회적인 삶에 대한 고민이 없는 그런 것들이 문제라고 생각하는데 그런 것들을 친구들이랑 같이 공유하면서 인성적으로도, 아, 노동에 대해서 많이 성숙해진 것 같아요.

It's problematic how schools usually require students to study and not develop real social lives; however, as students discuss such topics with each other, I think they're able to develop mature thoughts on societal issues. (Bongjoong H, Parent Hong, Interview).

She also excitedly explained how on one occasion, her son came home thrilled when his teacher analyzed a movie based on current social issues in class. Her son told her how the film included stories about social issues related to MERS, income inequality, and the Korean social class hierarchy.

영화를 그냥 볼 때는 몰랐는데 수업시간에 선생님들이 컷 해가면서 그걸 비교해서 말해주는데 자기는 너무 소름이 끼쳤다는 거예요. 아이가 그걸 흥분을 가지고 집에까지 와서 저한테 이야기할 정도로 준비된 수업에 아이들의 감동이 있다라는 거죠.

He got goosebumps when the teacher analyzed each scene very descriptively. It means that my child was so moved by the class that he even talked about it with such excitement after arriving home. (Bongjoong H, Parent Hong, Interview).

Unlike other more socially conservative schools, Bongjoong High School can pinpoint the essential social issues the students should learn about. It encourages them to think for themselves and to feel comfortable engaging with other students with different points of view.

Furthermore, the school has a designated class for disabled students in a separate space. Based on their disability level, students spend different lengths of time in the classroom and are assigned to different classrooms whenever possible. If they can't remain in the standard class for a long time, they return to the class for students with disabilities. “동대문구에서는 우리 학교밖에 장애 통합하는 학교가 없거든요. 그래서 저는 되게 중요하다고 생각해요” “I think this integration of disabled [students] is significant because only our school does it in Dongdaemun district.” (Bongjoong H, Parent Hong, Interview). Ms. Hong believes that Bongjoong High School enables students to gain a broader perspective of the world. She wants her child to be able to contribute to society, and this integration by Bongjoong High School will help students do that by allowing students to respect, learn, and empathize with different people.

Ms. Hong wants her to be a good person. She has discussed with other parents “예전처럼 학벌로 인해서 신분이 변화되는 그런 세상은 아니니까. 아이가 선택하고 행복할 수 있다면 지지해줘야 되지 않겠느냐라는 이야기를 많이 했거든요” “about how the world is not all about the educational background. Parents should support their children's decision to achieve happiness.” (Bongjoong H, Parent Hong, Interview).

However, Mrs. Hong still sends her child to hagwons. She said:

이것도 혁신학교지만 그래도 1, 2 등급은 나름 엄청 힘들어요. 하는 애들은 하는 애들끼리 경쟁이 어디든 다. 그러니까 그 정도의 내신을 받는 것도 안 하면 못 받는 그런 구조예요.

Although it's a Hyukshin school, the top two degrees of the college entrance exam grade are still tough to achieve. Competition exists everywhere among students who study hard. If you can't get a good GPA, you can't get a high score for the college entrance exam. (Bongjoong H, Parent Hong, Interview).

Parents are unable to escape from the pressures of the competitive education system in South Korea.

## Discussion

Bongjoong High School is continuously and dynamically consolidating its principles. By providing group-oriented activities for students, Bongjoong High School develops students' confidence and ability to create a happy learning environment. Bongjoong's practical pedagogical strategies are embedded in a philosophy of education that ultimately espouses strong, pro-social norms. Mr. Lee Hyunwoo pointed out, "원래 교육이라는 것은 어떤 아이를 키우고 싶다라는 가치를 두고, 다 같이 노력해야 하는 것이죠" – that school education must always be value-oriented. We all work together on the importance of raising children (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Students receive various benefits from Bongjoong High School, such as developing character, cooperation skills, and autonomy. Bongjoong High School's principal designed the school to be well-balanced in the areas of students' character development and career guidance and preparation. Administrators, teachers, students, and parents all take that approach, too.

This dedication is sometimes eroded by the broader institutional context, Mr. Lee Hyunwoo believes. He said, "우리나라 교육은 교육과 학교 제도가 가치 지향적이지 않아요" – that we know that we are working in a larger school system that doesn't share these values (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview). He added, "아이들의 인권이나 권리에 대해서는 별로 관심이 없고. 근데 그런 게 많이 무너지고 해체 됐는데. 다른 것은 학교에 들어오지 않는 거죠" – that the system of neglecting students' human rights has collapsed and disintegrated, but nothing new has been created yet to fill that space (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview). The school needs to create new values and ways of teaching to fill the gap. However, it's difficult to do that because, within the school, teachers need to agree and pursue the new values, but the school has never offered any experience or training to help them do so.

The gap between policy makers and people involved in the Hyukshin movement also shows a conflict between aspiration and societal reality:

정책을 하는 사람은 되게 마음이 급하고 뭔가 빨리빨리 가시적인 성과를 원하는 거 같아요. 그런데 현장은 그냥 일상이거든요. 그렇기 때문에 뭔가 가시적인 결과물을 내놓는 거가 바람직하지도 않고, 많이 가능하지도 않아요.

The policy makers are in a rush and expect tangible results to occur rapidly. But the pressures of daily life are such that it's not always desirable or possible to present concrete results immediately. (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Mr. Lee wishes that policy makers and the SMOE would be more involved in the process of creating a less competitive atmosphere for students, even if that atmosphere does not immediately change student outcomes.

Although the faculty members of Bongjoong High School try their best to change, they acknowledge the inevitable limitations they sometimes face. When some students don't put in the same effort as teachers, and when teachers realize the difficulty of changing the embedded system, they experience burnout. Contemporary Korean society and the Korean education system still believe that academics are a priority, and grades by and large still define students. Furthermore, the negative perception of Hyukshin schools limits the ability of Bongjoong to attract students who are stronger in academics and could lift the school's profile.

Concern for student voice in Hyukshin schools, as Ms. Lee suggested, undermines academic achievement. Although the school focuses on an integrated approach, this stance was reflected by some faculty members of Bongjoong High School. Teachers believe the school lacks academic rigor. Ms. Lee stated, “사실은 저희가 인성, 협력, 공동체문화, 자기 주도성, 자율성 이런 거는 참 훌륭한데. 아무래도 이학력 부분이 약간 아쉬워요” “Students here have great character, cooperation, community culture, self-reliance, and autonomy. But rigor is declining, and that's disappointing (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Such critical perspectives were not limited to the faculty members. Choi said, “인문계랑은 다르게 공부를 그렇게 집중적으로 시키는 그런데는 아니잖아요” “Unlike most high schools, this school is not a place that focuses only on academics.” (Bongjoong H, Student Choi, Interview). Another student, Chanhyo Lee, said that “면학 분위기 조성이 조금 떨어지는면이 있는거 같기는 해요” “The school lacks an academic atmosphere.” (Bongjoong H, Student Lee, Interview). These critical perspectives indicate that the school’s aspirations to integrate the academic and non-academic aspects of learning may have tipped too far in one direction.

Teacher Ahn also mentioned how the parents think it is meaningless for students to enjoy high school but to find out in the end that they can't go to college. Regardless of the myriad of efforts and innovations, parents and many sectors of the mainstream Korean society still seem to reject many of the foundational ideas of the Hyukshin network. Thus, some teachers in Hyukshin schools end up questioning the meaning of the Hyukshin model itself.

For the values and practices of Hyukshin schools to be sustained, there will need to be an evolution of Korean society towards greater equality so that the fear of falling in the social hierarchy is not so pervasive. Mr. Lee Hyunwoo added, “혁신학교가 애들 행복한 거 안다 우리도. 그런데 우리는 행복한 걸로 만족 못 한다. 애들 대학을 좋은 데 가야 한다” “the reality is that parents are not satisfied with their children just being happy. They all feel that their sons and daughters need to go to prestigious colleges.” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview). This, again, shows how regardless of the various efforts the school makes to education as whole people and as future democratic citizens, the undermining such stereotypes is a long and grinding process.

Like every school, Bongjoong High School has its contradictory aspects. Some of these relate to different understandings of the "essence" of education. The principal stated that the "essence" of education is helping students find happiness. However, Ms. Ahn said, "행복이 중요한 게 아니란 거지. 진로, 진학. 일반계, 대학. 이게 거대한 벽이에요"

"Contemporary Korean society believes that the essence [of education] is not focused on happiness. A single-minded focus on college entrance and careers prevents that (Bongjoong H, Teacher Ahn, Interview). Mr. Lee Hyunwoo reflected the concerns of many of our interviewees when he said, "저는 이제 한국 교육의 가장 큰 불행은 이 경쟁적인 시스템이라고 생각하고요" – I think the biggest misfortune of Korean education is this competitive system (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview). In spite of the challenges, many faculty members at Bongjoong High School are looking forward to a brighter future. Mr. Lee stated, "한국 교육의 가장 큰 희망은 정말로 좋은 교육을 하고자 하는 학부모와 교사가 있다는 거예요" – that the greatest hope of Korean education is that there are parents and teachers who want to offer a good education." (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Mr. Lee Hyunwoo said that policy makers should provide more support to Hyukshin schools. He said, "이걸 하겠다라는 현장의 어떤 구성원, 학생과 학부모와 교사가 있으면. 꾸준히 정책적으로 지지해주고, 울타리를 쳐줘야 된다고 생각해요" Of there's anyone, such as students, parents, and teachers, who wants to make a change, the policy makers should constantly support them." (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview). Unlike pressuring them or giving them more work, simply creating a guideline for them and supporting them would be helpful.

In the near future, the teachers and administrators wish to avoid ranking schools, which creates such widespread dissatisfaction towards Hyukshin ideas. Ms. Lee Sunmin stated that educators should conduct research projects that study the advantages of Hyukshin schools and disseminate their findings to the public. Ms. Lee said, “이제 가끔씩 혁신학교에 대한 부정적인 기사가 신문에 나서, 그것 때문에 더욱 국민 여론이. 아, 공부 안 시키는 학교” – “I feel like the negative articles about Hyukshin schools manipulate the public to gear towards the pessimistic side even more. They think that Hyukshin schools lack good education.” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview). Ms. Lee thinks it's important to share positive experiences and outcomes to change the public's perception of Hyukshin schools.

Ms. Lee wants to eliminate the impression that Hyukshin schools give unlimited freedom to students. Therefore, rather than emphasizing only one side, such as students' personality, it's essential for the school to create a balance. However, it would appear that one major challenge for the school is not only changing public perceptions, but also addressing some of their internal dynamics so that no students or teachers feel that Hyukshin schools do indeed have problems with discipline and motivation. Our evidence in this report and in some of the other case studies indicates that the public perceptions are not entirely unfounded.

## **Conclusion**

Bongjoong High School strives for a well-integrated education. The school promotes student voices in developing democracy and student autonomy and confidence. The school also provides extensive counseling for college preparation. Given the democratic and horizontal structures at Bongjoong, teachers freely express their opinions to administrators, and teachers also take suggestions and feedback from students. This open-mindedness supports all relationships: student-teacher, teacher-teacher, and teacher-administrator.

One Bongjoong student, Lee, was proud of the healthy relationships between teachers and students. She said, "서로 친하고 소통이 잘 된다고 했잖아요" – I feel closer [to the teachers] through the full and open ways we communicate with one another (Bongjoong H, Student Lee, Interview). Another student, Choi, considered students' relationships with their teachers at school to be "엄마 아빠 같이 편한 존재예요" – as comfortable as [relationships with] one's mom and dad (Bongjoong H, Student Choi, Interview). She said, "편하게 그냥 어제 오늘 무슨 일이 있었는 데 하면 선생님도 같이 공감해주세요" – I can share my daily life experiences with my teachers, and they always show me a lot of warmth and compassion (Bongjoong H, Student Choi, Interview).

Bongjoong High School acknowledges that high-quality college preparation is one crucial role of high school due to its role in giving students access to high-paying and prestigious jobs later on. Bongjoong High School's specialized academic support programs and customized guidance help develop students' academic and non-academic skills. This support and guidance also help students to consider career options. Students at Bongjoong High School have opportunities to discover and delve into their interests earlier than students who attend a traditional school.

In class, teachers encourage group learning and team collaboration, and classroom activities are frequently led by the students. As a result, students can strengthen their presentation skills and reflect on their knowledge. They learn to be autonomous, self-determining agents in an open and democratic society. Principal Lee believes that students in Bongjoong High School can embody their ideas well and clearly, and that this skill will help them to find their life direction. It will also give the students the skills and the discipline to strengthen Korean democracy.

## **Heesung Middle School**

### **Introduction**

*About the School.* Heesung Middle School is located in the Dongdaemun District of Seoul. The school became a Hyukshin school in 2015. It has 20 classes, 45 teachers, and 513 students. The socioeconomic status in this precinct is slightly lower than average for Korea, and most Heesung Middle School students are from middle class families.

Heesung Middle School is a private school for boys and is affiliated with a major university, so it is very unusual in comparison to the majority of Hyukshin schools, which are typically public and coeducational. Heesung Middle School is on an unusually beautiful campus and its students regularly see university students playing on spacious sports fields in front of the school. The school had some similar values to those of the Hyukshin philosophy even before the school was designated as a Hyukshin school because of its mission: “Democracy in Education.” The school has been well-established and sustained over many years by loyal alumni and parents. As a testament to the school’s valuing of democracy, even before becoming a Hyukshin school, teachers took the time to consider students’ opinions and administrators encouraged regular communication among school staff. Hence, the Hyukshin philosophy of education already had a strong institutional presence in this school years before the Hyukshin movement gained momentum in South Korea and arrived in Seoul.

*School Emphasis.* The following are two focal Hyukshin values that Heesung Middle School emphasizes:

1. Democratic decision-making; and
2. Classroom innovation.

Heesung Middle School actively incorporates various democratic decision-making practices in order to ensure that the voices of all stakeholders within the learning community are heard. According to the school's principal, Jungwoo Yoon, teachers at Heesung Middle School have real power in decision making. He explained, “뭐 교직원 회의에 발언권을 높이 준다던지” “he school gives teachers many opportunities to express their opinions in faculty meetings.” (Heesung M, Administrator Yoon, Interview).

Students also have substantial autonomy to express their ideas and opinions. The school's student council serves as the voice of the student body, and is fully supported by both teachers and school leaders. One teacher said, “토론을 하고 회의를 하고 아이들한테 주권을 맡기려는 그 문화가 이 학교 자체에 있어서, 아이들은 그런 의사를 자유롭게 게재할 수 있는 분위기가 마련되어 있어요” “This school has a culture where teachers give authority to students and students discuss and hold meetings through student council, so students can freely express their voices (Heesung M, Teacher Yang, Interview). Students feel that the student council effectively allows students to share their opinions with teachers and school leaders.

In addition to the democratic decision-making processes of the school, Heesung Middle School teachers and leaders are intent on providing learning opportunities that incorporate innovative instructional practices. In the classroom, teachers actively utilize pedagogical approaches that encourage students to be critical thinkers who lead their own learning. Examples of these pedagogical approaches include groupwork, project-based learning opportunities, and active discussion. Such classroom innovation allows students to not only gain a deeper understanding of the content they are learning but also maintain academic rigor. Students say they appreciate the inclusiveness they feel in the school, due to its innovative instructional approaches.

## School Leaders

The school's elected principal, Jungwoo Yoon, has been at Heesung Middle School since 2017, when the school was already a Hyukshin school. Though he is now in favor of the HSSM, Mr. Yoon initially hesitated to become the principal of a Hyukshin school due to the misconception that teacher voices would overpower the principal's authority:

원래 학교라는 것이 교장, 교감 관리자에게서 좀 지배가 되고 통제가 되고 그다음에 일사불란하게 구동이 되어야하는데, 혁신학교같은 경우는 관리자 중심이 아니라 평교사 중심의 교육 시스템이라는 얘기를 제가 들어왔기 때문에 그것이 편견일 수도 있고 아닐 수도 있지만, 교장 교감의 목소리보다 평교사의 목소리가 더 어필이 되고, 더 주장이 되고 또 그런 교육 시스템이란 얘기를 들었기 때문에, 관리자 입장으로 볼 때는 경계가 되죠.

I was a bit hesitant because generally, schools are, in a sense, controlled by the principal and vice-principal in order to run smoothly. I may or may not have been biased, but I heard that Hyukshin schools were too teacher-centered. I worried about the teachers' voices overwhelming the principal or vice-principal. (Heesung M, Administrator Yoon, Interview).

Through his experience as a Heesung Middle School principal, however, he became fond of the democratic education. He realized that teachers were adhering to democratic decision-making practices, which allowed the school to make school-level decisions efficiently and effectively.

Vice-Principal Hyunsoo Nam has been working as a middle school vice-principal for five years. Before becoming a vice-principal, he taught high school math. He has a firm belief that Heesung Middle School has been practicing Hyukshin values even before the school was selected to become a Hyukshin school. He stated that the school motto was always democratization (민주화), a central Hyukshin value. Mr. Nam said, “이건 희성학원의 고유한 가치관인지, 혁신학교의 가치관인지, 불분명하잖아요” “It is unclear whether democracy is a unique value of Heesung Middle School or if it is derived from the Hyukshin philosophy.” (Heesung M, Administrator Nam, Interview).

***Leader Perception of Heesung Middle School as a Hyukshin Private School.*** Principal Yoon and Vice-Principal Nam highlighted several unique aspects of a private Hyukshin school. First, Principal Yoon emphasized the important role that Hyukshin funding plays in establishing an effective learning environment for students. According to Mr. Yoon, financial support through the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education (SMOE) for Hyukshin schools is a considerable benefit. There has been a decrease in the number of classes due to the decrease in the number of students, and consequently, some teachers have been forced to retire. However, with the support of the Hyukshin funds, the stability of teacher's positions at Heesung is better secured. Second, Mr. Nam explained the benefits of this funding system as a private school, specifically highlighting the interaction between autonomy as a private school and increased funding as a Hyukshin school. He stated, “사립 입장에서는 자유도가 클 거 아니에요. 어떤 예산과 취지만 부합하면 그 범위내에서 자율적으로 우리가 하고싶은 것을 영악하게 하는거죠” “As a private school with more autonomy, as long as there is an alignment between the budget and purpose, the school can freely use its funds within that boundary.” (Heesung M, Administrator Nam, Interview). Through the interaction of increased budgetary freedom and autonomy as a private school, Heesung Middle School is able to provide better learning opportunities for students.

***Leadership Style: Adherence to Democratic Administrative Practice.*** Heesung Middle School's motto embodying democratic principles reflects the school's leadership style well.

Vice-Principal Nam stated the following regarding the school motto:

우리 교훈이 민주화예요. 학원의 민주화, 사상의 민주화. 생활의 민주화가 교훈인데 혁신학교에서 실제 학교에서 가장 영향받는 부분이 민주적인 운영이에요 경영. 근데 경영이 이미 저희들은 그렇게 이루어지고 있었던거죠 학교 경영 자체가.

Our school motto is democratization. The democratization of the academy, of our philosophy, and our life. One of the most influential components of Hyukshin schools is their democratic school management. But that is what we were already doing in terms of school management. (Heesung M, Administrator Nam, Interview)

The leadership team believes that the school has always embodied democratic principles, even before it was chosen to become a Hyukshin school. As examples of its democratic ethos, Mr. Nam said that the leadership team gives teachers a greater voice in faculty meetings, and that teacher leadership positions are decided through election, rather than by appointment. By being a Hyukshin school, Heesung Middle School is able to continue implementing its democratic values.

Heesung Middle School leaders believe that effective and balanced communication with teachers is a central component of effective democratic administrative practice. According to Principal Yoon, the school embodies democratic values through a balance in power between the leaders and teachers. He stated, “저 스스로도 좀 민주적으로 교사들의 의견을 개진하고 추진하도록 유도하는 사람이었고, 평교사들도 그렇게 뭐 자기 주장이 옳고 맞다 그렇게 주장하는 사람도 없었고” “I myself tend to promote teacher opinions in a democratic way. The teachers are not strongly opinionated. They[don’t] strongly assert that only their thoughts are the correct ones (Heesung M, Administrator Yoon, Interview).

There is a sense of mutual respect between the administrators and teachers, which collectively forms a democratic decision-making process. The vice-principal also confirmed this leadership style by acknowledging that communication (의사소통) is key to ensuring a democratic environment (Heesung M, Administrator Nam, Interview). Through mutual respect for each other’s voices, the leadership and teachers are able to uphold democratic decision-making processes.

## Teachers

*Teachers' Perception of Hyukshin Schools.* While the principal and vice-principal at Heesung Middle School emphasized continuity in instructional and administrative practices in recent years, the teachers expressed a different perspective. Teachers felt personally and professionally challenged by teaching at a Hyukshin school and sought to innovate with their teaching accordingly. The schools' HHD was initially worried that the Hyukshin movement would lead to a lack of academic rigor. The HHD stated, “아이들을 공부도 안시키고 아이들이 무조건 활동만 하니까 아이들의 학업성취도가 낮지 않을까. 처음에는 그런 생각을 많이 했어요” “I used to think students might fall behind academically because the school would not make students study and students would only participate in activities.” (Heesung M, HHD, Interview). He conceded that Heesung Middle School, like most Korean schools, was focused on academics and the transfer of knowledge before becoming a Hyukshin school.

After turning into a Hyukshin school, however, teachers had to start transforming their pedagogical practices in ways that he found exciting. According to the HHD, “[혁신] 활동들을 한게 아이들에게 창의력이나 사고력을 할 수 있는 바탕이 된거더라고요” “innovative practices became the basis for creativity and deeper thinking.” (Heesung M, HHD, Interview). Heesung Middle School's transformation from a traditional school to a Hyukshin school resulted in teachers progressing from emphasizing academic rigor to implementing innovative teaching.

At Heesung Middle School, teachers improve their instruction through:

1. (PLNs) and Entrepreneurial Learning Networks;
2. Classroom innovation; and
3. Creativity.

*PLNs and Entrepreneurial Learning Networks.* Heesung Middle School teachers seem to take full advantage of a wide array of PLN opportunities outside of school. Ms. Yang, one of Heesung Middle school teachers, stated that she regularly participates in a PLN. She stated, “연수도 이루어지고 있고요. 지역별로도 모이고요. 아니면 1박 2일 연수도 있고, 많거든요” “There are many teacher learning communities outside school, professional development opportunities by region, or a two-day PD session.” (Heesung M, Teacher Yang, Interview). At these sessions, teachers gather in order to design curricula and share information together. This PLN extends into online spaces, where teachers can keep in touch by giving each other feedback, update blogs on teaching, and share resources.

Most of the professional learning opportunities mentioned by teachers, however, were entrepreneurial. In these cases, teachers actively reached out externally for guidance on a personal level, often using digital technologies to help them. All three teachers who were interviewed provided examples of entrepreneurial networks they participated in. The HHD has become a part of an informal network regarding Hyukshin schools. The HHD stated, “계속 선생님들끼리 카톡으로 어떤 활동들을 저희 학교에서 하니까 좋았더라” “t was great to communicate with teachers about which activities were effective at their schools through Kakaotalk.” (카카오톡) (Heesung M, HHD, Interview).

Another Heesung Middle School teacher, Mr. Lee, described the nature of cross-disciplinary collaboration with other teachers in the HSSM:

학교간 같은 과목끼리의 교류를 통해, 학교간에 교류를 통해서 교사들이 실험을 거듭하고 실패하고, 수정하고, 보완하는 연구회. 그런거를 많이 만들어서 문화를 전파하는게 중요한 것 같아요... 특히 요새는 인터넷으로 서로의 학습지라던지 경험담을 너무 쉽게 공유하거든요.

It is important to form a lot of collegial relationships through collaborating across different schools for the same subjects and share a culture where teachers can share experiences of projects, failures and modifications... especially these days, we can easily share each other's study materials or experiences through the Internet. (Heesung M, Teacher Lee, Interview)

Teachers use a variety of networks and methods to implement innovative pedagogical practices. Especially with technological advancements, teachers are able to take full advantage of their PLNs or entrepreneurial networks.

Ms. Yang, a Heesung Middle School teacher, also sought guidance from teachers external to Heesung Middle School. She said that she started to develop an interest in Hyukshin-relevant professional learning opportunities and, as a result, reached out to teachers external to Heesung Middle School. She stated, “다른 학교 선생님들과 의논하고 아니면 다른 선생님들의 소스를 받아다가 제가 오히려 그 학교에서 구성을 해보고 교육을 해보는 케이스였어요” “spoke with teachers working at other schools, got resources from them and then implemented them in my class.” (Heesung M, Teacher Yang, Interview).

***Classroom Innovation.*** Heesung Middle School teachers center their instruction around innovative practices that encourage students to actively engage in learning and bolster students' motivation. Teachers craft their instruction with a focus on students' interests and needs rather than simply maximizing their academic outcomes on tests. According to one teacher, “학생들 자체를 어떻게 이해하고 도와주어야 되느냐 이런 부분으로 비중이 많이 바뀐거 같아요” “I have shifted my focus to how I can help students and enable them comprehend the curriculum.” (Heesung M, Teacher Lee, Interview). For this teacher, getting to know students better was key to improving instruction.

Such crafting of teaching towards students and their interests has been confirmed by a Heesung Middle School student, Hwanho Choi. He stated, “선생님하고 학생들하고 상호작용, 질문하면서. 학생들도 모르는건 또 물어보고, 선생님들도 그거에 대한 다시 설명을 해주고” “Teachers and students talk together and ask each other questions. When students do not know something, the teacher explains the material again.” (Heesung M, Student Choi, Interview). The student expressed that such communication occurs frequently in class and that it helps him to learn scientific theories better.

Another student, Joonsung Shin, also had a positive experience with innovative classroom instruction. He stated, “수학 기구 같은 걸 선생님께서 도안 같은걸 주셔서 잘라서 엮어서 만들었는데. 만드니까 되게 기쁘고 상도 주셔서 좋았어요” “I made a mathematical tool by linking cut out pieces that the teacher provided. I was so happy to make the tool, and the teacher gave me an award.” (Heesung M, Student Shin, Interview). Rather than simply resorting to solving math problems, the teacher chose to employ fun learning moments for students.

**Critical Thinking.** Another focus of Heesung teachers is students’ critical thinking skills. The HHD said that since Heesung Middle School has become a Hyukshin school, students have been encouraged to learn and think autonomously. One activity was on introducing Korean culture (우리나라 한국의 문화 소개하기), where students researched the theme and decided the format of a presentation regarding Korean culture. According to the HHD, “아이들이 자유롭게 사고하고 창의있고, 자기 생각을 발표할수 있는 능력을 키우는 자리거든요”— “Students [at Heesung] can think freely and creatively and develop the ability to express their thoughts.” (Heesung M, HHD, Interview). Such innovative practices help students to learn on their own.

Choi described a typical classroom activity the following way, confirming Heesung

Middle School teachers' effort to promote students' critical thinking skills:

모둠활동을 하다 보면은 제가 알고 있는게 있고, 그 친구가 알고 있는 지식이 있는데, 모둠활동을 하다보면 그걸 나누게 되는거니까. 어? 이런생각도 했네. 가끔 그래서. 제 지식이 좀더 채워지는거 같아서 저는 학업적으로 좀 더 도움이 된다고 생각해요.

When I do a group activity, it will be clear that I know this thing and others know that topic. We work together and can share what we know with each other. So sometimes there is what we can call a “lightbulb moment.” This is when I can I feel that my knowledge is expanding. I believe this kind of experience is beneficial, from an academic point of view. (Heesung M, Student Choi, Interview)

Classroom activities such as group projects or presentations create more opportunities for students to critically think through subjects themselves and have more “lightbulb moments.”

Through interacting with the course content, peers, and teachers, students at Heesung Middle School are able to improve their critical thinking skills.

### **Students**

Two students shared their experiences at Heesung Middle School, highlighting the following characteristics that make the learning community an established Hyukshin school:

1. Classroom innovation; and
2. Democratic education.

***Classroom innovation.*** Heesung Middle School students report that they are cognizant of a wide variety of innovative instructional practices that the school employs, which not only make learning fun but also allow students to be more motivated in class. The major innovative instructional techniques that students mentioned can be grouped into two categories: collaborative learning activities and project-based learning opportunities.

Group-learning activities, a common pedagogical tool of the Hyukshin school movement, are embedded in many Heesung Middle School classes. When scaffolding occurs in a group, students can develop their own knowledge and skills. Shin, at Heesung Middle School student, learned from group projects that each student has his or her own strengths. He stated, “제가 알고있는게 있고, 그 친구가 알고 있는 지식이 있는데, 모둠활동을 하다보면 그걸 나누게 되면서 제 지식이 좀더 채워지는 것 같아요.” “Through group work, my friend and I can share our expertise, so sometimes I feel I am expanding my knowledge.” (Heesung M, Student Shin, Interview). He was pleased with innovative classroom activities that he regarded as new and different approaches to learning. He said, “무작정적으로 수업만 진행하는거보다 다양한 활동을 해서 진행하다보면 아무래도 학생들도 그냥 수업하는것보단 이해가 좀 더 잘 돼요” “Students have a better understanding [of the material] and participate more actively by doing diverse activities instead of just listening to what the teacher says.” (Heesung M, Student Choi, Interview). Heesung Middle School students are motivated to understand the course content on a deeper level through group activities.

Group activities are not only academically beneficial but also help to build a strong rapport among students and provide an important foundation for students’ future collaborative work with professional colleagues. According to Choi, “가끔 덜 친했던 친구들하고도 같이 모둠활동을 하게되는 경우도 있는데 그러면서 서로 친해지는 경우도 한 두번 본 거 같아요”— “Sometimes when students do group activities with students who they were not close to before, students become friends through the group work (Heesung M, Student Choi, Interview). Since an important part of democratic education has to do with social solidarity, Heesung Middle School

has a number of practices in place like these that could and should be shared with other Hyukshin schools.

In addition to group work, Heesung Middle School teachers have implemented project-based learning opportunities in their classrooms. Students provided examples of the various ways project-based learning has been implemented into classrooms of differing disciplines. According to Shin, “기술이라는 과목이 있는데, 그 과목에서는 종이로 교과서 몇 권을 만들 수 있는지 실험하고, 권총을 만들기도 해요” “Students are able to conduct interesting experiments in life skills class, such as how many textbooks can be made from [a certain amount of] paper or what is involved in assembling a model pistol.” (Heesung M, Student Shin, Interview). Such projects allow students to not only stay motivated in class but also develop critical thinking skills.

Korean class is another example of where project-based learning has been implemented. Joonsung Shin, who took Korean class, noted that the activities done in class helped him learn the topic on a deeper level. He stated, “국어 수업 같은 걸 해도 그냥 수업만 하시는 게 아니라 신문 만들기 활동이나, 여러가지 또 사진 취재 같은 것도 찾아보고 그런 활동을 해요” “Students don’t just follow along with the teacher, but they get to make newspapers, or report on issues through photo-journalism.” (Heesung M, Student Shin, Interview). After completing this activity, Joonsung understood the book the class was reading on a deeper level.

There are many benefits to project-based learning activities: students learn how to be critical thinkers, are motivated to study harder, prepare for their future careers, and form positive relationships with their teacher and classmates. Shin mentioned, “단순한 수업이 아니라 활동들이랑 연결해서 해주시는게 좋았어요, 그리고 학교가 학업적으로 많이 도와줘요” — “Classes are not held just for the sake of having classes, but for connecting knowledge with purposeful activities that will be useful later in life. I enjoy the classes, and the school helps me

academically.” (Heesung M, Student Shin, Interview). Through project-based learning opportunities, students apply what they experience to generate new knowledge.

Shin stated that he wants to become a musician, and a memorable activity for him was making a pen-flute with an empty plastic pen. The school introduced him to volunteering opportunities, and now he is teaching music to multicultural elementary school students. As can be seen from these examples, students at Heesung Middle School are exposed to various project-based learning experiences that allow them to build not only knowledge but a sense of self.

***Democratic Education.*** Heesung Middle School students were aware of the democratic practices that that school was attempting to implement as a key school emphasis, though they were unsure about the effectiveness of these practices. Regarding whether the school is democratic or not, Shin stated, “그런 면도 있고 아닌 면도 있는데. 일단 학생들이 원하는 프로그램을 많이 하는 것 같아요” “Sometimes the school is democratic, sometimes it is not. At least, the school provides a lot of programs that students want.” (Heesung M, Student Shin, Interview). This is a choice model of governance, and not a democratic model, however. Still, at the end of the interview, he said “학생회가 교장 선생님과 면담도 해서 원하는 의견 같은 거 전도해줘요” “he student council delivers students’ opinions to the principal.” (Heesung M, Student Shin, Interview). Heesung Middle School tries to be democratic, but it isn’t always apparent to students like Shin how or why such practices are implemented.

## **Parents**

***Parent Information.*** We interviewed one Heesung Middle School parent, Ms. Kim. Who was the chairperson of the Heesung Parent Association in 2018. Heesung Middle School, as a rule, elects a parent of an eighth grade parent as the chairperson of the Parent Association, and Ms. Kim was appointed on the recommendation of other parents. As the chairperson, she worked

to develop the parents' consent for Heesung Middle School to be reapproved as a Hyukshin school.

**Conception of Hyukshin Schools.** In Korea, students are assigned to middle schools by lottery or by location within the school district that their houses are located in. Bounded by this system, Ms. Yang, a parent, was worried that she had no choice other than to send her child to a Hyukshin school. She said, “내가 이학교가 혁신학교를 하건안하건 상관없이 저는 이학교에 아이를 보낼 수 밖에 없는거죠. 배정을 받았기 때문에. 그런데 혁신학교를 한다고하니 걱정이 되었어요”—“I was forced to send my child to Heesung Middle School regardless of whether the school was a Hyukshin school or not. I was worried about the school becoming a Hyukshin School.” (Heesung M, Parent Kim, Interview). According to Ms. Kim, many parents initially opposed the HSSM due to concerns about academic rigor, but they eventually voted in favor of reappointment as a Hyukshin school because they believed that the additional funding granted to Hyukshin schools would benefit their children.

**Critical and Appreciative Viewpoints.** According to Ms. Kim, Heesung Middle School parents' perspectives of Hyukshin schools have fluctuated between being critical and appreciative. Because parents often express contradictory sentiments, it is hard to understand their viewpoints without unpacking the points of tension. The following section examines both parents' critical and appreciative opinions of Heesung Middle School. Parents are critical of:

1. City regulations of private schools; and
2. The fixed curriculum for college entrance exams.

Parents appreciate:

1. Funds enabling diverse school activities; and
2. The emphasis on character development and relationships.

Through our interviews, it became evident that parents can have both critical and appreciative evaluations of different aspects of Hyukshin schools simultaneously. Sometimes those conflicting evaluations are difficult for parents to manage. For example, they both want their children to be happy and to excel on the CSAT eventually. While theoretically this is possible, in practice it is rare (OECD, 2016). This is a common concern in all of the 16 schools in our study's sample. It may be becoming universal as students from more and more countries compete for access to top universities.

***City Regulations of Private Schools.*** When it comes to school curriculum, private schools, in contrast with public schools, are relatively free from the regulations of the SMOE. However, for a private school to become a Hyukshin school, it must become accountable to the SMOE. Ms. Kim, a Heesung Middle School parent, worried about changes to the school's curriculum, caused by becoming a Hyukshin school, being an additional burden for teachers:

이제 혁신학교를 하면은 교육청에서 지원을 받는거거든요. 지원을 받음으로 인해서 교육청하교의 어떤 약속이 이루어진다고 말씀을 하시더라고요. 내가 이런이런 지원을 하는 대신 너네도 이런이런 약속을 지켜줘라 이런. 그런데 이제 그 약속이라는데 자체가 선생님들이 뭔가를 교육청에서 시키는 대로 해내야 하는 업무부담이 있는거예요.

Being a Hyukshin school means getting support from the SMOE. By getting funding, schools are required to follow some rules of SMOE. Since we, the SMOE, are supporting you, the school, this way, we want you to keep some promises. But the promise itself is a burden on teachers to do what they tell them to. (Heesung M, Parent Kim, Interview).

She concluded that being a private school in the Hyukshin movement meant that there would be some form of interference from the SMOE. However, she also thought that even if the autonomy that a private school can have in terms of curriculum might be reduced by becoming a Hyukshin school, the Hyukshin school funding would enable the school to provide more resources to

students, such as high-quality curricular materials. This was a trade-off that she thought was worth making.

***Fixed Curriculum for College Entrance Exam.*** It is well-known that Korean students are encouraged to attain high academic achievement from grades K-12 due to the competitive college entrance system. There are mainly two ways that Korean students can get into a college: one is through rolling admissions called su-si (수시), evaluating students based on their GPA and activities. The rolling admissions system may not require as high of a score on the college entrance exams. The other admissions system is called jeong-si (정시), and student evaluations are primarily based on college entrance exam scores. In 2019, 76.2% of students got into college through su-si and 23.8% through jeong-si (<https://news.joins.com/article/22494351>). Though more students enter college through su-si than jeong-si, Korean students and parents are still very worried about college entrance exam scores; worries about test scores are repeatedly mentioned by Hyukshin school parents, as shown in the interview with Ms. Kim. Ms. Kim stated, “저는 처음에는 사실은 저희 학부모 같은 경우는 혁신학교라는 이미지가 좋지 않았어요. 왜냐하면 저희 한국 교육 실정이 보통 이미 중학생이 되면 대입이란것에 몰두하게 되었거든요” “Parents like her initially did not have a good image of Hyushin schools because the reality of Korean education is that starting in middle school, students focus on college entrance exams.” (Heesung M, Parent Kim, Interview).

National college entrance exams have great importance for parents and their children. Students can take this exam only once per year. Every student takes same exam. This leads schools to follow a national curriculum for students to learn the material that is tested on the exams. Parents worried that Hyukshin schools might neglect some components of the national

curriculum since teachers have more freedom to determine their school's curriculum. Ms. Kim stated:

주변에서 어떤 학교가 혁신학교를 했는데 그 학교는 혁신학교를 하면서 교과 수업을 선생님들이 마음대로 하더라 라는 얘기를 들어서 그러면, 1 학기 내에 수업이 이렇게 이루어져야지 교과서 진도가 이렇게 나갈 수 밖에 없는데, 혁신학교를 하면 선생님들이 이 틀을 다 깬다는 거예요. 진도를 안나가도 되고. 교과서 위주의 수업이 아니라. 선생님들이 자발적인 창의적인 수업이 이루어지는거죠. 그런데 그게 물론 좋긴 하지만 현 한국 시점에 교육 상황에서는 맞지않는 시스템이었던 거예요.

I heard that at a different Hyukshin school, teachers changed the curriculum. That means teachers break the guidelines that are designed [so that students can] complete coursework within a semester. They are not required to finish the whole curriculum. [Hyukshin classes are] not textbook-oriented. [They are] creative, spontaneous class[es] for teachers. It is good, but it is not the right system for education at this point in Korea. (Heesung M, Parent Kim, Interview)

According to Ms. Kim, parents worried about the teachers' authority to alter the curriculum. The worries stem from the conception that an innovative school curriculum may negatively impact their child's college entrance examination test results. Ms. Kim emphasized that many parents' ultimate interest is in their child's grade, which they think is prioritized by higher education institutions, and not school activities. She said, “내 아이가 이번 중간고사 기말고사 성적을 몇점을 받아오냐는 관심이 많은데 평소에 이 과목의 수업은 어떻게 이루어지고는 관심이 없어요.” “Parents mainly care about midterm and final exam grades, and are less interested in how those classes are taught.” (Heesung M, Parent Kim, Interview).

Funds Enabling Diverse School Activities. According to Ms. Kim, there were many parents of Heesung Middle School students who had initially opposed the school's application to be a member of the Hyukshin movement. These parents were content with the prestige of the

school. They changed their minds, however, when they observed some of the benefits that additional funds given to Hyukshin schools can provide for their students.

Ms. Kim was one of the parents with doubts in the beginning. However, she said, “우리 회성중이 혁신학교를 하게 된 그 시점에서부터 이유에서부터가 굉장히 좋은 취지에서 시작을 하셨구나라는 것을 제가 알게된 거예요” “I realized that Heesung Middle School’s change to a Hyukshin school was well-intentioned.” (Heesung M, Parent Kim, Interview). Ms. Kim acknowledged that the increased funds allowed students to have a more diverse range of learning experiences.

***Character Development and Relationship.*** According to Ms. Kim, it is not true that all parents are only interested in their kids’ grades. In her words, most of the parents perceived that test scores and attending an elite SKY university like Seoul National University is important in Korean society, but they also believed that without character development, their children could not be good citizens. Ms. Kim shared her thoughts regarding the importance of character development:

제 주변에 굉장히 엘리트 코스를 밟고 서울대에 입학한 그런 자제도 제가 많이 봤어요. 그런데 그 부모님들의 골인 지점은 서울대학교였는데, 서울대학교에 아이가 입학하고나니 그 다음 고민이 뭐냐면 우리아이 어떡해요. 공부만해서 그런지 자기밖에 몰라요. 이 사회안에서 다른 구성원들과 잘 섞이지를 못해요 라는 고민을 많이 듣게됐어요. 저도 그런 고민을 보고 처음에는 서울대에 들어간게 굉장히 부러웠지만 나중에 그 부모님의 고민을 듣고는 아 나는 우리애는 저렇게 되지 않았으면 좋겠어라는 생각을 하게 된거죠.

Around me, I saw kids go through the elite course and enter Seoul National University. The parent’s goal was to have their child enter Seoul National University, but afterwards, they worried about their child’s well-being. They said, “My kid is selfish and cannot interact well with others in this society, maybe because studying was the only thing he did.” At first, I envied that their child was accepted to Seoul National University, but when I heard about such parental concerns, I realized I did not want my son to be like that. (Heesung M, Parent Kim, Interview)

In this sense, some parents believe that Hyukshin schools can teach students not only to be smart, but also to be good citizens who are happy and fulfilled.

Ms. Kim appreciates the efforts that Heesung Middle School is making to promote her son's character development. She especially emphasized the role that teachers play in the students' character development. Ms. Kim stated, “담임선생님께서 잘 중간 역할을 조금씩은 해주시는거 같아요” “The homeroom teachers are effectively playing the role as intermediaries.” (Heesung M, Parent Kim, Interview). For example, teachers give advice on how to make friends. Also, during class, they put students in groups to encourage collaboration. Parents are aware that positive student-teacher relationships and a collaborative learning environment allows their children to develop their character and play an active role in a democratic society.

## **Discussion**

All school reforms have implicit theories of change (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012). Reforms “have a purpose that has to be achieved, tools to achieve that purpose, and practices to arrange those elements in a particular way” (ibid, p.4). This discussion section centers around the Hyukshin school model as seen from the viewpoints of the different stakeholders through the lens of Hargreaves and Shirley's implicit theory of change for education reform. The process of reform requires deliberations on what to change and how to change. Questions that this deliberation might raise include: What would Heesung Middle School achieve by being a member of the Hyukshin school (purpose)? What tools do the educators use to achieve Hyukshin goals? What practices have been used and refined? Finally, to what extent is Heesung Middle School's theory of change aligned with a broader theory of the Hyukshin school movement?

These questions, centered around the purpose, tools, and practices of Heesung Middle School education reform, are answered in this discussion section.

Regarding the purpose of the school's reform, Heesung Middle School emphasized democracy even before becoming a Hyukshin school. Administrators and teachers believed that their schools already pursued the democratic values that the Hyukshin school movement also values. Those we interviewed reported that prior to becoming a Hyukshin school, Heesung supported democratic practices, where teachers were involved in the school's decision-making, and where students had autonomy in expressing their opinions through the student council.

If Heesung Middle School was already democratic, the question remains regarding why the school chose to become a Hyukshin school. One of the reasons that the school decided to become a Hyukshin school is the additional funding they would receive from the same as a Hyukshin school, which would allow the school to implement a wider range of student learning opportunities. Administrators, teachers, parents, and even students recognized that the school was able to organize diverse school activities due to this funding. In addition to the financial benefits, the school leadership and teachers should create venues to discuss what it means to be a Hyukshin school in particular, and how it could be of value not just for Heesung Middle School, but also for other schools in Seoul. That way, the school can find more value in taking on an active rather than passive role in the Hyukshin movement.

Heesung Middle School, as a Hyukshin school, will have to expand the tools that can be used to facilitate democratic practices. The administrators encourage teachers to express their opinions during frequent faculty meetings. The parent association also plays a role in facilitating communication with the teachers. The student council also has a role to play in creating a democratically run school by conveying students' opinions to the administration and faculty.

Faculty meetings, the parent association, and the student council are all perceived as beneficial to the school and essential to achieving its mission by all of the stakeholders we interviewed.

In terms of the instructional tools used for education reform, Heesung Middle School provides an array of learning opportunities for students. This is mainly through innovative instructional practices that include project-based learning and group activities. In addition, a wide range of extracurricular activities are provided to students. Through these practices, students are motivated to study, go to school, and find their career paths. These are the intended outcomes of the Hyukshin movement. Students, parents, and teachers believe that these innovative instructional practices allow for positive student development in areas like character and communication skills.

The challenge lies more in clarifying the architecture of tools, a structured formation of a learning community where voices of teachers, parents, and students are heard. Each of the stakeholders are supportive of Heesung Middle School, yet do not seem to have clear guidance on how to effectively practice Hyukshin values. For example, teachers sought guidance from teachers outside of Heesung through entrepreneurial networks, but primarily on an individual level through personal effort and not on a systematized, collective level. School leaders and teachers are passionate about improving instructional practices that align with Hyukshin values, but there seems to be a lack of structured teacher communities and networks that enable them to collectively work with each other. There is also room to develop educational reform tools that better address parent and student voices. Some parents are initially worried about sending their children to a Hyukshin school when there are assumptions that Hyukshin schools lower student achievement. Students are aware that democratic practices are implemented by the school, though they are unsure about the effectiveness about such practices. A proactive measure to

incorporate parent and student voices would allow Heesung Middle School to expand upon the tools used for Hyukshin education reform.

## **Conclusion**

Heesung Middle School strives for democracy in education for all of its administrators, teachers, and students. Despite initial doubts about Heesung Middle School becoming a Hyukshin school, teachers, parents, and the school community voted to become a Hyukshin school. They did so with the expectation that Hyukshin funds can bring to the school an increased number of high-quality activities for students to engage with.

This school has its own distinct identity. Its staff value democratic education. They cultivate a discussion-based faculty culture and organize activities that promote students' academic interests and foster their character development. The school community reported that their school has a good reputation in the local community as a good private school, regardless of its being a Hyukshin school or not. For them, being a Hyukshin school allows them to organize what they call a "student-centric" curriculum and to retain staff members, which may not have been possible without additional funding from the SMOE.

The strengths of this school are that stakeholders are motivated to put effort into improving students' learning and school culture. Administrators believe that a school has to be a place that teachers can participate in the decision-making process. Teachers constantly improved the quality of their classes by incorporating project-based learning opportunities and group activities. Students say they are grateful that they came to this school, which allows for them to be exposed to diverse club activities, student council, and project-based classes. Some of the parents who initially doubted the HSSM ended up supporting the school, by believing that the school's choice to be a Hyukshin school would improve its quality even further. Members of the

school community trust each other, and this seems to be a signature strength of Heesung Middle School.

At the same time, the school seemed to cultivate an insular detachment from other Hyukshin schools. Compared to the robust within-school PLCs at Heesung Middle School, teachers at Heesung tend to find outside professional development opportunities on their own. It may be beneficial for the school to build stronger networks with other Hyukshin schools, which could enable them to learn from each other. Heesung Middle School has an opportunity to contribute to the development of democratic education in Seoul and Korea by sharing its strategies and its positive and negative experiences with other Hyukshin schools.

## **Namseoul Middle School**

### **Introduction**

*About the school.* Namseoul Middle School is a public school that was founded in 1985. It is located in the Dobong-Gu district of Seoul, which has a relatively low socioeconomic status compared to other districts. This school consists of 23 homeroom classes with 484 students and 45 faculty members. After becoming a Hyukshin school in 2011, this school was re-designated as Hyukshin school in 2019 thanks to a unanimous decision by the teachers. This school has emphasized class innovation, open classes, and student autonomy for the last nine years.

The school leaders and the HHD have played important roles in making Namseoul Middle School innovative and caring. The principal is regarded as open-minded by teachers and has contributed to creating a free and horizontal atmosphere by respecting teachers' opinions. The principal believes that teachers' voluntary participation is the most important driver of the Hyukshin movement. Also, the HHD has acted as a mediator between departments in this school and has significantly contributed to building harmonious relationships among teachers. Despite the fact that most of the original members of this school have transferred to other schools at this point, due to the practice of cycling out teachers between schools every five years, the faculty and staff have created a strong school culture thanks to the efforts of these individuals.

### **School Emphases**

The three emphases at Namseoul Middle School are:

1. Professional learning communities (PLCs);
2. classroom innovation; and
3. a community of care (dolbom).

The principal maintained that all success the school has enjoyed can be attributed to the dedicated teachers and the collaboration and research that takes place in their PLCs. Teachers feel that they are able to sharpen their student-centered instructional skills during research meetings and regular open class sessions throughout the year.

In a similar vein, classroom innovation is also a defining characteristic of Namseoul Middle School. Some teachers use their professional judgement to foster a cooperative culture among students, and others prioritize helping students to develop their identities as is appropriate for young adolescents. While they tailor their curriculum to and class session to the specific needs of their particular students, they all strive to implement student-centered learning techniques and build an inclusive classroom.

The school also emphasizes inclusiveness and strives to create a community of care (or *dolbom*) among teachers and students. To create this type of community, teachers first needed to respect students and allow them to make realizations for themselves and grow independently. This type of autonomy, discussed previously, will allow them to develop positive attitudes towards learning, which will translate to developing other important skills. The community of care, also referred to as *dolbom*, is a central component of the Hyukshin movement, and this school serves as an exemplar of such a cooperative, compassionate, and respectful school atmosphere.

### **School Leaders**

The principal of Namseoul Middle School, Ms. Go, is 57 years old. She is a Biology graduate of Seoul National University and has been teaching for 35 years. She volunteered to be appointed to a Hyukshin school because she was interested in the network's mission. When she first heard about Hyukshin ideas in 2011, she was hopeful that they would be put into policy.

When the SMOE created a Hyukshin school in her district, she recalled, “학교에서 선생님들이 원하고 시도하고 했던 것들이 이제 드디어 정책으로 되는구나, 하는 굉장한 설레임이 있었죠,” “There was a lot of excitement about the fact that what the teachers wanted and tried at this school has finally become an official policy.” (Namseoul M, Principal Go, Interview). She knew that the competition of the college entrance exam and student alienation were big issues, and while she didn’t know how to solve them, she saw Hyukshin schools as a driver for this change.

Ms. Go was encouraged by the success of Hyukshin schools. During her interview, she said:

학교 내에서 우리는 국가 주도상 교육이 워낙 강하니까 그런 것들을 극복하고, 교사나 학생들과의 민주적인 관계를 형성하고, 수업에서 혁신이 이루어지고 등 여러가지가 있지만, 그런 것들을 하기 위해서 학생 뿐만 아니라 교사, 학부모 등의 모든이들이 계속 끊임없이 학습을 하면서 본인들 스스로가 성장을 할 때 그런 것들이 구현이 된다고 생각해요.

Our country has strong state-led education. We can overcome this through democratic relationships with teachers and students, and by innovating in our classes. To do that, not only students, but also teachers, parents, and others must continue to learn together. (Namseoul M, Principal Go, Interview).

Ms. Go hoped that eventually, Hyukshin schools will disappear as separate entities. She stated, “혁신학교의 미래라는 것이 특별한 어떤 학교의 형태로 존재하는 것이 아니라 학교 전체로 퍼져서 그들의 가치관, 그들의 추구하는 바로 스며들어야 한다고 생각해요,” — that the future of Hyukshin schools does not exist in a specific shape, but should spread throughout the schools and permeate their values and pursuits (Namseoul M, Principal Go, Interview). Her philosophy is that all schools in Korea should eventually embody Hyukshin values.

*PLCs and PLNs.* Ms. Go participated in regular cross-school administrator meetings where leaders discuss challenges in their respective schools. This PLN allowed administrators to collaborate with and gain insights from other Hyukshin schools. She said, “이 지역에는 굉장히 어렵고, 흔히 말해서 부모로부터 보살핌을 받지 못 하거나 아예 없거나 하는 아이들이 많아서 어릴적부터 누적된 결손이 많은 아이들이 많아요,” “here are so many students in need; because they have not received any care from their families, they have developed learning problems.” (Namseoul M, Principal Go, Interview). For Ms. Go, it was obvious that there was a need to better understand such student needs, and PLNs provided an opportunity for her to discuss such topics. She noted, “그 원인이 저희가 생각해보니까 너무너무 다양한 거예요. 습관에서 비롯된 것도 있고, 지적인 능력도 있지만, 난독증이 있다던가, 정서적인 문제가 있다던가, 학대를 받았던가,” “There are so many different causes of low achievement of students such as habits, dyslexia, emotional problems, and abuse problems.” (Namseoul M, Principal Go, Interview). These understandings were possible due to her participation in PLNs.

The principal recognized the role that PLCs play within Namseoul Middle School. She believes that the success of this school relies almost entirely on the teachers’ propensity to continually study and develop professionally. She explained:

제가 “학습중심”이라고 말한 것은 사실은 교사를 중심으로 두고 말한 것입니다. 혁신 학교가 목표하는 것을 이루기 위해서는 시스템도 중요하지만 그걸 담당하고 있는 교사들의 끊임없는 공부가 필요하다는 의미에서 학습이라는 표현을 했고, 물론 학생들한테도 학습이 너무 중요하죠.

What I used to call “learning-centered” actually means “teacher-centered.” Teachers’ learning and development are required to achieve Hyukshin goals. We call it “learning” because it requires teachers to be in charge of constantly improving. Of course, learning is very important for students, too. (Namseoul M, Principal Go, Interview).

The teachers could achieve this type of learning through their PLCs, which included open classes, research meetings, and general faculty meetings. Ms. Go believes that there are no weak teachers at her school. She said that all of the teachers earnestly work with one another to improve their teaching and that they all are dedicated to the enhancement of their students' learning.

Ms. Go explained how the open classes are central to the PLCs by explaining how:

전문 학습 공동체를 통해서 하는게 가장 많아요. 저희가 1년에 4번 수업 공개를 해요. 2주 동안 수업 공개를 한 후에 전체가 모여서 수업 연구회를 하거든요. 그때 본인이 수업에서 보고 배운 점, 느낀 점 혹은 그동안 학생들과 혹은 학교에서 느낀 문제점에 대해서 서로 토론하는 수업이 있어요. 전체 교직원이 토론하는 기회가 6번 정도 있고요. 그 다음에 교원 학습 공동체라고, 그룹으로 모여서 이야기하는게 여러개 있고요.

There's a lot that we accomplish through our PLCs. We open our classes four times a year. After two weeks of publicizing an open class, the entire teaching faculty gets together and has a research meeting. We discuss what teachers learned, what they felt, or what they have experienced with their students. There are about six opportunities for the faculty to have these discussions each year. (Namseoul M, Principal Go, Interview).

Ms. Go said that, “저희같은 경우는 일반적인 경우라고는 보기는 힘든게, 아주 초창기부터 됐었고. 구성원들이 랜덤하게 모였는데도 굉장히 좋은 상태이기 때문에, 모든 혁신학교가 다 이런식은 아니고, 이거는 상당히 운에도 좌우되는 부분이기도 하고,” “It's hard to say that our school is normal because we've been successful since the beginning. We're in very good shape. Not all Hyukshin schools are like this.” (Namseoul M, Principal Go, Interview).

**Classroom Innovation.** Ms. Go believed that Hyukshin schools were exemplary in the Korean context because they accounted for the wide range of students, teachers, and needs that were specific to different schools. She mentioned how, “다른 정책처럼 교육청에서 목적과 과정을 딱 가지는 것이 아니라, 각 학교에서 선생님들이 교육을 개혁하기 위해서 학교

현장 단위에서 출발을 했기 때문에, 하고 있는 범위가 굉장히 다양한거죠,” “Unlike other policies of the SMOE, which have pre-determined goals and processes that all teachers at each school must carry out, the Hyukshin school model aims to reform education.” (Namseoul M, Principal Go, Interview). She said:

대한민국 모든 중학교 아이들을 보자면 굉장히 많은 학생들이 다니는데, 우리는 그 중에서는 좀 적게 가는 편이에요. 첫번째 이유는 경제적으로 어려운 아이들이 많아서 그렇고요. 두번째는... 학교에서 수업하는 방식이나 이런 것들이 외우기 위주라던가 그런 것이 아니기 때문에, 학원에서 하는게 학교 시험에 크게 도움이 되지 않기 때문인 것 같아요.

Most middle school students in Korea go to hagwons, but fewer students do in our school. The first reason is because there are a lot of kids with financial difficulties. Secondly...the way we teach in our school is not focused on rote memorization, so learning in hagwons is not useful for our school exams. (Namseoul M, Principal Go, Interview).

Ms. Go outlined the differences between the assessments used at her school before and after they became a Hyukshin school. In this context, she said:

원래는 [혁신학교가 되기 전에] 1년에 4번 시험을 보면서, 지필평가와 중간에 수행평가가 들어가는데, 올해부터 시험을 두번으로 줄였어요. 그리고 과정 수행평가를 더 많이 늘렸어요.

Before our school became a Hyukshin school, there were four tests a year, which included multiple-choice questions and performance evaluation. However, it now has been reduced to two tests per year. We have also increased the proportion of process-based performance evaluations. (Namseoul M, Principal Go, Interview).

She recognized the pressures that high-stakes exams will put on students in the future but felt that Korea wrongly treated the college entrance exam as the entire definition of education. Ms. Go felt that, “우리나라는 대입이 마치 교육인 것처럼, 교육이 대입은 아니잖아요. 그것처럼 대단히 착시효과가 크거든요,” “Education isn’t all about college admissions. Such illusions have a great impact on students (Namseoul M, Principal Go, Interview).

Rather, she believes, “한 인간이 살아갈 수 있도록 모든 능력과 기술과 교양같은 것들을 배우는 것들이라고 생각합니다,” “It should be all about learning the skills and culture that will help students live and mature.” (Namseoul M, Principal Go, Interview). This does not mean that there is a narrow academic core that should be prioritized, but true education should encompass academic skills. Ms. Go contends that, “학생들한테서 얻어낼 수 있는 성취도 라는 것이 결국은 숫자화 된 성적이에요,” “test scores are just digitized number grades.” (Namseoul M, Principal Go, Interview).

**Community of Care.** The principal believes that, “제 개인적으로는, 혁신학교가 지속성을 갖기 위해서는, 저는 선생님들의 학습과 공유와 소통이 가장 중요하다고 생각해요,” “learning, sharing, and communicating are the three most important things Hyukshin schools need in order to be sustainable.” (Namseoul M, Principal Go, Interview). She said that, “물론 지적으로도 성숙하고,” “Education should produce intellectual maturity as well.” (Namseoul M, Principal Go, Interview). She expressed the hope that her school will produce individuals who are willing to show empathy in spite of their personal desires, for the sake of the community, and to avoid conflict. She strives to make this sense of harmonious living a main objective of her school. She provided an example of inclusive practices in action at her school:

아주 구체적으로 학급 야영을 예로 들면, 나는 어떤 활동들이 하고 싶고, 그렇지만 우리 반에 몸이 약한 아이가 있다던가 했을 때, 내가 그 아이를 배려해서 내가 하고 싶은 것을 양보하면 모두가 다 즐겁게 할 수 있도록 한다던가 그런 거죠.

If students want to do a certain activity during a school camping trip, they should know how to accommodate other students, including who are physically weaker than them, by deciding to do another activity that includes everyone. This decision makes everyone feel satisfied. (Namseoul M, Principal Go, Interview).

She hopes that building this sense of empathy will produce a community of care for her students.

**Parent Perceptions.** The principal noted how parents of children at this school seemed to be receptive to Hyukshin policies. However, there was some conflict with parents concerning the choices of school textbooks. Parents wanted textbooks with a lot of text, like in hagwons or traditional schools, whereas Hyukshin teachers tend to favor activity-rich textbooks with noticeably less text. She said:

학교 선생님들이 [교과서를] 1 순위로 정한 것이 학부모들에게는 불만인거예요. 어떤 면이 불만이나면, 선생님들이 정한 교과서는 굉장히 여백이 많은 교과서예요. 텍스트가 뽁뽁하지가 않고, 어떤 예시를 주고 학생들이 활동할 수 있는 여지가 많은 교과서였어요.

The textbooks chosen by the schoolteachers were dissatisfying for the parents. This is because parents think the textbook that teachers choose have a lot of empty space. The textbook does not have much to read but it gives examples for learning and has a lot of room for students to do activities. (Namseoul M, Principal Go, Interview).

She also originally faced some pressure from parents in the form of negative comparisons with hagwons. A common criticism she heard was that, “학원에 가면 하루에 영어 단어를 20 개, 30 개 외우게 하는데 왜 우리는 그런식으로 안하죠?” “Kids memorize 20 to 30 English words a day in hagwons. Why don't you do that?” (Namseoul M, Principal Go, Interview). Ms. Go seemed to dismiss these concerns, convinced that her teachers have been making the correct choices in their textbook selections.

### **Teachers**

Three teachers were interviewed, who together have had more than 15 years of teaching experience on average. One teacher has been working for five years in Namseoul Middle School. The other two have been at this school for six years and were hired through the invitation system rather than the more common transfer system.

**PLCs.** According to teachers, PLCs at Namseoul Middle School play an integral role in developing a learning community that meets all student needs. The teachers each had their own initial hopes about Hyukshin school's educational model when they first came to Namseoul Middle School. They each emphasized that Hyukshin values align with their visions of education and what they hope to accomplish as teachers. One teacher, Ms. Lee, said:

사실 저는 이 근처에 있는 학교들에서 선생님들 모임을 학교 내에서 계속 조직하려고 애를 썼었거든요. 그런 것들이 잘 안됐는데 혁신학교는 그런 것들이 잘 된다고 듣고 저희 교육철학하고 맞으니까 써서 왔어요.

Actually, I've been trying to organize teachers' communities. Unfortunately, it didn't work out. However, when I heard Hyukshin schools have well-developed learning communities, I decided to come to this school because it aligns with my educational philosophy. (Namseoul M, Teacher Lee, Interview).

PLCs are not just pleasantries for the staff, HHD (혁신부장), Mr. Kim, believes. Due to the fact that many Namseoul Middle School students come from poor families, self-affirmation and cooperation among the staff are absolutely necessary for students to experience on a daily basis. He described how teachers in this school eagerly collaborate:

제가 하고 싶은 걸 혁신학교가 아닌 학교에서는 학교장과, 동료 교사와, 학생들까지 포함해서 학부모까지. 설득해야 될 대상이 혁신학교에서는 훨씬 적습니다. 별로 많이 설득하려고 애쓰지 않아도 인정하고, 협력하고. 동료 간에 소통과 네트워크 이런 게 굉장히 활발하고. 신뢰할 수 있는 교장과 동료들이 있고. 학생들을 설득하는 것도 학교가 전체적으로 이런 방향성을 가지고 있다 라는 부분을 학생들이 알고 있고. 동료교사들도 다 이제 방향성 자체는 동의하면서 가기 때문에. 힘이 당연히 덜 들죠.

Compared to general schools, Hyukshin schools make it easier for me to pursue what I want because there are so few people I have to persuade to change their minds. In general schools, I would have to devote a lot of time and energy to persuade the principal, fellow teachers, students, and parents to commit to Hyukshin principles and practices. I don't have to do that here. Everyone acknowledges each other's professionalism and cooperates with each other. The constant communication among colleagues is effective. I trust my principal and my colleagues. Persuading students is also easier because they're already aware of the school's direction. Since my colleagues agree with this direction, it requires less work. (Namseoul M, Administrator Kim, Interview).

Generally, teachers are enthusiastic about their opportunities for continued professional growth at Namseoul Middle School. They appreciate that this school is so supportive and feel loyal to its mission. Ms. Lee stated how her collaboration with other teachers at this school suited her instructional style and her aspirations for curriculum design by explaining how:

선생님들과 같이 연구하고 그 다음에 어떤 교재를 같이 만들어내고 그런 작업들이 내게 의미 있다고 생각을 했었고 그에 그러면서 수업 방식 중에 하나도 어떤 강의식보다는 그룹 액티비티이나 모든 활동을 주로 많이 하면서 그런 수업을 좀 잘할 수 있는 학교를, 이런 데 최적화되어 있는 데를 찾다 보니까 여기가 가장 알맞다고 생각됐어요.

I realized that studying with other teachers and creating textbooks together was personally and professionally meaningful to me. Before, I really wanted to work in a school where classes are more based on group activities rather than lectures. Thus, I decided that this school is suitable for me. (Namseoul M, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Mr. Kim said that, “학교 안에서 자연스럽게 선생님들이 어떤 주제를 가지고 공부하는 모임을 만들고 교육청에서 그걸 예산 지원도 하고. 지원을 장려하는,” “teachers naturally make study groups related to specific subjects, and the SMOE funds and supports them.” (Namseoul M, Administrator Kim, Interview). However, he also noted how there is excessive SMOE involvement in these PLCs and the HSSM:

그런데 그걸 교육청에서 해 이러면 뭐 아 이걸 해야 돼? 라는 부담감을 가지고. 예산을 가지고 써야 돼 만들어야 돼. 그래서 교사들이 자발적으로 즐겁게 공부 할 수 있는 어떤 모임이 정책화 되면서 의무적으로 감당 해야 되는 상황이 되는. 어떤 양면성이 있는 것 같아요. 이제 혁신학교가 더 이상 확산되지 않는 내부적인 요인 중 하나이기도 하고.

When the SMOE starts to order teachers to do something, the teachers really start to feel the burden when they are finding ways to use up their budget or making something new just to show that they follow the new mandate. So, the groups that teachers voluntarily created to study in a fun and natural environment soon become mandated as a policy, and the experience feels like an imposition. This is one of the internal, bureaucratic factors that is well-intentioned but could prevent Hyukshin schools from expanding. (Namseoul M, Administrator Kim, Interview).

In general, the teachers maintained that collaboration is central to their work. Ms. Lee said, “네트워킹이 되게. 공식적으로, 비공식적으로 소통이 되게 잘 되어 있어요,” “We have a lot of formal and informal communication among teachers.” (Namseoul M, Teacher Lee, Interview). She was pleased that the high level of communication was so productive, explaining how, “아이들하고도 소통도 있지만 선생님들하고 소통을 통해서 아이들을 좀 더 알아보고. 어쨌든 선배 교사한테 도움을 받고 그런 게 저는 좋은 것 같아요,” “We are able to know much about our students and can get help from other teachers, which I like (Namseoul M, Teacher Lee, Interview). A strong PLC culture of “incessant communication” (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012, p. 177) makes Namseoul Middle School a better learning environment for students.

Ms. Lee also shared her experience of writing and keeping observation notes about students in other teachers’ classes. She stated, “저한테 개인적으로 크게 고르자면 수업 연구회를 통해서 가서 관찰일기를 썼던 것,” — what was very impressive for me was to write observation notes in the PLC for class research (Namseoul M, Teacher Lee, Interview). She elaborated on this point by explaining how:

우선 저는 가장 여기 와서 좋았던 것 중에 하나가 다른 학교에서는 수업 공개가 그냥 명목상으로만 존재하는데 저는 이 학교 와가지고 제가 계속 꾸준하게 있었던 게 다른 선생님들 수업을 들어가서 수업 반사 일기를 계속 썼었어요.

One of the best things for me in this school was that having an open class in other schools was very perfunctory, but after coming to this school, I have continuously been writing observation notes while joining other teachers’ open classes. (Namseoul M, Teacher Lee, Interview).

In particular, she believes that writing observation notes in open classes was very helpful in improving her expertise as a teacher.

She explained that:

그 관찰기를 쓰면서 대개 수업을 보는 눈 그다음에 가장 크게는 학생들을 보는 관점이런 것들이 좀 되게 넓어지고 좀 다각적인 측면에서 바라볼 수 있었고 그다음에 수업과 수업이 동떨어진 게 아니라 과목과 과목이 연결될 수 있다는 지점들이 많은 걸 알았거든요.

By writing observation notes, I have more insight into a class, and broaden my perspectives about its students. I realize that there are many possible points which could be used to make connections among various subjects. (Namseoul M, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Hyukshin school teachers are encouraged to continuously reflect upon and improve their instructional skills through such activities.

***Classroom Innovation.*** Namseoul Middle School teachers emphasized the importance of creating learning opportunities that truly interest students. Mr. Kim was asked what was most important in his school. He said it was, “더 자유롭게 배우고. 어쨌거나 지금 한국 사회가 학생들한테 주는 또 사회적인 압력,” “learning with more freedom, because Korean society pressures the students too much.” (Namseoul M, Administrator Kim, Interview). Students at Namseoul Middle School were afforded the opportunity to pursue their own interests. Students benefited from student-centered practices such as class discussions, group work, and presentations. Ms. Yoon, a math teacher, emphasized that this school is one with the reputation of having students proactively study. She stated, “아이들이 좀 즐거운 학교. 수업에 좀 즐거운 아이들이 많은. 그래서 수업에서 놀고 있는 아이, 작은 아이, 아무것도 하지 않는 아이, 이렇게 무기력한 아이들이 좀 없는 그런 학교라고 생각을 해요,” “the school has a reputation to be where most students enjoy taking classes. We only have a very few students who don’t focus in class, or who don’t participate in class.” (Namseoul M, Teacher Yoon, Interview). This contrasts with traditional schools, where students are not expected to participate so much in their courses.

By using more participatory and engaging teaching methods, teachers want to help their students think critically and to become comfortable with sharing their ideas with their classmates. They also wanted students to continuously reflect on their lives to affirm themselves, growing in self-confidence and competence. Mr. Kim stated, “사실 그 안에 숨겨진 저의 의도는 그 과정을 통해서 자기를 계속 돌아보기 바라는 거예요,” “My genuine intention in teaching is wanting the students to continuously reflect on their lives through this process.” (Namseoul M, Administrator Kim, Interview). This type of learning may be achieved through games, discussion, or collaborating with classmates on a personal level.

While teachers generally support the innovative, student-centered practices in Namseoul Middle School, Ms. Yoon also mentioned how she had experienced difficulty transitioning away from the traditional lecture-based style of teaching she was used to. She discussed how, “그런데 혁신학교라는 곳에 왔으니까 웬지 일제식 수업이라는 걸 내려놓게 될 거라는 생각이 드는 거예요. 그런데 저는 그게 굉장히 불편 하더라구요,” — she knew she would have to give up her lecture-style teaching because this is a Hyukshin school. However, she felt uncomfortable with it (Namseoul M, Teacher Yoon, Interview). She continued by stating, however, that “저는 제가 생각하기에 수학이라는 과목은 좀 일제식 수업이 필요하다라는 생각이 드니까,” — “I think some lecture-style teaching is necessary in math class.” (Namseoul M, Teacher Yoon, Interview). She believes that each subject has suitable teaching methods. These reports indicate that there may be some resistance to student-centered practices, either due to the continued belief in the value of traditional methodologies that teachers bring with them to Hyukshin schools, or because of subject-matter cultures in disciplines like mathematics, where teachers feel that the integrity of the discipline requires frontal instruction.

*Community of Care.* Namseoul Middle School teachers emphasized the importance of establishing a sense of community of care, where students learn how to collaborate with and respect each other. Regarding the definition of Hyukshin school, Ms. Lee responded by saying that, “혁신학교를 한마디로 되게 정의하기는 힘들지만 경쟁이나 갈등보다는 협력적인 문화를 가지고 있는 학교라고 그렇게 설명하고 싶어요,” “it’s hard to define it in one word, but I think Hyukshin school has a cooperative culture rather than having a competitive culture.” (Namseoul M, Teacher Lee, Interview). Mr. Kim expanded on this notion by saying that, “협력하고. 그리고 서로 배려하고 돌보고 이해하는 그런 쪽으로의 전환? 그러면서도 충분히 배울 수 있다는 걸 알게 되는거,” “It’s a school shifting towards a cooperative, thoughtful culture and yet still values learning.” (Namseoul M, Administrator Kim, Interview).

He also expressed that this type of non-competitive atmosphere was why he initially chose to come to the school. He stated, “학교를 옮길 때는 혁신학교를 가고 싶다고 생각을 하고 왔구요...어떤 식으로든 [교육이] 좀 바뀌어야 될 부분이 있다고 생각을 하는 거고. 개인적으로 제가 가지고 있는 교육철학이랑 [맞아서] 오게 됐습니다,” “When I had to transfer, I wanted to transfer to a Hyukshin school... I thought education needed transformation. Also, my educational philosophy aligns with that of the Hyukshin school. Thus, I decided to come to this school.” (Namseoul M, Administrator Kim, Interview). He expanded on this answer by describing how he was against the stress students experience as a result of the high-stakes exam culture:

특히 학생들은 좋은 성적을 받아야 되고 좋은 학교에 진학해야 되고, 그게 장래 자기 경제적인 생활과 직결된다는 압력을 계속 받고. 그게 실제로 학생들이 공부하는 게 제대로 된 공부가 아닌 쪽으로. 제대로 배우지 못하게 하는 쪽으로 영향을 미친다고 생각하고요. 그런 걸 키워드로 얘기를 한다면 경쟁이나 이런 쪽에서. 협력하고. 그리고 서로 배려하고 돌보고 이해하는 그런 쪽으로의 전환? 그러면서도 충분히 배울 수 있다는 걸 알게 되는 것.

Students are especially under pressure to get good grades and to go to good schools. They are forced to think about how school is connected to their economic future. I actually think this pressure is why students can't study and learn properly. It is difficult to cooperate in such a competitive situation. We need a shift towards caring for and understanding each other and realizing that you can still learn by doing that. (Namseoul M, Administrator Kim, Interview).

Mr. Kim then reflected how a central component of the school's community of care was predicated upon building an atmosphere of inclusiveness that ensured students were not alienated:

예를 들어서 기업이나 어떤 학부모도 학교 열심히 다니면 이 정도 할 줄 알았더니, 이것 밖에 안되네 이려고 지금 판단하는게 아니라, 그냥 각자 가지고 있는 뭔가를 좀 기다리면서 지원하는 역할을. 이 사람의 삶의 끝까지 꾸준히 하는 것.

If students aren't able to achieve their desired goals, it's important for teachers not to stigmatize them. Students are going through their own developmental processes. Thus, it would be better to wait for the student's unique talents to emerge, and then to support them, rather than to define them with a grade. (Namseoul M, Administrator Kim, Interview).

Mr. Kim said that having a compassionate school helps students who come from difficult backgrounds:

자기의 그런 상황 때문에 다 내려놓고 포기하고 그냥 어차피 이럴 거 이게 아니라. 어쨌거나 발전 가능성을 보고 지금의 기반이나 지금의 상황에서 내려놓는 게 아니고. 더 나아질 수 있고, 사회적으로 요구하는 어떤 수준에 지금은 못 미쳐도. 나한테 맞는 세상? 이런 걸 좀 찾아가거나 요구할 수 있고. 그게 다 자기 긍정과 협력과 이런 게 필요한 부분이라고 생각이 들어요.

I don't want students to give up, due to their financial difficulties or personal situations. I want them to focus on their potential and not give up. Although they currently don't fulfill their society's demands, I want them to realize their potential for growth. They might be able to find or create a world suitable for them. I think self-affirmation and cooperation is necessary for this to happen. (Namseoul M, Administrator Kim, Interview).

Namseoul Middle School teachers believe that a community of care is established when there is a strong sense of collaboration.

## Students

*Classroom Innovation.* The students interviewed were both 8th graders, randomly assigned, rather than voluntarily choosing to come to Namseoul Middle School. One student, whose name was Minsuh Oh, had played an important role in the student council as a vice president. The other student, Jaesoon Kim, had been involved in student council, and had experience of being a president in a classroom.

Both of the interviewed students were satisfied with the high engagement level and personal connections teachers made in their school. Jaesoon explained how, through his classes, “일단은 선생님께서 계속 말씀하시고 저희가 듣는 것 보다는, 저희의 생각을 말하면서 또 선생님과 소통해서 또 다른 것을 생각해낼 수도 있고. 아니면 내 생각을 한번 더 말함으로써 수업 내용을 다시 복습하는 그런 점이 있으니까,” “We are able to gain a new perspective or thought when we discuss our ideas with the teacher. Or maybe we can just review the class material by sharing our own thoughts with other classmates.” (Namseoul M, Student Kim, Interview). Teachers’ effort to employ classroom innovation allowed students to truly engage with course curriculum.

Interdisciplinary classes promote student engagement in subjects they usually are not as interested in. For instance, Jaesoon described how, “원래 저는 국어가 원래 되게 지루하고 딱딱한 수업이라는 느낌을 갖고 있었는데. 그런 것과 음악이 합쳐져서 같이 하니깐, 이해하는데 있어서도 더 재미 있었어요,” “I originally thought Korean language was a very boring and rigorous class but integrating the subject with music made it more fun to learn and understand.” (Namseoul M, Student Kim, Interview). Due to classroom innovation, students became interested in subjects that usually would not have been of interest to them.

Although the students expressed general satisfaction with the innovative classes, some students still have difficulty participating in their student-centered classes. Jaesoon stated, “학교에서도 선생님이 잘 준비하셔서 수업을 해주시는데, 학교 선생님께 여쭙보는 것도 좀 몇개 씩, 너무 많이 물어보기에는 눈치 보이기도 하고,” “At school, teachers prepare well and teach us, but I feel hesitant to ask the teacher too many questions in class.” (Namseoul M, Student Kim, Interview). This opinion contradicts the general sentiment from interviews with educators, which reported the sentiment that all Namseoul Middle School students are always open and avid participants. This same student also mentioned that he felt the teachers at the hagwon he attended were just as capable as his teachers at his school. He said, “어쨌든 학원 선생님도 전문적으로 하시는 분이니까,” “Anyway, hagwon teachers are professionals, too.” (Namseoul M, Student Kim, Interview).

**Autonomy.** When asked about anything unique about the school, Jaesoon responded, “일단은 억압이나 강제성보다는 저희 학교가 학생들이 하고 싶은 걸 하거나 학생들의 자유가 좀 더 열려 있다고 생각해가지고. 그래서 생활 할 때도 편하고 그래요,” “irst of all, rather than oppressing or forcing, the school lets students do what they want to do and to have much more freedom than is possible in most schools. That’s incredibly helpful to me.” (Namseoul M, Student Kim, Interview). Jaesoon describe Namseoul Middle School as a place where, “네가 하고 싶은 걸 할 수 있다...네가 하고자 하는 것을 많이 할 수 있다,” “Really, you can learn whatever you want to here...you actually can learn what you want to (Namseoul M, Student Kim, Interview). This is a school where students have flexibility in terms of what they learn.

The other student, Minsuh, explicitly stated that, “교장선생님도 자치를 중요하게 생각하시는거 같아요,” “The principal values autonomy.” (Namseoul M, Student Oh, Interview) when asked about the main emphasis for his school. He had come to this conviction because of the democratic way the principal runs the school:

왜냐면 그런 활동들이 발달되어 있잖아요. 근데 그게 저희 선에서 얘기할 수 있어도 만약에 그게 교장 선생님까지 갔는데, 교장 선생님이 컷하면 더 이상 반영될 수 없는 거 같아요. 그런데 선생님이 다 그런 의견을 반영해주고 실행해주시는 거 보면 교장 선생님도 그런 모토를 가지고 있는건 아닌가 싶어서.

The school activities are well developed. Even if students create an activity and they discuss it, the principal needs to confirm it. But overall, the principal seems to value each and every idea because the teachers consider our ideas and incorporate them into their instruction. (Namseoul M, Student Oh, Interview).

Minsuh also recognizes the differences between traditional school settings and the one at his school, where students are afforded opportunities to express their opinions. He encapsulated this idea by stating that:

이제 학생들이 스스로 자치하는 법을 알게 되는 거죠. 보통 초등학교때는 선생님의 의견을 많이 따르잖아요. 그런데 이제는 자기들 의견도 뚜렷하게 갖게 되고 그거를 이제 대의회의라는 곳에 가서 자신의 의견을 표출하게 될 수 있죠.

Students now have learned the idea of autonomy. We usually just obeyed what the teachers said in elementary school, but now we have our own opinions. Now, we attend representative meetings and express our opinions, which are reflected throughout the school. (Namseoul M, Student Oh, Interview).

Minsuh said, “저희 학교는 체육복을 입고 등학교를 해도 상관이 없고 사복도 너무 춥거나 더운날에는 허용하고. 그래서 시험시간에도 편안하게 시험볼 수도 있고 공부할 수도 있고. 자유로워서,” “The school doesn't care if I wear a gym suit or not. I am allowed to wear any clothes I like, regardless of the weather, so I can take a test or study comfortably (Namseoul M, Student Oh, Interview).

Minsuh also likes how the school allows its students to enjoy their free time:

“휴게실이라고 해서 그 학년이 편안하게 쉬는 시간에 쉴 수 있고 아니면 수업 시간에 그 교실에서 이동해서 토론수업이나 창의적인 수업을 할 수 있게. 그런 교실을 만든다고 하더라구요.” “During break time, we’re allowed to relax at the student lounge, which is currently being built. This room can also be used for debate club and other creative clubs.” (Namseoul M, Student Oh, Interview).

While Minsuh acknowledged an increase sense of autonomy at school, he also felt that some students became too accustomed to this relaxed atmosphere. He explained, “그게 너무 많이 주어지니까 학생들도 거기에 적응해서 더 이상. 자율권을 받은만큼 거기에 열심히 부응해서 해야 하잖아요? 근데 그걸 안하고 받기만. 이게,” “Since students get autonomy, they should learn to live up to it. But students don’t live up to the expectations.” (Namseoul M, Student Oh, Interview). Minsuh went on to state that students are afforded opportunities where they can organize events and govern themselves in the student council, of which he is the vice president.

He illustrated this autonomy in the student council with a specific example where:

그래서 학년끼리 나눠서 회의하는거 어떻게 그래서. 저번에 실험삼아 한번 학년회의를 했는데 저희 학년은 굉장히 반응이 좋았어요. 그리고 저희 양심선이라고. 비가 올때 우산 없는 애들 있잖아요. 그래서 학교에 양심적으로 들고 다닐 수 있게 해서 반에 5개 정도씩 우산이 있는데 그걸 건의해서 실행되고 있다.

We had an end of the year meeting for each grade once as an experiment, and generally received positive feedback from students. For example, we noticed that some students often forget to bring umbrellas when it’s raining. We decided to buy communal umbrellas and set up a system where we have five umbrellas in each class for anyone to use. This policy became official due to our suggestions. (Namseoul M, Student Oh, Interview).

Minsuh also believes that Namseoul Middle School is democratic because he has been able to participate in student council meetings after school, and can see for himself that the students are self-governing..

*Community of Care.* Building a community of care within the school is first started by the teachers modeling democratic relationships. When students live in a micro-culture such as this, they begin to learn how to be caring individuals. Minsuh has benefited from this atmosphere by building intimate relationships with his teachers. He commented:

학생들과 선생님들의 관계는 동등한 것 같아요. 나이나 그러한 면에서가 아니라 같이 일을 할 수 있는. 약간 기 죽지 않고 선생님도 저희한테 말씀하시고, 저희도 선생님께 말씀 드리는 그런 관계라고 생각해요.

The relationship between students and teachers really is equal. It's not about who is older or younger, but more about how we all work together. Here, we learn how to freely tell each other our thoughts, without worrying too much about issues of power or authority. (Namseoul M, Student Oh, Interview).

This student report sharply contrasts with the traditional hierarchical relationships between teachers and students found in most Korean schools. Minsuh also expressed within his interview that these close student-teacher relationships make Namseoul Middle School students feel more comfortable participating in classes and activities. These types of respectful relationships among the members of the school community may also be viewed as factors that ultimately contribute to a more equitable school atmosphere. The creation of this type of atmosphere should, in turn, hopefully allow students to develop important personality traits that are espoused by recent reforms in character education in Korea (Ministry of Education, 2019). School staff hope that once these positive characteristics are internalized by the students, they will bring these qualities into the world outside of school in order to create a more just society.

Minsuh expressed that the atmosphere at the school was, in his opinion, comfortable due to a feeling of mutual respect between the teachers and students. He said, “아무래도 학교가 자유로운 분위기니까 선생님들도 그 안에서 자유롭게 선생님들끼리 친밀해지고. 선생님들끼리 관계가 온화해지니까 학생들도 그걸 보고 되게 편안하게 느끼지 않나 싶어요,” “Since the school gives us freedom, teachers feel free to get close to each other. The relationship between teachers has become more peaceful, and I think students feel very comfortable with that.” (Namseoul M, Student Oh, Interview). He also noted that these more equitable relationships have opened conduits of communication between students and teachers.

Minsuh said that in his school, “진로상담밖에 안할 것 같은데. 저희 학교는 그냥 일상생활에서 겪는 그런 고민같은거 선생님에게 말씀드려도 선생님들이 잘 이야기해주는 편이에요,” “Students share their personal problems and concerns with the teachers. Aside from career paths, we can discuss concerns in our daily lives to teachers because they are open to such stories.” (Namseoul M, Student Oh, Interview).

Minsuh has mentioned how he was initially skeptical about enrolling in this Hyukshin school, due to its easy-going atmosphere. He said that Namseoul Middle School had a negative reputation, as its students were perceived as low academic performers. Minsuh confided that, “사실 처음에는 별로 오고 싶은 생각이 없었어요,” “I actually didn't want to come here at first.” (Namseoul M, Student Oh, Interview). He recalled, “제가 혁신 학교라 그러니까 공부안하고 놀 것만 같아서 나중에 제 고등학교 진학에 문제가 있지 않을까 싶어가지고 좀 꺼렸어요,” “I was biased and thought that Hyukshin schools don't require students to study, so I was worried that it would be problematic in terms of attending high school.” (Namseoul M, Student Oh, Interview).

Furthermore, it had been said that the relaxed atmosphere was cause for concern, as it distracted Minsuh, and perhaps others, from solely focusing on academics. Minsuh discussed how, within Namseoul, "왜냐면 시험 전에도 별로 완전 공부하는 분위기가 잡혀있지 않고 몇몇 애들은 시험 당일에도 뛰어다니는 애들이 있고," — there isn't any kind of atmosphere to solely focus on studying even before midterm season. Some kids even run around on the test day (Namseoul M, Student Oh, Interview). For this student, one can see how a relaxed environment was, at times, transformed into a potentially harmful one in which students took advantage of their freedom and where teachers seemed reluctant or incapable of asserting the proper authority for getting things back on course.

Minsuh thought that his hagwon could supplement some of what he may miss in a Hyukshin school, but also complained how there seems to be a general tendency amongst his classmates to skip hagwon or play, instead of studying for their exams. He even noted, "학업쪽으로 진학을 생각하는 친구들에게는 별로인데, 거기에 그렇게 큰 부담을 갖고 있지 않은 애들이라면 추천해요," — that his school is not good for students who think about going to a good college but would be suitable for those who don't want much pressure (Namseoul M, Student Oh, Interview). Overall, he expressed feeling as though the atmosphere at Namseoul Middle School is not competitive enough.

As far as the school atmosphere is concerned it seems as though the most apt way to describe this student's perception of his Hyukshin school is through the Korean idiom, "너무 앞만 보고 달려갈 필요 없다," "We don't have to run too far ahead of ourselves." (Namseoul M, Student Oh, Interview). This means that students should learn to not be pressured to do more than they can handle. Minsuh likes the comfortable atmosphere at Namseoul Middle School because it de-emphasizes and alleviates the pressure of studying, as compared to other schools.

However, Minsuh is concerned with how this orientation may impact his future educational opportunities, when applying to high school and to universities beyond that. He stated that, "나중에 고등학교나 더 진학을 하게 되면은 거기서 어려움을 겪을 것 같아서," "I think we'll have a harder time in high school." (Namseoul M, Student Oh, Interview). This tension between academic excellence on the one hand, and a relaxed atmosphere, on the other contributes to any ambivalence about the HSSM that many Namseoul Middle School students may be experiencing.

When Minsuh was asked about his future plans he simply noted that, "저는 제 할일 하면서. 근데 그 일이 제가 행복한 일이 되어야 해요," "My future job is something I want to enjoy and find fulfilling." (Namseoul M, Student Oh, Interview). He maintained that the less stressful school atmosphere allows him to feel more psychologically comfortable, which consequently allows him to focus more on what makes him happy. He conceded that the leadership and group opportunities he had been afforded in school had allowed him to recognize that he wants to be a leader in the future.

It was clear that Minsuh maintains an internalized sense of caring, provided by Namseoul Middle School's learning environment. He tied his relationship at Namseoul Middle School to his greater community by commenting on how, "혁신헌교를 다니다보니까 더 학교를 벗어나 더 큰 사회에서 어떻게 하면 잘 살 수 있을까 그런 걸 알게 되는 거 같아서 제가 학교는 학업이 중요하다라는 생각을 바꾸게 되었어요," "By attending a Hyukshin school, I think I have come to know how to live well beyond school in a bigger society. I've now come to understand that a grade isn't everything in education." (Namseoul M, Student Oh, Interview). Namseoul Middle School students like Minsuh have opportunities to truly explore what they want to do in life.

## Parents

Only one parent interview was conducted in Namseoul Middle School. Kyunghee Won, a mother of a first-year student, discussed her perceptions and interactions with Namseoul Middle School. Her interview illustrated parents' general contradictory sentiments towards Hyukshin education. This common perception of Hyukshin schools entails both supporting some aspects of Hyukshin education, such as promoting student happiness, yet simultaneously criticizing some aspects, such as the academic rigor or the actual ability to prepare students to enter prestigious universities.

**General Perceptions of Hyukshin Education.** Initially, this mother was worried about her child's admission to this school because of the negative perception of Hyuksin schools. She stated, “일단 혁신이란 것에 대해서 엄마들이 딱 굳어져 있는 이미지는 공부를 안 시킨다. 그래서 이 주변 어머님들이 그래서 이사를 많이 가지거든요,” “The most basic stereotype of Hyukshin schools among mothers is that they do not make students study, and that's why a lot of the moms who live in this area move out.” (Namseoul M, Parent Won, Interview). However, after her child started at Namseoul Middle School, she developed a more positive outlook on Hyukshin education due to the noticeable change in her child's satisfaction with their school life and personal relationships with classmates and teachers.

She believed that the Namseoul Middle School's teachers have done a good job in encouraging her daughter to pursue an interest in animation. She also sees how Namseoul Middle School's teachers serve as mentors for students, through the development of intimate relationships. However, she is still plagued by an underlying worry about a lack of studying within the school. She mentioned, “아이는 본인이 일단 정해진 것에 만족해서 친구들과하고도 해피하고, 공부를 좀 안 하기는 하지만 뭐 그 정도는. 1학년이니까 괜찮은 것 같아요,” —

“My child is satisfied with what she has settled on and maintains a positive relationship with her friends. Although she does not study a lot, I think it is okay because she is only in 7th grade.”

(Namseoul M, Parent Won, Interview). This reflects the internal conflict faced by parents: They are happy about their children’s life satisfaction, while being concerned about academics.

**Critical Perspectives.** There were some criticisms from this mother concerning the overall mission of Namseoul Middle School. She had noted that overall, parents of this school want Namseoul to provide more information about Hyukshin principles in order to clarify some of its values and practices. The reason for this is explained as being due to the fact that the majority of mothers are not aware of Hyukshin principles: “어머님들이 교육청이면 교육청. 아니면 학교나 학교 처음 아이를 입학시켰을 때 총회나 아니면 아이들이 입학식 때까지는 뭐 그렇더라도, 총회 때 오시는 어머님들한테 만이라도 저희 학교는 혁신 학교고 혁신은 어떤 겁니다 라고 설명을 해주면 훨씬 더 엄마들한테 혁신이라는 거에 대한 이미지가 조금은 개선되지 않을까 싶어요,” “Either through the SMOE, or at the general assembly before the entrance ceremony, defining and explaining what Hyukshin schools are to the moms would improve the school’s reputation.” (Namseoul M, Parent Won, Interview).

While simultaneously supporting and criticizing Hyukshin education, this parent conceded that the HSSM is in a difficult position when it comes to changing Korea’s education system. Korean language, English, and Mathematics are the most valued academic subjects in Korean society, due to their requirements for eventual college admission. Hyukshin schools remain in a system in which students are required to study for the CSAT to enter college. To help students avoid an education based around cramming, and instead hold more innovative classes based on the Hyukshin educational framework, the college admission process requires further changes.

## **Discussion**

*PLCs.* Open classes and research meetings are essential for the development of effective student-centered practices and interdisciplinary lessons. The teachers at Namseoul Middle School feel that the PLCs give them the freedom necessary to sharpen their teaching skills, fulfill their professional desires, and to enact their teaching philosophies. However, even though the teachers generally believe PLCs are helpful for teachers' growth in many ways, the activities involved with the PLC are sometimes viewed as burdensome or pressuring. This is due to the fact that SMOE has tried to translate the once voluntary PLC participation into an official policy that requires teachers in Hyukshin schools meet bureaucratic guidelines. So, participation in PLCs is no longer voluntary, nor is it a matter of teachers' choice. Understandably, it seems as though the teachers are losing their initial level of enthusiasm because something that began as voluntary work has become something that they are forced to do.

*Classroom Innovation.* In terms of students' learning and development, Namseoul Middle School's principal is pleased in the moments when teachers and administrators at nearby high schools praise his school for its quality. Often, these outside parties generally note that graduates from his Hyukshin school; despite not having the highest test scores, these graduates are excellent participants, critical thinkers, and presenters who are receptive to feedback. This kind of praise from other schools shows that, at the very least, the teachers and administrators in traditional schools are coming to value the critical thinking and active student participation of Hyukshin students in their own classes. Although there is no way to know how widespread this perception actually is, the general impression is that Namseoul Middle School is producing students with qualities that are appreciated and recognized as valuable by non-Hyukshin high schools.

Furthermore, even though the teachers expressed strong beliefs about innovating teaching and learning methods within their classrooms, there still remains some skepticism about student-centered learning in regard to particular disciplinary areas. At least one teacher mentioned being uncomfortable teaching math in a non-lecture-based fashion, even mentioning that Hyukshin-style education should have tailored applications to each subject. In other words, even though teachers generally agree with the general concepts of class innovation (e.g., group-activities, discussions), some teachers are still heavily influenced by the traditional teaching methods that they had previously grown accustomed to. This is not necessarily problematic. In actuality, it could be valuable for students to experience that every discipline has its own internal rules and exceptions, and that these lend themselves to some kinds of instruction more than others.

*Community of Care.* The overall non-competitive atmosphere at Namseoul Middle School leads to inclusiveness, which can be described as a ‘community of care,’ or “dolbom” in Korean. Sung and Lee (2018) describe this concept as, “a school culture in which students always feel safe, included, and accepted based on the principle that no student should be alienated, and students should have strong relationships with their teachers,” (p. 243). If the students are participating in sports, they should learn to provide encouragement and support for one another. This type of cooperation and collaboration extends to every part of the school day, from academics to extracurriculars. Ideally, the creation of this type of atmosphere will have the intended effect of ultimately preparing students to create a more equitable society. However, it is still unknown to what extent these values will survive into adulthood. Regardless, a notable and major strength of this school lies in its inclusiveness. Consequently, it will be intriguing to follow how these notions translate into mainstream Korean society, or “real-life,” outside of the school.

***Parental Perceptions.*** Parents of students at Namseoul Middle School generally have a positive perception of the school, expressing joy in being able to see that their children are happy and encouraged to pursue their interests. However, they do seem to maintain the stereotypical view of a Hyukshin school as being a place defined by lax study habits and poor test scores. Even though the parent and student interviews yielded some negative parent perceptions of the school, their concerns do not appear to be considered major issues by the administration. Failure to recognize the parents' and students' concerns seriously may represent a missed, bidirectional learning opportunity for the community of Namseoul Middle School.

In response to these types of criticisms, it might be wise for Namseoul Middle School to organize an event with researchers about the optimal conditions for supplementing the reported lack of hagwon attendance amongst its students. This could potentially include ways that parents could support their children's learning at home without having to feel that it is imperative to send them to hagwons in the evening. At any rate, simply dismissing the parents' perspectives as anachronistic may have the unintended consequence of appearing indifferent, while a more proactive approach could engage directly with their concerns and engage them with such research.

***Autonomy.*** Despite the positive aspects of student autonomy, such as allowing students to pursue their academic interests or dress in the ways they want, it is entirely possible that the emphasis put on student autonomy by the principal has had some unintended negative repercussions. One teacher maintained that the amount of autonomy given to students has impeded upon teachers' rights. One of the students noted how many of her classmates took the freedom they had for granted, and in turn failed to meet the expectations of their teachers and classmates.

## **Conclusion**

The community of care at Namseoul Middle School is characterized by healthy relationships amongst students, between students and teachers, and amongst the teachers. PLCs have proven to be an invaluable resource for the implementation of student-centered practices that emphasize critical thinking and deep reflection. Teachers feel as though classroom innovation is a central driving factor for the success of this school, and students and school leaders corroborate this recognition of classroom innovation as a unique and positive aspect of Namseoul Middle School. Students are encouraged to participate and remain engaged through student-centered activities, that ultimately promote student autonomy. A combination of a less stressful and more inclusive environment, implementation of classroom innovation, and increased student autonomy in this Hyukshin school has meant that its community now has the propensity to allow students to reflect on what they want out of life, rather than only worrying about the next exam.

In general, each of these emphases are viewed as both positive aspects and defining characteristics of this school; however, there are some critical perspectives concerning each of them. For instance, each respective stakeholder group is aware that their school has more innovative study and classroom methods than traditional schools, but the students and parents still report that, while they recognize the value of these practices, they would prefer a more traditional form of schooling due to its propensity to better prepare students to get into a reputable high school and college. Only through the examination of such an educational system and the passing of time will one be able to tell if these worries are, indeed, well-founded.

## Ollim Middle School

### Introduction

Ollim Middle School is located in the Guro District of Seoul. This district is a community with a majority of its population categorized as being of low socioeconomic status. The school is comprised of 28 classes, 48 teachers, and 593 students in total. The school is a co-ed public school. Ollim Middle School has been part of the Hyukshin school movement since 2014. After a period of one year of preparation in order to be designated as Hyukshin school, Ollim Middle School started its first wave of the Hyukshin school model in 2015 and continued in 2019 in its second wave.

### School Emphasis

There are two major school emphases of Ollim Middle School. First, the school pursues classroom innovation centered around a strong teacher community and open classroom pedagogical practices. Second, the school provides opportunities for students to develop student autonomy and identity.

***Classroom Innovation.*** Ollim Middle School emphasizes classroom innovation. It uses PLCs to design its open classroom approach, where teachers develop a lesson together, observe a class, and give feedback. The open classroom approach has been developed with the help of teachers who initially came from Woolgook Middle School, another Hyukshin school in Seoul that is included as a case study, that is known for its exemplary open classroom processes. Ollim Middle School has since expanded its connections with other Hyukshin schools throughout the SMOE, when the faculty perceived that there are strengths in other schools from which they could learn.

Teachers and school leaders placed the highest value on this pedagogical approach. As in other Hyukshin schools, this is one in which a teacher enhances students' learning as a “촉진자,” “facilitator” or “조력자,” “supporter,” rather than purely through the delivery of content knowledge. Parents and students acknowledge that the school's emphasis on class innovation through small group activities within the classroom is strong. Ollim Middle School succeeds in giving many students opportunities to voice their opinions in class.

***Student Autonomy.*** In addition to its innovative pedagogical practices, Ollim Middle School also provides a variety of opportunities for students to develop a sense of increased autonomy and identity. One of the goals of the school is to provide opportunities for students to develop democratic leadership skills through school activities. A unique way that the school offers such opportunities is by encouraging students to self-develop student clubs, rather than relying solely on the teachers. Students not only develop the initial ideas for such student clubs but also the financial and administrative plans. Ollim Middle School encourages an overall culture of education in which students lead the process of learning.

There is a wide variety of student clubs and activities provided by the school which allow students to explore what they like doing, and what they would like to do in the future. Students say that they can explore fields such as music, foreign-language, sports, and media through club activities. This is not only fun for the students, but also allows them to explore a plethora of different vocations or careers. According to the school website, Ollim Middle School exposes students to various activities in the field of arts and sports, noting an annual student contest for musicals and plays. By being given room to explore what it is that they like doing students are then able to develop their identities and acquire a better understanding about potential career paths.

## School Leaders

**School Leader Information.** The principal, vice-principal, and HHD were the school leader interviewees. The principal of Ollim Middle School, Park Gwangsuk, was internally appointed into this role as of March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019. He has 35 years of teaching experience in the discipline of geography. Before working at Ollim Middle School, he was at Gwansuh Middle School, which is another Hyukshin school in Seoul. As he was suddenly appointed as principal, Park believed, “교사의 입장으로 제가 판단을 하는 경우가 좀 많을 것 같아요,” “school-level decision making is generally made from the teacher’s point of view.” (Ollim M, Principal Park, Interview).

The vice principal, Kim Sunhee, was appointed in 2018 and worked as a teacher for 30 years beforehand. She had not had any experience leading a Hyukshin school prior to being appointed at Ollim Middle School a year ago. She is currently in a master’s degree program at Inje University on Hyukshin education. There, she is conducting research and studying different approaches to leading a Hyukshin school. The HHD of Ollim Middle School, Hwain Jeon, is in her fifth year as HHD, and has been teaching science for 15 years. She was previously at Woolgook Middle School, one of the most developed Hyukshin schools in Seoul, before accepting a transfer request from Ollim Middle School as its HHD.

**Leadership Goals.** Ollim Middle School leaders emphasize the role teachers play in the HSSM. Mr. Park stated, “초점이 교육에 갈 수 있도록 분위기를 형성해주고,” “The main goal is to focus on education.” (Ollim M, Principal Park, Interview). This focus on pedagogy and learning may distinguish Ollim Middle School from other Hyukshin schools that emphasize topics such as student councils or community engagement, which can be relatively distant from academics.

Ollim Middle School leaders emphasizes the importance of teachers' active involvement and collaboration in classroom innovation, specifically by “수업의 설계가 아주 치밀하게 검토되고,” “critically reviewing curriculum design.” (Ollim M, Principal Park, Interview). This may be successfully done through both discussion and open classroom practices. The theme of activating teachers' professionalism is an essential strand of the HSSM. It sets it apart from other kinds of international reforms that tend to impose specific models upon teachers, reducing their independent agency in an effort to increase transparency and accountability.

**Goal 1. Teacher Support.** Ollim Middle School leaders believe that teachers should, as part of their roles, focus on providing the best instruction to students. Mr. Park stated, “혁신학교는 그래서 선생님들에게 최대한 그런 교육청이 내세우는 교육의 본질, 교육청도 본질은 내세우는 거거든요,” “Hyukshin schools should allow teachers to put forth the essence of education as emphasized by the SMOE.” (Ollim M, Principal Park, Interview). Such support for teachers may be done through, “예산도 지원해 주고 그 다음에 각종 업무를 경감시켜 주고 그 다음 업무 부담도 좀 정교하게 하고 기본적으로 선생님들이 교육에 매진할 수 있도록 분위기를” “financial support, reducing administrative tasks, refining the delegation of tasks, and creating an environment for teachers to focus on education.” (Ollim M, Principal Park, Interview). The principal explained that, “그러니까 흔히들 잡무라고 표현되는 일들을 실무사님이 해 주시고, 그리고 쌤들은 수업에 더 매진할 수 있는 거죠,” “one specific strategy used by the school was to hire two administrative managers who can take care of non-instructional tasks so that teachers can focus on their instruction.” (Ollim M, Principal Park, Interview). According to the HHD, specific tasks for the administrative managers include “수업 모임 하시고 나서 설문지 하시고 나면 그거 다 타이핑 이잖아요 . 그런 것부터 시작해서

출석점검하는 것, 공문, 이런 물건 사고 하는 것들은 이 분들이 굉장히 많이 지원해 주세요,” “typing up meeting notes and survey results, checking student attendance, developing reports, and buying school supplies.” (Ollim M, HHD Jeon, Interview). Due to the fact that one major problem with teacher morale, internationally, typically has to do with excessive non-instructional tasks, the hiring of the administrative managers should be credited with consequentially freeing the teachers time to better focus on student learning.

The vice principal highlights the important role that financial support plays in enabling educational opportunities to students. As one example, she stated that, “그 수업 모임을 할 수 있도록 계속 간식이라든가 이런 것들을 지원해 주는 거예요. 만약에 이 지원이 끊긴다면, 다시 돌아갈 수밖에 없어요,” “for group extracurricular activities, snacks are provided, which is possible because of financial support. If such support stops, the extracurricular activity will revert back to its prior secondary position.” (Ollim M, Vice Principal Kim, Interview). Overall, one thing that Ollim Middle School leaders agree upon as an important factor of Hyukshin schools is the increased ability to take care of non-educational tasks rapidly and efficiently, so that teachers are able to focus solely on teaching with a full repertoire of professional resources at their disposal.

### ***Goal 2. Active Teacher Involvement and Collaboration in Classroom Innovation.***

Another emphasis of Ollim Middle School is their goal to create an environment where teachers can innovate with their instruction, both individually and through their PLCs. The principal stated, “수업을 하면서 뿌듯함을 느끼고 수업을 통해서 자신도 성장하는 걸 느끼고 재미와 의미를 선생님들이 수업에서 재미와 의미를 통한 성장 그런 것들을 수업에서 느끼는 것,” “I want teachers to feel proud of teaching each moment of the class, feel a sense of inner growth, and find happiness and meaning through such growth (Ollim M, Principal Park, Interview). He

added, “수업 시간 1 시간 1 시간이 엄격하게 수업의 목적을 달성할 수 있도록, 그래서 수업의 설계가 아주 치밀하게 검토되고 반성 되고 다시 조율 되도록 이런 부분이 아주 강점이에요,” “In order to achieve the goal of each hour of instruction, teachers meticulously monitor, reflect upon, and change the structure of the class.” (Ollim M, Principal Park, Interview). In addition, the vice principal claimed, “나의 부족한 점과 너의 부족한 점이 모여지면 어떤 시너지를 낼 수 있을까 그러니까 학교의 안에서 교사들도 학생들도 안전하게 나의 생각을 안전하게 말할 수 있는,” “I have been interested in the synergy that results from individual teachers with weaknesses being able to safely communicate their thoughts within the school community.” (Ollim M, Vice Principal Kim, Interview).

Teachers learn that innovation is an essential part of their jobs in a Hyukshin school. The HHD sees her role as encouraging teachers to participate in PLCs. She said that “같이 선생님들 좀 쉬고 싶을 때 그래도 우리 좀 더 해볼까요 라고 하면서,” “When teachers want to rest, my role is to ask them to push themselves further.” (Ollim M, HHD Jeon, Interview).

### **Teachers**

Two teachers and one HHD described they ways in which Ollim Middle School realizes Hyukshin principles. The teachers discussed the kinds of classroom innovation that they have developed as a signature strength of their school. Their classroom innovation is defined as “배움의 공동체,” “a learning community.” (Ollim M, Teacher Kang, Interview). One teacher explained, “저희 학교의 혁신 학교로서의 기본은 수업 혁신 학교예요 우리 학교는. 그래서 수업을 좀 다들 이제 배움의 공동체 수업으로 하려고 애를 쓰고 있어요. 그래서 아이들이 스스로 만들고 발표하는 수업을 만들려고 해요,” “This learning community is one in which students are creating and presenting their ideas in class.” (Ollim M, Teacher Kang, Interview).

In this section, we provide an overview of the ways in which Ollim Middle School teachers have learned from other Hyukshin schools. We show how they have collaborated to promote their own form of classroom innovation. We also examine the ways that the system and school culture are sustained by the teachers.

*The Contributions of Founding Members from Another Hyukshin School.* Ollim Middle School was founded by a group of dedicated teachers who transferred from Woolgook Middle School, and who then took on leadership roles in establishing both their new school's classroom innovation system and culture. These founding teachers transferred to Ollim Middle School in its first year as Hyukshin school (2015). The idea was that teachers from one successful Hyukshin school could form a cadre that would successfully infuse Hyukshin principles and practices into Ollim Middle School.

The detailed process that Ollim Middle School employed when it first appointed these teachers is as follows: (1) At first, in 2014 when Ollim Middle school was in its Hyukshin preparatory period, one teacher proposed documenting its founding Hyukshin principles. (2) Then, the next year when Ollim Middle School was approved to become a Hyukshin school, this school liaised with three teachers who had led a PLC at Woolgook Middle School to build up Ollim Middle School's Hyukshin principles and practices. These four teachers shared a common understanding that classroom innovation should create a “배움의 공동체” “learning community.” (3) Three more teachers, for a total of 7 members, created a PLC in 2015 and began innovating.

According to the teachers who attended the interviews, those four teachers who transferred to Ollim Middle School contributed greatly to creation of the school's PLC culture: “여기에 처음에 혁신학교가 되도록 투표하시고 가자고 진행 하신 분이 원래 울국에서

처음에 하셨던 분이세요. 근데 그래서 그게 쪽 연결되는 과정이었기 때문에 그래서 저희가 이 정도 됐죠,” “The teachers who voted for Ollim Middle School to become a Hyukshin school were from Woolgook Middle School. As they kept working on building the Hyukshin principles here, our school was able to establish the Hyukshin culture.” (Ollim M, Teacher Jeon, Interview). Teacher Seo agreed:

울국중학교는 지금 3기 거든요. 혁신 학교의 어머니, 할머니라고 얘기를 하는 학교인데요. 이제 거기서 오셨던 세 분 선생님과 원래 계셨던 선생님 둘 그리고 저. 그리고 저희 1학년 부장님. 이렇게 이제 저희가 일곱 명에서 최대한 해보려고 애를 썼던 그런 시간이었어요.

Woolgook Middle school is in its third Hyukshin wave. They are a mother, or even a grandmother of the Hyukshin school movement. The three teachers who came from that school, two teachers, me, and the head of the 7th grader department, these seven teachers put efforts to the fullest. (Ollim M, Teacher Seo, Interview).

These seven teachers published a book explaining how they built the classroom innovation at Ollim in 2015 and 2016. A great deal of evidence has shown that the founding members, with experience from other Hyukshin schools, contributed to building the Hyukshin principles in Ollim Middle School. The focus on classroom innovation has proven to be sustainable, in large part, because it has been teacher-led from beginning to end.

***Ollim Middle School's Classroom Innovation: Learning Community.*** Like other schools in the HSSM, Ollim Middle School named its form of classroom innovation a “learning community” (Shin & Son, 2019). Through the information gathered by the teachers themselves, the ways that the school defines a learning community and manifests it can be categorized into: (1) Teacher as a supporter and facilitator, and student as a negotiator; and (2) Socio-emotional support.

First, Ollim Middle School teachers agreed that a teacher's role in a class in their school is that of a facilitator rather than a deliverer of information. Teacher Jeon stated, “교사가 조력자 라던가 어떻게 보면 사회자 역할을 할 수 있을 정도가 되면 사실은 가장 좋다라는 의견들을 많이 가지고 있고 아이들이 자기 역량을 좀 더 많이 드러낼 수 있게 수업이 디자인을 해야 된다고 생각을 하고 있거든요,” “Our teachers believe that a teacher being a supporter or facilitator in a class is the best because then, students can reveal their competency to the fullest. We believe our class should be designed that way.” (Ollim M, Teacher Jeon, Interview). Additionally, teacher Seo stated that, “아이들 안에서 배움이 일어나는 그 순간을 포착하시고 그걸 관찰한 것을 토대로 선생님들의 수업 교사에게 어떤 식으로 피드백을 주면 좋을지,” “A teacher has to capture moments that students learn something and then give feedback on that.” (Ollim M, Teacher Seo, Interview). The teachers agreed that it is more important to realize how each individual student best learns rather than uniformly delivering knowledge uniformly to groups of students.

Ollim Middle School teachers use many student-led group-activities in their classes. They believe that group activity enables teachers to better comprehend how students learn. Further, they believe students should have more opportunities to express their opinions and discuss with other students. They incorporate various pedagogical approaches including Havruta (small-group discussion) and tools (e.g. giving a whiteboard to a group). They design their classes in ways that allow for the students to engage with and then make conclusions on the questions that their teachers pose. They give a whiteboard to a student group to help to facilitate small group and whole-class discussions. Students are then required to discuss and coordinate their opinions with their peers.

The second notable point is that teachers significantly considered students' emotions in organizing their classes. One teacher said, “우리나라는 한국은 정서상이라는 말이 굉장히 보편화 되어있는 거 같아요. 우리가 수업을 만들 때에도 아이들의 마음을 움직이는 것이 되게 중요해요,” “In Korea, considering someone's ‘emotion’ is very universal. When we designed a class, we have to move students' hearts inside.” (Ollim M, Teacher Seo, Interview). Teachers at Ollim Middle School have organized student group activities in a systematic way. Their goal is for students to have enough of an opportunity to polish their opinions so that they do not feel hurt if their answers are wrong: First, students write down their thoughts individually. Then, they share it within a group. Finally, they share opinions with a whole group. One teacher stated that, in this way, students are not afraid of messing up and in turn, express their thoughts in an emotionally safe learning environment.

**PLCs.** The PLCs of Ollim Middle School aspire to have a solid system and real value. Its PLCs are organized by grade level- grade 7, 8, & 9, and are called “grade-level PLCs.” Every Monday, each grade-level PLC gathers to conduct and discuss research on the students in their grade level. The PLCs draw upon Woolgook Middle School's open-classroom approach. The faculty endeavor to create a PLC culture that is based on every teacher's willingness to participate in a space where teachers support each other. There should be no “alienated teaching” (Shirley & MacDonald, 2016, p. 3) in Ollim Middle School.

Teachers concur that their school places a high value on grade-level PLCs, where teachers who are home classroom teachers for the same grade have a weekly meeting about their classes. More than 50% of teachers volunteer to participate in this meeting, according to one teacher. To facilitate this meeting, Ollim Middle School assigns teachers strategically at the beginning of the school year as such there are some teachers who can actively lead Grade level

PLC by grade (Ollim M, Teacher Seo, Interview). Another factor that can facilitate this grade-level PLC is that Ollim Middle School initially constructed a system that teachers share a room together by grade, called “학년부 체제,” “grade system.” These teachers focus on conducting research on a class such as preparation for open-classroom activities without doing any administrative tasks.

Ollim Middle School has established its own open-classroom approach over the years. Grade-level PLCs of the 7th and 8th grade teachers are required to organize six open-classes during each school year, whereas Grade level PLC of the 9th grade must meet five times. The way that grade-level PLCs prepare for and organize opening up their classrooms is well-established: Teachers plan a lesson collaboratively within their grade-level PLCs one month before it actually will be taught. They create a “활동지,” “class activity sheet.” (Ollim M, Teacher Seo, Interview) that students can discuss a topic along with a textbook together. Then, one teacher will give a trial run in one of their classes one week before the formal open class event. In that class, teachers observe “어떻게 배움에 이르게 되거나 알게 되었는지,” “how students reach to understand a topic that is taught.” (Ollim M, Teacher Seo, Interview). Finally, teachers make changes, and then an open class teacher will offer the instruction in front of other teachers.

One teacher explained that this approach was largely inspired by Woolgook Middle School’s open classroom approach (Ollim M, Teacher Seo, Interview). Ollim Middle School has implemented this open classroom approach since 2015. Two teachers addressed how they were able to build pedagogical knowledge by participating in Ollim Middle School’s open class model.

Participation in the activities of the PLCs is voluntary. Teachers decide independently whether they will open their class or observe it, and attend a grade-level PLC. This year, all the 15 teachers who opened their classrooms volunteered to do it. However, relying on volunteering may not be optimal to sustain the activities. In a certain past year, there were some cases in which certain grade-level PLCs did not work well as they otherwise expected. In response, Ollim Middle School created some strategies to enhance voluntary participation. Before each school year, the school holds a one-night workshop that shares experiences from the open-classroom process. Some teachers have created a video clip of the previous year's open-classroom experiences for this workshop. They tried to make it fun and attempted to reassure their fellow faculty that open classroom practice is not just one teacher who must prepare by her/himself, instead, teachers collaboratively assist in alleviating that burden and give input in its development.

***Organic Relationships with Other Schools.*** Ollim Middle School puts an institutional effort to learn from other Hyukshin schools, as well as to share Ollim Middle School's classroom innovation with other schoolteachers and prospective teachers. Ollim teachers meet other Hyukshin schoolteachers at least once per school year. One teacher explained, “혁신 학교 하는 사람들 사이에서 뭔가 고민을 나누고 그걸 앞으로 어떻게 좀 해결해 갈 것인가” “how we wanted to share more thoughts to solve some problems that they encountered and get some ideas from other schools' strategies.” (Ollim M, Teacher Kang, Interview). These aspirations led Ollim Middle School to visit other Hyukshin schools. One teacher stated “되게 적극적으로 연수를 다른 학교를 가서 배우려고 했어요,” “Ollim Middle School proactively learned from other schools.” (Ollim M, Teacher Kang, Interview).

Ollim Middle School learned substantially from Woolgook Middle School on how to best develop their classroom innovation approaches. It seems that some of the Ollim Middle School teachers have continued building informal relationships with Woolgook Middle School. Two research team members who visited Woolgook Middle School observed that the HDD of Ollim Middle School also attended the Woolgook's open classroom (October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019).

Last year, Ollim Middle School teachers visited Jeongsun Middle school to learn about how to organize activities designed to promote student autonomy. One teacher explained, that “정선 중학교가 혁신학교로 되게 활발한 활동을 하고 있다. 특히 아이들 독서 분야나 학생회 활동이나 이런 자치 활동이 되게 활발하다 이래서 그 학교를 보러 갔었지요” “Jeongsun Middle School is known for its active engagement in student's reading club, student council and student autonomy. So, we visited it to learn.” (Ollim M, Teacher Kang, Interview). They also visited Dongsuh Middle School in order to learn about community engagement.

In addition to learning from other Hyukshin schools, Ollim Middle School plays a role in sharing its own classroom innovation with the broader HSSM. Other schoolteachers visited and observed how the PLCs of Ollim Middle School work together as a group. One teacher stated, “저희 학교가 수업 모임이 조금 잘 되다 보니까 다른 학교 선생님들이 단체로 오시기도 해요. 왜냐면 중학교가 과목 상관없이 모여서 같이 수업을 공부한다는 거 자체가 사실 쉽지는 않아 가지고요,” “Our schools' PLCs worked well, so other school teachers visited us. Because it is hard for teachers to conduct research, regardless of their own teaching subjects.” (Ollim M, Teacher Jeon, Interview). The HDD has visited other schools to help them to build their PLCs. This school's interest in learning across the HSSM was inspiring for our research team.

There was once a case where prospective teachers visited Ollim Middle School to observe its PLC meetings. One teacher described how, “교대 학생들인데 역사교육과 학생들이 수업연구모임 참관했어요. 근데 이제 이 친구들이 실제 학교에서 공개 수업이 어떻게 되는지 소문이 어떻게 되는지 궁금한 거예요,” “The students of the college of education who were majoring in history of education observed our PLC meeting. They said they were curious about how an open classroom is implemented in a school.” (Ollim M, Teacher Jeon, Interview). Ollim Middle School invited them to observe their PLC meeting. Those prospective teachers attended the open classroom, as well as a meeting held after the open classroom, in which teachers give feedback to the open classroom teacher. The HHD found this experience to be valuable, because she believes that connection with experienced teachers will be helpful for prospective teachers, to see how classroom innovation can be brought to an actual classroom.

### **Parents**

We interviewed two parents, both of whom have children in the 8th grade. In their interviews, three themes emerged as notable characteristics of Hyukshin schooling: (1) Student autonomy; (2) Discussion-based group activities in classes; (3) Happiness and academic achievement.

***Student Autonomy.*** Parents perceived that the emphasis of Ollim Middle School is student autonomy. One parent said, “중점은 늘 얘기하는데 자율성이라고 얘기를 하거든요. 아이들 스스로에게 맡긴다는 자치, 자율. 아이들 스스로에게 많이 맡기고 있다는 것을 많이 말씀들을 하세요,” “I had heard that the focus has always been student autonomy. Self-government and student autonomy. People said that this school gives a lot of authority to students.” (Ollim M, Parent Yoon, Interview).

Another parent had a similar impression:

제일 큰 변화는 저는 학생이 주체가 되어서 학생이 자치하고 학생이 행복해지고 애네들이 주도하는 학교. 선생님들은 약간 도와주고 그래서 학생 자치가 되는 학교가 제가 생각할 때는 혁신학교가 그런 것 같아요.

The biggest change is that students can be their own boss and they become happy and lead their school life. The teachers are just helping them a little bit. I think the innovation school is all about student autonomy. (Ollim M, Parent Jeon, Interview).

The parents provided abundant examples of how Ollim Middle School focuses on student autonomy across multiple classes, school extracurricular activities (e.g., festivals), and school rules.

As an example, each class holds an annual musical performance. According to Mrs. Yoon, students participate significantly in the production of the musical. She also added that students are involved in organizing the school's festival. Students have class meetings to decide what activity their class is going to organize and who takes which role. She stated, “의견을 나누고 소통을 하면서 그 안에서 자기 주장을 낼 수 있는, 그런 아이가 되기를 사실은 바라죠.” “Through these activities, I hope students will cultivate their abilities to share their opinions, communicate, and express their thoughts.” (Ollim M, Parent Yoon, Interview).

Mrs. Jeon believed that group activities were especially important for this particular school student population. She thought that, as this school district is in a poor area, students might not have the same discussion skills that would be evident in groups of students who are well-educated and have had private education. It seemed all the more imperative that they learn the social skills that go along with voicing opinions, hearing others' perspectives, and coming to compromise.

The two parents expressed conflicting opinions on the relaxed school rules, particularly about how to dress in school. Ollim Middle School allows students to have unique hairstyles (e.g. dying hair) as well as make-up while at school. One parent said, that it is, in her opinion, “시기상조” “too early.” (Ollim M, Parent Yoon, Interview). Such relaxed policies give too much freedom to Ollim Middle School students, as other schools still have restrictions on school uniforms, hairstyles, and so on. Furthermore, she pointed out that the process of changing the school rules was “형식이 돼버린,” “perfunctory.” (Ollim M, Parent Jeon, Interview). In other words, parents’ opinions were not fully reflected. According to her, in the meeting that was held between students, parents, and teachers to discuss the changes in the school’s uniform policy, only two parents were invited as representatives to speak on behalf of all parents. She believes that those two opinions cannot accurately represent the whole population of parents. She stated, “학부모가 참여한 의미가 없었다는 거죠. 아이들 의견대로 딱 가는 형식이 돼버린 거죠” “parent participation was meaningless. The school policy was changed following students’ opinions.” (Ollim M, Parent Yoon, Interview). Another parent, conversely, believed, “그런 변화는 굉장히 좋은 것 같아요,” “that these changes (to loosen school rules) were very good.” (Ollim M, Parent Jeon, Interview).

***Open-Classroom Activities.*** Ollim Middle School parents also shared their observations of open classes. Parents agreed that the students have plenty of opportunities to present their ideas and to participate in activities. Students have a time to think about their teacher’s questions, and can discuss their ideas in a small group. The learning environment of the class was innovative. For some open classes, students’ desks are organized in a circular shape so that students can face one another, which facilitates discussion.

Two parents then went on to share their thoughts on open classes. Regarding open classes, one parent said, “그리 다르지 않다” — “It was not that different (Ollim M, Parent Yoon, Interview). Interestingly, Parent Jeon felt a reluctance to go to an open class, as most of the participants are typically teachers. She said, teachers encourage parents to come and see the class, but parents have perceptions that teachers might not like parent participation. Also, she said that this school district has a lower parent engagement level. She stated, “좀 교육열이 낮다 보니까,” “Parents tend to have less education fever.” (Ollim M, Parent Jeon, Interview).

*Happiness Gained from Various School Activities.* A major contrast in the perceptions of both parents regarding Hyukshin schools was the dichotomy between student’s happiness and academic achievement. Mrs. Jeon said, “학교 생활이 너무 행복하고, 공부 빼고 다 괜찮아,” “School life is very happy, except with regard to academic performance.” (Ollim M, Parent Jeon, Interview). She believes that this Hyukshin school will be a truly happy school if activities to increase students’ academic performance are better complemented. However, she is also worried about the possibility that her children may fall behind once in high school.

The happiness of students at Ollim Middle School is attributed to the variety of school activities provided to students by both parents. One parent said that students at Ollim Middle School go outside of school to participate in a number of field trips, and that the school provides many sports activities as well. Students can pick whatever activities they want to participate in. Another parent said that her child attended many career development activities, primarily in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. She found it to be very innovative, as students have opportunities to think about their future careers. She expressed her hope that Ollim Middle School will have a customized career development activity so that students can get more support according to their individual preferences.

## Students

Two 8<sup>th</sup> grade students (Woonsoo Choi and Kyungah Paek) were interviewed, and several major themes emerged regarding their understanding of the role Ollim Middle School plays in their learning. First, the students saw the school community as a place that values student autonomy and voice. Second, students valued the closely-knit relationship between themselves and their teachers. Finally, in terms of classroom innovation, the students have noticed a school emphasis placed on extracurricular activities extending beyond the classroom as well as collaborative group work within the classroom.

***Student Autonomy and Voice.*** When asked how Ollim Middle School might be different from other schools, both students highlighted an increased sense of student autonomy. One student stated “학생들이 좀 더 저희 생각 표현하고 적극적으로 참여할 수 있도록 도와주는 학교인 것 같아요,” “The school allows students to express or thoughts and be proactive.” (Ollim M, Student Paek, Interview). He further solidified his opinions on the increased sense of autonomy by saying, “자유롭다고 해야 되나?,” — “I feel free” (Ollim M, Student Paek, Interview) at school. Another student, Woonsoo, stated, “중학교 때는 저희 의견을 더 많이 수렴할 수 있는 기회가 더 많은 것 같아요,” — “that compared to elementary school, Ollim Middle School provided more chances to incorporate [students’] opinions.” (Ollim M, Student Choi, Interview). Both students provided the same example of the school’s uniform policy as a case in which students’ voices are respected by the school’s administration. One of the students stated, “학생들이 그렇게 원해가지고,” “The school changed the uniform policy because the students wanted it changed.” (Ollim M, Student Paek, Interview). Student Choi emphasized, “학생들 투표를 해서 바뀐 거라서,” “The change in uniform policy was due to students’ votes.” (Ollim M, Student Choi, Interview).

**Teacher-Student Relationships.** Both students valued their teachers' efforts to develop close relationships with all students. When asked about the positive attributes of Ollim Middle School, one student answered, “잘하지 못하는 아이들도 잘할 수 있도록 도와주는 것 같아요,” “The teachers help academically poor students to do better.” (Ollim M, Student Choi, Interview). Choi said, “학업 능력 떨어지는 친구들이 여기 와서 열심히 하면 선생님들이 잘 도와주셔서 오면 좋을 것 같아요,” “because teachers guide students so well, students who had fallen behind benefit from the school.” (Ollim M, Student Choi, Interview). This student stated that teachers respect the students and listen to their opinions when planning classes.

**Classroom Innovation: Group Collaboration.** Students appreciate the emphasis placed by their teachers upon group work in the classrooms. According to Woonsoo, “웬만해서 모든 일 같은 거는 모둠 활동을 하니까,” “Ollim Middle School teachers generally employ group work for most student activities.” (Ollim M, Student Choi, Interview). This is in contrast to when other schoolteachers might simply hand out worksheets. This student explained his enjoyment of such group activities, because, “저희 모둠에서 저희끼리 그냥 자유롭게 얘기하면 되잖아요. 학원이나 그런데를 다니면 서로 친구들한테 물어보면 또 안 되고 그러니까,” “Unlike hagwons, where asking each other questions is not allowed, group work at school allows students to talk to each other freely.” (Ollim M, Student Choi, Interview). Kyungah enjoys group work, and finds that he can “공부를 가르치긴 가르치는데 좀 새로운 방법으로 가르치니까 괜찮은 것 같아요,” “study the same materials in a different way.” (Ollim M, Student Paek, Interview). Both students say they appreciate the caring and positive learning environment at Ollim Middle School.

***Extracurricular Activities and Student Clubs.*** Ollim Middle School emphasizes career exploration, the performing arts, and student-led clubs. Kyungah thinks, “동아리 활동하거나 그런 건 좋다고 생각해요,” “Such activities are good” (Ollim M, Student Paek, Interview) because “저희가 하고 싶은 걸 같은 취미가 있는 친구들이랑 할 수 있어서,” “I can enjoy the same hobby with my friends.” (Ollim M, Student Paek, Interview). He is currently learning “Ehru” (a Chinese violin) through the Korean-Chinese musical instrument club, and he is also a part of the broadcasting club “제가 어렸을 때는 꿈이 PD 였거든요,” “to follow my childhood dream to become a producer.” (Ollim M, Student Paek, Interview). He wants to join the student council in the future. He also learned Chinese and plans on learning Japanese. He exclaimed, “배우는 언어가 좀 많아졌으면 좋겠어요,” “I want to learn many foreign languages” (Ollim M, Student Paek, Interview) so that he can “그래가지고 많은 나라 사람들이랑 소통을 해 가지고,” “communicate with people from many countries.” (Ollim M, Student Paek, Interview). He believes that learning many languages will help him to, “저한테 어울리는 직업을 찾고 그렇게 하는 게 좋을 것 같아요,” “find a career that suits me.” (Ollim M, Student Paek, Interview).

Woonsoo states that, “동아리 같은 걸 통해서 여러 가지 경험해 보고 그런 걸 찾을 수 있도록 도와주는 것 같아요,” “club activities help me experience various things and find his dream (Ollim M, Student Choi, Interview). He believes that Ollim Middle School students “여러 가지 활동할 때 적극적으로 참여하는 것 같아요,” “actively participate in various student activities.” (Ollim M, Student Choi, Interview). He is currently in the badminton club and finds that “치다 보니까 재밌어서,” “It is fun to play” (Ollim M, Student Choi, Interview) with fellow students.

## **Discussion**

Ollim Middle School's theory of change is centered upon its teachers, and the intended outcome ultimately centers around classroom innovation as a way to promote student autonomy. It is clear that what the school community as a whole emphasizes is classroom innovation. School leaders, teachers, parents, and students are fully cognizant of the fact that group collaboration is encouraged within the classroom, and that there is an abundance of opportunities for students to participate in various activities. Through such opportunities, students learn how to be autonomous thinkers, and the school becomes an environment where they can be truly free and happy. Since all stakeholders seem to agree that such intended outcomes of the school are realized in actual practice, this is indicative of Ollim Middle School being an effective Hyukshin school.

According to Hargreaves and Shirley (2009), the impetus behind such impactful educational change is driven by three principles of teacher professionalism. The three principles are the following: (1) high quality teachers; (2) powerful professional associations; and (3) lively learning communities. Ollim Middle School was able to attract and maintain teachers who became the driving forces for classroom innovation. Several strategies employed by the school seemed effective in garnering high-quality teachers. First, teachers who had experience teaching at a Hyukshin school were recruited, which built a sense of professional expertise in a vision for educational change. School leaders then ensured that teachers could focus on the essence of education through reducing administrative tasks, specifically through hiring administrative managers. Such an environment seems to have allowed teachers to maximize their instructional capacity.

In terms of professional associations, the school principal mentioned that quite a bit of teachers and he himself are members of the Korean Teachers' Union (KTU), which has prioritized getting back to the fundamentals of education. There is, in a sense, a unified agreement on what should be valued in education. The KTU encourages its members to enculturate students to such educational values.

Finally, the presence of active PLCs at Ollim Middle School seems to play an integral role in positive educational change. Teachers collectively improve upon instructional practices through continuous deliberations. They hold open classrooms, where teachers provide constructive feedback. The school provides an environment that encourages teachers to communicate and collaborate with one another. Taking into consideration all of the factors mentioned above, Ollim Middle School emphasizes the role teachers play in classroom innovation, which is congruent with the three principles of teacher professionalism that enable the "Fourth Way" model change (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009, 2012).

In regard to Ollim Middle School's prioritization of group work and student activities as major components of classroom innovation, there still exists some tradeoffs. With the push for student freedom and autonomy through encouraging participation in discussion-oriented coursework and student activities, there is a higher chance of student academic performance falling behind. Another similar yet distinct tradeoff would be between the school's effort to create an equitable education environment in which all student needs are met and the overall academic performance of the school community falling behind. Especially for Ollim Middle School, which is located in a low socioeconomic community, the tradeoffs would be critical for students who have few other ways of acquiring academic knowledge through private hagwons or tutoring.

As long as the competitive college admissions system that exists in Korea remains centered around academic performance, and as long as the society in which Hyukshin schools exist define success as being accepted into prestigious universities, attending Hyukshin schools, in a way, may be problematic for students. The tradeoff between student participation in activities and academic performance seems to be well-understood by parents and students. A Ollim Middle School student acknowledges that the school is, academically “수준이 다르니까,” “on a lower level” (Ollim M, Student Kyungah, Interview) compared to the school for the gifted that he is currently attending. Parents at times express disapproval at Ollim Middle School when it seems to prioritize student activities and clubs over academic instruction. The inevitable irony occurs as a result: the school-level’s successful attempt to escape the academically competitive education system may be the reason for parents to worry that their children are falling behind academically. Ollim Middle School educators could think about how to address this tradeoff so that the unintended consequences of lower student academic performance could be better resolved.

### **Conclusion**

Ollim Middle School strives for its distinctive model of classroom innovation with emphasis on its PLCs and its open classroom approach. The school leaders devote themselves to freeing the teachers’ time so that they may be able to better focus on lesson planning, classroom observation, and collaborative activities to serve their students. Despite some hurdles that the school encounters to provide adequate services to students, they have succeeded at classroom innovation with full support from its school community and through their connections with other exemplary Hyukshin schools such as Woolgook Middle School, Dongsuh Middle School, and Jeongsun Middle School.

This school's strength is in its embodiment of the Hyukshin theme of classroom innovation, by establishing a clear goal and developing affiliated practices. The school's goal is to develop each class' innovative activities in a manner that facilitates students' learning. Teachers are positioned as either facilitators or supporters.

This goal is clearly shared with the school's stakeholders. Parents and students both recognize that teachers emphasize student autonomy in class. In achieving this goal, PLCs at Ollim Middle School play a crucial role in providing settings in which teachers feel comfortable discussing how to design their classes to attain this overarching goal.

Ollim Middle School seeks to establish its own, highly professionalized open classroom approach and to keep improving it by learning from other Hyukshin schools. Ollim Middle School developed its open classroom approach within its earlier stage as a Hyukshin school, through an enormous contribution from the teachers of Woolgook Middle School. Ollim Middle School has expanded its connections with other exemplary Hyukshin schools to learn their strengths. Ollim Middle School was not complacent with its status as a receiver of lessons from other schools. In this sense, Ollim Middle School has conducted meaningful work as a Hyukshin School.

The focus on its classroom innovation model is a double-edge sword for Ollim Middle School. School leaders, teachers, parents, and students acknowledged within their interviews that this school consistently has improved. Although parents and students feel grateful that students' voices are heard in academic classes, they want extracurricular activities such as career development to be strengthened. Now is a good time for the school community to discuss what to leave off to the side and what to push forward with in order to further elevate their distinctive school culture.

## **Hyunsa Middle School**

### **Introduction**

Hyunsa Middle School is located in the Gangbuk district of Seoul. It is a public Hyukshin school located in a diverse neighborhood in terms of socioeconomic status, with most of the students coming from middle- and lower-class families. Almost the entire student population attends hagwons. The school has 29 classes, 56 teachers, and 685 students in total. In 2016, Hyunsa Middle School was selected as one of the best middle schools in the country (Hwang, 2016). After this recognition, the Mayor of Seoul, the Superintendent of the SMOE, and various celebrities visited the school on the following Teacher's Day, May 15<sup>th</sup>, to celebrate the accomplishment. Due to this recognition, all the facilities were remodeled, and the school now enjoys a much stronger reputation than ever before.

Hyunsa Middle School became a Hyukshin school five years ago, thanks to the previous principal's advocacy. After a majority of the teachers voted for Hyunsa Middle School to become a Hyukshin school, as well as after the school's completion of a transition phase (marked by a lack of student participation and a general tendency for teachers to resist innovative practices), teachers began to adopt student-centered approaches. Students easily adapted to the new classroom environment and innovative approaches to teaching, until it eventually became normalized. To realize its current status as an exemplary middle school in the Korean context, the former principal of Hyunsa Middle School, who is considered an avid supporter of Hyukshin education, played a central leadership role during the transition to becoming a Hyukshin school.

Currently, Hyunsa Middle School teachers report that they are satisfied with the principal's leadership and the school's adaptation of the Hyukshin model of education. The three separately structured grade-level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are strong here, and teachers frequently hold open classes, participating in cross-disciplinary and project-based lessons. Students echo reports that they are satisfied with the atmosphere at Hyunsa Middle School. They say that they have developed a sense of ownership of the school through their involvement in the democratic way that the school is managed.

Overall, the school appears to be successful. Its teachers actively communicate with each other and students willingly collaborate and make decisions autonomously. Together, this creates a general sense of unity in which joint work and independent decision-making are merged. However, there are still some issues with student participation, discipline, and teacher adaptation to Hyukshin practices.

### **School Emphases**

The school emphases of Hyunsa Middle School are:

1. Autonomy;
2. Democracy; and
3. Teacher collaboration.

***Autonomy.*** Students at Hyunsa Middle School say that they are afforded autonomous learning opportunities inside and outside of the classroom. As in many Hyukshin schools, student-centered classroom practices, a range of electives, and the student council are popular pillars of Hyunsa Middle School. Students create events for their classmates. In their student council meetings, they practice leadership skills by collaborating and listening to one another's opinions.

***Democracy.*** The students have the experience of making informed decisions that can have actual implications. This democracy can be seen in the school's rule-making processes. Parents are invited to participate in the school's extracurricular activities and make decisions regarding how the school is run. Teachers and school leaders have attempted to promote such democratic practices by allowing students to influence how their classes are run. Students have responded by actively leading class sessions and creating new class rules.

***Teacher Collaboration.*** Through both the school leader and teacher interviews, it was revealed that within-school teacher collaboration in the structured open class system and teacher participation in professional learning networks (PLNs) are essential elements for professional development, particularly in terms of improving student-centered teaching strategies. During such lesson observations or open classrooms, within both Hyunsa Middle School and other schools, teachers tend to adopt a student-centered approach when evaluating the lesson. Continually, student responses are closely monitored, which is another reason why it has become so popular.

### **School Leaders**

The principal, Ms. Shin, has been working in Hyunsa Middle School for two years and the vice principal, Mr. Han, has been in Hyunsa Middle School for 6 months. Both of them were assigned to Hyunsa Middle School when the school was already a well-established Hyukshin school, described Ms. Shin (Hyunsa M, Principal Shin, Interview). Although they were randomly assigned, both school leaders had positive expectations about working in Hyunsa Middle School, because they already knew that it had developed a good reputation as an excellent Hyukshin school.

The principal said, “현사중학교가 비교적 혁신학교 중에서는 상당히 운영을 잘하는 학교로 이미 다 알려져 있었어요. 그래서 굉장히 좀 기대도 되고 또 편안한 마음으로 왔습니다,” “Hyunsa Middle School was already known to be a relatively good school for managing Hyukshin [principles]. So, I was looking forward to it, and came with a comfortable mind.” (Hyunsa M, Principal Shin, Interview). The vice principal stated how, “저도 발령에 의해서 오는 거니까 우리 교장 선생님 말씀하신 것처럼 우리 학교가 인근에서도 학부모들도 굉장히 선호하고 학생들이 열심히 하는 학교라고 알려져서 기분 좋게 왔습니다,” “Since I came here by appointment, as our principal said, I came here happily because the school was known as a school that parents favored, and in which students also worked hard.” (Hyunsa M, Vice Principal Han, Interview).

**Autonomy.** Both Hyunsa Middle School administrators believed that the school provided teacher and student autonomy. Vice Principal Han believed, “분위기가 훨씬 조금 더 자율적이고 또 시스템도 민주적이고 선생님들의 공동체 의식 이런 것들도 조금 더 일반 학교보다는 강화돼 있지 않나 그런 생각이 듭니다,” “Hyunsa Middle School has achieved a more autonomous school atmosphere, more democratic school system, and higher community spirits among teachers as compared to non-Hyukshin schools.” (Hyunsa M, Vice Principal Han, Interview). He praised student autonomy as the main emphasis of this school. He explained how, “혁신학교는 자율과 책임이 따르는게 아주 노멀한,” “A Hyukshin school puts emphasis on autonomy and responsibility as norms.” (Hyunsa M, Vice Principal Han, Interview). In the pursuit of promoting student autonomy, the principal attempts to respect autonomously run student activities and the free expression of student opinions, rather than imposing his own ideals.

She said:

학생회 관련해서는 아까 교감 선생님이 말씀하셨듯이 제가 좀 마음을 편하게 열어 놓는 게 제일 중요한 거 같다는 생각이 들어요. 왜냐면 학생들이 하는 행사를 보면 어떤 보수적인 생각으로 보면 저렇게 해야 되나 이럴 때도 있을 수가 있어요. 그런데 그런 생각을 안 가지려고 굉장히 노력을 해요.

As for the student council, as the vice principal said earlier, I think the most important thing is to keep my mind open. Because if you look at students' events with a conservative mind, you might wonder whether they should do those things in that way, but I put a lot of effort into not thinking like that. (Hyunsa M, Principal Shin, Interview).

While some school administrators may limit the level of student autonomy according to their own definition of what is acceptable, Principal Shin chooses to prioritize student autonomy over her own preconceptions. The vice principal also highlighted the idea of affirming students' perspectives:

학생들의 입장을 이해하려고 굉장히 많이 노력을 해요. 제가 개인적인 취향이 아닐 수 있잖아요. 그렇지만 개인적인 취향과 학생들의 생각을 이렇게 일치시키려고 하지 않거든요. 그래서 학생들이 그런 부분에 대해서 이미 알고 있기 때문에 굉장히 본인들이 하고 싶은 대로 우리는 언제든지 하면 교장 선생님이 밀어주셔서 이런 생각을 하고 있어요. 그렇기 때문에 훨씬 더 자율적이 되지 않나 그런 생각이 들어서 굉장히 바람직하게 생각을 하고 있어요.

I try very hard to understand students' perspectives. Maybe they are not my personal preferences, but I don't try to match my preference with the students' thoughts. Because the students already know that, they have a thought in their minds that the principal would support anything they want to try. I think this is why [students] can become way more autonomous. I think it's very desirable (Hyunsa M, Vice Principal Han, Interview).

The school leaders tried not to make judgments based just on their own views. They wanted to give students space to express their opinions, too.

**Democracy.** Regarding the school's leadership style, the principal values the democratic participation of students in relevant decision-making processes. The principal detailed the school's democratic leadership style:

과거에 ... 교장 선생님의 리더쉽으로다가 ... 이끌고 나가는 그런 것이 과거에 교육 모델이었다면 혁신학교에서는 이제 조금 더 선생님들이 자발성이 강조돼서 아이들이 뭘 원하는지 학생들이 뭘 원하는지에 대한 흐름을 읽고 그것 중에 중요한 의제를 이렇게 정해서 그걸 어떤 한 사람의 아이디어로 하는 게 아니라 다모임이라고 했으니까 전체가 모여서 협의해서 나아가갈 방향을 정해서 그대로 추진하는 거예요.

In the past ... principal's leading role ... was highly emphasized in making decisions in the past. However, in Hyukshin school, teachers' autonomy is now more stressed, and it is also important for them to understand what students want, and to create an appropriate course of action together rather than 'one-takes-all.' Thus, all school members, because we are Damoim (all gathered), we get together and discuss to make decisions, and then proceed. (Hyunsa M, Principal Shin, Interview).

As an example of democratic leadership, the principal described how she and the teachers discussed and made decisions regarding the date of a day off for the teachers. The principal said:

예를 들면, 학사 일정을 학교의 내년도의 일정을 짜야 되는데 언제 휴업일을 할 것인가 이런 거 있잖아요. 그럴 때도 그때 다모임에서 선생님들이 재작년, 작년도 계속 대다수의 의견이 언제 쉬는 날이었으면 좋겠다 이런 것들도 그 선생님들하고 모임에서 정한 거거든요. 그러니까 제가 이렇게 정하는 게 아니라 여러 가지 안을 짜 놓고서 거기에서 언제 쉬는 날이었으면 좋겠다 이런 것들도 같이 정하고.

For example, when you have to make next-year's schedule for school, such as deciding when you're going to have a day off, the teachers and I at Damoim made decisions about the date of the day off according to the majority of the opinions two years ago and last year. These decisions were made during a meeting with teachers. So, it's not like I decide, but out of multiple options, we choose which days to take the day off (Hyunsa M, Principal Shin, Interview).

The school leaders liked having a democratic leadership style. This emphasis intertwines with the school's norms on promoting student autonomy, and giving students opportunities to express their opinions.

**Teacher collaboration.** Principal Shin also emphasized that there has been strong cooperation among teachers for improving their pedagogical abilities in Hyunsa Middle School. She highlighted the teachers' collaborative efforts that were made in the form of open classes. She said, “교육 방법에 대한 거는...어떻게 보면 소속 교원, 소속 교과 전체의 관심사이기도 하잖아요. 그래서 인제 우리 같은 경우는 보면 한 학기에...학년별로 이렇게 돌아가면서 자기 수업을 공개를 해요,” “The teaching methods ... are a matter of interest to all teachers who teach each subject. So, in our school, teachers usually take turns in each grade to do open classes.” (Hyunsa M, Principal Shin, Interview). Regarding the open classes, she explained how the teachers cooperate not just by participating in other teachers' open classes as observers, but by collaborating with the teacher opening their class starting from the lesson planning phase. She explained:

그냥 과거의 공개 수업처럼 수업을 공개하는 게 아니라 그 수업을 어떻게 계획을 하고 어떻게 발전시켜 가지고 어떻게 학생들이 실제로 이렇게 배움이 발생할 수 있도록 이렇게 할 거냐 그거에 대한 구체적인 것들을 갖다가 이게 순차적으로 이렇게 진행을 합니다.

It is not like an open class in the past... now teachers cooperate step by step on how to plan and develop open classes so that students can actually experience learning (Hyunsa M, Principal Shin, Interview).

Principal Shin specified that teachers collaborate on ideas that could be helpful for their lesson plans:

먼저 계획을 하면 나는 이렇게 기획을 했는데 이거에 대해서 선생님들께서 혹시 더-- 인제 경험이 다 다르잖아요. 좋은 경험들이 있으니까 경험을 바탕으로 해서 내 수업 계획에 조금 더 보탬이 될 수 있는 아이디어를 주시라 그러면 아이디어 미팅을 해요. 그래서 그것들을 반영해서 실제로 수업지도안을 만들고 그거를 바탕으로 해서 먼저 수업을 한 번 진행을 해 봅니다...그 계획대로 수업 진행을 했는데 뭔가 거기서 추가적인 피드백이 있으면 그걸 반영을 해서 최종적으로 완성된 수업 공개를 해요.

First of all, even though I prepare a certain way for planning open classes, other teachers have different experiences regarding this. Teachers have meetings with the expectation that other teachers would give them good ideas that can help to plan their own classes. Teachers actually make a lesson plan based on other teachers' feedback, and then try open class as practice...if there's any additional feedback after, teachers reflect on the new feedback and finalize the lesson plan. (Hyunsa M, Principal Shin, Interview).

Ms. Shin emphasized that open classes eventually lead to the teachers' professional learning in this school. Participating in this process and seeing how students reacted to other teachers' lessons became central to adopting more effective pedagogical strategies:

여기서도 선생님들이 관찰을 하시는데 선생님 어떻게 가르쳤느냐 교재는 뭘 썼느냐 이런 거보다는 실제로 학생들이 어떤 장면에서 배움이 일어났는가에 대해서 학생의 배움 중심으로 관찰을 해서 피드백을 주죠. 그러면 그게 그 한 선생님의 공개를 했지만 결국은 그 학년 전체가 공유를 하게 되는 것이고 또 아이들이 어떤 장면에서 배움이 일어났는가를 보게 되기 때문에 내가 내 수업에서 학생들을 어떻게 이끌어야 되겠다는 공감대 형성이 되는 거예요

The other teachers are observing the open classes as well. Rather than focusing on how the teacher teaches and what material the teacher is using, they actually look at when students actually learn and try to give feedback based on the observation. Even though it is one teacher's open class, one teacher's efforts and pedagogical approach, the other teachers' feedback is shared among all teachers in the same grade. Also, because the observation is focused on students' learning, it usually leads to teachers' having shared understanding of and a consensus on how to teach students in the class. (Hyunsa M, Principal Shin, Interview).

Ms. Shin continued on by stating that “학생들의 배움을 중심으로 관찰을 하게끔 프로토콜 작성이 되어 있어요,” “There is a protocol for observing the open class, which emphasizes students' learning.” (Hyunsa M, Principal Shin, Interview). This protocol was a product of teachers' cooperation, and emphasized the understanding of sharing different experiences, trying new pedagogical approaches, and always aspiring to promote deep and authentic student learning.

In addition to teachers' collaboration within the school, Principal Shin highlighted that there had been two kinds of school networks running across the HSSM:

그런 네트워크가 두 가지가 있어요. 여기 지역적으로 같이 분포돼 있는 학교들. 그거는 교육청 중심으로 해서 네트워크로 묶여 있어요. 묶여 있고 그거 이외에 좀 더 넓게 바운더리 넓게 해 가지고 혁신학교끼리 별도의 네트워크를 또 만들어서 운영을 하고... 그러니까 두 트랙으로 운영이 되는 거죠.

There are two kinds of school networks. One school network is shaped across schools in the same district, centering around the Office of Education. The other school network has broader boundaries, which means that Hyukshin schools have created and operate separate school networks...That is, the school networks are operating on two tracks. (Hyunsa M, Principal Shin, Interview).

She explained that there are six middle schools and two high schools in the eastern part of the district. She noted how, “고등학교 입시를 무시할 수 없잖아요?” “We can't ignore the high school entrance exams.” (Hyunsa M, Principal Shin, Interview).

In this context, Ms. Shin put so much emphasis on the value of the PLNs because she believes that Hyukshin schools need to constantly communicate with each other, not just to be sustainable, but in order to make progress in changing the education system in Seoul as a whole. She extended this notion by stating that, “혁신학교뿐만 아니라 세상 자체가 네트워크 아니겠어요?” “Not just in Hyukshin schools, because the world itself is a network.” (Hyunsa M, Principal Shin, Interview). Also, she stated that “자꾸 이렇게 아이디어를 공유하고 그러지 않으면 곧 퇴보합니다. 그래서 새로운 수혈을 계속해야 되죠. 서로 가르쳐 주고 서로 배우는 거죠,” “If you don't keep sharing your ideas like this, you'll regress soon. We have to continue to accept new ideas. We teach each other and learn from each other.” (Hyunsa M, Principal Shin, Interview). Through PLNs, teachers are able to continue to improve instructional practices.

Principal Shin said that, “중학교 중심으로 해서 거기 교장 선생님들은 교장 선생님들끼리 별도로 모여서 가지고 어떻게 해야지 학생이나 선생님들을 잘 지원할 수 있을까에 대해서 초점을 맞추고 아이디어를 공유하시고,” “Middle school principals shared ideas, with a focus on how to support students and teachers.” (Hyunsa M, Principal Shin, Interview). She explained how teachers from other schools participate:

수업에 대한 건데 아까 말씀드린 것들은 교내 자체에서의 수업 공개였고 전체적으로도 또 같이 공유하기도 해요. 우리 학교에서 언제 이런 수업 공개를 하니까-- 그날 수업 공개를 하게 되면 인제 안내를 해서 시간이 되시는 분들은 가서 그 수업을 같이 참관을 하는 거죠.

The open class I've mentioned earlier was for the teachers in this school. In addition, we share some of our open classes with other schools. We're going to open up the class, and we're going to reveal the kind of classes we teach at our school. When teachers in our school do open classes, we first announce the day of the open classes to teachers from other schools. In that way, teachers from other schools who are available on the day can come to observe the open class. (Hyunsa M, Principal Shin, Interview).

Beyond teachers' ability to participate in PLNs, Ms. Shin said that “또 자치 한마당이라고 해서 학생들도 그 정해진 시간에 쪽 준비를 해서 이렇게 각 학교에서 거의 일 년 동안에 해 왔던 내용들 중에서 우수한 내용들을 갖다 이렇게 정리해서 정해진 날짜에,” “There was a festival where students from different schools prepared and gave presentations about what they had done well for students' autonomous activities.” (Hyunsa M, Principal Shin, Interview). She explained how, “그래서 [학생들이] 거기 가서 공개를 합니다. 서로 보고 배우는 거죠. 벤치마킹하는 거죠. 결국 인생도 그런데 교육도 모방 아니겠어요?” “Students share their activities with each other at the festival. They learn from each other. It's benchmarking. Isn't education also imitation? (Hyunsa M, Principal Shin, Interview).

## Teachers

All of the teachers expressed feeling as though it is meaningful to work at Hyunsa Middle School. Ms. Jung, who was a Physical Education teacher, used to command students in a traditional style. However, her teaching style has now changed, and allows the students to approach her more easily. Mr. Hong, a social studies teacher who was in charge of the student council, feels especially empowered by his contribution in building students' culture at the school. Ms. Keum, the HDD, 혁신부장), described how she has learned from teachers at other Hyukshin schools about innovation in lesson designing and observation, in which teachers of different disciplines collaborate and analyze lessons from a student-centered perspective. She thought that it was meaningful how the research process of designing and observing lessons has led to teachers' discussions about individual students. Ms. Keum also expressed feeling happy to have the opportunity to learn from her colleagues as she designed lessons alongside other subject teachers. She reflected that she could grow professionally from the collective intelligence of the group of teachers.

*Autonomy.* Mr. Hong, a social studies teacher, believes that his ideas are well realized at this school. He feels that his efforts can change the school, particularly as the faculty member in charge of the student council. He shared some examples of his involvement in the student council, such as providing a common area, athletics day, and school festivals. He described how many of these practices were realized with the support from school administrators, and eventually were handed over to the students:

정말 사적으로 이야기를 하자면 중앙에 정원이 있었고 풀들이 자라고 있는 이 공간에서 학생들이 노래도 하고 자기들끼리 어떤 문화를 만들어 갔으면 좋겠다는 생각이 들었어요. 그래서 처음에는 정말 버스킹 할 수 있는 스피커와 마이크 갖다 두고 원하는 애들이 나와서 노래 부르고 이런 거였거든요.

Personally, I thought that it'd be nice to have a park in the center where there is grass growing and where there is space for the students to sing and to create their own culture. In the beginning, only a speaker and a microphone was placed there, just like busking, so that students who wished to sing could come to sing. (Hyunsa M, Teacher Hong, Interview).

He then went on to describe how this started a chain reaction. Once this park became popular students wanted more. He said, “이런 문화들이 하나 만들어지고 또 학생들이 이런 것도 해 봤으면 좋겠다 하는 것들이 늘어가기 시작했구요. 그런 것들에 대해서 교장 선생님과 교감 선생님이 열렬히 지원을 해 줬던 거 같아요,” “With such a culture created, students were interested in trying more and more things. Concerning those things, I think that the administrators were very supportive.” (Hyunsa M, Teacher Hong, Interview).

He went on to describe how the faculty and staff promote student autonomy:

‘체육대회도 바꿨으면 좋겠습니다’ 그러면 교장 선생님이 체육 선생님을 불러서 이렇게 이야기를 해 주고 ‘축제도 좀 더 학생들이 참여할 수 있는 여지가 늘어났으면 좋겠습니다’ 공연뿐만 아니라 학급에서 부스도 운영하고 그랬으면 좋겠다, 역시 마찬가지로 학생들이 설 수 있는 공간이 있었으면 좋겠다 그래서 컴퓨터도 만들고. 이런 모든 과정에서 교장 선생님이나 교감 선생님이 저를 거스르지 않았던 거 같아요.

When we said, “We want to change the athletics day,” the principal would summon the physical education teachers to tell them about it. If the students wanted more participation by students in school festival planning, having not only performances but also booths or classes, or if the students wanted resting places, they made resting places. In all such processes, neither the principal nor the assistant principal ever went against me. (Hyunsa M, Teacher Hong, Interview).

Sparked by Mr. Hong’s original wish to create a space for students, Hyunsa Middle School now has a big common area that the whole community uses. Students are able to actively communicate with their student council on many important school decisions. They hold numerous cultural events that they run on their own, such as concerts, fundraising activities, and raffles.

Feeling that his ideas were supported by the administrators to cultivate the student culture at the school, Mr. Hong described Hyunsa Middle School as a much better workplace as compared to the non-Hyukshin schools he had previously worked in. He was happy to be able to make such meaningful contributions to his students' development as whole people.

**Democracy.** Ms. Jung, a 1<sup>st</sup> grade (7<sup>th</sup> grade) homeroom teacher who teaches physical education (PE), also feels a sense of meaning through working at a Hyukshin school because she has learned how to gain mutual respect from her students. She has been able to adapt from her former, authoritative approach, to teaching in a more horizontal one. This is due, in large part, because of the democratic participation Hyunsa embodies in the creation of its class policies and rules. This has allowed her to build more friendly relationships with students and, in turn, become more satisfied with her work.

Ms. Jung shared how innovation within the school management system has changed her relationship with the students. She described how, sometimes, she felt that she had to be forceful in her PE class in the past, but that this style of teaching eventually changed. Ms. Jung started striving to ensure that her students were in horizontal relationships with her. She expressed how, in Hyunsa Middle School, it is possible to ask students to follow the rules without being forceful, since they themselves also played a role in creating or contributing to the rules. She felt that “그러니까 강압적으로가 안 되고 자연스럽게 서로 학교 운영에 참여하는 참여자로서 교사, 학생이 동등한 입장에서 이렇게 되는 거 같더라고요” “his became possible when naturally, not forcefully, both teachers and students participated in school management and horizontal relationships.” (Hyunsa M, Teacher Jung, Interview). Ms. Jung no longer felt the need to force her students to bend to her will, but rather was able to emphasize a mutual respect during class.

Ms. Jung, in response, changed the way she communicated with students. She now consistently provides more time for students to speak and for them to share ideas among themselves. For instance, whereas she used to say, “이건 이렇게 하는 거야, 이렇게 한번 그대로 해 봐,” “This is how you do it, do it like this!” she now says, “여기에서 이걸 어떻게 풀어가면 좋을까, 저희들이 한번 모둠별로 생각해 볼래? 혼자서 생각하면 힘드니까 모둠별로 협력해 볼래?” “How do you want to solve this problem here? Why don't you think about it as a group? It's hard to think alone, so why don't you work together in groups?” (Hyunsa M, Teacher Jung, Interview). She says that she has started to apply a student-centered approach to teaching through groupwork, allowing students to proactively lead their own thinking through collaboration.

Ms. Jung changed her relationships with students. She explained how previously, “저를 되게 두려워하고 저랑 가까이 가는 것을 힘들어하고 이런 학생들이 되게 많았어요. ... (이제는) 아이들이 더 친근하게 다가오고 권위적인 게 많이 없어졌죠,” “Students were very afraid of me, and there were many who found it hard to get close to me ... (but now) they are friendly, and a lot of old authority is gone.” (Hyunsa M, Teacher Jung, Interview). Ms. Jung is more fulfilled now.

Reflecting on her experiences at Hyunsa Middle School, Ms. Jung stated that, “교사로서의 가치관이 좀 많이 변하기는 했었습니다,” “My values as a teacher changed a lot.” (Hyunsa M, Teacher Jung, Interview). She has found that learning is not only transmitted by teachers, but can be constructed by the students. Ms. Jung now considers learning as reciprocal at its best. She now thinks that learning is something that students and teachers do together.

She explained:

학생들을 통해서 교사도 당연히 배울 수 있고 제가 오히려 생각지도 못한 아이들이 해결책을 줬을 때, 제가 예상했던 해결책이 아닌 창의적인 해결책이 나왔을 때, [저는] '그러면서 같이 배우는구나' [라는 점을 깨달아요]. 이 학교가 배움이 학생들만 있는 게 아니라 교사들도 같이 배우는 장소라는 인식이 좀 많이 되고. 그렇게 하기 때문에 이제 학생들을 당연히 존중해야 되고.

Teachers can learn from students, and when the students provide solutions that I could've never thought of, when they come up with unexpected and creative solutions, I realize that "Like this, we learn together." I get to understand that this school is a place that only has students learning, but also teachers learning. Therefore, students for sure need to be respected. (Hyunsa M, Teacher Jung, Interview).

Ms. Jung learned over time how to teach at a school that strives for mutual respect between students and teachers.

***Challenges with autonomy and democracy.*** Although teachers felt it was meaningful to teach in Hyunsa Middle School, they faced some challenges in initiating Hyukshin principles. These challenges involved providing an autonomous, democratic learning environment and general authority to students. The teachers shared how they have conflicts with their colleagues who are concerned about giving too much freedom to students, as well as conflicts with some students who tried to manipulate the democratic environment to argue against the teachers.

Mr. Hong said that he believes students at Hyunsa Middle School now have more rights. He stated, "받아들이지 못하는 선생님들도 계신 거죠," "There are some teachers who cannot accept that." (Hyunsa M, Teacher Hong, Interview). Mr. Hong feels that these teachers don't trust the students' ability to make good judgments. Teacher Hong said some teachers are unhappy that "분위기가 이렇게 방만해지지 않냐, 자유롭지 않냐 이런 것에 대한," "The school atmosphere is getting to be too loose and too free." (Hyunsa M, Teacher Hong, Interview).

Furthermore, Ms. Jung shared her skepticism about student authority in organizing events. Because Ms. Jung was a physical education teacher, she has hosted the school's athletics day with her colleagues in the past. However, since Hyunsa Middle School is a Hyukshin School, she had to cooperate with the students as equals as well, which she has found difficult to accept.

Ms. Jung said, “학생들이 잘 모르니까 자기가 하고 싶은 것만 막 하다 보니까 이게 학교의 주변 여건이나 아니면 우리 학교의 여러 가지 조건들을 감안하지 않고 아이들이 자기가 하고 싶은 것만 계속 얘기를 하니까” “Because students do not know much about the school's unique conditions and surrounding circumstances, they seemingly made demands about what they wanted without fully comprehending the implications.” (Hyunsa M, Teacher Jung, Interview). What made it worse for her was that the HHD still wanted to try out their ideas. Ms. Jung also explained that the event was largely unsuccessful. Although Ms. Jung tried to respect students' ideas, she was concerned that they did not take everyday school realities into account. She felt disappointed that the students had the support of the HHD.

Teachers not only experienced conflicts among themselves, but they also had difficulty with their students directly. Despite creating better student-teacher relationships and a more democratic environment, some students took advantage of the fact that there was less of a top-down relationship between teachers and students. Teacher Jung stated, “교사가 권위적인 위치가 아니라는 걸 아이들이 알기 때문에 이제 대드는 아이도 있고” “Lids who were aware that the teachers are not in the authoritative position argued with teachers.” (Hyunsa M, Teacher Jung, Interview). The increased freedom of students has led to iconflict between teachers and students.

Ms. Jung shared examples of two incidents when her students had acknowledged that she has limited power over them. One time, she had asked a student to comply with a rule, but the student responded, “제가 하기로 했는데 전 안 지키려고요,” –“that even though the student knew there were rules, he would not follow them.” (Hyunsa M, Teacher Jung, Interview). Although school rules were democratically voted upon, it was difficult to manage the few students who had not agreed to the decision made by the majority of the school population.

At another time, when Ms. Jung admonished a student for putting on makeup during class time, the student talked back by saying, “저희 화장되잖아요?” “students are allowed to put makeup on at our school.” (Hyunsa M, Teacher Jung, Interview). Ms. Jung often felt uncomfortable managing such situations in the new democratic form of her classroom. Although students were fast to grasp horizontal relationships with Ms. Jung, mutual respect was not developing in some students, who manipulated the democratic culture of Hyunsa Middle School.

**Teacher collaboration.** Ms. Keum was happy working at Hyunsa Middle School. She said, “사실 저는 거의 30년 차인데 이 학교에 있었던 5년이 가장 행복한 교사 생활이었거든요” “Although it was almost my 30<sup>th</sup> year in teaching, the five years I’ve worked at the school have been the happiest.” (Hyunsa M, Teacher Keum, Interview). She explained:

그 이전보다 훨씬. ... 이게 선생님들과의 관계에서 오는 거 같아요.  
선생님들과의 관계나 무언가를 할 때 이 관계가 선생님들이 서로  
협조적이고 같이하고 이러한 것들을 제가 이제 느끼니까. 그리고 '이 사람 참  
멋진 사람이다' 라고 하는 선생님들이 혁신학교에는 좀 많아요.

More than ever before ... I find meaning in my relationships with other teachers. Whenever we collaborate, I see how the teachers cooperate with one another, and that we do this together. At Hyukshin schools, there are many teachers who would say of their colleagues that “This person is such a great person.” (Hyunsa M, Teacher Keum, Interview).

Ms. Keum said that her interactions with her colleagues contributed to her fulfilment.

Ms. Keum described how she found it meaningful to learn from other HSSM teachers outside Hyunsa Middle School about curriculum innovation through a PLN. Although she used to hold a negative perspective on Hyukshin schools, Ms. Keum described how this changed, and that now she thinks, “이거는 우리가 앞으로 나아가야 할 방향이다 라고 생각을 했습니다,” “[Hyukshin] is the direction we need to move forward to.” (Hyunsa M, Teacher Keum, Interview). Her perception changed after she observed how other Hyukshin teachers collaborate in designing lessons, and how they communicate to provide student-centered feedback after an open class.

When Hyunsa Middle School was in the decision-making process of Hyukshin implementation, its teachers visited other schools that had already implemented Hyukshin principles and practices. During one such visit, Ms. Keum saw how teachers of different subjects cooperated in designing a suggestive lesson, which is a type of open class, but with a bigger group of observers, including parents and teachers from other schools. She observed how in a PLC, teachers of the same grade level gathered and designed lessons together. She was impressed how collaborative the practice was. She said, “공동 디자인 수업은 저희도 지금은 하고 있어요,” “Teachers (of different subjects) designed interdisciplinary lessons together (Hyunsa M, Teacher Keum, Interview).

Ms. Keum was also surprised by how the other Hyukshin school focused on students during the lesson observation:

수업의 관찰이 교사의 관찰이 아니라 학생을 관찰한다는 게 놀라운 지점이었고요. 그 학생의 관찰이 학생이 수업에서 어떠한 변화가 일어나는 거를 관찰하는 게 주거든요. 아이들 하나하나를 선생님들이 지켜보면서-- 그룹별로 지켜보시면서, 아이들이 '어, 내 시간에는 이 아이가 이런 아이인데 이 시간에는 이런 모습이 보이는구나' 라고 하는, 그런 생활 지도의 공유까지 같이 갈 수 있다는 게 저는 되게 의미 있었고.

It was astonishing how the lesson observation was not about observing the teachers, but the students. The major part was observing what kind of chances students take during the lesson. Teachers observed children one by one, group by group, and reflected, ‘Ah, in my class, that student is this kind of kid, but in this class, he also shows a different side.’ (Hyunsa M, Teacher Keum, Interview).

Ms. Keum considered an open class to be significant because it leads teachers to discuss the individual students. By interacting with and learning from teachers at other Hyukshin schools, Ms. Keum learned how to improve her own teaching.

Following her positive experience observing open classes at other Hyukshin schools, Hyunsa Middle School implemented its open classes, too. Ms. Keum shared how teachers learn from one another through this system. Initially, the school held 12 open classes every year. Under three grade-level PLCs, four teachers in each PLC held an open class each year. Teachers who taught the open class had one lesson observed and spent three lessons observing, whereas other teachers just had four open class observations a year.

Although Ms. Keum acknowledges that open classes take a longer time to prepare for, she also asserts that it is worth the effort. She stated that, the process does not feel too burdensome since teachers are generally observed once a year and say that they benefit from the experience. Further, she stated, “나의 발전을 위해서” “It is for the teachers’ own professional growth.” (Hyunsa M, Teacher Keum, Interview).

She shared how teachers have grown together as professionals through interactions in their PLCs and the open class protocol that her school developed. She said that teachers learn from one another, especially through collaboration with other teachers when designing lessons. Teachers also benefit by focusing on students, rather than teachers, when giving each other feedback.

Ms. Keum learned from her colleagues while she collaborated with them in planning a suggestive lesson:

제가 혼자 했을 때 생각하지 못했던 부분들을 그 선생님들이 보완해 주는 게 되게 많았어요. 저는 제가 이렇게 하려고 하는 거는 딱 요기까지라면, 이거 말고도 이거하고 이거하고를 더해 주시기도 하고, '아, 선생님, 저라면 요 부분을 이렇게 하는 게 좋을 것 같아요' 라고 하시기도 하고요. 또 그거 이상으로 '나 이거 하려고 하는데 선생님 뭐 했던 거 있어요? 선생님 어떻게 했었어요?' 라고 제가 질문을 했을 때, 기꺼이 아이디어들을 굉장히 많이 주셔서 제가 제안 수업을 했을 때는 선생님들이 했던 경험하고 이런 것들 같이 공유해서 저는 되게 좋았어요.

There were many parts other teachers supplemented that I could not think of when I was doing it alone. If it was just about 'here' when I was doing alone, they added more, saying, 'Ah, if it was me, I think it would be better to do this way or that.; Or, when I asked, 'I am trying to teach this, but were there (similar) activities you did before? How did you teach this?' they gladly shared many ideas. So, when I taught an open class, it was good because I experienced what my colleagues did, and we could share these together (Hyunsa M, Teacher Keum, Interview).

Ms. Keum also shared how the grade-level PLC and student-centered feedback from teachers has helped her to learn about her students. She said:

그럴 때마다 그 아이가 어떤 환경이고 왜 그런가 하는 것을 이해할 수 있는 굉장히 좋은 기회가 되는 것 같아요. 그래서 공통적으로 '어, 그 아이 왜 그래?' 라고 하면, 담임 선생님이 얘기를 해 주세요. 그러면 저희가 '아, 애가 이래서 이런 반응들을 보이는구나' 라는 거를 알게 되는 계기가 많이 되고 있어요. 그래서 저는 그런 게 참 도움이 많이 되는 거 같아요. ... 그냥 단지 선생님의 수업으로 끝나는 게 아니라 아이들에 대한 이야기를 나누는 그런 공동체.

Whenever we have a lesson observation, it is a great opportunity for us to discuss about the environment the student is in, or why he does such things. So, when teachers ask, "Uh, why is that child like that?" the homeroom teacher talks a lot. Then, we get to say, "Ah, so that is why that child was reacting that way," and learn. It is very helpful. ... Not just ending as a teacher's lecture, it turns into a community, in which we can discuss the students. (Hyunsa M, Teacher Keum, Interview).

Ms. Keum highlighted how the suggestive lesson planning process is not just about growth in teaching skills but is also a meaningful learning opportunity in which teachers can learn from and discuss with one another about their students to better understand them.

**Workload.** Another common challenge facing the teachers at this school is the workload.

Mr. Hong shared, “일도 굉장히 많아지는 편이죠,” “The amount of work increased a lot.”

(Hyunsa M, Teacher Hong, Interview). Mr. Hong shared how his tasks increased as student council activities increased. He also described how there were more tasks that he had to complete for class innovation as well:

학생회 활동이 늘어나면서 학생회 예산도 많이 늘어났고요. 그 예산을 지출하기 위한 공문 결재나 행정 일들도 늘어나게 되니까 일단 업무적으로 많이 늘었고요. 수업도 바뀌야 되고 학생회 활성화도 해야 되고 ... 이제 잘 못 하겠는 거죠.

With increased student council activities, the budget has also increased a lot. As administrative paperwork for spending the budget has increased, the overall workload also increased. Classes have to be changed and the student council has to be activated ... So now, I feel that I cannot do them well. (Hyunsa M, Teacher Hong, Interview).

Mr. Hong has felt burdened by the increased work in his position as a class teacher and his additional duties in the student council.

Ms. Jung reflected how she also had diverse tasks assigned to her that increased her overall work load. She stated, “저는 학교에서 교사의 역할이 되게 여러가지예요. 교과 선생님으로서 체육 선생님 그다음에 행정 업무를 하는 행정 업무자로서 그다음에 담임 교사” “I have many roles at school, as a physical education teacher, administrative officer, and a homeroom teacher.” (Hyunsa M, Teacher Jung, Interview). All in all, finding meaning in their careers by accomplishing their educational desires and goals were exchanged for their physical fatigue.

## Students

The two interviewed students, Choi and Lee, were 8th graders in Hyunsa Middle School. Both served on the student council, which runs a “학습 멘토링,” – mentorship program for learning program that they participated in (Hyunsa M, Students Lee & Choi, Interview). Even though both of the students were randomly assigned to Hyunsa Middle School, they have had positive experiences that they described.

*Autonomy.* Students at Hyunsa Middle School agreed that there is a sense of student autonomy. One student said that, “저희 학교에 학생 자치가 되게 활발한 편이고 그리고 학생들의 의견을 되게 자주 반영하는 편이라서,” “Students’ autonomous governance is very active in my school and the school reflects the students’ opinions very often.” (Hyunsa M, Student Choi, Interview). Choi described, “학습 멘토링,” “a mentorship program for learning, which was run by the student council (Hyunsa M, Student Choi, Interview). She explained how, “저희 학생회 사업이 있는데 그중에 학습 멘토링이라고 학생들끼리 멘토와 멘티를 뽑아서 서로 학습을 도와주는 그런 식으로 진행을 하고 있어요,” “We had a student council project and part of it is a mentorship program in which students help each other with their studies.” (Hyunsa M, Student Choi, Interview). She elaborated on this program by saying, “내가 특별히 이 과목에 자신이 있다, 근데 이 친구는 별로 자신이 없으면 내가 이 친구를 도와주고 이런 느낌이예요,” “If I am confident in a subject, but another classmate is not, then I could help my friend (Hyunsa M, Student Choi, Interview). Choi believes that “일단 학생들이 이런 사업을 하고 싶다 이러면 선생님들께서 되게 적극적으로 도와도 주시고,” – if a student wants to do a certain project, then the teachers enthusiastically help us (Hyunsa M, Student Choi, Interview).

**Classroom Innovation.** Lee thought that there were visible changes in his school in terms

of classroom innovation. She stated:

일단은 혁신학교라 했을 때, 제일 먼저 한눈에 알아볼 수 있는 건 자리 배치 같아요. 자리 배치를 C 자로 하거나 일단 저희 학교에 디귤 자로 한 곳은 드물기는 한데 활동을 하거나 그럴 때 원탁으로 동그렇게 앉거나 네모났게 앉거나 자유롭게 앉아서 책상을 돌리고 그렇게 해서 친구들과 마주 보면서 이야기하면서 서로 수업에 대한 내용을 주고받고 하면서 기억에 조금 더 잘 남게 하도록 그렇게 하는 거 같아요.

When talking about Hyukshin school, the first salient point is the classroom layout. The desks are all arranged in the shape of a straight C. There are a few classrooms in our school with that layout. However, when we do some activities, the desks are arranged like a round table or a square, or students sit freely or turn the desk around so that students face each other and then we talk to each other about the contents of the lesson so that we could memorize them well. (Hyunsa M, Student Lee, Interview).

She experienced creative learning activities in her Korean and English classes:

국어 시간에는 자리를 뒤로 짝 옮겨서 역할 상황을 직접 짜내고 스토리를 직접 다 친구들이 모둠 상의해서 만든 다음에 연극을 실제로 해 봤어요. 그런 결과 친구들에게 이야기의 전개나 그런 거 배울 때 좀 더 도움을 줄 수 있었고

In Korean language class, after moving all the desks to the back of the classroom, we came up with situations by ourselves, discussed them in groups, created a story and put on a play. It was helpful for learning about the flow of a story. (Hyunsa M, Student Lee, Interview).

Regarding English class, she said that:

영어에서는 동그렇게 앉아서 약간 토론식으로 한번 영어 토론을 해 봤는데 영어 토론이라고 해 가지고 영어에 자신 없는 친구들이 있으니까 저도 그렇고 그래서 한국어로 그냥 영어 어떤 책 그거를 읽고 토론을 한번 해 봤는데 그래서 기억에 조금 더 잘 남는 거 같아요.

We sat in a circle and tried debating in English class. Even though it was an English debate, we did the debate in Korean after reading an English book because there were some students who were not confident in their English, including me. It made it easier to remember. (Hyunsa M, Student Lee, Interview).

These innovative approaches engage students and help them learn, students say.

**School Events.** Above all, Choi found it very pleasing to be in this school because there have been a lot of events for students to enjoy. She stated that, “그냥 다른 학교 친구들이랑 얘기해 봤을 때, 좀 저희 학교의 좋은 점도 나타나는 거 같고 그리고 다양한 행사 같은 게 좀 자주 있어서 그 점에서 좀 재밌게 다니고 있는 거 같아요,” “When I talk to friends in other schools, it seems that my school has good things. Because there are various events, it’s fun to go to school.” (Hyunsa M, Student Choi, Interview). She praised her school’s atmosphere by saying, “너무 공부적으로도 강요하지도 않고 학생들을 위한 복지 시설도 많이 갖춰져 있고 그리고 아까 말했듯이 다양한 학생들의 즐거움을 위해서 만들어져 있는,” “Students are not forced to study too much and there are a lot of recreational facilities for the students. Also, as I’ve said before, there are many things that students enjoy.” (Hyunsa M, Student Choi, Interview).

She described one recent event in which, “아까 저기 중앙 정원에서 축제도 했고 등교 맞이도 하고 그리고 수요일마다 특정 기간에 노래자랑이라고 해서 학생들끼리 경연을 하기도 하고 하는 식으로 좀 다양하게 있습니다,” “We had a festival in the central garden and there were welcoming events in the morning. There are various events such as singing competitions every Wednesday, at a certain period where each contestant sings.” (Hyunsa M, Student Choi, Interview). Lee stated, “저희 학교는 행사 쪽으로 발전이 많이 되어 있어서 되게 행사 준비를 할 때면 친구들도 유쾌하고 그래서 MC도 잘 봐주고 그러고 호응도 좋아서 되게 행사 쪽으로는 저희 학교가 튼튼한 것 같아요,” “Our school is well-developed in terms of school events. When preparing for events, the students are cheerful and enthusiastic. The reactions are good as well. In terms of events, our school is strong.” (Hyunsa M, Student Lee, Interview).

## Parents

**Democracy.** The parent interviewed, Ms. Jung, said that there are formal meetings held for parents where they are encouraged to weigh in on school decisions. She said that, “저희들은 1년에 2번 학부모 연수를 통해서, 만들거나 배움을 통해서 어머니들 연수를 받아요. 그래서 학교에 참여하게끔-- 그런 것도 있고요, 그 다음에 또 1년에 2번 모니터링을 해서 학교에 건의하고 싶은 사항이나 하고 싶은 말씀이 있는 거, 그런 거를, 네,” “We (parents) participate in parent training twice a year, which helps us participate in school events. And through school monitoring twice a year, we could propose any suggestion to the school.” (Hyunsa M, Parent Jung, Interview).

**Involvement.** Parents of Hyunsa Middle School students voluntarily run three different clubs for the school, hoping that their involvement will contribute to the creation of a stronger local community. The president of the parent committee, and the organizer of the ‘side-dish club,’ Ms. Jung described, “학부모 동아리가 저희는 캘리가 있고요, 독서 동아리가 있고, 그 다음에 반찬,” “We have calligraphy, reading, and side dish clubs.” (Hyunsa M, Parent Jung, Interview). She went on to explain how, “동아리라고 저소득 아이들에게 반찬을 만들어서 나누어 주는 봉사, 네, 그런 활동이에요,” “In the side dish club, we volunteer making side dishes for children from low-income families.” (Hyunsa M, Parent Jung, Interview). She noted:

저희 학교도 그렇고 지역이 저소득 분들이 많아서 아이들도 좀 보고 느끼는 게 있었을 거고, 그 다음에 이런 취지가 나오게 된 것도 이런 봉사를 함으로써 아이들이 조금 더 나은 생활을 할 수 있을까-- 그러니까 같은 엄마 입장에서.

In this community and the school, there are many low-income families. So, the kids might see and feel empathy about that. As a mom, I do these types of volunteering in hopes that all kids will have better lives (Hyunsa M, Parent Jung, Interview).

She views herself as a role model for many students in the school.

In a similar vein, when asked about how parent involvement in Hyukshin schools compares to general schools, she noted that there is a key difference. She stated that, “학교 임원님들이 동아리나 연수는 혁신 학교에서 지원을 많이 해주시니까 기본적으로 많이 하고 계시는 걸로 알고 있는데, 저희 학교가 좀 더 적극적으로 많이 하고 있는 것 같기도 해요.” “I know Hyukshin school [parents] actively participate in clubs or in-training services because Hyukshin schools basically support such clubs or training.” (Hyunsa M, Parent Jung, Interview). Ms. Jung maintains that Hyukshin parents are more active because of the emphasis the HSSM puts on democratic education and community engagement.

**General Perceptions.** Ms. Jung believes that her child is very happy at his school but was simultaneously greatly worried about his future career prospects. She explained how the extracurricular activities at school are his primary source of happiness, and that, “부정적으로 특별히 변한 건 없어요. 많은 참여를 하니깐,” – he hasn’t changed negatively because he has participated in a lot of activities (Hyunsa M, Parent Jung, Interview). She then continued on to detail her son’s experience in extracurricular activities by saying:

저희 애는 1학년 때는 학생부를 했었고요, 지금은 축구 동아리며 댄스 동아리를 많이 하고 있거든요. 근데 동아리 하면서 아이가 좋아하고, 행복하고, 자기가 하고 싶은 거 하기때문에 그건 만족하고 있어요.

My kid was in the student council when he was in first grade and he’s in soccer and dance club now. He’s happy while participating in the clubs and doing what he wants, so I’m satisfied. (Hyunsa M, Parent Jung, Interview).

She described how: “그리고 학생부에서도 굉장히 적극적으로도 했었고, 좋아하고, 그다음에 학생부에서 하는 모든 활동이 아이들이 재미있어했었던 거 같아요.” “When he was in the student council, he was very active and had so much fun. I think students liked all of the activities in the student council.” (Hyunsa M, Parent Jung, Interview).

Ms. Jung believes that this school's designation as a Hyukshin school has promoted her son's happiness. She stated that, “근데 또 이 학교는 좀 다른 게 옆에 세 학교가 이렇게 경쟁하듯 하는 분위기가 있었는데 이 학교는 혁신학교가 되면서 물리적인 환경들을 많이 바꿨어요.” “Unlike the three other schools nearby that have competitive atmospheres, the environment changed in this school after it was designated as a Hyukshin school (Hyunsa M, Parent Jung, Interview). She said it has become a sort of shelter for the students, where they do not have to take the same kinds of tests as in most schools.

In terms of testing, she believes that this district has a relatively relaxed attitude. She stated that, “강남처럼 성적에 민감하지는 않거든요.” “Unlike Gangnam district, this district is not excessively sensitive to students' test results.” (Hyunsa M, Parent Jung, Interview). She concluded by saying that all of these factors have contributed to parents' satisfaction. She explained that, “그러면서 만족도는 올라가는 것으로 알고 있습니다.” “From what I understand, in this context, parents' satisfaction has been increasing.” (Hyunsa M, Parent Jung, Interview). Conclusively, she is happy with Hyukshin schools overall due to the fact that they provide settings in which “애들이 행복하고 학교 학생들이 자치가 있고,” “Students are happy and can become self-governing.” (Hyunsa M, Parent Jung, Interview). Parents valued the fact that their children could lead happy lives as students of Hyunsa Middle School.

**Critical Perspectives.** When asked if any school in Korea could guarantee that all students will be fulfilled, Ms. Jung said, “가능하지 않다고 보지만 있다고 하면 당연히 보내겠죠.” “I think it's impossible! But if it's possible, of course I would send my child to a school like that.” (Hyunsa M, Parent Jung, Interview).

She is, continually, aware of the broader trends in Korean education, so she expressed some critical perspectives about the HSSM. In terms of extracurricular activities, for example, she mentioned that they are not e unique to Hyukshin schools. Indeed, the 2015 revised National Curriculum explicitly called for schools to promote ‘Creative Experiential Activities,’ such as a broad range of clubs and activities (Ministry of Education, 2015). She said that:

근데 저희 학교만 혁신 학교라 그래서 참여를했다고 생각은 안 하고요, 어느 학교든 동아리든 자치부 활동이 있기 때문에, 그러니까 우선 저희 학교가 더 많이하기는 하죠. 근데 모든 학교가 동아리나 자치 활동을 하기 때문에.

I don't think my child can participate in so many activities only because this is Hyukshin school. Any school has clubs and self-governing activities. This school has more clubs and self-governing activities. However, any school has clubs and some self-governing activities. (Hyunsa M, Parent Jung, Interview).

In terms of academic achievement, she expressed some worries that seem to common among parents of Hyukshin students: “또 우려되는 [부분이] 시험이라든지 이런 제도가 많이 없어지기 때문에, 학력 저하 이런 게 다른 부모님들과 똑같이 많이 고민하실 것 같아요.” – “I am concerned about a decline in grades like the other parents, because this school doesn't have a testing system.” (Hyunsa M, Parent Jung, Interview). She even said that, “근데 지금 거의 혁신 학교로 많이 하기 때문에 솔직히 말해서 고등학교는 혁신학교로 안 가려고요,” “To tell the truth, I would not send my child to Hyukshin high school, because there are so many Hyukshin schools now.” (Hyunsa M, Parent Jung, Interview). Ms. Jung's son, an 8th grade student, is already feeling social pressure to compete academically with his peers. She said, “학교 생활은 잘 하고 있어요. 학교 생활은 잘 하고 있는데 진학에 대한 고민은 많이 하고 있죠... 미래의 걱정도 해야 되고 이런 거에 대한 걱정인 거 같아요,” “His school life is good, but he's worrying about going to high school a lot... He's worrying about his future and so on.” (Hyunsa M, Parent Jung, Interview).

In general, she is worried about her son's happiness recently because he has been feeling the pressures of applying to high school. She recounted briefly how, “제가 물어봤거든요? 안 행복하대요,” “I asked him [if he is happy] and he said he's not happy.” (Hyunsa M, Parent Jung, Interview). This has made her question how realistic Hyukshin schooling really is in the Korean context. She stated:

시대에 맞지 않는 거는 당연-- 저도 고민을-- 지금 저희가 중 3 이거든요. 그래서 무엇보다 고민을 많이 하고 있는데요, 지금 제 입장은 고등학교를 보내는 입장에서는-- 네, 멈추셨으면 좋겠어요. 왜냐하면 다 아는 얘기지만 강남권은 아직 혁신이 없거든요. 근데 그 아이들과 어차피 경쟁을 해야 되는 저희 애로서는 지금은, 네.

[Hyukshin schools] are not well-fitted with the times. My son is in 3rd grade, which is why I'm so worried now. As a mom whose child is going to high school, I think Hyukshin schooling needs to stop here. As everyone knows, this is because there's no Hyukshin school in Gangnam district yet. But my son still has to compete with students in Gangnam district anyway. (Hyunsa M, Parent Jung, Interview).

In light of these comments, she had some suggestions about ways in which Hyukshin schools could better prepare graduates for what awaits them both in high school and beyond. She believes the school would benefit from having more “좀 더 전문적인 지식을 가진 선생님들이,” academic and professional teachers” (Hyunsa M, Parent Jung, Interview):

조금 더 선생님들이 전반적인 지식을 가진 선생님들이 많이 계셔서 아이들에게 많은 애기와 경험, 풍부한 지식 그러니까 갖고 계시는 기술, 지식을 아이들에게 많이 해 주셨으면 좋겠어요. 거기서 아이들이 토론도 하고, 모둠 활동도 하면서 충분히 배울 수도 있을 것 같아요.

I hope that many teachers who have lots of general knowledge teach their skills and knowledge to students. In that way, I think children can learn many things by discussing and having group activities. (Hyunsa M, Parent Jung, Interview).

She expressed agreement with the notion that the money that goes towards funding Hyukshin schools would be better spent on increased academic supports for students.

## **Discussion**

There is a great emphasis on autonomy, democratic education, and teacher collaboration at Hyunsa Middle School. These characteristics are congruent with the Fourth Way of educational change, as described by Hargreaves and Shirley (2009, 2012).

***Autonomy.*** The school leaders and students of Hyunsa Middle School seek to increased student autonomy. The principal attempts to respect autonomously run student activities and the free expression of students' opinions, rather than imposing his own judgments. Students believe that they can openly express their opinions in their classes and on the student council.

Regarding student autonomy in Hyunsa Middle School, there are three points of further discussion. First, improving student autonomy involves the integration of not only systematic changes, but also breaking down the hierarchical social norms between adults and students. Through this, students may be viewed as equals and the education process can be considered a mutually constructed endeavor.

Second, in Hyunsa Middle School, students have used their autonomy to facilitate collaborative learning practices amongst themselves. The student council had voluntarily run learning and mentorship activities in which the students are able to make a mentor-mentee relationship for conceptualizing and comprehending the academic subjects in this school. This mentoring program exemplifies one of the ways that students increased their level of autonomy. Students are able to run and participate in autonomous activities which ultimately contributes to their growth instead of delinquency or immature mannerisms. Thus, this atmosphere could be a good case to show how students exercise their appropriate participation and are encouraged to grow.

Third, a combination of the autonomy that students are granted, and the student-centered pedagogy employed at Hyunsa Middle School, appears to contribute to greater levels of student happiness. Students are empowered to express their opinions and teachers have developed a culture of professional deliberation in which they have been able to respond constructively to student preferences. By individually tailoring their lessons based on student interests and feedback, teachers effectively and consciously promote students' autonomy. The teachers try their best to break through the traditionally hierarchical social norms pervasive throughout South Korea. They view students as equals and want ensure that the education process is a mutually constructed endeavor, rather than tonly he dissemination and rote consumption of pre-existing knowledge.

**Democracy.** Hyunsa Middle School's administrators and teachers believe that they have set up a school environment that takes all stakeholders' perspectives into account. For example, parents are invited into the school twice a year to learn about ways in which they can get involved in extracurricular activities. Parents are also encouraged to make suggestions about how to improve overall school operations. They feel free to come to open classes and to get an up-close perspective on teaching and learning at this school.

Student engagement is exemplified by the levels of student involvement in rule making, and an overall democratic school environment that allows them to influence how the school is run on a daily basis. Homeroom teachers work with their students to collectively decide upon class rules. Additionally, the school's student council has the authority to create proposals and to put on events. Students relish the opportunities that they are given to grow in leadership and confidence.

However, despite such successful examples, the schools' focus on student autonomy and democracy has, at times, proved difficult for certain faculty members. Teachers reported that students sometimes take advantage of the amount of freedom they are given in class and during their extracurricular activities. These instances lead to teacher frustration and, according to one teacher, result in poorly managed events. It has the potential to create some division amongst the faculty, as some teachers are still uncomfortable with giving the students such levels of authority and others are proponents to it. When teachers feel as though the administrators give more support to students than to their colleagues' professional judgments, they experience demoralization as a result. In response, further professional development may help educators to deliberate upon and to resolve these differences.

***Teacher Collaboration.*** Teachers at Hyunsa Middle School treasure their high degree of collegiality and seize upon opportunities to participate in two different forms of open classes. The first is a relatively more common practice, through regular grade-level, within-school open classes. In this system, teachers collaborate with one another to create lesson plans, open their class to observers, and participate in feedback sessions. The second form of open class, or "suggestive lesson," is part of a PLN. During these classes, teachers from other schools are invited to observe open classes and vice versa. In both forms of lesson observations, teachers follow a protocol that emphasizes students' responses to different classroom practices, rather than purely focusing on or scrutinizing the teachers. This student-centered approach to professional development is one reason why teachers say that they are attracted to this form of collaboration.

However, some teachers are still reluctant to participate in these open classes. They tend to construe them as more of an evaluation of their personal talents rather than a valuable learning opportunity to improve their teaching. Their passive opposition to open classes appears to be widespread in Korean schools and to reflect a relatively privatized understanding of what it means to be a teacher (Choi, 2017; So, 2013; So, Shin, & Son, 2010).

Overall, in spite of a small number of detractors, it seems as though the teachers have adapted well to this innovative form of professional development. They will still need some more time in order to evolve towards truly demanding and responsive teaching practices. The efforts of the majority of teachers in this school to continuously experiment with open classes are an important reflection of their dedication to this aspiration and to their commitment to Hyukshin values.

## **Conclusion**

Hyunsa Middle School is characterized by a democratic learning environment, the promotion of student autonomy, and teacher collaboration through a structured, open class system. The success of this school is evident through its designation as one of the best middle schools in Korea in 2016. As a result of this designation, it maintains a positive reputation that enhances all of the Hyukshin education in this district.

The school's success can largely be attributed to a combination of the school leaders' full-fledged support for the Hyukshin movement and the passion of past and present teachers for Hyukshin educational values. Teacher leadership has also led to the development of school-wide teacher collaboration. This type of collaboration takes place primarily during mandatory grade-level open classes and through "suggestive lessons" in a PLN, where teachers from other schools are invited to observe lessons and provide feedback.

Stakeholders say they are generally satisfied with the values that the school emphasizes and are especially excited about the democratic skills students are able to develop through participation in class and through the various extracurricular activities offered. In their classrooms, teachers have been able to adopt and successfully implement student-centered pedagogical strategies that effectively promote student autonomy and democratic practices. Accordingly, these new approaches to teaching have led to an atmosphere of mutual respect where teachers play the role of facilitator and students are empowered to make their voices heard.

## **Dosan High School**

### **Introduction**

***About the school.*** Dosan High School is the only coeducational public school located in the Eunpyeong district. It opened in 2011 and became designated as a Hyukshin school in 2017. It is currently in its third year as a Hyukshin school. The district is centered in between renowned private high schools and elite schools and is known for being generally conservative. This environment has led students from challenging backgrounds to voluntarily come to Dosan High School.

In the Eunpyeong district, many of the students with lower academic performances and whose families have lower than average incomes decide to enroll in this school. The teachers, who want to financially and professionally support students, decided to apply to become a Hyukshin school. Currently, the Eunpyeong district is actively promoting the HSSM. As one of the few Hyukshin high schools in Seoul, Dosan High School is believed to have the optimal conditions to attract and carry out community-related projects and other forms of learning that will be experienced as relevant and engaging for its students.

***School Population.*** The school consists of 24 homeroom classes, 57 teachers, and 608 students. Additionally, it has three homeroom classes for students with special needs. Although some prejudice from more conservative community members still remains regarding Dosan High School, after the students are enrolled, parents come to trust the school's teachers. Moreover, in spite of negative stereotypes about the school, its students are receiving better college entrance exam results, when compared to their academic performance, so parents are pleased that standards are high. Thus, the parents' expectations are growing regarding the college admission process.

## **School Emphases**

Dosan High School emphasizes:

- i. Student and faculty democracy;
- ii. Interpersonal relationships; and
- iii. Active participation of its students.

***Student and Faculty Democracy.*** The principal, Mr. Lee, described that it is necessary to run a school both democratically and reasonably. The school allows students to express their opinions and feedback freely, in order to ensure that the students are satisfied with how the school is embracing everyone's opinions. For instance, everyone gets a chance to voice an opinion by suggesting it to the student council. Nonetheless, some students complain about how their peers' inconsistent attitudes within the classroom causes distractions, inhibiting them from adequately concentrating and studying.

***Interpersonal Relationships.*** Mr. Lee also aims for the student-faculty relationship to become more established. After all, academics aren't the only important factor impacting the students' futures. Other social abilities, such as developing a network or personal values, are required in society. Thus, Mr. Lee believes that forming intimate relationships will help students develop these abilities and create a more fun, welcoming learning environment.

***Active Student Participation.*** Dosan High School encourages students to participate in activities inside and outside of the classroom. The principal believes that it's unreasonable to attempt to fathom a student's ability based purely on their academics. Even if students lack academic abilities or have noncompliant behaviors, Dosan High School aims to support them by encouraging them to participate in diverse activities that will help them discover their talents or interests.

## School Leaders

Mr. Lee has been the principal of this school since 2019. He has 30 years of teaching experience and majored in math education. Mr. Lee visited both Namseoul and Jeongsun Middle Schools before being assigned to Dosan High School. In 2012, he had his first experience with Hyukshin schools, when he was sent to work at the SMOE.

Mr. Lee emphasized the limitations of the current Korean education system. He stated, “학생들이 가지고 있는 잠재력이, 창의성, 자기 능력들을 발휘하고 키워줄 수 있는 그런 본래의 교육이 의미를 이렇게 좀 등한시하는 경우 이런 게 많이 있어요,” “There are many cases where supporting and developing students' potential, creativity, and abilities, are neglected.” (Dosan H, Principal Lee, Interview). He saw the HSSM as a way to overcome this limitation. Mr. Lee said, “정리하면 공교육의 본질로 돌아가고 그 다음에 미래의 역량을 좀 키워내는 교육이다 저는 이렇게 봅니다,” “The purpose of education is to return to the essence of public education and develop future competencies.” (Dosan H, Principal Lee, Interview).

The vice principal, Ms. Heeyoung Lee, has 31 years of teaching experience. She majored in Chinese Language Education in college, and multimedia studies in graduate school. When asked to define the meaning of Hyukshin, Ms. Lee replied that, “혁신이라는 단어가 선생님들 사이에서는 마음에 와 닿는 게 좀 힘들 수는 있지만 혁신이라는 것은...아이들을 좀 깨우는, 그런 게 저는 혁신이라고 생각을 해요,” — while it may be difficult for teachers to define the word ‘Hyukshin,’ I personally think it’s a set of studies to raise awareness among students (Dosan H, Vice Principal Lee, Interview). Echoing Principal Lee’s philosophy on the purpose of education, Vice Principal Lee advocates for allowing opportunities for students to actively lead their own learning and build upon their strengths.

***Emphases of Dosan High School.*** Dosan High School administrators describe the three emphases of Dosan High School as follows:

1. Student and faculty democracy;
2. Curriculum reform; and
3. Community of care (dolbum).

In addition, the administrators highlight the tension between the societal pressure for students to excel academically and Dosan High School's Hyukshin values, which promote an alternative model of education.

***Student and Faculty Democracy.*** Mr. Lee emphasized the importance of maintaining a sense of respect among leaders, teachers, and students in order to establish a democratic school community. He explained how, "첫째는 학교 자체가 교육 주체들이 원활한 소통...서로 간의 존중과 배려를 바탕으로 해서 좀 소통이 잘 돼야 되겠다. 그러므로 해서 학교 자체가 민주적이고 합리적으로 운영됐으면 좋겠어요," "First, the faculty members and administrators should be able to communicate well ... based on the respect and consideration of each other. Thus, the school itself could be democratically and reasonably operated." (Dosan H, Principal Lee, Interview). Mr. Lee believes that a system in which administrators are the only decision-makers, isn't effective. He said, "결국은 실제로 교육을 하는 선생님들이 얼마만큼의 자발성을 가지고 학생들과 대하면서 교육하느냐 이게 인제 교육 개혁의 어떤 성패예요," "that in the end, a successful education reform is dependent on the willingness of teachers to educate and respect students." (Dosan H, Principal Lee, Interview). All stakeholders in the school – administrators, teachers, students, and parents –should work together as a democratic community.

**Curriculum Reform.** Dosan High School administrators highlighted the need for the school to reform the curriculum to better suit student needs. Principal Lee sai, "밑의 애들은 이미 교과 수준을 제대로 이해 못 할 정도로 차이가 많이 나요. 태반이 막 이해를 못 하니까 답답하고 지루해해요," "Students who can't catch up with the curriculum are bored and frustrated in class." (Dosan H, Principal Lee, Interview). The principal also talked about his dislike for the focus on CSAT scores in schools:

다만 수능 자체는 선행 학습과 그야말로 문제 풀이, 암기식 이런 것을 길게 오래 한 학생들한테 유리한 구조. 사실은 교육적으로는 바람직하지 않잖아요. 그렇게 오지선다형으로 질문하는게 실제로 얼마나 많이 알고 있고 자기 것으로 소화하고 발표하고 응용하고 이런 것을 정확하게 측정할 수는 없잖아요...시험이란 한계를 극복을 해야 된다고 생각해요.

The CSAT itself is a structure that is only advantageous to students who have long done such things as pre-learning, which refers to getting ahead of the school curriculum by learning the material prior to the regular class schedule, problem-solving, and memorization. In fact, it's not educationally desirable. The test can't accurately measure the students' abilities such as presenting and applying simply based on a single test...Thus, it's important to overcome the limitations of exams. (Dosan H, Principal Lee, Interview).

Mr. Lee wants to bring about a change in the requirements and environment of the overall school curriculum. To attain this goal, the teachers at Seoul Dosan High School use different types of teaching strategies:

저희가 수업 방식이 다양하잖아요. 배움의 공동체나 모둠활동이나 거꾸로 수업이나 여러 가지 수업들을 선생님마다 다양하게 활용을 했었어요...적절하게 중요한 내용을 얘기하면서 또 애들은 호기심을 가지고 찾아 나가면서 또 발표하면서 그러면서 자기 거를 만들게.

Learning community, group activities, and flipped classrooms. They assign their students appropriate amounts of work. Students are motivated to learn more by preparing presentations of their own (Dosan H, Principal Lee, Interview).

Principal Lee argues that a good curriculum encourages a wide range of students to participate in class.

Vice Principal Lee supported Principal Lee's idea of the need for Hyukshin schools to develop students' potential, proactive learning skills, and creativity. She explained how Dosan High School works to address students' needs:

저희는 3 등급 아이들이 저소득층 학생에다가 공부에는 관심도 없고 부모님들은 희망하는 게 대학 진학이 아니라 고등학교 졸업이에요...그래서 국영수의 수업보다는 아이들이 좋아하는, 쉽게 말하면, 공예 수업....어떤 게 가장 나한테 적성에 맞는지 그런 거를 이렇게 집중적으로 진행이 되고 있습니다.

Level 3 students are mostly in low-income families, so their parents want them to earn a high school degree...Rather than just telling them to study, our school provides individualized programs for them. For instance, rather than Korean, English, or math class, they can participate in crafts, or in a photography class...so they can discover their dream career. (Dosan H, Vice Principal Lee, Interview).

Through far-reaching curricular reforms that open up potential careers for students, the hope is that they will become proactive learners who can step up and take charge of their educations.

Principal Lee stated:

학교에서 활동하고, 수업 시간에 참여하고 요런 것들이 대학에서 학생들을 뽑을 때 적극적으로 반영되고. 좀 기초가 부족하더라도 어떤 수업이든지 적극성을 가지고 참여하면서 또 배우려고 노력하는 학생들이 됐으면 좋겠죠.

I want students' participation and extracurriculars to be recorded and reflected, so it could benefit students during the college admissions process. Also, even if the students lack some basics, I still would like the students to actively participate in any class. (Dosan H, Principal Lee, Interview).

He wants the staff at Dosan High School to create a revised curriculum and affiliated extracurricular activities that will encourage participation from the students. His ultimate goal is to ensure that all students, regardless of their academic achievement, are able to build upon their strengths.

*Community of Care.* Dosan High School administrators advocate for building a community of care (dolbum) at the school. As a result, students would be able to mature into adults who could contribute positively in society. Vice Principal Lee reports that it is a challenge to lead Dosan High School due to the lack of parental care. She said that:

가정적으로 케어가 안 되는 애들이 많아요. 어렵고. 그리고 부모가 한 부모나 또는 너무 어려우니까 부모가 안 들어오기도 하고. 그러니까 애들이 늦잠 자고 못 오고. 붙어 있지만 퇴학 받고 이런 애들도 있어요. 그리고 애들이 거칠고 부모가 이렇게 안 되니까.

There are a lot of students who are from difficult backgrounds and lack sufficient care at home. Some of our students live in single-parent homes. When parents are absent at home because they're working, students oversleep or get expelled from school. The kids are rebellious, and their parents can't control them. (Dosan H, Vice Principal Lee, Interview).

She explained further how, sometimes, “선생님들이 가정 방문을 가서 아이들 집을 찾아가도 연락이 안 돼요,” “Even if the teachers go to visit their homes, it’s hard to contact the parents and students.” (Dosan H, Vice Principal Lee, Interview). Dosan High School administrators see the best way to resolve this issue is to create a community of care within the school. Principal Lee said:

학생을 학교에서 따뜻하게 맞이해 주고...배우는 게 꼭 성적 높이고 이것만 얘기하는 게 아니고 사회에서 앞으로 다양한 관계라든가 가치관이라든가 이런 걸 다 배우게 되잖아요? 요런 것에 초점을 맞춰서 선생님들과 학생들 같이 지내면서 대화하고.

The school should be a welcoming place to students. Aside from academics, students should learn social skills like developing relationships or personal values. Students and teachers should discuss and develop these aspects of what it means to be human (Dosan H, Principal Lee, Interview).

Principal Lee wants Dosan High School to provide students with experiences that go beyond knowledge acquisition. He wants students learn how to form relationships that will enable them to succeed in society.

***Challenges of Dosan High School.*** In addition to the three main emphases of Dosan High School, Vice Principal Lee discussed the challenges due to the tension between the societal pressure for students to excel academically and Hyukshin school emphasis on providing good education. Ms. Lee believes that, “제일 큰 게 우리나라는 입시가 교육을...사실은 억압하고 있는 거죠. 특히 고등학교 교육은. 학생도, 선생님들도, 학부모도 어쨌든 대학 가야 되는 거 아니냐 이러니까 우리가 창의성 있는 교육, 다양한 활동들 이런 것을 하는 데 어려움이 좀 있잖아요,” “the biggest hardship is that the entrance exams and high school education in Korea are forcing everyone to perform to their fullest capacity. In fact, it's difficult to provide creative education and activities because everyone's so worried about college.” (Dosan H, Vice Principal Lee, Interview). Ms. Lee believes that a greater level of open-mindedness about what constitutes a good education at the higher education level is creating new prospects for Hyukshin schools. This is due to the fact that “그래도 괜찮다고 보는 건 수시가 점차 확대되면서 과거에 비해서 학교 활동을 중요시하게 된 거예요. 대학교에서도 볼 때,” “More people are applying for early decision for college, and the value of extracurricular activities has increased as well.” (Dosan H, Vice Principal Lee, Interview). Thus, even if the students' CSAT scores may be lower in comparison to others, their high GPA and examples of how they actively participated in various educational activities are now taken into consideration and are regarded to as achievements by the universities.

Ms. Lee states, “지금은 그렇게 불리하지는 않아요,” “It's not as unfair as it was before.” (Dosan H, Vice Principal Lee, Interview). Differing slightly from the principal, Ms. Lee believes that some “경쟁을 어느 정도는 필요하다고 보는 거예요,” “competition is necessary to a certain extent.” (Dosan H, Vice Principal Lee, Interview).

## Teachers

**Teacher Information.** Two teachers at Dosan High School, Haechan Lee and Soohyuk Kim, were interviewed. Haechan Lee is an English teacher who is the head of the 8th-grade teachers. He defines a Hyukshin school as “열악한 지역 학교에 지원을 많이 해줘서, 아이들이 학교 생활을 조금 더 적응 할 수 있도록 돕는 학교,” “a school that provides a lot of support to the poor community, so that children can adjust to school life a little better.” (Dosan H, Teacher Lee, Interview). Mr. Lee said that, “예를 들어서 혁신학교로 지정된 학교들 보면, 일단은 지역적으로 열악한 곳에있어요. 그래서, 성적이나 진학률 보면은 떨어지는 학교고, 그런 학교 위주로 정한걸로 알고 있고요,” “If you look at the schools designated as Hyukshin schools, they're mostly in poor communities. If you look at their grades and college entrance rate, they are lower. As far as I know, that's how Hyukshin schools have been chosen.” (Dosan H, Teacher Lee, Interview). Mr. Lee appeared not to be aware of the process of applying to be a Hyukshin school and its democratic nature with regard to voting by teachers and parents.

Soohyuk Kim has taught for 8 years in Dosan High School. He defines a Hyukshin school as “주체적이고 민주적인 시민으로 성장 할 수 있는 능력을 갖추어 나가는거라고 보는거거든요,” “a school where students mature into self-reliant and democratic citizens.” (Dosan H, Teacher Kim, Interview). Mr. Kim described how, “아이들도 학생 자치 학급단위회의와 그걸 대표하는 대의원들이 모여서 대의원회의를 해서 그걸 또 학교측하고 행정실장, 학교장과의 면담을 통해서 실현가능한 원하는 것들을 빨리빨리 고치고요,” “students get together at the student representatives' meeting, asking the school, the chief of administration, and the principal to change what they need through meetings (Dosan H, Teacher Kim, Interview).

***Democratic Decision Making.*** According to Teacher Kim, Dosan High School administrators and teachers focus on putting into practice the values of democratic decision making. Administrators and teachers don't just espouse democratic theories, but also operate the school in democratic manner. Mr. Kim describes how, “학교 운영과 관련해서 교육과정을 짠다거나 아이들의 활동을 계획한다 이런데서 일방적으로 누군가가 주도해서 학교측 소위말하는 학교장이라든가 교감선생님 이런 분들이 주도해서 제안하고 그거를 해라 이런식은 전혀없죠,” “There's no such thing that someone from the school, a so-called school principal or vice-principal, takes the lead in making suggestions in designing curriculums or planning children's activities, including school management.” (Dosan H, Teacher Kim, Interview). Instead, the school operates faculty meetings that are full of animated discussions, where teachers take the lead in making school-level decisions, and administrators play a supporting role. He further drives the point home by explaining that, “아무리 작은 것도 같이 회의를 통해서 같이 결정하고 그 결정된 결과에 대해서는 서로 존중하죠,” “Even the smallest things are decided together, and we respect the final decision.” (Dosan H, Teacher Kim, Interview). Dosan High School teachers echo school administrators' emphasis on the importance of applying democratic decision-making processes.

***Dosan High School Student Characteristics.*** Teacher Kim believes that the location of Hyukshin schools in Seoul has a strange shape. He said, “지금 혁신학교들은 서울시에보면 서울이 요렇게 생겼으면 이 둘레에 있어요. 외곽에요,” “If you look at Seoul, Hyukshin schools are concentrated along the edge of the city, along the suburbs.” (Dosan H, Teacher Kim, Interview). The schools in the center of Seoul, which are financially affluent, have almost no Hyukshin schools.

As a result, some of their parents are against the notion of Hyukshin schools. For them, a Hyukshin school is, “공부시키는 학교가 아니고 어려운 학교란 인식,” “a poor school, not an academically rigorous school.” (Dosan H, Teacher Kim, Interview). Here, it appears that Hyukshin schools suffer from a societal stigma.

***Societal Pressure for Academic Excellence.*** Both Teacher Lee and Teacher Kim focused on the struggle that Hyukshin schools faced due to the societal pressure for students to focus on college admissions and academic excellence. Mr. Lee asserts that the college entrance exam should be changed to lessen the inequality in education. He stated that, “어렸을 때 부터 꼭 대학 가야된다고 하고, 졸업한 대학에 따라 임금 편차가 있는 것부터가 문제잖아요. 그래서 학력위주사회가 깨져야죠,” “The problems are that students have been told that they should go to college from an early age and that there is a wage gap depending on the university you graduated from. That's why we need to change our society that focuses too much on academic pedigrees.” (Dosan H, Teacher Lee, Interview). He thinks inequity occurs due to the differences in family income. Mr. Lee stated, “돈이 있거나 뭔가 투자를 더 해줄수있거나 부모가 더 신경을 써 줄 수 있는 애들은 따로 수월성교육을 하잖아요,” “Children who have money, who can invest more, or whose parents can care more about them, participate in a separate educational system.” (Dosan H, Teacher Lee, Interview). To combat this societal issue, Teacher Lee believes that the CSAT should be criterion referenced, not based on student academic rank. If the entrance examination methods do not change, he worried that “계속 이런 박탈감이 재생산 될 것이다,” “The sense of deprivation will continue to be reproduced (Dosan H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Soohyuk Kim, teacher and the head of the 9th-grade, claims that efforts to change the college entrance requirements face significant obstacles;

지금 교육부가 추진하고 있는 것 중에 고교학점제를 들여다보면 실은 그걸하기위한 전제조건이 있어야되거든요. 고교학점제라고 하는건 대학처럼 학생들이 과목을 선택하고 그에 관한 학점이 부여가 되잖아요. 대학의 입장에서 학생들을 입시에서 받아들일때 [학생들의 그 학점을] 모두 인정을 해야 [하는데 그게 어렵죠.]

If you look at the high school credit system among the things that the Ministry of Education is pushing for now, there should be a precondition for doing it. The high school credit system, like in a university, allows students to choose subjects and receive credits for them. When universities accept students, they have to accept all of those credits, [but it's hard] (Dosan H, Teacher Kim, Interview).

The main issue is that recent governmental effort does not resolve the fundamental issue of a competitive education system. He believes that, “현재 입시제도를 일부 바꾼다고 해서 특별하게 교육이 크게 달라지지 않을거다,” “Changing some of the current college entrance examination systems will not change education significantly.” (Dosan H, Teacher Kim, Interview). As a result, the societal pressure for students to excel academically still remains.

***Hyukshin School Limitations for High Achieving Students.*** Both teachers expressed concern about the high achieving students in Dosan High School. Teacher Lee believed that, “([잘하는학생들이] 만족 못 할거예요,” — “[Top students are] not satisfied in the school.” (Dosan H, Teacher Lee, Interview). They do like it, however, that they can get a higher GPA here than at more demanding schools. Teacher Lee expresses how, “그거에서 오는 이득이 커서 상위권 애들은 다 현실적인 이유로 저희학교 옵니다,” “The benefit from this is huge, so top students come to our school for practical reasons (Dosan H, Teacher Lee, Interview). Here, the practical reason is for students to get a high GPA, an integral component of college admissions.

The teachers question whether or not their students' learning improves at the school sufficiently. One teacher said that, “수능으로 경쟁하는 것 보다는 [내신이] 더 유리하다는 판단하에오는건데 문제는 수능불정도의 실력이 [학교다닐동안] 안 생기는거죠. 3년 동안 치열한 경쟁이 없으니깐요,” “our decision is based on the judgment that having a good GPA is more advantageous than competing with the CSAT, but the problem is that students don't improve enough on academic achievement to take the CSAT [during school years]. There's no fierce competition for them for three whole years (Dosan H, Teacher Lee, Interview). The learning environment, especially for the top students, comes to be perceived as weak, and not just by outsiders.

Teacher Lee explained:

본인들도 달달달 푸시 해줬으면 좋겠는데, 뭐. 교실에도 한 몇명 없고 그러니까 다 같이 막 밤새서 해야 막 열심히하는데 그런분위기는 형성이 안되는게 한계죠. 그런데 이제 그게 지역적인 한계도 있고, 개인적인 분위기, 학교 분위기도있죠.

Those students hope somebody pushes them to study. The reality is that some classmates are even absent from the classroom. Students will study harder if others stay up all night together, but the reality is not, so that is the limitation. It was impacted by regional limitations, personal issues, or school vibes (Dosan H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Dosan High School teachers face a complicated situation that is reflected in many of the school profiles in our sample. As the school itself focuses more on implementing Hyukshin values, high achieving students at Dosan High School worry that they do not get the support from teachers to the level that they desire. Instead, they experience that their teachers focus their attention on the students who struggle the most. While this is understandable from the vantage point of social justice, high achieving students are concerned that their own academic achievement suffers as a consequence.

## Students

The Boston College research team interviewed student Seojin Yoo, a junior, who transitioned from a general middle school to a Hyukshin high school. Seojin originally thought that Dosan High School was similar to other general schools. He then realized that it was a Hyukshin school, but only after his sophomore year. He exclaimed, "일단은 제가 다른 일반고를 다니지 않았으니까 별로 혁신학교와의 차이점을 몰라서 혁신학교라는 걸 잘 알아차리지 못했고 2 학기 때 설명을 들어서 이 학교가 혁신학교 라는 거를 알게 됐어요," "First of all, because I didn't attend any other general high schools, I didn't know the difference between a Hyukshin school and a general school. Later on, I heard that it was a Hyukshin School only during the second semester." (Dosan H, Student Yoo, Interview). For students similar to Seojin, the fact that Dosan High School is a Hyukshin school was not a priority.

The second student, Heeyeon Jung, who is also a junior, voluntarily came to this school due to the wide range of learning opportunities. She stated, " 혁신학교가 많은 활동을 한다고 들어 가지고 이 학교에 오고 싶어서 왔어요," "I had heard that Hyukshin schools have a lot of activities." (Dosan H, Student Jung, Interview). She had understood that, " 원래 다니던 학교 같은 거 보면 교사 위주의 활동이나 그런 걸로 하는 걸로 아는데 혁신학교는 학생들이 주도하고 학생들이 위주가 되는 그런 학교라고 들어가지고 해서 온 거 같아요," "Whereas general schools have teacher-oriented activities, Hyukshin schools are led by students, and are more student-oriented." (Dosan H, Student Jung, Interview). In spite of the apparent social stigma of Hyukshin schools in some circles, the notion of active learning is a drawing point for students like Heeyeon.

*Diversified Learning Opportunities.* Regardless of their different experiences, first impressions, or reason behind attending Dosan High School, both students were able to share interesting stories and experiences about the school. Dosan High School has unique activities to embrace students' diversity and provide various opportunities to develop their future. The three activities are:

1. 'Nareul;
2. 'dure' activities; and
3. 'I am a teacher.'

One student stated, "일단 공부에 관심이 없는 친구들은 혁신학교에 오면 괜찮을 거 같아요," "I think I would recommend Hyukshin schools to students who aren't interested in studying." (Dosan H, Student Yoo, Interview). This, he explains, is due to the fact that students can experience different jobs through the Nareul program. Heeyeon explained that, "이걸 통해서 공부에 흥미 없는 친구들도 다른 활동을 하면서 자신의 진로를 좀 더 추구할 수 있는 그런 게 다른 점이다 생각해요," — "Through these activities, even students who aren't interested in studying can pursue and discover their careers." (Dosan H, Student Yoo, Interview). Dosan High School tries to address the educational needs of all students.

Heeyeon stated, "저는 좋았던 거 같아요. 왜냐면 제가 해 볼 수 있는 그런 기회가 많고 그리고 다른 학교에 비해서 뭔가 좀 더 자유로워 가지고 제가 뭔가 더 할 수 있도록 그래가지고 좋은 거 같아요," "I like my experience in a Hyukshin school so far because there's a lot of opportunities for me to take advantage of. Also, it's more democratic and open-minded compared to other schools. These aspects allow me to try out different things (Dosan H, Student Jang, Interview).

Heeyon explained that, “두레활동을 통해서 친구들 마음에 맞는 친구들 모아 가지고 저의 도움이 필요하다고 하면 거기에 대한 제가 스터디 같은 걸 제 지식이나 그런걸 공유할 수 있어요.” “Through ‘dure’ activities, students can create a study group and share what they know with each other.” (Dosan H, Student Jang, Interview). She expressed how she prefers ‘dure’ activities over regular group projects. She said, “두레 활동은 이제 자신과 마음이 맞는 친구들만 모여서 하는 거고 협동 활동은 그냥 무작위로 뽑거나 아니면 출석 번호순대로 해가지고. 그래서 저는 두레 활동이 더 좋아요.” “There might be free-riders in regular group projects who don’t do their share of work. However, whereas regular group project members are randomly chosen, dure activities are only among students who are actively participating and agreeing with you. Thus, dure activities are better.” (Dosan H, Student Jang, Interview).

Heeyon explained the “I am a teacher” activity, which encourages students to teach their classmates:

다른 학교 제 주변 친구들을 보면 저처럼 혼자 해 가지고 할 수 있는 그런 활동이 별로 없어요. 다 선생님이 참여하거나 아니면 단체로 하거나 하는데, 저는 여기서 혼자서 나는 선생님이라는 프로그램이 있거든요. 그래서 제가 관심 있는 분야를 그걸 설정에서 그것을 친구들한테 발표해주는 거예요.

Looking at my friends from other schools, they don't have that many student-led activities. Teachers participate in it or students have to be in a group. But in Dosan High School, there's a program called "I'm a teacher." We can choose a topic that we're interested in and present it to other classmates. (Dosan H, Student Jang, Interview).

By becoming teachers, Dosan High School students learn how to assist others. Heeyon explained how “도와주면서 제가 안다고 생각했던 게 모를 수 있잖아요. 도와주면서 한 번 더 알 수 있게 되고 그러면서 공부도 더 한층 깊이 되는 거 같아요.” “Helping others helps me learn something that I didn't realize or have the chance to review. From this, I expand my knowledge.” (Dosan H, Student Jang, Interview).

***Limitations in Curriculum Reform.*** Ultimately, there were some contradictory quotes from both students regarding how effective Dosan High School is in providing innovative curriculum reform. Although Dosan High School provides diverse activities, it doesn't seem to hold interdisciplinary classes. Seojin was asked in the interview, "교과 간에 주제를 통합을 해서 사회시간에 과학과 관련한 걸 끌어서 같이 그런 경험이 있어요?" "If the school integrated any subjects like social studies and science?" (Dosan H, Student Yoo, Interview). Seojin answered that, "아니요, 그런 적 없는 거 같아요," "I never had such experiences." (Dosan H, Student Yoo, Interview). Furthermore, usually in class, he claimed, "교과서 위주로 설명해주시고 설명이 끝나면 학습지를 나눠주고 학습지를 풀게 하고 정보를 맞추는 식으로 진행합니다," "that teachers mainly explain based on textbooks and distribute worksheets for students to solve. At the end, we check the answers together." (Dosan H, Student Yoo, Interview).

Students felt that instructional practices of Dosan High School mirrored closely to that of traditional, non-Hyukshin schools. Seojin explained further how, "선생님이 설명하는 강의실 그런 수업이 70% 정도 돼요," "Seventy percent of the class is composed of teachers lecturing and explaining the subject (Dosan H, Student Yoo, Interview). Such lecture-based classes mirror a traditional classroom. Further, he expressed how "혁신학교에서만 배운 중요한 삶의 레슨은 없는 거 같아요," "there aren't any important life lessons I've learned from this school." (Dosan H, Student Yoo, Interview). Unfortunately, he exclaimed, "변화는 없는 거 같아요," "There wasn't anything that changed my mind." (Dosan H, Student Yoo, Interview). Overall, Seojin did not really see a distinct difference between Dosan High School and other non-Hyukshin high schools.

In addition, while Heeyeon acknowledged a school-level effort to garner student collaboration skills, she did not know whether such effort was effective. Heeyeon said that, “교실 수업을 보면 중학교 때랑 했던 건 다르게 약간 모둠수업 이런 거 많이 하고 조별 과제 약간 이런 걸 많이 해서 혼자가 아닌 협동심을 길러주려고 하는 거 같고,” Compared to middle school, we have more group activities and projects in the classroom, so I can see they're trying to develop our teamwork.” (Dosan H, Student Yoo, Interview). Heeyeon admitted, “솔직히 잘 모르겠어요,” “I honestly don't know if these activities increased our spirit of teamwork.” (Dosan H, Student Yoo, Interview). Both Seojin and Heeyeon were not able to clearly see the positive impacts of curriculum reform.

***Extracurricular Activities.*** Aside from classroom activities, Dosan High School offers opportunities outside of the classroom. Seojin explained:

중학교 때는 일단 시험이 끝나면 기말고사가 끝나면 방학 되기 전에 기간이 좀 남잖아요. 그때는 그냥 활동 같은 거를 하지 않고 그냥 무의미하게 핸드폰으로 시간을 보내는데 혁신학교니까 그때 교육청의 지원을 받아서 따로 외부로 활동을 나가거나 아니면 강사를 초청을 하기도 해요.

When I was in middle school, once the final exams were over and I had time before vacation, I didn't participate in any extracurriculars. I just spent meaningless time on my phone, but since Dosan is a Hyukshin School, the SMOE funds our school, so we can participate in activities outside of the school like listening to guest speakers. (Dosan H, Student Yoo, Interview).

More specifically, Seojin added that, “올해 1 학기 기말고사가 끝나고 코엑스에 가서 직업 체험 같은 것도 하고 박람회도 보고 그리고 인권 교육 같은 그런 교육도 받고 활동을 많이 했어요,” “This year, after the final exams during the first semester, we went to COEX (CONvention and EXhibition center) to experience jobs, see career fairs, and receive education on human rights.” (Dosan H, Student Yoo, Interview).

Seojin explained that such extracurricular activities are how he ended up choosing his prospective major: He stated:

대학교에 여러 학과가 있잖아요. 경영학과라든지 미디어학과 이렇게 학과들을 다 직접 그 학교에 대학생들을 초청해서 과에 대한 설명을 들으면서 그때 제가 제일 흥미롭던 게 경제 쪽인 거 같습니다.

There are multiple departments like the business or media department. So, when I went to the job fair, I was able to listen to college students explaining about different departments. Eventually, I realized that I was most interested in the economics field. (Dosan H, Student Yoo, Interview).

Although Seojin was able to discover his career interest, he wasn't able to discover the meaning and purpose of his life through school activities. He said, "다른 친구들은 모르겠는데 저는 별로 생각하고 그래 보진 않아요," "I don't know about others, but I don't necessarily think about the meaning and purpose of my life while doing the career experience activities." (Dosan H, Student Yoo, Interview). Yet, he later contradicted himself. He said, "경제학과로 가고 싶다 이런 것도 나중에 내 삶의 의미를 그쪽으로 발전시키고 싶다 이거랑 연관이 될 거 같은데요," "My goal of enrolling in the economics department is related to the meaning of my life." (Dosan H, Student Yoo, Interview).

**Democratic Values.** Dosan High School provides a myriad of opportunities for students to participate and even run student-led activities. Seojin said that:

학급 회의를 이리이러한 안건이다 하면 학급 임원들 모여서 하는 회의에 가서...그 쪽에서 투표를 해서 안건들을 그대로 교장 선생님이나 다른 선생님한테 올려서 만약에 이 안건이 좋은 거 같다 하면은 선생님들이 이 안건을 찬성 반대해서 찬성됐다고 하면 이 안건을 실시하는.

If there's an agenda for a homeroom meeting, students go to the student council meeting to inform them about it...Then, the class officers vote on it and send it to the principal or another teacher. If the teachers agree to the agenda, we can execute it. (Dosan H, Student Yoo, Interview).

However, both students listed some negative side-effects of freedom, especially regarding their academics. Seojin stated, "이게 활동 때문인지는 모르겠는데 수학 같은 경우는 좀 진도가 저희 학교가 좀 느리다고 해야 되나. 그런 편인 거 같아요," "I don't know if it's because of the activities, but our math class seems to progress more slowly than in other schools." (Dosan H, Student Yoo, Interview). Seojin observed:

공부를 하는 친구들은 공부에 관심 없는 친구들이 수업시간에 떠들고 핸드폰으로 그러다 보면 가끔씩. 근데 이에 대해서 좀 많이 불만을 한 거 같아요. 왜냐면 선생님들이 이렇게 잔소리를 하시니까 수업의 질이 떨어지고 수업시간도 실질적으로 좀 약간 줄잖아요...그리고 공부에 관심없는 친구들은 나는 공부에 관심이 없는데 굳이 수업을 들어야 되나 이렇게 생각하는 거 같아요.

During class, students who aren't interested in studying often talk in class, and they use their phones sometimes. Other students with higher academic performance don't like this. When teachers scold students, both the quality of instruction and class time spent learning decline, when the students who aren't interested in studying, even question the necessity of taking the class. (Dosan H, Student Yoo, Interview).

Heeyeon, in agreeance, stated that, "일단 먼저 안 좋은 거를 말하면 너무 자유롭다 보면 이제 해야 될걸 해야 되는데 안 해야 되는 경우가 있잖아요... 그런 게 공부에 대해서 약간 좀 너무 놔 버린다고 해야 되나요? 저는 그런 생각이 없어요," "because the school gives students so much freedom, some students don't do what they're supposed to do...For example, some students are too careless about studying. Even I sometimes forget that I need to study." (Dosan H, Student Jung, Interview).

In an apparent contradiction to her positive comments, Heeyeon said that:

저는 솔직히 말해서 이 학교는 별로 그렇게 추천하고 싶지는 않아요... 혁신학교가 나쁘다는 게 아니라 그냥 학교 분위기가 별로여가지고 추천드리고 싶지 않은데 만약에 다른 분위기 좋은 혁신학교라면 일반 다른 고등학교에 비해서 거기 학교를 추천하고 싶어요.

I honestly don't want to recommend this school to anyone ... I'm not saying that Hyukshin schools are bad. It's just because our school atmosphere is not that good. However, if other Hyukshin schools have a good atmosphere, I would recommend you go to a Hyukshin school rather than a general school. (Dosan H, Student Jung, Interview).

Heeyeon knew that "여기 있는 학교는 이 지역에서 그렇게 평판이 좋지는 않은 학교예요,"

— "this school isn't a very reputable school in the area." (Dosan H, Student Jung, Interview).

She stated:

역사가 별로 없어 가지고 그래서 학생들이 너무 놀기만 한다 이런 게 처음부터 원래 이런 게 있었어요. 그래서 저도 맨 처음에 혁신학교가 아니었으면 올 생각이 없었는데...그런 것 때문에 그런 거 같아요.

This school doesn't have much history in terms of its reputation, so most people's first impression is that students here don't study at all. At first, I didn't want to go to a general school, but I came to Dosan High School ... just because it was a Hyukshin school. (Dosan H, Student Jung, Interview).

It isn't just the larger system that makes it difficult to sustain Hyukshin principles, according to these students. There also are dynamics in the schools themselves that provide evidence that not all students are sufficiently devoted to their learning.

## Parents

Two parents at Dosan High School asked to be interviewed together. Okhee Seo is the mother of a freshman and a sophomore, and Sarang Han has a child in his freshman year. Okhee's daughter wanted to go to an academically specialized high school. However, when she failed to get in, she was randomly assigned to the Dosan High School based on its regional proximity. She told us how, "아이가 처음에 얘기를 듣고, 문 잠그고, 심각하게 울고 그러더라고요," "When my daughter first learned that she was assigned to the Hyukshin school, she locked herself in her room and cried." (Dosan H, Parent Seo, Interview). She asked, "엄마,

내가 이렇게 수업 받아서 과연 대학을 갈 수 있을까?” “Mom, can I even get into the college with the quality of this school? (Dosan H, Parent Seo, Interview).

Sarang also recalled the moment when her son was enrolled to Dosan High School. As Sarang’s son was interested in sports, he wanted to attend Dosan High School that specializes in physical education. Despite the fact that the school no longer maintains this status as a specialized physical education school, her son enjoys going to school, nonetheless. Ms. Han commented, “제 아이가 영혼도 자유로워서,” “My son is full of energy.” (Dosan H, Parent Han, Interview). She believes a lively boy like her son benefits from the Hyukshin philosophy.

Freedom with Responsibility. Regardless of how happy her son is, she has concerns about the lack of responsibility students may experience while enjoying their freedom. She explained how, “저는 자유에 대한 책임을 좀 배웠으면 좋겠는데, 그것까지는 아이들에게 너무 어려운 것 같아요. 아이들은 이제, 자유로움만 추구하고, 그 자유로움에 대한 책임이 있다는걸 잘 몰라요,” “I wish students could learn to take some responsibility for freedom, but I think that is too difficult for many children. Now they do not realize the importance of responsibility for freedom, but just pursue it as they please at school.” (Dosan H, Parent Han, Interview)..

Adults know that freedom comes with responsibility. However, students appear to be unclear about how they should go about taking on their roles in assuming such responsibility. Ms. Han expressed, “그래서 [학교가] 그 부분을 좀 인지 할 수 있게 도와줬으면 해요,” “I hope the school and the teachers help students to recognize their responsibilities.” (Dosan H, Parent Han, Interview). She said, “저희 아이는 행복해해요. 솔직히 말해서, 만약 거기에 이제 그 자기자신에 대한 책임만 조금 느낄 수 있다면 더 할 바램이 없을 것 같아요,” “My

son is happy. However, if my son could learn a little more responsibility, I would be much more satisfied.” (Dosan H, Parent Han, Interview). Sarang defined the Hyukshin school emphases as, “저는 혁신이 자유이지만 그 안에 책임이 있다라고 생각해요,” “freedom, but that still should include real responsibility as part of it.” (Dosan H, Parent Han, Interview). She is concerned that at times, giving too much freedom to students may lead to a lack of discipline and responsibility.

Lack of Academic Rigor. Both of the parents worry that the academic atmosphere of the classroom has not been established successfully in Dosan High School. Ms. Han explained that, “여자 남자가 같이 학교를 다니다보니까 애네들이 분위기는 좋은데 공부에 대한 것은 조금...[걱정되요]” — the school is a coeducational school, so it has a positive vibe somehow, but when it comes to academics, there is a little ... [concern] (Dosan H, Parent Han, Interview). She continued to state, “공부를 좀 더 했으면 좋겠는데, 아이가 공부 할 여건이 많이 만들어지지 않았다고 얘기해요,” — I hope my son can focus more on studying. But I feel like the academic atmosphere is not solid here (Dosan H, Parent Han, Interview). Okhee stated, in addition, that “반 아이들 자체가 공부를 열심히 해야된다 그런 생각을 가진 아이들이 많지 않은 것 같더라고요. 그래서 공부하는 분위기가 안될 때가 있죠,” — I don’t think there are many students in the class who think they need to study hard. That is why a healthy learning atmosphere cannot be attained (Dosan H, Parent Seo, Interview). Sarang worries, in general, due to, “대한민국 경쟁이 아이들 굉장히 치열하거든요. 그 경쟁에서 치우치지 않을까,” — the academic competition in Korea is fierce. I am anxious and wonder if my kids are lagging behind (Dosan H, Parent Han, Interview). Parents are concerned about the lack of academic rigor of Dosan High School and wishes that their children would focus more on studying at school.

Lack of Hyukshin Value Emphasis. Finally, it was found that the school did not provide a reasonable explanation about Hyukshin philosophy to its students. As a result, the students have a poor understanding of what Hyukshin is overall. One parent described how, “아직까지 선생님들도 혁신에 대한 인지가 많이 없고, 학생들도 그 부분에 대한 인지가 많이 없어요,” “Teachers and students do not have much awareness of Hyukshin ideas yet.” (Dosan H, Parent Han, Interview). Okhee suggested that, “초반에 입학시기에 혁신 학교란 이런것이다 계속 아이들이 듣다 보면 알게되고 인식도 좋은쪽으로 바뀌지 않을까해요,” “If students learn about Hyukshin schools and listen to the explanation of Hyukshin philosophy at the time of admission, I think they can recognize it better. There will be a positive change in perceptions.” (Dosan H, Parent Seo, Interview).

## **Discussion**

Dosan High School seeks to be a (i) democratic school, with (ii) strong interpersonal relationships, and (iii) the active participation of students. Data triangulation from the interviews confirm the democratic spirit of the school. All of the interviewees, (e.g., school leaders, teachers, students, and parents) appreciate the school's positive democratic environment. The school supports its students and teachers through such an atmosphere. The student council and the faculty meetings for even small school issues are examples of such democracy in practice.

Dosan High School promotes students' interpersonal relationships. In turn, academics are not the main focus of the school; as a result, some students and parents worry about issues of rigor. Students with higher overall levels of motivation seem to have a number of complaints. They sometimes have a difficult time concentrating in class due to distractions. According to the interviewees, Dosan High School is a suitable place for students that are looking towards their future careers, but not for students who want to concentrate on academics.

One parent mentioned that sometimes a healthy learning atmosphere cannot be established in the classroom, which makes her worry about her son falling behind. The school seems to give opportunities for its students to explore a myriad of personal values or career programs. Still, the school must promote students' academics.

Dosan High School emphasizes overall student participation in school. However, one student mentioned that, in practice, most of the classes are lecture-based. Thus, there is still a strong imprint of traditional teaching practices within Dosan. Teachers within Dosan High School attempt to design more group activities and to experiment with project-based learning in their classrooms, but one of the interviewed students was not convinced that the classes are truly or significantly different from those in general, non-Hyukshin schools.

One of the teachers' efforts to encourage student participation was explained by the example of giving candies to the students as rewards. The research team visited open classes and observed a teacher trying to motivate students by giving them such candies and sweets, rather than punishing the students who did not concentrate. This intention is good, but teachers should reconsider the possible negative implications and consequences of extrinsic motivation within classrooms.

The extracurricular activities made available outside of the classroom are considered by all parties to be a strength of Dosan High School. In the past, the school has invited guest speakers for various topics that range from interesting career experiences or controversies in human rights education. There is a special program for students with low academic performance who likely are not going to higher education. The students learn about potential careers in that program.

The opinions over the college entrance process aroused much controversy among the interviewed school members. The principal, Mr. Lee, hopes that the students' participation and extracurricular activities will ultimately benefit their college admission prospects. He believes that the test (CSAT) cannot measure students' understanding or their skills at applying knowledge in real-life situations, which is a limitation of the exams.

A teacher, Haechan Lee, agrees that the college entrance examination should be changed to check whether or not the students obtain certain score points for basic understanding. However, the current testing system is so deeply embedded in Korean society that another teacher, Mr. Kim, thinks that the schools, in general, will not change significantly. In spite of such skepticism, we find that there are reasons for optimism among reformers. There is a growing constituency that believes that the Hyukshin movement is encouraging creative education, providing a diverse repertoire of extracurricular activities, and demonstrating that high quality public education can be achieved by going beyond just focusing on the students' academic test results. The Revised National Curriculum of 2015 also supports and accelerates many Hyukshin-related principles and practices.

### **Conclusion**

Dosan High School focuses on developing a democratic environment, active student attitudes, and students' effective social abilities. Overall, the principal pursues a horizontal and democratic leadership style for faculty members and administrators to facilitate effective communication for all. Mr. Lee believes that by teaching and interacting in a democratic environment, teachers can be more motivated to voluntarily respect and educate students, and he models this democratic spirit in his school leadership.

Although some students complain about the excessive freedom and how this creates a distracting studying environment, Dosan High School provides a myriad of activities to help students discover and develop their future career in many ways. For students who prioritize academics and grades, there are specific activities, (e.g., ‘dure,’ or ‘I’m a teacher’), which allows students to share each other’s perspectives and knowledge within the classroom.

On the other hand, there are activities for students who aren’t as interested in studying as hard others. For instance, the ‘nareul’ activity embraces students who don’t perform well academically by providing job experience and assisting them in finding their future career paths. Furthermore, to support students from low-income families, the school provides individualized programs aside from Korean language, math, and English, so they could be prepared to work after graduating from high school. Overall, the school generally embraces all types of students and tries to support them in unique ways. Nonetheless, the school needs to make more effort to create a stable environment for students who want to focus while studying.

The principal’s challenged the importance of CSAT scores by explaining how scores are merely numbers and cannot fully evaluate a students’ ability. Thus, students at Dosan High School are trained to strengthen other abilities, (e.g., socializing, presenting, debating) by participating in diverse activities. Yet, some students still struggle to connect the meaning of these activities and translate it into their lives. Although they’re satisfied with such activities, they haven’t found their meaning and purpose in their lives yet. This, in general, is a challenge for young people everywhere today.

## Samoon High School

### Introduction

Samoon High School in the Gangdong District of Seoul consists of 27 homeroom classes, 606 students, and 52 teachers. The Gangdong District is placed as 13<sup>th</sup> out of 25 districts within Seoul for average monthly income, which can be considered to be a moderate socioeconomic status. The school started in the pioneering Seoul Hyukshin school cohort in 2011, with 84% of teachers and 88% of parents supporting its designation as a Hyukshin school at the time. Samoon High School is one of the original three Hyukshin high schools within Seoul, alongside Okja Girls' High School and Sagaksan High School.

Typically, students from a wide variety of middle schools enter Samoon High School. The students at Samoon seem to have relatively low academic records when compared to non-Hyukshin schools, though not significantly. Samoon High School is a public school. Nearby to Samoon High School, there are two private schools that boast a strong focus on college admissions with which Samoon has a competitive relationship. Consequently, according to a teacher, “사립고를 보내길 원하는 거 같아요. 제가 봤을 때 그 중학교 성적이 조금 되고 그 다음에 가정형편이 여유가 있는 그런 집은,” “If parents can financially support their children and the student is strong academically, the students are generally sent to private schools.” (Samoon H, Teacher Kyung, Interview). This loss of top students to the public schools of Seoul is a major challenge to the entire HSSM.

The vice principal stated, “아이들이 자유롭고 싶고, 그런 이탈되는 행동을 하고 싶은 아이들이 많이 지원을 하는 편이죠. 인근의 다른 학교에 비해서,” “Samoon High School has a high proportion of students who apply to the school because they want the freedom to deviate from common types of academic behavior (Samoon H, Vice Principal Kim, Interview).

According to Teacher Nam, “여기 학교의 좋은 점 뭐냐면 딴 학교에서 와도 1 등을 할 수 없거나 다른 학교에서 소외된 중간층 학생들 있죠,” “Samoon High School is ideal for students who are not first in class or are having a hard time academically at another school.” (Samoon H, Teacher Nam, Interview). The staff knows that students have had challenging experiences in schools previously and therefore, to build morale and confidence, teachers compliment students on what they are able to do well.

The parents of Samoon High School students have, overall, exhibited low parental engagement in terms of participation in school meetings and events. One reason seems to be attributed to a simple lack of time. Parents, generally speaking, have jobs with schedules that do not allow for parental involvement in school. According to one parent, another possible explanation could be a lack of an established channel of communication among the mothers.

### ***School Emphasis***

***Overview.*** Samoon High School has three major school emphases, which collectively contribute to creating a learning environment that respects each student. The school’s emphases are:

1. Student Autonomy;
2. Democratic school community; and
3. Student well-being.

***Student Autonomy.*** Samoon High School’s faculty aim to create a positive and supportive school community. Teachers and the administrative team make constant effort to provide opportunities for students to develop their sense of autonomy. Samoon High School encourages student autonomy through a formation of diverse range of academic student clubs, which helps personalize learning experience for students. According to the vice principal, “아주 힘든

아이들은 저희가 두드림 교실이라던가 아름다운 교실이라던가 이런 프로그램들을 운영을 해서... 그 아이들만의 프로그램을 다양하게 운영을 하죠,” “For students who are struggling, the school provides ‘dodream’ and ‘beautiful classroom’ programs, which are run by the students.” (Samoon H, Vice Principal Kim, Interview). ‘Dodream’ classes are activities mainly for students with learning disabilities or behavioral issues in learning. Their ‘beautiful classroom’ programs are school-led volunteer activities with goals to meet the educational needs of Samoon High School’s lower socioeconomic students or other students in need. An example of an activity within these programs would be holding a fundraiser for a scholarship fund, which in turn would be awarded to students in need.

***Democratic School Community.*** According to the vice principal, “관리자들은 그분들을 지지할 수 있는 어떤 역할을 뒷받침해줘야 되고,” ‘School administrators support teachers.’” (Samoon H, Vice Principal Kim, Interview). Rather than upholding a top-down hierarchical system, teachers take a proactive role in determining their preferred teaching practices instead, and this directly impacts the school’s curriculum. The teachers acknowledge the school community’s desire to create an alternative to the bureaucratic nature of most other Seoul schools, and work towards promoting a more democratic decision-making process whenever possible. Additionally, according to the vice principal, “자기가 말하고 행동에 대한 것들에 대한 책임, 이런 것들을 서로 배워 나가지 않을까 하는 생각이 들어요,” “Students are taught to be responsible for their words and actions, and learn from each other.’” (Samoon H, Vice Principal Kim, Interview). Samoon High School encourages all stakeholders in the school community to form healthy interpersonal relationships and to develop a democratic learning community.

***Student Well-being.*** With regard to its third emphasis, Samoon High School also focuses on developing character education through programs that promote students' well-being. One major focus of the school's leadership team is to ensure that all stakeholders are happy within the school. This is accomplished, they believe, by developing prosocial attitudes and actions. While this is a major contrast with many schools in the traditional system, the national curriculum revision explicitly asks schools to focus on the promotion of students' well-being (Ministry of Education, 2015). The vice principal stated, “제가 일단 행복해야 되고 제가 행복해서 또 다른 사람도 거기에 영향받아서 행복했으면 좋겠다,” “First, I need to be happy at school, and I hope others at school are also inspired by me to be happy.” (Samoon H, Vice Principal Kim, Interview). She additionally stated, “본인의 행복하고 나한테 좀 베풀고 그러면서 본인이 행복한 그런 아이,” “I want students to be happy by being helpful to others.” (Samoon H, Vice Principal Kim, Interview). This sentiment is also shared by the HHD. He stated, “일단 학생이 행복해야 하고,” “the school should ensure that the student is happy.” (Samoon H, Teacher Kyung, Interview).

The vice-principal emphasized the quality of the students' social lives as part of their well-being. She said, “아이들이 나중에 살아도 자기가 말하고 행동에 대한 것들에 대한 책임, 이런 것들을 서로 배워 나가지 않을까 하는 생각이 들어요,” “I hope students learn how to be responsible for their words and actions and learn from each other.” (Samoon H, Vice Principal Kim, Interview). She wants, “본인이 사회에 나가서 사회의 일원으로서의 역할을 좀 감당을 해낼 수 있는 기본적인 이런 인성 또 자기가 소통하는 방법,” “students to develop fcharacter and communication skills as positive contributors to society.” (Samoon H, Vice Principal Kim, Interview).

## School Leaders

Description of School Leaders. We interviewed the school's the vice-principal, Jayoung Kim, and the HHD, Younghwa Kyung. The principal was newly appointed in September of 2019, and thus was not interviewed.

The vice principal has been at Samoon High School for five years and indicated planning to request a transfer to another school in the following year. She was a teacher at a non-Hyukshin school prior to working at Samoon High School, and initially heard that she would have a hard time adjusting to the HSSM. She said that, “교감 관리직으로서는 참 어려운 학교다 라고 얘기를 한 거죠. 학생도 어렵고 교사도 어렵고,” “As an incoming vice-principal, I heard that Hyukshin schools were difficult to manage. I heard that it was difficult to work with both the students and the teachers in Hyukshin schools.” (Samoon H, Vice Principal Kim, Interview). Her initial perception of Hyukshin schools was that they were “일반 학교 시스템하고는 많이 달랐죠,” “Very different from the regular school system.” (Samoon H, Vice Principal Kim, Interview).

The HHD has been teaching at Samoon High School for three years. She HHD listed Samoon High School as one of her top choices and was appointed as a teacher. One of the first things the HHD noticed three years ago was that the school upholds democratic values. She found that, “되게 민주적으로 운영된다는 것, 그리고, 되게 학생들이 주체적으로 많은 활동을 한다는 것,” “The school was run very democratically, and students were participating in its activities.” (Samoon H, Teacher Kyung, Interview).

**Leadership style.** Both the vice-principal and HHD saw the school leadership's role as the supporters of teachers. According to the vice principal, with the change in the Samoon High School teaching staff throughout the years, there was a lot of conflict. She stated, “이제 1 기

2기 3기가 있었을 때 다른 분들이 다른 의견을 냈었을 때는 의견 수렴이 어려우실 때가 있었죠,” “It was hard for newer teachers to voice their opinions in the presence of the older teachers.” (Samoon H, Vice Principal Kim, Interview). It was reported that, not only in their relationships with administrators, but also amongst themselves, teachers have their own hierarchical relationships.

In terms of the leadership style, the vice principal defined herself as a negotiator for teachers. She said, “애기를 소통하고 이렇게 되면 이런 어려움이 있고 이런 분들이 이렇게 갈등도 있을 수도 있고 그런 조율을 많이 해나갔다고 보죠,” “My role was to communicate with teachers regarding hardships and conflicts and to be the negotiator.” (Samoon H, Vice Principal Kim, Interview). There is no department head who plays an intermediary role between the teachers and leaders in this school. She said, “[선생님이] 다이렉트로 교감한테 가야 하니까,” “[the teachers] need to directly communicate with the vice principal.” (Samoon H, Vice Principal Kim, Interview). By voicing and supporting teacher opinions, Samoon High School administrators are able to facilitate a teacher-led decision-making process.

The HHD stated, “교장 선생님의 위주로 운영되는 것이 아니라,” “the school does not center around the principal (Samoon H, Teacher Kyung, Interview). Rather, Teacher Kyung said, “제가 있는 동안에는 교사들이 결정하면 그대로 가는 거죠. 되게 민주적으로 운영된다는 것, 그리고, 되게 학생들이 주체적으로 많은 활동을 한다는 것,” “teachers’ opinions are respected. The school is run democratically, and students exercise leadership in the way that they run activities in and out of their academic classes.” (Samoon H, Teacher Kyung, Interview). There is an active implementation of democratic decision-making practices in Samoon High School.

*School Theory of Change.* When asked about the goals of Samoon High School as a Hyukshin school, the vice-principal answered:

저는 교육의 가장 기본적인 그 부분을 좀 돌아가 보자 그런 의미에서의 혁신이라고 생각을 해요. 혁신은 일단 학생들은 학생다워야 되고, 교사는 정말 본인의 본연의 업무인 학생들의 인성 지도와 수업에 집중을 해야 되고, 또 관리자들도 그분들을 지지할 수 있는 어떤 역할을 뒷받침해줘야 되고.

I think the Hyukshin movement is intended to return to the essence of genuine education. Innovation occurs when students can be students. Teachers should focus on students' character development and their education. Leaders should back up teachers' roles by supporting them. (Samoon H, Vice Principal Kim, Interview).

The essence of Hyukshin, according to the vice principal, is to provide opportunities for students to figure out how they want to live.

In order to arrive at that point, the leadership team first focuses on teachers' growth. When teachers first arrive at Samoon High School, they have a hard time. The vice principal stated, “교육에 대해서 20년, 15년, 10년 이렇게 지났을 때 한 번도 우리가 고민해보지 않았던 것을 여기 와서 고민을 해보고,” “I needed to think about education in a way that I had not done before, in their previous 20, 15, and 10 years of teaching.” (Samoon H, Vice Principal Kim, Interview). The school provides many opportunities for teachers to grow in terms of instructional practices, which include research meetings where teachers discuss hardships and specific issues they faced. Also, according to the vice principal, a focal point of transformation for students occurs through project-based learning. She stated, “의견을 자기가 개진하고 발표하고 하는 것들을 할 수 있는 기회가 많다는 것,” “There are many courses where students develop their own ideas and present on them.” (Samoon H, Vice Principal Kim, Interview).

## Teachers

Two teachers and the HHD were interviewed to discuss their opinions on the way that Samoon High School puts Hyukshin principles into practice. The teachers discussed:

1. Their choice to come to this school;
2. Democratic community;
3. The school's focus on teaching rather than promotions;
4. Its PLCs and PLNs; and
5. Student autonomy.

*Choice to Come to This School.* Some teachers within Samoon High School came to this school specifically because of its Hyukshin principles. One teacher said she was interested in the establishment of a Hyukshin school and participated in a teacher community which studied the cases of progressive schools as her preparation to work for Hyukshin school. She wanted to come to this school on the year of its opening. However, she remembers there being many history teachers who had wanted to teach in this school. Due to this, she waited and eventually joined Samoon High School later. She feels as though teachers at Samoon high school are invested in teaching and paying much attention to students.

Although there are some teachers who volunteered to come to Samoon High School on their own accord, there are others who were initially hesitant after being transferred to it. Teacher Shin said that, “제가 생각한 어려움은요. 이 혁신학교로서 사문고가 다른 학교에 비해서 공동체성을 굉장히 강조한다는 얘기를 들었거든요,” “The difficulty was I heard that this school places greater emphasis on community compared to other schools.” (Samoon H, Teacher Shin, Interview). She thought she would need to be spending more time with other teachers and students.

Teacher Shin was confident that she would learn a lot of things from other teachers. She stated, “열심히 하는 선생님들이 모인 조직이라는 믿음이 있었다,” “I believed that Samoon High School has a group of hard-working teachers.” (Samoon H, Teacher Shin, Interview). She additionally stated that, “달라진 부분은 학생을 대하는 마음 그리고 동료 교사를 대하는 마음인데요. 양쪽 다 존중하고 존중받는 것이 자연스러워진 마음입니다,” “What has really changed in regard to my own thinking is how I treat my students and my fellow teachers. It feels very natural here to be respected by everyone.” (Samoon H, Teacher Shin, Interview). By being a teacher at a Hyukshin school, some teachers found that they could continue to learn and grow as professionals.

***Democratic Community.*** Three teachers agreed that concept of a democratic community is actualized within their school. Samoon High School’s emphasis on a flat organizational structure, democratic decision-making process in meetings, and a supportive teacher culture shows how Hyukshin principles of democratic education can be realized in the day to day life of a real school.

Regarding its organizational structure, three teachers stated that, “사문고만의 특성은 권위주의가 거의 없는 학교라는 겁니다,” “This school is very free and open.” (Samoon H, Teacher Shin, Interview). This openness has positive impacts on the relationship among teachers and students alike. One teacher said, she is afraid to be assigned to other schools because, in this school, her relationship with teachers was “선생님들 관계가 되게 좋거든요,” “so great.” (Samoon H, Teacher Nam, Interview). The HHD said that teachers support each other in what they perceive to a rich community culture that they themselves lead, and that cares about their wellbeing.

Samoon High School holds frequent meetings among teachers and school leaders. One teacher stated, “우리 학교는 권위주의가 없고 의사 결정을 할 때에 회의를 굉장히 많이 합니다.” “Since our school has no authoritarian leadership, we have a lot of meetings where we make all of the decisions together.” (Samoon H, Teacher Shin, Interview). She explained further that some teachers have three or four meetings per day. Though she thinks it is often difficult for teachers to convene so frequently, she believed involving teachers in decision-making process is the most ideal to do and something that she has never experienced in other schools. She explained how this is because she believes it's worth the trouble of spending more time and trying harder.

One Samoon High School teacher expressed within their interview that Samoon High School has a fair organizational culture because the school has evenly distributed the workload to teachers regardless of teachers' ages or teaching experiences. Though teachers take on a lot of work at school, and in some ways creates additional work compared to traditional schools, Samoon High School has endeavored to do so in a way that works for everyone. One teacher went further to comment, “제가 전에 있던 학교 보면, 젊은 선생님은 담임 교사도 맡고, 그다음에 업무도 중요한 것을 맡고 이런 경우가 많거든요,” “In my previous school, younger teachers have to work as a homeroom teacher but also take care of other important tasks.” (Samoon H, Teacher Kyung, Interview). However, the teacher went on to explain that, “우리 학교는 그렇지 않고요. 딱 절반은 담임을 하고, 절반은 업무를 하거든요,” “Our school is not organized in this way. Half of the teachers are homeroom teachers. The other half focuses on administrative work.” (Samoon H, Teacher Kyung, Interview). This is seen to be a fair distribution of tasks.

***Focusing on the Real Purpose of Education.*** Samoon High School teachers are reported to be more likely to focus on the real purpose of education than just strategizing on ways to be promoted in the SMOE bureaucracy. According to two teachers, there are some teachers in other schools who solely want to be involved in activities that lead them to be promoted. They do this, for example, by trying to make a good impression on school leaders to get high scores in their teacher evaluations and by increasing their students' test scores. One teacher stated that Samoon High School teachers are interested in caring for their students in an educational sense:

이 학교는 진급에만 신경쓰는 사람이 없으니 서로 압박을 주고 그러지 않아요. 그래서 나는 혁신 학교가 꼭 필요하다고 생각해요. 왜냐하면 교사들이 많이 지쳐 있거든요. 그리고 이런 아이들을 돌볼 수 있는 학교가 별로 없기 때문에.

Samoon High School has no teacher who solely focuses on being promoted. We don't put pressure on each other. Hyukshin schools are necessary, because teachers are frustrated when their goals are thwarted. There are not many schools that care about students in this way. (Samoon H, Teacher Nam, Interview).

Another teacher said that in Samoon High School he was able to focus on teaching students as whole human beings, unlike other schools that place undue emphasis upon academic achievement. He stated, “아이들을 가르치는 거 외적으로 너무 생각할 게 많아요” “There are many tasks to do other than teaching the kids.” (Samoon H, Teacher Kyung, Interview). He believes that, because Samoon High School has not just focused on tests, it is able to organize “민주적인 자치활동,” itself so that Hyukshin principles come to life. Another teacher said, “학교에서의 일상이 의미 있다는 확신을 가질 수 있거든요? 근데 이전 다른 학교에서는 내가 지금 뭐 하고 있나 싶은 순간들이 있었습시다. 근데 사문고에서는 적은 편입니다.” “My daily life here is meaningful. In other schools I sometimes wondered what I was doing.” (Samoon H, Teacher Shin, Interview).

**PLCs and PLNs.** Samoon High School has 12 PLCs. They are organized either by the school subject matter or by the grade level of the homeroom teacher. For example, PLCs organized by subject, have created a small coalition of the seven Korean language teachers at Samoon High School, who now have regular PLC meetings and unplanned discussions when necessary. Teachers share what instruction works well and which lessons were less successful. One teacher said that she learned a lot from her PLC: “1 학년 담임 여덟 명 선생님이 같은 교무실에서 그 날 있었던 일을 교류하는데요. 학급 아이들 생활 지도하는 데 굉장한 도움이 됩니다,” “Eight 10<sup>th</sup> grader teachers meet every day in the same office and discuss what is happening. It is very helpful in lesson planning.” (Samoon H, Teacher Shin, Interview).

Grade-level PLCs are organized with the members of homeroom teachers by grade level. Homeroom teachers who are responsible for the same grade share their teaching practices with one another. One teacher said, “학급 아이들 생활 지도하는 데 굉장한 도움이 됩니다,” “I found it to be very helpful in guiding students’ learning.” (Samoon H, Teacher Shin, Interview).

Regarding PLNs, one teacher shared that Samoon High School faculty present their activities to other Hyukshin schools once per year. One teacher explained this process by stating that, “학교 밖으로 제가 알고 있는 딱 한 가지는 일 년에 한 번씩 혁신학교 모임이 있거든요,” “As far as I know, there is a gathering among the Hyukshin school to present each school’s activities.” (Samoon H, Teacher Shin, Interview). She felt that, “근데 그 일 년에 한 번 모임 가지고 조금 부족한 거 같고요. 아마 제가 잘 모르는 부분이거나,” “having this gathering once per year might not be sufficient.” (Samoon H, Teacher Shin, Interview). Samoon High School’s teachers say they appreciate their PLCs, but suspect that more could be done with PLNs.

***Student Autonomy.*** Samoon High School teachers teach students to be autonomous.

Teachers believed that “돌봄,” — “caring” (Samoon H, Teacher Kyung, Interview) is one of the essential elements in Hyukshin schools. The HHD identified their approach as “회복적 생활교육,” “restorative life guidance education.” (Samoon H, Teacher Kyung, Interview). Further, the HHD stated that, “그 아이들을 생활지도라는 걸 할 때 아이들의 원인을 찾아서 좀 해보자. 회복적 생활교육 같은 거 그런 거를 열심히 이제 도입했어요,” “When it comes to life guidance education, we are trying to find what affects for students to behave such a way. We incorporated an idea of restorative life guidance education.” (Samoon H, Teacher Kyung, Interview). This approach was evident in a “성찰교실,” “reflection class” (Samoon H, Teacher Kyung, Interview) in which students are asked to think about inappropriate aspects of their behavior. The school also has “공동체 생활 포럼,” “community life forums,” (Samoon H, Teacher Kyung, Interview) where students discuss the school’s policies.

Although Samoon High School teachers agree upon the importance of restorative life guidance, they had some misgivings in regard to unintended negative side-effects of excessively light punishments given to students when they had misbehaved. One teacher said, “다 허용을 하면 나머지 애들이 너무 힘들어지거나 공부하려는 의욕이 안 생긴다 라고 맨 처음에 생각해서 처음 1년은 되게 힘들었어요,” “if we allow some students to do anything they want, others get frustrated and lose their motivation to study. I thought this way too, so my first year spent teaching in this school was tough.” (Samoon H, Teacher Nam, Interview). The answer to these problems, one teacher said, is always to “교육 활동에서 한 명 한 명의 인격을 존중해요,” “respects each student’s personality in planning our educational activities.” (Samoon H, Teacher Shin, Interview).

One teacher said that Samoon High School’s restorative education approach has had a positive impact on students. Teacher Kyung said, “어떤 선생님은 백배 성찰 교실이라고 해서, 처음에 아이들이 잘못했을 때, 뭔가 반성할 기회를 주는 100 번 절하는 것을 하거든요. 60% 정도는 효과가 있지 않을까” “Some teachers had students who misbehaved do the ritual of a 108 bows, with the intention that this causes students to reflect about the ways in which their actions hurt others. It worked well for 60% of the students.” (Samoon H, Teacher Kyung, Interview). While this may seem like an old-fashioned way to punish students, from the perspective of its staff, Samoon High School offers room for its students to reflect when they misbehave.

***College Entrance and the True Meaning of Studying.*** Samoon High School’s teachers are not by any means free from the pressure of college entrance exams. One teacher stated, “우리 학교의 대입 성적이 자랑할 만한,” “Samoon High School is not proud of the outcomes of our students’ college entrance exams.” (Samoon H, Teacher Shin, Interview). The students who come to Samoon High School do not have top-ranked grades in their middle schools. This is because those high-scoring students chose to go to elite schools instead.

Although Samoon High School students generally do not have high test-scores, teachers believe that this school teaches students competency, which is necessary in real-world situations:

공부라는 개념 어떤 기준을 좀 다르게 생각하게 된 거예요. 그것이 사회에서 원하는 수능성적이 잘 나오는 공부는 의미가 없고 세상에 이제 나오는 여러 가지 정보들을 예측을 하든지 여러 가지 정보들에서 자기가 그거를 해석하는 능력.

We see the concept of studying differently here. It is not just about obtaining a high college entrance exam score that the society esteems. For example, we value learning how to read to influence society, and how to interpret information accurately. (Samoon H, Teacher Nam, Interview).

This teacher attempted to increase students' critical thinking and analytical thinking in her history class by requiring students talk about a historical event in their own words.

A biology teacher had organized after-school activities for students to visit some places where they could learn about environmental issues: “지난 겨울에, 애들 한 10 명 썩 데리고 한강의 겨울 철새, 그다음에 저기 서천의 국립 생태원, 순천만, 그래가지고 한 세 번 정도 아이들하고,” “Last semester, I went to the Han River with 10 students to observe winter migratory birds. Then I went to the National Institute of Ecology in Seochon and Suncheon-Bay 3 times with students” (Samoon H, Teacher Kyung, Interview). He taught sustainable development to his students, not because it is a topic on the exams, but because it is essential knowledge to be a responsible citizen.

## **Parents**

***Parental Involvement.*** The parents of two students at Samoon High School were interviewed. Youngja Lee, a mother whose son is in the junior class, is involved with writing and editing the parent newsletter. She also has an older son who graduated from Samoon High School. Heesoo Jo, a mother whose daughter is also in the junior class, likewise has duties as an editor for the parent newsletter and as a parent representative. She has an older daughter who graduated from a non-Hyukshin high school.

***Academic Pressure Versus Student Happiness.*** A major theme evident throughout both parent interviews was the clash in values between their children's short-term happiness and their long-term academic and career success. When asked what she hoped for her child, Mrs. Lee replied:

과정이 편안하고 매일매일 그냥 행복했으면 좋겠어요. 그런데 그 3년간 정말 공부 잘 할 수 있어요. 점수 높일 수 있는데 3년간 너무 괴롭게, 행복하지 않게 보내는거는 너무 아이에 대해서.

I just want the process of studying to be stress-free and happy for my son every day. For the three years he is in high school, he can study really well. He can improve his grades, but it is too much for a child to spend three years in pain or unhappiness. (Samoon H, Parent Lee, Interview).

The intense pressure on students is often due to their parents' anxiety about their future prospects. Ms. Lee says, “특히 고 1 학부모들은 입시 때문에 학교를 정해서 가잖아요,” — “parents choose schools based on their aspirations for college admission.” (Samoon H, Parent Lee, Interview). She hopes that her son could do better and try to do a little more.. She stated, “더 잘할 수 있고 조금 더 했으면 하는데 안 하는 부분이 있는 것 같아요,” “He just doesn't work hard enough.” (Samoon H, Parent Lee, Interview).

Mrs. Jo faces a very similar dilemma. When asked about the prospects for college admission for her daughter, she answered, “당연히 걱정을 하죠. 걱정하는 것보다 그거에 대해서 고민하고 준비하고 있지요,” “Of course, I am worried about it. I am always thinking about it.” (Samoon H, Parent Jo, Interview). Her dilemma is clear: “아이가 행복했으면 좋겠는데 좋은 대학교 갔으면 좋겠고,” “I want my child to be happy, and I want her to go to a good college, too.” (Samoon H, Parent Jo, Interview).

She sees that her daughter gets tired from studying so hard, but she still sends her to a hagwon after school every day. She stated, “아이가 대학도 가고 싶어 하고 학교생활도 열심히 하고 싶어 하고 그러니까,” “My child wants to go to college and wants to try her best at school too.” (Samoon H, Parent Jo, Interview). Here the daughter's current well-being is sacrificed for the hope of a better future.

*Importance of a Supportive School Community.* Both parents seemed to value a close and collaborative school community. Mrs. Jo focused more on the mentorship that Samoon High School teachers provide to her daughter than on other things like after-school activities. She said that through skilled career counseling, “그 꿈을 보고 아 그 꿈을 이런 방법으로도 찾을 수 있겠다 저런 방법으로 찾을 수 있겠다 다양한 진로를 열어 주는 거 같아요,” “teachers listen to students’ dreams and open up possibilities on how they can achieve those dreams through various means.” (Samoon H, Parent Jo, Interview). Mrs. Jo describes such mentorship:

답임 선생님과 상담 선생님이 아이를 수시로 이렇게 상담을 하면서 진로가 어떻게 되는지 그걸 위해서 어떻게 준비하면 좋을지 그런 거에 대해서 학생들의 의견을 들어본 다음에 그 의견에 대해서 선생님이 코치를 해 주는 식으로 이렇게 하고 있어요.

Teachers and counselors frequently meet with students to counsel them regarding their career paths and how to best prepare for them. After asking for students’ thoughts, the teacher coaches them. (Samoon H, Parent Jo, Interview).

Another example Mrs. Jo provided was when, “저번에는 학생들이 사문 아카데미 그래서 이렇게 공부를 한 다음에 교장 선생님 애들 김치전은 이렇게 부쳐주셨어요,” “the principal made kimchi pancakes for the kids after a school event.” (Samoon H, Parent Jo, Interview). She appreciated the warm and supportive atmosphere of the school community and continued on to say, “아이들이 ,교장 선생님한테도 이렇게 편안하게 같이 먹고 이야기 나눌 수 있는 그런 분위기가 굉장히 저는 고맙고 이렇게 좋게 보죠,” “I was thankful that the students could comfortably converse with their principal and eat pancakes with him.” (Samoon H, Parent Jo, Interview). Through such simple expressions of affection, a community of care (dolbum) is established at Samoon High School, that gives parents and students a sense of well-being and life satisfaction.

Mrs. Lee valued the teachers who have worked so hard to form meaningful relationships with their students. She said, “계속 같이 있어준다는 거죠. 많이,” “the school’s teachers spend much more time with the students.” (Samoon H, Parent Lee, Interview). Outside of the instructional core classes, they do lots of activities together. The wide range of care that teachers convey to their students is highlighted by the parents. Mrs. Lee says:

고민도 상담해주고, 정말 뭐 좋아하는 애들끼리 모이게 하고 뭐 하고. 크고 작은 이런 것들이 담임 위주로, 또는 동아리. 과목 위주로 이렇게 이루어진 것 같았어요.

Teachers give students advice, and they bring students together. These things have real value, whether they are big or small, and whether they occur at the levels of homerooms, student clubs, or school subjects. (Samoon H, Parent Lee, Interview).

Based on both Mrs. Jo and Mrs. Lee’s points, it seems as though parents of Samoon High School’s students value the strong sense of well-being promoted by the school. Nonetheless, they remain insistent on high levels of academic pressure for their sons and daughters, knowing that the Korean social structure is harsh on those without top qualifications.

## **Students**

Two juniors from Samoon High School participated in interviews. Both students were initially worried about attending the school. One student said, “혁신 학교가 다른 학교에 비해서 교칙도 자유롭고 엄격하지 않다는 인식이 강하니까 외부에서 봤을 때는 이게 생소해서 양아치라 해야 되나 이렇게 바라보는 거예요,” “As Hyukshin schools give more freedom to students, some outsiders thought that this school is for bad boys (Samoon H, Student Choi, Interview). Another student also said the initial image of the Hyukshin school for him was, “성적은 약간 부진하고 그다음 날라리들은 있는 어떤 그런 느낌?” “schools consist of students who have low achievement and are badly behaved (Samoon H, Student Kim, Interview).

However, once they had entered the school, one student felt empowered right away because she could participate in decision-making instead of just following conventional policies. She said that:

혁신 학교라는 게 어떤 생각의 혁신이잖아요. 일반 학교에서는 관습적으로 행해 오던 것들 꼭 필요하지 않은 것들이요. 예를 들면 치마는 꼭 무릎까지 오는 교복을 입어야 되고 그러면 왜 하는지 모르지만 관습적으로 해 오던 게 있잖아요. 그런데 제가 학생들한테 필요한 것이 무엇인지 질문을 던지게 됐어요. 학교가 자꾸 그냥 정해진 답을 학생들한테 가르치려는 게 아니라 학생들한테 계속 물어봐요. 학교를 어떻게 운영할까, 어떻게 하면 좋아 이거를 학생들한테 계속 물어보고 실제로 그게 반영되는 게 보이니까 나도 학교를 바꿀 수 있는 힘이 있다 이런 걸 알게 됐어요.

A Hyukshin school is a kind of innovation in thinking. Things that have been practiced in ordinary schools are not always necessary. For example, in most schools the school uniform skirt length must be under knees. But in this school, I began to think about what the students need. The school keeps asking students, not just trying to teach them the answers but think about how to run a school, or how can a school make your life better, how to do it. Then they actually implement students' opinions. I have learned I have some authority to influence my school. (Samoon H, Student Choi, Interview).

Students create clubs based on their interests. For example, one student created a new computer club with approval from teachers. Teachers helped her to invite an external specialist to teach these club members how to control furniture through a mobile phone. Another student found, “교육을 입시 위주가 아니라 학생들 모두를-- 잘하는 사람만 끌고 가는 게 아니라 모든 사람이 다 같이 할 수 있는 그런 교육 아닌가” “this school is not just focused on the college entrance exam for certain high academic achieving students, but supports every student.” (Samoon H, Student Kim, Interview). The students thought this school is democratic as every student is treated equally. One student added that this school takes the opinions of teachers, parents, and students into consideration. The school calls these stakeholders the “three agencies,” (3 주체).

**Democratic Education.** The two students reported being satisfied with how Samoon High School supports overall student democracy. One student said all school events, such as festivals and field days, are organized in discussion with students, instead of teachers just deciding what to plan. He felt it is more fun and fulfilling when students have a chance to organize things. This gets them interested in the school's events, he said.

The other student felt that, “이 학교의 주인은 학생이다,” “Students are owners of Samoon High School.” (Samoon H, Student Choi, Interview). This same student added that teachers do not make decisions in advance and notify students: “내가 낸 의견이 선생님들께 바로 전달이 되고 선생님들은 그것을 싫다고 안 해요. 그것을 바로 받아들이시고 바로 또 전달해서 진짜로 학교가 바뀌고 그게 보이니까 너무 신기해요,” “My opinions were reported to the teachers. Teachers do not just say ‘No!’ They take students’ feelings into account and work with others to make changes in the school. I was amazed to see this.” (Samoon H, Student Choi, Interview). Samoon High School respects student autonomy and allows them to be active members of the learning community.

One student explained how Samoon High School has a solid system in place to facilitate students’ experiences of democracy. For her, the distinctive feature of her school is its student council and its incessant communication among students, teachers, and school leaders. The student council is involved in planning diverse activities including freshmen orientation, festivals, and concerts. The student council has an organizational architecture that includes class meetings and a supreme student committee meeting. Students’ opinions are discussed in a class meeting first, and then their discussion topics are transmitted to the supreme student committee meeting.

In the student committee, student representatives decided to hold a teacher-student round-table conference. Then, the school held a forum that every Samoon High School student was able to participate in. In the past, students posed an important issue: a teacher's ability to teach was not always respected by some students in this school. Some students had refused to follow the teacher's directions, even though they were reasonable. This was discussed in a class meeting, a student committee meeting, at a teacher-student round table conference, and by the entire school:

저희가 어떻게 돼 있냐 하면 학급 회의가 있고 대의원 회의라고 회장들하고 부회장들이 모여서 하는 회의가 있어요. 일전에 한 학급 회의에서 교권 존중에 대한 얘기가 나왔어요. 학생들 스스로도 선생님들이 정당한 지시를 내림에도 불구하고 자기 행동을 지적받았다는 사실에 화가 나서 선생님을 막 대했어요. 이것 문제로 제시한 학급이 있었는데 그 학급 회의 내용이 대의원 회의에 와서 좀 더 큰 회의로 와서 그 얘기가 나오니까 다들 이거에 대해서 더 얘기해 보고 싶다는 의견이 나온 거예요. 그래서 교사·학생 간담회라고 선생님하고 학생이 모여서 얘기를 나누는 그런 회의가 또 마련이 돼서 거기서 선생님들이 교권 존중에 대한 의견을 말씀하시고 학생들도 얘기를 해서 이에 포럼이라고 또 큰 전교생들이 회의하는 그런 회의에서 저희가 학교 교칙이 정해져있는 게 아니라 학생들이 이런 내용을 학생 스스로 난 이런 내용을 지키고 싶다 하는 내용으로 약속이라는 이름으로 다 규정이 되어 있는데 그 포럼이라는 장소에서 교권존중에 관한 내용을 학생의 약속에 추가하고 싶다는 의견이 나와서 정말로 추가가 되었어요.

We have class meetings and committee meetings where the class president and vice president get together to meet. There was a time that one class talked about a teacher's authority. Despite a teacher giving justified orders, some students became angry and defiant. The issue was brought up in a class. The issue was brought up from the class meeting to the committee meeting. Everyone wanted to talk more about it. Our school had a teacher-student conference. During the conference, the teachers talked about their opinion on educational authority as did the students. There is another meeting called the "forum" where all the students participate. During the forum, student set school policies instead of just following a school policy. In that forum, students added the principles on respecting teachers' authority during this forum. (Samoon H, Student Choi, Interview).

In the forum for the entire school, Samoon High School's students agreed upon an additional school policy in which students must respect their teachers' opinions, whenever they are fair.

The student we interviewed felt that this process was one example that proves Samoon High School is democratic. In this process, she was able to learn what policy was implemented and why. She said that the purpose of the meeting was to persuade others with reasonable opinions. Through the discussions, she realized that what opinions can be reflected in school and why some not. She added, “이 학교에 오고 나서는 학생이 뭔가를 바꿀 수 있다는 것을 깨달았기 때문에 다른 학교 학생들이 이런 걸 못 느끼고 고등학교를 졸업하게 되는 게 좀 아쉬운 것 같아요.” “It is frustrating that other students at regular schools cannot experience they can make changes at school.” (Samoon H, Student Choi, Interview). Samoon High School students appreciate that there are ample opportunities to voice their opinions in a democratic manner.

***Group Activities and Discussions.*** Two interviewed students said the discussion-based class, particularly in the Korean language class, brings positive outcomes to them such as presenting their ideas in public, thinking critically, and understanding diverse viewpoints. As one teacher said, teachers cannot always lead group discussions in class due to amounts of the curriculum that they have to cover. One student said 20% of the class are based on group-discussions. For group-discussions, desks are organized in a way that allows them to see each other's faces.

One student felt she learned about other ways of thinking from her classmates. In that class, students discussed whether a human can fall in love with a robot. She said:

제가 영화 *Her* 이라는 걸 보고 그 내용이 그 남자 주인공이 인공 지능과 사랑에 빠지는 내용이었는데 저는 로봇과 사랑에 빠질 수 없다고 생각한 게 그 로봇은 입력값이 있잖아요. 그래서 항상 사람이 그 입력값에 대해 의문을 갖고 사랑을 계속 의심할 것 같아요. 다른 친구는 사랑의 종류는 다양하다고 했어요 예컨데 소수자들의 사랑처럼요. 그 이후에 문제를 바라보는 시야가 넓어졌어요.

I watched a movie, Her, where a male main character fell in love with AI. I think it is not possible to fall in love because what AI says is just input so a person would doubt about what that input comes from which leads to doubt in love itself. However, my friends said there are many types of love such as love between marginalized people. Through that discussion, I could have a broader viewpoint. (Samoon H, Student Choi, Interview).

She thought that this type of learning will be helpful in college as well. She believed that she was ready to think about one issue from many diverse perspectives.

Samoon High School incorporates group effort into establishing a system of grading rather than solely focusing on outcomes. One student elaborated on the grading policies in her music class. She was required to team up with another student to play a piano piece. As her friend is not good at piano, they performed that piece more slowly than usual. However, the teacher gave full points to the duo, regardless of the speed of their performance, as she found that their collaboration was a valuable learning experience. She explained how, “선생님께서 저희만 유일하게 상대방의 속도에 맞춰서 연주를 했다는 거예요,” “The teacher said we were the only team that adjusted the speed of the composition to each other’s abilities.” (Samoon H, Student Choi, Interview). Through this experience the students learned that collaboration is rewarded in their school.

Teacher Kyung stated that it is important for students to learn how to get along with others: “아이들이 3년 동안 최소한 더불어 사는 것은 많이 좀 배우고 가지 않나 싶어요,” “Students, at least, learn how to live with others in this school for 3 years.” (Samoon H, Teacher Kyung, Interview). Another teacher said that Hyukshin schools should guide students to, “공감능력을 키울 수 있는 학교, 그래서 공부 잘하는 애도 못 하는 애도 같이 어울릴 수 있는 학교,” “empathize with others in a way that makes students work well with those who are good at studying, as well as with students who are not.” (Samoon H, Teacher Nam, Interview).

***Teacher-Student Relationships.*** The two students interviewed expressed feeling that Samoon High School teachers place great importance on their ability to communicate openly and honestly with students. The theme of good communication is emphasized across their academic classes and in their extra-curricular activities as well. One student gave an example of how teachers facilitate good communication in her Korean language class. Students wrote what they thought was an answer to the teacher's questions on post-it notes. They then attached their post-its to a blackboard, read them, discussed each other's answers to the questions. Following this discussion, they voted on which students' answer made the most sense to them. This well-structured and scaffolded activity enabled students to compare their thoughts with one another easily. It also gave them practice in articulating their ideas with their teachers and the whole class. She explained, "이런 것처럼 학생들이 어떤 생각을 가지고 있는지 선생님들께서 궁금해하시고 그래서 계속 소통을 강조하시는 것 같아요," "As you see in this class, teachers are interested in what students are thinking and they constantly put emphasis on communication." (Samoon H, Student Choi, Interview). Samoon High School teachers proactively incorporate learner-centered instructional methods that meet student needs.

## **Discussion**

Based on our interviews with administrators, teachers, students, and parents, we can now see how complex the change processes are that characterize Samoon High School in its current stage of development. Samoon High School has been continuously consolidating its practice of democratic education since its inception as a founding member of the Hyukshin school network in 2011. Throughout this period of time, the school has built a structure and culture that teachers feel is fair, regardless of their place in the hierarchy constructed by age or teaching experiences.

Students expressed feeling a sense of empowerment as they attend class meetings and student councils where they can express their opinions and in turn, see their opinions reflected in changes to the school policies. School leaders, teachers, parents, and students within Samoon High School were unanimous in their perception that Samoon has organized a democratic environment on many levels. In this sense, one is able to tell the purpose of the theory of change in Samoon High School was well-processed and is one of their strengths.

As part of their democratic emphasis, Samoon High School has built a supportive community. School administrators encourage teachers to come up with ideas and implement them. Teachers are motivated to develop activities and classes that they think are most beneficial for their students. As an example, teachers implemented a restorative education approach where they solve problems of students who misbehaved by dialogue and give time to reflect.

In this school, as was evident in all 16 of our case studies, parents worry about their children's college entrance exam scores and their future career prospects. This anxiety, however, does not prevent the school from innovating continuously. Samoon High School teachers mentor students as whole human beings. They endeavor to show students that there are many different ways to live and to contribute to their society that go beyond admission to a top-tier university.

Students value the ways that they approach learning in their classes and extracurricular activities, primarily because of purposeful discussions that will benefit them in their future. They believe that Samoon does not alienate students through arbitrary measures, but that it treats students equally despite any differences in their test scores. Parents report that they like the school and are appreciative of their ability to contribute actively to its achievements. These are striking accomplishments in the context of an intensely competitive system that is endeavoring to transform itself into one that is more supportive of its students' well-being.

## Conclusion

Samoon High School puts its values into action as a Hyukshin school. This seems to be possible thanks to a strong alignment in values among the school leadership, teachers, parents, and students.

The first value that the schools promotes is student autonomy. School leaders and teachers collectively provide opportunities such as extracurricular activities or restorative life guidance for students to develop autonomy in leading their lives and studying. Students confirm the school emphasis on student autonomy, stating that they feel their voices and thoughts are heard. Both students and parents feel that teachers take into consideration what students' thoughts are through effective communication.

A second value that stakeholders uphold is the importance of students becoming responsible and democratic future citizens. When asked what kind of adult she wanted her child to grow up to be, one parent replied that she wants her son to, “배려할 줄 아는 사람, 더불어 함께 사는 사람,” “be respectful of others and to know how to live alongside others.” (Samoon H, Parent Jo, Interview). The vice principal hopes that through the education students receive from school, they will, “나중에 살아도 자기가 말하고 행동에 대한 것들에 대한 책임, 이런 것들을 서로 배워 나가지 않을까 하는 생각이 들어요,” “learn how to be responsible for what they say and do in the future.” (Samoon H, Vice Principal Kim, Interview).

A third value that the school as a whole emphasizes is student wellbeing. The school leadership team aims to create an environment where students feel supported. Teachers incorporate effective communication methods that respect student voice. The parents send their children to the school in hopes that the process of studying will be a stress-free, happy experience.

Even with the same vision, it is natural for stakeholders to have differing priorities when it comes to putting their values into practice. Everyone we interviewed struggled with the right balance of happiness in the here-and-now daily lives of students and academic pressures oriented towards students' future careers. Such struggles are inevitable and can be a source of creativity and growth for all. The dynamism of Samoon High School is a rich representation of what has been achieved by the HSSM.

## **Hansabong Middle School**

### **Introduction**

Hansabong Middle School is located in the Sangdo-dong area of Seoul, which is a district that has dilapidated residential buildings and a rapidly aging population. Hansabong is a small, co-ed public school that consists of 327 students, 33 teachers, and 17 classes. On average, students reside in multi- or cross-generational households that are considered to be lower-middle class. Due to this, many students require socio-emotional support and, consequently, many teachers have tried to avoid being assigned to this school. Prior to the 2000s regional underdevelopment caused the school to have been managed by the Ministry of Patriots and Veteran Affairs. Hansabong Middle School was designated as a Hyukshin school in 2010, making it one of the oldest schools in the HSSM. In 2015, 94% of students, 94% of parents, and 89% of teachers voted on the school's HS re-designation.

The HHD and teachers spoke highly of the principal's leadership style that has inspired teachers' enthusiasm for curriculum innovation activities involving natural, historical, and cultural exploration. The teacher-centered leadership approach found in Hansabong Middle School was only adopted a few years ago after the current principal took office. The HHD acknowledged that the school had gone through “암흑 시대,” “a dark time” (Hansabong M, HHD Choi, Interview) previously, in which its former leaders had no capacity to innovate. The power to make decisions was held firmly in the grip of only a few senior members. Currently, teachers are empowered to undertake practical steps to follow in order to balance the burden of their workloads. Students and parents favor the community-based, extra-curricular activities offered by the school and its focus on environment protection and talent development. The school is moving in a positive direction.

Regarding teachers, one-third of them move to other school assignments annually. This is a high level of change for any school to sustain, although many of the departing teachers have held fast to traditional teaching practices, and hence are not a good match for the HSSM. Another challenge, according to both students and parents, is that the school needs to improve the effectiveness of its methods in teaching mathematics and the English language in the classroom.

Generally speaking, however, the students at Hansabong Middle School are improving across different levels of academic achievement, (e.g., academic performance, educational behavior, cognitive abilities). The average academic performance of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students, based on standardized scores, has been steadily improving since 2016. The graduates of Hansabong Middle School are equipped with increasing amounts of knowledge in the fields of Korean literature, math, foreign languages, and social studies. Hansabong Middle School has demonstrated a track record of success in helping students with problematic behaviors so that they may study and transition successfully to high school. Students' cognitive capacities are further expanded when they collaborate to solve campus-related issues, reduce the waste of neighborhoods, and protect the ecosystem of the local community.

### **School Emphasis**

The staff at Hansabong Middle School believe that participation is the most important factor that forms the basis of student autonomy and offers the best education. Students' initiative to participate in the decision-making and problem-solving procedures develop them into active citizens of a democratic society, they say. The abundant life experience in group life from an early age is believed to be an anchor to help students to overcome the greatest obstacles and to play a positive role in the future of their country.

Therefore, among the many Hyukshin values that Hansabong Middle School emphasizes, there are three in particular that stand out:

1. Participatory ecological education;
2. Experience-based education; and
3. Community involvement.

***Participatory Ecological Education.*** Hansabong Middle School takes a holistic approach to ecological education that seamlessly combines conventional curriculum, hands-on learning, and collaborative projects. Teachers and local residents who are environmental activists deliver a series of lectures on ecology and environment protection in school. Students are tasked with the responsibility of transforming their classroom learning into problem-solving and innovation. The most distinctive examples are a class on recycling in which students design creative products from the waste materials they collected and a class on green energy in which students conduct research projects on climate change and renewable energy, make small solar panels, and maintain solar panels on the school's rooftops. A green festival, or “생태축제,” “ecological carnival” (Hansabong M, Student Ahn, Interview), is a climax in the school's annual curriculum where students demonstrate their knowledge in environment and sustainability through their finished projects. Most projects require significant teamwork among students, teachers, parents, and villagers. In addition to operating a solar heat system, the school also manages a vegetable garden. The school wants to become a “햇빛 학교,” “sunlight school” (Hansabong M, Principal Choi, Interview) that relies on 100 percent of clean energy for self-sufficiency. In addition to all of its own work on its campus, it also supports sustainable energy practices in its surrounding neighborhoods.

***Experience-Based Education.*** Experiential learning exists not only in the education of ecology protection, but also in the conventional subjects of the humanities and sciences, and the creative subjects of aesthetics and music. To increase students' knowledge and understanding of Korean literature, teachers plan field trips that take students to visit real-life places that have inspired literary classics. Cemeteries and museums are popular travel destinations for students in the history class, for example, to comprehend the colonial period under Japanese rule, to analyze the historical issues at work in terms of interpreting the past, and to learn appropriate gratitude for Korea's forerunners of democratic protests. Outdoor adventure activities also are an integral part of the school's nature and character education.

Students also learn about the importance of perseverance through experience-based education. The themes of feminism, sexism, and gender equality are taught through semester-long workshops. These aim at helping students eat healthy meals, understand the risks of cosmetic surgeries, and appreciate differences in body shapes.

The school's musical ensemble and theatre group select student members based on their demonstrated interests instead of existent talents. Students improve their performances, accumulate stage and production experience. They practice teamwork skills through the preparation process, learn how hard it is to pull off successful performances, and grow as whole people.

The Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) curriculum at the school stresses practical, creative training that deepens students' understanding of physics, mechanics, and chemistry. Teachers try to teach these subjects in ways that students will find engaging and rewarding, they say.

***Community Involvement.*** The school's environment curriculum is firmly grounded in an energy-related cooperative union with a village called “성대골,” “Seongdaegol.” (Hansabong M, Principal Choi, Interview). It is an energy-independent village which means that its residents voluntarily save, conserve, and produce their own energy. Hansabong Middle School is considered, geographically, part of the village that has been providing expertise and support for the school's educational activities related to ecology and energy, from renewable energy generation, climate change research, to energy course design. The village has loaned its library space to teachers to hold seminars, workshops, and discussions for both their students and teachers. The village can be considered as a second, extended campus of Hansabong Middle School that provides more flexible library and service hours for its teachers and students.

All village residents are invited to attending the school's major events, that span from education to entertainment. Getting parents more involved in school and students' learning is a major initiative of senior administrators. Training sessions are regularly held to strengthen the parents' relationship with teachers and students. The school runs an eco-friendly snack bar that sells delicious, healthy, and affordable snacks to students.

Hansabong Middle School has received numerous awards and honors. The city of Seoul has recently named it “1 호 초록미래학교,” “No.1 Green Future School.” (Hansabong M, Principal Choi, Interview). The National Assembly of the Republic of Korea has granted the school a medal for its progress on ecological education. It won a prize from a national contest organized by the Ministry of Education on the best school co-op practices nationwide. The prize was based on Hansabong Middle School's collaboration efforts with the village of Seongdaegol on achieving energy conservation and independence and developing pro-ecological education.

## **School Leaders**

**Principal Information.** The school principal, Hwa-Sub Choi, was internally appointed in 2018 when Hansabong Middle School was designated as the Hyukshin school for the third time. He had been teaching social studies for 30 years before rising to this position. He has previous experience in working as the head of the HHD for another Hyukshin school.

He believes that education has to focus more on humanity and community engagement. When interviewed, he said, “양적 팽창과 경쟁체제의 중심으로 왔던 교육 부분들이 좀 더 인간적이고 다수가 함께 발전하는,” “Education needs to be more humanizing and collectively improving together, rather than increasing quantity expansion or competition. (Hansabong M, Principal Choi, Interview). He believes that education is a way to solve many social problems and disparities in the Korean society, such as the deep inequality among the social classes. He wants to transform the hierarchical and patriarchal relationship aspects of the culture.

As principal, Mr. Choi brings to Hansabong Middle School a long history of human rights activism and democratic advocacy. He considers middle school to be a place where practicing one’s education of democratic citizenship can help students create a better and happier society, where people are treated fairly and respect each other. Thus, Mr. Choi regards his role as foundational in supporting the school faculty members and constructing a democratic school climate among the school’s stakeholders.

**Leadership Style.** Mr. Choi intends to engage all major parties of the school in the decision-making process of extra- and co-curricular activities. He has organized multiple types of the faculty meetings, increased parental engagement at school, and connected with the neighborhoods to facilitate school events. His philosophy of school leadership has three parts:

- (1) Leadership role: supporter;
- (2) Theory of action: democratic school climate; and
- (3) Philosophy: participatory school activities.

**Leadership Role: Supporter.** The principal has acted primarily as a supporter in the school community by encouraging ideas of mid-level school managers, including the HHD, in designing school activities and collecting teachers' opinions. He explained his commitment to the teachers: “저는 [선생님들] 옆에서 있겠다고 약속을 했어요. 제가 [대화를] 주도하고 이끌어가는 것이 아니라,” “I made a promise that I will stand by [the teachers]. I will not dominate [the conversations] or try to lead them.” (Hansabong M, Principal Choi, Interview). According to him, the faculty at Hansabong Middle School has a wide range of meetings in which genuine teacher discussion and negotiation frequently happen.

The situation of, “몇 사람 리더가 끌고 가는 게 아니라 토론과 협의,” “a few leaders leading the entire meeting instead of discussion and negotiation” (Hansabong M, Principal Choi, Interview) does not take place here. There are a variety of meetings among:

- (1) heads of several school departments per week;
- (2) grade level teachers once per week; and
- (3) all faculties per month.

Mr. Choi reported that there have been no cases where teachers' voices were not incorporated in the last two years. Teachers thus felt respected by the school leaders.

The principal said he had been inspired by demonstrations of school leadership in other countries. Canadian and German school leaders worked on “허드렛일,” “chores” (Hansabong M, Principal Choi, Interview) in school. Young teachers start to undertake larger-scale assignments that prepare them for future leadership positions in school (e.g., principal, vice-

principal, or department chair). Thanks to the burden of school leadership and administrative tasks being shifted, Canadian and German principals are able to gladly participate in the management of other chores. Mr. Choi's leadership can thus be seen as fostering ongoing, collaborative teacher support instead of achieving dominance over the teaching ranks.

The Principal affirmed the notion that teachers' opinions, including his, have been heard in school. He stated, “학교의 전반적인 문화가 [교사들이] 서로를 존중하고 내가 무엇을 하고자 할 때 되는 방향으로 지원들을 해 주기 때문에 신이 납니다,” “Hansabong Middle School has a culture where [teachers] respect each other. [For example], they support me when I propose things. That makes me excited about my work.” (Hansabong M, Principal Choi, Interview).

**Theory of Action: Democratic School Climate.** The school motto, according to Mr. Choi, is, “앎과 삶이 함께 하는 민주시민 육성,” “cultivating democratic citizenship with knowledge and life competencies.” (Hansabong M, Principal Choi, Interview). He understands that being a democratic citizen in Korean society requires continual experiences in which citizens are able to express their opinions reasonably and logically. Through this, individuals are then able to be looked to by their communities for practical problem-solving. Not only does he value teachers' opinions, he also emphasizes those of the students and parents. Specifically, teachers have regular meetings to share their perspectives. Students have round-table discussions, programing, and, “공청회,” “conferences” (Hansabong M, Principal Choi, Interview). They then set school policies related to the rules of life guidance and “사회적 협동조합,” “social cooperation.” (Hansabong M, Principal Choi, Interview). Moreover, the school has implemented a new program, called changemaker, to resolve its campus problems through the collaboration of multiple stakeholders. Mrs. Choi, an active organizational member of the program, shared that,

“협동조합에서 자기네가 어떤 음식을 먹고 싶은지 가격은 어떻게 할 것인지 어떤 프로젝트 활동을 할 것인지 등,” “[Students decided] the dining menu options and pricings; also, they talked about what projects they wanted to proceed in the future (Hansabong M, HHD Choi, Interview).

Mr. Choi has created a platform that actively engages parents in school. The program is an integral part of the school’s model. This program entails a four-hour, interactive, parent-led session each time. At the end of the program, the vice president of the student council collects the participants’ feedback and measures the event’s success. The HHD confirmed this, stating that, “학부모님들은 교육을 받았던 분들이 동아리를 운영하시는데 주도하는 사람도 있고 모둠별로 매 협력강사로 하고. 주장사가 앞에서 이끌면 모둠별로 하는 걸 선생님이 서포트 하는,” “Parents are led by other parents who have been trained to run this session, and each group is monitored by a [teacher] partner. While the instructors lead the process, the teacher provides support.” (Hansabong M, HHD Choi, Interview). The initiative has been successful in attracting at least five to eight parents each time. The parents have become more willing to connect the school employees with the surrounding residential communities after participating in this program.

**Philosophy: Participatory School Activities.** Hansabong Middle School provides opportunities for students to become active participants in the school community, which includes the school’s orchestra program and academic guest lecture series. The middle school’s orchestra program, named ‘Cantabile,’ does not have selection criteria based on students’ musical talents or performances. Any student interested in music performance can participate. The principal explained how the orchestra was organized:

한사봉 칸타빌레라고 해서 학교에 오케스트라가 있어요. 학생 1,2,3 학년 전체 150 명 중에 오케스트라가 56 명이니까 엄청난 수가 오케스트라인데. ♯음악 선생님 한 분이 잘 하는 애들을 뽑은 게 아니라 돌봄과 보살핌이 필요한 아이들을 중심으로, 매주, 격주 이렇게 훈련을 해서 행사를 했어요. 학생들이 함께 하는 하나의 예이기 때문에 주변에서 많이 놀랐어요.

Our school orchestra, called Hansabong Cantabile, consists of 56 students. Considering the total number of school students are 150, this orchestra is quite a size. A music teacher selected orchestra members considering who needs more care rather than evaluating students' musical skills. We trained students weekly or biweekly and then held an event. People were surprised by our orchestra because the orchestra represented an example of collaboration. (Hansabong M, Principal Choi, Interview).

The orchestral Christmas-themed performances in Seoul's subway stations and its international airport were a great success. It has enhanced the school's profile not only nationally, but internationally as well. It also created strong attachments to the school among the students and created lasting memories for all of the participants.

In addition to the orchestra, Mr. Choi has brought guest speakers to campus in an effort to broaden students' knowledge and to improve their study habits. To maximize student participation and to accommodate their different stages of learning and growth, the lectures were delivered to two groups for students at the lower and upper level respectively. Mr. Choi said:

대학교처럼 공부를 제대로 하고 싶어하는 아이들한테 공부를 어떻게 하는지 방법을 알려주는 전문가들을 초빙해서 실은 2 학년, 3 학년을 대상으로 전문강사 두 분을 초대해서 3 회에 걸쳐서 공부 원리와 방법을 교육을 시켰죠. 1 학년은 LG 의 도움을 받아서 18 회 정도 상담을 하더라구요.

We have invited [education] experts to teach students on how to study properly like in college. Specifically, the school has hosted three sessions with two experts for students in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade on the fundamentals and techniques of learning. As for those in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 18 similar sessions were held under the help [corporate sponsorship] of LG. (Hansabong M, Principal Choi, Interview).

This initiative is an example of public-private partnership for schools which may have a large number of low-income students or a tighter budget, due to either the pandemic or policy changes.

## Teachers

*Curriculum Innovation: Experience-Based Education.* Hansabong Middle School teachers focus on creating various experience-based education opportunities for students. Co-curricular school activities include natural and historical exploration trips, as well as multiple workshops that focus on topics such as waste education, gender equality, and the history of colonialism. Teachers have organized excursions and outdoor adventures for students in all seasons. One teacher shared the following:

봄에 가을에 애들 데리고 자전거 타고 여기서 자전거를 타고 서해안까지  
바닷가에 대한 그 다음에 가을에는 팔당에서 양평 남한강 자정계 완공되고  
12월이라 할 텐데 그런 어떤 자전거도 그런 아이들이 좀처럼 활동을 할 수 있는  
기회를 많이 주고 거기서 아이들을 느끼면 학교도 하고 체험활동을 할 때 애들도  
많이 달라요. 그래서 그냥 이렇게 화려있게.

In the spring and fall, the students and I rode bicycles from the school to the west coast. In the fall, I took them to see the Namhangang River in Paldang and Yangpyong. The construction will be completed around December. Students are more active when cycling. When the students were outside, they were different from doing academic or campus activities in school. I always try to make the outings a fantasy experience for them. (Hansabong M, Teacher Yoon, Interview).

Hiking and long-distance cycling train students to strengthen their willpower: He added:

한번 갔다 오면 뭔가 아이들이 뿌듯함을 느끼는 거죠. 지리산 꼭대기에 올라가면  
이게 만만치 않아요. 그런데 한번 갔다 오면 올라갈 때는 쉽지 않죠. 아이들 그냥  
그 아이들 10미터 가서 10분 쉬고 10미터 가서 10분씩과 같이 하는 거예요.  
그런데 그들은 결국 산꼭대기에 올라가서 그런 것들을 느끼려고 아래를  
내려다보았을 때 모두 놀라요.

Climbing to the top of Jiri Mountain has taught students the importance of patience and persistence. [To conquer this challenge], they needed to alternate proceeding and resting every ten minutes when they were exhausted. They were all surprised [by their achievements] in the end when they went up to the mountain top and looked down to feel those things. (Hansabong M, Teacher Yoon, Interview).

This exercise also helps students practice gratitude, appreciate nature, and cultivate a strong sense of satisfaction and accomplishment after they made it to the mountain top. Despite the advantages, this teacher recognizes the need for private discussions with students who may have troubles balancing the academics with outdoor activities.

To encourage civic engagement in the students, Ms. Lee took students to participate in candlelight protests that demanded the impeachment of former president Park Geun-hye for her abuse of power and corruption: “그래서 저는 학생들이 본인들이 내가 필요하다라고 생각을 하면 정말 촛불집회에도 저희 2016년에는 아이들이 다녀온 적도 있어요,” “When students felt the need to participate, in 2016, our students participated in the candlelight protests.” (Hansabong M, Teacher Lee, Interview). Ms. Lee integrated other elements of civic education into classroom learning as well. To commemorate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Gwangju Uprising, she invited students to share their reflections for 30 seconds to one minute in class before the lecture. She hoped that, “그런 이야기들을 나누고 그 가운데서제 앞으로 우리가 어떻게 살면 좋을까,” “through such an exchange, students would think about how to live.” (Hansabong M, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Another experience-based activity is the operation of a waste reduction, reuse, and recycle program that instructs students on the skills and techniques to transform garbage into useful products. According to Ms. Lee, “예를 들면 1 학기 때는 저희가 기술 선생님 중심으로 해서 생활용품 제품을 재활용해서 하는 그런 프로젝트를 해서 학교 행사인 봉봉마켓까지 이렇게 쪽 갔어요,” “the school’s green project has students recycle waste collected from school and Bongbong Market for the school festival (Hansabong M, Teacher Lee, Interview). To celebrate an ecology festival, students built a boat from liters of empty soda

bottles and rowed the boat in the school pond. During this process, the students deepened their understanding of physics principles, such as buoyancy and stored kinetic energy, while increasing their knowledge of recycling.

Through such activities and events, teachers strive to encourage student participation. These possibilities then allow students to experience a number of benefits. For example, Hansabong Middle School's staff use character education as a pathway towards gender equality. Due to the ubiquitous nature of sexism and the importance of appearance in Korean society, Teacher Lee believes that adolescent girls may be exposed to appearance-based discrimination in schools, in addition to becoming victim to verbal harassment from their male counterparts. To address this issue, teachers in Hansabong Middle School organized a series of events on the appropriate expressions of gender, respect, and other popular topics such as plastic surgery, cosmetics safety, aesthetics, and diet plans. Some larger scale, class-wide events were also held in a community gender-equality library near the school.

All of the school's 7<sup>th</sup>-graders during their second exam-free semester are now required to take part in these events. During these events, male students are taught to treat their female classmates in an equal and appreciative manner, acknowledging all of the many different types of beauty instead of only those that are fixated upon by the media. Consequently, the entire student body benefits from a heightened sense of equality, mutual respect, and a harassment-free environment.

Other featured series of events include experiences centered around Korea's colonial and division history. Teachers lecture on the Japan's colonial and WWII atrocities, the comfort women, territorial disputes, and the Korean war. The students went on field trips to further explore these topics. Ms. Lee listed as an example how, "12월에 전쟁과 여성인권

박물관이라고 위안부 할머니들 이제 좀 기념하는 그런 박물관이 있어요,” ‘In December, [we visited] a museum called the War and Women’s Rights Museum, which now celebrates the grandmothers [former comfort women.]’ (Hansabong M, Teacher Lee, Interview). The students visited the museum in order to be a step closer to such a tragic history, rather than simply learning about it through textbooks.

**PLCs.** The PLCs at Hansabong Middle School differs in terms of culture and mindset across the teacher’s community of the three grade levels. A vibrant PLC culture exists within grade 7, where teachers do not have the burdens of exams. The teachers are active in discussions, seminars, and workshops with other faculty members in the community library. These exchanges often take place after school. The teachers are then able to use their time to improve their teaching strategies and coordinate future projects.

However, teachers in grades 8 and 9 believe that the collaboration model in 7<sup>th</sup> grade is incompatible with their academic teaching and exam preparation demands. Mr. Yoon said, “그러면 2학년 담임이나 교과 선생님들과 대면은 힘들실 수 있죠,” “Some teachers have implied that [the 7<sup>th</sup>-grade PLC practices] would be too difficult for them.” (Hansabong M, Teacher Yoon, Interview). This gap in the general consensus of teachers has started to diminish the enthusiasm of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade teachers. Ms. Lee wondered, “그냥 생각에 2, 3학년은 그렇게까지 안 하는데 1학년은 너무 많이 하는 거 아니냐라는 생각하실 수도,” “Since the teachers in the other two grades do not engage, the 7<sup>th</sup>-grade teachers wondered if they had done too much.” (Hansabong M, Teacher Lee, Interview). It is uncertain to what extent the school’s classroom innovations might be constrained by the dissimilar views of the PLCs, which in turn are caused by the CSAT.

***A Democratic Practice: Teachers' Participation in School Budgeting.*** The power of formulating the school's budget has passed from the hands of the principal to those of the individual teachers. Teachers are able to decide on the educational products and services the school should purchase for each grade level, which is an unconventional approach in comparison to most other schools. According to Ms. Lee, “그런 단위에서 얘기가 굉장히 공정하고 투명하게 이뤄지고 있고 그다음에 인정된 혁신학교라 그런 일이 없지만,” “The budget process in this Hyukshin school has to be fair and transparent. The tasks need to be delegated to individual teachers.” (Hansabong M, Teacher Lee, Interview). Ms. Lee said that the principal has never asked the teachers to carry out his orders regarding the budget simply because he is the principal. Likewise, students are able to participate in formulation of the school budget portion related to their school activities.

***Community Building: Stakeholder Engagement.*** Teachers within Hansabong Middle School enjoy a close relationship with their students, parents, and same-grade co-workers. Such relationships and opportunities for collaboration are due to the many avenues through which the school community hosts events and activities. For example, there is a school-wide reading initiative which allows for the teachers to help the pupils cultivate reading habits and eventually develops positive teacher-student relationships. The planning and execution of the school's ecological education (e.g., the ecological festival) has provided teachers with an opportunity to collaborate with one another across disciplines. Although some teachers reported difficult conversations with parents who hold a negative view of the many extra-curricular activities the school sponsors, Ms. Lee says that she has established an excellent rapport with parents who are involved in the same community church and humanitarian organization with her. She views parent involvement as a developmental process.

She provided an example:

월드버전 인터내셔널은 교회 행사가 끝난 후 지역 내 학교들을 위한 모금 행사를 주최해요. 저는 월급의 10분의 1 까지 그 원인에 기부했어요. 한 번은 아파서 모금 행사에 참석하지 못했어요. 그래서 학부모들은 행사를 원활하게 진행하는데 도움을 주었다고 말했어요.

World Version International hosts a fundraiser for schools in the district after the church rites and ceremonies. I have donated up to one tenth of my salary to the causes. I was sick one time and couldn't serve the fundraiser; however, parents took the lead in facilitating the event. (Hansabong M, Teacher Lee, Interview).

In addition to fundraising for an alliance of the school district, teachers have teamed up alongside the parents to operate the school canteen and snack counter. This teacher-parent cooperative will be further elaborated upon in the upcoming parent's section.

**Teachers' Concerns.** Mr. Yoon stated that some teachers feel discouraged at times because the school's innovations seemingly plateaued recently, despite the teachers' best efforts. One such instance that exemplifies this feeling is how students have started to hold unrealistically high expectations of their outdoor group activities, due to a visit to Mt. Hallasan, the highest mountain in South Korea, via a cruise ship. Mr. Yoon shared:

오기 전에는 제가 애들 데리고 한라산 세월호 같은 그 배 타고 한라산내로 데리고 왔다. 아이들이 그런 체험을 통해서 얻는 것들이 참 많은데 다음부터 학교생활에 애들이 귀가 다 달라요.

Before I came to this interview, I brought my students to Mt. Hallasan on a ship similar to the ferry Sewol. There's a lot of things that students are able to get from those experiences. The next time, students will have even more expectations on their field trips. (Hansabong M, Teacher Yoon, Interview).

As a result, teachers have started to bear an increasingly heavier workload. They have also been tasked with balancing the disparate demands of school leaders and students on these adventurous trips.

One further concern expressed was that the teachers' decade-long proposal of building a new school campus has not yet been considered. The SMOE was urged to provide more assistance to the administrative affairs of school operation. Furthermore, according to both teacher interviews, educational policies related to the Hyukshin schools have not been fully realized. Ms. Lee suggests that the power of designing curriculum and selecting education materials has been gripped primarily by the government, rather than the Hyukshin schools. The teachers expressed concerns about the role of politics in revising the existing system, safeguarding the teachers' political rights, and promoting the best policies.

## **Students**

***Overall Experiences.*** Two students participated in interviews, both of whom were 9<sup>th</sup> graders that served a leadership role for their student council. Student Song and Ahn were the student body President and Vice President at the time of the interview. They discussed a range of topics from personality development and students' interpersonal relationships, to creativity promotion and test preparation. This section primarily centers around their perspectives as students on their school's environment, education, and community building experiences.

***Ecological Education.*** Students realized that their behaviors and perceptions have changed through the ecological education and activities provided to them by their school. Song said, “우리 학교가 환경에 관심이 많아서 환경에 관련된 활동을 많이 하고 있어요,” “Our school is very passionate about the environment, so we do a lot of related activities.” (Hansabong M, Student Song, Interview). The student admitted that, initially, he was not interested in the environment; however, after learning more, he has since become an advocate for environmental conservation.

Song also shared, “한사봉 중학교에서 축제를 한 후에, 학생들이 쓰레기를 줄이고 재활용도 하려는 게 자연스럽게 되더라구요,” “After the school festival at Hansabong Middle School, students automatically try to reduce trash and recycle it.” (Hansabong M, Student Song, Interview). Similarly, Ahn had not paid much attention to the ecological education promoted by Hansabong, as it is rare in South Korea. However, she began to develop her understanding in this field since attending Hansabong Middle School. She declared, “그러면서 지구를 좀 더 소중히 다뤄야겠다. 그리고 생각보다 심각하다는 생각을 했어요,” “the environment had deteriorated much more than I expected, and I felt the responsibility to leave a greener earth to my children.” (Hansabong M, Student Ahn, Interview). These strengthened ecological values were due to the ecological education at Hansabong Middle School.

Ahn visited a city called Seongdaegol which is energy self-sufficient. She then produced a report on the situation, tactics, and facilities of the city’s energy self-reliance after her visit. She hopes that, one day, “우리 지역까지 확대되고 이 성대골 사례가 더 확장돼서 서울시 전체적인 분위기가 그런 쪽으로 갔으면 좋겠다,” “Seongdaegol’s success could expand to my hometown and the entire Seoul metropolitan area.” (Hansabong M, Student Ahn, Interview).

***A Tight-Knit School Community.*** Hansabong Middle School students want to be engaged with their learning. Their school encourages this both on a schoolwide and class level. On a school level, Hansabong Middle School holds an annual event referred to as the “체인지메이커,” “changemaker” (Hansabong M, Student Song, Interview) where, “학교에서 불편함 점들을 학생들끼리 찾아서 그것을 어떻게 개선했으면 좋겠는지 탐구를 한 다음에 발표를 하는거예요,” “students found room for improvement within the school, explored the issue deeper, and presented on possible solutions.” (Hansabong M, Student Song, Interview).

The ideas that students came up with were innovative and ultimately contributed towards building an improved school community for all. According to Song, one student group proposed innovative ideas for easily cleaning up spider webs around school, and another group presented an idea for replacing door locks with keypad locks so that the person in charge of attendance would not need to arrive at the building as early. This year, the students voted on changing the traditional, more formal, school uniforms to pullover sweatshirts. Through such projects, students are able to better understand perspectives from different students and work towards building a school community that benefits everyone.

On a class level, students are able to participate in activities that allow them to improve their collaboration and communication skills. Song described “저희 모둠 주제를 뽑아서 저희끼리 역할 분담하고 너는 이런 거 조사해 이렇게 해서 다같이 보고서를 만든 거예요 자기가 조사한 부분에 대해서,” “a project where team members selected a research topic, delegated roles, and contributed to writing a report.” (Hansabong M, Student Song, Interview). Song stated that, although “답답하긴 한데 일단 조그만한 거라도 주면 학생들이 해오거든요,” “It was frustrating at times, once team members were delegated tasks, they completed them.” (Hansabong M, Student Song, Interview).

The opportunity to participate in group activities allows Hansabong Middle School students to work together. One student expressed their desire for Hansabong to incorporate more activities that encourage collaboration. He stated, “저희학교가 하는 활동에 비해서 이 활동이 많은 편이 아니라고 생각하기 때문에,” – compared the schoolwide projects, there are fewer classroom activities (Hansabong M, Student Song, Interview). Students seem to appreciate classroom activities and want more of them, in order to build upon their skills at problem-solving and collaboration.

## Parents

*Talent Cultivation.* Due to the levels of student engagement in co- and extra-curricular activities, both students and parents have grown a stronger sense of awareness on students' strengths, artistic interests, and learning styles. Teachers provide quality teaching and learning experiences both in and outside of the classroom in order to facilitate the development of their students' talents. Ms. Kim, who sent her three sons to this school, shared the changes of her youngest son after he participated in musicals at school. This parent reported that, “부족한 아이이고 사춘기도 조금 오기도 했었고,” “My son had been undergoing issues of introversion and rebellion in early adolescence.” (Hansabong M, Parent Kim, Interview). The child then discussed this with his teacher and was encouraged to explore his potential interests in drama and performing arts. The teacher then referred him to the production of a musical during his exam-free semester. Ms. Kim said:

선생님들이 그 아이의 잘하는 것 찾아가지고 보고서, [예를 들어서], 애는 축구를 잘하네 그림을 잘 그리고 그거를 갖다가 어떤 걸 할 수 있게 넣어 주시더라고요.

The teachers are passionate about spotting the strengths of each student, [and they say, for example] how about playing soccer or drawing, and [they] provide them with the opportunities to develop their interests. (Hansabong M, Parent Kim, Interview).

Afterwards, this parent noticed changes in the behaviors and attitudes of her son. She surmised, “아마 좀 하면서 흥미를 느꼈나 봐요,” “Perhaps he got interested while doing it.” (Hansabong M, Parent Kim, Interview). The parent then further recalled that her son greatly enjoyed discussing his stories and opinions in the musical production team. Another parent expressed her appreciation of a teacher had once used the public budget to take four female students, including this parent's daughter, to watch a musical.

***Students' Enthusiasm for Schooling.*** Hansabong Middle School, according to both parents, has ignited a passion for learning in their children. One parent said: “학교를 무슨 일이든 7 시에 올 정도로 재미있어 하고요. 이곳에 와서 어떤 활동을 하려고 재미있어 하고,” “Regardless of the school calendar, he gets to school at 7 am and reflects on the school activities he wants to participate in.” (Hansabong M, Parent Kim, Interview). She attributed the increase of her child’s self-determination skills to the school activities; he had his heart set on the campus activities and has undertaken an executive role in the class management team in his second semester.

Hansabong Middle School has recently started a study club named ‘plan’ for its students, which resulted in mixed reactions. Some students consider it less important than the private tutorial schools’ clubs, and thus have seemingly adopted a perfunctory attitude: “학원 다니는 친구 같은 경우를 보면 학원에 가야 한다고 말하고는 자리를 떴어요,” “In the case of a friend [of my son], he said ‘I have to go to hagwon now’ and then left.” (Hansabong M, Parent Kim, Interview). In contrast, the parent’s youngest son has expressed an unparalleled level of enthusiasm for the study club. He enjoyed working with his team members to complete their assigned writing tasks via rounds of discussions, corrections, and comparisons. However, Ms. Kim described the process as exhausting.

Alongside building a stronger school community, food choices have continually raised students’ environmental awareness. Coupons for the snack counter were made available as prizes for students who had won athletic events or had improved their exam scores. According to one parent, these incentives successfully encouraged students to work harder on their academic studies and activities. The costs of the food are mostly covered by the portion of the school

budget subsidized by SMOE's Hyukshin administration program. In one instance, when the school budget had run out, parents and teachers took the initiative to pay for a portion of the expenses. The students have generally expressed their preference for the school's investments in food and drink, over films and books. This choice is understandable, considering the context of the students' lower-middle-income families.

**Parents' Concerns.** Both parents attempted to avoid discussing their children's academic performances at Hansabong Middle School. One explicitly stated, “저는 특별히 성적 얘기는 안 하고 싶어,” “I do not want to discuss the scores.” (Hansabong M, Parent Kim, Interview). Another acknowledged the potential deficiency of the Hyukshin model in preparing her youngest son for college. Still, she believes that it also depends on the students themselves. For instance, her other two sons who are also alumni of Hansabong Middle School proceeded to do well in their respective academic and career paths. Her eldest son has moved forward in his professional pursuits, while her second is committed to the study of humanities in a public university.

Reflecting upon the test scores of her youngest son, she has been worried about his future. Ms. Kim began to wonder whether attending college is necessary for him. Nonetheless, she described her third child as, “그 아이들은 성적도 잘 안 나오고한 아이들이지만 학교생활 되게 열심히 하니까 열심히 다니고,” “working extremely hard for his school despite his unsatisfactory exam scores.” (Hansabong M, Parent Kim, Interview). She believes that he “공부도 재능이라고 생각하기 때문에,” “had been acquiring the learning ability [rather than testing skills] at school.” (Hansabong M, Parent Kim, Interview). It seems that Hansabong's students have encountered difficulties, most typically in the studying and testing of math and English.

## **Discussion**

Hansabong Middle School is a unique case of the HSSM, where democratic school leadership and strong collaboration has triumphed over an otherwise disadvantaged school context. By allowing the school policy and management decisions to be made by the teachers, Hansabong Middle School's principal has encouraged personal growth, creativity, and innovation, as well as an overall commitment to follow through. The teachers put forth a considerable effort in designing and delivering a participatory, experiential, and community-based learning experience. Thus, Hansabong Middle School differentiates itself from its counterparts by having its teaching practices and goals of curriculum innovation align in exemplary fashion with the HSSM's ideas and principals. Hansabong Middle School often enlists external support, be it through the community of Seongdaegol or the sponsorship of corporation and nonprofit organization. In this way, the school hopes to expedite the on-campus curriculum change, expand off-campus curriculum opportunities, and enrich teaching and learning. The principal and teachers often consult the opinions of students, parents, and community on decisions and processes.

Hands-on environmental learning and abundant educational field trips are examples of the implementation of the school's principle of learning by doing and driving the progress of students' knowledge acquisition. Immersed in an underserved village, the school stakeholders understand the importance of strengthening the community's energy self-sufficiency through adopting and maintaining solar energy panels. The school is committed to becoming a leading "sunlight school" and supports the energy use of Seongdaegol. Students are exposed to waste management upon entering middle school, and classroom practices are in place to ensure that students have mastered the process of reducing, reusing, and recycling both within school and in

their greater lives; learning is not confined in classrooms. Teachers utilize a multi-disciplined pedagogical approach that incorporates a rich, extra-curricular learning experience in order to support the conventional and indirect classroom education.

Within this school, solid inter-stakeholder relationships, specifically those of school-community, teacher-parent, and teacher-student have been built. Multi-stakeholder collaboration is indispensable to an environmentally friendly campus environment, a health-conscious campus lifestyle, and school activities that extend beyond academic bounds. Parental engagement, workshops, and general interactions between parents and teachers promote a mutual understanding and communication. It has become clear that these relationship assets assist students in the development of their artistic and athletic talents. However, it remains uncertain from our interviews and the data they provided as to how the close connection may further contribute to the students' academic achievement.

As prominent as Hansabong Middle School is, it still faces hurdles in classroom innovation. Teachers are overloaded with administrative duties that have impeded upon the progress of their lesson planning, integrated curriculum exploration, and organization of professional teaching networks. The communication channel existent between the Hyukshin school and SMOE's district branch is established primarily through the principal, rather than classroom teachers. In a decentralized school leadership practice, national and regional education policies for curriculum reforms would benefit from addressing the needs of teachers closely and authentically. Further talent development in leadership and management approaches to education should be developed and reserved through additional program offerings and mentoring or coaching.

For a pioneering Hyukshin school like Hansabong Middle School, the success of its curriculum updates, or achievements in terms of providing innovative teaching and learning, need to be measured continuously lest it rest on its laurels. Some teachers expressed their concerns that the momentum of the school's innovative pursuits might have slowed down a bit amid a shower of praises, local news coverage, honorary awards, and national and international visits.

### **Conclusion**

Despite its financial and geographical disadvantages, and high teacher turnover due to term limits, Hansabong Middle School flourishes. This is accomplished through democratic school management, their whole-school sustainability framework and practice, experiential and participatory learning both in school and in nature, and finally, a strong partnership between the school and the community. Teachers, particularly those in the lower grade-levels, are empowered to get the most out of the exam-free school year in order to ensure the students' greatest possible learning experience in environment protection, humanities, and gender studies, all of which would not have taken place in the normal circumstances. A robust and close-knit school community amongst teachers, students, parents, and villagers was successfully constructed within Hansabong Middle School through frequent collaboration, common goals, and a practical necessity that compensates for the lack of material resources afforded to the school. Although the PLCs in the upper grade-levels are still in their beginning stages, teachers are adjusting their teaching and administrative responsibilities, and both parents and students seem anxious about certain core subjects (i.e., English and math) for high school admissions. Despite these concerns, Hansabong Middle School has dedicated itself to successfully teaching its students' knowledge, skills, and habits required for students' future successes.

## **Waehun High School**

### **Introduction**

Waehun High School is located in the Gwanak area of Seoul, which is a district with a large population of students of lower socioeconomic status. It is a public school and has been a Hyukshin school for eight years. This school has had some difficulties in recent years, primarily due to the fact that most of the initial proponents of Hyukshin education have since transferred to other schools.

Waehun High School became a Hyukshin school in 2011, after decades of being a general school. Unlike many other high schools, such as Juggaksan High School and Samoon High School, which were founded as Hyukshin schools and had faculties comprised almost solely of KTU members, Waehun High School faced a stark divide between Hyukshin supporters and opponents during its inception. In its early years, the transition from a general school to a Hyukshin school was marked by conflict and difficulty. Initially, the move towards innovative practices was driven primarily by passionate KTU members. This had created a clear, and typically uncomfortable, divide between union and non-union teachers within Waehun High School. Some had even said that intimidation tactics were used by KTU teachers in an effort to ensure that non-union members either adopted Hyukshin principles or left the school entirely.

As the years passed, new teachers have cycled into Waehun High School and the KTU teachers have cycled out, to the point where non-union teachers now represent the majority of the faculty. These struggles have, at times, made it difficult for the school to uphold Hyukshin values and practices. Waehun High School has largely overcome these challenges through skilled leadership.

The school has been able to stabilize under the leadership of the former HHD and its teachers. The HHD's experience as one of the early leaders of the school's transition to becoming a Hyukshin school and as the head of the school life safety department's voluntary transfer to the school have helped to sustain and spreading Hyukshin values in the school. As of 2018, the appointment of a new school principal has been able to support Waehun High School's teachers through constant dialogue and exchange.

On one hand, the overall declining trends in teacher participation within the open class professional development system have been perceived by the SMOE as a lack of strong conscious efforts in the school for classroom innovation. On the other hand, teachers have been opening new channels for cross-disciplinary discussion, as called for in the 2015 National Curriculum Reform at the national level. They also have been developing innovations of their own open class professional development systems, based on grade level. Many teachers also continually try to introduce alternative, content-specific professional development opportunities. Ultimately pointing to the notion that there are other ways to innovate than through open classes, and the teachers at this school are choosing to explore those venues.

Additionally, Waehun High School has recently paid a great deal of attention to developing close relationships amongst teachers and students, as a part of a new drive for improved student-centered education. By doing so, the school is supporting various revised National Curricula, especially those of 1995 and 2015, which endeavor to reduce the stress in the system that comes along with preparing students to take the CSAT. In Waehun High School, 17 out of 50 teachers have voluntarily organized PLCs and have taken advantage of in-service teacher training opportunities, in an effort to cultivate their competences in student-centered instruction.

## **School Emphases**

Waehun High School emphasizes the following Hyukshin values:

1. Classroom and administrative innovation;
2. Student autonomy; and
3. School democracy.

First, regarding classroom and administrative innovation, this school has been able to adopt student-centered pedagogical changes and to utilize additional Hyukshin funding, which is relatively unrestricted by the SMOE, to implement a variety of novel instructional approaches in both the academic core and new extracurricular activities. Second, school leaders cite student autonomy as one of the foundational pillars of their transition to becoming a part of the HSSM. This autonomy is made evident through the student-led activities and classroom culture that exists within Waehun High School, where students are generally unafraid to share opinions. Third, democratic practices can be seen at every level of the school, from how academic classes are organized, to student self-governance, and to parental engagement as well. Teachers are able to play influential roles in school leadership, students are encouraged to participate in democratic practices within their student council, and the voices of parents, students, teachers, and leaders are all considered in the school's overall decision-making processes. To a degree scarcely attained in many other public schools around the world, many of which host bureaucratic decision-making where those at the top of the system often prevail, Waehun High School shows what democratic education looks like in practice. However, this is not to say that democratic education is without problems or challenges. Democratic education is a kind of education that requires skill in soliciting diverse perspectives, compromising with others who hold opposing viewpoints, and respecting and upholding final decisions.

## Findings

### School Leaders

Mr. Na, the school principal, has an overarching understanding of a Hyukshin school as a venue where no students are alienated or unhappy. Within his conceptualization of a Hyukshin school, one is able to better understand the inner workings and approach of Waehun High School, and the goals for which they strive. The principal explained:

그동안 우리는 그런 입시 위주의 교육을 치르면서 불필요하게 경쟁이라고 하는 경쟁 구도 속에서 우리 아이들이 생활을 했어요. 그 가운데서 잘하는 아이들은 굉장히 성공하고 행복한 그런 학교생활을 했겠지만, 경쟁이라는 그 자체가 결국은 부족하면 떨어진 아이들이 있기 마련이고 그러다 보면은 사실은 소수 학생의 행복과 다수 학생들 불행을 낳았다는 얘기죠.

So far, our children have been subject to unnecessary competition because of the college entrance exam-centered education. A handful of students who excel at getting high test scores could succeed and be happy, but the competition itself inevitably leaves students behind. This results in a few happy students and a majority of unhappy ones. (Waehun H, Principal Na, Interview).

Mr. Na continued on to define a Hyukshin school as, “소수 학생이 행복한 것이 아니라 다수 학생들이 행복할 수 있는 학교. 그것이 바로 뭐냐, 그러면. 학생 개개인의 인권을 존중하는 그런 교육이 아니겠는가 하는 거죠” “a school where a majority of students are happy, rather than only a few. It’s an education in which every student’s rights are respected.” (Waehun H, Principal Na, Interview). He then stated that, “근데 하물며 우리 학생이 좀 배움이 느리다고 해 가지고 그 학생을 무시하고 소외시키고 이러면 안 된다는 거죠” “students should not be ignored or alienated from the class because they are not good at learning (Waehun H, Principal Na, Interview).

**Innovation.** Mr. Na believes that innovation is required in order to make Waehun High School a place where all students can develop their talents. He sees this not only as a requirement of the school, but as a vehicle through which students may be prepared for their futures. Mr. Na explained:

우리가 이제 바꿔줘야 되는 부분이 첫째는 뭐냐 그러면은 수업 이에요. 수업이 정말 여기 내 공부를 해서 좋은 대학을 가고자 하는 그런 공부, 소위 고등학교에서 EBS 문제풀이 식 그런 교육이 아니라 정말 우리 아이들이 미래에 살아갈 수 있는 그런 능력. 미래 역량. 창의력이라든가 사고력이라든가 문제 해결 능력. 정보 활용 능력. 서로 소통하는 능력. 서로 같이 협력하는, 제 4 차 산업혁명 시대에서는 굉장히 중요하잖아요, 서로 같이하는 협력. 이제 그런 능력들을 어떻게 하면 성장을 시킬 수 있을 것이냐 하는 것에 수업의 목표를 정하고 수업의 변화를 이끌어가고 있어요.

The first thing to be done was to change the classes. Classes shouldn't be focused on teaching to the CSAT. Rather, it should provide the children with the abilities to help them survive and thrive in the future, such as creativity, cognitive abilities, problem-solving, information processing and communicative abilities that are important in the fourth industrial revolution. We have changed our classes to cultivate such abilities. (Waehun H, Principal Na, Interview).

According to Mr. Na, Waehun High School has changed its teaching methods with the aim of improving future competences of our students rather than simply passing information and knowledge to the students. To achieve this classroom innovation, teachers utilize discussion-based classes to cultivate the children's cognitive abilities, problem-solving abilities, information processing abilities, communication skills and abilities to cooperate with their team members.

Mr. Na puts a great deal of stress on the importance of changing these pre-existing, and often limiting, evaluation systems. He said, “이제 그런 면에 있어서 수업의 방향이나 수업의 방법이나 그렇게 해서 우리가 변화를 이렇게 시켜 나가고 있는데, 수업만 변화가 된다고 이게 되는 게 아니죠. 뭐냐 하면 평가지, 평가” “We are changing our teaching methods and how the classes are handled, but that's not enough. The evaluation system needs to change, too.” (Waehun H, Principal Na, Interview).

Mr. Na also believes that equipping classrooms with resources is an indispensable approach to classroom innovation. He described how, “환경이 갖추어지지 않고 수업을 변화시킨다고 하는 것은 구호에 불과하고 그 다음에 전시적이고 일시적인 것밖에 안 된다, 지속적이고 좀 더 내실 있게 하기 위해서는 환경의 변화가 필수적이다 이런 거예요” – “classroom innovation without providing such an environment is an unrealistic plan and is not sustainable. For innovation to be sustainable, we must bring changes to the environment.” (Waehun H, Principal Na, Interview). For this to be accomplished, the principal explained that the school needs tools such as tablet PCs, class materials or books. He said, “그것이 없으면 아이들 머릿속에 들어 있는 얕박한 지식을 가지고서 서로 이렇게 나누는 것에 불과하다” “without them, the students will have nothing but their shallow knowledge to utilize.” (Waehun H, Principal Na, Interview). Thus, these tools provide a necessary shift towards innovative thinking and the Hyukshin approach to education.

To address this challenge, Mr. Na is currently in the process of equipping Waehun High School’s classrooms with digital devices and education technology. He said:

지금 우리가 음악 교실이라든가 스터디 카페라든가 아니면 도서관이라든가 이런 곳은 지금 전부 다 와이파이 시설이 돼 있고, 아이들이 컴퓨터를 통해서 자료를 찾아볼 수 있는 그런 시설들이 다 갖추어져 있어요. 그런데 그런 필요를 하는 선생님들이 그 교실에서 가서 아이들로 하여금 자료를 찾아보게 하고 또 그 자료를 가지고서 토의, 토론 할 수 있는 그런 정리를 하고 그렇게 해서 서로 발표를 할 수 있는 그런 시설들이 갖추어져 있지요. 그런데 이것이 전 교실에 다 되어야 된다는 거예요.

We have wi-fi installed in the music room, and study cafes and libraries where the students can use computers to search for information. The teachers can tell the students to search for information needed for preparing classroom discussions and to present what they have found. All classrooms need such facilities. (Waehun H, Principal Na, Interview).

Through these changes, Principal Na wants to lead change in his school.

**Student Autonomy.** Waehun High school has facilitated students' autonomy by respecting students' rights and perspectives. Regarding students' autonomy, it was highlighted by Principal Na that teachers should not view students' opinions and perspectives as 'wrong.' Instead, teachers are asked to change their traditional perspectives about students as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge to instead see them as individuals that deserve respect. Mr. Na conveyed this idea to school staff by emphasizing, “우리 학생들의 개개인 인권을 보장한다. 인정을 해 주자는 거예요” “the importance of respecting the human rights of our students.” (Waehun H, Principal Na, Interview). He said that this is not a common practice in Korean schools, and criticized the culture of non-Hyukshin schools where the students are punished if they do something 'wrong' in the eyes of the teacher. Mr. Na provided the following example:

아이들이 가령 예를 들어서, 머리를 기르고 싶어요. 또 머리에 물을 들이고 싶어요. 그것이 전에는 우리는 그거를 불량 학생이라고 했어요. 그런데 불량 학생이냐고요? 그 학생이 나쁜 학생 이에요? 아니라는 거죠. 자기들 몸을 자기는 그렇게 가꾸고 싶을 따름이에요. 그런데 우리는 그거를 비도덕적으로 본 거예요. 바람직하지 않는 가치관을 가지고 있는 학생으로 보는 거예요. 그건 잘못됐다는 거죠.

If students want to keep their hair long or dye their hair, some would consider them to be bad. Are they? Are they bad because they want to do so? I say no. It's their way of expressing themselves. We used to view them as immoral. I think that view is wrong. (Waehun H, Principal Na, Interview).

Mr. Na continued: “사람에게, 상대방에게 피해를 준다든지 아니면 혐오감을 느끼게 한다든지. 이런 것을 벗어나지 않는 범위 내에서의 그런 생활 지도, 학생들 그런 것들을 존중해 주자는 거죠” “It is important to respect our students' lifestyles, unless students try to harm somebody (Waehun H, Principal Na, Interview). He wants to provide students with freedom, while also teaching them about responsibility.

**Democracy.** As Principal, Mr. Na rejects any leadership style that simply coerces teachers. He said, “오늘 교장이 어떤 철학을 가지고서 아 이게 바람직하다. 그래가지고 선생님들한테 우리 이렇게 하자고 하는게 없어요” – there is no instance where he forces teachers to enact (his) ideas on what he thinks is right (Waehun H, Principal Na, Interview). Instead of being an independent leader, Mr. Na encourages the input and collaborative effort of the faculty and staff. For example, when the school becomes aware of problems, Mr. Na believes that faculty should solve them as a collective. Such democratic and collaborative efforts within Waehun High School seem to have been implemented effectively; Principal Na reported that, “그 과정 속에서 이렇게. 그것이 훨씬 더 빠르다니까요” – things get solved quickly through collaborative decision-making (Waehun H, Principal Na, Interview).

Mr. Na believes that a major difference between Hyukshin and non-Hyukshin schools relates to the level of effort required to establish a democratic community. Mr. Na stated that, “우리나라도 민주화가 이루어졌지만, 막상 집단에 들어가면 권위적인 경우들이 아직도 남아있어요” “Even today, there is an authoritarian culture in most schools in Korea in spite of democratization.” (Waehun H, Principal Na, Interview). He believes change is necessary: “그래서 그 권위를 저는 깨뜨려야 된다고 생각을 하는거예요” “I think we must get rid of such a culture.” (Waehun H, Principal Na, Interview).

Mr. Na fears that if Korea refuses to change this culture, it won't be as productive and positive as it could be. In order to further change Korean society, Principal Na believes that school democracy is the best way to start, in order to give students good values. Through transforming its educational system, he believes Korea will find better ways with which to solve its problems.

Regarding Waehun High School's emphasis on school democracy, Mr. Na emphasized that not only have teachers participated in the decision-making, but students are also partaking in shared deliberations about how the school should be organized and run. Thus, democratic decision making is shared amongst all major stakeholders and groups within the school community. For example, Principal Na described what is called 지행오기—*Jihaeng Oh-gi*. This is a forum where school students gather to engage with the question: “우리 혁신학교인데 어떻게 하면은 우리가 보다 더 좋은 학교를 만들 수 있겠느냐?” “How do we, as a Hyukshin school, improve and make our school a better place every day?” (Waehun H, Principal Na, Interview). Through such forums and activities, the students of Waehun High School are able to cultivate their problem-solving skills. Mr. Na explained that this event is planned and run by the students, which places a great deal of confidence and responsibility in the hands of the student body.

Another form of democratic education occurs when teachers and students interact. Mr. Na described how students and staff collaborate:

그러니까 가령 예를 들어서 무슨 행사를 한다 그러면 기획단을 모집을 해요. 그 행사를 하기 위해서 너희들이 참여하고 싶은 학생들이 있으면 모여라. 그래가지고 모여. 50 명씩 모여요. 그래가지고 이거를 우리가 어떻게 운영을 할까. 서로 회의를 해요. 그리고 각기 역할분담을 해요. 그래가지고 그것을 이루는 거예요.

When there are school events to be held, we start to gather volunteer staff members and students. Based on this voluntary participation of students, we'll have a meeting on how we are going to host the event. All students will become responsible for their own tasks. (Waehun H, Principal Na, Interview).

Through such collaboration, Waehun High School is able to work together to benefit the whole community, while simultaneously promoting the democratic and innovative nature of Hyukshin education.

## Teachers

The ethics teacher and head of the administration department, Mr. Choi, is 51 years old and has been working at Waehun High School for nine years. Ms. Choi, a math teacher and head of the curriculum department, is 47 and has been working at the school for five years. They were both interviewed together. Another Waehun staff member, the Korean language teacher, Ms. Han, was interviewed separately. She has 30 years of teaching experiences and is in her second year of teaching in a Hyukshin school.

**Funding.** When asked about what they think of Hyukshin schools, Mr. Choi and Ms. Choi highlighted the freedom the school has to use its substantial budget from SMOE to fund extracurricular activities. Mr. Choi described how, “크게 차이는 안 나지만 일반 고등학교같은 경우에는 거의 이제 8-9 천 정도 지원이 되니까 혁신학교라고해서 더 지원받는 건 한 3-4 천 정도가 되는 거예요” “Hyukshin schools receive approximately 30,000-40,000 USD more than regular high schools.” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi 1, Interview). Oftentimes, as they described, this budget goes towards providing additional or alternative opportunities for the students and school communities to engage in. However, schools within the HSSM may use the additional funding for a variety of expenditures, as the budget for Hyukshin schools has no limitations or conditions. School staff decide what they want to fund. This unique feature of the HSSM further supports the emphases of both innovative practices and school democracy, as staff are able to determine together the most appropriate application of the budget for their school.

Ms. Han originally came to Waehun High School because she had previously been working on a Korean curriculum that was not supported in general schools. The reasons for this lack of support were related both to the applicability of the chosen texts to the CSAT and due to

financial reasons. She explained her transition to Waehun by saying, “자료집으로 묶을 수 있었던 것도 혁신 학교에 지원, 돈이 있었기 때문에... 일반 고등학교 같은 경우에는 좀 이런 걸 자료집으로 묶기가 좀 어렵거든요” “Hyukshin schools have a lot of funding, so I was able to implement my curriculum. In traditional high schools, it's hard to put these things together.” (Waehun H, Teacher Han, Interview). All Waehun High School teachers emphasized the increased instructional autonomy that Hyukshin funding brings.

**Classroom Innovation.** Classroom innovation is a central Hyukshin value that Waehun High School teachers liked. Ms. Choi recognized that, “학생들 하고 소통하면서 수업하는 ...학생들이 좀 더 자기가 그냥 받는 입장이 아니라 참여하면서 지식을 습득해 나갈 수 있는” “Hyukshin teachers strive to create classes where students and teachers communicate more. Students learn more by participating and gaining knowledge.” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi 2, Interview). Mr. Choi stated that these practices are only used in 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades because seniors have to prepare for the CSAT. Due to the limited period within which these practices are used, students who go through two years of student-centered, democratic education are then thrust into traditional test-driven, memorization-based classes towards the end of their high school experience.

Ms. Han described how the first and second grade classes at Hyukshin schools are structured differently than they are in other schools:

여기는 모둠 별 활동 같은 것도 많고 저뿐만 아니라 다른 선생님들도 그러니까 모둠 활동이라든지 영화를 보고 수업을 한다든지 막 그런 여러 가지 어떤 좀 다양한 수업 형태가 이뤄지기 때문에 애들이 좀 조금 더 많이 행복해하면서 학교를 다니는 것 같아요.

There are a lot of group activities here. Not just in my own class--other teachers also like group activities. There is a wide variety of teaching styles. I think the kids are happier when they go to school here. (Waehun H, Teacher Han, Interview).

As a result, Ms. Han said that her classes are now more student-centered than they used to be. Instead of traditional, lecture-style teaching, she explained how students read the selected texts and have a period afterwards where she facilitates the opportunity to have a discussion class with them.

These kinds of student-centered approaches have led her to be more reflective in her teaching practices. She said, “학생들의 입장에서 뭔가 조금 더 친숙하게 생각해 볼 수 있고 고민해 볼 수 있는 뭐 그런 것들을 제재로 선택하기 때문에” “I think about the lesson themes from the perspective of students.” (Waehun H, Teacher Han, Interview). In her own way, Ms. Han is growing as an educator insofar as she moves beyond strict fidelity to the established curriculum and towards more a more dynamic and interactive style of teaching.

***Administrative Innovation.*** Outside of the classroom, innovative practices within Waehun High School can be clearly seen via how teachers and administrators communicate with one another. For example, the school has significantly reduced its number of staff meetings, from once a week to once a month. This was possible, Mr. Choi said, thanks to advances in technology. She said, “요새는 학교마다 메신저를 쓰면서 중요한 내용은 업무를 전달을 하죠” “Important communicationss are now delivered via a messenger system (Waehun H, Teacher Choi 1, Interview). When the educators do meet, Ms. Choi believes that the discourse is more about sharing opinions rather than a transmittal of administrative responsibilities. The whole atmosphere described here by Mr. and Ms. Choi starkly contrasts with traditional meetings in most general schools, where the principal and vice-principal just assign important tasks.

***Student Autonomy in Extracurricular Activities.*** Ms. Choi notes that the increased SMOE funds to support a wide variety of extracurricular activities has given Hyukshin students an advantage in college admissions in previous years. She said:

혁신 학교는 돈이 있었기 때문에 여러 가지 활동들을 많이 할 수 있었어요. 그리고 그게 생기부에 기재가 되니까 혁신 학교 아이들이 대학 가는 데 좀 유리했어요. 왜냐하면 다른 학교보다는 생기부 기재가 여기가 좀 풍성했었거든요

General high schools were not doing many activities back in 2012. At that time, Hyukshin schools were able to implement such activities because we had enough budget. And because participating in such activities were recorded on student records, students from Hyukshin schools had more advantages for entering college (Waehun H, Teacher Choi 2, Interview).

As one example of an extracurricular activity, Ms. Choi provided an example of a club called the “Reading Café.” She described it as a place “방과 후에 아이들이 남아서 책을, 그니까 책을 읽고 모이죠” “where students stay after school to read. Then, they gather and debate topics in the book.” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi 1, Interview). Ms. Choi said that in the past they would invite the author and make programs with the students.

One thing to note is that Hyukshin teachers in this school believe that increased extracurricular activities is not a unique Hyukshin school emphasis anymore. Traditional, non-Hyukshin schools have recently caught up to the HSSM by adopting and offering a comparable number of extracurricular activities to their students. She believes, due to this, that “지금은 제가 봤을 때는 혁신 학교에서 활동하는 그런 것들과 일반 고등학교 활동하는 것들이 별 차이가 없는 상황이에요” “There are no big differences in the types of activities run by general schools and Hyukshin schools now.” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi 2, Interview). This reduced gap can be seen as troublesome to those who saw extracurricular activities as a unique Hyukshin school trait.

Teachers had concerns regarding the benefits of extracurricular activities. Ms. Han had critical perspectives on whether or not a number of the student activities, including their student council, actually benefits students. When asked about how she thinks that the student council helps students, particularly when it comes to finding the meaning and purpose in their lives, she stated that, “그런 것들이 생활 속에서 생각해 볼 수는 있지만 그게 학생 활동에 대다수를 차지하는 것에 대해서는 저는 좀 부정적이에요” “It’s okay for them to think about politics in their daily life, but I’m a little negative about it taking up the majority of time during student activities.” (Waehun H, Teacher Han, Interview). She elaborated on her skepticism of the capability of the student council to be able to make objective decisions by saying:

모든 것들에 대한 나의 입장을 세우기에는, 사실 알아야 될 사실들이 너무 많고 고려해야 될 것들이 너무 많은데, 고등학교 때에는 내가 본 자료. 주어진 자료, 제한적인 자료에서 그거를 판단하고 결정을 내리기 때문에, 저는 좀 그거를 판단하고 결정하기에는 우리가 심사숙고 해야 될 게 굉장히 많기 때문에, 선부르게 판단할 가능성이 좀 많아서 좀 더 진지한 탐색이 있기를 원하는 편이에요. 저는.

There are actually so many facts to know, and so many things to consider when really engaging in politics. But students judge and make decisions on their access to information which is limited. There are actually a lot of factors that should be judged and decided upon, so they are likely to make a hasty decision, which is why I want a more serious approach. (Waehun H, Teacher Han, Interview).

While this might not always be the case, and whether or not students recognize this to be true, there remains the possibility of scaffolded support for Waehun High School’s student council. A lack of supervision by teachers, as can be surmised from Ms. Han’s interview, seemingly results in a questionable learning process. This is an area of growth that Waehun may wish to address in order to ensure that democratic decision-making policies remain as appropriate and efficacious as possible.

**Democracy.** Currently, Waehun High School is following a democratic decision-making protocol, in direct response to a mandate by the SMOE and national curriculum reforms from 1995 and 2015. In other words, the democratic decision-making protocol is supposed to be adhered to not only by Hyukshin schools but also non-Hyukshin schools. However, there is a difference in the level of compliance among Hyukshin and non-Hyukshin schools. Ms. Choi said that, “운영해 나가라고 공문은 이미 2, 3 년 전에 시달이 됐어요... 혁신학교 뿐만 아니라 모든 학교에. 그런데 제가 알고 있기로는 현실적으로 일반계 고등학교가 그렇게 안하고 있어요” “The official mandate SMOE was sent out two or three years ago, not only to the Hyukshin schools but to all schools. But, as far as I know, none of the regular high schools are complying with this.” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi 2, Interview).

Waehun High School ensures that all stakeholder voices are heard when making decisions. Mr. Choi summarized his understanding of the democratic atmosphere in Waehun High School:

구성원들의 의견을 수렴해서 최종 결정이 내려지는 것이죠. 네. 그래서 선생님들이 결정 할 문제라고 하면은 교직원 회의를 통해서 결정을 하는 거고 아니다, 이것은 학생과 학부모와 굉장히 밀접하게 연관되어 있는 부분이다 라고 판단이 되면 학생, 학부모의 의견 수렴도 해요.

When I say democratic, I mean final decisions are made after the opinions of each staff member is collected. If any issue is brought up by a teacher, we discuss in a staff meeting. And if any issue concerns parents and students, we collect their opinions too. (Waehun H, Teacher Choi 1, Interview).

Through the collection of this myriad of opinions, democratic voting processes are made available. Mr. Choi explained:

예를 들어, 지각 처리를 수업 시간에 몇 분 이상을 빠진 아이들을 결과 처리를 할거나 말거나 이런 게 문제로 발생했을 때, 주로 저희가 처리하는 방식은 선생님들 토론하시고 토론을 거쳐서 필요하면 투표해가지고 교장 선생님이 최종결정하는. 그런 식으로. 그러니까 교장 선생님이 결정이 아니라 항상 그전에는 선생님들의 의견을 수렴하는 과정이 있는.

We [students and teachers] discuss whether or not to mark a student late. Then, through a voting process, we submit the final conclusion to the principal. Then, the principal makes the last decision. So, in this way, the decision-making process has shifted from principal-only to staff discussion, staff vote, and then principal judgement. (Waehun H, Teacher Choi 1, Interview).

Overall, while these teacher interviews seem to reflect that Waehun High School's school staff are proponents of this democratic system, they concede that it entails extra work. Ms. Choi noted that, “일반학교에서는 그렇게 하자고 하면 그게 설령 민주적이라고 하더라도 제 상식으로는 선생님들은 좋아하지 않아요. 왜냐하면은 그거 자체를 일이라고 생각을 해요” – “some teachers do not like to do some things, even if they are democratic, because they regard additional undertakings as just another task.” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi 2, Interview). This is a common teacher criticism of Hyukshin schools. It reflects a general problem with innovation insofar as even well-intentioned reforms almost always involve an intensification of teachers' workloads, at least in the short term.

**PLCs.** Teachers reported that there are many types of PLCs in their school that teachers are free to voluntarily participate in. Mr. Choi said, “모든 혁신학교에는 교원 학습 공동체가 요즘에 강조되고 있는 추세예요” “Recently, PLCs are being emphasized in Hyukshin schools.” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi 1, Interview). There are over 10 PLCs at the school, and teachers engage with as many, or as few, as they wish. Ms. Choi, the head of the two math PLCs, explained:

저희 수학과 같은 경우에도 지금 공동체가 이제 두 개가 있거든요. 그러니까 고 3 선생님들이 이제 한 그룹이 돼 가지고 이제 그런 이제 입시 학생들을 위해 준비할 수 있는 그런 문제나 그런 것들을 연구하는 그런 공동체가 있고, 또 1, 2학년 선생님들도 이렇게 한 공동체로 해 가지고 거기에서는 이제 좀 더 애들이 즐겁게 참여할 수 있는 그런 뭐 활동 중심의 이런 수학 이라든지 그런 좀 다양한 것들 이렇게 또 같이 이렇게 그런 지식이나 그런 것들을 공유하는 그런 또 공동체도 있고.

Even in the mathematics department, there are two communities. The teachers of the seniors formed a group with the purpose of studying examinations for the students. Then, the teachers of the first and second grades formed a community to bring fun activities for students to participate in. (Waehun H, Teacher Choi 2, Interview).

She went on to describe the voluntary nature of these PLCs. Ms. Choi stated, “아주 딱딱한 시스템의 개념은 아니고 그냥 우리가 어떤 일이 발생했을 때, 어떤 식으로 일이 처리되겠구나 라는 것을 예상할 수 있게. 공유 되어 있는 문화는 형성이 된 거 같아요” – “It’s not necessarily a rigid system. When something happens, we are able to predict how to manage it together. It’s more of a working culture where we share well.” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi 2, Interview).

Alternatively, Ms. Han went on to detail how not everyone chooses to participate in the PLCs. In Waehun High School, attending PLC meetings is entirely voluntary, and varies from teacher to teacher. She explained her own experience with PLCs:

저는 거기는 참여는 안 했거든요. 왜냐하면 제가 그러기에는 너무 많은 그 친구들을 이해하는 시간들이 너무 많이 필요해 가지고 저는 조금 선뜻 그 친구들을, 그런 모임을 받아들이기가 좀 어렵더라고요. 그래서 저는 ... 그 친구가 제재가 어느 정도 필요하다면 진 제재를 해야 된다는 교육관을 가지고 있거든요. 그래서 끊임없이 그 친구들을 설득하기 위해 가지고 애를 써야 된다는 거에 대해 가지고 저는 좀 반대 입장이라서 저는 거기에 참여는 하지 않았는데 또 많은 선생님들은 거의 뭐 한 열 명 이상의 선생님들은 또 그런 모임을 하고 있어요.

I don't participate there because I need a lot of time to get to know the students. It was hard for me to join those meetings. For me... if a student needs it, I believe that he or she should be disciplined. I'm against the idea that I have to constantly try to persuade the students. So, I don't participate in PLCs, but I know at least ten teachers who do (Waehun H, Teacher Han, Interview).

In a similar vein, Mr. Choi believes that the teachers with work experiences in Hyukshin schools do not always participate in PLCs. Those who do not participate in the PLCs are viewed unfavorably and may be perceived as opponents of Hyukshin education by those who do participate.

Despite not participating in the PLC, Ms. Han mentioned that she participates in a PLN where teachers from different schools gather to collaborate. Ms. Han described how:

저희가 같이 모여 가지고 심포지엄 같은 그런 것들도 하고 그러거든요? 같이 학교 끼리 모여서 교과 발표회같은 것도 하고 같이 경험을 공유하고, 수업 내용을 공유하고 그 다음에 어떤 형태가 더 좋았더라 이런 얘기, 발표도 하고 하거든요?

We get together (with teachers from other schools) and have symposiums. We gather together at the same school and watch presentations on the subjects. We share our experiences. We share the contents of the class. And we talk about what kind of strategies are better. We also do presentations. (Waehun H, Teacher Han, Interview).

Even though not everyone participates in PLCs, it seems like the option of attending a PLN provides an alternative professional development opportunity for teachers who are reluctant to get involved in their own school community. Ms. Han further described the PLN she attends by saying:

혁신 학교 간의 네트워크는 탄탄하게 아마 연결되어 있을 거고요. 저는 중학교, 초등학교는 사실 잘 모르겠어요. 그런데 이제 고등학교 혁신부장님들은 정기적으로 모임을 갖고 뭐 여러 가지 이제 학교 상황도 공유하면서 또 거기에서 고민도 같이 해나가는 걸로 알고 있어요. 그리고 현재 교육청도 진보 교육감이 계시니까 혁신 학교를 특히 이제 고등학교 혁신 학교가 좀 적다 보니까 더 늘려 나가려고 하시는 것 같기는 해요.

Hyukshin school PLNs are strong. I'm not sure how the middle and elementary schools do things. But in case of Hyukshin high schools, the HHDs have regular meetings. They share the current state of each school and discuss how to proceed. Also, since the current superintendent is progressive, I suppose they are trying to increase the number of Hyukshin high schools. (Waehun H, Teacher Han, Interview).

These remarks indicate that there is a strong and active PLN serving Hyukshin high schools in Seoul. Their apparent success may be attributed to the relatively small number of Hyukshin high schools, compared to the larger numbers of middle and elementary schools in the HSSM.

**Community of Care.** Teacher interviews included multiple descriptions of how Waehun High School promotes overall student happiness in its student body. One of the mottos of all Hyukshin schools in Seoul is ‘*a caring community*’ that is focused on creating schools where students may come freely and enjoy a happy life. Teacher Choi believes that they have been able to create this type of caring community because the school, does not really give pressure on academic aspects, but focus on doing various types of activities.

Mr. Choi described the efforts of school staff to fulfill the motto of a caring community by saying that teachers are trying so hard for the students. He elaborated:

형편이 어려운 애들도 많고 ... 학생들이 좀 공부는 못 하지만 학교생활이 너무 재미있는 거예요, 정말로. 애네들이. 내가 사회에 나가면 학교 밖을 벗어나면 정말 내가 너무 힘들고 좀 어렵고 그렇지만 이 학교 안에서 만큼은 되게 애들이 행복하고 기분이 좋은 그런 학교라는 느낌을 되게 많이 받았거든요.

There are many students from poor home environments...Although the students have low academic ability, they are happy in the school. Whenever I go out of the school, I feel discouraged about their difficulties, but at least while they are in school, students are really happy. (Waehun H, Teacher Choi 1, Interview).

While the school staff cannot help beyond the school walls in the ways they wish they could, oftentimes such a community of care has an impact that is existent within students’ experiences for far longer than their difficulties are.

**Challenges.** As in any school, Waehun High School teachers face challenges. The most salient issue concerns attracting new teachers whose teaching philosophies align with the Hyukshin mission. Mr. Choi described how, “1기 시작할 때 이제 초창기 계셨던 혁신과 선생님들이 계시잖아요. 그러니까 그 분들은 이제 5년이 되가지고 이제 떠나시는 거예요.” “In the initial stages, many staff members were enthusiastic about innovation, but after five years, they all left (Waehun H, Teacher Choi 1, Interview).

Additionally, due to these cycles of teachers transferring schools every five years, more teachers who are not interested in innovation replaced ones that were. This led to some resistance about what the innovation department suggested. Not everyone likes an administrative structure that is flat, because it means that decision-making is ultimately imposed upon everyone, including those who would rather focus on teaching and learning in their classes.

Ms. Choi discussed how there are teachers who were assigned to Waehun High School against their will. She said that, “나는 원하지 않는데 왔는데 왜 자꾸 나보고 혁신에 동참하라고 하나?” “Some teachers feel the school [is] forcing them to innovate.” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi 2, Interview). She said that this problem is also amplified because, “사실 절반이 훨씬 넘는 선생님들이 전교조 선생님이 아니고 본인이 원해서 여기 온 선생님들이 아닌 선생님들이 많아요” “More than half of the teachers here are not from the KTU but are required to come here.” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi 2, Interview). Younger teachers without the shared history of struggle may hold a more transactional approach to their jobs as teachers than the older generation.

The other issues cited by teachers are common for many schools in the HSSM. Waehun High School is located in a low socioeconomic neighborhood. Mr. Choi described the area as “경제적인 상황이나 여러 가지 지역적인 거가 열악한 위치...추구하는 그런 수업을 했을 경우에 아이들의 그 대학 진학에 불리하다라는 생각들을 많이 줌 하고 계신 것이죠.” – “a poor economic environment...in which people think that academic abilities are undervalued and may be disadvantageous for entering college.” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi 1, Interview). The low SES level of the community can be viewed as a problem by students who want to receive a high-quality education.

The school also faces challenges that derive from the widespread belief that Hyukshin students do not study hard or are not expected to study as much as students in non-Hyukshin schools. Ms. Han described having difficulty adjusting to Waehun High School students' more relaxed attitudes towards traditional study practices. She was not accustomed to this less stressful and stringent approach, as she originally came from general schools where students were more highly motivated to achieve. This is an issue that persists throughout the HSSM because according to Teacher Han, “자유. 뭐 그 다음에 방만한 교육관? 뭐 이런 것들을 가지고 있을 거라고 학생들이 생각해가지고 공부 자체에 대한 관심이 없는 애들이 여기를 오는 거죠. 그래서 저희가 이제 저희의 교육 자체를 하기가 참 힘든—힘들더라고요” “Students believe they have a relaxed education, so they're not interested in the study itself, so they come here. It's really hard for us to educate them. It's hard!” (Waehun H, Teacher Han, Interview). Some teachers from Waehun High School may struggle having to balance student academic achievement and Hyukshin values such as classroom innovation or student autonomy that may at times hinder student studies.

### **Students**

The two student interviewees were Kang Hwi and Lim Hyunseo. Having attended both a Hyukshin elementary and middle school, the 10th-grade student, Lim, reported, “딱히 큰 느낌은 없어요” “no special feeling” (Waehun H, Student Lim, Interview) about choosing Waehun High School over a general school. The 11th-grade student, Kang, is the current student council president. Waehun High School was not his first choice during the high school selection process. He was assigned there after failing to meet the requirements of a traditional high school in Seocho-dong.

Both students acknowledged a lack of a strong school reputation in the past but say that this has changed. Lim said, “혁신이라는 이름을 갖게 된 이후로 조금 더 인헌고등학교에 이미지나 분위기가 조금 더 좋아진 거 같긴 해요” “After being named a Hyukshin school, I think that the image or the atmosphere has been enhanced somewhat.” (Waehun H, Student Lim, Interview). Kang explained that, “지금 인헌고등학교가 혁신학교로 바뀌면서 이미지가 많이 좋아지기는 했는데, 예전에는 여기 좀 노는 학생들이 많은 그런 학교로 소문이 많이 있었어요” “The image of Waehun High School has improved a lot after being transformed into a Hyukshin school. The school was previously plagued by the rumor that a lot of its students were messing around.” (Waehun H, Student Kang, Interview).

Kang said that it is really only a small minority of students who like to play and have fun, rather than study while at school. Though it certainly was true that student autonomy has increased as a result of Waehun High School embracing Hyukshin principles, this growth in autonomy did not necessarily come at the expense of student motivation, as some may assume. When executed properly, the experience of autonomy promoted a sense of greater motivation in many respects and is able to be successfully balanced by many students in the HSSM.

***Classroom Innovation.*** Waehun High School students say they enjoy the innovative instructional practices in their school. Kang liked his experience in his 10th-grade Korean history class, where students wrote commentaries after watching movies that contained historical facts. The exam format he described was unique: “시험도 100% 서술형으로 해가지고 저희 생각을 쓰고 그 생각이 논리적으로 맞으면 점수를 주는 식으로 시험이 진행이 됐는데” “The test is one hundred percent open response. We wrote out our thoughts and the teacher graded them on their logic (Waehun H, Student Kang, Interview).

Like other students in our 16 schools, Kang liked innovative approaches to academic content: “이런 식으로 한국사를 배워 보니까 좀 더 와 닿았던 것 같아요. 교과서로 글로만 보는 것보다는” “I think learning Korean history this way was more memorable than just studying the textbooks alone.” (Waehun H, Student Kang, Interview). Student Lim mentioned, “수업의 방식이 굉장히 다양하고” “There are a variety of instructional methods that are employed in my classes.” (Waehun H, Student Lim, Interview). On the one hand, they helped her learn from a mix of teaching methods, including textbook studies, debate participation, play and movie watching, as well as musical production. On the other hand, the diversification of lessons, especially those heavily reliant on groupwork, was difficult. She stated, “가끔은 너무 예상치 못하고 너무 힘들 때도 있어요” “At times, groupwork is too unexpected and difficult.” (Waehun H, Student Lim, Interview). She explained, “그 과정에서 잘 참여하지 않는 친구들이나 활동이 어렵다 보면 스트레스를 받게 돼요” “There are students who do not participate well, or the activity is just too challenging.” (Waehun H, Student Lim, Interview).

Despite the high level of classroom innovation, a subpopulation of students seemed to not benefit from them. The efforts to strengthen the students’ participation seemed to be hindered by the students’ inability to complete their assignments. tLim explained, “그 친구한테 계속 그 활동을 하도록 권했고 계속 그 친구가 할 수 있는 최선을 하도록 도왔지만...그 친구 할 수 없는 부분에 대해서는 저와 또 다른 친구가 나눠서 했어야 했어요” “I kept suggesting to my friend to take part in those activities and have tried my best to support her ... but for the parts that she just couldn’t do, I had to reassign the portions with another student for the assignment (Waehun H, Student Lim, Interview).

Beyond the stressors of the classroom, Lim also knows that she needs to compete with students from all types of Korean high schools for college admissions in the future. Therefore, she said, “대학이 원하는 바를 맞춰야 하기도 하고 대학이 원하는 성적을 맞춰야 되는데” – “I need to fit into the conventional university framework and also have the essential grades sought after by colleges.” (Waehun H, Student Lim, Interview). So, attending a Hyukshin school that sets its own requirements for graduates to be creative, cooperative, and versatile requires Lim to adapt to an innovative and a traditional environment simultaneously during her high school studies. This balance between innovative and traditional studies is experienced differently for each Waehun High School student. Lim elaborated that her classmates who transitioned to Waehun High School from general middle schools were less receptive to the school’s group activities. She said, “어쩔 수 없지 학교가 이렇게 하는데 내가 따라갈 수밖에 없다 이런 느낌으로” “The students feel as if they have no choice and that they have to do them because of the school’s requirements.” (Waehun H, Student Lim, Interview).

Nevertheless, not all components of Waehun High School’s innovative curriculum have been negatively received by students. The in-class presentations have stirred up students’ interests, increasing their engagement with class materials. Continually, the students said, whenever a problem appeared in the printed textbook; the teacher would not explain everything to them right away. Instead, the teacher or other, more academically advanced, students would help their classmates who were behind to understand the nature of the given problem, and to suggest strategies for tackling it. The students receiving the help would then go on to present to the class on the mistake in the textbook and they said that this sharpened their skills as critical thinkers.

Kang continued on to explain how he tends to put extra attention into class when his friends are the ones who are presenting. He said, “수업 분위기가 일단은 좋은 것 같아요. 잠을 잘 수가 없어요” “I think the classroom atmosphere is pretty good now. I can’t sleep [in class] anymore.” (Waehun H, Student Kang, Interview). He added, “수업을 선생님이 진행하는 게 아니라 학생이 진행하는 수업이니까, 제가 만약에 자버리면 그 수업을 놓치게 되고” – “Students, rather than teachers, are the propellants of the class discussions. If I fall asleep, I will for sure miss the entire class.” (Waehun H, Student Kang, Interview). Despite these beliefs and Kang’s overall opinions of the classroom approach, he also recognized that there are students who struggle with this collaborative format.

Even with an innovative curriculum, exams seem to have diminished the students’ enthusiasm for school subjects. For example, Kang was keen on his Korean literature class and his teacher but had encountered difficulties in learning the complex grammatical rules in the Korean language. His interests in the discipline were reignited after the teacher adopted a more interactive teaching strategy that left more room for students’ questions. These interests, however, did not last long. Kang had to soon revert back to his old routine of studying for exams, despite the innovative approaches to learning the topics. Kang summarized this by explaining, “선생님이 재미있게 가르쳐 주시면서 제가 질문도 하고 하면서 재미있어졌는데 ... 생각해 보니까 내가 이것을 다 외워야 되는 거고” “The teachers tried to teach in a more fun way and I was active in putting forward questions. But then, I realized I would still need to memorize all of these [grammar rules and applications.]” (Waehun H, Student Kang, Interview). Unfortunately, students still face these academic stressors, no matter how innovative the teachers make their classes.

**Student Autonomy.** Student council is one form of student-led organizations that allow students to have autonomy. Kang, understandably, has a positive view of the student council, which is in charge of hosting a number of school-wide events. He described Students' Day, one such event, as an all-day festival on November 3rd that commemorates the day in which the Gwangju Student Independence Movement courageously protested against the Japanese occupation in 1929. He shared:

작년에는 선생님들의 도움은 거의 받지 않고 학생들끼리 어떻게 하면 우리가 학생의 날을 잘 기릴 수 있을지, 그리고 어떤 행사를 치러야 할지를 생각하고, 그거를 실행을 했어요. 같이 학생이랑 학생회랑 준비위원회랑 같이 했어요.

With only a little assistance from the teachers, the student council and a preparatory committee thought about and carried out a detailed plan for last year's festival including the methods of celebration, and the kinds of events to be included. (Waehun H, Student Kang, Interview).

Compared to other high schools that observe this anniversary simply by having students watch videos and write about their various reflections, Waehun High School dedicated an entire school day to Students' Day. The school did this in an effort to respect the will of the students that wish to learn about why this historical period was so important in fomenting Korean resistance to the Japanese occupation and must be commemorated by students today.

Kang said that low levels of teacher involvement in the beginning stages of any student council initiative is often difficult. He said, “선생님의 개입이 적으니까 어렵긴 한데, 전 아예 아무 것도 없는 상태에서 저희가 시작을 하려면 회의할 때도 어떤 의견이 나와도 그 의견이 실행될 수 있을지를 저희는 모르잖아요” “If we want to start something from scratch without the teachers' input in a meeting, we do not know what kind of opinions can be implemented by the school in the end.” (Waehun H, Student Kang, Interview). The initial stages of planning, then, are difficult for the students.

On the other hand, Kang also explained having the experience of a teacher approving a final report delivered by the members of the student council that was completed without any of the teacher's involvement in the discussion process. Reflecting upon that, Kang declared, “뿌듯함을 느끼는 것 같아요” “I feel proud of that!” (Waehun H, Student Kang, Interview). He added, “선생님이 개입을 안 하시는데 좋다고 하시니까” “This is because the teacher did not intervene but acknowledged [the student councils' initiative.]” (Waehun H, Student Kang, Interview). Notwithstanding, Kang also mentioned that he was upset when the teachers rejected his proposal of renting a mini-Viking ship for a school festival despite his efforts of having conducted thorough research into the safety measures with the rental companies.

***Teacher-Student Relationship.*** The energy of Waehun High School's teachers has spread to many of their students, particularly those with learning difficulties or unsatisfactory grades in class. However, Kang believes that this also had negative consequences for high-achieving students. Kang repeatedly expressed the following sentiment: “공부를 잘하는 학생들은 조금 불편할 수 있다고 생각을 하는 게. 공부를 하는 학생들한테는 선생님들이 그 학생들까지 끌고 가야 하니까 공부를 잘하는 학생들한테 해가 되는” “I have thought that the school is kind of bad for students who are good at studying due to the lack of attention and energy of the teachers dedicate to them.” (Waehun H, Student Kang, Interview). However, Kang also said that he enjoys supporting others to help them understand an idea or concept. He said, “저는 되게 남들한테 가르쳐 주는 것도 좋아하고 애들 뭐 모르는 거 있으면은 알려주고 하는데” “I like to teach my fellow classmates and clarify things they didn't master.” (Waehun H, Student Kang, Interview). He said, “그런 애들이 점수를 점점 올라가고 애들이 막 수업도 하나도 안 듣고 하다가 그래도 듣는-- 듣고 못 알아들어도 자지는 않는 약간 이런 식으로

계속 있으니까” “As soon as they get higher scores, they will be listening to classes regardless of their comprehension. Even if they didn’t understand a class, they wouldn’t fall asleep.” (Waehun H, Student Kang, Interview). Some students who had not previously studied well, changed once they realized that the efforts their teachers have been putting into helping them. He said that, “이 선생님들이 애들 하나하나 깨우고, 화내시지 않고 이렇게 말을 하는 것을 보면서 선생님한테 약간 미안함 그런 게 있으니까 수업을 같이 듣는 게” “Watching the teachers strive to awaken the students who don’t study and talk to them without being angry at them, they started to listen to classes because they felt a bit sorry for the teachers (Waehun H, Student Kang, Interview).

Kang offered another example about how the teachers motivated their students to keep up with their learning. He said, “사실 제가 수학을 엄청 못 해요. 근데 이번에 1 학기 때 제가 수학을 되게 못했-- 1 학기 때까지 수학을 못했다가” “I am really bad at math. I couldn’t do math at all throughout the first semester [of 11th grade.]” (Waehun H, Student Kang, Interview). During his second semester, Kang’s math teacher happened to be assigned as the teacher supervisor and counselor to the student council that he was in charge of. The math teacher reminded Kang to continue his studies during his preparation for the school festivals. Subsequently, Kang’s exam scores on all other subjects had fallen but the special attention to his math scores allowed them to improve.

Kang ultimately believes that the school is unsuitable for students who excel in academics and do well on exams. He said, “만약에 공부를 매우 잘하고 상위권 학생이라면 오라고 하고 싶지는 않고. 왜냐하면 여기는 가장 잘하는 학생을 띄워주는 학교가 아니라 모두가 아주 잘하는 학교로 만들어주고 싶은 학교라서” “I wouldn’t recommend top students

to come study here because this is not a school that makes the best students stand out. It helps all of its students to become the best version of themselves.” (Waehun H, Student Kang, Interview).

**Meaning and Purpose.** Waehun High School students find meaning and purpose in exercising their own judgment. Lim defined her purpose in life as, “실제 시간적이든 아니면 정신적이든 무언가에 쫓기지 않고 그냥 내 속도에 맞춰서 하는 거” “not to be pressured mentally or by time but simply to do things at my own pace,; (Waehun H, Student Lim, Interview). IKang considered his life purpose as, “저는 제가 하고 싶은 걸 하는 게 제일 중요하다고 생각해요” “oing what I want to.” (Waehun H, Student Kang, Interview). Lim described how, until recently, her education revolved around competing with other students, which required her to keep track of others’ progress and the certain time limits imposed on her. She believes that the overall pressure to achieve more in less time has deprived her of the opportunity to demonstrate all her skills and abilities. Lim expanded by explaining that, “그 속도에 신경 쓸 때마다 오히려 제가 할 수 있는 능력보다 훨씬 낮은 정도밖에 보여줄 수 없다는 걸 느끼게 됐고 ... 그래서 좀 더 여유로운 것이 오히려 나한테 더 좋은 선택이지 않을까” “Whenever I care about speed, I feel like I can showcase much less than what I am capable of ... so I thought being freer [than now] would be a better choice for me.” (Waehun H, Student Lim, Interview).

For Kang, the autonomy he has experienced within Waehun High School, as reflected through his prior engagements with the student council, contributes to his dream of being in politics and the mass media once he enters society. He hopes to “궁극적인 거 같은 경우는 나라를 바꾸고 싶고요” “change the country eventually.” (Waehun H, Student Kang, Interview). He attributed such motives to his studies at Waehun High School:

국어 시간과 정치와 법 시간에 교과서 외에 다른 거를 배우는 경우가 있잖아요. 자료 같은 게 필요하니까. 그때 사회적인 것들을 선생님이 자료를 많이 뽑아 주시고, 그 자료를 읽고 그거에 대해서 어떻게 생각하는지를 발표를 하고 비평을 많이 해요.

Students learn about social issues other than what are in the textbooks related to the classes of Korean literature, politics, and law. The teacher pulls out a lot of materials on the social issue stuff, announces what they think about it, and criticizes them a lot. Retrospectively, I think that has impacted me. I thought about why these issues were problematic and how I could fix them (Waehun H, Student Kang, Interview).

In other words, through vocalizing their political viewpoints, the teachers at Waehun High School have influenced their students, including Kang, to think critically of Korea's current and historical events and motivated them to make changes for their future.

### **Parents**

The two parents interviewed sent their children to Waehun High School in hopes that they would pursue their individual interests, rather than only focusing on studying for college admission. Ms. Cha, the 11<sup>th</sup>-grade parent representative, described a Hyukshin School as “아이들이 자기의 생각과 자기들의 주장과 이런 꿈 진로 같은 거를 자유롭게 펼칠 수 있는 그거를 좀 이렇게 다듬어 갈 수 있는 학교...입시 위주가 아닌” “a school where children can freely unfold and refine their opinions, arguments, dreams, and careers ... that does not focus only on college entry.” (Waehun H, Parent Cha, Interview). Ms. Suh, the 12<sup>th</sup>-grade parent representative, said that attending a Hyukshin School lets students build wider perspectives and find their potential:

외국은 대학교 가서 정말 진짜 공부를 하잖아요, 깊은 공부를. 그런데 우리나라는 너무 초등학교 때부터 고등학교까지 너무 힘들게 아이들을 공부를 시키잖아요. 이 과정들은 정말 아이들이 공부에 흥미를 갖게끔 만 해 주는 과정이고 진짜 공부는 대학 가서 ... 초중고 때는 정말 내가 좋아하는 게 뭔지 이런 꿈을 펼칠 수 있고 내가 흥미로운 걸 찾을 수 있는 그 과정일 뿐이고 대학교에 가서 내가 그렇게 좋아하는 걸 진짜 다양하고 깊게 공부했으면.

In foreign countries, the students will study when they get to college. They receive deep learning. But in Korea, we make students study too much from elementary to high school. This stage should aim for them to get interested in studying, so that they really study in college. Elementary, middle, and high schools should be stages for them to follow what they like and what they dream of, and for them to find what interests them. Then, when they go to college, they should learn in-depth about what they like (Wachun H, Parent Suh, Interview).

Ms. Suh appreciated the Hyukshin educational approach that allow students to enjoy the learning process and find their true meaning and purpose in life. Ms. Suh further stated, “혁신고는 그래도 그렇게 딱딱하게 너무 공부 공부라기보다는 어떤 폭넓게 아이들한테 시야를 넓혀주고 아이들한테 안에 있는 걸 막 끄집어내 주고 자기 재능을 찾게 해 주는 조금 여유가 있어 보이는 것 같아요” “Hyukshin schools are less rigid than just studying, and it is more relaxing and it widens children’s perspectives and pulls out children’s inner potential to let them find their talents.” (Wachun H, Parent Suh, Interview).

**Classroom Innovation.** Both parents indicated that their children have become more expressive after they learned how to engage in class discussions thanks to the innovative measures of their teachers. Ms. Cha said that, because her child was taught to speak up, he improved his speaking skills, which has allowed him to freely formulate unique ideas. Moreover, Ms. Suh described that her child has grown as an active learner who is now motivated to study independently. She also added that her child prepares everything on his own, under the guidance of teachers’ who support him in his preparation for college. Ms. Cha shared how her child had changed by saying:

처음에는 약간 성격이 소극적이예요 내성적이고. 그런데 뭔가 선생님 토론을 하고 하는데 자기 생각을 자꾸 끄집어내 주시니까 그래서 너무 좋다고 엄마 내가 내 생각을-- 저하고도 얘기할 때도 제가 생각하지 못한 얘기들을 이렇게 저한테 하더라고요. ... 얘기들을 저한테 하는 걸 보면서 그래 네가 그렇게 네 생각대로 꽤 나올 수 있었다는 것만으로도 참 좋다 저는 그렇게 생각을 해요.

He used to be shy and introverted, but now he can share his thoughts with the teachers. [My child] really liked that. Sometimes when he talks to me, he says something that I never had thought of. I think that it is really good that he can say what is on his mind (Waehun H, Parent Cha, Interview).

Ms. Cha felt that her child was clearly benefiting from the autonomy he was afforded in his classes. She liked that he is encouraged to share his thoughts and improve his speaking skills.

Ms. Suh also felt that the student-centered learning environment was beneficial for her child to develop into an active learner. She described, “학교 수업 자체에 소그룹 활동이나 앞에 나와서 수업 방식이 정말 딱딱하게 책상에 앉아서만 주입식으로 공부하는 게 아니라 스스로 학습 자료를 준비해서 ppt 같은 것도 하고 발표하고 이런 수업들이 되게 많아요” – that the class is done in small groups, rather than just stiffly sitting at desks to study passively, where students prepare their own study materials, such as [PowerPoint slides] to conduct presentations (Waehun H, Parent Suh, Interview). Ms. Suh also shared that it seemed that her child was motivated and confident in his abilities. Ms. Suh said:

저희 애는 중학교 때는 학습 능력이 막 선두는 아니었어요. 그냥 이렇게 중상 정도였는데 여기 혁신고를 오면서 오히려 그런 자유로운 분위기 속에서 본인이 스스로 '아, 내가 여기서 조금만 더 노력하면 공부를 잘 할 수 있겠구나' ... 느낀 거 같아요. 그래서 저희 애가 오히려 여기 와서 공부를 더 열심히 했어요. 그래서 지금 완전히 상위권에 들게 됐거든요. 그래서 저는 일단은 만족해요.

My child was not the top of the class in middle school. He was about above average. However, after coming to the Hyukshin school here, under the more liberating atmosphere, I think that he felt that... ‘Ah, if I try a little bit more here, I could do better. My child actually studied more after he came here. So, now, he is on the top level. So, I am satisfied with that (Waehun H, Parent Suh, Interview).

Due to this student-centered approach and the greater notion of classroom innovation evident in Waehun High School, Ms. Suh’s child was able to become an avid learner. He has seemingly understood that at Waehun High School, he could be a high academic achiever through his proactive effort to learn.

Subsequently, Ms. Suh's child prepared, relatively autonomously, for the college admissions process. This is unlike many other students in Korea, who go to *hagwons* for support. According to Ms. Suh, “학교는 기본적인 교육들을 해 준다고 하면 입시 정보는 학원들이 더 풍부하다는 약간 그런” “In Korea, hagwons have more voluminous information in terms of college entry than schools.” (Waehun H, Parent Suh, Interview). However, Ms. Suh's child prepared on his own. She stated, “선생님들한테 쫓아다니면서 질문하고 선생님들하고 너무 눈물, 콧물 흘려가면서 상담해 가고” “My son tracked teachers down and asked them many questions, having meetings with them in tears.” (Waehun H, Parent Suh, Interview). Ms. Suh expressed feeling proud of her son because he proactively leading his college entry preparation. It seemed through Ms. Suh's explanations that the motivation he gained as an active learner at the school allowed him to take self-initiative in taking this process.

***Student Autonomy: Extracurricular Activities.*** Waehun High School provided opportunities for students to find a sense of self through extracurricular activities. Ms. Cha described that her child decided to come to Waehun High School because he wanted to find himself through Hyukshin education, an education that is not solely focused on academics. She believed, “죽어라고 공부하는 것 보다는 그래도 자기가 하고 싶은 것을 좀 더 탐색할 수 있는 게 좋지 않겠냐 싶은 생각이 들어서” – rather than having her child study to death, it would be good to provide opportunities for her child to explore what he is interested in (Waehun H, Parent Cha, Interview). Believing that a Hyukshin School allows students to practice self-enrichment, Ms. Suh described how Waehun High School provides an atmosphere in which teachers respect students' diverse talents, particularly noting that not all talents are related to academics. She explained that students can practice what they want to do through diverse extracurriculars.

She said:

저희가 미술 거점 학교이기도 하고 또 동아리도 되게 다양하게 있고 또 선생들이 각자의 재능이 있다 그러면 그걸 또 인정해 주는 거 같고 그러니까 이제 공부할 애들은 공부를 하고 또 정말 미술에 재능이 있는 애들은 미술을 하고 이런 식으로 어떤 일반고나 인문계열 이런, 옛날엔 인문계열 학교, 직업학교 이런 분류가 있었잖아요. 근데 지금 이런 공부하는 학교에서는 이렇게 조금 자유롭게 뭔가 선택할 수 있게끔 ... 농구도 있고 미술도 있고 그렇다고 또 본인이 다른 걸, 예를 들어, 프로그래머가 꿈이다. 그럼 또 인정해주고 이런 아이들의 개개인의 그런 능력을 인정해주시는 선생님들 분위기에요.

Because we are also an arts focused school and because there are diverse extracurricular activities, if a student has a gift, teachers acknowledge that. Therefore, students who want to study, study. And students who have talent in art, do art. In general, high schools, there used to be the humanities school, or the vocational school. But here, you can freely choose. ... Here, there is basketball club, art club, and if, for example, you dream of becoming a pro-gamer, they acknowledge you. Teachers concede individual students' talents. It is like that here (Wahun H, Parent Suh, Interview).

Ms. Suh saw the extracurricular activities as a chance for students to discover what they want to do, in an environment where their diverse talents are acknowledged.

Ms. Cha and Ms. Suh also shared the positive influence their children had from getting involved in a musical contest in their school. Ms. Cha described that her child learned how to cooperate with peers and felt happy, whereas Ms. Suh described that her child learned how to be confident performing in front of crowds. Ms. Cha gave an example of how her child learned how to get along with others as he worked with his peers to prepare for the musical contest. She said that:

저희 아이 성향상 조금 자기를 좀 중요시하는 아이인데 ... 그런 거를 꺾어 보면 학교에서 그런 프로그램들을 해보고 그래서 많이 그런 부분이 변했다고 생각해요. 뮤지컬 대회같은 것도 하면서 친구들끼리도 한 아이가 좀 특이한 행동을 했을 때 엄마 개가 그렇게 특이한 행동을 했어 뭐 이렇게 얘기를 하면서 ... 우리가 좀 화가 났지만 또 그 아이가 아무래도 이해할 수 있어서 뭐 이런 얘기들을 하는 거 보면 그런 게 없었으면 정말 궁금하고 이렇게 했으면 그런데 생겼을까 그런 생각도 들어요.

My child previously tended to only care about himself, but when he experienced such programs at school, I feel that he changed a lot. As he got involved in the musical contest, when a friend has done something weird, he said, ‘Mom, he did something weird like this. ... Although we were angry, we could also understand why he did that.’ So, whenever he says such things, I wonder if he would have changed positively without such activities (Waehun H, Parent Cha, Interview).

From getting engaged in the musical contest, Ms. Cha’s child could improve his personality. His selfish tendency changed to willingness to work with others. Ms. Cha felt that her child would not have changed as positively if he went to another school. Ms. Cha also added that her child was able to experience pride in his school:

그거를 하면서 너무 즐거워했고 본인이 이제 음악 감독을 하면서 그런 것들을 하나하나 조율해 가고 음악을 친구들과하고 조율해 가고 또 바꿔 가고 하면서 그게 너무 좋았다고 하면서 음악 활동 친구들과 사이에 갈등도 있지만 그것들을 또 해결해 나가는 부분에서 너무 좋았다고 라고 얘기하면서 "엄마 나 우리 학교에 대한 자부심이 생겼어." 이렇게 얘기를 하더라고요.

He really enjoyed doing [the musical contest], and as a music director, he loved to do music tuning and changed the music with his friends. Although there was a conflict among friends, he liked the part where he had to overcome and solve it through. He said, ‘Mom, I became proud of my school’ (Waehun H, Parent Cha, Interview).

Ms. Cha’s child felt happy to develop his interest in music with his peers through the musical.

Ms. Suh also explained how she noticed gains in her child’s confidence by recognizing an increased comfort in speaking in front of a crowd, thanks to the musical experience. She said, “저희 아이가 되게 쑥스러움 많고 대중 앞에서 서는 걸 잘 못 하던 애가 1학년 때 뮤지컬 공연을 같이하고 나서 그 뒤로 노래시키거나 어디서 뭐가 막 시키면 선뜻 전교생 있는 데서 막 나가고 대중 앞에 서는 걸 이제는 두려워하지 않게 됐고” “My child used to be very shy and could not stand in front of many people. However, after doing the musical in the first grade, when people ask to sing or do something, he is not hesitant nor afraid to go in front of the crowd.” (Waehun H, Parent Suh, Interview).

**Volunteer Work.** Ms. Cha shared that Waehun High School fostered social activism in her child through voluntary service programs. As her child learned how to express himself through speech, his experiences in service led to meaningful connections; he became able to identify various social issues in his surrounding and engage with them. Ms. Cha shared that her child felt the need protect homeless people, and that he spoke against child abuse.

Ms. Cha shared how her son began to look after people around him and experience increased levels of compassion after her son participated in a voluntary work that provides meals to homeless people at Seoul Station. He wished, “이런 약자들을 사회에서 좀 더 보살펴 주는 그런 제도가 더 있었으면 좋겠어” “That there were more institutions in the society that take care of such weak people.” (Waehun H, Parent Cha, Interview). He also asserted, “그분들도 인격이 있는데” “The homeless people also have human rights.” (Waehun H, Parent Cha, Interview).

**Critical Perspectives.** Although the interviewed parents shared a diverse number of positive changes their children exhibited, they also described some perceived rooms for improvement. Ms. Cha described that, since Hyukshin pedagogy differs so much from curriculum at general schools, students who came from non-Hyukshin schools take a longer time to adjust to the learning environment. Also, Ms. Suh was concerned that the school atmosphere may be too loose and gives too much freedom to students who are not yet ready to take on the responsibility that it entails.

Coming from a non-Hyukshin middle school, Ms. Cha’s child had a difficult time adapting to the Hyukshin curriculum, which is not teacher-centered nor is it exam-driven. She accounted how her son had difficulty transitioning to student-centered lessons by saying, “선생님이 정말 적어 주신 대로 받아 적고 이렇게 했는데 뭔가 자꾸 자기 얘기를 해야 되고

뭔가 자꾸 자기 생각을 발표를 해야 되고 하니까 그게 정리가 안 되니까 좀 많이 힘들고” –  
“My son just used to write down what the teacher wrote on the board. But now, because he had to continually talk about himself and share his thoughts, he found it frustrating that the thoughts were not organized.” (Wachun H, Parent Cha, Interview).

Her child also had difficulty adapting to the amount of autonomy students were afforded in classes. She said, “자유로운 환경이 너무 그러니까 ‘수업 시간에 왜 자꾸 토론만 해. 공부를 엄마 공부를 안 해.’ 저희 아이가 처음에 그러더라고요. ‘엄마 진도를 안 나가. 도대체 뭘 어떻게 하라는 거야?’ 이렇게 얘기를 하더라고요. 엄마 이게 혁신고야?”  
“Because the environment was too free, he was like, ‘Why are we only discussing in class? They are not doing any studying.’ He said, ‘Mom, they are not making any progress. What do they want me to do?’ ... ‘Is this what a Hyukshin School is?’” (Wachun H, Parent Cha, Interview).  
The HSSM can tolerate a certain number of critical perspectives like this, but if too many students agree with her son, larger transformations likely are called for.

Ms. Suh believed, somewhat reluctantly, that too much freedom in the learning environment is a negative aspect of the school’s functioning. Although her child put in a great deal of effort to do better in academics, Ms. Suh was concerned that, for other students, too loose of an atmosphere may divert them to concentrate on other areas, that are not academic. The freedoms that students are given may lead them to become easily distracted or otherwise off task. She explained:

걱정되는 면은 무엇이었나 하면 너무 아이들한테 스스로 선택하게끔 이렇게 하다 보니까 어떻게 보면 공부를 너무 소홀히 하는 친구들도 있긴 있어요. 왜냐면 ‘공부 별로 중요하지 않아, 차라리 내가 좋아하는 걸 찾으면 돼, 나는 이것 좋아하지만 이것만 하면 돼’ 해서 너무 강압적으로 공부시키는 분위기는 아니어서 또 어떻게 보면 학습 분위기나 이제 또 아이들의 질서 면이나 이런 게 조금은 자유로운 것도 있어요.

What I worry about is that because students freely select, there are some children who become less inclined to study. Because they feel that ‘Studying is not that important. I just have to find what I like. I like this, so doing only this is enough,’ Because it is not an environment that pushes students to study, the study atmosphere or the orderly manners of children are a bit too loose (Waehun H, Parent Suh, Interview).

Ms. Suh was worried that the Hyukshin atmosphere may encourage students to find talents that are not related to traditional academics and are not or will not be helpful.

Ms. Suh also expressed her concern that Waehun High School students often accept their autonomy without acknowledging the responsibility they need to take along with it. She felt that, “애들이 고 2 정도만 되면 벌써 어른이 다 된 것처럼 행동하는 게 너무 자유분방한 것도 조금은-- 아직은 아이들한테 책임 의식은 별로 없잖아요” “Even from the second year in school, students already behave as if they are adults. The children are still yet to have the sense of responsibility.” (Waehun H, Parent Suh, Interview). Ms. Suh worried that students are acting freely, but not learning a real sense of responsibility.

On the other hand, Ms. Cha felt that students’ true freedom remains limited at the school. She questions whether Waehun High School is providing students with sufficient amounts of freedom in planning their school events or in choosing what they study. Feeling that there is not much authority for students yet, Ms. Cha indicated that students who were engaged in a humanities event were just a nominal planning team because they had no choice but to follow what the teachers had planned for them. She said that “뭔가를 결정할 때, 아직까지는 아이들이 이걸 주도 해서 하는 게 아니라 선생님들이 짜준 틀 안에서 아이들이 거기서 이렇게 뭔가 선택하는 게 있는 거 같아요” “When decisions are made, it seems that students cannot lead the process, but choose one of the options that teachers predetermined (Waehun H, Parent Cha, Interview).

She elaborated on this point:

인문학당도 강사가 다 정해지고 선생님들이 다 정해 주시고 그러니까 선생님들이 다 정해준 강사 외 애네들이 하는 건 아이들이 기획단이라고 하지만 그냥 간식 준비하고 이렇게 아이들 오는지 체크하고 자기도 회의는 하지만 그 정해진 주주 내에서 자기들이 뭔가를 하니까 제가 봐서는 그건 아이들 의견이 아니거든요.

Because the humanities school club guest speakers are decided by the teachers, although the students are called the planning team, what they do is just preparing snacks, and checking students' attendance. Although they often have meetings, if feel they are only doing things within the fixed framework, this is not children's opinions (Waehun H, Parent Cha, Interview).

Ms. Cha said that because students were just working within the framework teachers have already set, there was no chance for them to make their own decisions and the freedom that they experienced was not true student autonomy.

## **Discussion**

Stakeholders at Waehun High School exemplify how each Hyukshin school must forge its own identity. They have largely been able to construct their own unique identities through an unwavering reliance on school innovation over many years. This innovation has taken on various forms. Most notably, innovation has been evident in classroom and administrative changes, the promotion of student autonomy, and the infusion of democratic practices into every aspect of the school. Ultimately, these emphases are indeed evident within Waehun High School.

***Classroom/Administrative Innovation.*** The principal, with the help from passionate teachers, has successfully replaced traditional top-down leadership with a system marked by collaboration and respect. Innovations at the administrative level can be seen in the newfound collaborative practices amongst faculty and the classroom innovations that have been realized through the introduction of student-centered practices.

Teachers were able to collectively replace the largely ineffective open-class professional development system with more than 10 discipline-specific PLCs. By doing so, they have successfully created a new faculty identity marked by collaboration and support. Furthermore, the interviews indicate that Waehun High School benefits from participation in PLNs. While PLNs are either mentioned ambiguously or not at all in Hyukshin many of our middle school interviews, they have a straightforward organization and purpose at the high school level. These robust PLNs provide a valuable platform for school educators to collaborate with others from different HSSM schools.

Teachers have been afforded the freedom to build their own unique curriculums and implement the feedback that they receive from their PLCs and PLNs in their classrooms. This has generally resulted in the adoption of student-centered pedagogy by the teachers. Their lessons are often discussion-based or project-centered. Although this style can seem unorganized to students and parents at times, it is a change of pace from the traditional, authoritarian, test-driven curriculum, and teacher-fronted instruction found in more traditional schools.

***Student Autonomy.*** The principal is an avid proponent of respecting student perspectives. On the surface level, this can be seen in school's dress code and the acceptance of many different hair styles. Students are able to experiment with their ideas autonomously and put them into practice during student-led extracurricular activities and student-centered classroom practices. During student extracurricular activities, such as the student council or the reading club, students are given the freedom to create their own learning environments without the intervention of teachers. In the classroom, teachers have drawn upon a student-centered pedagogy that emphasizes inclusiveness and student voice in an effort to promote happiness by allowing students to explore course materials at their own pace and according to their own interests.

However, it also seemed that students' freedom of choice was limited. First, the parents interviewed reported that students' freedom in choosing what they study is limited at Waehun High School. That is, students in this school are not allowed to make their own choices in choosing subjects based on their interests, but rather must follow a framework provided to them by the school faculty. Second, students reported in their interviews that teachers often provided the student council with only a few options for planning events, and that the students needed to prepare accordingly. They felt frustrated being confined to these pre-selected choices. It seems that students do not have true autonomy in all respects possible in this school.

***Democracy.*** School leaders have recognized the importance of democracy in education and have infused it in every sector of the school. For example, teachers, students, and parents are now involved in various decision-making processes in the school. Students are able to collaborate and participate in democratic decision-making processes during their autonomous extracurricular activities. These democratic practices give students a sense of ownership of the school and ideally instill life-long democratic values. They also benefit from democratically run in-class discussions where each student's voice is valued.

Teachers participate in their own collaborative and democratic communities, via their PLCs. A PLC could change an entire school culture, although they also can be taken over by a school's or district's administrative leader (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). It seems as though teachers at Waehun High School have been able to effectively change their school culture from a KTU-led, open-class system to a more democratic and participatory one.

***Remaining Issues.*** In the name of classroom innovation, the school leader and the teachers have introduced student-led group-activities, discussion-based classes, and different evaluation methods in order for students to be more engaged in the learning process and to

develop the more complex cognitive abilities necessary in the fourth industrial revolution era. Abilities such as communication skills, information-processing, and problem-solving are expanded upon beyond the limited cognitive skills traditionally required of students for the standardized college entrance exam. The interviewed students admit that the pedagogical changes provide an enjoyable educational experience when innovative teaching methods enable more connections between students and the curriculum.

However, the findings concerning classroom innovation, especially from the parents and students, showed that students in Waehun High School frequently undergo difficulties getting used to the new student-centered pedagogies. This seems to be particularly true for students who are enrolled in Waehun High School after attending a traditional middle school. Unfortunately, this sometimes results in experiences where they fail to participate in class, which, in turn, undermines the whole notion of group activities among students. Consequently, the students who graduated from non-Hyukshin middle schools have some negative views on the student-centered pedagogies, such as group activities. They feel that they are forced to adapt to this particular style of learning.

These maladaptive and negative reactions of students to the new pedagogical changes clearly show that, whereas teachers in this school have brought about some *technical* changes regarding classroom innovation, they are not successful in bringing about meaningful changes in students' educational experiences at deeper levels, such as within the students' norms and values. This indicates that to bring *real* innovation into the classroom, the school should be aware that all students are not automatically ready to be engaged in a new way of education in terms of their ability or attitude.

In particular, it is very important to address the lack of relevant experience many teachers have had regarding the practical challenges of switching to student-centered education. Most students have been driven through a test-driven education system and, accordingly, come to have students' disposition and value system which best function for the test-driven education system and work against what Hyukshin school pursues. That is, unless such disposition and value system, are addressed, it would be more difficult for classroom innovation to be fully achieved in terms of students' experiences. This is because students would not faithfully accept the new pedagogical changes but would instead choose to stick to the traditional way of preparation for the college entrance exam.

Overall, despite these remaining hurdles to overcome, the faculty at Waehun High School are changing the nature of educational available to students in the HSSM. School leaders have generally been receptive to the democratic and innovative pillars of the Hyukshin movement and have responded accordingly. They changed the school culture, step-by-step, by encouraging teacher collaboration, promoting student autonomy both in and out of the classroom, and involving all school stakeholders in important decision-making processes.

## **Conclusion**

As one of the few Hyukshin high schools in Seoul, Waehun High School serves as a valuable example of what Korean education can look like in the future. Through an emphasis on innovation in every aspect of the school, its staff were able to survive the tumultuous transition from traditional top-down, teacher-fronted education to a democratically run, student-centered style of education, and ultimately thrive. While successfully evolving from a general school into a Hyukshin school that was led by KTU teachers, this transition has been hindered by the five-year teacher rotation policy. Although the original drivers of change are no longer working with

Waehun High School at this point, the spirit of innovation persists within the dedicated teachers and school leaders who emphasize and embody the Hyukshin principles of democracy.

Attacking problems through innovation, the staff and community members of Waehun High School make decisions democratically and give students the autonomy they need to become democratic citizens. They have been successful in adopting and implementing student-centered practices by innovating their professional development opportunities; they developed a robust array of PLCs and a close-knit PLN. When important decisions need to be made, school leaders have been able to relinquish much of the power from their once authoritarian position and distribute it evenly amongst the teachers. Furthermore, students are given meaningful opportunities to express their voices through student-centered pedagogy and the school's well-funded extracurricular activities.

All in all, stakeholders at Waehun High School can be as involved, or uninvolved, in the school's democratic practices as much as they please. Student clubs, the teacher's PLCs, and parent-collaboration are all voluntary. This micro-culture marked by freedom of choice has promoted the Hyukshin mission of democratic education. An emphasis on innovation, autonomy, and democracy has allowed this school to take its place as a driver of educational change in Seoul.

## Moonggok Middle School

*For Moonggok Middle School, student and parent interviews were not conducted, and the case study is based on school leader and teacher perspectives.*

### Introduction

***School Demographics.*** Moonggok Middle School was established in 2011 as one of the first 23 Hyukshin schools in Seoul. There are a total of 659 students and 53 teachers at this public school. It is what is called a “welfare school,” which means that the school is allocated more funding in order to provide increased numbers of educational programs (e.g., mentorship from college students, counseling, study groups) for students from low-income families.

The school is located in the district of Seongbuk-gu, a neighborhood that has recently been going through rapid economic development. This has created a socioeconomic gap amongst many of the students. Families who have been living in Seongbuk-gu for longer periods of time have historically faced a lower socioeconomic status, where both parents generally are not at home due to work, and grandparents become the *de facto* guardians of the students. In contrast, families who are moving into the newly developed neighborhoods of this area are of a higher socioeconomic status. The students at Moonggok Middle School come from both high and low income families, which creates some challenges in terms of equity.

Compared to other middle schools in the surrounding area, Moonggok Middle School students seem to slightly fall behind academically, though not by much. There seems to be a fluctuation in academic performance among each grade and between the different homerooms. As of 2019, students’ satisfaction level of the school was lower than expected, and the school has been attempting to understand the causes behind the low satisfaction scores.

*History of the School.* Moonggok Middle School, since the beginning of its development, has had a strong bottom-up culture driven by its innovative teachers. After Hyukshin schools were first established within the Gyeonggi Province in 2009-2010, a small group of approximately ten likeminded teachers in Seoul regularly gathered to discuss how to best develop Hyukshin schools in the city. Collectively, the teachers read books on educational change and exchanged ideas. They discussed how to best administer and develop the Hyukshin schools' curriculum.

Once it was announced that Moonggok Middle School would be one of the first Hyukshin schools in Seoul, around 70% - 80% of the teachers from this aforementioned group decided to transfer to Moonggok Middle School in order to fully realize the plans and dreams they had long been discussing. Principal Ryu was one of the founding teachers who were a part of this group. According to the principal, “정말 선생님들이 같이 이렇게 우리가 함께 one team 으로 움직이면 할 수 있구나 그런 희망이죠,” “Moonggok Middle School symbolizes the hope that if teachers work as one team, they can make changes.” (Moonggok M, Principal Ryu, Interview).

The bottom-up culture found within Moonggok Middle School has remained strong amongst teachers, although it has slightly diminished over the last eight years due to some of their most experienced and dedicated teachers transferring out of the school. The school is now in the midst of generational change as its pioneer generation wraps up careers and enters into retirement. One important question, that is yet to be determined, centers around the sustainability of the school's Hyukshin identity. Will a rising generation uphold the school's place in the HSSM?

## **School Emphases**

The emphases of Moonggok Middle School that are most clear from the administrator and teacher interviews are:

- a) their school motto;
- b) proactive living and learning; and
- c) a happy school community.

**School Motto.** The Moonggok Middle School motto since its establishment in 2011 is 삶의 주인이 되어 더불어 행복한 우리 “taking ownership over our own lives, forming a happy school community,” which summarizes the following two school emphases. First, Moonggok Middle School staff want students to live and learn in a proactive manner. Second, the school emphasizes the importance of finding happiness in learning and wants this to be genuine and lasting.

**Proactive Living and Learning.** This school wants students to learn to be proactive, and not simply to wait for others to initiate activities for them. The school’s motto comes to life thanks to the school principal, who personally greets students in the morning. She holds regular teacher and student meetings with the purpose of hearing and incorporating their diverse perspectives and concerns into school planning for purposes of community building. Teachers strive to be proactive in their lesson planning, too. The vice principal stated, “선생님들이 수업을 주도하는 모습. 스스로 교육 과정도 이미 재구성한다고 하잖아요. 대부분의 선생님들이 학습지를 다 만들어 가더라고요,” “Teachers lead the class by restructuring the curriculum. Most of them develop their own assignments.” (Moonggok M, Vice Principal Kang, Interview).

Continually, and perhaps most important, is the school's aim, which is the following: “부모님 이게 아니라 자기 삶의 주인이 될 수 있도록 키워내는 것,” “to nurture students, and not their parents, to take ownership over their own lives.” (Moonggok M, Vice Principal Kang, Interview). As an example, the vice principal reflected positively on an instance where students proactively led their own learning process. He said, “시험 보는데 아침 새벽같이 와서 그룹으로 앉아서 토론을 하는 거예요,” “students gathered early in the morning to voluntarily discuss topics to prepare for an exam.” (Moonggok M, Vice Principal Kang, Interview). This can be clearly viewed as the students taking proactive measures to embody ownership over their academic success. Through such ownership over their lives, students are then encouraged to become proactive learners and contributors to the greater learning community of Moonggok Middle School.

***Happy School Community.*** Another one of the school's emphases is to have all of its constituents, especially the students, form a happy learning community. This happiness need not stem from high academic achievement, as the school is more focused on students' self-esteem. This distinction in the emphases of Moonggok Middle School marks it as being different from other schools that, instead, focus on happiness as a by-product of academic achievement. Thus, student well-being within Moonggok Middle School is something that is important in its own right.

This school has changed in recent years, as its principal was eager to describe. She stated, “선생님들의 표정과 아이들의 표정,” “the facial expression of teachers and students changed.” (Moonggok M, Principal Ryu, Interview). The vice principal said, “활기찬 학교, 아이들의 웃음,” “the school feels lively, with students who smile.” (Moonggok M, Vice Principal Kang, Interview).

Overall, the school staff believe that such a vibrant school community is possible because teachers themselves make many efforts to make learning fun. According to the vice principal, “교사가 변해야 학생도 변합니다,” “Once the teacher changes, students change, too.” (Moonggok M, Vice Principal Kang, Interview). Through fun and interactive learning opportunities, students learn how to work together on projects and activities and become active contributors to their learning community. The school then takes this a step further by encouraging students to take what they have learned and apply it once they enter society. The vice principal said, “우리가 함께 행복한 사람이 되고 그런 사람들이 모여서 또 행복한 사회를 만들어 가는 그런 아이들,” “I want students to be happy together, and to contribute to a happy society as a whole.” (Moonggok M, Vice Principal Kang, Interview). By going beyond individual happiness and into a shared, collective culture, students within Moonggok Middle School are flourishing, administrators say. While each student has his or her individual strengths, they are able to collectively depend on one another to combine their strengths and create a happy society.

### **School Leadership**

*Description of School Leaders.* The principal of Moonggok Middle School was appointed in 2019. She had taught as an English teacher for 28 years before becoming the principal. She was one of the founding teachers of Moonggok Middle School. Before teaching at a Hyukshin school, she has been disheartened by the lack of positivity at school. She recalled a time of “좀 희망이 안 보이는 것,” “not being able to see hope in schools.” (Moonggok M, Principal Ryu, Interview). Additionally, she stated, “학교에 오면 더 절망하는 것 같고,” “Students seemed to be sad when they were in school.” (Moonggok M, Principal Ryu, Interview).

After she started teaching at Moonggok Middle School, Ryu started to feel better. She said, “아이들이 눈빛이 살아나는구나,” “students’ eyes started to sparkle.” (Moonggok M, Principal Ryu, Interview). She then realized that teachers’ leadership was producing real changes in students. She was able to bring this mindset with her as she began her new role as the principal of Moonggok Middle School.

Vice principal Kang had worked as a math teacher for 27 years and was the vice principal for a non-Hyukshin middle school for four years before transferring to Moonggok in 2019. When he first moved to Moonggok Middle School, the vice principal realized, “여기 와서 느끼는 것은 밖에서 바라봤을 때의 혁신 학교가 제가 막상 왔을 때 혁신 학교가 다르더라고요” “The perception of Hyukshin schools was different from what I experienced.” (Moonggok M, Vice Principal Kang, Interview). He added, “교육 과정 이라던지, 우리 선생님들 수업 준비하는 태도 라던지, 활기찬 아이들의 모습,” “I was impressed by the curriculum, teachers’ attitude towards class preparation, and engaged students.” (Moonggok M, Vice Principal Kang, Interview).

**Theory of Action: Leading by Example.** Both the principal and vice-principal see their roles as active contributors in the school community, leading by example. They do so by putting into action the school motto and communicating closely with both teachers and students. The principal said, “아이들이 희망을 찾는 학교를 만드는 게 저의 꿈이었죠,” “My goal is to transform a school into a place where students find hope.” (Moonggok M, Principal Ryu, Interview). She personally greets students in the morning with snacks, which the kids really enjoy. She works hard to communicate with the students in order to make the school a learning community.

Also, the vice principal believes that monthly meetings between the principal and student council are well-established and productive. He stated, “아이들의 불편한 점, 좋았던 점 이런 것들을 서로 이야기하니까,” “Students are able to express what they like and dislike.” (Moonggok M, Vice Principal Kang, Interview). Through this process of regular dialogue, students’ opinions are often reflected clearly within many of the school-level decisions. The vice principal added, “[회의가] 아이들이 굉장히 즐거울 수밖에 없잖아요,” “[The monthly meetings are] fun for the students.” (Moonggok M, Vice Principal Kang, Interview). Students are able to see their conversations with principal resulting in changes in their school that they have influenced.

As one example of how student voice is responded to by the school leadership team, both the principal and vice-principal served as cafeteria guides during lunchtime, because students requested it (Moonggok M, Vice Principal Kang, Interview). There were cases of students cutting in line, so the leadership team itself worked on resolving this issue. An additional example was when the school community decided to keep school uniforms, rather than to get rid of them. Students believed, “우리 학교 상징이다,” “The uniforms were a school symbol.” (Moonggok M, Vice Principal Kang, Interview). Students felt a sense of ownership over what they wore.

Another example was the school’s decision to incorporate student feedback on how to best schedule midterms. Rather than making a top-down decision on how many subjects to test, students were given a choice between taking one or two midterms a day. The leadership team immerses itself into the school community, ensuring that students’ voices are being regularly heard.

The vice principal also leads by example through enabling teachers to have less administrative work so that they are able to focus on instruction. This is tied back to his belief that a school can become a vibrant learning community when teachers work hard to prepare for class. He told the teachers that, “선생님들의 교육 활동에 걸림돌이 되지 않고 디딤돌이 될 수 있도록 내가 최선을 다해서 선생님들을 도와주겠다,” “Rather than becoming an obstacle to teaching, he would be a steppingstone to best help teachers.” (Moonggok M, Vice Principal Kang, Interview). Moonggok Middle School administrators led by action in order to be of real help to the teachers. The main way through which the vice principal supports teachers is through reducing administrative work. The vice principal saw his role as, “교육 활동에서 제 도움이 필요하면 얼마든지 도와주겠다,” “helping teachers as much as I can in educational activities.” (Moonggok M, Vice Principal Kang, Interview). The vice principal works with two additional administrative assistants to resolve administrative tasks on their end so that teachers can solely focus on teaching. His role as an active supporter of teachers ultimately contributes to creating a happy school community where teachers can better focus on instruction.

## **Teachers**

*Description of Teachers.* Two teachers from Moonggok Middle School were interviewed. Teacher Noh has been teaching at Hyukshin schools since 2011, when the HSSM started in Seoul. He has been teaching at Moonggok Middle School for a total of three years and is the head of school affairs. He believes, “교육의 본질에 충실하려고 하는 학교다... 계속적으로 이제 바뀌는, ing 로 바뀌어 나가는 학교,” “that a Hyukshin school should be true to the purpose of education ... and continuously improve.” (Moonggok M, Teacher Noh, Interview). Teacher Noh’s focus was on providing true education for students.

Teacher Lee has been working at Moonggok Middle School for four years. She is a head teacher whose role is to focus on instruction. She said, “수석 교사라는 거는 이제 교수 학습을 같이 가장 중심에 놓는 교사니까,” “As a head teacher, my role is to put teaching at the center.” (Moonggok M, Teacher Lee, Interview). She believes that, “교육의 본질은 아이들의 성장이잖아요. 배우는 거부터 해서,” “The purpose of education is student growth and learning.” (Moonggok M, Teacher Lee, Interview). Lee believes that the role of Hyukshin schools, and specifically her role as a head teacher, is to help students grow.

Overall, Moonggok Middle School teachers have a strong Hyukshin mindset. The school itself started in 2011 as one of the first Hyukshin schools in Seoul, with teachers who were eager to expand the bottom up Hyukshin movement. Currently, teachers who used to teach at another Hyukshin school, have transferred to Moonggok Middle School, forming the main teacher body that supports the HSSM. Such like-minded supporters of the Hyukshin movement are currently embodying leadership roles within the teacher community at Moonggok Middle School.

***Overview of Teacher Perspectives.*** There were several major themes that emerged from the teacher interviews. The first focuses on the role PLCs and professional learning networks PLNs play in teaching. One of the defining characteristics of Moonggok Middle School teachers is their well-established PLCs. Teachers are using various ways to guide each other in classroom instruction and to make school-level decisions. PLNs seems to be comparatively less established when compared to PLCs, as was explained by the Moonggok Middle School teachers. Second, teachers focus on providing personalized learning opportunities for students. Finally, teachers reflect on societal constraints that block them from fully incorporating Hyukshin values into their teaching.

*The Role of PLCs and PLNs.* Moonggok Middle School has used various approaches that collectively play an integral role in forming PLCs. Its major approaches include the following:

- (1) teacher meetings with discussions;
- (2) open classrooms; and
- (3) monthly class research meetings.

First, teacher meetings were one of the first tasks Noh implemented when he became the head of school affairs. He explained, “정확하게 하세요. 토론이 있는 교직원 회의를. 그래서 그런 문화 조성이 된 거죠. 토론 문화 조성이 되어 있어요.” “There is an exact structure to the teacher meetings. A culture has formed, which focuses on discussions.” (Moonggok M, Teacher Noh, Interview). The vice principal was impressed when, “이런 보드에 자기들의 의견을 다 써서 그것들을 다섯 분임이면 여기 칠판에 다 붙이는 거예요.” “Teachers wrote down opinions based on small group discussions and posted them on a board.” (Moonggok M, Vice Principal Kang, Interview). Through this process, teachers were able to find solutions to the school’s issues.

Second, open classes are supported through strong PLCs. Teacher Lee stated that, “수업 공개 저희 학교는 모든 교사가 하는데, 모든 교사가 하기 전에 수업 전 나눔도 하고 수업 후 나눔도 해요.” “All teachers participate in open classes, and teachers share feedback both before and after them.” (Moonggok M, Teacher Lee, Interview). Another teacher stated that, “선생님들의 어떤 교육 교수 학습의 질이 좀 달라질 수 있다.” “It was possible for the quality of teaching to improve, thanks to open classes (Moonggok M, Teacher Noh, Interview). Open classes are a PLC activity that allows teachers to improve instructional practice.

Third, school teachers also hold regular class research meetings. Some of the topics that these meetings touch upon are, “교육 과정 연구회, 책 읽는 연구회 … 수업 문화를 바꿔보는 그런 프로젝트,” “Course curriculum, reading books, and changing the school culture.” (Moonggok M, Principal Ryu, Interview). Through such activities, Moonggok Middle School teachers have PLCs that consistently guide and support teachers in effective instructional methods.

In addition to the PLCs, there are PLNs available to teachers that are provided by the SMOE. Examples include “혁신학교끼리는 지역별로 협의체가 있어요... 학교 간 교환 학습 공동체도 있고요,” “regional Hyukshin PLNs... and PLNs across schools.” (Moonggok M, Principal Ryu, Interview). However, Moonggok Middle School teachers do not utilize such opportunities. They gave two reasons: (1) the PLN is weak overall; and (2) teachers do not have time.

When asked why the Hyukshin PLN was weak, one teacher stated that, “지금은 그냥 혁신 학교를 모르는 사람들도 그냥 발령을 받기도 하고 이렇게 하다 보니까,” “Some teachers at Hyukshin schools are not familiar with the Hyukshin movement.” (Moonggok M, Teacher Lee, Interview). With the shift in the teacher population to those who may not be as passionate about Hyukshin values, Hyukshin PLNs seemed to have naturally weakened. Also, when another teacher was asked why teachers did not participate in PLNs, he answered, “마빤 것 같아요,” “because teachers are busy.” (Moonggok M, Teacher Noh, Interview). Overall, Moonggok Middle School teachers seem to depend more on PLCs for their instructional support than PLNs.

*The Focus on Personal Growth.* Teachers at Moonggok Middle School strive to provide learning opportunities for all of their students. Those who struggle academically have access to “대학생 멘토링,” “college student mentoring.” The SMOE also provides them with “상담사 선생님 파견,” “counselor teachers.” (Moonggok M, Principal Ryu, Interview). The principal says that, “저희 학교 선생님이 또 몇 명씩 모아서 수업하는 것도 있고요,” “Teachers [at Moonggok Middle School] lead study groups (Moonggok M, Principal Ryu, Interview).

Moonggok Middle School teachers also focus on personal growth of students, especially through mentorship. The principal stated that the teachers think of students in the following way: “너는 너대로 또 잘하는 게 있을 거야,” – that each student has his or her own strengths (Moonggok M, Principal Rye, Interview). Teachers want to respect those strengths in all of their diversity rather than solely focusing on their students’ academic performance. According to Teacher Noh, “원래 학습능력을 가진 애들이라는 걸 빨리 인식을 시켜줘야 되는 게 혁신학교의 소신인 거 같아요,” – for students who do excel academically, the purpose of Hyukshin schools is to recognize such strength early on (Moonggok M, Teacher Noh, Interview). However, regardless of whether the student is first in class or not, the teacher believes that the student needs to protect his or her dignity and identity.

According to vice principal Kang, the school is, “학생 중심으로,” “centered on the student.” (Moonggok M, Vice Principal Kang, Interview). The fact that the school provides individualized attention to students encourages them to participate more proactively in class. Both the school leadership and teachers believe that a major goal of the Hyukshin movement is to ensure that all students, regardless of whether they excel academically or not, deserve educational opportunities that allow their strengths to shine so that they can grow as whole people.

*Societal Contradictions Between Mainstream Norms and Hyukshin Values.* According to Moonggok Middle School teachers, despite their effort to incorporate Hyukshin values, academic constraints serve as obstacles. The societal emphasis on academic achievement creates negative perceptions of innovative instructional practices of Hyukshin schools. According to Teacher Noh, “가장 큰 오해는 공부를 안 시킨다 이런 오해...기존의 학교 수업 모습하고 좀 많이 다르니까요” “One of the biggest misunderstandings is that Hyukshin schools do not make their students study...simply because class instruction looks quite different from that in more traditional classrooms.” (Moonggok M, Teacher Noh, Interview). The vice principal also confirms the misunderstanding. He said that, “왜냐면 절대 혁신 학교라고 해서 수업을 등한시하거나 학력이 나쁜 건 아닌 거 같아요,” “Moonggok Middle School does not value academics less as a Hyukshin school.” (Moonggok M, Vice Principal Kang, Interview).

This misunderstanding about the HSSM produces a tension that comes from parents who are worried about their children’s academic performance. According to teacher Lee, “공부만 잘 하길 바라는 거지... 학생은 무조건 자유를 쥐선 안 된다라는 그 틀을 부모님들이 갖고 계셔요 어른들이” “Parents only want students to study well ... and do not think students should be given too much freedom (Moonggok M, Teacher Lee, Interview). Teacher Noh said , “예전에 교실에 경험했던 사람들은 1년을 짝 앉아서 교사에게 딱 주목하는 학창시절의 기억들이 그대로 남아 있잖아요” “Parents only remember having to sit down and listen to the teacher for the whole year when they were students.” (Moonggok M, Teacher Noh, Interview). As long as the society emphasizes a narrow and competitive framework of academic achievement, contradictions between mainstream societal norms and Hyukshin values will continue to exist.

## **Discussion**

There are two distinct factors that contribute to Moonggok Middle School being a successful Hyukshin school. First, the school has a strong bottom-up culture driven by a uniform vision of teachers and leaders who are passionate about incorporating Hyukshin values. Second, the school is willing to promote Hyukshin values unapologetically. While it acknowledges and respects societal emphases on academic performance, it does not let these undermine its commitment to the education of whole human beings and the potential of education to lead to real joy and fulfillment in school.

*Uniform Vision of the School.* According to Hargreaves and Shirley (2009), in order for an education system to be successful, there needs to be coherence, which can be established through four catalysts of change:

- (1) sustainable leadership;
- (2) integration of networks;
- (3) responsibility; and
- (4) differentiation and diversity.

Through the full integration of the four catalysts, Moonggok Middle School supports an inspiring vision.

First, Moonggok Middle School has provided a level of sustainability through successful leadership transition. Current principal Ryu was one of the founding teachers of Moonggok Middle School and has been a strong supporter of the HSSM. With a school leader who has ample experience as a Hyukshin teacher, the foundation for a successful Hyukshin school is solidified.

Second, the school motto of, “삶의 주인이 되어 더불어 행복한 우리,” “taking ownership over our own lives, forming a happy school community” is shared by the school teachers, who has formed a strong PLC culture that guides their teaching. Moonggok Middle School teachers contribute to their PLCs, through their open classrooms, teacher meetings with discussions, and monthly class research meetings. Workshops and meetings held throughout the year within the school, and occasional PLN meetings in Seoul, further guide teachers in instruction.

The third catalyst that emphasizes responsibility over accountability is observed through both school leaders and teachers. The school principal and vice-principal “lead by example,” proactively incorporating student and teacher voice in order to form a happy school community. Teachers who are supporters of Hyukshin values voluntarily take on leadership roles within the school community, and jointly, their goal is to, “행복한 아이로 키우는 게 제일 임무예요,” – raise students to be happy (Moonggok M, Teacher Noh, Interview). They want students to look forward to class. At Moonggok Middle School, both leaders and teachers take on the responsibility of forming a happy school community rather than doing so out of accountability measures.

Finally, the differentiation and diversity of students is emphasized by Moonggok Middle School. As a welfare school in a district consisting of a population with a notable socioeconomic gap, the school focuses on meeting the needs of every student. For those who are academically excelling, the school guides them to further succeed. For students who fall behind, opportunities to reflect on their own strengths are provided. Teachers work to best meet the needs of each student.

*Advocacy for Hyukshin values.* In every educational change network there is a tendency for innovators' values to be overshadowed by the society's emphasis on academic performance and unchanging college admissions system. A Moonggok Middle School teacher compares the competitive college admissions systems in South Korea to a “경주마,” “horserace.” (Moonggok M, Teacher Noh, Interview). Hyukshin schools widen the view, opening up possibilities that allow students to not necessarily run forward but in other directions as well, which can be negatively viewed by society.

Moonggok Middle School seems to have found a niche that promotes Hyukshin values without losing prospective students and parents. Its students are old enough to embrace Hyukshin values and carry them forward into high school and college. Many Moonggok Middle School students enter non-Hyukshin high schools upon graduation, and initially, the students have a hard time. However, according to Principal Ryu, “적응해서 오히려 공부도 열심히 하고,” “They generally get used to studying hard.” (Moonggok M, Principal Ryu, Interview). They are able to do so while continuing to maintain ownership over their own lives. According to the principal, Moonggok Middle School graduates say, “우리가 친구들과 함께 뭔가 해 나가는 것을 배웠는데,” “One of the biggest lessons they've learned is to collaborate with friends to achieve goals.” (Moonggok M, Principal Ryu, Interview). Moonggok Middle School seems to have maximized the advantage as a Hyukshin middle school, where students are old enough to truly embrace Hyukshin values but also have enough time to excel academically as well. Moonggok Middle School has found a middle ground that does not require students to choose one value over another. It allows students to live as whole human beings who participate in community and strive for excellence at the same time.

## **Conclusion**

Moongok Middle School emphasizes its students' ownership over their own lives and forming a happy school community. The main means to achieve the goals seems to be two-pronged. First, leaders are proactive supporters of the school community. While many school leaders mainly focus on communicating closely with teachers as a way for practicing democratic values in the school, Moongok Middle School incorporate student voice in addition to teacher voice, perhaps more so than other schools. Second, the teachers are intent on providing personalized learning opportunities for students with varying learning needs. Especially for the Moongok Middle School student population, emphasis on personalized learning seems to be an integral contributing factor that allows students to discover their strengths and gain ownership over their lives, which are Hyukshin values that lead to student success.

## **Yugok Middle School**

### **Introduction**

Yugok Middle School opened as a Hyukshin School in 2018 in a medium to low socio-economic neighborhood in the district of Seocho. By the time the school was visited to conduct interviews, the school was in its second year of operation. The school consists of 12 homeroom classes, 43 teachers, and 207 students, of which many are students who transferred from nearby schools due to dissatisfaction about school lives, such as in relationships with peers or conflicts with teachers. Yugok Middle School is the first Hyukshin School established near Gangnam despite the taboo on Hyukshin schools due to the region's extreme emphasis on enrollment to top-renowned universities and many parents' misconceptions about low academic performance of students in the HSSM. The school library is shared among school members and families of the town, so that in a real sense the school is visible as a community center that serves everyone in the area.

### **School Emphases**

Yugok Middle School administrators introduce their school as a "Fourth Industrial Revolution" Hyukshin School that develops essential capabilities in students as future human resources. According to them, a Fourth Industrial Revolutionary School teaches students to improve their own lives in the future, with abilities that the future society needs, such as creativity, discipline, and problem-solving skills. The school provides training students on how to take initiative and cooperate through student action centered pedagogies. It encourages students students to plan school events, and to solve school problems, through the student council.

Yugok Middle School had administrators who understand and implement the principles and practices of democratic school management. Its teachers were enthusiastic about classroom innovation, and enjoyed experimenting with student-centered learning and formative assessments. The school's faculty had a well-developed culture of PLCs. As in other schools in our sample, this school's teachers conducted open classes frequently. They became skilled at observing classroom interactions, and took the risk entailed in offering critiques for professional development.

### **School Leaders**

Mr. Cho, the principal of Yugok Middle School, has been an educator for 32 years, and was assigned to take his role when the school opened in 2018. Before he came to this school, Mr. Cho used to work at the SMOE to support schools. He assisted educators in their curriculum design, especially around educational activities for students' life guidance. He also has three-and-a-half-year work experience at the Seoul Education Training Institute, where he developed and led training programs for teachers. Mr. Cho had no experience in Hyukshin schools before he came to Yugok Middle School.

Ms. Jin, the assistant principal, had been an educator for 34 years. She has worked in this position since it opened in 2018. Before she came to Yugok Middle School, Ms. Jin used to work as the head of a department at another Hyukshin school. While she taught students, she also worked as a Hyukshin establishing agent of the school for about five years. With rich experience in supporting the initial Hyukshin phase of her previous school, Ms. Jin was recommended to take her position by coworkers.

Both Mr. Cho and Ms. Jin had no doubts about the promising future of Hyukshin schools. The vice principal framed the movement as a "paradigm shift," (Yugok M, Vice Principal Jin,

Interview) which was caused by current society. Thus, they were certain that Hyukshin schools would be sustainable. Ms. Jin believed that Hyukshin schools would withstand future political changes. She said:

In our country, the policy changes depending on what kinds of mind people have at the SMOE. However, I believe that the big flow of the Hyukshin schools would not change because the society has entered an era where people request such things. ... There is no choice, but for the big flow to continue. (Yugok M, Vice Principal Jin, Interview)

Mr. Cho agreed that Hyukshin education would last, viewing the movement as a big flow of the current society. He stated, “even many general schools (that are not Hyukshin) have already grafted onto [the movement], such as in student autonomy, democratic management ... and implementing parents’ association as a legislation” (Yugok M, Principal Cho, Interview). Mr. Cho also added, “efforts for educational innovation will continue in any kinds of forms whether it is in the form of the Hyukshin movement or not” (Yugok M, Principal Cho, Interview). Yugok Middle School had administrators who viewed the HSSM as beyond the control of a small group of political leaders. Vice Principal Jin believed that “the direction the Hyukshin movement is taking is right.” (Yugok M, Vice Principal Jin, Interview). To the Yugok Middle School administrators, the Hyukshin movement was built to last as a reflection of the current needs of the Korean education system, regardless of the political context.

### **Leadership Style**

The administrators of Yugok Middle School had a huge emphasis on democracy in their management of the school. Finding cooperation as the key aspect, they treated teachers in a horizontal manner, and supported them. They ensured that students are respected in their freedom of speech and form sense an ownership of the school by getting involved in deciding on school rules. They were flexible communicators when they worked with parents in making decisions.

*Leadership of Teachers.* Yugok Middle School administrators believed it was important to allow teachers to be the leaders of the school. Ms. Jin stated that the school should provide an “environment where it is painless to teach,” (Yugok M, Vice Principal Jin, Interview) for Yugok Middle School teachers. They listened to and respectfully communicated with them in faculty meetings. They “trusted” (Yugok M, Principal Cho, Interview) and “emotionally and financially supported,” (Yugok M, Vice Principal Jin, Interview) teachers on what they wanted to implement in their class and provided a cooperative community for all.

Mr. Park, a technology teacher, described the horizontal structure of faculty meetings at Yugok Middle School. He said that “there were almost no conflicts with the principals” (Yugok M, Teacher Park, Interview). When there were times of disagreement, the principals tried to persuade the teachers, and that any consensus made in the meetings was, “not changed by the principal alone afterwards” (Yugok M, Teacher Park, Interview). Mr. Kim, a science teacher, also described about the democratic structure and horizontal relationships between teachers and the administrators of the school, comparing his work experience at a traditional Korean school where the principal had power over the teachers. He said:

In the previous school, it was really hard to actually carry out anything that I had the heart to do. The principal asked, ‘Why do you do that?’, and he disapproved a lot of things, and the cooperation for organizational purposes was bad. So, for example, if I wanted to camp with children, I heard, ‘Why bother to do it?’ ... There was too much energy spent until I actually succeed in implementing what I thought I would like to do educationally. So, it was very difficult (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview).

Mr. Kim could try out new things with his students. He could take students on camping trips, for example. He could develop “student autonomous activities, such as students presenting a musical, or students arranging transitional period (end of an academic year when students have no more contents to learn after taking finals) programs and running them” (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview).

Teachers at the school described that “the principals and the administration department are also financially supportive” (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview). Mr. Kim stated, “teachers are supported to try what they have wanted to do,” (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview), and Teacher Park added, teachers are encouraged to “actually carry it out” (Yugok M, Teacher Park, Interview). At Yugok Middle School, teachers do not stop at simply talking about change but can see through that innovative classroom practices can be incorporated in real life due to full support by school leadership.

***Leadership of Students.*** The school principals established a strong sense of student leadership and ownership. Thinking that democratic education is one of the most important values students would need for the future, they included students in the decision-making process regarding school rules. Students were empowered and felt that their rights were respected in the school.

Yugok Middle School administrators want students to take part in a democratic community. The vice principal has indicated that too often students are “passive and obedient. That hinders their creativity.” (Yugok M, Vice Principal Jin, Interview). The vice principal believed that democratic education is essential for students to grow as future citizens. The administrators especially emphasized freedom of speech. They want students to participate in deciding upon school rules, and to increase their sense of ownership. The assistant principal shared an example of how she gave the student council a chance to participate in such processes:

When students have lunch, it was a tradition for the 3rd graders (seniors) to eat first. But I said that the Sunbae (seniors) culture and how only 3rd graders get to always eat first were wrong. I asked the student council to discuss what would be the logical way to eat in order. Students gathered their opinions and came up with an alternative, which students had further discussions about if new problems came up. (Yugok M, Vice Principal Jin, Interview)

Ms. Jin believed, “it is important to have such process although it takes time” (Yugok M, Vice Principal Jin, Interview). She elaborated:

In the past, all rules were decided by the teachers. There was even a rule that students cannot wear uniforms that were shorter than how many centimeters. Right now, opinions from all students, parents, and teachers are heard, and the rules are decided upon an agreement. And so, the students feel more responsibility, and better follow rules. (Yugok M, Vice Principal Jin, Interview)

Ms. Jin thought that involving students in making decisions on school rules led them to follow the rules better with the feeling of an ownership.

Following the administrators, both students interviewed also described that “the school always listens [to their ideas]” (Yugok M, Student Jeong, Interview). A 2nd grade student, Soojeong, described that generally, “students’ opinions are considered important,” (Yugok M, Student Jeong, Interview). According to the student, “there are many times, in which students can speak about their opinions” (Yugok M, Student Jeong, Interview). Another 2nd grade student, Yeji, chose how students’ rights were respected as the best strength of Yugok Middle School. She said, “I think our school’s best strength is that students participate in school problems, and that students have rights. I am not sure if all Hyukshin schools are like this, but I think that is our school’s best strength” (Yugok M, Student Kim, Interview). Yugok Middle School students felt that their rights were respected, and that they also owned the school from having the freedom of speech.

***Leadership on Parents.*** The administrators also engaged parents in making decisions about the school. They ensured that there was sufficient communication between them and parents when they needed to persuade them, or when the parents brought up requests. As leaders of the school, the principals were flexible around their educational philosophies to mediate with parents.

The parent representative, Ms. Lee, said that, “our principal communicates with [parents] freely.” (Yugok M, Parent Lee, Interview). Echoing Ms. Lee, Ms. Jin described how the school administrators, “ceaselessly hold meetings with parents to mediate and persuade them on things they need to persuade or things they could accede” (Yugok M, Vice Principal Jin, Interview). She shared how the administrators persuaded parents on eliminating midterms to reflect the Hyukshin school’s focus on progress assessments, which contradict take-once exams, such as midterms and finals. She said:

Because we pursue formative evaluation ... we did not have any midterms. In Gangnam, it is really hard to be like this. All other schools had both midterms and finals, but we got rid of midterms, and had finals once a semester. Last year, we explained and persuaded this [to the parents]. Due to free semester (a policy to have no exams in the first semester of 1st grade), this meant that the 1st graders who were moving up to 2nd grade, were only having one final during the whole academic year. We said to them that for 2nd graders, we will increase the number of exams to two, once a semester, but that there still will be no midterms. We persuaded parents that we will try this just for one year, and when parents want to discuss about it afterwards, we will revise on it together. So, we got rid of [midterms]. (Yugok M, Vice Principal Jin, Interview)

Ms. Jin continued how they “cannot just say that we are definitely going to do this,” (Yugok M, Vice Principal Jin, Interview) to the parents. They had to be flexible mediators. For instance, Mr. Cho shared how he had to change his decision about midterms after getting feedback from the parents. He said:

When we had a meeting at the end of the year, [the parents] said that although they understand the administrators’ intentions and the schools’ direction, they feel that their kids aren’t studying as much compared to other school students who study also for midterm preparation, and they requested to return midterms. So, we agreed to take both midterms and finals, and also to take formative assessments. (Yugok M, Principal Cho, Interview)

As he tried to initiate the Hyukshin principle on growth-based evaluation, Mr. Cho knew how to be flexible in his decision, so that all school members, including the parents, felt their opinions were valued.

Mr. Cho, and Ms. Jin applied democratic leadership in their management of the school. Respecting teachers in a horizontal structure and supporting them, respecting students in their freedom of speech and growing their ownership of school, and respecting parents' ideas and being flexible mediators, Yugok Middle School administrators sought to provide a cooperative community, in which all members of the school was included.

### **Teachers**

According to the school's teachers, Yugok Middle School was described as "a school where teachers who wanted to work in Hyukshin schools have gathered" (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview). The school's core faculty team is consisted of a group of self-initiating KTU (Korean Teachers' Union) teachers. Under their shared vision of Hyukshin Schools, the teachers were happy to work in their school, especially due to the supportive school system and cooperative culture among faculties.

Most of the teachers who are currently working in Yugok Middle School had already worked in the HSSM previously. Before it opened, there was a KTU office in the Gangnam district, where teachers who wanted to establish a Hyukshin school in the area gathered and visited Hyukshin schools to study them. Mr. Kim, who was one of the KTU teachers from the Gangnam district, said that "when [we] heard that Yugok Middle School was going to open as a Hyukshin School in Seocho (neighborhood of Gangnam), [we] applied altogether." (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview) Along with the group of KTU teachers who were already active in the HSSM, Mr. Park, another KTU teacher not from Gangnam, was invited to come to the school by a teacher from this group. Likewise, many Yugok Middle School teachers came from a KTU network of teacher leaders.

Yugok Middle School teachers showed great enthusiasm about coming to this school, and felt happy about the cooperative workplace. Mr. Kim, the technology teacher, said that a “Hyukshin school is not unfamiliar for [me]. [I] had wanted to come to a school like this.” (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview). Although he knew that he would need to invest more time and passion than how he had worked at non-Hyukshin schools, he was still happy that he came here. Mr. Kim reasoned that his happiness comes from the cooperative atmosphere. He said:

In the case of our school, first, if I say that I want to do something, the supportive environment for me to achieve that to some point is already established. Things, such as the school system and support from the teachers. And when coworkers give an idea that they want to try out something, the atmosphere that we could collaborate is set. ... Much of this could not be done especially in the case of technology class that I teach. Especially in high schools, I could not even dream of having a woodworking lesson. (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview)

Mr. Kim felt happy that he realized what he had dreamed of implementing, such as a woodworking lesson, in his class, with support from his coworkers.

The other two teachers agreed with Mr. Kim that Yugok Middle School faculty support one another, and that they collaborate in order to pursue the principles of the HSSM. Mr. Park, said that “here, if something is even just a little helpful to children’s education, the teachers support the direction and work together because all teachers who came here are dedicated to the principles of this as a Hyukshin school” (Yugok M, Teacher Park, Interview). Ms. Lee, who teaches social studies, said that her workload is reduced due to her colleagues’ commitment to the HSSM:

If I suggest diverse ways for [class innovation] to the teachers, generally, they all are good at collaborating. Compared to when the HHDs of other school suggest something, our teachers are highly focused and responsive. So, there is no difficulty in pursuing a new task. (Yugok M, HHD Lee, Interview)

Yugok Middle School teachers showed a great sense of dedication to the common mission of the HSSM.

## **Curriculum**

Yugok Middle School teachers held strong emphasis on student-centered learning. They believed that student-centered activities foster participation, autonomy, and ownership in students through active learning, that contrasts passive education in most traditional schools. Accordingly, interviewees shared two lesson examples, that reflected the teachers' student-centered educational philosophy.

***Philosophy of Student-Centered Class.*** Yugok Middle School teachers believed that student-centered lessons would increase students' quality of life, for training them in becoming active learners through engagement, autonomy, and ownership from constructing their own learning. Ms. Lee, the HHD, believed that, "Korean school culture discourages the initiative of students." (Yugok M, HHD Lee, Interview). She said that a "class needs to be centered around the actions of students, so that they complete tasks on their own." (Yugok M, HHD Lee, Interview). Ms. Jin, the assistant principal, said that such class is "different from a traditional class that is just based on memorization." (Yugok M, Vice Principal Jin, Interview). Yugok Middle School classes foster autonomous learning. Mr. Kim, the technology teacher, believed that a Hyukshin class needs to "let all students construct their own learning through engagement in activities." (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview). This would ensure that they become the main agents in class. Ms. Lee believed that by fostering participation, autonomy, and ownership through the activities, students gain skills, such as "being able to critically filter out untrustworthy information from media." (Yugok M, HHD Lee, Interview). According to Ms. Lee, student-centered classes are essential for increasing students' quality of life.

***Class Innovation.*** Following their philosophy, Yugok Middle School teachers held engaging activities as the core principle in constructing student-centered curriculum, of which two class innovation examples were shared.

Yeji, a 2nd grade student, shared a Korean literacy lesson that she chose as the most meaningful lesson she had in the school. The lesson reflected student collaboration and freedom of speech:

It was for us to read a book about a social issue and discuss about it. We were divided into groups of four. Each group had one book, and we were to share our own thoughts after reading it. In the group I was in, we selected the topic of genocide. We read one book about the topic, summarized it, and shared our thoughts around the group, and for each hour, we picked one presenter out of the four members. Then, the presenter shared what we discussed among groups. (Yugok M, Student Kim, Interview)

The lesson emphasized that students can become collaborative learners by engaging in group work. Students were required to decide on which social issue they would read and discuss about, that they could make a meaningful connection to. Students were free to discuss social issues openly, and they also had opportunities to connect the learning to their personal lives and the society.

Mr. Kim designed a science unit that placed students into small groups to learn about natural disasters:

Among the science units, there is a unit on natural disasters. Previously, students just learned about the unit theoretically. What I did this year was different. We created a natural disaster drill. About once a month, teachers planned the drill to have students practice it. The drill had been processed this way, but I connected this to the natural disaster unit...In small groups, students had to consider in which route people could safely evacuate in the case of natural disasters. They were asked to research what kinds of natural disasters there are to start with in order to create the drill routes on their own...Students voted for the group that best designed the route, so that all members from the class where the voted group was from, became the drill staffs to run it. (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview)

This lesson also emphasized collaborative learning on students when they were required to form groups to conduct research on content knowledge about what problems people would face in evacuating from different natural disasters, and when they were to become problem solvers in creating new drill routes based on the collected knowledge. It let students to understand why they need to know what they learn. Because the research for conceptual understanding connected to an actual design of the drill route, students had a chance to visualize how the learning connects to their real lives. Moreover, because the best designed drill got to actually be practiced by the whole school with students being staffs, this unit allowed students to feel ownership in their learning. In addition, students enjoyed learning throughout the project.

Ms. Lee, the HHD, added that, “here, all teachers in common have the general idea that class is most important, and that students need to be joyful to learn” (Yugok M, HHD Lee, Interview). Likewise, the students interviewed stated that they find lessons at their school engaging. Yeji said:

For me, [Yugok Middle School] is a joyful school. I love just coming here, and I like getting engaged in diverse activities and sharing my thoughts in presentation. ... I like sharing my thoughts ... I think I had a lot of time to try out various things. ... I always look forward to the activities (Yugok M, Student Kim, Interview).

Along with Yeji who anticipated to participate in diverse learning activities, in which she could express herself freely, another 2nd grade student, Soojeong, said, that Yugok Middle School classes ask students to “move around to think and ask questions to the teachers” (Yugok M, Student Jeong, Interview). She liked how “it is not a class where [I] just sit still in my chair to listen only” (Yugok M, Student Jeong, Interview). As a result, the class helped her to engage in learning. Thanks to their teachers’ hard work designing and leading student-centered classes, students said that they found learning to be not a burden, but truly joyful at Yugok Middle School.

## **Teachers' Learning Communities**

Opened as a Hyukshin School from its beginning, Yugok Middle School had its teachers collaborate in diverse learning communities in and out of school from its initial stage of Hyukshin development. Before the school opened, the schoolteachers collaborated within diverse Hyukshin workshops held by the SMOE and connected with other Hyukshin schoolteachers to gain knowledge and advice about Hyukshin operation. After the first academic year, Yugok Middle School teachers decided to continually hold a pre-school training workshop, in which they could discuss and plan about how to implement and which Hyukshin principles to focus on in the coming year. Even during the school year, teachers' efforts to collaborate and learn from one another continued within PLC, in which they conducted open classes.

***Pre-School Training Workshop.*** Before the school opened in March 2018, Yugok Middle School teachers had to participate in diverse Hyukshin training sessions and workshops over the break to gain knowledge about Hyukshin. Ms. Lee, the HHD, shared that, "there was no winter break for [them]." (Yugok M, HHD Lee, Interview). When teachers were appointed to the school during the first week of January, they had to spend January and February to work together to open the school. Mr. Kim, the science teacher, described that they had training sessions on diverse Hyukshin principles, such as "principles of learning communities, restorative education for living, and class management." (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview). Ms. Lee added that they also had to communicate with other Hyukshin schoolteachers to learn about "how teachers collaboratively plan lessons and how that impacts students' learning." (Yugok M, HHD Lee, Interview). Teachers had to use their personal time during the winter break to learn about how a Hyukshin school is operated, and about various responsibilities and expectations of HSSM teachers.

Thanks to their dedication and commitment, the teachers who taught at Yugok Middle School in its first year were able to adapt to the HSSM culture by the time that academic year ended. Unfortunately, a similar process that they went through had to be repeated all over again when new teachers came for the school's second year. This is because in Korea, public school teachers are required to transfer to other schools every five years. This disruptive pattern seemed to also repeat in the Hyukshin school context when the first wave of Hyukshin school teachers transfer, with the consequence that its hard-won Hyukshin character became diluted. Therefore, Yugok Middle School decided to hold a workshop led by the HHD for all appointed teachers before the beginning of an academic year, so that the new teachers could learn about the work accomplished previously to shape the unique culture of Yugok Middle School. The community-building workshop was designed so that all of the teachers would have the opportunity to share ideas and collaboratively plan for the new year's Hyukshin development.

The pre-school workshop in 2019 was about formative assessment following the school's new Hyukshin focus. The progress-centered, formative assessment is one of the major innovations in Hyukshin curriculum that is a growth-based assessment, which differs from traditional exams that students can only take once. Ms. Lee, the HHD, described that the specific focus was chosen for the year since many Yugok Middle School teachers believed that, "academic performance is more than just being able to solve multiple choice and short answer questions in written exams." (Yugok M, HHD Lee, Interview). The HHD also added that "[academic performance] cannot be measured by just two exams over a semester." (Yugok M, HHD Lee, Interview). Formative assessments align with Hyukshin values that emphasize student growth over time, more than summative assessments that are gathered through a single, high-stakes test.

Ms. Lee shared that during the workshop, she “introduced teachers some of the formative assessment examples [she] had previously implemented.” (Yugok M, HHD Lee, Interview). After the introduction, teachers were grouped homogeneously according to the subject they taught, and Ms. Lee asked each group to modify assessment recording sheets that teachers would use to record gradual observation and feedback of students in their class. Since each subject may have different criteria to assess on students’ performance, Ms. Lee suggested teachers to, “modify the [recording sheets] that fit the subjects they taught” (Yugok M, HHD Lee, Interview). With the guidance from Ms. Lee, teachers could collectively learn about and develop the guidance for Hyukshin assessment for their class before the school started.

***Open Classes and PLCs.*** When the academic year began, teachers continued to work on initiating Hyukshin principles through their PLCs, where they implemented open classes. In Yugok Middle School, the open class structure much resembled open classes of a neighboring Hyukshin school, from which Yugok Middle School teachers got advice in its initial stage of Hyukshin development. Ms. Lee described that “five teachers of each subject department shared an open class.” (Yugok M, HHD Lee, Interview) last year. According to Ms. Lee, every open class was held “after sending all students other than the students of the open class to home,” so that, “the whole school faculties could come in to observe” the class instead of teaching at the same time. (Yugok M, HHD Lee, Interview).

***Professional Development.*** Open classes allowed Yugok Middle School teachers to grow professionally. As teachers continued reflecting the school’s emphasis on student-centered learning during open classes also, they could learn about their students more, and through collective inquiry within PLC on lesson design, teachers could make improvements in their lessons.

Yugok Middle School's open classes were intended to be student-centered and they required teachers to focus on pupil learning, rather than on how a teacher performed during the observation. Ms. Lee shared some examples how teachers gave out student-centered feedback. She said:

When the class ended, the observers took turns one by one, and said things like "That student is not like that in my class, but he's doing great here," which were different attitudes of the students to attitudes in their class. Teachers gave feedback for things from "Because you implemented that activity, students were well engaged" to "For this part, it could have been better if this was done that way" by making comparisons to their class. (Yugok M, HHD Lee, Interview)

Because teachers were required to continue the student-centered perspective in open classes, they were able to observe and compare how students did similar or different in their class; comment how with this activity, students grasped about the content better; advise on possible improvements on the lesson; and discuss about student engagement during diverse lesson activities. Ms. Lee shared that teachers focused on, "what communications students had and how students' learning became deeper when the teacher said what." (Yugok M, HHD Lee, Interview). As a result, teachers also had the chance to "discover strengths of their students that they could not capture in their own class." (Yugok M, HHD Lee, Interview). Open classes also benefited teachers by enabling them to communicate openly among themselves about the students they teach.

In open classes, teachers could also improve as professionals. The observed teachers could make improvements on their lessons by gathering feedback from other teachers in their PLCs. The teachers who provided feedback and suggestions could also benefit through the process of analyzing the impact of diverse activities and pedagogies on pupil learning in the open class.

Ms. Lee shared an example how a teacher responded to collegial comments after an open classes:

During the 1st semester, our science teacher taught a lesson on the diurnal motion of the moon to the 2nd graders. The lesson was to be taught in five different classrooms. When the teacher taught the lesson first to two classrooms, we took a look at the activity sheet and briefly planned it together...After the two observations, teachers came back together, and commented that because the system of question and research assignment was repeated, the students seemed to feel bored. Then, they suggested to combine the two, so that the students could continue just doing research...Doing so, by changing the order and the content organization in the activity sheet, as other teachers suggested, the class atmosphere changed to be more focused from the atmosphere of students being in a bustle. Also, better cooperative communication between students could be observed...Two important modifications were made to the activity sheet by the time the teacher taught the lesson to the fifth class. When the lesson was taught for the last time, students cooperatively communicated well. After the process, the teacher commented that the research assignment turned out to have good results. (Yugok M, HHD Lee, Interview)

The observed science teacher benefited from coworkers' feedback by developing a better lesson for the students. The observers were able to develop a better skill in critically analyzing the influence of instruction on students' learning from multiple observations and suggestions they made.

**Challenge.** Although open classes allow professional development for many teachers, the school only had five open classes last year. Ms. Lee explained why teachers don't like open classes:

When teachers say I have an open class, in the culture of Korean schools, it is still the manners to only observe a colleague's class for the first 10 minutes, ... The atmosphere is not like teachers to show an open class voluntarily, but rather, them feeling obliged to take turns, although they do not want to do it. (Yugok M, HHD Lee, Interview)

Yugok Middle School teachers felt uncomfortable being observed by other teachers while they teach. Observers felt disrespectful to watch over their colleagues' teaching. Ms. Lee, the HHD, described that this culture made it, "harder to conduct more open classes" (Yugok M, HHD Lee, Interview).

Subsequently, Ms. Lee changed the PLC structure for open classes to be by grade-level from this year, hoping that the new structure with smaller number of teachers in each PLC would allow closer relationships among them, and that they become more comfortable in making sharing. As a result, Yugok Middle School is now composed of three PLCs, with 10 teachers in the 1st grade community consisting of homeroom teachers and teachers who mostly taught that grade-level, 10 teachers for the 2nd grade PLC and 9 teachers for the 3rd grade PLC. Ms. Lee anticipated that teachers would feel less burdensome about open classes.

### **Discussion**

The case study has shown that Yugok Middle School held strong emphasis on democratic management of school, student-centered education, and proliferation of teachers' learning communities. The school was successful especially in having different levels of democracy holistically interacting with one another. Yugok Middle School had administrators who truly served democratic leadership principles in common with all members of the school community. Finding cooperation as the key aspect, they provided a supportive, horizontal structure for teachers to work effectively. They ensured that students' voices were respected in the decision-making process of school rules, so that students would feel ownership of the school. They constantly communicated with parents to also involve them in the community. Reflecting how Hyukshin administrators should optimally encourage responsibility and initiative of all school members, the school principals included themselves, teachers, students, and parents in all decision-making processes to solve school problems. This formed the culture of critical dialogue, in which all members could freely share their ideas in cultivating the culture of Yugok Middle School.

The findings show that Yugok Middle School teachers collectively stressed student-centered learning. Believing that student-centered activities foster participation, autonomy, and ownership in students, the schoolteachers initiated student-centered curriculum in their class, that also led meaningful and joyful learning for students. Moreover, rather than ranking students by test scores, teachers provided multiple opportunities for students to make up their grade through formative assessments that were different from traditional take-once midterms and finals. Implementing innovation in curriculum and class through student-centered learning and growth-based evaluation, students felt happier and less stressed to learn in Yugok Middle School than elsewhere.

Yugok Middle School activated teachers' PLCs. Before the school started, teachers learned about various Hyukshin innovations in workshops, and during the academic year, they worked within their PLCs to conduct open classes. Much of the professional development work at the school was led by the HHD. She showed strong leadership skills in workshops she held annually before school began, and in her exemplary implementations of progress assessments in class.

Yugok Middle School enjoyed the good fortune of opening as a Hyukshin School. Having collaborative leaders and group of passionate KTU teachers to take lead in promoting Hyukshin principles, the school had no conflicts among faculties with regard to their commitment to the Hyukshin movement. The school leaders truly served democratic management of the school holistically, and teachers worked towards initiating student-centered education in their class, which the small number of students (about 1:5 teacher to student ratio) seemed to have helped.

Although more studies could be done to represent voice of more members of the school, and to analyze impacts of diverse learning activities on the school students, students at Yugok Middle School felt happy to learn in their school. Most findings of the study indicated that Yugok Middle School manifested many Hyukshin principles. It could serve as an exemplar for others.

## **Ryuah Middle School**

### **Introduction**

Ryuah Middle School is located in the Guro area of Seoul. It is a public school consisting of 360 students, 32 teachers, and 16 classes. Initially, teachers at the school became interested in the Hyukshin model due to their aspirations to uplift students from poor and working-class backgrounds who live in this area. It was designated as a Hyukshin school in 2011, placing it in the first cohort of the HSSM, and making it one of the more experienced of our 16 Hyukshin schools.

Recently, 87% of teachers and 91% of parents agreed to continue as a Hyukshin school. This is a testimony of commitment from two key stakeholder groups that the school is on a good path. Parents of students attending Ryuah Middle School have faith in the mission of the school and rarely complain about the teachers. A number of parents are also engaged in school activities themselves.

Regarding the teachers, more than half are in the early stages of their careers. Just over half of the teachers (17) are in their 20s. This may largely be attributed to the fact that very few experienced teachers apply to teach here. This is believed to be due to the disadvantaged status and reputation of the school district, as well as the large workload that teachers carry due to the school's relatively small size and faculty. Educators say that generational differences amongst the faculty have led to an overall disparity in task-allocation. Older teachers seem to expect the younger ones to take on additional responsibilities, that are inherent within Hyukshin schools, but nonetheless add to the workload of younger colleagues. Two of those responsibilities that are especially onerous have to do with the facilitation of PLCs and the creation of student-centered curricula.

## **School Emphases**

Ryuh Middle School emphasizes the following four components in their educational approach:

- (1) Teachers' roles as drivers of educational change;
- (2) Classroom and school-wide innovation;
- (3) PLCs; and
- (4) an active student council.

These four points of emphasis are considered to be mutually interdependent parts of an overall change strategy. (1) The school leaders want teachers to be the drivers of innovation. They have responded accordingly, by relieving all teachers of all of their administrative duties so that they may instead focus on the ultimate goal of true educational change. (2) Consequently, this has allowed teachers to focus their efforts on Hyukshin-style classroom innovation, specifically in terms of student-centered activities such as group work and presentations. Such practices of innovation are then spread across the school community in multiple aspects of their functioning. (3) The aforementioned relief from administrative duties for teachers has led to the creation of active, voluntary grade and discipline-specific PLCs, which have proven to be effective catalysts of innovation in the school. The PLCs help the teachers to learn about new and different ways of planning lessons, and they also organize open classes in which teachers give each other feedback on ways to improve instruction. (4) To a lesser extent, there is also an emphasis on the autonomously run student council, much like in many other Hyukshin schools, as was reported by the teachers and students. This is considered to be essential for democratic education.

## Findings

### School Leaders.

Mr. Hong is 54 years old and became the school's principal in 2019 through the open-recruitment system of the SMOE. From 2009 to 2014 he worked as a science teacher, and eventually became the HHD at Ryuah Middle School. He was one of the original advocates for the school to join the HSSM in 2011. For six years he was the principal at Ollim Middle School, another Hyukshin school in Seoul, before returning to Ryuah Middle School.

The vice principal, Mr. Kwon, is 56 years old and has more than 30 years of teaching experience. He arrived at Ryuah Middle School in March 2019. This was his first time serving as a vice principal or working in a Hyukshin school, which is why he made few comments during the interview.

Mr. Hong sees himself as a “practical principal who manages administrative tasks well.” (Ryuah M, Principal Hong, Interview). He believes that teachers must have a positive attitude towards innovation in his school. He has organized things such that teachers are freed from management chores and know “교장이 한다고 했으니까 행정적인 업무 해 주겠지,” “that all of the administrative work will be taken care of by the principal and his staff.” (Ryuah M, Principal Hong, Interview). From his perspective, the emphases of the school are “classroom innovation and school culture.” (Ryuah M, Principal Hong, Interview).

***Classroom and School-wide Innovation: Emphasizing Teachers' Roles.*** The school leaders believe that teachers should focus their attention on their teaching and school-wide innovations. The school dedicates a portion of its Hyukshin budget to hire administrative assistants for teachers, so that they “are relieved from administrative work, such as buying

teaching materials and planning schedules, and can focus on their teaching.” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview) This arrangement was implemented during the school’s first year in the HSSM, after the principal “선생님들한테 물어봤었어요. 설문조사를 했었어요. 가장 걱정스러운 게 뭐냐고 했을 때, 업무가 늘어날 것 같다,” “carried out a survey of teachers about their concerns, which had to with their increasing workload” (Ryua M, Principal Hong, Interview).

Teachers had reported that they “교육활동에 중심을 두지 못하고,” “were unable to focus on the curriculum” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview), because of too many administrative tasks. The school leaders restructured workloads to support teachers, so they could focus on their fundamental roles in education, and had few administrative tasks (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview). Mr. Hong said it took a couple of years to fix the issue. He said “사실 그래서 첫해에는 다 넘어가지 못했었어요. 두 번째 해에 거의 다 넘어갔었어요,” “so, actually by the first year, administrative tasks could not be turned over completely, but by the second year, they were almost completely turned over to others.” (Ryua M, Principal Hong, Interview).

**Classroom Innovation.** Mr. Hong said his “저희 학교가 있는 지역이 어려운 학생들이 많은 지역이에요,” “school was in an area with many difficulties.” (Ryua M, Principal Hong, Interview). He wants to transform teaching so that “선생님들이 주로 일방적으로 가르치는 그런 형태의 수업에서 ... 아이들이 수업의 주체,” “students are the main agents in class, rather than having the teacher simply deliver information” (Ryua M, Principal Hong, Interview).

*PLCs*. In addition to recognizing that, teachers are the main agents in educational innovation (Ryuah M, Principal Hong, Interview). Mr. Hong said that “선생님들이 교사 공동체를 굉장히 열심히 하셨어요,” “teachers put a lot of work into their PLCs.” (Ryuah M, Principal Hong, Interview). He believes that PLCs allow teachers to develop the HSSM (Ryuah M, Principal Hong, Interview), in ways that improve students’ learning.

Mr. Hong noted that there is a PLN for Hyukshin school leaders that has been organized by the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education (SMOE). He questions its effectiveness, however, saying, “주로 연수인 것 같아요, 관리자한테는. 근데 저는별로 저는 연수가 효율적이라고 생각하지는 않아요,” “these are seminars for administrators. I personally don’t think they are efficient” (Ryuah M, Principal Hong, Interview). He considers the principal and vice principal promotion system in Korea to be a barrier to innovation:

승진 제도가 어떤 교육 혁신적인 마인드를 가진 그런 것에 초점이 있는 것이 아니고 점수를 쌓아서, 저는 전혀 관계가 없다고 생각해요. 그래서 관리자 되신 분들이 혁신적인 마인드를 가지고 있느냐 부분에 대해서 굉장히 회의적인.

The promotion system is not focused on Hyukshin principles, but on accumulating points. I think that there is no connection between the two. I don’t think that the people who became administrators have a Hyukshin mindset. (Ryuah M, Principal Hong, Interview).

A PLN also exists for HSSM teachers to learn from colleagues in other schools. Mr. Hong said that “어려운 문제인 것 같은데 일단 저희는 학교는 다 혁신학교는 대부분 개방을 하거든요. 수업 연구회- 어제도 개방을 해서 다른 학교 선생님들이 오셨었어요,” “we open our school to others. Yesterday we had an open class and teachers from other schools came to observe it” (Ryuah M, Principal Hong, Interview).

**Challenges.** In the SMOE, teachers transfer to new schools every five years. Mr. Hong explained that one limitation of this system is that teachers who gain experience here transfer to other schools and implement what they have learned in their new schools. Sometimes they fail because their approach is too new for other schools (Ryuah M, Principal Hong, Interview). He continued that many beginning teachers are positive about our school about innovations, but old traditional teachers expressed their strong concerns (Ryuah M, Principal Hong, Interview).

There have been some problems with older teachers. For example, one old traditional teacher who was sent to his school, “교무실을 막 거의 발각 뒤집어 놓으셨어요. '나 다시 다른데 보내줘라' 하시고,” “complained and asked to be sent to another school.” (Ryuah M, Principal Hong, Interview). The current teacher rotation system does not seem to be aligned with the HSSM.

### **Teachers.**

Mr. Suh transferred in to Ryuah Middle School. He liked it, saying: “이 학교로 와서는 제가 상상하던 것만큼, 오히려 그 이상으로 그런 것들이 이루어지고 있어가지고 저한테 되게 만족스러워요,” “since I came to this school, I have been satisfied because Hyukshin principles are realized, more than I had imagined” (Ryuah M, Teacher Suh, Interview). The HHD said that Ryuah Middle School was “a school that made me think of how I might go about improving” (Ryuah M, HHD Kim, Interview). He said that he had a history of “teaching lethargically,” (Ryuah M, HHD Kim, Interview) he recently has “felt a desire to provide more diverse ways of learning through cooperative work with the teachers” (Ryuah M, HHD Kim, Interview).

Mr. Moon, a Korean literacy teacher, felt that the professional growth he has experienced in his PLCS, in which the teachers are “open minded about classes” has been facilitated by “the will to make improvements.” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview). Mr. Kim believes that “the high level of motivation that teachers bring to their PLCs is the driving force behind Ryua Middle School.” (Ryua M, HHD Kim, Interview). Mr. Suh and Mr. Moon both praised the concept of freedom with responsibility that the school’s student council has developed over time, denoting a positive response from the faculty about the approaches Ryua Middle School has taken.

***School Culture Innovation.*** Mr. Suh has been satisfied with the school leadership. He feels that Ryua Middle School supports its teachers in an attempt to focus them more on successfully educating students, rather than have their focus on administrative tasks. In Ryua Middle School the school leaders have “eliminated or simplified the processes of administrative work, so that it only takes about three to five minutes for teachers daily.” (Ryua M, Teacher Suh, Interview).

***PLCs.*** The HHD said that Ryua Middle School has “a great cooperative culture” (Ryua M, HHD Kim, Interview). At the school, there are grade level PLCs. There is also a club called *O-Hyuk-Dong*, which stands for *Ryua Hyukshin Communication*, implemented for Ryua teachers interested in conducting class research. Beginning around the year of 2013, *O-Hyuk-Dong* has increased its members to 21 out of the 30 teachers in the school, including the principal and vice principal.

In the grade level PLCs, Ryua Middle School mandates that all teachers hold open classes. The HHD believes that his school has “fruitful open classes,” because everyone is involved in them (Ryua M, HHD Kim, Interview). He shared one of his experiences where

diverse disciplinary teachers in the same grade level all came together and collaborated as one

team:

예를 들면 제가 2학년에서 기후 변화에 대한 온실에 지구 온난화에 대한 수업을 했었는데 그때 게임 수업을 계획을 했었거든요. 네 지구 온난화 게임을 개발을 해 가지고 하는데 수학 선생님이 그러시는 거예요. 이렇게 게임판을 개발하면 자꾸 fail 만 나온다 이게 진행이 안 된다는 거예요. 주사 이상으로 저는 그런 확률까지는 생각을 못 해봤던 거예요. 그다음에 작년에 전력과 전기 에너지 이런 수업을 했었는데 그때 어떻게 이거를 제 머릿속으로는 한계가 좀 있었어요. 그랬는데 국어 선생님께서 그러면 애들한테 좀 재밌게 가정에서 사용하는 전자제품들을 여러 개를 주고 쇼핑하듯이 너희가 한 번 너네 집들을 꾸며봐 모뎀별 모뎀 하우스를 그래서 거기서 전력을 계산하게끔 일상과 연결이 되게끔.

I had a 2nd grade class on climate change. I developed a global warming game, but the math teacher said, 'If you develop the game board like this, you'll fail.' I had not thought of such probability, that was more than just making the dice. And last year, I had a class on power and electrical energy, but this lesson was planned inadequately in my way of thinking. But then the Korean literacy teacher suggested an idea to provide multiple home appliances, so that students decorate their own houses in groups to calculate the power use of each house to find the learning more joyful—and so, it is also connected to their real lives. (Ryua M, HHD Kim, Interview).

The HHD found ideas from other teachers helpful in “adjusting to the appropriate level of students.” (Ryua M, HHD Kim, Interview). He initially found it strange to meet with teachers who do not teach science to plan a science lesson, but he now considers this a strength of Ryua Middle School.

The HHD also said that regular PLC meetings have allowed for the creation of an atmosphere in which teachers are able to meet with their colleagues. He shared an example of a time when he thought of collaborating with the Korean literacy teacher to initiate a science book report:

과학책을 읽고 싶어서 과학 도서를 읽고 싶어서 어떻게 하면 좋을까 하다가 시간이 너무 안 나고 국어 선생님이랑 이거를 통합을 해야 되겠다 그러니까 국어 선생님은 수업 시간에 독후감 활동을 하고 저는 과학 시간에 그 책을 읽고 과학 퀴즈나 이런 알게 되는 거를 좀 익히는 거로 해야

되겠다라고 해서 했어요. 원래는 국어와 과학의 독후활동을 사실은 저만 생각을 하고 있었는데 국어 시간에 독소를 세 번을 하거든요. 거기에 아그럼 과학 도서를 하면 제가 시간을 벌 수 있겠구나라는 생각을 한 거예요.

I wanted students to read science books. I thought about how to implement this in class, but there was not enough time. I thought of collaborating with the Korean literacy teacher, so that students could complete book reports in Korean literacy class and read and take quizzes on what they learned from the books in my class. Originally, it was only me who thought of doing Korean literacy and science book reports together. In the PLC meetings, however, I learned that the Korean literacy class reads similar books. I thought, “If I include science books, this would be great.” (Ryuah M, HHD Kim, Interview).

This is an example of the interdisciplinary learning that has been promoted since the 2015 revised National Curriculum called for integrated instruction in science and the humanities (Ministry of Education, 2015). Mr. Kim believes that “the school’s atmosphere encourages teachers to talk” (Ryuah M, HHD Kim, Interview). Teachers were enthusiastic about designing new ways for students to learn.

Mr. Moon, the Korean literacy teacher, feels that Ryuah Middle School has a great PLC culture. The school has “mandatory open classes” (Ryuah M, Teacher Moon, Interview), he explained, and these ensure that each colleague “provides constructive criticism” after observing a lesson (Ryuah M, Teacher Moon, Interview). For every open class, “teachers have one to three meetings before teaching it,” (Ryuah M, Teacher Moon, Interview). Since “the meetings involve other teachers with different subject matter expertise” (Ryuah M, Teacher Moon, Interview), Mr. Moon feels that he is better able to “look at the lesson from the perspective of the students,” (Ryuah M, Teacher Moon, Interview).

Mr. Moon said that his experiences when teaching open classes in the past have benefited from a large number of observers. The school pilots “shared lessons” that also invite parents and teachers from other grade levels and schools to observe. Mr. Moon was only in his second year of teaching when he taught his first shared lesson. He said that it “felt very demanding” (Ryuah

M, Teacher Moon, Interview), but he also said that he “learned a lot” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview):

굉장히 제가 초라해진다 라는 느낌도 받았는데 그거를 거치면서 점차 내 수업이 처음에 혼자 계획했던 거보다 다른 사람의 의견을 들은 게 훨씬 나아졌다 라고 들었고 그리고 마지막에 수업이 끝나고 난 다음에 진짜 많은 선생님들이 진짜 칭찬을 많이 해줬거든요. 외부에 있는 선생님들에게도 이제 칭찬을 많이 받았고 해서 뭔가 제가 수업을 잘했다기보다 사실 제가 잘못하면 절대 그런 식의 수업을 못 했을 텐데 진짜 이런 과정을 통해서 수업이 좀 나아진다 라는 걸 느꼈어요.

I felt first very small, but I gradually found that hearing others' opinions was better than planning lessons on my own. After the last lesson was over, many teachers complimented me. I got a lot of compliments from teachers from other schools, too. I felt that I would never have taught in that way if I had planned the lesson all alone. My lessons have improved through such processes. (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview).

This teacher said that “there cannot be any improvement” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview) unless teachers share their lessons. “Although it may feel unpleasant” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview), in order to establish open “communication among teachers of diverse age ranges” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview), he believes it is essential for all schools. Mr. Moon shared how he held “voluntary open classes” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview) four or five times this year, and that the teachers used his prepared survey to give him feedback. Having experienced much support from his coworkers, Mr. Moon felt that Ryua Middle School has a collaborative faculty community that works with the common “will to improve.” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview).

**Student Council.** Mr. Moon found that the Ryua Middle School “student council tends to make all decisions, from spending their budget, to organizational plans, on their own” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview). Having about 10% of the student population as student council members, the school supports them “through its budget” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview)

and does so “administratively and culturally” (Ryuah M, Teacher Moon, Interview). Stating that the school “generously supports the council with a budget especially targeted to autonomous activities” (Ryuah M, Teacher Suh, Interview), Mr. Suh explained that Ryuah Middle School’s student council budget is “four times” larger than that of other schools. This is due to the SMOE’s provision of additional resources to Hyukshin schools.

The budget is mostly spent on festivals, which students organize. More than 10 million won was spent just to install a stage at last year’s festival. Mr. Suh felt that the students are more advanced in their “democratic way of making decisions” (Ryuah M, Teacher Suh, Interview), “cooperation and initiative” (Ryuah M, Teacher Suh, Interview), compared to students in non-Hyukshin schools.

However, Mr. Suh felt that the large budget allocated to the student council was “not right.” (Ryuah M, Teacher Suh, Interview). “The number of student autonomous events held does not, in and of itself, achieve student autonomy” (Ryuah M, Teacher Suh, Interview) Mr. Suh worried that the “students are still yet to attain democratic citizenship at the level their teachers want.” (Ryuah M, Teacher Suh, Interview). He felt that students must learn to share power.

Mr. Suh felt that some “teachers are having a very hard time” (Ryuah M, Teacher Suh, Interview), when they see students acting unilaterally. He gave this year’s festival as an example. The student council organized a festival that was supposed to take place in the school’s gym. The annual festival had been held outside successfully in previous years. Now, however, because a new gym had been built, the student council and teachers had agreed it was best to hold it indoors.

However, not too long afterwards, the students changed their minds. They disregarded the teachers' preferences and held the event outside. The schools' administrators supported the students. In this case, due to these factors, the teachers were not the drivers of change. The festival was held outdoors, as it had been in previous years, and the teachers' opinions were overruled.

Feeling that their previous consent was meaningless, teachers complained. They asked questions like, “Do we always have to comply with the kids' requests?” and ‘Is this educational?’” Ryuah Middle School teachers felt that they had been marginalized and that their professional judgment had been overlooked in favor of the student council. This was troubling for them.

Mr. Moon explained that this is “one of the features of achieving a democratic decision.” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview). While it may be unsettling at times, Mr. Moon understands the frustrations that come along with democratic education. He explained, “그것이 좋은 결과를 낳든 나쁜 결과를 낳든 간에 어쨌든 아이들이 선택한 거고 그에 대한 결과를 느끼고 또 내년에는 어떤 식으로 진행할 것인가에 대해서 스스로 배워나갈,” “whether the decision has a good or bad outcome, it was what students had decided, of which they need to feel about the outcome and learn how to proceed it next year on their own” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview). Mr. Moon conceded that a democracy does not always make the right decisions (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview).

He explained, “어떤 뛰어난 리더가 하는 선택이 항상 더 나은 선택이 될 수 있는데 그럼에도 불구하고 이제 민주주의를 고집하는 이유는 그 선택에 대해서 구성원들이 책임을 질 수 있을 거라는 믿음 때문이잖아요,” “although a good leader could make better decisions, in a democracy the community has to take on responsibility for decisions.” (Ryua M,

Teacher Moon, Interview). Mr. Moon felt that “that students need to acquire this sense of responsibility on their own.” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview). He believed that “students will do a better job in preparing the next festival.” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview).

Mr. Suh still believes that the student council members “need to be educated about how to conduct themselves” (Ryua M, Teacher Suh, Interview). He disliked it when “the person with the loudest voice got to make decisions.” (Ryua M, Teacher Suh, Interview). In the Korean age-based *sunbae* culture, “first graders could not speak up in front of second or third graders.” (Ryua M, Teacher Suh, Interview). This teacher found it unfair that seniority commands a greater level of responsibility and respect, such that older students are advantaged when compared to their younger counterparts.

Mr. Suh felt it is not true that simply diminishing teachers’ participation produces equality among students in regard to the distribution of influence and power. To address this problem, Mr. Suh has tried to change the format of the student council. He is dividing the members into five departments and gave them separate tasks to complete. Despite the change, only the heads of each department made the final decisions, and the others just became workers for them.

Mr. Suh divided the student council members into different grade levels, so that students at the lower grades would feel safer to express their opinions. However, Mr. Suh said, “whatever efforts I made, only the main members made decisions, and dictated the decisions to others.” (Ryua M, Teacher Suh, Interview). Mr. Suh considers this inequality amongst students to be an issue that merits attention. He now wants to “reduce the number of student council events, and to use the budget more on the development process” (Ryua M, Teacher Suh, Interview) with students.

## Students.

The two students we interviewed are both eighth graders at Ryuah Middle School. They say that they have experienced remarkable changes in their school as a result of classroom innovation. They appreciated the level of student autonomy given to them in the student council.

*Classroom Innovation.* The students appreciated their education. Cho said that, “모둠 형식으로 거의 진행을 하고요,” “classes are organized into group activities” (Ryuah M, Student Choi, Interview). Lee said that, at this school, group activities are important. The arrangement of the desks is not in rows. Teachers provide students with places to communicate with our friends. Choi echoed that, “학생끼리 의견 모아서 내 의견은 이렇고, 상대방 의견도 들어보고. 하면서 하는 것 같아요,” “we share our opinions with each other.”

The two students had experienced interdisciplinary curriculum units that their teachers had designed. Choi said that, “1학년 때는, 수학하면서 같이 역사를 배운다든가. 미술을 하면서 과학도 같이 배운다든가. 그런 식으로 수업이 돼 있었어요,” “when I was in sixth grade, I studied history, alongside math, and art, alongside science. Classes were organized like that” (Ryuah M, Student Choi, Interview). Interdisciplinary lessons, Choi explained, “저는 되게 도움된다고 생각했어요,” “help students a lot” (Ryuah M, Student Choi, Interview). There are several examples.

He said,

자기가 한 과목씩만 배우는 게 아니라 수학할 때 역사적인 인물이 나왔을 때, 이 인물에 대해서 궁금할 수도 있는데 그런 수업 통해서 역사적 인물에 대해서도 알 수 있으니까 조금 더 깊이 공부할 때 도움이 된다고 생각해요.

Not only did I learn one subject, but we also learned about historical figures during the math class. We might wonder who someone was, but through such lessons, we could learn about the man. This helps me to go deeper in my studies (Ryuah M, Student Choi, Interview).

Lee found that his teachers worked hard in preparing lessons that were interesting for students. He emphasized that his science class was very impressive because of the way his teacher let students be involved in scientific experiments:

과학은 저희가 침 아밀레이스가 녹말을 분해하잖아요. 그런 거를 직접 저희가 좀 더러울 수도 있지만 저희가 직접 침을 뱉어서-그래서 아이오딘-아이오딘화 칼륨을 떨어뜨려서 검정색으로 변하는지 이렇게 청담 색으로 변하는지 이렇게 봐서 이렇게 색깔로 표를 만들어 주셔서 색깔로 그렇게 하는 실험이 인상 깊었고.

In science, saliva amylase breaks down starch. It may sound a little dirty, but we spit saliva ourselves. We dropped iodized potassium to see whether the color of our saliva changed to black or dark blue. I was impressed by the experiment and was able to compare it to a color table we had made previously. (Ryuh M, Student Lee, Interview).

In another example, Lee mentioned the case of his English teacher in Ryuh Middle school by stating:

영어는 저희 영어 선생님이 수업을 되게 열정적이게 해 주세요. ppt 가 진짜 이 선생님을 따라 못 갈 정도로 되게 몇 시간 동안 작업을 하신다고 하시더라고요 ppt 도. 정말 저희도 되게 노력하신 게 보일 정도로 열심히 해 주세요...선생님이 학습지를 되게 중요시 여기고 교과서보다는 학습지 살짝 이런 주의서서.

Our English teacher prepares very detailed lessons for our class. I hear that the teacher usually spends so many hours preparing the PPTs and we can also feel the teachers' enormous efforts. ... The teacher put a heavier emphasis on assignments rather than on the textbook. (Ryuh M, Student Lee, Interview).

He said that teachers in this school modify their lessons, responding to how students feel about them.

Lee said:

영어 같은 경우에는 선생님께서 따로 진짜 아예 만드셔서 자신이 수업이 좋은 점이랑 좀 개선돼야 될 점을 이렇게 칠판에 한번 포스트에다 붙여서 써 봐라 이렇게 해 보셨어요. 그래서 선생님 말이 너무 빨라요 선생님 너무 집요하게 너무 하시는 것 같아요 아니면 좋은 의견을 선생님 영어를 많이

사용해 주셔서 좋아요 아니면 여러 활동을 하셔서 좋아요 이렇게 이런 선생님이 하시는 수업에 대한 평가를 저희가 직접 익명으로 써서 선생님이 그걸 보시고 칠판에다 아예 코팅을 해서 붙여 놓으셨더라고요.

In the case of English, the teacher had us put up sticky notes. We were asked to write about good aspects, and aspects that need to be improved about his class on the blackboard. We wrote anonymously about the teacher's class. We could post such things as “the teacher is talking too quickly,” “is too tenacious,” “we are happy that the teacher is using English a lot,” and “we are happy that the teacher lets us do a lot of activities.” The teacher read that feedback to the class, laminated all of the sticky notes, and placed them on the blackboard. (Ryua M, Student Lee, Interview).

Lee stated that group activities like this help students to collect their own thoughts and solve problems in creative ways (Ryua M, Student Lee, Interview). He said that students learn to work in teams through exercises in group problem-solving, and he appreciated the way that the teacher was not at all defensive about aspects of classroom innovation that needed improvement.

One important part of classroom innovation that students noted involved assessment. Because, “선생님들이 개인 평가 안 하세요. 모둠 평가도 많이 하셔서 나 혼자만 잘하면 되는 게 아니라 조장을 뽑으면 조장도 이렇게 조장이 잘 이끌어 줘야지,” “teachers don't evaluate students individually but as a group, it is not so important that a student works well independently” (Ryua M, Student Lee, Interview). Rather, “when a student leader is elected, the leader learns how to lead the group well” (Ryua M, Student Lee, Interview).

***Student Autonomy.*** Three themes arose in the interviews regarding autonomy: (i) an active student council; (ii) students' voices being respected; and (iii) autonomy with responsibility. Regarding (i) an active student council, Choi said that, a “혁신헌교란 선생님과 학생이 이끌어 나가는 학교,” “Hyukshin school means a school led by teachers and pupils.” (Ryua M, Student Choi, Interview). There are many student-led activities which are run by the

student council. The sports day and club activities are examples of students' autonomous activities:

운동회를 원래 운동회를 저희 학교가 안 했었는데, 학생회장 저한테 선배님이 바뀌면서 학생회장 하면서 학생끼리 우리 운동회를 우리끼리 해서 해보자 해서 운동회를 시작을 해서 잘 끝마무리 됐고, 그리고 제가 속해있는 동아리도 지금 고등학교 1학년인 선배님이 만들고, 직접 새로운 동아리를 학생끼리 만들고자해서 만들어서 저도 이제 하고 있는 거니까 되게 학생회 대해서 하는 것도 많은 것 같고. 학생이 좀 주도하는 그런 활동 많이 하는 것 같아요.

We students hadn't taken the lead of the sports day before, but after the new student president was elected, we organized the sports day based on his ideas. And it all worked out just fine. Also, the club which I'm in was created by an alumnus who is a 9th grader in high school now. He took the initiative to make the club, and that is how I got to be involved in this. So, I think there are lots of things the student council does, and I think there are many activities like that, where students take the lead. (Ryua M, Student Choi, Interview).

Lee said that the student council is very active (Ryua M, Student Lee, Interview). He said, “정말 학생회들이 좀 힘들 정도로 많이 열심히 하고 그리고 학급 회의도 좀 자주 하는 것 같아요. 자주 하면서 학교의 문제나 아니면 개선해야 할 점 아니면 건의 사항 그런 것도 많이 하고 그런 거를 학생회들끼리,” “the student council works hard. It has a lot of meetings. It discusses problems and how to solve them.” (Ryua M, Student Lee, Interview).

Lee felt that students actually have a lot of authority to make their own decisions in student council:

그러니까 학생들이 할 수 있는 범위가 훨씬 더 넓은 것 같아요. 축제를 준비할 때도 예산같은 걸 학생들이 직접 조율을 한다든지. 학생 동아리에 나눠줄 지원금? ... 그런 것들.

I think the extent to which students can do things on their own in my school is much greater than elsewhere. For example, when students prepare for the school festival, students can discuss issues about the budget allocations, or the right amount of funding for school clubs. (Ryua M, Student Lee, Interview).

Students said they believe that they are respected by their teachers. Lee emphasized how teachers and students “have lots of conversation with each other,” (Ryua M, Student Lee, Interview).

Lee believed that “teachers have closer relationships with students,” (Ryua M, Student Lee, Interview) than they have in non-Hyukshin schools.

He continued:

교무실에 학생들이 많이 가요. 선생님들이랑 얘기도 많이 하고 그냥 학생들의 의견을 많이 수렴해 주셔서 좀 더 이런 단체 활동이나 아니면 체험 활동처럼 저희가 저희 의견이 반영된 것을 하니까 저희도 재밌고. 선생님이 저희도 좀 더 이렇게 열정적으로 할 수 있게 더 끌어 주시는 거 같아요 선생님들끼리 그리고 학생과 선생님이 서로 존중을 해 준다 해야 되나? 그런 관계가 되게 좋은 것 같아요 저는.

Many students go to teacher's offices to talk with the teachers. Teachers accept many of our opinions and have tried to organize group activities or field trips, that incorporate our ideas. So, it is fun! I think the teachers also like us to be more passionate. Teachers and students mutually respect each other here. I like such relationships. (Ryua M, Student Lee, Interview).

One of the two students said that students not only exercise their autonomy, but also have to develop a sense of responsibility if they wish to preserve their freedoms. Choi felt that, “학교에서 학생에게 주는 그런 압박감들 좀 자유랑 권리를 주면서 막 압박감들을 크게 주지 않으니까 오히려 자기가 지켜야 될 의무는 지키면서도 자기 자유랑 권리도 같이 챙기는 거 같아요,” “because students are freed from a lot of negative pressure at our school by knowing that our rights are respected, students enjoy our freedom” (Ryua M, Student Choi, Interview).

Choi felt that students in Ryua Middle School were not immature: “그런 건의 사항이나 할 때도 저희도 너무 말도 안 되는 터무니없는 얘기를 하지 않으려고 최대한 노력은 하고,” “When we make suggestions, we try our best not to make absurd proposals.”

(Ryuah M, Student Choi, Interview). Thus, students feel that they are learning to take on the responsibilities entailed in full participation in a democratic school and society. They want to maintain their educators' respect for them, and as part of this they recognize that they must behave maturely in order to keep their freedom within the school. Students want to be reasonable:

학급 회의를 회장들이 이끌어 가잖아요. 이렇게 손을 들어서 얘기를 하는데. 저희 반 같은 경우는 이 의견은 너무 좁 그렇지 않나 아니면 이 의견은 너무 학생들에게만 좋은 거 아닌가 살짝 이렇게 좀 여러 시선에서 여러 방향에서도 괜찮은 의견 같다고 느끼려고 많이 다른 사람 입장에서 많이 생각해 보려고 많이 노력하고요.

Class meetings are led by chairs. Students express their opinions by raising their hands. In the case of my class, there were times when I thought “Is that opinion okay?” or “Isn't this opinion too focused on students?” We try to consider the strengths and weaknesses of different ideas from various perspectives. (Ryuah M, Student Choi, Interview).

**Challenges.** Students described two challenges in their school. The first challenge was about student-led activities. Lee said that while he was satisfied with innovations, such as using music in English class group activities, other students felt differently. He said that, “좀 관심을 가지지 않으면 정말 이것까지 해야 돼라고 느끼는 학생도 분명히 있을 거라고는 생각해요.” “There are some students who think, ‘Do I really have to do this too?’ when they are not interested” (Ryuah M, Student Lee, Interview). Lee claimed that there are severe gaps between the advanced and low achieving groups. Some advanced students think that assignments are too easy and wonder why other students are not able to solve them, while students at lower levels find it hard to study English lyrics (Ryuah M, Student Lee, Interview). This is an issue for the HSSM to consider.

Although teachers try to get students involved in group activities, they are not always successful. Choi stated, “반끼리 단합해야 될 때가 상당히 많고 모둠 활동을 기본으로 두고 수업을 하니까 뭉쳐야 될 때가 되게 많은데, 그때마다 좀 곁돌고 무리에 합류하지 못하는 친구들이 많으니까 거기에 대해서 좀 참여하게 할 수 있는 촉매가 있었으면 좋겠다. 생각해요,” “There are times when cooperating in groups works. But each time there are some students who don’t join in. I wish there was a way to get them involved.” (Ryua M, Student Choi, Interview).

Lee went on to discuss the kinds of students most appropriate for Ryua Middle School’s student population. Lee believes that the school is not a good choice for top students with high aspirations:

똑똑한 학생들한테는 추천을 하고 싶진 않아요. 왜냐면 저희 중학교는 교육보다는 약간 인성 살짝 이런 거에 좀 많이 치우쳐진 학교 같아요. 그리고 여기가 조금 고등학교 가기 좀 어려운 길이에요. 약간 주변에 이름난 고등학교가 있지도 않고 약간 이 지역이 자체가 좀 공부하는 사람들 공부하는 지역은 아니라서 정말 내가 공부를 잘하고 싶고 정말 좋은 고등학교 명문대 가고 싶다 이렇게 하고 싶은 학생한테는 많이 안 가고 여기 가까운데 있는 목동 많이 가죠 솔직히.

I wouldn't recommend this school to smart students. This is because our school is focused more on character education than on academic achievement. From here, it is hard to go to a good high school. There is no famous high school nearby. This area is not a place where many students have high academic achievement. Many students who want to study hard and want to go to a good high school, and then go to a famous university, go to schools in the Mokdong district near here. (Ryua M, Student Lee, Interview).

He agreed that at times there is a poor academic atmosphere in his school:

학생 수가 별로 없는데 공부하겠다는 마음을 가진 학생들이 그렇게 크게 많아 보이지는 않긴 해요. 다른 학교에 비해-학생들이 약간 분위기 탄다 이런 말도 있잖아요. 다 노는데 나 혼자 공부하는 게 조금 그럴 수도 있단 말이죠.

There are not many students here who are determined to study really hard, compared to other schools. There's a saying that students are very sensitive to how their peers do in the classroom. It might seem a little weird for me to study alone while the other students do not study, but just play around. (Ryua M, Student Lee, Interview).

The perceived inability of students to achieve high CSAT scores, and the suspicion that Hyukshin students do not study hard, seem to be common stereotypes of Hyukshin schools. Based upon these student interviews in Ryua Middle School and statements from other students in our case studies, these stereotypes seem to have a grain of truth to them. This perception, whether it be true or false, is an area in need of attention if Hyukshin schools are to flourish in the long run.

## **Parents**

Two Ryua Middle School mothers were interviewed, both college graduates, one of whom majored in science, Ms. Lee, and one who majored in engineering, Ms. Kim. At the time of the interviews, both mothers were undertaking top leadership roles in the Ryua parents' association: the chairmanship and vice-chairmanship. Ms. Lee and Ms. Kim had careers after their marriages as a computer engineer and architectural designer, respectively.

*Extracurricular Activities.* Ms. Lee and Ms. Kim both contemplated sending their children to a regular school in the Mokdong district, where students are thought to study hard. During school vacations, elementary school pupils in Mokdong attend private academies from 10 in the morning to 10 in the evening (Ryua M, Parent Lee, Interview). However, both parents did not agree with their neighbors. They enrolled their children in Ryua Middle School because of the principal and the sense that Hyukshin values align with their own aspirations for their children. They were also attracted by the school's promotion of the arts and physical education. Ms. Kim stated:

고민을 많이 했었는데, 한 4 학년 정도에 내가 목동에 들어가면 너무 애를 예체능 같은 거 다 빼고 학원에서 교과 과목을 계속 돌릴 거 같더라고요... 좀 성적에 대한 부담감을 좀 덜어 가면서 중학교 생활을 보내게 하는 게 좋겠다 라는 생각이 들어서.

I was worried about making the right decision. I thought I would inevitably have my children study ceaselessly in Hagwons without any participation in physical education and the arts if I decided to live in Mokdong when my child was in 4th grade. Besides, I wanted my child to live his life in middle school, relieved from the stress of academic grades. (Ryua M, Parent Kim, Interview).

Similarly, Ms. Lee was satisfied with Ryua's athletic options. Her son was an active member of a school skating group that practices in an off-campus rink all year long. She added, “학교에서 체육 활동을 계속 배드민턴, 티볼 선생님이 계속 돌려 주시면서 하면 굉장히 흥미를 많이 느끼고 애가 되게 좋아하더라고요,” “The teachers led the training sessions of badminton, Tee-ball, and many others. My son is extremely interested in them and likes them very much.” (Ryua M, Parent Lee, Interview).

Young teachers within Ryua have been able to bond with their students through such extracurricular activities. Teachers have made a good impression on students and parents by dancing together at the opening of a sports festival, for example. The students and parents enjoyed the dances. They felt like their school was a real community. Some even saved recordings of this event on their phones.

Ms. Kim has discovered that participation in sports is essential for some young people. For some students, sports promote an inclusiveness that students do not otherwise experience at school:

처음에는 정말 강제전학 온 애가 1 년 동안 아이들이랑 한마디도 안 한 아이가 있었어요. 근데 지금은 무슨 운동회를 하면 앞에서 응원을 주도하는 아이가 되어 있고 수업도 안 들어오던 애가 요즘은 수업도 들어와서 자더라도 그렇게 교실에 앉아있더라고요. 그래서 그런 아이들의 분위기가 이 아이한테도 이런 영향을 주지 않았을까.

There was a student who was forced to transfer to this school and did not speak a word with his classmates for a year. Then, he became a different person. He led the cheering during a school sporting event. While he used to just fall asleep in class, now he at least stopped skipping classes. I think the student might be influenced positively by the school's overall atmosphere. (Ryuah M, Parent Kim, Interview).

Any school which engages such previously alienated students must be judged as having attained at least a measure of success. Hyukshin schools want all such students to be re-integrated into their society.

**School Events.** The parents like the way that Ryuah Middle School delegates decision-making power to students with regard to school events. Due to the fact that many events require the participation of parents and community members, they make a real contribution to the school's neighborhood. Ms. Kim said:

학부모, 학생, 선생님 세 명이서 서로 소통하면서 선생님 주도, 학부모 주도, 학생 주도가 아니라 이 세 명이 다 주체가 돼서 같이 서로 이렇게 노력하면서 만들어가는 학교라고 생각해요. 만들어가는 학교.

This is a school where all three stakeholders, including the parents, students, and teachers, communicate with one another. The school isn't purely led by one party. Rather, all three groups are the main players. They collaborate well with one another. (Ryuah M, Parent Kim, Interview).

Ms. Kim referred to a time when students in the second and third grade disagreed upon an event venue and budget. Instead of this matter being decided solely by the teachers and administrators, the decision was made collectively, through school-wide voting. Ms. Kim said the school leaders were, “학교에서도 굉장히 아이들 의사를 굉장히 존중해주고요,” “extremely respectful of the pupils' opinions.” (Ryuah M, Parent Kim, Interview)

During this festival, students sold food they had made. Ms. Lee explained:

엄마들이 500 원 내면 어묵 두 개 주고 뭐 닭갈비 2,000 원. 그게 다 학교 돈 지원받아서 다 공짜로 저희가 다 무상으로 그냥 주다시피해서 여기 주민들 오시면 부침개도 1,000 원에 팔고.

Two fish cakes were priced at 500 won (or \$ 0.42), and chicken ribs were 2,000 won (or \$ 1.66). The school has subsidized all of the dishes, so they are almost free. The pancakes were sold to residents for 1,000 won (or \$ 0.83). (Ryuah M, Parent Lee, Interview).

The festival gave students a chance to learn entrepreneurial skills. Some parents questioned whether the expenses entailed were excessive and should have been used for academics.

Nonetheless, the idea of the event has been borrowed by other schools.

Students at Ryuah Middle School learn practical skills through gardening and farming lessons. There is a vegetable garden on the roof of the school where students grow “상추도 심고 방울토마토도 심고,” “lettuce, cherry tomatoes, and other produce” (Ryuah M, Parent Lee, Interview). Ms. Lee said that she wanted to develop a vegetable garden with the kids of her own child’s class too.

**Collaboration.** The teachers, students, and parents of Ryuah Middle School have also collaborated with one another to help the students prepare for athletic and academic contests. During such contests, and “거기서 뽑고 또 이번에는 난타를 학부모, 학생 그리고 학교에서 청소하는 선생님들까지 해서 저희가 합쳐서 연습을 했어요,” “after the students were chosen for the competitions, the parents, students, and teachers who were left in the school for campus cleaning worked together to help the students to practice” (Ryuah M, Parent Lee, Interview). Ms. Lee believes that these games have elevated Ryuah Middle School above other schools.

**Perceptions of Teachers.** Ms. Lee said both she and her child have respect for the young teachers in the school. Ms. Lee gave two examples of the teachers’ work ethic. First, teachers who excel at the English language have volunteered their time in order to tutor students. She

believes that these practices greatly benefit certain students because, “영어를 아예 학원을 안 다니는 애도 있더라고요. 많이 꽤 되더라고요,” “There are a lot of students who do not attend English Hagwons.” (Ryuah M, Parent Lee, Interview). Second, the teachers have taken their students, outside of the regular school day, to practice archery, a Korean national sport, and to visit theaters in order to see plays. The teachers have also moved the piano from the music classroom to the hallway to facilitate its use by students, which has directly benefitted Ms. Lee’s son.

Sometimes the parents expressed concerns that the instruction provided to the students at Ryuah Middle School was too lax and that standards needed to be elevated. Ms. Lee shared how many mothers were unhappy that “시험이 끝나면 영화를 틀어 주잖아요,” “when an exam was over the teachers showed a movie” (Ryuah M, Parent Lee, Interview). The aspect that struck parents the most was that students took a break and did not continue their progress with learning after the exams. As a consequence, the parents filed complaints with the administration (Ryuah M, Parent Lee, Interview). Some parents say the school does not help students who lack self-control to become more disciplined. Ms. Lee said, “만약 애가 스스로 공부에 성공하기로 결심하고 주변 사람들에게 쉽게 영향을 받지 않는다면 이곳으로 애를 보내는 것을 추천해요,” “I only recommend sending your child here if she is self-determined to succeed in studying. She mustn’t be easily influenced by those surrounding her.” (Ryuah M, Parent Lee, Interview).

The competing demands of the students and parents either for more leisure or for greater academic pressure can be difficult for teachers to adjudicate. Ms. Kim’s son had told her that he admired the professionalism of the teachers and the principal. She explained that he observed how educators knew the students’ strengths and weaknesses. They saw students as whole people.

They recognize students for things they have done well. Her son said that he, “선생님 군대 가면 편지 쓸 거라고 하고 그렇게 하더라고요,” “would write letters to his teachers when he is enlisted in the army for compulsory military service.” (Ryuah M, Parent Kim, Interview).

***Emphases and Expectations.*** Ms. Lee’s nephew lives in the expensive Gangnam district. She told us that her sister would not let her son attend his elementary school until he had finished his homework for the private academy that the mother prioritized. Ms. Lee said that, “여기는 별로 그렇지 않은데 강남이 제일 심하죠,” “This situation is severe in Gangnam, but it’s non-existent here.” (Ryuah M, Parent Lee, Interview).

Ms. Kim commented on how she has allowed her son to take two days off from his Hagwon in order to finish a composition for his music class. She believed that it was a necessary and a precious opportunity for him to work on the composition to relieve stress and participate in screenwriting and musical production. She said, “소수만 누릴 수 있는 거니까,” – “Few students in Korea can enjoy such experiences.” (Ryuah M, Parent Kim, Interview).

Ms. Lee expected her son to be an adult who can live independently (Ryuah M, Parent Lee, Interview). Ms. Kim wanted her son to be happy now, rather than waiting until he has settled into a profession. She said, “제대로 자고 쉬고 남처럼 즐길 수 있는 삶을 살았으면 좋겠어,” “live a life where he could sleep, rest and enjoy life” (Ryuah M, Parent Kim, Interview). She continued that, “저는 계속 일을 하고 살아온 입장으로서 내가 좋은 학교를 나왔다고 해서 좋은 직업을 가졌다고 해서 인생이 그렇게 계속 행복하거나 이러지는 않더라고요,” “As a working mother, I know that graduating from a prestigious university and obtaining a well-off job do not necessarily guarantee a happier life.” (Ryuah M, Parent Kim, Interview).

Ms. Kim wanted him to learn how to socialize with friends (Ryuah M, Parent Kim, Interview). She said “이 학교는 사회성을 굉장히 많이 배울 수 있는 학교여서 그냥 만족하고 있습니다,” “I am satisfied with this school because it has helped him to learn social skills.” (Ryuah M, Parent Kim, Interview). In addition, she valued the critical thinking skills that her son has cultivated through his experiences in the school. Ms. Kim explained:

사회의 뭐 불합리한 부분, 정치적이거나 보편 아 저거는 잘못됐어 이런 발언을 할 수 있는 아이로 크고 있다는 게 저는 좋은 거 같습니다. 그게 이 학교를 다님으로써 가능하지 않았을까 그냥 입시 위주의 학교를 다녔으면 이 아이는 세상을 돌아가는 것도 귀를 기울일 수가 없을 거고.

He has grown into a person who can speak out against political and social problems, which makes me satisfied. I think it was possible only because he attended this school. If he had attended a school oriented towards the entrance exam, he would not be able to listen to others. (Ryuah M, Parent Kim, Interview).

Ms. Kim said that having good grades and excellent academics doesn't guarantee financial and professional success. She said, “Just because you don't earn more money doesn't mean you've failed” (Ryuah M, Parent Kim, Interview). She said that, “오히려 세상에서는 그 사회적인 그런 조율을 잘하고 리더로 이끌어갈 수 있는 사람이 더 지속적으로 성장을 하더라고요,” “People who have social skills and are leaders will be successful.” (Ryuah M, Parent Kim, Interview).

Ms. Kim considers being a top-ranked student with perfect scores insufficient. She gave three reasons for this. First, exams focus on memorization and do not accurately assess students' knowledge. She explained:

저희 학교에서도 사실 전교 1등 했고 만점 받는 애가 있는데 저는 그게 잘한다고 또 생각하진 않는 부분이 있거든요. 왜냐면 암기 무조건 줄줄 외워 가지고 영어를 잘한다고 해서 개가 작문을 잘하거나 리슨이나 스피킹이 다 완벽히 되는 애들은 아니거든요.

There is a student who won the first place among all students. But there are aspects that I don't think is necessarily smart. Because for example, in English, although one is good through just memorization, it doesn't indicate that the student is perfect at the other aspects, such as listening, speaking, and composition. (Ryua M, Parent Kim, Interview).

Second, she described how the skills crucial to success can hardly be measured by test scores.

Ms. Kim believes that students' capabilities to achieve happiness and success in life, “그게 성적으로 꼭 반영되고 안 되고는 큰 의미는 없다고 보는데,” “cannot be captured by their grades” (Ryua M, Parent Kim, Interview). Third, she believes that the testing system is sometimes skewed due to the adoption of norm-referenced tests instead of criterion-referenced tests. Rather than encourage the students to become the best version of themselves, the evaluative process indicates that the only way to succeed is to get ahead of other students. Ms. Kim said, “상대평가는 애를 물리쳐야지만 내가 올라설 수 있는 부분이고,” “the relative evaluation [norm-referenced test] is an assessment where the student can only excel by defeating others along the way” (Ryua M, Parent Kim, Interview). Such a misunderstanding of the capabilities of the students, according to Ms. Kim, has bred a host of social ills. She stated that “교육 발표를 하는 것이 아니라 정말 세밀하게 좀 고민을 해서 뭔가 이루어내야지,” “the politicians should think more deeply, rather than just announce educational policies” (Ryua M, Parent Kim, Interview).

**Academic Achievement.** Ms. Lee said that, as a parent, she “살짝 후회하기는 했어요,” “has some regrets” (Ryua M, Parent Lee, Interview) about sending her son to Ryua Middle School because she “공부가 어려운 애들이 많아요. 저도 이 정도인지는 모르고 이 학교를 보냈어요,” “let her child to come to this school without realizing that there were so many students who had difficulties studying” (Ryua M, Parent Lee, Interview). However, she has noticed that her son has become more disciplined in his fitness training and piano practice than in

his academic studies. Ms. Lee explained that “이 학교 와서 달라진 건 자기가 첼봉이 갑자기 좋아져서 밥 먹고 알아서 가서 첼봉을 매일매일 하면서 굳은살 굉장히 많이 배겼거든요,” “the thing that changed after he came to this school is that he began to like working out every day.” (Ryuah M, Parent Lee, Interview). The school has given her son an environment where he can learn to play the piano and cello, and where he can practice a martial art.

Overall, Ms. Lee believes that, “혁신은 100% 좋은데,” “Hyukshin principles and practices are one hundred percent good.” (Ryuah M, Parent Lee, Interview). However, she has also heard that “고등학교 가서 또 모르는 거고 애도 적응 못 한다는 얘기가 있더라고요,” “some middle school graduates have difficulty adapting to the high school environment.” (Ryuah M, Parent Lee, Interview). Ms. Lee stated, “고등학교 때는 어쩔 수 없겠쥬. 이런 학교가 없으니까,” “You can’t have HSSM principles in a high school. There’s no high school like that.” (Ryuah M, Parent Lee, Interview). This points to a potential gap between the goals of the HSSM and their actualization. Ms. Lee could not believe in the success of a high school that used this approach, despite the existence of multiple Hyukshin high schools.

To deal with the pressures of getting into a high school that does not host such practices realistically, as Ms. Lee believes, she instructed her son to look at the assignments of students from other schools who attend *Hagwons* with him. By collaborating with students outside of Ryuah, her son was able to get a sense of the academic exercises that other students had been completing, to see how he compares with them. This approach, while applying pressure that Hyukshin schools often attempt to alleviate, allows for Ms. Lee to feel as though her son is at an equal level as his traditionally educated counterparts. She believes, however, that it is important to distinguish that it is not a particular system which makes the students fall behind their peers academically, but the lack of “시너지 효과,” “a synergy effect” (Ryuah M, Parent Lee,

Interview) in the school, where a large number of gifted and advanced students could encourage each other to work harder, to become more successful in their studies, and to develop good habits. Ms. Kim has been actively proposing a program that would bring two groups of students with the most satisfactory and unsatisfactory grades in school together, with the hope that their collaboration would allow the first group to influence the second. Despite her strong beliefs, the proposal Ms. Lee has put forth has not gained support from a majority of the parents.

Ms. Kim said that the SMOE has lacked the programming and initiative to educate local parents and other school community members to alter any negative preconceptions of Hyukshin schools and private academies. She explained that she believes the SMOE should publicize and advocate better for the HSSM. She thought the SMOE should curb the expansion of private academies, which are increasingly competitive and frequently operate until 1 or 2 am for students.

**Careers.** Although the school has hired a counselor who organizes career events, Ms. Lee remained anxious about the academic future of her child. She stated that “저도 답답해요. 제 아들을 어떻게 해야 되나,” “I’m frustrated!” and asked, “What should I do with my son?” (Ryua M, Parent Lee, Interview). Ms. Lee then continued on, to express contradictory messages about her son’s pursuit of academic excellence. On the one hand, she believed that the parents should lower the high academic expectations set for their young children. Ms. Lee said that, “아이가 잘못했다기 보다는 주변의 부모나 주변 사람들이 잘못된 거지 제 생각에는,” “It is not that the students did something wrong, but that the parents or people around students did” (Ryua M, Parent Lee, Interview). On the other hand, she said that, “인성 교육은 집에서 해야 될 거 같은데,” “Character education should be done at home rather than at school” (Ryua M, Parent Lee, Interview).

Ms. Lee did not like it that her son had neglected his assignments while preparing for a school festival. She had a conversation afterwards and said, “다시 좀 타이트하게 잡자, 너무 지금 풀어져 있다,” “Let’s tighten up with your studies again. They’ve become too loose.” (Ryua M, Parent Lee, Interview). He replied, “나는 결혼 안 할 거야. 자식 낳으면 자식이 매일 공부만 해야 되고 맨날 학원 가고 공부하고 그러는데 태어나서 뭐 하려고 자기는 안 낳을 거라고 그러더라고요,” “I will not get married. I don’t want to have children. Why should they even be born if all they ever do is to just go to a *Hagwon* every day?” (Ryua M, Parent Lee, Interview).

Ms. Lee explained that, “그렇게 많이 시키는 엄마가 아닌데 … 그렇다고 안 시키는 엄마도 아니고 사실 살짝 중간이거든요,” “I am not a mother who makes her child do a lot of things. I am also not the kind that doesn’t set standards. I am in the middle.” (Ryua M, Parent Lee, Interview).

Ms. Kim believes, along with other mothers, that her son studies better under less stress. She said, “다른 학교보다 애들이 자유롭기 때문에 근데 항상 아이는 행복하다 그러거든요,” “my child says that he is a happy at Ryua Middle School because he has more freedom than his friends at nearby schools.” (Ryua M, Parent Kim, Interview). He likes his school because he can enjoy extracurricular activities that are intrinsically motivating, unlike many academic subjects.

Ms. Kim’s child has been able to continue his passion for robotics and computer programming at Ryua Middle School, thanks to his reduced school workload. Her son was dismayed about a loss at a recent robotics competition and had doubts about his potential to ever become a computer scientist or robotics engineer (Ryua M, Parent Kim, Interview). In an

attempt to comfort her son and remove any pressure he may have felt, Ms. Kim told him that, “뭐 로봇공학자가 꼭 되든 안 되든 상관없지만 네가 그것도 선택해서 이때까지 이렇게 달려온 거지만 꼭 그게 아니어도 돼. 그리고 그걸 공부했다고 해서 꼭 직업으로 가지 않아도 돼,” “Whether you are to become a robotic engineer or not, and although you have come this far from choosing to go in that direction, you don’t have to be a robotics engineer in the end.” (Ryuah M, Parent Kim, Interview).

Despite their differences in approaches with their students, it is important to note that both parents touched upon intense societal pressures and expectations regarding students’ future careers. Specifically, the parents described how traditional Korean education often prepares students to be lawyers, doctors, and corporate executives, and considers any other kinds of jobs to be second-rate. Ms. Kim believes that these goals held by the public might potentially be outdated due to the technological advances that have reshaped the future of careers. She explained:

10년 전만 해도 우리가 스마트폰으로 직업을 갖고 모든 게 그렇게 상상도 못 하는 직업군이 다 생겨났잖아요. 그리고 뭐 네이버 시가총액도 뭐 삼성이랑 거의 차이 나지 않을 정도로 엄청 올라가고 세상은 이렇게 바뀌고 있는데 학부모님들은 그냥 남보다 좀 더 잘났으면 그리고 없어질지도 모르는 직업을 자꾸 부여안고 또 가고 있는 거잖아요.

It was unimaginable ten years ago to think of a career in smartphone technology. A new cluster of professions has emerged related to smartphones and their applications. The market value of Naver (the South Korean online search engine) can rival domestically with that of the Samsung Group (traditionally the most popular company for recent Korean graduates). Just like that, our society is changing. But the parents have not embraced the pace of these rapid changes. They are pushing their children to be better than others, in order to get into professions that might soon disappear. (Ryuah M, Parent Kim, Interview).

Ms. Kim believes that, “다양성에 대한 부모들의 인식개선이 더 많이 필요할 거 같아요,” – “parents need to increase their awareness of career diversity” (Ryuah M, Parent Kim, Interview),

in a way that may help them guide and support their students in the future. Since this has been a priority of the national curriculum reforms in South Korea, it seems that the interests of Hyukshin schools and national policies converge here. Parents do not always understand changing markets, but the Ministry of Education (2015) wants to ensure that students are informed about the range of careers open to them so that they are able to make good decisions about their futures.

Finally, as the chair of the parent association, Ms. Kim also believes that a student's individual performance in Hyukshin schools heavily influences the outcome of their high school admissions applications. Ms. Kim claimed that, “저희 학교에도 영재고를 가고 과학고를 해마다 가는 애들이 있다,” “There are students from this Hyukshin school that ended up in gifted schools and science schools” (Ryua M, Parent Kim, Interview) and that, despite a public misconception that the reputation of the school influences a student's future, “그거는 다들 자기가 할 나뉘이지 학교가 그 결과를 제공해주지는 안는데,” “The results are all up to them. The school doesn't guarantee the results for them” (Ryua M, Parent Kim, Interview).

## **Discussion**

Ryua Middle School's faculty is redesigning its teaching to engage and empower students (Sung & Lee, 2018). Teachers put forth great effort into tailoring and delivering lessons that promote student voice and a democratic atmosphere. This effort does not go unnoticed, as students reported that they recognize and appreciate the hard work their teachers put into their lessons.

The time that teachers dedicate to such lesson planning and practice is a result of the principal's initiative to relieve teachers of their administrative duties. This situation contrasts with teachers' experiences at other Hyukshin schools, where teachers report feeling burnt out due

to the demands of managing the daunting task of creating truly student-centered lessons while tending to administrative duties. This type of burnout often goes hand in hand with poorly structured organizational innovations (Chen, 2009). Mr. Hong prevents this exhaustion of staff by hiring assistants that carry out all administrative tasks. In this way, teachers are able to remain free to focus all of their attention on their students and fulfil their potential as drivers of innovation.

Despite the successes of student-centered practices, there were some shortcomings of student-centered pedagogy that do remain. Most notably, some students are easily able to fly under the radar during group activities, as they allow the more dominant students to carry the load. Accounting for such students in order to make sure they do not fall through the cracks will be one of the areas that teachers should focus on in their future endeavors.

Our interview subjects said that the academic rigor of Ryuah Middle School is questionable. One of the students would not recommend this school for students who are interested in high CSAT scores. One parent worried that the academic atmosphere would have a negative impact on her child's future.

These comments raise questions about Ryuah Middle School's academic standards. If the concerns are valid, students who attend this and other Hyukshin schools may be at a disadvantage when they enter high schools. If they are never able to bounce back during high school, in order to compete with their non-Hyukshin school peers, this could negatively impact their future studies and careers. That is, however, assuming that there is no further shift in the importance put on the CSAT in high school and no emergence of new kinds of work later on in the economy.

Ryuh Middle School recognizes its teachers as the driving force of innovation. It prizes its well-run, grade-level PLCs, that are supported by the administration and which are credited with the improvement of teaching and learning. These PLCs lead to actual changes in instruction, teachers say. Successful PLCs have also resulted in other professional development opportunities, such as research meetings in the teacher-created Ryuh Hyukshin Communication research group.

The PLN that the Ryuh Middle School leaders participate in appears ineffective, according to the principal. In this case and others, advocates of the HSSM can, at times, be overpowered by the SMOE bureaucracy and by the pressures placed on educators by assessments like the CSAT. Leaders who aspire to change the educational landscape of Korea in line with the practices of the HSSM can lose out to ambitious aspiring leaders who are conservatively and carefully climbing the traditional promotion ladder that offers few rewards for innovative thinking.

We heard conflicting views from students and teachers about the autonomously run student council. Both groups recognize that the student council is active and has authority to make decisions about school events. However, students believe that they have been exercising their freedom with enough responsibility and are doing well. On the other hand, teachers criticize the lack of what they believe to be truly democratic practices in the student council. Even though Ryuh Middle School has largely succeeded in enhancing student autonomy, this remains an area that still needs to be addressed moving forward.

Our interviews indicate that students need time and support to learn to exercise freedom with responsibility. They need to learn that younger students have just as much of a right to express their opinions in the student council as older students. For their part, teachers need to be

reassured that their pedagogical authority will continue to be respected when they are working with students on matters that impact the whole school community. Adjudicating these kinds of contradictions in the organization of democratic education could be a valuable topic for the next phase of development of the HSSM model in Seoul.

### **Conclusion**

Innovations in task management have allowed Ryuah Middle School to flourish, despite the turnover in faculty members that occurs as part of teacher rotation in the SMOE. Although teachers may still be burdened by the responsibility of being part of a relatively small faculty in a disadvantaged district, the fact that they can be confident they will have few administrative duties makes their workload more manageable than that of teachers at comparable Hyukshin schools. This arrangement has afforded them valuable time to put effort into sustaining strong PLCs and emphasizing student-centered, empowering classroom practices. Students say that they benefit from such innovations in the classroom. On the other hand, it seems as though student-run extracurricular activities that are meant to be democratic, such as the student council, could benefit from more formal guidance, as students have struggled to create a truly democratic environment.

### **Postscript: Becoming a “*Mirae*” School**

Out of the 16 schools profiled in this project, this was the only ‘Mirae,’ or ‘future-oriented’ Hyukshin school. After going through a competitive application process, Ryuah Middle School was appointed as a Mirae Hyukshin school in September 2019. The Mirae designation is sought after by both general and Hyukshin schools because such schools are afforded a larger budget for technological tools. Part of the school’s mission is to place a greater emphasis on teaching students digital literacy skills. During their interviews, Mr. Hong and Mr. Kwon spent a

considerable amount of time discussing the school's recent designation as a Mirae Hyukshin school. They were excited about its implications for advancing the innovative spirit of the school.

Mr. Hong, the principal, noted that Ryuah Middle School was appointed to be a Hyukshin 'Mirae' School this past September because it, “저희 학교는 동의율이 높아서 하게 된 거거든요,” “had a high teacher voting percentage” (Ryuah M, Principal Hong, Interview) compared to all Hyukshin school applicants. He noted that the main difference between normal and Mirae schools is that Mirae schools have a larger budget allocated to technological resources. He described how SMOE's intention for this special designation is “그러한 장점과 혁신학교의 장점을 좀 융합해서,” “to combine the merits of Hyukshin schools with new technologies” (Ryuah M, Principal Hong, Interview). Although previously the school was not allowed to use their budget for technological facilities, Mirae schools are financially supported for technology development.

In fact, according to Mr. Hong, “올린 예산이 5 억이에요. 5 억의 한 60% 되면 기계를 사는 거고-,” “60% of their anticipated (\$400,000 USD) budget, needs to be used for equipment.” (Ryuah M, Principal Hong, Interview). The faculty have been discussing how to use their budget and adapt their curriculum. They submitted a proposal to SMOE that is loosely modeled on an established Mirae school. Some of the major transformations include “학교의 문화의 변화,” “changes in school culture” (Ryuah M, Principal Hong, Interview) that revolve around “students having access to wifi and special Apps on devices provided by their school.” (Ryuah M, Principal Hong, Interview). Teachers will be able to “distribute devices so that students may use them at any time during classes” (Ryuah M, Principal Hong, Interview).

This new technology-driven classroom culture will teach students digital literacy. Mr. Hong notes that, “아이들이 이 스마트폰을 많이 쓰기는 하지만, 디지털 리터러시가 잘 되는 것은 아니거든요,” “although students use smartphones nowadays, it doesn’t mean they are digitally literate.” (Ryua M, Principal Hong, Interview). He says that digital literacy lessons involve “accurately searching for information in library databases and writing reports.” (Ryua M, Principal Hong, Interview). These lessons should promote students’ independence and successful use of new technologies.

The remaining 40% of the budget will be spent on purchasing equipment and hiring assistants to handle administrative tasks. Some of the funds will be spent on technology-interface training for teachers, students, and parents. Seminars about using Google Classroom will be offered to all members of the school community.

The budget that Mirae Hyukshin schools receive is a source of contention amongst the other Hyukshin schools in Seoul. Mr. Hong describes how other school leaders and their faculty complain that “예산이 공평하지 않다,” “budgets are allocated unfairly.” (Ryua M, Principal Hong, Interview). However, he believes that this kind of push-back from colleagues who have been left out of the Mirae Hyukshin designation is inherent in the “difficult path toward educational innovation in Korea.” (Ryua M, Principal Hong, Interview). He realizes that his school is a type of pilot school, as designated by the SMOE, and gladly accepts the challenge. He describes how “there must be financial support in order to innovate. Eventually the budget will be allocated equally. For now, we have to try out new things” (Ryua M, Principal Hong, Interview).

Due to its Mirae designation, Ryuah Middle School will have to take on the difficult task of figuring out an effective balance between pedagogy and technology. This is indeed a slippery slope, as heavy reliance on technology can lead to “superficial and distracted rather than reflective and mindful” practices if mismanaged (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012, p. 40). The SMOE is clearly looking at technology as a potential panacea to traditional Korean schooling’s ills; however, while these types of competitive special designations and funding packages look attractive on paper, they can be “exhausting and demotivating for educators.” (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012, p. 32). If teachers are able to find a way to harmonize, with these newly implemented technological tools, and “become professionals who use technology mindfully to enhance and support good pedagogy” (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012, p. 79), becoming a Mirae school will be worth it. It is encouraging that the Principal, Mr. Hong, is fully aware of his school’s special situation as a SMOE pilot case study on ICT-based educational innovation in Seoul and is willing to take on the challenge.

### **Introduction to the Cross-Case Analyses**

One limitation of case studies is that it is not always evident what aspects of a school's emphases are individual eccentricities and what features reflect commonalities across cases. For this reason, it is important to conduct cross-case analyses that can highlight themes and issues that are shared regardless of the peculiar characteristics of one particular school or another. By carefully coding and then analyzing data across all 16 of our schools, it has been possible to identify shared features and concerns that reflect the current state of development in the Hyukshin schools under investigation.

The importance of whole person education was a consistent theme across all 16 schools. While some of our interview subjects initially balked at questions on our research protocol about this topic, they all found it to be important and liked the ways that Hyukshin schools opened up significant subjects of this nature for deliberation and review. The intriguing nature of our respondents' comments indicate that the Hyukshin school movement is not simply dealing with logistical matters in its mode of educational change, but also is promoting a level of inquiry and reflection that is relatively rare, and is worthy of emulation.

The theme of classroom innovation was a recurrent topic across all 16 of the schools in our sample. Educators sought to promote innovation through their PLCs, through open classrooms, and through new integrated curricula that they developed themselves. In some instances, curricula were developed on a school-wide basis, reflecting an unusual degree of collaboration amongst educators across disciplines.

Since the Hyukshin model promotes autonomy and democracy for educators, and just for students, we also wanted to understand how well PLCs and PLNs functioned in and across the 16 schools in our sample. Our data was vast regarding PLCs, but relatively sparse about PLNs. This

raised issues of balance in the change model in place in the HSSM, and suggests that more could be done to promote educators' learning across participating schools.

The first two cross case analyses of whole-person education and classroom innovation focus on Hyukshin school administrators' perspectives. Next, there are three cross-case analyses focused on teachers' perspectives. Taken together, the five cross-case analyses provide an excellent overview of how the educators working in our 16 case study schools assess the current stage of evolution of the HSSM.

## **Whole Person Education: Administrators' Perspectives**

### **Introduction**

“Whole person education” is a slogan made popular by many governments and transnational agencies as an important value to pursue in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but it is unclear how this term is interpreted and put into practice. Variations across countries and school systems seem inevitable and perhaps even desirable, given the contributions of cultural diversity to well-being. The purpose of this cross-case analysis is to explore how whole-person education is understood and implemented by school administrators in Hyukshin schools in Seoul, and to triangulate our findings from the in-depth case studies with student survey data collected from Hyukshin and non-Hyukshin schools in Seoul.

The academically rigorous Korean education system, centered around competitive college admissions, leads both to high student academic achievement and low life satisfaction. The HSSM in Seoul endeavors to address this problem by emphasizing the importance of whole-person education that goes beyond academic achievement. This cross-case analysis of Hyukshin school administrators' conceptualizations of whole-person education has produced three major findings across the micro-level of the individual, the meso-level of the school, and the macro-level of broader Korean society.

At the micro-level, administrators saw the role of Hyukshin schools as pursuing several dimensions of whole-person education: (1) students' sense of meaning and purpose; (2) students' happiness and well-being; and (3) maintaining academic rigor. Next, on the meso-level of the school, administrators emphasized the importance of democratic citizenship, which is enabled through healthy teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction in classrooms and schools. Finally, on the macro-level of the society, administrators highlighted the difficulty of

advocating for whole-person education due to the public’s deeply rooted belief that for students to lead successful lives, they need to enter a good college, which is possible only through scoring well on the CSAT. Hyukshin school administrators aim to maximize opportunities to provide whole-person education while also attending to these societal constraints.

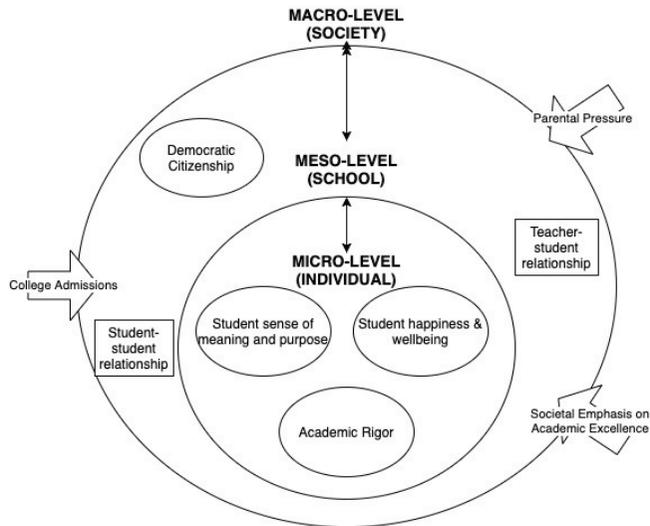


Figure 1. Conceptual Map of Hyukshin School Administrators’ Definitions of Whole-Person Education

## Methods

This cross-case analysis has employed a sequential exploratory mixed methods approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). In-depth interviews with Hyukshin school administrators in Seoul provided grounds for a deep understanding of the different dimensions of whole-person education as defined by Hyukshin schools. Formal interviews were held with principals and vice-principals from 16 Hyukshin schools in Seoul. From the interviews, a number of themes regarding whole-person education emerged. These themes, along with the Hyukshin movement theory of change as articulated in literature on Hyukshin schools, informed the development of a survey on these topics.

After doing the interviews, our research team developed a “*Seoul Student Survey*,” based on constructs that emerged from the administrator interviews and existing literature. Likert-type scale questions that address constructs in whole-person education were developed. The *Seoul Student Survey* was administered to students in July of 2020. A total of 3,065 students from 48 middle and high schools in Seoul participated in the survey, with over 85% of the participants being 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. All 16 schools that we visited participated in the survey, together with many other Hyukshin schools and a few non-Hyukshin schools. Approximately 2,598 students were from Hyukshin schools and 467 students were from non-Hyukshin schools. In this report, we describe findings that emerged both from the interviews and from this survey.

### **The Micro-level of the Individual**

Hyukshin school administrators focused on developing three constructs that address the development of students as individuals:

- (1) Student meaning and purpose in life;
- (2) Student happiness and wellbeing; and
- (3) Academic rigor.

#### **1. Student Meaning and Purpose in Life**

With respect to students’ meaning and purpose in life, administrators presented three overarching ideas. First, (a) administrators considered student meaning and purpose to be a central goal of the HSSM, which involves whole-person education. Second, (b) they explained that there are two opposing ways of defining meaning and purpose within the Korean context with which they have to contend. While the larger Korean society defines student’s sense of meaning and purpose by focusing on admission into a prestigious university, Hyukshin school administrators encouraged students to probe deeper within themselves in regard to who they

want to be and what they want to do with their lives. Third, (c) administrators articulated the importance of respecting students as individuals, with diverse interests and strengths, as a means for developing their sense of meaning and purpose.

*1a. Meaning and Purpose as a Central Hyukshin Goal.* Administrators saw the development of students' sense of meaning and purpose as a central goal of Hyukshin schools. Hyukshin schools have been designed to provide opportunities for students to explore who they are and how they can contribute to the development of a democratic society. When asked about whether Hyukshin schools develop a sense of meaning and purpose for students, for example, the principal from Jeongsun Middle School stated that it was a central Hyukshin goal. He actually asked the interviewer, “그래서 혁신학교가 생긴 것 아니겠어요?” – “Isn't that the reason why Hyukshin schools were created in the first place?” (Jeongsun M, Administrator Lee, Interview). For this school leader, it was self-evident that Hyukshin schools prioritized students' sense of meaning and purpose.

Administrators saw student meaning and purpose as a major way to overcome the shortcomings of the academically-driven education system in South Korea. A consensus among administrators was that not only was the development of student meaning and purpose a goal of Hyukshin schools, but that many of the schools are successful in providing opportunities for students to develop a sense of self and purpose within their society. The principal from Hansabong Middle School stated, “혁신학교 거친 아이들은 어딜 가도 시간이 지나가고 나면 자기의 삶을 충실히 살아가지 않을까 라는 생각을 하고 있습니다” – “that Hyukshin students would live life to the fullest even after time passes by” (Hansabong M, Administrator Choi, Interview). Hyukshin schools should make it a central goal to help students live purposeful lives through whole-person education.

To develop a student's sense of meaning and purpose in life, many administrators valued raising Hyukshin students' self-esteem (자존감). According to the administrators, it is a Hyukshin school priority for students to develop enough self-esteem to discover one's sense of purpose in life. The principal of Jeongsun Middle School said that

학력을 이루는 가장 중요한 밑바닥은 자존감 회복이라고 봐요. 내가 누구인가를 아는 힘... '내가 이런 능력과 힘을 가지고 있었구나' 라는 걸 회복시켜주고, 확인시켜 주는 게 저는 굉장히 중요한 역할이라고 보고, 선생님들이 수업에서 그 역할을 해 주는 거예요.

The foundation of education is developing self-esteem. The power to understand who I am... To recover and build my ability and strength to do so. I think it is important to solidify students' beliefs, and I think the teachers play that role in classrooms (Jeongsun M, Administrator Lee, Interview).

Many Hyukshin administrators stated that the foundation of education is the strengthening of students' self-esteem.

The principal from Ryuah Middle School elaborated: “본인이 모르고 있었던 어떤 자기의 능력들? 그런 것들을 좀 발견할 수 있게 해 주는 것들. 그런 것이 교육 혁신이 근본적으로 지향해야 하는 목표가 아닐까 라고 생각을 합니다” – “Hyukshin schools should try to increase [self-esteem] by allowing students to discover their inner capabilities. That's the fundamental goal Hyukshin schools must pursue.” (Ryuah M, Administrator Hong, Interview). Because many students feel defeated in a narrow, academically focused education system, administrators responded by providing opportunities for them to proactively find their meaning and purpose in life.

**1b. Realistic versus Idealistic Definitions of Meaning and Purpose.** While emphasizing the importance of students' sense of meaning and purpose, administrators clarified that there were two definitions: the realistic and idealistic. The principal from Namseoul Middle School emphasized, “입시에만 맞춘 공부냐 아니면 정말 온전한 교양 있는 시민으로 품격 있는

사람이 되기 위해서 필요한 것이냐” –“The purpose of education is for excelling on the college entrance exams or for becoming a truly civilized citizen.” (Namseoul M, Administrator Go, Interview). The prevalent definition of meaning and purpose is developed within the societal constraints of college admissions and obtaining a successful career. On the other hand, Hyukshin schools also aim to help students truly understand their identity, self-worth (자존감), meaning and purpose.

Hyukshin school administrators urged educators to look beyond academics when forming students' sense of meaning and purpose in order to pursue the more idealistic definition. In lamenting the current societal definition of meaning and purpose, the vice-principal of Yugok Middle School said:

이상은 인성도 갖추고, 좋은 사람으로 키우겠다는 것은 머리에 이론적인 이상이고, 현실은 기득권에 진입을 하기위해서는 기존의 교육에 맞춤형으로 해야 되는데, 혁신학교는 이상적인 철학을 가지고 교육을 하잖아요. 현실과 유리되어 있다고 생각하는 거죠.

It is ideal to grow up as a good-natured person. In reality, to enter the privileged class, you have to adapt yourself to the existing education system, but Hyukshin schools educate with an idealistic philosophy, even though some people think that the Hyukshin philosophy is isolated from reality. (Yugok M, Administrator Jin, Interview).

There is societal pressure for all educators in Korea to define students' sense of meaning and purpose solely in terms of academics. Hyukshin schools, on the other hand, want to enable their students to develop a sense of meaning and purpose with their own independent ends. The Vice-Principal of Woolgook Middle School said, “애들이 계속 커서 자기 꿈을 펴면 지금 당장의 문제풀이를 좀 못하더라도 나중에 결국 적응할 거예요. 성공 하죠” –“If students grow up to pursue their dreams, even if they are currently not great at solving problems in class, they will eventually adjust. They will succeed.” (Woolgook M, Administrator Jung, Interview).

Administrators are confident that Hyukshin school students can develop the capacity to find meaning and purpose in their lives through whole-person education. The principal from Bongjoong High School stated, “자기 소질이 무엇이고 자기 삶을 살아가면서 어떤 방향으로 가야하고 대학보다는 자기 능력과 소질에 맞춰서 가요” – “Students know their talents, know which direction they’re going to take throughout their lives, and prioritize their abilities and talents, rather than just aiming to go to college (Bongjoong H, Administrator Lee Interview). There is a firm belief that students should be allowed to explore and make sense of their own lives.

**1c. The Need for Diversified Education.** To provide students with opportunities to explore their own senses of meaning and purpose, administrators expressed the need to see students as individuals with different strengths rather than making judgments solely based on academic achievement. To do so, there should be diversified standards for measuring student strengths. This overarching idea was summarized well by the principal from Waehun High School, who stated, “이걸 잘 하는 아이. 저걸 잘 하는 아이. 각기 다 다르다는 거예요. 학생 개개인을 존중하자라고 하는 거예요. Divide 하자. 나누자. 그 다음에 이제 뭐냐 하면 separate 예요. 분리하다” – “One child is good at one thing, and another child is good at something else. We should respect them accordingly. Distribute [the standards] and separate them.” (Waehun H, Administrator Na, Interview). Among school administrators, teachers, and society as a whole, there is a need for a paradigm shift in defining what is considered a successful student. Hyukshin schools are making this shift towards diversifying the standards.

Principal Lee from Jeongsun Middle School stated:

아이들을 평가하는 잣대가 하나밖에 없어요. 일반학교에서는 성적. 근데 혁신학교에서는 아이들을 볼 수 있는 잣대가 굉장히 여러가지 짧아요. 굉장히 여러 가지를 보기 때문에 꼴찌가 없는 거죠.

There's only one yardstick for evaluating children. In most schools, it is about grades. But in Hyukshin schools, there are many yardsticks for measuring student success. Because of this, there is no such thing as ranking in last place for our students (Jeongsun M, Administrator Lee, Interview).

According to Hyukshin school administrators, the multiple yardstick approach is an effective way of implementing whole-person education. It provides an opportunity for students to develop a sense of meaning and purpose that capitalizes upon their strengths.

According to Hyukshin school administrators, diversifying the standards that define a successful student contributes to developing student meaning and purpose. The principal from Waehun High School stated, “아이들을 존중하고 아이들의 미래를 위한 교육을 하는 학교라고 하는 인식의 변화가 일어나고 있어요” – “People are starting to think that Hyukshin schools respect the children and educate them to prepare for the future.” (Waehun H, Administrator Na, Interview). Students, families, and society as a whole are starting to notice that one benefit of Hyukshin schools is their respect for individual student strengths, identifying and fostering them so that students can eventually develop their own senses of meaning and purpose in life. This is especially true for students who may not be considered successful by societal standards.

When defining a successful school, the principal from Waehun High School emphasized, “소수의 꿈이 이루어지는 학교가 아니라 모든 학생들이 각자의 자기들이 가지고 있는 적성을 개발하고 자기의 꿈을 개발하고 그래서 그 꿈을 이루어가는 그런 학교” – “It is a school where not just a small number of elite students, but every student can develop their talents and dreams.” (Waehun H, Administrator Na, Interview). Hyukshin schools aim to develop a sense of meaning and purpose for all students, rather than just those who excel academically.

**Seoul Student Survey Results.** Three of our survey questions focused on the school's role in developing students' sense of meaning and purpose. We asked students how well their school helped them in developing several specific skills (the response options ranged from 1/not at all to 5/a lot). Based on these questions, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare students' sense of meaning and purpose among Hyukshin and non-Hyukshin school students. As seen in Table 1 below, Hyukshin school students' mean scores on all three items were significantly higher than non-Hyukshin school students. We cannot be sure exactly what students had in mind as they answered the questions, but the results nonetheless suggest a significant difference at the Hyukshin schools. These survey data reinforce the qualitative findings regarding Hyukshin schools' emphasis on developing students' sense of meaning and purpose beyond academic achievement. To a modest but significant extent, Hyukshin students recognize that their schools are more focused on helping them develop a sense of meaning and purpose that goes beyond narrow academic achievement.

Table 1. t-test Results Comparing Hyukshin and Non-Hyukshin Schools on Student Sense of Meaning and Purpose

	School	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Pursuing my dreams	Hyukshin	1877	3.07	1.113	3.121*
	Non-Hyukshin	333	2.87	1.120	
Finding my career path	Hyukshin	1871	2.94	1.167	3.061*
	Non-Hyukshin	332	2.72	1.197	
Understanding what is meaningful to me	Hyukshin	1872	2.90	1.169	3.283*
	Non-Hyukshin	332	2.66	1.247	

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.001

## 2. Student Happiness and Wellbeing

A second component of whole-person education for Hyukshin schools is the development of student happiness and social-emotional wellbeing. Hyukshin administrators highlight three points regarding student happiness and wellbeing:

- a) Starting with leader and teacher happiness;

- b) Establishing schooling as a positive experience; and
- c) Lifelong student happiness.

**2a. Starting with Leader and Teacher Happiness.** According to Hyukshin administrators, teachers and administrators should first be happy themselves, if they are to provide opportunities for students to be happy. Leaders and teachers who are happy can create a positive learning environment for students. The principal from Cheonwol Middle School explains the logic:

일단 학생들이 행복한 학교를 우리가 지향을 하잖아요. 그러기 위해서는 선생님들이 행복해야 되겠다, 선생님들이 행복해야 아이들이, 예를 들어서 수업 중에 예상치 못한 행동이나 선생님한테 대들거나 그럴 때도 선생님이 좀 여유를 갖고 대처를 하고 하면 관계가 좀 더 건강하게 나갈 수도 있잖아요.

We all pursue a school where students are happy. To do that, teachers should be happy first. If the teachers are happy, they may react with a good heart when anything happens during class. In this way, healthy relationships can be built together (Cheonwol M, Administrator Lee, Interview).

Teachers should play a central role in providing a positive learning environment for all of their students. To do so, teachers' happiness is crucial to student happiness and wellbeing. School leaders themselves also feel the need to be happy. For example, the vice principal from Samoon Middle School mentioned, “제가 일단 행복해야 되고 제가 행복해서 또 다른 사람도 거기에 영향 받아서 행복했으면 좋겠다” – “I first need to be happy, and I hope that I can impact others to become happy as well.” (Samoon M, Administrator Kim, Interview). The shift towards a positive learning environment is important in Hyukshin schools. For example, the Principal from Moongok Middle School was happy to report that “선생님들의 표정과 아이들의 표정. 그 안에 있는 구성원들의 표정이 달라졌다고 생각합니다” – “The facial expression of

teachers and students, the expression of those within the school has changed.” (Moongok M, Administrator Ryu, Interview).

**2b. Schooling as a Positive Experience.** Coming to school in itself should be enjoyable for Hyukshin school students. Many of the Hyukshin school administrators emphasize that their students like being a part of the Hyukshin learning community. The vice-principal of Woolgook Middle School stated, “애들이 즐거워해요, 학교생활을.” – “Students enjoy school.” (Woolgook M, Administrator Jung, Interview). The principal of Yugok Middle School echoes a similar sentiment, stating “아이들이 집에 가서 너무 학교를 행복해 하니까” – “Children express great happiness about their school when they are home.” (Yugok M, Administrator Cho Interview).

Creating a positive learning environment is especially important for students who do not excel academically. In academically driven schools, there is a lack of opportunity for those who fall behind to enjoy learning, administrators say. Hyukshin schools address this problem by providing diversified learning opportunities catered towards students’ strengths and needs.

The Dosan High School vice-principal said, “3 등급 아이들이 도산고를 다니면서 행복해하는 이유가 공부보다는 본인에게 맞는 프로그램들이 계속 진행이 돼요” “The reason why third-tier (3 등급) students who fall behind are happy at Dosan High School is that rather than studying, programs that suit them are provided.” (Dosan H, Administrator Lee, Interview). According to the vice-principal, people who visit Dosan High School see how happy students are. This seems to be common in many Hyukshin schools. The vice-principal from Woolgook Middle School stated, “수업하는 방법이 학생들한테 맞는 거예요. 자기들을 좀 편하게 좀 해주고 막 그 수업에 대해서 또 그렇게 막 딱딱 거리지 않고” – “The style of

teaching suits the students. It makes them comfortable. Classes aren't strict." (Woolgook M, Administrator Jung, Interview).

**2c. Happiness to Extend Beyond School.** In addition to being happy at school, administrators want students' happiness to carry on into their outside lives. A long-term goal of Hyukshin schools is to help students grow into happy adults who can in turn contribute to a healthy society. The principal of Bongjoong High School emphasized, "사실 혁신학교에 가장 큰 그 목표 방향이 행복입니다" – "A Hyukshin school's biggest goal is happiness." (Bongjoong H, Administrator Lee, Interview).

The principal of Namseoul Middle School further elaborates on this point:

결국 이 모든 것들이 궁극적으로는 학생들의 삶이 앞으로 더 그러니까, 행복해지기 위한 거죠. 우리 사회 속에서 보다 더 행복한 개인으로 살아갈 수 있도록 개인적으로는 능력을 키우는 것과 함께 또 다른 것은 태도를 길러주는게 가장 핵심이라고 생각을 합니다.

So, all of this is ultimately to make their lives happier. I think the most important thing is to develop attitudes, along with developing abilities to live as a happier individual in our society (Namseoul M, Administrator Go, Interview).

While the starting point is for Hyukshin schools to ensure students are happy coming to school, the long-term goal is for them to develop positive attitudes as they enter the larger society extending beyond the school community. This long-term vision is held by the principal of Moongok Middle School as well. She stated, "나만 행복하면 안 되고 우리가 함께 행복한 사람이 되고 그런 사람들이 모여서 또 행복한 사회를 만들어 가는 그런 아이들로 키우고 싶은 거죠" – "It is not about being happy all alone. We should be happy together, and such happy individuals should form a happy society. We want to develop such students." (Moongok M, Administrator Ryu, Interview). Hyukshin educators think beyond the boundaries of the given

school community, with the ultimate goal of having Hyukshin school graduates play positive roles in creating a society characterized by high levels of psychological and social well-being.

***Seoul Student Survey Results.*** Three of our survey questions focused on the school’s role in developing students’ happiness and wellbeing. We asked students how well their school helped them in developing several specific skills (the response options ranged from 1/not at all to 5/a lot). An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare student happiness and wellbeing across Hyukshin and non-Hyukshin school students. Table 2 shows that there is no statistically significant difference between Hyukshin and non-Hyukshin school students’ mean scores on all three items. Hyukshin school students did not score significantly higher on items related to happiness, although their scores were slightly higher on each question.

Table 2. t-test Results Comparing Hyukshin and Non-Hyukshin Schools on Student Sense of Happiness and Wellbeing

	School	N	Mean	SD	t-test
Having a better understanding of my own emotions	Hyukshin	1870	2.82	1.218	1.708
	Non-Hyukshin	332	2.70	1.275	
Pursuing happiness	Hyukshin	1869	3.18	1.231	1.617
	Non-Hyukshin	332	3.06	1.199	
Being satisfied with life	Hyukshin	1873	3.02	1.210	1.000
	Non-Hyukshin	331	2.95	1.172	

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.001

### 3. Academic Rigor

The last micro-level construct for Hyukshin schools work on whole-person education is academic rigor. A common perception in the larger society seems to be that Hyukshin schools do not prioritize academic achievement. Many of the teachers, students, and parents in our profiles agreed with this assessment and expressed some measure of frustration that there was not a higher level of academic press in the HSSM. Hyukshin school administrators disagree on this point, however. They say that, despite their emphasis on wellbeing and happiness, academic

achievement is an integral part of Hyukshin schools. It simply is enacted in a new and unfamiliar way.

***Academic Achievement as an Integral Component of Whole-Person Education.***

According to Hyukshin school administrators, being a Hyukshin school does not mean letting go of academic achievement; rather, it means that they should uphold academic values as much as other components of whole-person education. Overall, Hyukshin school administrators are very aware of the importance of balancing the different emphases within whole-person education, which includes academic achievement. The principal of Cheonwol Middle School highlights the Hyukshin school mindset regarding academic achievement:

기본적으로 학교는 교육 과정 이수하는 곳이라고 생각하거든요... 교과에서 요구하는 학업은 해야 되는 거고 플러스 협업 능력, 리더십 능력, 그런 것도 다 학력에 포함된다고 보거든요. 조별 활동할 때 서로 소통해야만 결과물을 낼 수 있잖아요. 또 누군가는 조를 이끌어야만 되잖아요. 그런 활동 그런 능력을 심어 준다고 생각하시면 됩니다.

I think school is where we complete the academic curriculum. I think students must complete what is required by the curriculum. I also believe a collaborative mindset and leadership are important academic skills. When it comes to group activities, students have to communicate well to make results. Also, someone has to be a leader of the group. I think Hyukshin schools train students to gain such abilities (Cheonwol M, Administrator Lee, Interview).

In contrast to the perception that Hyukshin educators do not care about their students' achievement, Hyukshin school administrators argue that their schools are built upon students' academic skills. In order for students to succeed in life, they need both academic and other skills that will allow them to flourish. Hyukshin schools aim to foster both.

This idea is supported by other Hyukshin school administrators. The principal from Yugok Middle School stated, “저희는 도구적 기능을 무시할 수는 없으니까 도의적 기능을 갖되, 보다 다양한 교과과목을 통해서 본질적 기능을 보충해주는 강화시키는 그런 측면” –

“Since [Yugok Middle School] cannot disregard the instrumental purpose of education, we focus on academic achievement. But we supplement and enhance the fundamental function of education through diverse subject curriculums.” (Yugok M, Administrator Cho, Interview). Although the societal emphasis on academic achievement cannot be ignored, a diversified curriculum allows students to learn the curriculum according to their interests and needs. In another example, the principal from Bongjoong High School framed whole-person education as closely connected to academics. He stated, “진학도 굉장히 중요해요. 오히려 진학이 더 중요할 수 있어요 진학 속에 포함된 인성교육이지 인성교육 따로 진학 교육 따로가 아니라” –“College admission is very important. In fact, going to college may be most important. Character development is included in college admissions. They are not separate components.” (Bongjoong H, Administrator Lee, Interview). By embracing whole-person education, Hyukshin schools are embracing the integration of academics and social skills together.

### Overview of Student Sense of Meaning and Purpose in Life

As a way to gain an overarching understanding of the micro-level, individual student sense of meaning and purpose, we asked one survey question where students rank ordered what they considered most meaningful in their lives. Table 3 presents descriptive statistics from the Hyukshin school students (n=1,854).

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics on Hyukshin Students' Rank Ordering of Meaning and Purpose in Life

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	My Own Happiness	895	34.4	48.3
	Living Life with No Regrets	340	13.1	18.3
	Relationship with Family	253	9.7	13.6
	Following my Dreams and Goals	237	9.1	12.8
	Academic Achievement	73	2.8	3.9
	Relationship with Friends	56	2.2	3.0

Total	1854	71.4	100.0
-------	------	------	-------

Approximately 34% of Hyukshin students indicated that ensuring their happiness is the most meaningful in their lives, followed by living a life with no regrets (13%), relationships with their family (10%), and following their dreams and goals (9%). Academic achievement was far down the list, with only 4% of Hyukshin students choosing this as the highest priority.

At the micro level, then, Hyukshin school administrators and students emphasize a broader range of goals that go well beyond academic achievement. They feel that schools should help young people develop a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives, and that schools should be happy places in which positive emotions encourage students to engage and work toward productive lives. They do not, however, ignore the importance of academic achievement. Hyukshin schools focus on academics as well as other ends, and they do not see these as antithetical. In fact, many argue that life success will require both academic and other skills, and that Hyukshin students are prepared well for this.

### **Beyond the Self: Democratic Citizenship**

In their beliefs about the importance of whole person education, administrators go beyond considerations at the individual student level and work at the school community level, emphasizing democratic citizenship, which is developed through interpersonal relationships. According to the administrators, two major types of interaction occur within the school:

1. Student-teacher relationships, and
2. Student-student relationships.

Through these two kinds of relationships, students should practice democratic citizenship.

Whole-person education, as defined by Hyukshin school administrators, incorporates democratic

values to ensure that their students not only receive a holistic education that respects each student's strengths, but also encourages them to participate in a democratic society as adults.

### **Teacher-Student Relationships**

Hyukshin school administrators envision their teachers playing two important roles, to ensure that students receive whole-person education and grow into adults who will contribute to society. First, Hyukshin school teachers should respect individual students' differences. Second, they should form close teacher-student relationships. Both of these emphases require major paradigm shifts from more traditional schools. Through these shifts, students should feel respected as individuals, and they should learn how to be a part of a larger classroom and school community that goes beyond the self.

***Respect Individual Student Differences.*** Hyukshin school teachers embrace whole-person education by respecting individual student differences and utilizing a diversified instructional approach that allows students to build upon their strengths. This approach requires a shift for teachers who may be accustomed to defining student success by more narrowly understood academic skills. Regarding the paradigm shift, the principal from Jeongsun Middle School said

혁신학교에 있다는 건 아이들을 보는 시선도 달라지는 거거든요. 가르침 중심에서 배움 중심으로 가는 거거든요. 아이들에게 시선을 맞추고 아이들이 성장이 어떻게 일어나는 가를 주도 면밀하게 살피는... 아이들의 현 단계를 그대로 존중하지 않으면 혁신학교의 교육은 존재할 수가 없는 것처럼.

Being in a Hyukshin school entails a different way to look at kids. It goes from being teaching-centered to learning-centered. Keep your eyes on your children and watch how they grow up... if we don't respect their present stage, we can't have an education in a Hyukshin school (Jeongsun M, Administrator Lee, Interview).

Only when teachers can be learner-centered can they become agents for embodying whole-person education in alignment with Hyukshin values. Another area that Hyukshin teachers focus on is providing diversified experiences for students to develop a sense of career direction. The Vice-Principal of Yugok Middle School emphasized, “선생님들은 아이들한테 다양한 경험을 제공하려고 노력을 많이 해요. 그럼 이 아이들이 경험을 통해서 영감을 받아가지고 진로나 직업, 좋아하는 것들이 정해질 수 있잖아요” – “The teachers put much effort into providing students with various experiences. Through them, students can choose their careers and what they like to do.” (Yugok M, Administrator Jin, Interview). Hyukshin school teachers try to respect them for their strengths and their potential, guiding students to grow into their best selves.

The goal of respecting student differences is to ensure that through a healthy student-teacher interaction all students, regardless of their academic achievement, can receive whole-person education that caters to their strengths and will help them contribute to society. The principal from Namseoul Middle School was especially interested in ensuring all students are provided a chance to receive whole-person education. He stated, “궁극적으로는 학생들의 단 한사람이라도 배제되거나 낙오되지않고 우리 사회 속으로 성공적으로 들어가서 행복한 삶을 살 수 있도록 하는 거라고 생각해요” “Hyukshin education ensures that ultimately, no student is left out of successfully entering society and living happy lives.” (Namseoul M, Administrator Go, Interview).

Hyukshin school teachers’ respect for individual student differences aspires to create an environment in which all students are given a fighting chance to fully develop into adults who are successful in entering society. The Woolgook Middle School principal further extends this idea by stating, “우리가 수업에 추구하는 바는 민주시민으로서 이렇게 할 수 있는 걸

베이스로 하되 그 아이 개개인의 목표는 또 찾아 줘야죠” – “Through their classes, Hyukshin schools provide a foundation for students becoming democratic citizens, while also finding individual students’ goals in life.” (Woolgook M, Administrator Kim, Interview). By providing a diversified instructional approach for students, Hyukshin school teachers are enabling them to not only fully develop themselves but also contribute to the wider society.

*Community of Care.* Hyukshin school teachers care about individual student wellbeing and creating a community of care. Teachers reach out to students so that they feel cared for. There were many examples described by Hyukshin school administrators that demonstrated teachers’ efforts to create a community of care. One example was provided by the Principal of Ryuah Middle School, who explained that for Teacher’s Day – a Korean holiday celebrating teachers on May 15<sup>th</sup> of each year – the teachers themselves handed out rice balls to their students. As the reason for this event, the principal stated, “스승의 날이 우리가 스승으로서 뭔가를 받는 날이 아니고 스승으로서 우리가 뭔가를 할 수 있는 날로 삼아보자” “The teachers agreed on making this day a day where teachers serve students, rather than the opposite,” (Ryuah M, Administrator Hong, Interview). Many of the students had low self-esteem in this low-income neighborhood, and teachers wanted to show that they cared about the students.

In another example, Hansabong Middle School created an orchestra called the “Hansabong Cantabile,” which consisted of students who need extra levels of attention from the school. The principal of Hansabong Middle School said, “꽃임없이 아이들에 대한 복지와 돌봄을 바탕으로 수 많은 것들을, 자전거 투어, 역사기행 등을 선생님들이 자신의 것을 던져가면서 (희생하면서) 하기 때문에” – “Students can consistently participate in activities based on the foundation of welfare and care, which includes bike tours and historical trips,

thanks to teachers who sacrifice their time and effort for them.” (Hansabong M, Administrator Choi, Interview).

Hyukshin school students should develop positive student-teacher relationships, which in turn helps students to develop a sense of self and interpersonal skills. Teachers serve as instructors, guidance counselors, and moral supporters, helping students to grow into adults who are not only happy but also find their meaning and purpose in life. Regarding student happiness, the vice-principal of Yugok Middle School stated, “선생님들이 철학이 있기 때문에 아이들 하나하나를 굉장히 존중하고 인격적으로 대하긴 해요. 아이들이 굉장히 행복해해요” “Because of the teachers’ philosophies, they respect students and treat them well. As a result, the students are happy” (Yugok M, Administrator Jin, Interview). Rather than a hierarchical culture between teachers and students, teachers want to restructure the relationship so that their students feel close to teachers. The principal from Dosan High School stated, “일단 이제 담임 선생님이 계속 면담하면서 그것을 이제 꿈과 또 그 꿈에 이르는 길을 제시해 줘야죠” – “Teachers should guide students so that they figure how to achieve their dreams.” (Dosan H, Administrator Lee, Interview).

This role for teachers can be seen at other schools as well. At Cheonwol Middle School, there is a separate head teacher for career paths. According to the principal, “아이들 진로 수업도 같이하시고 진학 지도도 하시고” – “The head teacher of career paths provides career counseling.” (Cheonwol M, Administrator Lee, Interview). Students have close interactions with teachers in order to develop a sense of meaning and purpose and identify productive pathways in life. Through caring interactions with teachers, students learn interpersonal skills, and these become the foundation of democratic citizenship.

### **Student-Student Relationships**

According to Hyukshin administrators, the school community is a smaller version of the whole society. By encouraging healthy student-student interaction, Hyukshin schools teach students how to contribute to society. Students learn how to collaborate and communicate effectively in school, which are skills that are needed to participate in a democratic society as adults.

***Learning through Interaction.*** Hyukshin schools encourage student collaboration through small group activities. According to the principal of Moongok Middle School, many Hyukshin schools incorporate various small group activities in their classrooms for the purpose of instilling in students the value of collaboration. As for the purpose of group activities, she stated, “우리는 같이하는 거야, 내가 조금 잘하면 애한테 이거를 내가 도와줄 수 있고, 애는 또 뭘 잘하니까 애한테 나는 도움을 받을 수 있어' 서로 의지하는 관계” – “Students achieve things by working together. If someone needs help, I help. If I need help, others help me. Relationship building is the reason for group activities” (Moongok M, Administrator Ryu, Interview).

In another example, the principal of Namseoul Middle School discussed the Annual Sports Competition (체육대회) and school festival. He made the following statement regarding school events:

누구의 실수 때문에 자기 반이 지게 되었다든가 그럴 경우에 막 탓하고 비난하잖아요. 우리 아이들은 그런 태도가 훨씬 적어요. 공연 같은 것을 했을 때 실수를 했다면 ‘괜찮아, 괜찮아’ 라고 해주는 태도 라던가 이런 것들을 우리 학교 문화에서 배운다고 생각해요.

If someone makes a mistake which leads to losing a sports game, the student could be blamed. Our students have much less of that attitude. If a friend makes a mistake during a group performance, you learn how to say, "it is okay," or something like that from our school culture (Namseoul M, Administrator Go, Interview).

Rather than blame other students for their mistakes, Hyukshin schools encourage their students to be accepting of each other. As a result, school festivals and sports competitions are enjoyable collaborative experiences for students in which effective student-student collaboration skills are learned.

Ultimately, Hyukshin schools aim to teach students how to become democratic citizens by interacting respectfully and productively with their peers. The key idea is that true happiness in a healthy, democratic society is created through individual effort to collaborate and communicate effectively with others. The Principal from Bongjoong High School stated, “더불어 사는 그 행복을 찾아야 되는데 오히려 다른 사람을 밟고 일어서면 그런 교육은 저는 교육으로서의 기능이 아니라고 생각해요” – “Students should be happy with others. If some students step on others to rise above them, such education is not fulfilling its purpose.” (Bongjoong H, Administrator Lee, Interview). This principal addresses the competitive nature of Korean education, stating that there needs to be a deeper level of reform, in which students learn how to collaborate with each other.

A similar thought was expressed by the Moongok Middle School principal. She stated, “나만 행복하면 안 되고 우리가 함께 행복한 사람이 되고 그런 사람들이 모여서 또 행복한 사회를 만들어 가는 그런 아이들로 키우고 싶은 거죠” – “We should all be happy together rather than alone. Such individuals will build up a happy society, and the purpose of Hyukshin education is to raise such children” (Moongok M, Administrator Ryu, Interview). Several administrators, including the Namseoul Middle School Principal, coined the phrase “더불어 행복함” – collective happiness (Namseoul M, Administrator Go, Interview), which highlights the idea that societal happiness is a collective effort. Through effective student-student interaction, students learn how to build a happy and healthy democratic society together.

**Seoul Student Survey Results.** There were five survey questions that focused on the school's role in developing students' sense of democratic citizenship. The scale asked students how well their school helped them in developing several specific skills (the response options ranged from 1/not at all to 5/a lot). An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare students' sense of democratic citizenship between Hyukshin and non-Hyukshin school students. Table 4 shows that Hyukshin school students' mean scores on most items were significantly higher in comparison to non-Hyukshin schools. This reinforces the qualitative findings regarding Hyukshin schools' emphasis on developing students as democratic citizens.

Table 4. t-test Results Comparing Hyukshin and Non-Hyukshin Schools on Student Sense of Democratic Citizenship

	School	N	Mean	SD	t-test
Caring about others' well-being	Hyukshin	1869	3.48	1.144	.787
	Non-Hyukshin	332	3.43	1.196	
Becoming a global citizen	Hyukshin	1870	2.91	1.185	1.575
	Non-Hyukshin	331	2.80	1.186	
Learning democratic values	Hyukshin	1870	3.18	1.150	2.994*
	Non-Hyukshin	332	2.97	1.166	
Forming civic morality	Hyukshin	1869	3.41	1.161	3.556**
	Non-Hyukshin	330	3.16	1.226	
Being an ethical person	Hyukshin	1869	3.31	1.144	2.272*
	Non-Hyukshin	332	3.14	1.272	

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.001

### Societal Constraints

Along with their passion for whole-person education, Hyukshin school administrators also admitted that they face an uphill battle against the societal pressure to focus on academic achievement. Administrators aim to balance academic components with non-academic ones under the umbrella of whole-person education. At times, they feel they must spend less time on integral components of whole-person education in order to respond to societal pressure for academic success.

### Academic Pressure

The societal pressure for Hyukshin students to excel academically stems from two sources. First, there is social consensus on the importance of academic excellence and college admissions that Hyukshin schools cannot avoid. Second, there is a parental perception of Hyukshin schools as being less academically rigorous. For this reason, even parents who advocate eloquently for Hyukshin schools generally still send their children to Hagwons to prepare for college admissions.

**Parental Pressure.** On an immediate, day-to-day basis, Hyukshin school administrators feel the tension between their desire to provide whole-person education for their students on the one hand, and parental pressure for their children to focus exclusively on academic achievement, on the other. To start with, many parents tend to have a negative view of Hyukshin schools because of the apparently widespread perception that the schools care less about their students' academic achievement. The vice-principal of Heesung Middle School stated, “학부모들은 부정적인 인식을 훨씬 많이 해요. 그 이유는 아까도 말했지만 공부를 많이 시키지 않는다는 생각을 해요” – “Parents have a lot of negative perceptions. They think Hyukshin schools do not make students study enough.” (Heesung M, Administrator Nam, Interview). The vice-principal further added that this misconception generally fades away with the passage of time for elementary and middle schools, but Hyukshin high schools have a more difficult time, as parents get increasingly worried about their children entering prestigious universities.

A similar opinion was expressed by the Waehun High School principal, who stated “학부모들 인식이 어땠겠어요. 그 학교는 아이들의 인권은 굉장히 존중하는데, 공부는 아니야. 그 학교가면 망해” – “Parental perception of Hyukshin schools was negative. Parents think Waehun High School respects student rights, but does not focus sufficiently on academics. They think that if students go to our school, they will fail.” (Waehun H, Administrator Na

Interview). Parents' negative perceptions of Hyukshin schools are a powerful obstacle to overcome for Hyukshin school administrators who want to implement whole-person education.

Hyukshin school administrators also provide examples of tensions between Hyukshin schools and parents that go beyond initial parental misconceptions. The principal of Yugok Middle School said:

선생님들이 자유를 주면서 수업을 하다 보니, 기존에 암기식이나 어떤 몇 페이지부터 어디까지 수업을 하는 그런 효과는 확실히 좀 떨어지죠. 그게 의미가 좀 덜하다고 봐야 되겠죠. 어떤 학력 적인 부분에서는 단발 적으로 엄마들이 보기에 분명히 떨어진다고 보는 부분이 있을 거예요. 장기적으로 봤을 때는 과연 그럴까 하는 게 제 퀘스천마크 인데.

As teachers give students more freedom in learning, students do not tend to follow the older learning methods of memorization or strictly following the textbook. There is less emphasis on such learning methods. On a short-term level, mothers may see this as focusing less on academics. My question is whether this is true in the long-term. (Yugok M, Administrator Cho Interview).

While parents may appreciate the effort to incorporate whole-person education, they are simultaneously worried about their children falling behind academically. The principal challenged this idea by stating that, rather than solely focusing on short-term outcomes, Hyukshin schools aim to raise successful students in the long run. Hyukshin school administrators found themselves having to clash with parents on a day-to-day basis.

The principal from Jeongsun Middle School described the kinds of questions the school faces from parents. He said they ask, “아이들을 너무 놀리는 것 아니에요? 애들 당장 고등학교 가게 되면 수능형 공부를 해야 되는데 정선에서 혁신학교라고 하는 게 수능형 공부와 맞물리나요?” – “Aren't the children playing too much? Once they enter high school, they have to study for the CSATs. Do you think Jeongsun Middle School as a Hyukshin school is preparing them for their CSAT oriented studies?” (Jeongsun M, Administrator Lee, Interview).

A similar point was made by the Yugok Middle School vice principal when the school tried to reduce the number of assessments. The parents of the students said, “선생님들의 취지나 학교 방향은 알겠지만 그래도 다른 학교 애들은 중간고사를 보는데, 우리 학교 애들은 시험을 안 보니까 공부를 안 하는 것 같다. 그러니 하게 해 달라” – “Although we understand teachers’ intentions and the school’s direction, because other schools’ students have midterms, but our school’s students don’t, it feels like they are not studying enough. So, let them take the midterms!” (Yugok M, Administrator Jin, Interview). The school ended up following parents’ requests and increasing assessments again. In this way, Hyukshin schools may feel the need to negotiate and at times sacrifice Hyukshin values centered around whole-person education, as they acknowledge parental worries regarding their children’s academic success.

***Societal Emphasis on Academic Excellence.*** Korean society is centered around the competitive college admissions system. Thus, the society as a whole may simply not prioritize or recognize the importance of the Hyukshin school emphasis on whole-person education. According to societal standards, Hyukshin schools are sometimes seen as a less promising education option. The principal of Namseoul Middle School summarized the struggle well in the following statement:

이건 혁신학교이다, 아니 다를 떠나서 우리나라 교육 과정과 교과서 자체가 그렇게 설계되어 있기 때문에 그것을 던져버리지 않는 이상은 입시 준비를 다 하게 되어 있어요.

Regardless of whether the school is Hyukshin or non-Hyukshin, because the education curriculum and textbooks are developed in alignment with college admissions, unless we abandon them completely, all schools are bound to prepare for college admissions (Namseoul M, Administrator Go, Interview).

Nonetheless, as long as the societal emphasis on college admissions exists, Hyukshin schools will struggle to fully implement whole-person education.

Many Hyukshin school administrators admit that students can't escape this competitive, college-focused system. The principal from Bongjoong High School stated, “우리 교육이 너무 경쟁 속에 들어 있잖아요” – “Korean education focuses too much on competition.” (Bongjoong H, Administrator Lee, Interview). On a similar note, the Waehun High School principal stated, “우리 아이들도 입시를 떠나서는 또 살기가 힘들니까” – “Hyukshin students can't escape the college admissions system.” (Waehun H, Administrator Na, Interview).

Consequently, a very real and inevitable obstacle that Hyukshin school administrators face is defending Hyukshin values in the face of the societal conception that Hyukshin school students are falling academically behind. This struggle is highlighted by the principal of Hansabong Middle School, who said:

원래 저희들이 생각했던 학업성취도는 시험점수뿐만 아니라 우리가 생각하는 교육의 목표와 내용들을 전면적으로 수용하는 정도를 가지고 학업성취도를 이야기 하거든요. 그런데 이게 아직까지 정립이 안 된 상태이고 현재까지는 학업성취도가 주어진 시험을 정확히 어느 정도 했는가 확인하는 형태여서. 저희 학교 아이들이 공부를 엄청 잘한다고 말씀드리는 건 그렇고.

Hyukshin schools talk about academic achievement as not solely focused on test scores, but incorporate what we consider to be the purpose of education. However, our definition is not currently accepted by the society, as it considers academic achievement as defined by whatever score it is that students get on tests. That is why I cannot say our students excel academically (Hansabong M, Administrator Choi, Interview).

According to the prevalent societal definition of a successful student, Hyukshin schools are not faring well in comparison to traditional non-Hyukshin schools. In the face of such societal perceptions, it becomes much harder to pursue whole-person education aligned with Hyukshin values.

***Seoul Student Survey Results.*** Although there were no survey items that directly addressed Hyukshin schools' academic rigor, the research team administered a *Deep Learning*

*Survey.* The scale asked students how much they agree with statements regarding their deep learning skills in the classroom. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare deep learning skills between Hyukshin and non-Hyukshin school students. Table 5 below presents items that yielded significant results. For all significant items, non-Hyukshin school students had higher mean scores in comparison to Hyukshin schools. The students' views on deep learning reflect the dominant parental and societal view that Hyukshin schools tend to focus less on academics in comparison to non-Hyukshin schools.

Table 5. t-test Results Comparing Hyukshin and Non-Hyukshin Schools on Student Deep Learning Skills

	School	N	Mean	SD	t-test
I am developing my baseline knowledge well at school.	Hyukshin	1837	3.74	.905	-2.056*
	Non-Hyukshin	324	3.84	.842	
I can apply knowledge I learned to practical problems in real world.	Hyukshin	1839	3.29	.967	-2.266*
	Non-Hyukshin	323	3.42	.956	
I proactively participate in learning rather than simply memorizing knowledge.	Hyukshin	1843	3.29	.934	-2.298*
	Non-Hyukshin	324	3.43	.978	
It is hard for me to think of new solutions (recoded).	Hyukshin	1841	3.12	1.020	-2.038*
	Non-Hyukshin	324	3.24	1.026	
I can put my ideas into action.	Hyukshin	1842	3.31	.928	-2.753*
	Non-Hyukshin	327	3.46	.878	

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.001

## Discussion

Whole person education is defined in various ways. However, there are overlapping, central constructs under the overarching umbrella of whole-person education that Hyukshin school administrators emphasize. We have organized these constructs into three levels: the micro-level of the individual student; the meso-level of the classroom and school; and the macro-level of the larger school system and society.

On the micro-level of the individual, Hyukshin school administrators and teachers focus on developing students' sense of meaning and purpose, their happiness and well-being, and their academic excellence. On the meso-level of the classroom and school, Hyukshin schools emphasize the need for students to develop healthy and effective interpersonal skills that facilitate democratic citizenship. These interpersonal skills are built through respectful, collaborative student-student and student-teacher relationships within the school community. Going beyond the school to the macro-level of Korean society, Hyukshin school administrators acknowledge that they struggle with social pressure for competition and narrow academic achievement.

The macro-level shapes the key tensions that we have identified in this cross-case analysis. Hyukshin school administrators feel enormous parental and societal pressure to prioritize academic achievement over other constructs, such as students' sense of meaning and purpose and student happiness. In this situation it is almost impossible for any single school or network to overcome the societal consensus that stresses the importance of students studying hard to enter the top colleges. As long as the Korean education system is aligned to the college admissions system, Hyukshin school administrators will feel the need to emphasize the importance of academic rigor, at times sacrificing important components of whole-person education.

### **Whole Person Education as a Whole: How Does It Come Together?**

Wortham et al. (2020) propose four questions that map out different approaches to education for well-being. This cross-case analysis applies the four questions to the context of Hyukshin schools to better understand the schools' overall conception of whole-person education.

**1. Which dimensions of human functioning does the approach attend to?** Hyukshin school administrators focus on four major constructs of whole-person education, which touch upon various dimensions of human functioning. First, the development of student meaning and purpose in life encompasses a *vocational* dimension of human functioning, though it is far deeper than simply finding a job deemed as successful by society. Second, student happiness and wellbeing attend to an *emotional* dimension. Third, academic rigor highlights the *intellectual* dimension of human functioning. Finally, democratic citizenship can be considered as a *relational* dimension.

These four constructs are seen as interconnected by Hyukshin school administrators, who see a close affinity between happy students who form healthy relationships with peers, in order to develop their own sense of meaning and purpose in life. As seen by the close connections among the various dimensions, whole-person education as defined by Hyukshin school administrators lives up to its name by aiming to develop students into adults who mature in a wide range of interconnected dimensions of human functioning.

**2. How does the approach envision the relationship between individual development and social change?** While many approaches to whole-person education may prioritize individual development over social change or the opposite, Hyukshin school administrators challenge this notion by asking: Why not both? Their idea is in alignment with Wortham et al. (2020), who observe: “both the individual and society are important because humans develop in context and societies are composed of individuals.” The interdependent nature of individual development and societal prosperity is also compatible with Korea’s Confucian heritage, one that prioritizes social harmony. Hyukshin educators seem to see their classrooms and schools as a manifestation of an idealized future Korean society, where citizens will have healthy interactions with one another

and where social ranking and status will be reduced in favor of more humanistic and democratic social mores. Hyukshin schools aim for their students to graduate and to play their own leadership roles in developing such a future society.

***3. How does the approach treat instrumental ends, and how does it envision intrinsic ends?*** The Hyukshin movement was developed in reaction to the Korean education system that primarily served the instrumental purpose of helping students get into a good college and ultimately gain high social status. It naturally follows that Hyukshin school administrators see the purpose of whole-person education on the opposite end, as meeting the intrinsic interests of students. Wortham et al. describe such intrinsic motivation as “generative” and provide concrete examples, such as when students pursue their own, autonomously-developed purposes in life and become positive contributors to society subsequently. The central constructs of whole-person education as defined by Hyukshin schools are congruent with this aspiration of fostering the intrinsic motivations of students.

***4. How does the approach engage with life purpose, with the question of individuals’ roles in a broader moral order?*** While many approaches to whole-person education may focus more on the immediate, day-to-day outcomes of student wellbeing or academic rigor, Hyukshin school administrators identify the development of student meaning and purpose in life as central to whole-person education. Administrators hope that Hyukshin students can search for their true meaning in life and contribute to a happy and healthy society.

## **Conclusion**

If there is a distinctive characteristic of Hyukshin school administrators and teachers with respect to whole-person education, it would be their open-mindedness in defining what it means to be a successful student. Rather than being bound by the societal definition of a successful

student as those who excel academically, whole-person education offers multiple measuring sticks for different types of student strengths. In *The Fourth Way*, Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) argue for teaching and learning practices to go beyond academics alone, encompassing all kinds of learners. This paradigm shift is hard for educators that are working within an academically competitive education system. Hyukshin school administrators are pioneers who are paving the way for students to receive whole-person education that shifts the lens from a teacher-centered instructional model towards a learner-centered model.

By incorporating other goals and moving beyond academics toward well-being as a central educational end, Hyukshin schools accomplish several things. They prepare students better for future jobs, because successful careers do not require just academic skills; if we prepare students to collaborate, to work well with others, to have self-respect, and to treat others fairly, then they will be more effective in the workplace. Hyukshin schools also prepare students for democratic participation, for being effective citizens in Korea, because a democratic society requires the respect and collaboration developed in these schools. Ultimately, the schools aim to change the society toward more productive values, like respect and collaboration, overcoming an ultimately corrosive focus on relentless competition.

## **Educational Innovation: Administrators' Perspectives**

### **Introduction**

Educational innovation (interchangeably classroom innovation) is an integral aspect of the HSSM. Recent research has demonstrated that, in South Korea, classroom innovation allows for the application of “diverse educational philosophies and teaching practices” (Sung & Lee, 2018, p. 120), in a manner that successfully enables “comprehensive (school) growth,” (Song, 2018, p. 29). The necessity for developing such innovative approaches stems from the compressed modernization South Korea has experienced in the past decades (Sung, Lee, & Choi, 2016).

The Hyukshin school movement has been supported across South Korea and, under the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education (SMOE), 55 middle and high schools in the metropolitan area participated in the movement in 2019. As of 2020, after our data collection, the number had increased to 57. Historically, Korean education had been based upon a ‘closed text’ approach, which supplemented a knowledge-based curriculum in which students are required to reproduce facts without any notion of diverse interpretations (So & Kang, 2014). However, in 2013, educational reforms instead promoted competency-based education for students, in which autonomy and adaptive learning were encouraged with the hopes that it would lead to a happier population of students (So & Kang, 2014). In order to accomplish such societal shifts, the hope was that traditional pedagogical styles could be transformed to ensure such outcomes in the future. As with any educational reform, these goals were met in some schools but not in others.

Unfortunately, the persistence of traditional, competition-based pedagogies is not easily overcome. Societal expectations alike still adhere to prescriptive curricula, which students follow strictly because they aspire to be admitted into top universities as a result (So & Kang, 2014). This has discouraged many from accepting significant classroom innovation.

Despite these challenges, the HSSM has worked to create an alternative approach to education that is more attentive to the future needs of South Korea. As part of this, educators have utilized multiple “tools by which to mediate progressive school change.” (Sung et. al, 2016, p. 238). These include, but are not limited to, U-shaped seating arrangements, collaborative rulemaking, ecological education, professional learning communities (PLCs), and student-centered learning (Lee, 2018; Sung et. al, 2016; Sung & Lee, 2018).

Our approach to understanding classroom innovation and its implementation by the HSSM is rooted in Urie Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory, first introduced in the 1970s (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). In this model, the growth of an individual can be understood through interactions between a myriad of systems (e.g., micro-, meso-, exo-, macro-, and chronosystems). When applied to Hyukshin schools, this model can be used as a framework through which classroom innovation can be understood. Bronfenbrenner’s model classifies students and their classrooms as two components at the *micro-system* level. Schools are understood as *meso-systems*, and the larger society as a macro-system. Bronfenbrenner’s model also included reference to a *chrono-system*, involving change over time, and an *exo-system*, which connects the different discrete elements of the ecological system to one another. All five of these levels are important for understanding the strengths and the challenges facing educators’ efforts to innovate in the HSSM.

Hyukshin schools' faculty members tend to prioritize various changes in their overall pedagogy "based on their belief that transformation in pedagogical practices is at the forefront of all other changes" (Sung & Lee, 2018, p. 241). Due to the tendency of the HSSM to place this new style of teaching "at the heart of all school change efforts," it is essential to understand just how classroom innovation is enacted (Sung et. al, 2016, p. 230). Overall, classroom innovations focus on increased student engagement, collaborative learning environments, integrative lesson plans, and a "whole school approach," (Sung et. al, 2016, p. 221), aiming to produce democratic citizens and an "ethical community" (Cho, 2018, p. 14).

In the following sections, we follow Bronfenbrenner by beginning with the micro-system. This is broken into two parts: one section focusing on the student, and a second section focusing on the classroom. We then report in the third section on the meso-level of the school, and in the fourth section on the macro-system of the larger society. We discuss the chrono-system and the exo-system throughout, because they are embedded in, and traverse, the other three levels.

### **First Section: The Micro-level, Focus on the Individual Student**

*Fostering Connections.* Schools within the HSSM want their schools to foster social connections, in contrast with the prevalent school model of competition and social isolation. In order to achieve this goal, Hyukshin educators foster social connections in three ways:

- 1) Culture of Collaboration;
- 2) Student-Centered Learning Approaches; and
- 3) Student Engagement.

**1. Culture of Collaboration.** In order to best serve students, many Hyukshin schools adjust their educational practices in a way that promotes an overall culture of collaboration. At

the student level, these collaborative measures are emphasized in how teachers design and teach. Students develop relationships with their peers through direct interactions in the classrooms, class discussions, and collaborative activities.

Across the schools we studied, students described how important class discussions were for them. Through these interactions, which are promoted by both the administration and the teaching staff, students build friendships. This, in turn, promotes critical thinking and their ability to work with others. Such connections help students to become productive members of a free and democratic society. These skills not only improve the culture of their school, but also promote their academic achievement, according to the teachers.

In Moongok Middle School, the principal described how group activities impact students' learning. She said that small group work directly teaches students how to form interdependent relationships and to develop empathy for others. She commented,

내가 조금 잘하면 애한테 이거를 내가 도와줄 수 있고, 애는 또 뭘 잘하니까 애한테 나는 도움을 받을 수 있어' 서로 의지하는 관계. 아무리 성적이 상위권이라도 혼자서는 이 사회를 살아갈 수는 없는 거잖아요. 그리고 성적이 그렇더라도 사실 자기가 잘 할 수 있는 게 있기 때문에 서로 이렇게 보완하고 의지하는 관계를 만들어 주는 게 더불어 행복한 사람을 만드는 거 아닌가.

If I am good at this, I can help with this, and if he is good at this, I can be helped with that by him. Interdependent relationship. Although you are excellent in grades, doesn't mean you can live alone in this society. Also, even though with good grades, isn't building up a relationship that supplements and allows one to depend on others what makes one happy. (Moongok M, Principal Ryu, Interview).

Here, students' collaboration in their classes creates beneficial relationships across the entire student body.

In 11 of the 16 Hyukshin schools we studied, project-based learning is a cornerstone of classroom innovation. Active learning is prioritized whenever possible. These collaborative approaches to projects are shared across the HSSM. This was noted by Moongok Middle

School's principal: “제일 중요한 건 수업에서부터. 아까 보셨지만 대부분 혁신학교가 모둠 활동을 하고는,” – well, we are more class centered. As you may have seen, most of the Hyukshin schools have group activities (Moongok M, Principal Ryu, Interview).

As Moongok's principal noted, things such as student clubs, extracurricular activities, and a student led School Council are further ways in which groups integrate innovative practices in Hyukshin schools. Within the 16 Hyukshin schools we interviewed, such practices go well beyond the individual or their classroom, through a variety of avenues students are able to pursue. As discussed in further detail below, these practices ensure the student bodies within Hyukshin schools receive a well-rounded education.

**2. Student-Centered Learning Approaches.** Within many Hyukshin schools, the student body is within the central area of focus in the school. Often, individual students are considered to be one of the most important factors in a successful Hyukshin education. Thus, a large portion of classroom innovation revolves around the needs and interests of the student body.

Student autonomy is a goal that 9 of the 16 Hyukshin schools said that they aim to support. Through classroom innovation, students are encouraged to express themselves independently and to utilize critical thinking in a manner that allows them to take ownership in their education. This is particularly important for Hyukshin schools that serve students in low-income neighborhoods, as they may not be given such opportunities outside of their schools.

The principal of Jeongsun Middle School explained:

이쪽이 좀 열악하잖아요. 그래서 이 친구들이 그냥 내가 무엇을 잘 할 수 있다. 내가 이런 능력을 가지고 있었어? 내가 다른 사람에게 이런 힘을 가지고 있었어 라고 뭔가 성공적인 경험을 별로 없이 자라온 친구들이 되게 많아서 그런 친구들이 수업을 통해서 학생 자치를 통해서 그런 내가 이런 능력과 힘을 가지고 있었구나. 라는 걸 회복시켜주고, 확인시켜 주는 게 저는 굉장히 중요한 역할이라고 보고, 선생님들이 수업에서 그 역할을 해 주는 거예요.

The school is located in somewhat impoverished area. So, these students often did not grow up with a lot of successful thoughts or experiences that they are doing something well, that they have a certain capability, or that I had certain influences to others. So, I think it's very important to restore and confirm that they have this ability and power through their classes and through student autonomy. I think teachers play that role in the class. (Jeongsun M, Principal Lee, Interview).

Educators in the HSSM use their understanding of the individual needs of the students to provide personalized education, another important aspect of curriculum innovation. Teachers, through their pedagogical approaches, want the students in their classes to learn the curriculum in a manner that they find meaningful. Classroom innovation allows for group activities, classroom discussions, and project-based learning.

**3. Student Engagement.** At the most basic level, when students' individual needs are met, they become more confident in their academics and increase their overall classroom engagement. Such attention to “their present stage” (현 상태) allows Hyukshin Schools to have “a different way to look at kids. It goes from teaching-centered to learning-centered” (아이들을 다른 시각으로 보게끔 하죠. 그 전엔 선생님 중심이었다면 이제 학생들 위주로) (Jeongsun M, Principal Lee, Interview). Administrators in various schools see these increases in engagement as beneficial, as students are able to access more of the curricular content provided to them by their teachers and are not held to the strict, uniform standards that traditional education provides.

Woolgook Middle School's principal explained this difference:

그 하위권 아이들이 일반학교 같으면 이제 엎어져 자거나 이제 그럴텐데 여기서 이렇게 협동수업을 하잖아요? 모둠 수업을 하니까 그 아이들이 무슨 말이라도 같이 대화를 하게 되고.

If the lower-level children are in a regular school, they're going to sleep or something like that, but here, we are doing group activities, so students talk with each other at least. (Woolgook M, Principal Kim, Interview).

Diversified standards and approaches to academics, such as those which are afforded to students within the HSSM, not only increase engagement within the classroom but also encourage in-depth discovery of the topics unique to each individual. Throughout the HSSM this is done through extracurricular activities and student clubs. However, within some locations (e.g., Samoon High School), interviews revealed a more comprehensive approach. In such approaches, students are encouraged to pursue their interests, and self-discovery is included as another aspect of classroom innovation. Samoon High School's vice principal explained:

수업이 30% 이상 되는 아이들은 학교에서 관심을 안 받고 있었다가 여기는 관심을 자기가 있는 부분에 대해서 많은 프로그램이 있고. 거기에서 주도적으로 본인들이 수업 자체가 우리는 프로젝트 수업들이 많다 보니까 의견을 자기가 계진하고 발표하고 하는 것들을 할 수 있는 기회가 많다는 것. 그러니까 학생들은 그런 기회에서 본인들이 굉장히 많이 성장했다고 이야기를 해요.

More than 30% of the students in class did not gain any attention before, but here, there are a lot of programs that they're interested in. Here, they have a lot of project classes, which they take the lead, so they have a lot of opportunities to carry out their opinions and presentations. So, students say that they have grown up a lot from such opportunities. (Samoon H, Vice Principal Kim, Interview).

Through innovative blends of academic and project-based classes, educators report that student engagement has increased. With this combination, students develop their interpersonal skills and self-confidence.

## **Second Section: The Microsystem of the Classroom**

**Pedagogy and Curriculum Development.** In the HSSM, consideration is given by staff to developing a curriculum for students that goes beyond traditional learning and is truly innovative. As a microsystem, one can view classrooms through ecological theory as a system in which developing individuals engage in a pattern of specific activities and roles, often face-to-

face, in an environment that should encourage engagement and interaction (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Common ways in which many of the Hyukshin schools engage students in their innovative pedagogical styles are:

- 1) Collaborative Curriculum;
- 2) Experiential Learning; and
- 3) the School Learning Environment.

**1. Collaborative Curriculum.** The HSSM seeks to innovate through collaborative curriculum planning. As explained by one Bongjoong High School administrator, “일반적 강의가 아니라 협업을 중심으로 하는 협동 수업이 많이 이루어집니다.” –when it comes to classes, there are many collaborative classes which focus on collaboration, not general lectures. (Bongjoong H, Principal, Interview). Three ways in which Hyukshin schools create a collaborative curriculum are:

- a) Student-centered Classrooms;
- b) PLCs; and
- c) Interdisciplinary Curriculums.

**1a. Student-centered Classrooms.** Many of the educators we interviewed said that they wanted their classes to be “student-centered” rather than focused exclusively on mastering the curricula. They wanted to get to know their students well, and they wanted their students’ interests and needs to inform the ways that they prepared their classes, monitored activities, and evaluated their learning. Speaking to both the power of classroom innovation and the efficacy of Hyukshin schooling’s approaches with regard to student-centered instructional approaches, Moongok Middle School’s principal said, “일단 수업에 참여하고 뭔가를 배우려는 이런

태도를 가지고 있다는 게 좀 달라졌어요,” – “First, the attitude changed, so that they now participate and want to learn in class.” (Moongok M, Principal Ryu, Interview).

One Cheonwol Middle School administrator said:

수업에 몰입하지 않는 학생들이 있는데 어떻게 하면 이 학생들을 몰입하게 만들 수 있을까, 그래서 수업의 학습 목표나 장기적인 교육 과정에서 달성하고자 하는 목표, 그런 걸 달성할 수 있겠느냐, 그것이 큰 과제인데 그렇게 생각해 본다면 어떻게 하면 수업 혁신을 통해서 학생들의 학습 의욕을 동기 부여하고 그다음에 수업에 몰입하고 그다음에 학습 효과를 높일지.

When we see students not focusing during the classes, we would think about what we can do to make them focused, so that they achieve learning goals in long-term curriculum. This is our big homework, but in a different way, it is also about how we could motivate learning desires of students and how to let them pay attention in class through class innovations. Then, how to raise the learning outcome. (Cheonwol M, Principal Lee Interview).

By encouraging teachers to observe just how well students are engaging with the curriculum and what adjustments are needed in instruction, such administrators advance the professional learning of their staff. They encourage their teachers to treat each student as an individual that may require some adaptations in their approaches so that students can fully comprehend what is being taught and why it is important.

**1b. PLCs.** PLCs are some of the most important meetings in Hyukshin schools, where teachers and school staff discuss their teaching and ways to improve it. One Hyunsa administrator explained how PLCs work:

그냥 과거의 공개 수업처럼 수업을 공개하는 게 아니라 그 수업을 어떻게 planning 을 하고 어떻게 develop 을 시켜 가지고 어떻게 학생들이 실제로 이렇게 learning 이 발생할 수 있도록 이렇게 할 거냐 그거에 대한 구체적인 것들을 갖다가 이게 순차적으로. (...) 먼저 planning 을 (...) 인제 경험이 다 다르잖아요. 좋은 경험들이 있으니까 경험을 바탕으로 해서 내 수업 계획에 조금 더 보탬이 될 수 있는 아이디어를 주시라 그러면 아이디어 미팅을 해요.

그래서 그것들을 반영해서 실제로 수업지도안을 만들고 그거를 바탕으로 해서 먼저 수업을 한 번 진행을 해 봅니다. 계획과 실행은 항상 차이가 있을 수

있으니까 그 계획대로 수업 진행을 했는데 뭔가 거기서 추가적인 피드백이 있으면 그걸 반영을 해서 최종적으로다가 완성된 수업 공개를 해요. 여기서도 선생님들이 관찰을 하시는데 선생님 어떻게 가르쳤느냐 교재는 뭘 썼느냐 이런 거보다는 실제로 학생들이 어떤 장면에서 배움이 일어났는가에 대해서 학생의 배움 중심으로 관찰을 해서 피드백을 주죠.

It's not just an opened class (lesson observation) like in the past. It's more than that. It's about how we plan and develop the class, and about how we will make the actual learning happen for students. We plan those specific steps successively. (...) First, we plan (...) We all have different experiences. Because we have the good experiences, we can have a meeting to share ideas based on the diverse experiences to support the lesson plans.

Then, we come to actually making a lesson plan based on [the meeting], and implement the lesson. Things could always go different between what we expected when we planned and what actually happens when we teach the lesson. So when additional feedback comes up after teaching the lesson, we reflect and finally share the completed version. Here, the teachers observe, but rather than on how the teacher taught or what materials he used, they give feedback focusing on how learning actually happened for students, and in which part of the lesson, as in a student-centered approach. (Hyunsa M, Vice Principal Han, Interview).

Approaches such as these enable educators to enjoy spirited discussions with one another in their PLCs about the best ways to improve not just their teaching, but also their students' learning, in the HSSM.

In some schools, such as Ollim, these open class collaborations occur on a regular schedule. Ollim's administrators explained:

저희가 월요일마다 모임을 한다 그랬잖아요. 그러면 그렇게 한 세 번 정도 논의 한 다음에 마지막 월요일쯤에는 저희가 단축을 해서 그날은 일찍 보내고 한 반만 남겨 놓고 그 선생님이 수업을 공개적으로.

We told you that we have meetings every Monday. Every month, we have such Monday meeting three times, but on the last Monday, we have an early dismissal, so that only half of the students are left for the teacher who shares an open class. (Ollim M, Vice Principal Kim, Interview).

Regular allocation of times to dedicate towards open classes and collaboration within PLCs has proven to be a successful part of Ollim's class curriculum innovations.

**1c. Interdisciplinary Curriculums.** The curricular design and pedagogical perspective through which a majority of Hyukshin schools approach education is due, in part, to the interdisciplinary organization of student courses. Connections between a combination of courses allow for innovative lesson plans and activities, as well as increased student interest and engagement.

While every Hyukshin school has some notion of interdisciplinary curricula, Woolgook Middle School is an exemplary instance of this practice. Woolgook's vice principal commented:

참여를 다 하고 그래서 여기가 아마 서울시에선 가장 그런쪽으로는 우수하다고 해가지고 오늘 서울시 교육청에서도 촬영도 오고, 지난주에도 촬영을 했고 오늘도 지금 촬영도 하고 있어요. 홍보영상 촬영도 하는 그런 굉장히 우수한 학교입니다.

Because everyone participates in it, I heard that it's probably the most outstanding school in Seoul in terms of that. The SMOE came to film last week and also today, they are filming right now. It's a very outstanding school which also films promotion videos. (Woolgook M, Vice Principal Do, Interview).

These promotional videos illustrate how collaboration and the exchange of ideas is encouraged across the HSSM.

**2. Experiential Learning.** Experiential learning for Hyukshin students begins in the schools through clubs and extracurricular activities. One Hansabong administrator said that, “아이들의 복지와 돌봄을 위해 선생님들이 자전거 투어라던지 역사 탐방이라던지 많은 것을 계속 합니다.” –“For the welfare and care of children, teachers continue to do a lot of things, bicycle tours, history trips, and so on, and so on.” (Hansabong M, Principal Choi, Interview). Many of these experiences coordinate well with class discussions.

Hands-on learning is popular in the HSSM. Opportunities such as field trips are provided to students to enable them to better comprehend the subjects they are studying, and why they matter. For example, one Dosan High School administrator explained that, “근데 이제 제가 볼 때는 실제로 배움이라는 것은 스스로 적극성을 가지고 노력할 때 일어나는 거잖아요?” – “In my opinion, learning actually happens when you try to be active, right?” (Dosan H, Vice Principal Lee, Interview). Thus, students are encouraged to become more active by going out into their communities and visiting landmarks or museums, supplementing their in-class discussions and lessons (i.e., Hansabong Middle School’s field trip to the War and Women’s Rights Museum for history class).

Such ecological interactions are intended to be beneficial for both the students and their communities. For example, Hansabong Middle School hosts an “생태축제,” – “Ecological carnival, where students demonstrate their knowledge about the environment and its sustainability via a diverse array of projects and presentations.” (Hansabong M, Principal Choi, Interview). Some of the other ways that Hansabong promotes hands-on learning for its students is through the creation and management of a vegetable garden, the operation of a solar heating system in the school, and various other projects through which they seek to become a fully self-sufficient, clean energy “햇빛 학교,” – sunlight school.” (Hansabong M, Principal Choi, Interview).

**3. School Learning Environment.** At the classroom level microsystem of the HSSM, a number of common themes can be found in regard to the organization and manner of instruction. Classroom innovation is exemplified by these themes and can be viewed as directly impactful on the overall educational environment experienced by students. Both the classroom and

educational atmospheres provided to students by their school's administration are carefully considered and implemented in ways that are intended to be conducive to innovative learning.

Waehun High School's principal commented, “특히 그런 환경이 이렇게 갖춰지는 게 더 중요한 거다, 그렇지? 만약에 그런 환경이 없다 한다면 선생님이 그런 조건을 제시를 해야 돼요. 뭐를 통해서? 어떤 자료를 제시를 해서,” – “Especially, having such environment is important, right? If the right environment isn't provided, the teacher must make a proposal. Through what? Through submitting some data.” (Waehun H, Principal Na, Interview).

Overall, Hyukshin schools aim to create microsystems in their classrooms in which students will feel comfortable in engaging in their class lessons. Educators work hard to ensure that this kind of learning is done not so much because of external pressure and extrinsic rewards as through the interpersonal relationships fostered in the school. For example, one Hansabong Middle School administrator commented on how teachers have created a culture of consultation with their students, opening direct lines of communication between the two parties. In such cases, “수업 부분이 전달을 넘어서 학생과 상호작용을 통해 진행된다는 거,” – “생활협약도 처벌하고 벌점을 주는 게 아니라 자치를 중시한다는 것,” “The class goes beyond just delivering content, and it proceeds through interaction with students. It not only punishes and penalizes for breaking school-life agreements, but values self-governance.” (Hansabong M, Principal Choi, Interview).

Bongjoong High School also takes this approach to classroom atmosphere. Its principal said:

학생과 교사간에 이 피드백 상호피드백. 학생과 학생, 교사와 학생, 선생님들끼리도 이렇게 서로 상호도의를 해서 뭐가 부족하고 그 다음에 학생들이 또 뭘 요청하는지 학생 중심으로 수업이 되는거죠.

The interactive feedback between students and teachers, student-student, teacher-student, and teacher-teacher. They have an interactive discussion and tell each other what they're lacking. Then, we talk about what the students ask for. The classes become student-centered. (Bongjoong H, Principal Interview).

Through such interpersonal relationships between the staff and the students, Hyuksin school educators want to engage their students with learning in a manner that they find to be meaningful. The overarching goal is to promote academic achievement and the well-being of the students at one and the same time.

Such an investment in students is evident in the following quote, from Waehun High School's principal:

그렇죠. 어떤 지식이나 정보를 학생들에게 전달하고 주입하는 그런 교육이 아니라 우리 아이들이 그런 미래 역량을 어떻게 하면 키울 것이냐. 그런데 수업 방법이 좀 다르죠. 이따 와서 수업에 참관해 보시면 아시겠지만, 선생님이 일방적으로 ICT 내용, 빔프로젝터를 통해서 아이들을 어떻게 하면 잘 전달시킬 수 있을 것이냐 이거보다는 노래하듯 함께 토의하고 토론하고 그래서 아이들의 어떤 사고력, 또 과제에 대해서 어떤 문제를 해결할 수 있는 그런 능력, 그런 해결하기 위해서 어떤 정보를 어떻게 해서 좀 활용할 것이냐가 정보 활용 능력, 또 발표하는 능력, 소통하는 능력, 이런 그런 능력, 그리고 또 같이 분임 활동을 통해서 서로 아이들이 협력하는 그런 능력.

Of course. We don't simply pass information and knowledge to the students. We try to make them grow. That's why our classes are different. As you'll see afterwards, when you observe a class, the teachers are not concerned with how to efficiently pass more information to the students, by using beam projectors and such. Rather, they are concerned with how to cultivate the children's cognitive abilities, problem-solving abilities, by giving them assignments, information processing abilities, speech, communications, abilities to cooperate with their team members, and so on. (Waehun H, Principal Na, Interview).

Many of the educators in the HSSM approach curriculum and instruction in the same manner. There is of course considerable variety amongst the schools, which appears to be at least partly explainable based on when they joined the movement and the internal dynamics in the school and its surrounding community. On the whole, however, the educators we interviewed said that

they want their classes to be student-centered. They did not mean this exclusively in terms of individual independence, because they also want their students have a variety of ways to engage with one another. This means that “student-centered” in the HSSM has a pro-social component that is not always evident in how the term is used. The educators also want their students to have more meaningful learning experiences than they believe is possible in traditional schools.

### **Section Three: The Mesosystem of the School**

*An Intentional Approach.* An intentional approach to the enactment of Hyukshin principles was evident all of the schools we studied. At the school-wide level, each decision implemented by the school administration and teachers can be traced back towards a distinct goal. Some ways in which such intentional approaches are evident in the Hyukshin schools we studied are:

- 1) Innovative Applications to Learning;
- 2) Alternative Assessments;
- 3) Tools and Technology;
- 4) Collaborative Frameworks and Leadership; and
- 5) Student Activities.

**1. Innovative Applications to Learning.** The CSAT exam is faced by South Korean students annually, as an assessment through which their likelihood of admission into a particular university is determined. This exam inherently embodies strong societal pressure to obtain high grades in order to ensure future enrollment in one of the highest status, SKY (Seoul National University, Korea University, and Yonsei University) universities. Consequently, many students face an immense amount of stress when studying or preparing for the exam. How the HSSM

addresses these pressures and its impacts on the well-being of students is through an often innovative, approach. As the vice principal of Samoon High School explained:

저희는 교육활동에 관련되는 것이 특별하게 대입이 중점은 아니지만은 그래도 대입과 관련해서 우리가 할 수 있는 프로그램이라든가 이런 부분들을 굉장히 많이, 다른 학교에 비해서 시도를 많이 하고 있죠.

We don't particularly focus on college admissions, but we're trying out a lot of programs that we can do about college entrance, compared to other schools. (Samoon H, Vice Principal Kim, Interview).

**2. Alternative Assessments.** One alternative offered to replace the traditional mode of grading and exams is the notion of narrative-based assessments. Hyukshin schools, with a focus on class discussions and supporting student voice, feel as though narrative based assessments are the most logical option. As Jeongsun Middle School's principal stated:

수업을 토론식으로 하면서 돌아서서 이거는 다시 5 지선다로 찍게 하는 게 말이 되는 가? 이렇게 토론했다면 토론해서 정리한걸 언어로 서술할 수 있어야 되지 않겠는가?

Does it make sense to have a discussion in class and then turn around and take multiple choice tests? If they've discussed something, shouldn't they be able to describe it in the language that was previously discussed and organized? (Samjoeng M, Principal Lee, Interview).

Despite these changes and the innovative approaches found in schools from the HSSM, work towards a larger societal shift remains challenging. Some believe that, although progress is being made within Hyukshin schools to utilize alternative forms of assessment, more must be done. At a higher level, school administrators and teachers believe that while, “이제 그런 면에 있어서 수업의 방향이나 수업의 방법이나 그렇게 해서 우리가 변화를 이렇게 시켜 나가고 있는데, 수업만 변화가 된다고 이게 되는 게 아니죠. 뭐냐 하면 평가지, 평가,” – “We are changing the teaching methods and how the classes are handled, but that's not enough. The evaluation system needs to change.” (Wachun H, Principal Na, Interview).

The CSAT exam exacerbates the stress felt by the students and unfortunately continues to do so even after innovative changes are made within their school courses. One administrator at Dosan High School stated that, “수능 자체는 선행 학습과 그야말로 문제 풀이, 사실은 교육적으로는 바람직하지 않잖아요.” “The CSAT is simply about prerequisite learning and solving problems. It is not really educationally desirable.” (Dosan H, Vice Principal Lee, Interview).

**3. Tools and Technology.** Educators in the HSSM supplement their innovative teaching approaches with tools and techniques that they believe ultimately contribute to greater levels of overall student engagement and interest. Some of the tools mentioned by educators were electronic, such as software applications from Google, projectors, or digital blackboards. Yugok Middle School’s principal explained how such technological tools are integrated into their classes:

기본적인 거는 협업하는 수업혁신이 저희학교는 가장 큰 포커스를 주고 있어요. 아이들 수업 방법을 좀 바꿔보겠다. 선생님들도 그런 것을 하고, 추가 되는데 구글 플러스로 해서 디지털 테크놀로지 활용하는 수업도 첫 걸음마, 내년에는 좀 더 추가할 수 있게 선생님들이 연수도 받으시고 노력을 하고 있어요.

Basically, cooperative class innovation has the biggest focus at our school. We’ll change children’s class style. Teachers do that too, and add them, classes using digital technology through Google Plus as the first step to use digital technology. Teachers are making efforts, such as to get trained, so that we could add more next year. (Yugok M, Principal Cho, Interview).

Teachers take workshops on how to implement these techniques and tools in their classrooms. This allows for collaboration with colleagues in their schools, facilitated by support from administrators for their classroom innovation. Such endeavors are in line with the philosophy of the HSSM.

While Hyukshin Schools receive budget support and allocations from SMOE, the schools and their administrators have some leeway with the resource allocations they believe are most fitting. In some schools, the budget support goes towards experiential learning (e.g., Samoon High School's district gardens) while others put the budget towards tools and technology (e.g., Waehun High School's tablets and wi-fi routers). However, some Hyukshin schools located in lower socioeconomic areas believe even further assistance from SMOE would impact their students positively.

Waehun's principal expanded upon this by stating:

우리 학교에는 지금 뭐냐 하면은 와이파이를 일부 교실만 되어 있는 거예요 (...) 그런데 그런 필요를 하는 선생님들이 그 교실에서 가서 아이들로 하여금 자료를 찾아보게 하고 또 그 자료를 가지고서 토의, 토론 할 수 있는 그런 정리를 하고 그렇게 해서 서로 발표를 할 수 있는 그런 시설들이 갖추어져 있지요. 그런데 이것이 전 교실에 다 되어야 된다는 거예요, 제 생각하기에는. 그래서 우선 예산도 있기 때문에, 제가 선생님에게 그런 교실을 원하는 선생님들을 조사를 했어요...

At our school, we only have wi-fi installed in some classrooms (...) So, we let teachers use the classrooms if they need them for students to search for references. With the resources found, they can organize them to have discussions and debates to present. We are equipped with such facilities. But I think all classrooms need such facilities. Since we have the budget for it, I surveyed teachers to see who wanted such classrooms... (Waehun H, Principal Na, Interview).

From this quote one can see that educators are aware of the revenues they receive from participation in the HSSM. Such assistance provides a foundation for an increase in classroom innovation, across classrooms and throughout the schools. It also lets the educators in the HSSM know that the SMOE is supportive of their work, and that they are trusted to make good judgments.

**4. Collaborative Frameworks and Leadership.** The HSSM endeavors to shift away from the competitive nature of traditional South Korean education. Hyukshin educators focus on a collaborative framework instead. The principal at Yugok Middle school said:

도구적인 것 보다는 교육적인 것으로 가야된다. (...) 그게 혁신학교가 추구하는 거잖아요. 금방 결과가 나타나기는 어렵죠. 그래서, 우리학교도 당연히 교육비전이나 창의력과 협업하는 것을 굉장히 강조해요.

For a school to function more as its educational purpose, rather than as a tool to go to college. (...) that is what Hyukshin Schools are pursuing. It is hard to have instant results quickly. Therefore, our school, too, of course, greatly emphasizes educational vision, or creativity and cooperation. (Yugok M, Principal Cho, Interview).

A collaborative framework, it is hoped, will remain with students beyond their time in the schools.

The Bongjoong H principal explained: “진학해서도 그 그룹에서는 리더라고 이야기를 하더라 (...) 대학가서도 보면 우리학교 애들이 그 조그룹이 되거나 발표 수업할 때는 그야말로 그렇게 잘한다고,” “They told me they’re leaders in the group even in college (...) If you look at our students in college, when they end up doing group projects or presentations, they’re really good at those.” (Bongjoong H, Principal Interview).

Some competition is still evident in Hyukshin schools, then, even if it is only among schools. Hansabong’s principal expanded upon this by saying, “그렇다고 경쟁을 전면적으로 배격하는 게 아니라 협동과정에서 경쟁을 해서 오히려 심화시키는,” “It does not reject the competition entirely, but rather intensifies the competition in the process of cooperation.” (Hansabong M, Principal Choi, Interview). Educators in the HSSM know that parents and the public observe the learning results from each school in the SMOE, and Hyukshin schools are no exception.

Hyukshin educators often said that hierarchical leadership styles detract from innovative learning. Thus, 13 of the 16 schools we studied emphasize topics related to collaboration and democracy. Via a horizontal approach, many schools within the HSSM approach leadership as a collaborative process that fosters equality amongst administrators, staff, and students. Thus, “변화하시는 건 쉽지 않은 것 같아요. 특히나 관리자의 태도도 굉장히 중요하고,” – “it’s not easy to turnover. That’s why the administrators’ attitude is very important.” (Ryuah M, Principal Hong, Interview). Mr. Hong at Ryuah explained how difficult it is to change administrators’ attitudes and implement a horizontal approach, even if they know the importance of the changes.

Through PLCs, collaboration is often accomplished and further networking between Hyukshin schools is supported. This becomes important with the cycling of teachers that occurs periodically in South Korea.

School staff allow ample space for students’ voices to be heard. Student autonomy and responsibility are the cornerstones upon which a democratic atmosphere in Hyukshin schools is embodied. All of the 16 Hyukshin schools emphasized collaboration. The popularity of student councils across HSSM schools is especially noteworthy.

**5. Student Activities.** Hyukshin students explore topics that interest them, by participating in their schools’

- a) Clubs; and
- b) Student Councils.

**5a. School Clubs.** Students across 10 of the 16 Hyukshin schools we studied reported a variety of different clubs and events hosted by their schools. From these interviews, examples of clubs ranged from orchestras (e.g., Hansabong Middle School), academic studying clubs (e.g.,

Samoon High School), debate clubs (e.g., Namseoul Middle School), and clubs on volunteer opportunities (e.g., Hyunsa Middle School), to highlight a few.

Oftentimes, the development of diverse individual skill sets is possible due to the schools' focus on, “수업을 통해서 아이들이 자치,” “self-governing activities.” (Chumhwa M, Principal Paek, Interview). One administrator in Woolgook Middle School said that

여기는 동아리 활동이 상당히 다른 학교에 비해서는 좀 학생들 위주로 학생이 상설 동아리인데 학생들 위주로 자기가 하고 싶은 걸 하고 그 다음에 여기 학생회가 자발적으로 움직여요.

Compared to other schools, the club activities here are more student-oriented. It's a permanent club but it's student oriented so they could do whatever they want to. Also, the student council here works voluntarily. (Woolgook M, Vice Principal Do, Interview).

Students put forth a great deal of effort and take on a large amount of responsibility through such activities in their schools.

**5b. Student Council.** Another avenue through which the students' feelings of ownership can be developed, alongside with critical life skills, is student councils. Students provide, via their advocacy and leadership, successful student councils within approximately half of the Hyukshin schools studied. Due to the fact that many Hyukshin schools have a large focus on collaboration and democracy, the existence of student councils is an understandably popular practice.

One Woolgook Middle School administrator described its student council as a sort of self-government approach in which students negotiate the school rules and regulations as well as provide input to their discipline policy. Woolgook's principal said that:

학급자치, 그런 것도 철저하게 이루어져요 (...) 그러니까 학생자치도 잘 하고 있지만 그런데 우리가 역점을 두는 거는 수업방법 개선이다 이거죠.

Class self-government, that one is also very thoroughly proceeding (...) So this school is doing well regarding the student self-government, but our emphasis is on improving class innovation. (Woolgook M, Principal Kim, Interview).

Classes and student engagement with these innovative materials has the potential to be furthered by the availability of student clubs and a student council. This is due to the common occurrence of students becoming more self-efficacious and confident in their abilities.

The principal at Waehun High School gave an example of one kind of student:

중학교 때 한 일이 없어요. 우리학교 와가지고 저 뒤에서 조용하게 있을 아이인데 그 아이가 참여했어요. 그래가지고 그런 능력을 발휘한 거예요. 학교다닐 때 이런 경험을 한 아이들이 학교밖에 나가서, 사회에 나가서 무슨 일이 주어졌을 때 개네 스스로 기획하고, 개네 스스로 어떤 파트를 담당할 수 있는 그런 역량이 키워지는 거죠.

He did not do anything in middle school. While he used to sit back quiet when he came to our school, he participated. So, he was able to display such capability. Because students have such experience when they are schooling, when a duty is held when they enter the society later, they could plan things on their own, and this is how the capability to take responsibility of one's own task grows. (Waehun H, Principal Na, Interview).

Through examples like these we can see that Hyukshin schools not only provide students with an active role in their current education, but also set forth a path of being actively involved citizens that can be followed in the students' futures.

Many of the opportunities provided to Hyukshin school students were a result of generous SMOE funding. Woolgook Middle School's vice principal explained:

뭐 다른 데 보다는 아마 행사가 많을거예요. 왜 그런가 하면 이 예산이 좀 다른 학교보다 많잖아요. 혁신학교 예산이 있어서 많다보니까 그 예산으로 동아리라든지 외부활동이라든지 체험학습이라든지 외부강연이라든가 이런 것들이 일반학교보다는 많죠. 그래서 그 학생들이 그런 거 자기 적성에 맞춰서 가는, 체험학습을 하는 그런 게 일반학교보다 많을 겁니다.

There are probably more events than other schools. It's because we have more budget funding than other schools. We have a lot from the Hyukshin School budget so from that budget we can create more clubs, extracurricular activities, experiential learning, out of school lectures than other general schools. That's why the students can find what's more

suitable for them and do experiential learning compared to other general schools. (Woolgook M, Vice Principal Do, Interview).

All the stakeholders, such as administrators, teachers, students, and parents, recognized and appreciated the impact of the budget allocated to Hyukshin schools. They believe that this is a unique aspect of the HSSM in Seoul that allows them to create their own signature practices, which in turn enable them to stand apart from the general schools that students might have otherwise attended. Many of the innovative activities and projects discussed throughout this report might not have been possible without this funding. In addition, administrators in several of the schools said that they had reduced teachers' workload with respect to managerial tasks. Since Korean teachers in general feel that they are required to devote excessive time to these tasks, the combination of workload reduction and additional funding is powerful and beneficial for the HSSM.

#### **Section Four: The Macro-system of the Larger Society**

*Beyond the Classroom.* Macro-systems are the overarching structures or patterns within which the smaller or more specific systems occur (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). In the case of the HSSM, the subsystems of the students, their classrooms, and their schools are all dialectically related through numerous exo-system connections to the broader system of South Korean society. Thus, consideration of the world beyond the classroom is an essential aspect of Hyukshin schooling that shapes the abilities of the schools to implement classroom innovation.

Hyukshin educators stated that they want to prepare students not only for positive experiences during their years in school, but also for successful futures in ways that extend beyond academia. They have developed strategies and concepts for helping their students to approach their futures holistically. The ultimate goal is to assist a rising generation in feeling

confident as individuals who have essential roles to play in the formation of South Korean society.

The emphasis placed by schools on the student roles beyond the classroom is manifested in four categories:

- 1) Democratic Citizenship;
- 2) Critical Thinking Skills;
- 3) Responsibility; and
- 4) “Real Life” skills.

It is the hope of the HSSM that the future generation of students will be primed for success in creating greater societal changes through the promotion of innovative education.

**1. Democratic Citizenship.** As previously mentioned, societal influences have played a large part in the creation and spread of the HSSM. A focus on the students’ future roles within South Korean society is emphasized through the structure and orientation of classes in Hyukshin schools. In particular, many students are encouraged to develop a sense of democratic citizenship, which is considered in some schools to be, “초중등교육의 아마 가장 기본목표,” – “the most basic goal of primary and secondary education” (Hansabong M, Principal Choi, Interview). Through this, students are able to learn:

더불어 행복함이에요. 나 혼자만 나의 삶의 주인, 내가 되어서 나만 행복하면 안 되고 우리가 함께 행복한 사람이 되고 그런 사람들이 모여서 또 행복한 사회를 만들어 가는 그런 아이들로 키우고 싶은 거죠

It’s about being happy together. Rather than being alone in one’s life and being happy alone, we have to become happy people together, and gather up to create a happy society and raise happy children (Moongok M, Principal Ryu, Interview).

Hansabong Middle School’s principal explained that, in his opinion, new approaches to education should be humanizing, enabling all students to participate as equals in democratic

deliberation with one another. This requires students to learn to develop their own opinions and to respectfully listen to others. In this way, he believes a solution to the many disparities and social problems faced by Korean citizens could be addressed by the rising generation of students (Hansabong M, Principal Choi, Interview). His perspective aligns with Moongok Middle School's philosophy. Its principal said that education should be about “양적 팽창과 경쟁체제의 중심으로 왔던 교육 부분들이 좀 더 인간적이고 다수가 함께 발전하는,” –“collectively improving together, rather than increasing quantity expansion or competition-centered education.” (Hansabong M, Principal Choi, Interview).

**2. Critical Thinking Skills.** The emphasis on critical thinking skills in Hyukshin schools comes from the conviction that students should be autonomous. Educators in the HSSM say that they want their students to be able to express their opinions and ideas in a concise and effective manner. Beyond their schooling, students should be prepared and able to take charge over their personal lives, “시민, 민주시민으로서 어 본인 생활을 영위할 수 있는 그, 생각을 할 수 있는,” –“and think by themselves as citizens, democratic citizens.” (Woolgook M, Principal Kim, Interview). Hyukshin school educators say that they feel a sense of responsibility towards the well-being of the students overall. One principal said that true education should focus on:

... 정말 우리 아이들이 미래에 살아갈 수 있는 그런 능력. 미래 역량. 얘기하면은 창의력이라든가 사고력이라든가 문제 해결 능력. 정보 활용 능력. 서로 소통하는 능력.

...giving the children the abilities to help them survive and thrive in the future - which I call “future competence” - such as creativity, cognitive abilities, problem-solving, information processing and communicating abilities. (Waehun H, Principal Na, Interview).

**3. Responsibility.** The importance of such skills both within and beyond the classroom walls, as well as the impact they have on the student body, allows for both Hyukshin schools and their students to recognize the responsibility they hold in embodying and spreading this philosophy within greater Korean society. Through such an approach, school staff and administrators tend to agree with the following: “아이들이 나중에 살아도 자기가 말하고 행동에 대한 것들에 대한 책임, 이런 것들을 서로 배워 나가지 않을까 하는 생각이 들어요,” – “I think that children will need to learn responsibility for what they say and do in the future.” (Samoon H, Vice Principal Kim, Interview). This administrator emphasized that the personal traits and skills students learn within their time at Hyukshin schools allow for the successful continuation of responsible behaviors. Students can then choose to lead purposeful lives as a constructive member of society.

**4. “Real Life” Skills.** Hyukshin schools tend to utilize innovative methods and unique school events to promote the exploration and comprehension of life competencies or ‘real life’ skill sets. Hansabong Middle School’s principal has gone so far as to emphasize this within their school motto – “앎과 삶이 함께 하는 민주시민 육성,” – “cultivating democratic citizenship with knowledge and life competencies.” (Hansabong M, Principal Choi, Interview).

Through a variety of innovative school events and activities, Hyukshin schools attempt to make connections between students’ coursework and future career opportunities. Often, schools host these clubs, events, or activities, “그럼 이 아이들이 경험을 통해서 영감을 받아가지고 진로나 직업, 좋아하는 것들이 정해질수 있잖아요,” – “So (students) can be inspired by their experiences and decide their careers and careers and what they like” (Yugok M, Principal Cho, Interview). Another administrator explained this holistic support, even for those students with poor academics:

어려움을 겪는 학생들이 여전히 있기는 하지만, 그 학생들이 완전히 학교에서 내쳐지는 것이 아니라 '너는 너대로 또 잘하는 게 있을 거야' 수학은 좀 못해도 또 잘하는 거 있을 때 선생님들이 그런 시선으로 애들을 인정하고 존중해 준다면 그 아이들도 저는 잘-- 비록 수학은 못 하더라도 저는 이 사회의 일꾼으로 클 것이다 그렇게 생각합니다.

There are still students with difficulties, but rather than putting them aside, we would respect them and tell them they are talented in other areas. They might be bad in math, but they could be good at something else. I suppose that when teachers view students with such a mindset, students will grow to become great contributors to the society, even though one might be bad in math. (Moongok M, Principal Ryu, Interview).

No matter what levels of academic achievement students may have attained within their classes, school staff want to focus on the positive aspects of their students. They can see when their students are exhausted or discouraged and they want to provide them with a better education. These educators believe that this supports not only the involvement of the students in the school but also increases their self-esteem in ways that will give them confidence in shaping their future lives.

## **Discussion**

***Student Level.*** At the student level, classroom innovation practices allow for students within Hyukshin schools to foster connections in a manner that improves both their educational experiences and their preparation for entering society in the future. Classroom innovations experienced by these students allow for the support and continuation of their successes, building up their self-esteem and confidence via student-centered learning. Collectively, students are able to learn about how to better occupy their roles as democratic citizens through collaboration and group activities. Classroom innovation can be seen as an aspect of Hyukshin schooling that supports the well-being of its members at the individual level, which is one of the HSSM's principles.

When approaching the Hyukshin school systems at this level, the students say that they are better able to understand their course lessons and engage with course materials. They report that they are then able to increase their confidence, and their feelings of self-autonomy, and ultimately become contributing democratic citizens within greater Korean society.

The ways through which classroom innovation is approached by the HSSM differ greatly from the traditional model of education that past generations of South Korean citizens have experienced, and that many current students are still experiencing. The combination of Hyukshin principles, classroom innovation practices, and engagement with the larger society allows for an impactful and beneficial experience for many students, according to our interview data.

Students are the foundation upon which the HSSM is based. No matter the way in which students experience classroom innovation (e.g., group activities, experiential learning, u-shaped desks), the flexibility of Hyukshin schools provides an experience that students in more traditional school settings do not get. This movement intentionally departs from the traditional modalities of teaching, in order to offer a unique kind of education.

However, despite the difference in educational practices between traditional and Hyukshin schools, innovative practices are still evolving. A balance is required in order to ensure the most efficacious manner of delivering classroom innovations, and this requires trial and error over time. In order to engage in this iterative discovery process, schools consider discussions amongst the administrators, teachers, and staff of their own school as well as other HSSM schools within the movement to be essential. In some interviews, school representatives reported feeling as though there was a disconnect between what society considers to be essential to student successes and what the schools consider to be detrimental to student learning and development.

Student engagement through classroom innovation does not necessarily promote well-being. One principal said that innovation can lead to confusion for some students. Most students seem to need additional attention which adjusting to classroom innovation upon entering into Hyukshin schools. Jeongsun Middle School's principal said, “어떤 날은 정리가 안 되는 것 같기도 하고. 아이들 토론만 있는 것 같기도 하고. 어떤 날은 아이들이 물음표를 찍는 상태에서 끝나기도 하고,” – “I think that some class discussions are only childish chatter. Some days, students end up leaving class more confused than when they came in.” (Jeongsun M, Principal Lee, Interview).

***Classroom Level.*** Innovation that moves away from traditional education applies itself within Hyukshin classrooms in a way that allows for collaborative curricula, unique learning experiences, and hands-on education. Such pedagogical approaches at the classroom level not only influence students learning and school experiences, but also shape the larger systemic levels of the school environment and its structure.

Within this microlevel system, one can see how the intersection of students and their classrooms allows for individuals to push beyond their comfort zones and past the traditional infrastructure of education. Hyukshin schooling appropriately falls in line with Lev Vygotsky's original conceptualization of the learning process, in which he explains that an individual's education is processed through the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Kang, 2012). This is accomplished through scaffolding and is evident in the HSSM via the various classroom innovations that allow for students to exist equally amongst one another while progressing in their personal ZPDs. Through such practices, students can be supported in the pursuit of their interests.

Hyukshin schools appear to benefit from the creation and support of PLCs through grade-level and subject-area groupings. PLCs can also cut across grades and academic content to design interdisciplinary courses and collaborative curriculums. PLCs do require some additional training and support for teachers who are unfamiliar with the model, educators say. Regular PLC meeting times and open class schedules appear to be effective and successful in many of the schools, and are components that all Hyukshin schools should consider as part of their change strategies.

Through the encouragement of collaboration amongst professionals, educators are able to gain feedback and support from one another. By sharing experiences, professionals learn how to design and experiment with innovative techniques. Laying the foundation for open lines of communication should assist educators to expand beyond traditional schooling and improve student learning and human development in ways that would otherwise be impossible, educators say.

Finally, collaboration between school staff and administrators allows for these educators to feel as though they are supported by the SMOE. They say that they feel comfortable making occasional errors and learning through reflection about the diverse modalities of classroom innovation that work best for them and their teaching styles. This freedom also allows them to strengthen important aspects of their professional skills, such as the habit of meta-cognition, which is improved when they are all sharing amongst themselves. Their freedom allows them to overcome the strict guidelines of closed-text approaches to curricula, and to consult with the students directly about what they would like to learn and why. The HSSM is pioneering a promising new approach to education.

When considering the manner through which classroom innovation can be most successful within classrooms, we find that experiential learning is evident across all of the 16 schools we studied. Some of the schools seem to have fully elaborated change architectures to support classroom innovation, while in others it is promoted through dialogue outside of formal settings like PLCs or open classrooms. Student autonomy is fostered through the encouragement students receive in pursuing their interests.

Experiential learning, the opportunity for students to go on field trips and to apply their knowledge in environments beyond the classroom, allows educators to facilitate growth in ways that go beyond simple cognitive achievement. Educators see a relationship between the activities, clubs, and experiences provided to the students, and beneficial outcomes in their behavior and overall well-being. Student engagement in courses increases, they say, and relationships within the student body and the school environment are fostered and supported. Students are encouraged to think of their future life trajectories, and the support they receive contributes to their overall happiness with their schools. This approach aspires for critical life skills to be nurtured within students, as they prepare for integration into democratic society in South Korea.

Due to the influential and pervasive nature of classroom innovations and the multiple aspects of Hyukshin schooling that it seems to impact, the school learning environment can often serve as a good indicator of where the school stands in its embodiment of innovative practices. The goal is for each Hyukshin school to provide a comfortable and safe environment in which students can express themselves and explore their identity through democratic deliberation in their classrooms, student councils, and student clubs. Students are then able to engage with the course materials and comprehend their lessons more deeply. Thus, it seems that HSSM students become well equipped for their future roles as citizens in South Korean society.

***School Level.*** The Hyukshin schools in our sample explore classroom innovation consistently. At the school-wide level, innovative approaches are offered to students through a variety of pedagogical techniques and new curricular offerings. Such techniques may include changing their overall applications of learning, shifting their perspectives on assessment, or adjusting the framework through which they structure and run the schools themselves.

This distinction is one which most fully sets the HSSM apart from traditional schooling, as the approach to academic assessments, student expectations, and the definition of what it means to be ‘successful’ has shifted. While this shift has been approached through multiple avenues across South Korea, the emphasis has been most strongly seen in the HSSM. It is a large and challenging shift that has been challenging for these Hyukshin schools; however, the student outcomes prove that, when done effectively, classroom innovation can have ripple effects that can impact students, faculty, schools, and society itself.

One of the distinctions between Hyukshin schools’ approach to education and the traditional model can be seen when looking at the formation and utilization of assessments for the students. While many school staff members conceptualize the CSAT education and traditional ‘closed text’ models as less efficacious in helping students comprehend the subject matter, there seems to be a disconnect when it comes to the opinions of the parents and families of students. Instead, many of these still insist that their students attend hagwons after school.

Some believe that this is because there are some people who think that Hyukshin schools do not focus on high academic performance, or that they reduce students’ academic performance. While sensible people can differ on the best ways to improve academic performance, HSSM schools are assessing students carefully while motivating students and stimulating their curiosity at the same time.

One administrator in Dosan High School said that,

일방적으로 애들 수준을 봐 가면서. 무조건 다 해 봐라 이거는 아닌 거 같고  
적절하게 중요한 내용을 얘기하면서 또 애들은 호기심을 가지고 찾아 나가면서  
또 발표하면서 그러면서 자기 거를 만들게

I don't think it is right for a teacher to unilaterally just request students to do something based on the level of them. But rather, teacher saying appropriate important material, and students finding interest in and look for it, then having them present, so that the learning becomes theirs. (Dosan H, Vice Principal Lee, Interview).

Throughout the HSSM, participating schools should consult with parents, civil society organizations, and students to deliberate upon the most efficacious approach to exams and assessments. Most schools assess students carefully, while stimulating students' curiosity and letting them engage in learning through various classroom innovations.

In order to best facilitate a shift away from the traditional model, the SMOE budget for tools and techniques was discussed in our case study interviews. Integrating updated and modern pedagogical techniques, curricula, and assessments allows for students to become prepared for the more democratic and industrialized society that exists in their future. While the investment into technology and tools has proven successful in some schools, responses revealed that a small number of Hyukshin school administrators ultimately determine just how the budget itself is distributed.

This allows for substantial variation among Hyukshin schools. It provides a measure of just how far along a given school is in its transition to the democratic and participatory manner of governance espoused by the HSSM. While school leaders certainly have to be assigned ultimate responsibility for how a budget is used, encouraging teachers and staff to engage in discussions about expenditures would be more congruent with Hyukshin values than leaving these choices to principals or vice-principals.

***Societal Level.*** Hyukshin schools are an important educational innovation in Korean society, and they exist within a larger culture that continues to award high status and prestige to CSAT exam results and students' entry into the elite SKY universities. The broader societal emphasis on credentialism, and the persistence of relatively high levels of economic inequality, make it difficult for those interested in a more collaborative and democratic approach to schools and society to persevere. That Hyukshin schools continue to thrive even under challenging societal circumstances is itself a sign of success.

These societal pressures are partially addressed in Hyukshin schools through the full repertoire of classroom innovation activities that enable students to improve their critical thinking skills, their ability to present their ideas and to listen to others respectfully, and to take initiative in shaping their own learning environments. These kinds of skills are not just needed by democratic citizens; they are also of value in our rapidly globalizing world, in which people of different cultures, from different backgrounds, are brought into regular contact with one another. We anticipate that Hyukshin schools will prove to be sustainable, as their innovative features will likely prove to be assets in negotiating a future of constant and often unpredictable change.

Classroom innovation in Hyukshin schools impacts the learning and relationships of students, and it does so through instructional approaches and curriculum designs that are pushing the boundaries of what has hitherto been considered possible in Korean schools. The approaches we have described in this cross-case analysis indicate that a quiet educational revolution is underway in the HSSM. For this reason, it should be attended to carefully by educators in Korea and beyond.

## **Professional Learning Communities and Professional Learning Networks:**

### **Teachers' Perspectives**

#### **Introduction**

From their inception Hyukshin schools in Seoul have promoted the creation of PLCs for their teachers (SMOE, 2016). Although each school has had to overcome various conflicts among its members at the initial stage of Hyukshin implementation, teachers have found PLCs to be helpful for their professional development. Learning communities also have formed beyond in-school levels, so that teachers can communicate across Hyukshin schools in Seoul. Teachers report that they value their PLCs and would benefit from more robust PLNs. Before describing educators' views on PLCs and PLNs, we first discuss their views on authority and educational change. This provides important background, because PLCs are an alternative form of professional organization.

#### **Perspectives of School Members**

Hyukshin school administrators and teachers had a diverse spectrum of feelings about educational change in their schools. Most teachers described their administrators as supportive colleagues who helped developing a horizontal work culture, but a few reported that their administrators persisted with authoritarian leadership styles. Teachers also varied in their views about the Hyukshin school movement (HSSM). On some matters they were supportive, but they also felt uninformed or worried at times. This variation meant that some schools were able to accelerate rapidly and efficiently towards the transformation of their cultures, while others stalled.

*Administrators.* Hyukshin school teachers described their administrators as supportive or unsupportive. Although most teachers described their school leaders as supportive, there were

few who said they had a hard time and were dissatisfied with their principals. They contended that their school leaders did not fully understand about the democratic style of Hyukshin school management.

*Supportive administrators.* Teachers said that their administrators enacted “혁신학교의 틀을 잘 유지하는 수평적 리더십” “a horizontal leadership style that sustained the Hyukshin school framework.” (Dosan H, Teacher Kim, Interview) They said that principals “선생님들이 뭔가 하고자 하는 것들을 컷하지 않고” – “did not block what teachers want to do.” (Samoon H, HHD Kyung, Interview) Teachers felt valued by “건들지 않는 리더십” – “leadership that doesn’t interfere.” (Chonwol M, Teacher Shin, Interview) One teacher explained that “혁신학교는 자발적이 대부분이에요. 교장 선생님이 하라 그러는 건 없어요” – “most parts of a Hyukshin school are autonomous, and there is nothing a principal asks teachers to do.” (Woolgook M, Teacher Hong, Interview)

Other teachers said that “눈치보는 게 없어요.” “there was no need to feel awkward” (Hansabong M, Teacher Ma, Interview) around the principal, since “교장 선생님도 하나의 구성원으로써 저 뒤에서 경청하시는 입장이고” “they were also listeners, as members of the staff.” (Chonwol M, HHD Lee, Interview) In the HSSM, “교장 선생님이 결정이 아니라 항상 그전에는 선생님들의 의견을 수렴하는 과정이 있는 – “there was always the process of gathering teachers’ opinions before, rather than the principal making decisions on his own.” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi & Cho, Interview)

Hyukshin school administrators showed “본인의 생각은 확고하셔도 선생님들의 말을 들어봤을 때 그것이 충분히 납득이 된다고 생각하시면 기꺼이 본인의 의견을 덮으실 수도 있는 그러한 유연한 리더십” – “flexible leadership, so that even when they had firm

convictions, they were willing to change after hearing teachers' views.” (Ollim M, Teacher Seo, Interview) This helped teachers feel that “탑다운 느낌이 많이 열리는 거 같아요” – “the sense of a top-down culture was changing.” (Chonwol M, Teacher Kim, Interview)

***Unsupportive administrators.*** Not all teachers said that their administrators were supportive of the HSSM. A few teachers thought that their administrators were authoritarian and were not able to respect HSSM principles regarding democratic education and teacher leadership. A teacher from a middle school said that her principal did not accept a decision reached by the teachers:

토론이 있는 교직원회의라 그래서 어떤 주제를 주고 그거에 대해서 교직원 회의를 해요. 그럼 막 선생님들이 전지에다가 의견을 써가지고 마인드맵 그리고. 그래서 발표까지 다 해요. 근데 결과는 안 받아들여지는 경우가 좀 많은. 그래서 선생님들 분위기는. 뭐야, 결과 정해져 있는데 왜 했어. 시간 낭비 아니야 이럴 때도 가끔 있어요. ... 봉사활동 시간 때문에도 그랬던 거 같은데. 학기 말 프로그램도 그렇고. ... 교장 선생님 약간 독단적인 부분이 있는 게. 본인이 생각하신 것은 딱 이루어야 되는 거예요

At a faculty meeting with discussion, we had meetings based on a given agenda. Then, teachers wrote their ideas on paper, created a mind map, and made presentations. But there were quite a lot of times when our finalized decisions were not accepted. Then, teachers often complained, ‘Why wasn’t this proceeded with what we have discussed?’ ‘Isn’t this a waste of time?’ ... This was the case for the hours of service, and programs for the end of the semester ... Because our principal had the character that what he wished needed to be accomplished, he was often arbitrary in confirming decisions. (Chumhwa M, Teacher Kim, Interview)

While most teachers saw their administrators as democratic leaders, there were teachers who “되게 좀 많이 힘들었어요. 관리자가 혁신학교가 무엇을 하고자 하는지에 대한 이해도가, 교장 교감 선생님이 이해도가 상당히 떨어지고” – “struggled, since their administrators had a meager understanding of what Hyukshin schools want to achieve.” (Hansabong M, HHD Choi, Interview) When school leaders had not understood or accepted the Hyukshin model of change, teachers felt that their time and efforts to enact Hyukshin principles were “낭비” – “wasted.”

(Chumhwa M, Teacher Kim, Interview) School leaders who have been appointed through the SMOE's school rotation systems seemed to have a more difficult time than those who were elected.

## **Teachers**

About half of the teachers our team interviewed said they were supportive of the HSSM. Other teachers had not known that their school was in the HSSM, and worried about what it entailed. Some teachers did not want to work in a Hyukshin school, and felt out of place in one.

***Supportive teachers.*** Many Hyukshin schools had teachers who supported Hyukshin schools. Out of 45 teachers interviewed, 21 teachers stated that they applied to their school knowing that it was a Hyukshin school, and wanted to work for the HSSM. Whereas some of the teachers learned about the HSSM through training sessions or from the SMOE, other teachers had been interested in Hyukshin schools as Korean Teacher Union (KTU) members.

Teachers “목적을 가지고 이렇게 혁신학교를 운영했던 거 같아요” – “worked at Hyukshin schools with a real sense of purpose.” (Hyunsa M, Teacher Hong, Interview) They contributed to a vision of education that promoted “동료 간에 소통과 네트워크 이런 게 굉장히 활발하고. 신뢰할 수 있는 동료들이 있고.” – “active communication, networking, and trust among colleagues.” (Namseoul M, HHD Kim, Interview) With the leadership of these teachers, “그냥 하나의 토론 문화로 자리를 잡은 것” – “faculty discussions became a cornerstone of school culture.” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi & Cho, Interview) These teachers “회의를 굉장히 많이 합니다” – “had a lot of meetings” (Samoon H, Teacher Shin, Interview) “[일] 때문에 모이기도 하고. 아니면 그냥 개인적인 모임이기도 하고” – “both formally and informally.” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview) One teacher said that “전반적으로 다 잘

협력하시는 편이에요. ... 집중도도 높고 선생님들이 많이 호응을 잘 해주시니까 새로운 일을 해나가는데 어려움이 없구요” – “There is no difficulty at all when teachers are cooperative, focused and responsive.” (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview)

**Worried teachers.** In spite of their fame in educational change circles in Korea, not all teachers we interviewed had even heard about Hyukshin schools before their current assignments. Seven out of the 45 teachers we interviewed stated that they applied to—or were appointed at—their school, without knowing that it was a Hyukshin school or what that meant. These teachers said they felt confused and worried when they learned that their schools had a distinctive philosophy and mission. For example, one teacher from Bongjoong High School said, “저는 처음 들어봤어요. ... 혁신학교에 대한 그런 개념도 없었거든요” – “I had never heard of Hyukshin schools before, and had no idea what was involved with them.” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview)

One teacher shared her memories of when she first came to Chumhwa Middle School:

내가 잘 할 수 있을까 이런 부분이 자신감, 자존감에 대한 문제도 컸고 방법을 많이 몰랐잖아요. 방법을 몰라서 그런 거에 대한 우려도 크고. 사실 이전학교에서는 혁신이라는 걸 접해볼 기회가 잘 없었어요. 혁신이라는 것도 이렇게 넘어 넘어 들었지, 제가 직접 딱 부딪힌다고 하니까 혁신 뭘 혁신 하라는 거지? 그래서 막 혁신이 뭔 뜻인지 찾아보고 그랬더니 혁이 오히려 가죽 혁 자를 쓰더라고요. 그래서. 그래서 뭐지? 모르겠는데. 막 이렇게 생각했을 정도로 되게 답답했죠.

There was a big issue of confidence and self-esteem. ‘Could I do it well?’ As I didn’t know much about the Hyukshin model, I worried about how to implement it. I hadn’t had experienced the Hyukshin philosophy at my previous school. I had only heard of it. I wondered ‘What was there to innovate?’ I looked up the meaning of Hyukshin and saw that “Hyuk” meant leather. So, I was like: ‘What is this? I don’t know!’ I was very frustrated. (Chumhwa M, Teacher Kim, Interview)

Given that Hyukshin schools were “굉장히 낯선 그런 개념” – “an unfamiliar concept”

(Waehun H, Teacher Choi & Cho, Interview) these teachers simply did “잘 무슨 말인지

모르겠지만” – “not understand what Hyukshin was.” (Chonwol M, Teacher Kim, Interview)

They didn’t know “어떻게 바꾸겠다는 건지는 모르겠지만” – “how to make changes” (Hansabong M, HHD Choi, Interview) based upon by Hyukshin principles. These teachers heard from their colleagues that Hyukshin schools demanded too much work from educators. One teacher at Namseoul Middle School said, “선생님들이 수업 공개 엄청 많이 해야 한다고 그러는 거예요. 엄청 부담스러웠거든요” – “I felt a lot of pressure when I heard from other teachers that there would be a lot of open classes.” (Namseoul M, Teacher Yoon, Interview) Two teachers from Waehun High School told us that their colleagues thought of a Hyukshin school as “거기는 일이 많다. 매일 토론 한다며.” – “a school with a ton of work and so many discussions every day.” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi & Cho, Interview) Although there were teachers who chose to work at Hyukshin schools because of their vision, then, there were others who worried about aspects of the HSSM that they might not be able to manage.

***Unsupportive teachers.*** Seventeen of the 45 teachers we interviewed worked in schools that converted to the Hyukshin model while they were assigned to them. These teachers reported that there were more unsupportive teachers in schools that joined the HSSM, rather than in new schools that opened as one. One teacher said that her school had many teachers who opposed the HSSM:

중각상고하고 사문고등학교처럼 혁신학교로 개교를 한 학교들이 있어요. 거기는 처음 시작할 때부터 혁신학교여서 멤버들 자체가 거의 전교조 선생님들로 들어가요. 그러니까 그 안에서의 갈등이 별로 없어요. ... 우리는 전체 구성원 중에 사실은 절반 넘는 사람들이 전교조 선생님들이 아니에요. ...그래서 힘들었어요?

There were schools like Junggaksan and Samoon that opened as Hyukshin schools. For these schools, because they were Hyukshin schools from the beginning, the faculty members mostly consisted of KTU teachers. There was not much conflict among them. In our school, more than half of the teachers were not KTU. It was rough. (Waehun H, Teacher Choi & Cho, Interview)

Because schools had their own cultures set years before converting into a Hyukshin school, there were “변화에 대해서 조금 거부감이 있으셨던” – “teachers who were hostile to the idea of change.” (Ollim M, Teacher Seo, Interview) These teachers were “수업. 조직 문화의 변화. 이런 거에 대한 두려움이 있고요.” – “afraid of changing their classes and their form of school.” (Moongok M, Teacher Noh & Lee, Interview) They felt “내 수업에 누군가 들어오는 것에 대한 걱정과 부담감, 반발 그런 것들” – “anxiety, pressure, and resistance to having others in their classrooms.” (Ollim M, Teacher Seo, Interview) One Hyukshin Head of Department (HHD) said that “연배가, 경력이 계신 선생님들은 기존에 있던 것을 그냥 하는 것이 더 편하겠죠” – “the older and more experienced teachers felt comfortable in just carrying on with what they had always done.” (Chonwol M, HHD Lee, Interview). When there were many more teachers who were unsupportive of Hyukshin schools, conflicts opened up between them and the supportive teachers.

### **Conflicts**

Teachers have had very different understandings about what it means to work in Hyukshin schools. Divisions among them were said to impact the school’s overall atmosphere.

*Between supportive and unsupportive teachers.* There were more conflicts between supportive and unsupportive teachers when a school converted into a Hyukshin school than otherwise. Unsupportive teachers “내가 왜 여기에 와야 하는지 모르겠다는 불만을 가지는” – “complained about why they needed to be at their schools.” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi & Cho, Interview) If some colleagues wanted to create a new curriculum, “나는 원하지 않는데 왔는데 왜 자꾸 나보고 혁신에 동참하라고 하나” – “they wondered why they were asked about it, because they did not even want to be in a Hyukshin school.” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi & Cho,

Interview) One teacher said that it was very difficult to innovative at the beginning, when there were only few supportive teachers at her school:

수업 혁신이 시작되고 있는 상황이었습니다. 1학년에 부장님 한 분 빼고 자발로 거기에 지원한 사람은 저 혼자였습니다. ... 저희가 교원이 한 50명 가까이 되는데 그 일곱 명에서 정말 몰입해 가지고, 정말 손목을 갈아 넣으면서 수업을 만들고 참관하고 계속 했었던 거였거든요. 그런데 그 때 사실은 뭔가 마음만큼 와주지 않은 선생님들에 대한 어떤 서운함도 있고 너무 괴로웠거든요. ... 그래서 굉장히 힘든

When class innovation was just beginning, for our 1<sup>st</sup> grade PLC, it was only me who volunteered, except the HHD. We had 50 faculty members, but just 7 pro-Hyukshin teachers. We were immersed in change. We held open classes. It was as if we had to grind our wrists into them! There were painful and upsetting moments when teachers didn't come to the open classes as much as I hoped. It was a rough year. (Ollim M, Teacher Seo, Interview)

Some teachers felt that “몇 사람이 희생할 수 밖에 없어요.” – “a few people just had to sacrifice” (Bongjoong H, HHD Ahn & Teacher Lee, Interview) in schools that had a lot of unsupportive teachers. The supportive teachers had to prove to their colleagues that Hyukshin principles were valuable for them and their students.

*Among supportive teachers.* There were also conflicts among supportive teachers at the beginning stage of Hyukshin schools, since “혁신이라는 게 사실은 정해져 있는 게 없어가지고” – “There was nothing crystal clear about them.” (Dosan H, Teacher Lee, Interview) Arguing whether “그게 혁신이다, 아니다.” – “this and that was Hyukshin, or not,” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi & Cho, Interview) supportive teachers found themselves “전쟁” – “at war” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi & Cho, Interview) with one another. At times, one teacher remembered, their “중간에 학교를 나가기도 하셨어요. ... 그분이 혁신의 주 멤버였거든요. 그 정도로 갈등이 좀 심했었어요.” – “conflicts were so harsh that at one point, one of the major advocates of the HSSM left school in the middle” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi & Cho, Interview) of the year. These findings highlight the emotional character of educational change.

They are to be expected when innovative practices collide with more established ways of doing things.

***Between KTU and non-KTU teachers.*** As a group with history that began the movement for “True Education” (Synott, 2007) that became the foundation of Hyukshin schools, KTU teachers were often viewed negatively by non-KTU teachers, who worried that they would be overwhelmed by the KTU coalition. Some teachers depicted a Hyukshin school as “전교조 학교” – “a KTU school” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi & Cho, Interview) and felt reluctant to work in one, since they “모두 다 동조할 수는 없는 거니까 불편할 수 있다” – “might feel uncomfortable because of not being able to agree with them completely.” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi & Cho, Interview) However, there were teachers who held that “꼭 전교조 조합원들이 있어서 혁신 학교가 운영되는 건 아니고요. ... 내용이나 취지에 공감하는” – “a Hyukshin school did not always work because there were KTU members but rather when teachers appreciated the content and purpose” (Moongok M, Teacher Noh & Lee, Interview) of the HSSM. Even though KTU teachers were acknowledged to be “추진의 동력” – “the driving force” (Hyunsa M, Teacher Hong, Interview) in developing the HSSM in some schools, in general, teachers did not describe cases of open conflicts between KTU and non-KTU teachers.

### **PLCs**

Along with the various feelings of school members around Hyukshin schools, the 16 schools we studied also had diverse learning community structures and cultures. In general, schools distributed their teachers into each grade-level PLC, but some schools had additional PLC, called the “Initiative PLC.” In this PLC teachers took initiative in creating new offerings for professional development, or for a restorative time. The schools also had pre-school workshop for the entire school faculty members before the school started every year, for teachers

to get to know about Hyukshin schools, and to collectively discuss about the Hyukshin direction they would take the coming year.

**Grade-Level PLCs.** All Hyukshin schools studied placed their teachers in a grade-level PLC, in which homeroom teachers for the grade-level and teachers who mostly taught the grade-level students were placed. The only exception was Heesung Middle School, which was a private school. This school retained the traditional structure of distributing teachers by the subjects they taught. Hyukshin school teachers who worked in grade-level PLCs described their positive aspects.

Teachers said that a big advantage of a grade-level PLC was that “아이들 이해하는 게 정말 좋아요” – “it was truly good in understanding the students.” (Woolgook M, Teacher Yoo, Interview) They reasoned that when “담임 선생님들이 다 같은 부서에서” – “all homeroom teachers were placed in the same department” (Dosan H, Teacher Kim, Interview) with coworkers who taught the same students, and when faculty “같은 교무실에서 매일 얼굴을 보면서 [그] 학년에서 그날 있었던 일을 자연스럽게 교류를 하는데요.” – “worked face to face every day in the same office, it became natural to share what happened that day.” (Samoon H, Teacher Shin, Interview) One teacher from Woolgook Middle School said:

저희가 9반 선생님들이 다 모여 앉아있잖아요. 그러니까 그냥 어쩔 수 없이 공유되는 게 있어요. 제가 저희 반 지금, 저는 국어수업에서 광고수업을 하면 아 요즘에 애들 광고 찍으러 막 돌아다니고 하니까 조금 시끄러울 수 있어요 이렇게 얘기하면 다 이제 알아주시고. 가사 선생님이 가정 선생님이 지금 스파게티 만드는 가사 실습을 하시면 애들 가사 실습하니까 담임 선생님들 궁금하시면 보러 오세요 뭐 이런 식으로 하시고. 뭐 해서 약간 일상적으로 공유되는 거?

Because all 9 classroom teachers were together, some things were just inevitably shared. For my Korean class right now, if I said, ‘We have an advertisement class, so it might be loud because students are going around filming,’ other teachers understood. If the housework teacher was teaching students how to cook spaghetti, she told us to come and

watch if we were curious. Things were shared naturally. (Woolgook M, Teacher Yoo, Interview)

A teacher from Chumhwa Middle School added, “협력을 더 잘 할 수 있겠죠. ... 다른 학교는 제가 좀 전 학교 선생님들하고 어찌다 먹을 때나 이야기를 하지” – “the grade-level structure initiated more cooperation than in my previous schools, where I only talked with other teachers when I had a meal with them on occasion.” (Chumhwa M, Teacher Choi, Interview) One teacher said that the grade-level PLC gave teachers greater “집단적으로 지도하는 힘이 생기고. ... 굉장히 파워풀한 어떤 관심과 이런 케어” – “capacity to advise students with a lot of care.” (Bongjoong H, HHD Ahn & Teacher Lee, Interview)

**Initiative PLCs.** Along with grade-level PLCs, some Hyukshin schools had Initiative PLCs. Although an Initiative PLC was “의무는 아닌 거거든요” – “not compulsory,” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi & Cho, Interview) there were cases when “100 퍼센트 자발적으로 그런 비슷한 고민이나 관심을 가지고 있는 선생님들이 모여서” – “teachers who shared similar concerns or interests took initiative and gathered 100% spontaneously.” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi & Cho, Interview) Initiative PLCs promoted professional development or gave teachers some restorative time.

Six of our 16 schools had Initiative PLCs. Figure 2 represents the Initiative PLCs in these schools.

	Meeting Frequency	No. of initiative PLC	PLC for restorative time	PLC for further professional development
<b>Namseoul</b>			Ukulele; Calligraphy; English-speaking club (4-6)	
<b>Waehun</b>		~10		Math Curriculum for College Entrance study club; Fun Math Activities study club; Restorative Life Education club (10/50)
<b>Ryuah</b>				Ryu-Hyuk-Dong (Ryuah communicating Hyukshin) – lesson study club (21/30)
<b>Hyunsa</b>			Reading club	Social Studies Curriculum research club; KTU club
<b>Chumhwa</b>	Once ~ twice a month	7		Learning World (배움누리) club – lesson study club (14)
<b>Samoon</b>	~Once a month	12		Korean Literacy Curriculum research club (7); Subject department PLC

Figure 1. Initiative PLCs

**Initiative PLCs for professional development.** There were more Initiative PLCs for professional development than for restorative time in the schools. Most Initiative PLCs for further professional development were constituted of teachers who taught the same subject, whereas the others constituted of teachers from the entire school no matter the subject or grade-level they taught.

There were many Initiative PLCs, in which teachers of the same academic discipline gathered for professional development. Since the major grade-level PLCs limited teachers to colleagues who taught the same subject—which was possible in traditional schools—some schools formed additional PLCs to overcome aspects of the Hyukshin model. Waehun High School had an Initiative PLC of “고 3 선생님들이 이제 한 그룹이 돼 가지고 입시 학생들을 위해 준비할 수 있는 그런 문제나 그런 것들을 연구” – “3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers studying math problems for college entrance preparation,” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi & Cho, Interview) and another PLC of “1, 2 학년 선생님들도 좀 더 애들이 즐겁게 참여할 수 있는 그런 뭐 활동 중심의 이런 수학 이라든지 그런 좀 다양한 그런 지식이나 그런 것들을 공유하는 그런 또 공동체” – “1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers sharing diverse math pedagogies, such as activity-centered

lessons, with which students enjoyed engaging.” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi & Cho, Interview)

Hyunsa Middle School had a curriculum research PLC for its social studies teachers. Samoon High School had numerous PLCs by subjects, such as the curriculum research PLC of Korean teachers, in which teachers met monthly with one another. These teachers used their meetings to “최근에 이런 수업을 했는데 이 부분이 좋았고 이 부분은 좀 힘들었다” – “share what they did that went well in class, and also what they had trouble with.” (Samoon H, Teacher Shin, Interview)

There were also Initiative PLCs for professional development, that were not focused content areas. Ryuah Middle School had an Initiative PLC, called “류혁동 ... 류아 혁신 소통하기 ... 저희가 교장 교감 선생님 제외하고 서른 명인데 그중에 스물한 분이 류혁동에 참여를 하고 계세요.” – “Ryu-Hyuk-Dong, that meant ‘Ryuah communicating Hyukshin schools,’ in which 21 out of 30 teachers in the school participated” (Ryuah M, Teacher Kim, Interview) for a collective study on Hyukshin classes, and Chumhwa Middle School had an Initiative PLC, called “수업 방법 고민하는 배움 누리” – “‘Baewoom Nuri,’ for discussing teaching methods,” (Chumhwa M, Teacher Kim, Interview) in which 14 teachers participated once or twice a month. In Waehun High School, there was an Initiative PLC for “회복적 생활 교육이라고 그래서 ... 50 명 중에 열 명 ... 그 친구들의 그 상처를 그러니까 계속 이제 이해하면서 나아가야 된다” – “restorative life education, ... in which 10 out of 50 school teachers learned about students who were emotionally hurt and how to understand them.” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi & Cho, Interview) Although implementing Hyukshin principles was “굉장히 어렵고 되게 힘든데 이런 협력적인 어떤 이런 수업 동아리에 대한 그 교사들의 그

욕구가 되게 동력” – “difficult, the positive atmosphere in Initiative PLCs improved teachers’ motivation.” (Ryua M, Teacher Kim, Interview)

**Initiative PLCs for Restorative Time.** In addition to the Initiative PLCs for professional development, there were also Initiative PLCs that were for teachers to enjoy restorative activities. Hyunsa Middle School had a reading club, and Namseoul Middle School had ukulele, calligraphy, and English-speaking clubs. One teacher in the English-speaking club, shared that “저희가 아침 출근전에 10분 20분씩 모여서 영어로 떠들고 그 다음에 한국말로 떠들고 뭐 이러면서 되게 친분도 돈독하고 그때 고민도 얘기하고.” – “chatting in English and Korean for 10 to 20 minutes every morning with the community members before school started allowed them to build rapport.” (Namseoul M, Teacher Lee, Interview) Another teacher shared how she “우쿨렐레도 같이 연주하는 손들이 모여서 연주하고 애들 무슨 행사했을 때 공연도 나가서 하고 이런 식으로 교사공동체도 너무 좋아요” – “loved communities like ukulele club, that allowed teachers to make music together, and to perform at students’ events.” (Namseoul M, Teacher Yoon, Interview)

**Pre-School Workshops.** Besides the grade-level PLC and Initiative PLC, Hyukshin school teachers held a pre-school workshop every year before their schools began in March, that was required by the SMOE. At that time the faculty prepared for the coming year, and “혁신학교로서 우리 학교는 올해 한 해를 어떤 방향으로 이끌어 나갈 것인가에 대해서 서로 논의” – “discussed in which direction they would lead their school as a Hyukshin school that year.” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview) Teachers were told that “우리 학교가 혁신학교고요, 혁신학교는 이렇게 운영이 되고 있어요” – “their school was a Hyukshin school, and discussed how a Hyukshin school operated,” (Hyunsa M, HHD Keum, Interview) as

well as “혁신이 왜 필요한가” – “why Hyukshin principles were necessary.” (Chumhwa M, Teacher Kim, Interview) Depending on which focus their school had, teachers also discussed the concepts of a “배움의 공동체라든지, 회복적 생활교육, 학급운영을 어떻게 하면 될 까, ... 공동수업 설계와 그게 아이들의 배움에 어떻게 영향을 미치는지” – “learning community, restorative life education, and how to run class.” They discussed what influences collective lesson design had on students’ learning,” (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview) or “과정 평가 왜 해야 하는가” – “why they had to use progress-centered assessments.” (Chumhwa M, Teacher Kim, Interview)

The HHD of Yugok Middle School shared how she guided teachers during one pre-school workshop:

제가 그 전에 했던 수행평가 중에 단계를 밟아서 하고 의미있었던 것 ... 선생님들에게 안내를 해드렸고. 과정중심 평가 기록지같은 경우에도 제가 만들어서 예시로 보여드리면 선생님들이 교과에 맞게끔 변형을 하셨구요.

I introduced some assessments, which I had used the last time and were helpful for the teachers. In the case of recording sheets for formative assessments, when I made a template and showed it to the teachers, they were able to modify it and to use it in their classes. (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview)

Because this was a pre-school workshop, all staff participated, including “좀 경력이 있는 선생님들도 혁신학교 경험이 없는 사람들 ... 새로 발령 오는 선생님들” – “experienced teachers, teachers with no Hyukshin school experience, or newly transferred teachers” (Ryuh M, Teacher Moon, Interview).

**Limits.** Although schools had pre-school workshops at the beginning of every academic year, many teachers said that “그 시스템을 다 익힌다고는 볼 수 없어요. 1년은 생활을 하셔야 ... 아실 수 있으시죠.” – “no teachers could master the totality of the Hyukshin model with only a few days of a pre-school workshop. They would know only learn this when they had

worked for about a year in a Hyukshin school.” (Hyunsa M, HHD Keum, Interview) The teachers reasoned that Hyukshin schools require far more professional skills than how the teachers learned when they were in their teacher training programs or when they had worked at traditional schools. Teachers explained that Hyukshin schools expected teachers to provide student-centered lessons which were very different from teacher-centered approaches and that they “전혀 안 배웠죠. 이걸 학교에서” – “never learned about when they were attending university.” (Ollim M, HHD Jeon, Interview) Teachers described that at universities, “지식전달에 그치는 경우” – “it was mostly about professors delivering knowledge.” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview) They said they were “[가르치는 방법]을 알려주지는 않잖아요. ... 이론적인 것을 배우고” – “only taught theories, and not taught how to teach.” (Woolgook M, Teacher Kim, Interview) Although pre-school workshops could partially prepare teachers for class innovation, teachers felt that they had to work throughout an academic year with colleagues to progress, and have the support of “교원학습공동체에서 도움을 많이 받았고요” – “a PLC, that was helpful,” (Woolgook M, Teacher Kim, Interview) to truly be able to teach with Hyukshin principles in mind.

### **Open Classes**

Hyukshin schools conducted open classes with different kinds of structures. Educators differed on whether open classes should be mandatory or voluntary. There was also debate about how much time should be spent in open classes, which some schools providing various systematic supports as an alternative solution. In addition, teachers described their feedback culture and identified areas for improvement.

In some schools, the HHD or the head teachers were in charge of all open classes, while in others this responsibility was distributed across all teachers in each PLC. While some schools

had a few volunteers who offered to teach an open class from time to time, other schools required all teachers to conduct an open class at least once a year. Open class observers also differed, based on whether the open class was conducted for the whole school or for a grade-level PLC. The timing of the open class sessions, and the protocol used to prepare them also varied. The frequency of open classes ranged from twice a year at some schools to once a month at others.

Figure 2 below delineates the features of open classes, that were indicated in interviews at 11 schools. The other five schools did not talk to us about PLCs.

	Frequency	Participants	Observers	Preparatory Procedure	Pre-Lesson Observation and Feedback Time	Opened Class Time	Mandatory
Yugok	5 times a year → Every teacher once each semester	Head teachers of each subject department → All teachers	Whole school teachers (~20) → Members of grade-level PLC	Independent lesson plan → 1-2 pre-lesson observation → feedback meeting	Observation: free period Feedback: PLC meeting	School hours; Early dismissal	Yes
Namseoul					Observation: free period		No
Hansabong					Observation: free period		No
Waehun	No opened class from 2019						No
Woolgook	6-7 times a year; Twice each grade-level	Volunteers	Members of grade-level PLC	Collective lesson plan 2weeks before → pre-lesson observation → 2-4 feedback meetings	Observation: free period Feedback: after school work hours (weekly PLC meeting)		No
Ryuah		All teachers		2-3 prep meetings			Yes
Hyunsa	12 times a year; 4 times each grade-level	Volunteers	Members of grade-level PLC	Collective lesson plan → pre-lesson observation → feedback meeting	Observation: duty training hours		Yes
Moongok		Voluntary head teachers		Prep meetings			
Chonwol						Video recording	No
Ollim	Once a month	Volunteers	Members of grade-level PLC	Collective lesson plan → 2-3 pre-lesson observation → feedback meeting	Observation: free period Feedback: after school work hours (weekly PLC meeting)		No
Chumhwa	3 times a year	Volunteers	Whole school teachers	~3 prep meetings			Yes
Heesung	Twice a year		Members of same subject department		Observation: colleague supervision hours		No

Figure 2. Open Classes in the HSSM

**Frequency.** Hyukshin schools decided how many open classes they held each year.

Schools like Ollim Middle School, that had active open class cultures, held an open class every month. Yugok Middle School and Ryuah Middle School had all of their teachers teach at least one open class once a semester, or at a minimum, once a year. Hyunsa Middle School had four open classes a year in each grade-level PLC, for a total of 12. Woolgook Middle School had two open classes a year in each grade-level PLC, for a total of six. Chumhwa Middle School and

Heesung Middle School had two or three open classes a year. Waehun High School had no open class requirements at all. The frequency of open classes differed from school to school.

***Participants and observers.*** In Yugok Middle School and Ryuah Middle School, it was mandatory for every teacher to take a turn teaching an open class. In other schools, teachers volunteered to teach open classes. At Yugok Middle School, Ryuah Middle School, Hyunsa Middle School, and Chumhwa Middle School, teachers other than the ones teaching an open class were required to observe the shared classes. In other schools, teachers volunteered to observe them.

***Mandatory vs. voluntary open classes.*** Some teachers in schools with mandatory open classes liked them, because they improved their teaching. A teacher from Ryuah Middle School, on the other hand, said that because “공개 수업이라는 게 사실 부담스럽잖아요. ... 자기 수업을 공개한다는 거에 대해서 되게 싫어하는 교사들이 꽤 있어요.” – “Open classes create pressure. A lot of teachers hate them.” (Ryuah M, Teacher Moon, Interview) In one high school, “원하는 사람들이 했거든요” – “only the teachers who wanted to volunteered,” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi & Cho, Interview), which meant in practice that this school had no open classes at all.

In general, “좀 젊은 선생님들은 그런 거에 대해서 특별히 문제라고 생각하지 않는 부분이 있는 거 같고요. 좀 경력이 많으신 분들은 조금 부담스러워 하시는 부분이 있는 거 같고” – “younger teachers seemed to have fewer problems with being observed, while teachers with more experience found it difficult.” (Chonwol M, HHD Lee, Interview) One teacher shared her experience when she discussed with her coworkers about changing the open class system from voluntary to mandatory:

반드시 수업을 하게끔 한다든지 이런 것들이 있어야 된다. 그렇지 않고서는 뭔가 안 하는 사람들을 끌어올 수 있는 방법이 없다. 그런데 그 얘기를 했을 때, 몇몇 선생님들은 그렇게 해서 그 사람이 억지로, 또는 의무 때문에 또는 어떤 그런 시스템 때문에 해야 된다면은 그것이 얼마나 그 사람한테 의미가 있느냐.

Some teachers said, ‘There must be a policy or something that requires teachers to participate in open classes. Otherwise, there is no way to make sure that they will actually come to open classes.’ However, several other teachers responded, ‘If the people were forced by a duty or the system to do it, what would be the point in all this?’ (Ollim M, Teacher Seo, Interview)

Although many teachers knew that the mandatory open classes were held in some schools, several said they disliked the idea that they should be required to engage in this particular kind of activity. They believed that the open classes would only be productive when teachers saw them as valuable ways for growing as professionals. Advocates of open classes wished teachers would grasp that an open class was “교사 개인적인 성장을 이루어낼 수 있는 기회” – “an opportunity for teachers to develop best practices.” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview) They felt that all teachers should “선생님들 수업도 배우고 싶고” – “want to learn from their colleagues,” (Woolgook M, Teacher Kim, Interview) and should view open classes as one of the best ways of building their professional collegiality as well.

***Preparatory procedure.*** The preparatory procedures for open classes varied. Generally, schools had all members of a grade-level PLC plan the open class. This element of collaborative lesson planning has followed the lesson study approach pioneered by Manabu Sato, whose name was mentioned by Hyukshin educators as an important influence. In this way, “공개수업을 위해서 물론 그 선생님이 표면적으로 봤을 때는 공개수업자이지만 그 내면적으로 봤을 때는 모든 선생님이 조력자이고 그 수업을 함께 만들어나가는” – “Although an open class seemed to be a product of an individual, all teachers were assistants in designing the open class.”

(Woolgook M, Teacher Kim, Interview) Differences in how open classes were organized can be categorized into three types.

Type A, which Yugok Middle School followed, had a teacher first independently plan a lesson and teach it. This is represented in Figure 3. During the first lesson, “자기 수업이 없는

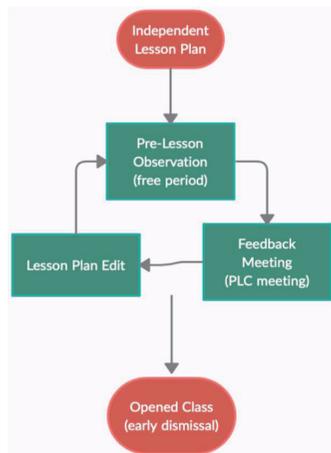


Figure 3. Yugok Middle School open class procedure (Type A)

선생님이 들어오셔서 수업을 보셨어요.” – “other members of the teacher’s grade-level PLC who had no class during the time the lesson was taught came in and observed.” (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview) Then, the observers shared what they had felt during the pre-lesson observations when their PLC meeting was held. Throughout the meeting, the grade-level PLC teachers collectively re-designed or made edits on the lesson plan based on the feedback shared. The cycle of pre-lesson observation and feedback meeting repeated until the teacher’s

last classroom, that became the actual open class.

Type B, which Ollim Middle School, Woolgook Middle School, and Hyunsa Middle School followed, was different. It had all teachers of a grade-level PLC plan the lesson from the start. One teacher from Ollim Middle School described how her PLC planned an open class and made multiple versions of it throughout pre-lesson observations and feedback meetings:

그냥 가져온 활동지가 있으면 그걸 가지고 일단 저희가 수업 모임을 해서 초안을 만들어요. ... 애들의 반응을 예상해 보면서 초안을 하나 만들어요. 그리고 그걸 가지고 수업을 해 봐요. 그런데 우리의 예상을 빗나가는 그 점이 있고, 우리의 예상과 맞아 떨어지는 지점이 있죠. 그러면 우리가 예상이 빗나가는 지점을 다시 수정을 해요. 활동지 문구 같은 것도 다 수정하고, 배치도 다 수정을 해요. 굉장히 세밀하게 수정을 하거든요. 그걸 가지고 또 수업을 해 봐요.

Once a teacher brought a worksheet, we went through a meeting and made a first draft by making a prediction about students’ reactions. Then, the teacher tried teaching her class

with the draft lesson plan. After the class, there were always points that conformed our predictions or didn't match with them. Then, we changed phrases and arrangements of worksheets. Then, we repeated the process, teaching with the edited lesson plan and observations. (Ollim M, Teacher Seo, Interview)

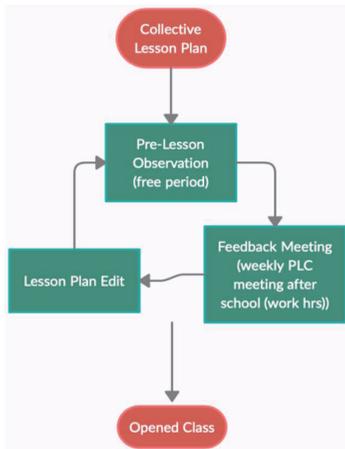


Figure 4. Ollim Middle School open class procedure (Type B)

During the repeated pre-lesson observations, teachers “계속 피드백 해줘요. 시간도 다 적어드리고. 아이들 반응도 다 적어드리면서 계속 관심을 드려요.” – “continually gave feedback, wrote time and students’ reactions, and paid attention.” (Ollim M, HHD Jeon, Interview) The process was repeated “그거를 저희가 최종 공개 수업까지 하는 것” – “until the final class, that became the formal open class,” (Ollim M, Teacher Seo, Interview) ultimately conducted similarly as in type A.

Type C had a simpler procedure for holding an open class. Schools that followed type C, such as Ryuah Middle School, Moongok Middle School, and Chumhwa Middle School, just had multiple preparatory meetings to plan and conduct an open class, and excluded the process of pre-lesson observation and the meeting feedback meetings that followed it. For instance, in Ryuah Middle School, teachers “수업을 하기 전에 한 두번에서 세번정도 수업 연구회를 갖고 그 수업을 어떻게 하면 더 낮게 할지 고민 ... 되게 건설적인 비판도 많이 하고” – “had about two to three preparatory meetings, in which they pondered on how to improve the first draft of the lesson planned, and ... shared constructive criticisms before a teacher taught an open class.” (Ryuah M, Teacher Moon, Interview)

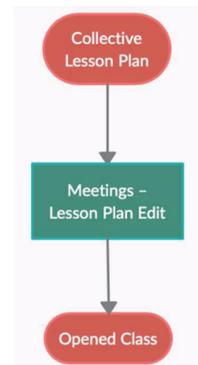


Figure 5. Type C

**Time.** Although many Hyukshin school teachers took part in open classes, one difficulty concerned was time allocation. One teacher from Woolgook Middle School described that the open class was all about time, saying “자기 시간을 내야 되는 거잖아요. 내가 비어있는 시간에 다른 선생님도 참관 하고 그 다음에 또 방과후에 모여서 서로 피드백하고 이런 시간을 가져야 되기 때문에” – “We had to take time to observe other teachers during our free periods, and also to meet after school for sharing feedback.” (Woolgook M, Teacher Hong, Interview) Teachers agreed that the issue of time management was “가장 어려운 것” – “the most difficult” (Hansabong M, Teacher Lee, Interview) part of preparing open classes. Teachers said they already had “회의 때문에” – “too many meetings,” (Samoon H, Teacher Shin, Interview), so they felt that open classes were too much work. Simply put, “쉬는 시간에 제 수업시간 쉬는 시간에 뭔가를 가서 업무도 봐야 되는데 가서 보는 게 사실 쉽지는 않더라고요.” – “it wasn’t easy to visit open classes when they also had so many things to do.” (Namseoul M, Teacher Yoon, Interview)

A teacher from Woolgook Middle School shared how much time was needed to conduct an open class:

공개수업이나, 이런 거 준비를 뭐 종례 끝나고 한 3 시반부터 모이는데 이제 4 시 반에 퇴근시간이잖아요. 근데 퇴근 시간이 지났는데 이 수업에 대한 어떤 이렇게 뚜렷한 아이디어가 안 나오면 계속 이제 계속 회의를 계속 하시는 거예요. 그리고 오늘 회의한 내용을 가지고 그 다음날 그 선생님께서는 ... 수업을 미리 해보시면 그때 이제 다른 선생님들이 들어가셔서 피드백을 또 가지고 또 그날 끝나면 또 모이고 또 모이고 하는데 이런 식으로 어떤 모임이 자주 되고 길어지고. –

We gathered for preparatory meetings at 3:30, after students were dismissed. We were supposed to leave by 4:30, but even though it was time to go, the meeting did not end when there were no clear ideas for the open class. On the day after the meeting, the teacher taught the lesson as a preparatory activity, and other teachers came in and offered feedback. We got together again for more feedback the next day. Meetings for open classes were held continuously. (Woolgook M, Teacher Kim, Interview)

This level of inquiry reflects a high level of professional expertise. Still, it does require a lot of time.

**Systematic support.** Some schools let teachers use their work hours for open classes. They allocated time for their teachers to make pre-lesson observations. In the case of Hyunsa Middle School, the school teachers “시스템적으로 저희가 만들었어요. 그걸 직무 연수라고 하고요. ... 저희가 교육청에 신청을 하고 그걸 허가를 받아서 운영을 하고 있는 거예요.” – “created duty training hours as a system by requesting to the SMOE, and operated after getting permission.” (Hyunsa M, HHD Keum, Interview) Setting 20 hours a year for duty training, Hyunsa Middle School teachers were required to “이 타임에는 항상 선생님들이 참여해 주세요” – “always participate in pre-lesson observations’ during this time.” (Hyunsa M, HHD Keum, Interview) Similarly, Heesung Middle School teachers had “동료장학” – “colleague supervision hours” (Heesung M, HHD, Interview) which teachers who taught the same subject used for visiting each other’s classrooms and making pre-lesson observations.

Some schools, like Ollim Middle School, set fixed times for teachers to meet for preparing their open classes. In one school, each-grade level PLC had a set day of the week, when the members “무조건 수업 모임을 한다” – “definitely had preparatory meetings” (Ollim M, Teacher Kang, Interview) after school on that day. The school ensured that all teachers could participate in the meetings by “다른 회의를 잡지 않고 다른 행사를 전혀 학교에서 하지 않아요. ... 그날은 방과후 같은 수업도 진행되지 않았습시다.” – “not requiring any other meetings or events, or extracurricular activities” (Ollim M, HHD Jeon, Interview) that could be held on those days. Teachers “다른 연수나 교육을 잡지 않을 것” – “were not allowed to

schedule any other workshops or training sessions” (Ollim M, Teacher Seo, Interview) during those times.

Yugok Middle School had early dismissals on the days of open classes. In this school, an open class was held during the last period of the day, and “애들 다 보내고 수업하는 학급만 남아서” – “students other than the ones of the open class went home.” (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview) This was a way for the school to make sure its teachers did not have to spend their own time for open classes.

Some schools hired additional faculty to support teachers to dedicate time for open classes. Ollim Middle School had “정책적으로 18시간이 넘어가게 되면 그 시간에 대해서는 최대한 강사를 쓰는 원칙.” – “a policy of using visiting lecturers whenever teaching their own class, and teaching and observing open classes exceeded 18 hours” (Ollim M, HHD Jeon, Interview) a week. By drawing on the Hyukshin budget to hire visiting lecturers, this school helped teachers to derive the benefits of open classes without suffering the drawbacks of workplace intensification.

Hyukshin schools such as Woolgook Middle School, Namseoul Middle School, and Ollim Middle School, employed additional staff, so that teachers were relieved of chores and could dedicate enough attention to open classes. In Woolgook Middle School, there was “실무사 한 분을 추가로 고용을 했죠. ... 일주일에 3일 오고” – “one additional staff member who came three times a week” (Woolgook M, Teacher Hong, Interview) to relieve faculty of these tasks. In Namseoul Middle School, “행정실 직원이 한 명이 다른 학교보다 많아요.” – “there was also one more officer in the administrative department than in other schools” (Namseoul M, Teacher Lee, Interview) to help in this regard. Ollim Middle School “두 분을 모셨고요” – “hired two

new staff members,” (Ollim M, HHD Jeon, Interview) to relieve teachers’ burdens. Its HHD said:

실무사님들을 저희가 고용을 했어요. ... 저희가 올해 예산을 5800만원, 약 6천만 정도를 교육청에서 받아서요. ... 1200만원, 큰 돈이죠. ... 두 분이 14시간씩, 14시간 이후는 고용문제때문에 못 하게 됐거든요. ... 예를 들어서 선생님들이 수업 모임하시고 나서 설문지하시고 나면 그거 다 타이핑이잖아요. 그런 것부터 시작해서 출석도 되는 단순점검하는 것, 공문, 이런 물건 사고 하는 것들은 이 분들이 굉장히 많이 지원해 주세요.

We hired staff. We received 58 million won, about 60 million won, from the SMOE this year. A large amount, 12 million won was used to hire two officers each for 14 hours. We could not hire them more than 14 hours due to an employment problem. After teachers had planning meetings and filled in surveys, all the processes were typed up. The officers provided support ranging from checking on attendance, to paper work, to purchasing materials. (Ollim M, HHD Jeon, Interview)

The new staff members helped teachers to “수업에 좀 더 집중할 수 있도록” – “focus more on open classes,” (Woolgook M, Teacher Kim, Interview) rather than administrative chores. With their support, schools could “행정 문서에 그런 절차들의 다 간소화하거나 없애 버렸어요.” – “simplify or eliminate paper work.” (Ryua M, Teacher Suh, Interview) Schools that hired additional staff could “최소, 간소화시켜 줬어요. 불필요한 거 다 없애고” – “minimize unnecessary work,” (Moongok M, Teacher Noh & Lee, Interview) so that teachers had time for open classes.

### **Feedback Culture**

There were several cases, in which the schools’ feedback culture for open classes was said to be ineffective. When teachers were said to be “아직은 선생님들이 스스로 사이 하신거죠” – “too shy” (Ollim M, Teacher Seo, Interview) to be critical of one another and only shared positive feedback, the spirit of inquiry and motivation needed to sustain open classes was diminished. Some teachers said that “좀 조심스러운 거죠. 사실. 어떻게 보면 내 수업에

대한 전문성은 내가 가지고 있는데” – “they had to be cautious since they did not have expertise on the curricular content of the lesson.” (Namseoul M, Teacher Yoon, Interview) It was often “비판하는 거에 대해서 좀 예의가 없는 거라고 생각하는 경우” – “the case that teachers felt it was rude to be critical of their colleagues.” (Ryuah M, Teacher Moon, Interview) Although there were teachers who “그래도 해줄 수 있는 말은 해 줘요. 이 수업에서 이 문제는 여긴 거 같다 그리고 이런 부분의 수업이 좀 미진하다 라는 부분에 대해서” – “said what they should say about what parts of the lesson were inadequate,” (Ryuah M, Teacher Moon, Interview) their concern that the other teacher might feel bad led them to withhold their true reactions. Teachers said this “연습이 조금 필요한 부분” – “was an area they need to work on.” (Ollim M, Teacher Seo, Interview)

Why is it that teachers struggle to share their authentic reactions with one another? Jiwon Shin and Woojung Son (2019, p. 57) posit that this is due to the education that the teachers themselves received. “Because Korean teachers, researchers, and administrators have themselves experienced a harshly competitive school environment, they have little chance of listening carefully to others’ voices and collaborating in their classrooms.” Teachers need patience and support to understand that openness to criticism is an essential part of their professional development.

### **PLC and Open Class Outcomes**

In spite of concerns about time management and the emotional dimensions of feedback culture, teachers on the whole said that they benefitted from PLCs and open classes. There were teachers who described about the positive emotions they experienced when working with other teachers in PLCs, and there were teachers who shared their experience of professional growth from working with other teachers in open classes. Teachers liked being able to inquire about

themselves as teachers, and enjoyed learning more about their students while working in the HSSM.

**Positive emotions.** Teachers said that they were “행복했어요” – “happy” (Yugok M, Teacher Kwak, Interview) working in their PLCs. They felt that they were “되게 생산적인 일을 하고 있다” – “being productive,” (Moongok M, Teacher Noh & Lee, Interview) and that made them feel “보람” – “fulfilled” as educators. (Jeongsun M, Teacher Kwon, Interview; Woolgook M, Teacher Hong, Interview) One HHD described her PLCs as “신나는” – “exciting.” (Hansabong M, HHD Choi, Interview). These teachers experience their work as “의미가 있다” – “meaningful” (Samoon H, Teacher Shin, Interview; Woolgook M, Teacher Hong, Interview; Hansabong M, HHD Choi, Interview).

**Relationships and connections.** Teachers said that they experienced wellbeing through “선생님들과의 관계에서” – “their relationships with other teachers.” (Hyunsa M, HHD Keum, Interview) One teacher from Samoon High School was “내년에 가야 되는데 다른 학교 가는 게 두려워요. 여기는 선생님들 관계가 되게 좋거든요.” – “afraid that she would have to transfer to another school next year, because I had such good relationships with teachers here.” (Samoon H, Teacher Nam, Interview) A teacher from Bongjoong High School said, “이렇게 끈적끈적하게 ... 동료애를 느껴본 게 학년부 중심체제 처음 시작했을 때” – “the first time I felt such close camaraderie was when I joined my grade-level PLC.” (Bongjoong H, HHD Ahn & Teacher Lee, Interview) The HHD from Hyunsa Middle School commented, “30년 차인데 이 학교에 있었던 5년이 가장 행복한 교사 생활이었거든요 ... 선생님들의 힘이 아닐까” – “the five years I worked at Hyunsa Middle school were the happiest in my 30 years of experience. That was because of the teachers.” (Hyunsa M, HHD Keum, Interview) Since

research (Shirley, Hargreaves, & Washington-Wangia, 2020) shows that teacher well-being thrives in positive workplace cultures, these comments testify to real strengths of the HSSM.

Whereas in non-Hyukshin schools, “일을 통해서 되게 깊은 어떤 유대를 갖기가 힘든데” – “it was hard to build rapport with colleagues,” (Bongjoong H, HHD Ahn & Teacher Lee, Interview) in Hyukshin schools, teachers could establish “믿음 관계 ... 의지가 돼요. 같이 만들잖아요.” – “trustful and dependable relationships as they worked together.” (Ollim M, HHD Jeon, Interview) One teacher from Hansabong Middle School said that in her Hyukshin school, teachers “다른 선생님들과 같이 이야기를 하면서 해결 방안을 고민” – “together reflected on how to solve problems with other teachers.” (Hansabong M, HHD Choi, Interview) Teachers said that a Hyukshin school was “같이 할 수 있는 학교” – “a school in which teachers work together.” (Dosan H, Teacher Kim, Interview) There were many Hyukshin school teachers who highly valued their colleagues.

### **Professional development.**

Teachers said they grew as professionals by working with other teachers in open classes. They said that they learned a lot by receiving constructive feedback, by observing other teachers, and by listening to the perspectives of different subject-matter teachers. In addition, teachers reported that they gained deeper insights about their students from open classes.

***From constructive feedback.*** Many Hyukshin school teachers felt that they grew as professionals when they received constructive feedback from their grade-level PLC members while they prepared for an open class. They stated that they “되게 많이 배웠다 ... 교사들의 지속적인 피드백을 받아서” – “learned a lot from receiving continuous feedback from the teachers,” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview) in which “혼자 했을 때 생각하지 못했던

부분들을 선생님들이 보완해 주는 게 되게 많았어요.” – “the teachers supplemented parts that they could not think of on one’s own.” (Hyunsa M, HHD Keum, Interview)

One teacher from Ryuah Middle School shared his positive experience when his PLC members gave him advice:

처음에 수업을 전체에 대한 모둠 수업을 계획을 해요. ... 그거에만 너무 집중을 하다 보니까 어떤 그룹의 결과물은 나오는데 개인이 보완할 수 있는 결과물이 너무 약했더라고요. 그래서 이제 어떤 선생님이 너무 이제 그룹의 결과에 집착한 나머지 개개인의 성과를 보여줄 수 있는 건 아무것도 없지 않냐 라는 피드백을 주었던 적이 있거든요. 아 그래서 제가 너무 협력이라는 거에만 몰입을 해서 개인의 성장은 조금 도외시한 게 아닌가 라는 생각이 들어서 그 피드백을 받고 개인용 활동지랑 성과를 만들 수 있는 장치를 수업이 넣었거든요.

First, I planned a group lesson for the open class. Because I was too focused on that, assessments for individuals became weak, although there were group-based assessments. One teacher asked me, ‘Because you were too focused on collecting results for groups, didn’t you miss having any assessments to show results of the individuals?’ This question helped me to realize that I might have disregarded the importance of individual students’ growth. I may have focusing too much on student cooperation. This led me to add in individual worksheets and assessments to gauge students’ learning.” (Ryuah M, Teacher Moon, Interview)

Although one teacher felt “굉장히 제가 초라해진다” – “very small” (Ryuah M, Teacher Moon, Interview) when he heard such critical feedback at first, he said, “사실 제가 짚으면 절대 그런 식의 수업을 못 했을 텐데 진짜 이런 과정을 통해서 수업이 좀 나아진다는 걸 느꼈어요.” – “I would never had been able to teach such a good lesson if I planned it on my own. Through such open discussions, my lessons improved.” (Ryuah M, Teacher Moon, Interview) A teacher from Yugok Middle School shared how he improved his lesson after hearing “질문과 탐구과제 ... 이걸 같이 두개로 합쳐서 아이들이 그냥 연속해서 탐구하게 하면 어떨까?” – “a suggestion to combine my ways of posing questions and conducting research” (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview) from another teacher. Many other Hyukshin

teachers found feedback during preparatory and feedback meetings helpful in improving their lessons.

*From observing other teachers.* Teachers said that “배운 게 되게 많았어요” – “there was lots to learn” (Woolgook M, Teacher Hong, Interview) when they observed how other teachers taught or when they worked with their colleagues in preparing an open class. The HHD of Heesung Middle School shared how important it was for her to observe “나랑 똑같은 수학선생님인데 애들이 이 수학선생님 수업시간에 너무 즐거워하는거예요” – “students having much joy in another math teacher’s class.” (Heesung M, HHD, Interview) The HHD described that from studying “이 선생님이 어떻게 하고 있구나” – “how the teacher interacted with students,” (Heesung M, HHD, Interview) she learned a number of things about new ways she could engage with her own students in future lessons.

One teacher from Chumhwa Middle School described how having a chance to examine other teachers’ assignments was especially helpful for her:

다른 선생님의 학습지 폼을 본다. 사실 이전학교에서는 거의 없는 일이에요. 오히려 재활용 분리수거 종이 이런 거 뒤지다가 가끔. 아 이 과목은 이렇게 학습지를 만드네? 그냥 이렇게 넘길 정도인데. 여기는 아예 공식적으로 어떤 선생님이 자기 학습지를 오픈하고, 그 학습지를 같이 고민하고. 그 과정이 굉장히 도움이 많이 됐고.

Taking a look at other teachers’ worksheets. Such a thing actually happened rarely in my previous school. Rather, there were often times when the only opportunity I had to look at my colleagues’ worksheets was when I dug into the paper recycling bin! At those times, I just thought, ‘Ah, for this subject, teachers create worksheets that look like this.’ In this school, on the other hand, teachers share their assignments as part of our shared professional culture, and collectively discuss them. Such things are helpful to me. (Chumhwa M, Teacher Kim, Interview)

Because teachers could share their lesson plans and observe one another in a PLC for open classes, they said they could develop their expertise in ways that previously had been impossible.

They experienced the rewards of the “professional imperative of educational change.” (Shirley, 2017, p. 79)

*From perspectives of different subject teachers.* There were teachers who said that “여러교과가 모였을 때 장점이 있다” – “this school has real assets that can be shared when every subject-matter teacher gets together” (Woolgook M, Teacher Hong, Interview) in the same grade-level PLCs to prepare open classes. Although some “굉장히 되게 이상하다라고 생각을 했었어요” – “felt very awkward” (Ryua M, Teacher Kim, Interview) when they first conducted an open class with teachers of different disciplines, they realized that this was helpful in “다각적인 측면에서 바라볼 수 있었고” – “viewing lessons from other perspectives.” (Namseoul M, Teacher Lee, Interview)

A science teacher shared two instances when feedback from other teachers from other academic content areas helped:

지구 온난화에 대한 수업을 했었는데 ... 게임을 개발을 해 가지고 하는데 수학 선생님이 그러시는 거예요. 이렇게 게임판을 개발하면 자꾸 fail만 나온다 이게 진행이 안 된다는 거예요. 주사 이상으로 저는 그런 확률까지는 생각을 못 해봤던 거예요.

I was teaching a class on global warming. I was developing a game for it, but a math teacher gave me feedback, that if I develop the game like this, it will keep saying ‘fail’ and the game wouldn’t be able to proceed properly. I hadn’t been able to anticipate that possibility.

전기 에너지 이런 수업을 했었는데 그때 어떻게 이거를 제 머릿속으로는 한계가 좀 있었어요. 그랬는데 국어 선생님께서 그러면 애들한테 좀 재밌게 가정에서 사용하는 전자제품들을 여러 개를 주고 쇼핑하듯이 너희가 한 번 너네 집들을 꾸며봐. 모뎀별 모뎀 하우스를 그래서 거기서 전력을 계산하게끔 일상과 연결이 되게끔. 그러니까 다른 교과에서 나올 수 있는 그리고 다른 교과 선생님들이기 때문에 학생과 눈높이를 맞출 수가 있는 거예요.

I was teaching a class on electrical energy. At that time, figuring out how to plan the lesson was really hard for me. But a Korean teacher suggested, ‘Try asking students to decorate their homes after giving them several electronics devices they can use at home if

they want to go shopping online. We have to try helping them to connect the curriculum to their everyday lives. Then can calculate the electric power used at the group houses.’ Because she taught a different subject, she could meet the needs of her students. (Ryuah M, Teacher Kim, Interview)

When PLC members “아는 바는 많이 없지만 오히려 그래서 좀 학생의 입장에서 볼 수 있는 것” – “did not have much knowledge about what was being taught, they saw that the perspectives of the students could be more nuanced.” (Ryuah M, Teacher Moon, Interview) Teachers confessed that at times they thought that “애들은 이해를 그 정도까지 못 할 것 같아” – “students will only be able to understand that much” (Ryuah M, Teacher Kim, Interview) during an open class. They asked themselves, “이렇게 하면 좀 더 재미있지 않을까요?” – “Wouldn’t it be more engaging if we tried this different approach?” (Ollim M, Teacher Kang, Interview) Rather than focusing on content-based feedback, working with different subject teachers was helpful for Hyukshin school teachers to look at issues that might be relevant to pedagogy in general rather than a specific curriculum. By moving beyond the given academic content—whether it was chemistry, mathematics, or history—teachers created better lessons for their students.

**Getting to inquire.** Teachers said that what they had done to innovate in their classes led them to inquire about themselves in their roles as teachers. This level of reflection was not simply at the level of adjusting one part of instruction here or tinkering with a lesson plan there. Instead, they found themselves wondering whether they even “스스로 변화해야 되겠다는 마음을 먹게 해 준” – “had the right mindset to want to change the way that they were teaching.” (Ryuah M, Teacher Kim, Interview) The teachers were engaging in a level of inquiry that did not only entail surface-level modifications in their teaching, but pushed towards an “existential imperative for educational change.” (Shirley, 2017, p. 113) Research (Mehta & Fine,

2019) indicates that this level of inquiry is essential if educators are to help their students to attain deep learning.

Teachers from Waehun High School shared that they could not help but inquire when they worked in a Hyukshin school:

혁신학교가 아니었다면 이런 자극이나 동기를 부여받지 못할 텐데 혁신에 관심이 없다고 하더라도 혁신학교에 근무를 하다 보면 고민을 안 할 수가 없는 상황이거든요. ... 스스로 내 수업에 대한 고민을

If it was not a Hyukshin school, we would not have been motivated this much. But even though one was not interested in Hyukshin schools, if he worked at one, it was a situation, in which all of the teachers could not help, but to think about their own classes. (Waehun H, Teacher Choi & Cho, Interview)

Because Hyukshin schools require teachers to “계속 고민” – “reflect continuously” (Chumhwa M, Teacher Kim, Interview) about their classes both independently and collectively, the HSSM made them more “용기를 줬다 ... 교육 활동에 조금 더 다른 면을 해야 되겠다는 그런 욕구를 느끼게 됐고” – “encouraged, and motivated to try something more different over the course of their careers.” (Ryua M, Teacher Kim, Interview) PLCs and open classes, then, creating environments for inquiry and practice in which educators could be reflective practitioners would catalyze change in schools across Korea.

***Deeper understanding of students.*** In schools that conducted open classes within grade-level PLCs, teachers described their open classes as “그 아이가 어떤 환경이고 왜 그런가 하는 것을 이해할 수 있는 굉장히 좋은 기회” – “great opportunities to understand which situation a student was in, or why a student was behaving in a certain way.” (Hyunsa M, HHD Keum, Interview) Teachers thought that it was beneficial when their colleagues knew more about a troubled student and could talk about similar students they taught. The HHD of Hyunsa Middle

School shared an experience, when her PLC members learned more about a student, by working with his homeroom teacher:

공통적으로 '어, 그 아이 왜 그래?' 라고 하면, 담임 선생님이 얘기를 해 주세요. 그러면 저희가 '아, 애가 이래서 이런 반응들을 보이는구나' 라는 것을 알게 되는 계기가 많이 되고 있어요. 그래서 저는 그런 게 참 도움이 많이 되는 거 같아요. ... 선생님들이 공동적으로 그 아이에 대해서 이해할 수 있게 되고

When we asked about a certain student in our PLC, the homeroom teacher explained more about the student so that we could understand more about what was influencing misbehavior. This became an opportunity to understand why the certain student reacted in certain ways. I found this really helpful. We could understand the student.” (Hyunsa M, HHD Keum, Interview)

When homeroom teachers worked with members of their PLC to prepare an open class together, teachers could understand more about individual students. One teacher from Ollim Middle School described the advantages entailed in working with the same-grade level teachers in a PLC:

“내가 들어가는 반의 아이들을 공식적으로 관찰할 수 있는 기회가 주어지잖아요. 그럼 그 아이들을 이해하게 되는 거예요. 아, 애가 늘상 엎어져 있는 애는 아니야. 그러면은 내가 애를 내 수업시간에 일어나게 하려면은 뭔가 무슨 장치를 해야 되는걸까. 또는 애가 늘상 자는 건 아니구나. 애가 이 시간에는 왜 이렇게 뭔가 소극적이고 입을 다물고 있는 것일까. 그러면은 그거를 내가 그 샘하고 얘기를 해 보겠는 거죠. 영어 시간에는 개가 되게 열심히 하는데, 과학 시간에는 되게 조용하더라고요. 그러면 그 선생님이, 아 그래요? 그러면은 개는 뭔가 과학 시간에 좀 어떤 어려운 점이 있나 보네요.

In open classes I have a chance to observe the students I teach, and to understand them. ‘This student does not always slump in her seat. Then, what could I do in my lesson to help her sit up?’ ‘This student does not always sleep in class. Yet, why is he so timid and quiet?’ I would talk with that teacher afterwards. ‘He is engaged in English, but so quiet in science.’ Then, the teacher would say, ‘Ah, really? Maybe he is having a hard time in science.’ (Ollim M, Teacher Seo, Interview)

Because the grade-level PLC consisted of teachers who taught the same students, teachers could easily ask about certain students to their PLC members, and learn more about them. Moreover, teachers shared that they could apply “아이에 대한 어떤 해결책” – “certain solutions to

individual students” (Namseoul M, Teacher Yoon, Interview) in their own classrooms, when they had learned more about them from their colleagues’ conversations in PLC meetings. Because PLC members continually observed and talked about many of the same students, they could learn certain characteristics of individual students, such as “어떤 아이는 자주 엎드려있고, 어떤 아이는 2 학기에 들어와서 수업 집중도가 높고” – “how a student frequently slumped in the front of the class, or how another student changed and became more attentive in class over the course of the school year.” (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview)

One teacher described how he applied what he learned about a student from his colleagues:

서로 공동으로 알게 되니까 본인 수업에 들어갔을 때 애가 민감하거나 지금 좀 상태가 안 좋을 때에는 그 아이에 대해서 조심하게 되구나. 조금 열심히 한다 그러면 아이를 보고 격려를 조금 많이 해주려고 하고. 너 무슨 시간에는 열심히 한다며 그러면 이번 시간에도 열심히 할 수 있지 cheer up 해주려고 하고.

As we knew that one student was sensitive, I learned to be very gentle when she was not doing well in my class. Whenever she tried just a bit, I encouraged her. When I heard that she was doing well in another class, I told her she could do well in my class, too. (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview)

Research (Johnson, 2019) indicates that students learn better when their teachers collaborate.

Hyukshin schools in Korea are no exception to this general rule.

### **Fifth-Year Transition**

In Korea, public school teachers transfer to other schools every five years. Due to this policy, many Hyukshin school teachers said they felt stressed from having to “리셋” – “reset” (Hansabong M, HHD Choi, Interview) what they had established for enacting Hyukshin principles. Teachers said that they “바뀌면 다시 시작하는거죠. 다시 이제 안내하고” – “had to restart and re-orient” (Woolgook M, Teacher Hong, Interview) staff when new “혁신학교를

전혀 모르시는 선생님들 “teachers had no clue about Hyukshin schools” (Hyunsa M, Teacher Hong, Interview) or “밀려서 오는 “were forced to come against their wills.” (Hansabong M, HHD Choi, Interview) “혁신학교는 학교 구성원 전체가 마음을 맞추어서 함께 해야 되는 ... 그런 부분이 많기 때문에” – “Because there were many parts in a Hyukshin school, in which all school members had to sustain,” (Hansabong M, HHD Choi, Interview) teachers said they “고생을 되게 많이 했어요.” – “had a hard time” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi & Cho, Interview) when they saw that the Hyukshin culture was becoming “약화시킨 것 같아요” – “diluted” (Moongok, Teacher Noh & Lee, Interview) from teachers rotating so often.

One teacher said, “4년 있으면서도 선생님들이 구성원들이 계속 바뀔 때마다 이 수업연구모임에 대한 어떤 성격이나 분위기도 많이 달라지더라고요.” – “even during the four years I worked at my school, the atmosphere of my PLC changed every time the members changed.” (Woolgook M, Teacher Kim, Interview) A teacher from Hansabong Middle School shared that her school “[휘청한다고.] 저희가 그런 경험을 했죠. 2015년16년에 ... 일곱 명에서 열명 사이로 바뀌고 그랬을 때는” – “stumbled when around seven to ten teachers rotated in and out in 2015 and 2016.” (Hansabong M, Teacher Lee, Interview) Educators complained that “선생님들을 다시 연수를 또 처음처럼 하기가 너무 어려운 거죠.” – “it was so difficult to train new teachers.” (Hyunsa M, Teacher Hong, Interview)

The constant churn of faculty in and out of Hyukshin schools led some advocates of the HSSM to wonder whether the HSSM could be sustained under these circumstances. When asked to comment about this possibility, the HHD of Hyunsa Middle School stated, “저도 이렇게 확언을 드리기는 어렵습니다.” – “I myself cannot tell” (Hyunsa M, HHD Keum, Interview) if Hyukshin schools could endure. A teacher from Woolgook Middle School worried “더

회의적으로 생각하시는 선생님들이 많아지면 아마, 교원학습공동체가 공급할 수 없게 되고 그러다보면은 저절로 혁신학교에 대한 것도 없어지지 않을까” – “if there are too many teachers who become skeptical about the HSSM as a result of staff rotations, none of our PLCs will be able to keep going, which then might lead other components of the Hyukshin schools to disappear.” (Woolgook M, Teacher Kim, Interview)

### **Teacher Invitation**

To reduce the problems caused by the five-year transition policy, some Hyukshin schools benefitted from a policy of “초빙” – “teacher invitation,” that allowed teachers to stay at a school for ten years. The teacher invitation took a process of “직접 자기가 초빙에 응해가지고 우리 학교에서 이 사람을 만났다고 결정을 해야 올 수 있는 거예요” – “a teacher personally accepting the invitation, and the school deciding to hire that person.” (Samoon H, HHD Kyung, Interview) One teacher said that when a school converted into a Hyukshin school or newly opened as one, “원래 첫 해 오는 사람들은 전부다 초빙이에요. 그냥 발령받으신 [몇 분] 빼고” – “all teachers who came for the first year were invited teachers, except for a few who were appointed.” (Yugok M, Teacher Kwak, Interview) Since new Hyukshin schools “기초를 잡아 주실 분들이 필요” – “need experienced teachers to build a foundation,” (Ollim M, HHD Jeon, Interview) some schools that took advantage of the invitation policy at their initial stage of development. “인사권에 있어서 전입을 몇 프로 받을 수 있고 이런 권한” – “They had the permission to hire a certain percentage of the personnel.” (Ollim M, Teacher Seo, Interview)

There were also schools that “지속적으로 초빙을 받았던” – “persistently requested teacher invitation” (Chonwol M, Teacher Shin, Interview) after their initial stage of development was over. In such schools, teachers could stay on for “옮겨야 되는 시점에 제가 5년 더” – “five

more years than was originally established as the deadline when they would have to leave.”

(Namseoul M, HHD Kim, Interview) This support from the SMOE helped schools to “꾸준히 기존의 연속성을 가지고 있어야” – “keep the established HSSM culture in place.” (Chonwol M, Teacher Shin, Interview) These schools were able to build trust and deepen relationships in order to sustain the transformative education they had worked so hard to achieve.

### **PLNs**

Hyukshin schools had various PLNs that were either formally run by the SMOE, or informally run by teachers who took the initiative to communicate with other teachers to learn from one another about HSSM development. An annual meeting called the Hanmadang, monthly meetings convened through an “autonomous council,” and university degrees at the bachelors’ and masters’ degree levels were the three formal Hyukshin PLNs. School visits and self-initiated meetings were informal PLNs that were organized on an ad hoc basis by Hyukshin school educators.

### **Formal PLNs**

*Hanmadang.* Hanmadang was a conference that was held once every year, in which all Hyukshin schools were required to participate. This is an essential forum in which Hyukshin educators share information with one another on how they have implemented Hyukshin principles in their schools over the previous year. There was one Hanmadang for all 15 Hyukshin high schools in Seoul, since they were few in number. There were Hanmadang for Hyukshin elementary and middle schools, that existed in each district. Every Hanmadang, was organized differently.

Hyunsa Middle School faculty attended a Hanmadang that had “여섯 개 학교 선생님이 모두 모여서 일 년 동안 했던 것들을 같이 나눔을 가졌던” – “teachers from six schools

shared what they had done over the past year.” (Hyunsa M, HHD Keum, Interview) Heesung Middle School teachers attended a Hanmadang, that appointed “한 학교에 한 테마 씩” – “a theme for each participant school” (Heesung M, HHD, Interview) to present, and the one that Bongjoong High School attended was organized by “스물세 개 분과 정도를 교과별로 ... 국어, 영어, 수학 ... 주제별로 학교 민주주의에 대해서 다루는 분과도 있고요, 학생 자치, 다음에마을 교육과정이라고” – “about 23 presentations, which were organized either by subjects such as Korean, English, and math, and by themes, such as school democracy, student autonomy, or local community learning.” (Bongjoong H, HHD Ahn & Teacher Lee, Interview) As a convention, in which teachers from different schools gathered and communicated, Hanmadang let different Hyukshin schools to learn from and share diverse Hyukshin programs to one another.

***Autonomous Council.*** Autonomous councils were meetings for which “[교육청에서] 희망자들 추천을 받아요. ... 협의회를 이끌어 갈 수 있는 예산 지원을 해줘요.” – “the SMOE received volunteers, and were financially supported.” (Chumhwa M, HHD Hwang, Interview) Autonomous councils consisted mostly of teachers who passionately contributed to the HSSM at their schools, such as the HHDs, and the teacher researchers—who were selected by the SMOE every year about 15 in number—to support them and conduct observational study. Similar to the Hanmadang’s organizational structure, there was one autonomous council for all Hyukshin high schools and multiple district autonomous councils for Hyukshin elementary and middle schools.

Meeting every month, autonomous councils “한마당을 준비하기 위한” – “prepared for the Hanmadang” (Hyunsa M, HHD Keum, Interview) and “매 시기마다 이런 학교들이 갖고

있는 현안들을 같이 공유” – “shared issues each school had at every term.” (Dosan H, Teacher Kim, Interview) The autonomous councils sponsored discussions on topics such as “혁신학교 운영하면서 생기는 ... 학교장과의 갈등문제를 어떻게 풀어나갈 것이냐 이런 데 대한 논의 ... 올해 갈 방향은 어디고” – “how to solve conflicts with administrators, or how to set the right direction to head this year.” (Waehun H, HHD Seo, Interview) Through monthly meetings, the council members exchanged their “예산 계획, 혁신학교 운영 계획” – “budget plans, school management plans,” (Dosan H, Teacher Kim, Interview) and “우리 학교에서 이렇게 하고 있는 사업들” – “projects their schools were undertaking.” (Hyunsa M, HHD Keum, Interview) The autonomous councils wanted to support “처음 하시는 분들은 참 어렵잖아요” – “teachers who were just starting to work in Hyukshin schools and found it challenging.” (Ollim M, HHD Jeon, Interview) In autonomous councils, teachers communicated with each other frequently.

**Universities.** Teachers learned about Hyukshin schools at both the level of bachelor’s and master’s degrees. At the level of bachelor’s degrees, students studied “혁신학교 개념 정도로만 알고” – “Hyukshin schools as a concept” (Woolgook M, Teacher Kim, Interview) when they prepared for teacher certification exams. One teacher from Ryuah Middle School stated, “[대학교에서 혁신에 대해] 몇 번 들어오긴 했는데 거의 알지 못했고 ... 학교 행정에 대해서 배우지만 ... 일반적인 학교의 사례에 그치는 경우가 많아서” – “although I had heard of Hyukshin schools when I was at the university, I learned very little. Even though I studied about school administration, the schools we studied were mostly traditional ones.” (Ryuah M, Teacher Moon, Interview) He thought that most teachers would start their careers “혁신학교에 대해서 잘 모를 거라고 생각을 해요. 젊은 교사들도” – “not knowing much about Hyukshin schools, even among the younger teachers.” (Ryuah M, Teacher Moon,

Interview) Although some universities were asked to touch upon Hyukshin schools in their curricula, teachers reported that they had “혁신학교가 뭔지도 잘 모를” – “not understood what a Hyukshin school was,” (Hyunsa M, Teacher Jung, Interview) and that more needed to be done in this area.

At the master’s degree level, three universities—Sungkonghoe University, Konkuk University, and Korea National University of Education—ran programs that focused on Hyukshin education. Each university’s program differed in their chosen focus: “인권이라든가 민주주의라든가 내용적인 부분 성공회대가 좀 집중하고 있고 그다음 건대는 교육 행정, ... 교원대가 교육 정책” – “Sungkonghoe University emphasized themes such as human rights and democracy; Konkuk University concentrated on educational administration; and Korea National University of Education dealt with education policy.” (Ryua M, Teacher Suh, Interview)

One teacher we interviewed was a current student in the Sungkonghoe University program. He told us that the three programs “세 갈래지 그렇게 그 교육과정이 뚜렷하게 구별되는 건 아니에요” – “had a lot of overlap. Their curricula were not clearly distinguished.” (Ryua M, Teacher Suh, Interview) Since the programs were in their second year of running in 2019, there were no graduates of the programs when our interviews were conducted. Not much was known about how universities served as a PLN for teachers, since the master’s degree programs were “이제 만들어 나가는 과정” – “just in the beginning phases of becoming established.” (Ryua M, Teacher Suh, Interview)

### **Informal PLNs**

There were informal PLNs, in which teachers communicated with colleagues from other schools. In order to “다른 혁신 학교의 좋은 점도 자꾸 도입하려 그리고, 또 우리 학교의

좋은 점이 있으면 또 다른 혁신학교에 전파하려고 하고.” – “learn about innovations in other Hyukshin schools, and to spread positive aspects of one’s own school” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview) teachers visited other schools. Some schools “최대한 주위 학교에 있는 선생님들을 많이 좀 초청” – “invited as many teachers as possible from neighboring schools” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview) to share ideas with them.

**School visits.** Teachers described school visits as examples that they organized to illustrate how they took independent initiative to communicate with other Hyukshin school teachers. Especially when a school newly opened as a Hyukshin school, or converted into one, Hyukshin educators knew that additional levels of support would be helpful. Teachers said that they “우리보다 먼저 시작한 학교 있잖아요. ... 개인적으로 연락해서” – “contacted educators at schools that had implemented the Hyukshin model before them,” (Heesung M, HHD, Interview) which the list of possible schools to contact was provided by the SMOE. The teachers shared how they learned about open classes, PLCs, and student autonomy from visiting other schools.

School visits focused on viewing “제안 수업 “demonstration classes.” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview) These were the same as open classes held in-school, but had a much larger group of observers, including often the school parents, other school teachers, or student teachers from universities. Trying to share their experiences of “수업 방법 혁신은 어떻게 할 것이며 학교 혁신을 어떻게 할 것인지” – “how to innovate at a school level, and how to innovate in the classroom,” (Hyunsa M, Teacher Hong, Interview) educators invited other HSSM schools to observe their demonstration classes. Often, teachers in older Hyukshin schools volunteered to mentor those in the more recent ones. For instance, Ollim Middle School teachers invited educators from neighboring Hyukshin schools to observe how an open class they had prepared

was conducted in a grade-level PLC, since “과목 상관없이 모여서 같이 수업을 공부한다는 거 자체가 사실 쉽지는 않아 가지고” – “In reality, it was not easy for teachers who taught different subjects, even at the same grade level, to study lessons together.” (Ollim M, HHD Jeon, Interview) Also, Jeongsun Middle School teachers “처음에 시작할 때 장만중학교라는데 가서 수업하는 걸 보고” – “visited Jangman Middle School to observe how Hyukshin classes were held, when they first adopted the Hyukshin model.” (Jeongsun M, Teacher Kwon, Interview)

One teacher from Jeongsun Middle School described how a demonstration class helped him:

학생중심활동이 실제로 진행이 되는 걸 보고 놀란 거죠. 저게 될까? 그래서 [제안수업 하신] 선생님이나 이런 분들한테 실제로 선생님만 되느냐? 다른 선생님도 되느냐? 왜냐면 우리도 해 봐야 되니까. 그래서 와서 시도한 게. 저는 맨 처음에 교과서 빈칸 채우기부터 했어요. 왜냐 그러면 최소한 애들이 보고 빈칸은 채울 수 있으니까. 내가 뭔가 할 수 있는 것. 그걸 줘야지 애들이 뭔가를 할 거예요.

When I saw how a student-centered activity was really proceeding, I was shocked. Can that really happen? So, I asked the teacher who taught the demonstration class if this was possible only for her, or if other teachers could also do it. Because we wanted to try it too at our school. So, what I tried first was to create fill-in-the-blanks of textbook, since that was a task the students could do entirely independently. I thought that students would only be engaged if I gave them something that they felt they could do on their own. (Jeongsun M, Teacher Kwon, Interview)

Just as one teacher “다른 학교의 사례를 보면서 우리학교에 적용 가능한지 안 한지 보고” – “observed the case of other school and considered if it was applicable in my school or not,” (Jeongsun M, Teacher Kwon) school visits let many teachers to “다른 학교에서 했던 것을 따라하면서 ... 가져와서 바꿨고 – follow what other schools did ... and modify” (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview) to fit their school context in implementing open classes. In addition, demonstration classes also allowed teacher visitors to learn how to “교사의 관찰이 아니라 학생을 관찰한다” – “observe students, rather than the teacher” (Hyunsa M, HHD Keum,

Interview) for an open class. For instance, teachers shared how they saw demonstration class observers “아이들이 어떻게 배우는지를 굉장히 구체적으로 꼼꼼하게 보더라고요.” – “meticulously analyzing on how students were learning,” (Woolgook M, Teacher Hong, Interview) rather than how the demonstration class teacher performed. When teachers made school visits and observed a demonstration class, they could better understand how open classes should be conducted.

School visits were said to be useful for introducing Hyukshin principles and practices to educators in new Hyukshin schools. Ollim Middle School teachers “특히 학생회 활동이나 이런 자치 활동이 되게 활발하다 그래서 그 학교를 보러 갔었고요.” – “visited Jeongsun Middle School, because they were known to have succeeded in promoting student autonomy, especially with the organization of their student council.” (Ollim M, Teacher Kang, Interview) Many schools were encouraged to visit Hyunsa Middle School and “벤치마킹” – “to see it as a benchmark for what was possible.” (Hyunsa M, HHD Keum, Interview) The HHD of Hyunsa Middle School explained that other school teachers copied their student autonomy practices, such as how “1학년 학생이 들어왔을 때 오리엔테이션을 2학년 학생회에서 준비해서 학교 소개를 하는 거” – “the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade student council prepared an orientation to orient 1<sup>st</sup> grade students when they entered school.” (Hyunsa M, HHD Keum, Interview) Other educators were also intrigued by how there were “자치회 2주, 4주 차에 애들 놀이라고 공연 마당을 하거든요. 점심시간에” – “mini concerts of students, called ‘kids play,’ during lunch time biweekly.” (Hyunsa M, HHD Keum, Interview)

***Self-initiated meetings.*** Other than school visits, there were multiple self-initiated meetings, that some groups of teachers took initiative to create for exchanging ideas and

thoughts around Hyukshin schools as a type of informal PLN. For instance, there was a “전교조 모임” – “KTU meeting,” (Hansabong M, HHD Choi, Interview; Yugok M, HHD Lee, Interview) in which some KTU teachers who worked at Hyukshin schools gathered to collectively study about Hyukshin education, and there was a chat room on Kakaotalk (Korean messenger app), in which “176명” – “176 [teachers]” (Heesung M, HHD, Interview) shared Hyukshin-related information, such as “이거 한번 해보고 좋네. 뭐 이정보 어디가면 얻을수 있어요 이런것들” – “what they tried and felt useful, or where to look for information.” (Heesung M, HHD, Interview) Also, there was a “혁신 교육 연구회 모임” – “Hyukshin education research meeting,” (Dosan H, Teacher Kim, Interview) in which about 10 Hyukshin high school teachers spontaneously gathered to study the curriculum of Hyukshin high schools and discuss what they could do to help with promotion of the HSSM. These kinds of self-initiated meetings indicate that teachers have internalized not just the letter of the HSSM, but also its spirit. They augur well for the sustainability of the HSSM and for the development of teacher leadership, independent of the SMOE.

### **Teachers’ Thoughts**

Teachers had diverse thoughts about the benefits and drawbacks of networks and the way that they currently are available in the HSSM in Seoul. Some teachers felt that the planning and running of PLNs demanded too much of their time and attention. For those teachers who felt that the currently existing networks were “부족” – “insufficient,” (Hansabong M, Teacher Ma, Interview; Ryuah M, Teacher Moong, Interview) on the other hand, PLNs were essential to create “어려움이 사실 되게 많아요. ... 그런 부분들을 좀 해소할 수 있는 시스템이 필요한 거 같아요.” – “a system that could resolve the many challenges facing the HSSM.” (Hyunsa M,

HHD Keum, Interview) These teachers wanted “직접 와서 볼 수 있는 기회를 많이” – “more opportunities to visit schools and to learn” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview) from other schools.

One teacher wanted a more systematic approach to developing the HSSM through PLNs:

혁신학교에 대한 더욱 더 전폭적인 지원을 할 수 있는 조직이 있으면 좋죠. 그런 네트워크가 강화되고 실제로 혁신에서 가장 힘들어하는 부분이 결국 이제 인적 구성이 바뀌면 혁신학교를 초반에 추진했던 사람들이 학교를 떠나가고 또 새로운 사람이 오게 되면 아무래도 그 혁신학교의 방향이나 이런 것들이 좀 묻어지고 과거로 좀 회귀할 수도-- 사실 그런 문제를 많이 겪거든요. ... 그런 부분에 있어서 공식적인 오시는 분에 대해서 이렇게 교육이나 이런 것들이 이루어진다면 훨씬 더 좋겠죠.

It would be good if there was a system that provided more support for Hyukshin schools in order to strengthen its networks. In fact, the most difficult part about being in a Hyukshin school is when the staff changes. When the people who initially led an important phase in the Hyukshin model have left the school and new people have come in, things, like the Hyukshin direction, became diluted. We found ourselves often to be returning to past practices. We actually have run into such challenges a lot. ... In these cases, it would be much better if there was an official training done for all of the newcomers. (Hyunsa M, Teacher Hong, Interview)

A teacher from Ollim Middle School argued that the Hanmadang, the largest formal PLN currently, was inadequate also for experienced teachers to learn from teachers from other schools:

혁신 학교들이 서로 그걸 막, 교류하는 자리 이런 거는 거의 없는 것 같아요. 1년에 한 번씩 혁신 학교 한마당[에서는] ... 그냥 자기 학교에서 하는 것들을 좋은 사례를 발표하는 이런 정도인데, 그거를 혁신 학교 하는 사람들 사이에서 뭔가 고민을 나누고, 혁신 학교 주도하는 사람들 사이에서 고민을 나누고 그걸 앞으로 어떻게 좀 해결해 갈 것인가. 서로를 조금 그거에 대한 아이디어를 얻고 이런 자리는 조금 부족하지 않나.

There weren't many networks where Hyukshin schools convened. Once a year at Hanmadang, it was just about presenting examples of what was done in the schools. There weren't places where we could share concerns among those who also worked in Hyukshin schools. We weren't able to discuss issues with those who lead Hyukshin development. Sessions where we could learn to solve problems were insufficient.” (Ollim M, Teacher Kang, Interview)

Many teachers felt that “학교 단위로 하고 있는 것들이 많지가 않아” – “there was not much being done to promote learning across schools.” (Heesung M, Teacher Yang, Interview) Hence, although there were few passionate teachers who took the initiative to involve in additional PLN, teachers felt that “일개의 교사로 다시 자기 학교로 돌아갔었을 때, 그거를 한 학교를 이끌어 가기에는 그 파워가 그 만큼 나지가 않아요” – “the power to change one school by sharing what was learned in a PLN could not work in practice when educators returned to their schools as solitary individuals.” (Heesung M, Teacher Yang, Interview)

However, there were teachers who felt reluctant about advancing networks, saying that their “일단 학교가 녹록치 않은 것 같아요” – “schools were already tough” (Moongok M, Teacher Noh & Lee, Interview) and that they were so “바쁜 것 같아요” – “busy” that it wasn’t realistic to take on even more tasks. (Moongok M, Teacher Noh & Lee, Interview) A teacher from Bongjoong High School shared the difficulty in sustaining networks:

다른 학교와의 어떤 네트워크라든가 이런 것들이 시도들은 됐었어요. 됐었는데 지속 가능성이 떨어지는거죠. ... 그런 커뮤니티를 만들려면 누군가는 뭔가 이야기를 해야 하고, 계속해서 콘텐츠를 만들어 가야 하는데. 그런 것들이 쉽지가 않다는 거지. 그게 어렵다는 거지. ... 초창기 혁신학교 운동이 일어날 때 ... 서로 학교 방문도 하고 했었는데, 지금 와서는 많이 희미해졌죠.

We had attempted forming networks with other schools, but the chance for them to sustain was unlikely. ... In order to build such network, someone needed to keep talk and create contents, but such tasks were not easy. They were difficult. ... At the beginning stage of Hyukshin School movement, ... schools visited one another, but now, it had become very weak. (Bongjoong H, HHD Ahn & Teacher Lee, Interview)

Although there were many teachers who wished for more constructive PLN to support themselves, some teachers thought that they were overwhelmed just to “학교 안에서 좀 안착화” – “establish the Hyukshin model in their school,” (Ryua M, Teacher Suh, Interview) and felt “쉽지가 않은” – “uneasy.” (Ollim M, HHD Jeon, Interview)

## **Discussion**

Based on our interviews of teachers in 16 Hyukshin schools, there was a diverse spectrum of support for the HSSM model. Throughout Hyukshin development in PLCs and open classes, teachers both saw advantages and encountered challenges. Although there were some ways in place to abate the challenges, teachers seemed to feel that additional supports would be helpful.

***Hyukshin Leadership.*** Most teachers said that their administrators had a Hyukshin mindset that “did not cut” back their initiatives. Administrators “did not interfere,” “stayed back,” and “asked for nothing.” Teachers clearly enjoyed their new-found freedoms and made the most of them. Little was said, however, about how administrators directly facilitated the process of establishing a democratic school culture. These teachers seemed to believe that a good Hyukshin leader was one with a leadership that was directly opposite to the hierarchical leadership of traditional schools. However, it may be that there is more to effective school leadership than abstention and observation.

Emphasizing too much how Hyukshin schools are a paradigm change from traditional schools, some leaders may have gone so far as to identify Hyukshin leadership as an abrogation of their authority to the teachers. The theory of “servant leadership,” (Greenleaf, 1970/1991) suggests that a good leader should be first among equals, (Crippen, 2005) not last. Hence, a democratic leader actively engages to involve in teaching and mentoring staff. (Crippen, 2005) Having much resemblance to an “orchestrator,” (Wallace, 2003) such leaders would monitor teachers’ practices relating to a change, setting the course for schools to realize align Hyukshin principles.

***The Difficulty of Establishing a Cooperative Hyukshin Culture.*** There were many teachers who felt that they underwent many conflicts and emotional struggles when their school first adopted the Hyukshin model. Since the model of a Hyukshin school was “an extremely unfamiliar concept,” it took the dedication and “sacrifice” of a few passionate teachers to establish a cooperative culture. This was difficult because of the inevitable differences among supportive and unsupportive teachers. Since there was “nothing at the core of Hyukshin schools”—due to their focus on autonomy—it took a tremendous amount of time to establish a collective understanding of Hyukshin principles even among supportive teachers. Although there were less conflicts in schools that opened as a Hyukshin school and had its members collectively establish a unique Hyukshin culture from the start, even then different understandings of what a Hyukshin school entailed led to differences in practice within and across schools. Since there were no precedents for schools that implemented Hyukshin model in the first phase, the fact that other schools that later joined the Hyukshin movement still struggled with the same problems seemed to identify an ambiguity in the HSSM, that endangers its sustainability.

***Systematic Holes.*** We identified three challenges for the HSSM to address. First, many teachers had no knowledge about the missions of Hyukshin schools until they began working at one. Second, even with the training available on Hyukshin principles at three universities and training sessions provided by the SMOE, many teachers felt that there were just not enough places other than a Hyukshin school for teachers to be trained properly for the demands of class innovation or the emotional growth required by open classrooms. Third, the five-year transition system in Seoul meant that staff churn undermined the schools’ efforts to build communities of care.

Some of the educators we interviewed seemed to interpret Hyukshin schools as necessitating a kind transformational leadership (Sashkin & Burke, 1990) which ultimately depends on teachers' leadership for the manifestation of Hyukshin principles and practices. However, it should be noted that many advocates of such transformational leadership treat teachers' agency as potentially unlimited. (Wallace, 2003) The emphasis on the transformation of authority could overstate the extent of teachers' autonomy, even in an innovative school, and understate limitations on what they can do. (Wallace, 2003) For example, teachers still have to abide by contractual obligations that have been negotiated by the SMOE and their professional associations.

Change leaders should not be surprised when some teachers said they felt troubled "as if they ground their wrists" by trying to induce educators to internalize Hyukshin principles and practices. Educational change is exceptionally difficult and multifaceted, involving a complex interaction of structures and cultures. Although some advocates of the HSSM could overcome several years of hardships to establish a Hyukshin culture at their school, teachers still often found their influence to be limited. Every year, when new teachers "who had no clue about Hyukshin schools" or "who were forced to come" replaced teachers who had been leading the Hyukshin system in school, the remaining teachers found it stressful to "return to the past" and "reset" the strenuous process of orienting new teachers and training them. Thus, although Hyukshin culture could be established at a school successfully, it often "stumbled" and was "diluted" as time passed. This familiar problem of educational change has been described as the proclivity of systems to default to prior ways of doing things, due to "innovative overload" (Shirley & MacDonald, 2016, p. 77). Sustainable models of change are needed to address this issue (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006).

***Solution: PLNs.*** Making changes to education at a national level, Hyukshin schools advocate for distributed leadership (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009), which was partially achieved in each school by providing more agency to the teachers. However, in order to maximally delimit the teacher agency from a lack of understanding of Hyukshin schools and from the less supportive broader social system, Hyukshin schools should collaborate more. They need to mobilize all possible resources (Ainscow, 2015), so that teachers, as well as schools, can learn from one another and collectively develop their expertise. Described as a self-improving system (Armstrong et al., 2020), school networks could spread innovation, stimulate learning, increase professional motivation, and reduce inequities (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). They can only do so, however, if they overcome educators' reticence to share their honest observations of what is going well and what is not in their schools. Otherwise, PLCs and PLNs turn into empty rituals of "contrived collegiality" (Hargreaves, 1995) in which valuable time is wasted by failing to address what really needs improvement.

***Status Quo.*** The 16 Hyukshin schools we studied were already engaged in Hyukshin PLNs. These included Hanmadang, which was the only formal network all schools attended, once a year. However, Hanmadang was described as "insufficient" from the teachers for deeper learning among schools to occur. Several teachers said that the way that Hanmadang was run did not enable them to discuss critical areas in need of attention. Although some teachers engaged in additional networks to have those kinds of conversations, these teachers were "solitary individuals" who did not have the capacity on their own to enact what they had learned, when they returned to their schools. Teachers agreed that the current level of infrastructure supporting the HSSM needs rethinking, while at the same time, they were not looking for more required meetings.

### ***The Challenges of Change***

It is encouraging that some teachers had chosen to work with and support one another within a common interest to improve schools in the HSSM and the SMOE. However, in order to effectively manage and sustain the Hyukshin style of voluntary collaboration, there needs to be systematic support, so that teachers, who prioritized “settlement in-school” and felt already “tough,” “uneasy,” and “busy,” learn that enhancing networks is a potent way to eventually ease their work in-school, rather than accumulating more work.

### **Conclusion**

This cross-case analysis of PLCs and PLNs in the HSSM found that there was a large group of teachers in our 16 case study schools who took a great deal of initiative in classroom innovation, open classes, and teacher-led professional development. These teachers had come together based on a shared determination to support a different kind of public education than is found in Korean schools. While the HSSM does have to find ways to manage those teachers who are skeptical of Hyukshin principles and remain attached to traditional ways of doing things, the culture of open deliberation and joint problem-solving augurs well for the future.

Since PLCs are developing relatively well in each Hyukshin school, the next phase would be to connect the schools into a stronger PLN. While some components of an effective PLN are now in place through annual Hanmadang conferences, autonomous councils, and the new university partnerships, these initiatives do not seem integrated with one another or adequate to support the HSSM as it prepares to enter its second decade. For this reason, we encourage the SMOE to explore the prospects for establishing a PLN that can work to ensure the rapid and effective communication of innovations across the HSSM and beyond.

## Whole Person Education: Teachers' Perspectives

### Introduction

The concept of whole-person education in Korea has a long and ancient Confucian heritage and recently has been undergoing considerable refinement as part of the country's compressed modernization. Traditionally, exams in all of East Asia have served the purpose of preparing civil servants, and they have emphasized memorization of a vast, pre-established body of knowledge. After the Second World War, the educational system experienced a "quantitative expansion," that was followed by a stage of "qualitative improvement" up to the mid-1990s (Lee & Kim, 2016, pp. 414-415).

It was not until the 31 May Education Reform Report of 1995 when a reform movement began to change the Korean education system from an academically focused curriculum to a learner-centered curriculum. The specific term that has been used to describe whole-person or holistic education in Korea is "전인교육," in which student characteristics such as knowledge (지), morals (덕), and physical health (체) are emphasized. Other terms that fall under the umbrella of whole-person education include human character education (인성교육), ethical education (도덕교육), and values education (가치관 교육) (You, 2007). Regardless of the exact term used, proponents of whole-person education in Korea highlight the importance of treating the learner as a whole human being, with interconnected characteristics. This means that not only students' mastery of academic subject matter, but also their socioemotional development and aspirations for wellbeing, form part of the official policy agenda for school systems.

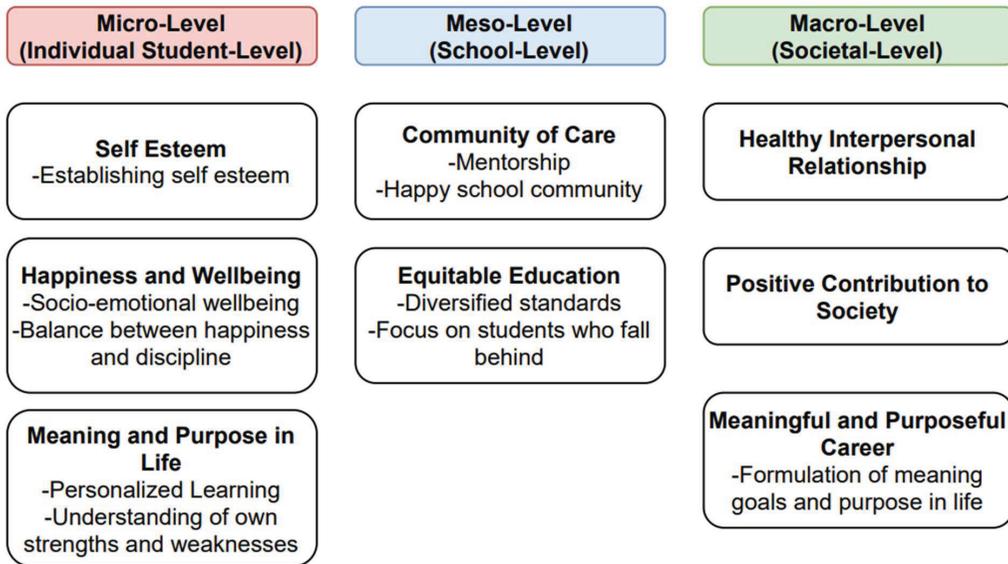
One common point of departure for whole person education is the belated recognition that schools' overemphasis on academic achievement has contributed to students' ill-being. Currently, the 2015 Revision of the National Curriculum conceptualizes an ideal person living in

the 21<sup>st</sup> century as developing a sense of autonomy, creativity, culture, and interpersonal skills. These character traits go beyond academic achievement and reflect a new value placed on the learner as a whole person.

How is this new concern for the education of students as whole people playing out in schools? This cross-case analysis addresses the question by drawing on new qualitative data from 16 Hyukshin schools in Seoul, through the lens of their teachers. The cross-case analysis is divided into three sections:

1. We first present Hyukshin school student characteristics that teachers viewed as being both problematic in terms of social disadvantage, as well as being a reason for implementing whole-person education.
2. We describe our findings about whole-person education as defined by Hyukshin school teachers, using Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model including micro-level (student-level), meso-level (school-level), and macro-level (societal-level) dimensions.
3. We discuss findings that highlight Hyukshin school teachers' conceptualization of whole-person education, particularly teachers' emphasis on the development of "dolbom," or a community of care.

This structure is based on a conceptual map that we have developed based on our Hyukshin school teacher interviews. The conceptual map is presented in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual Map of Whole Person Education in Hyukshin Schools in Seoul

It is useful to conceptualize our findings about Hyukshin school teachers' conceptualization of whole person education using Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which presents individual growth in terms of interconnected components from different system levels, including the micro-, meso-, exo-, macro-, and chronosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The model treats individual students as the micro-system, schools as the meso-system, and society as the macro-system. Micro-level constructs of whole-person education include student establishment of self-esteem, happiness and wellbeing, as well as meaning and purpose in life. These were constructs that teachers saw as important for students to develop as whole people. Meso-level constructs include community of care and equitable education. Both focus on establishing a healthy and happy school community in which all students are provided opportunities to grow. Finally, the overarching macro-level construct is democratic citizenship, which consists of healthy

interpersonal relationships, positive contribution to society, and a meaningful and purposeful career.

These three levels have been helpful in conceptualizing Hyukshin school teachers' definition of whole-person education. The micro-, meso-, and macro-systems interact with each other in ways that can enhance student growth. For example, many Hyukshin school teachers emphasized the importance of establishing a strong sense of student self-esteem, which can be built through a school community of care in which students form healthy mentor-mentee relationships with teachers. In other words, micro-level student growth occurs through the meso-level school community in which healthy teacher-student relationships are formed. The findings section elaborates upon each of the levels and their interconnections in detail.

### **Problem Statement**

Hyukshin school teachers identified student characteristics that mainly consist of potential disadvantages in comparison to students from traditional schools, which can be seen as constraints that can impede high quality education. These student characteristics were also presented as reasons why Hyukshin school teachers want students to receive whole-person education.

***Hyukshin School Student Characteristics.*** According to the teachers, they have to respond to a widespread belief that their students are behind academically compared with non-Hyukshin school students. As seen in Table 1 below, school teachers indicate that Hyukshin school students have characteristics that may impede whole person education. The column labeled Seoul Survey Report is the average 2016 household income for the district the schools are located in, providing the socioeconomic context of the Hyukshin schools (The Seoul Research Data Service, 2016).

**Table 1.** Student-Level Characteristics by Hyukshin School

School Name	Seoul Survey Report	Hyukshin School Teacher Interview		
	District Average Household Income	Low SES	Behavioral Issues	Academically Fall Behind
Namseoul Middle School	\$4000		0	0
Hansabong Middle School	\$3900	0	0	
Woolgook Middle School	\$3500	0	0	
Bongjoong High School	\$3300		0	0
Waehun High School	\$3900		0	0
Chumhwa Middle School	\$3600	0		0
Haesung Middle School	\$3300			
Yugok Middle School	\$4600	0		
Ryuah Middle School	\$3800	0		
Jeongsun Middle School	\$4100	0	0	0
Dosan High School	\$3850	0		0
Hyunsa Middle School	\$3600			
Moongok Middle School	\$3500			
Samoon High School	\$4400	0		0
Chonwol Middle School	\$3850	0		
Ollim Middle School	\$3800			

**Low Socioeconomic Status.** Many Hyukshin schools are located in school districts with a higher proportion of students from low-income families. Out of the 16 Hyukshin middle and high schools where interviews were conducted, 9 teachers mentioned that their students come from low-income families, and this seems to be a prevalent characteristic of the Hyukshin school student population in general. A teacher from Dosan High School mentioned, “혁신 학교로 지정 된 학교들 보면, 일단은 열악한 사회의, 집이나 부모님이나 지역적으로 열악하다” “Generally, schools that were designated as Hyukshin schools are placed in disadvantageous districts and consist of students who are from low income families” (Dosan H, Teacher Lee, Interview). Many times, Hyukshin schools are located in areas where students may be at a disadvantage in terms of learning. A teacher from Hansabong Middle School stated, “우리 아이들이 거주하는 지역인 주로 다세대 이런 지역이고 다른 중학교로 가는 아이들은 주로

아파트에 있는 아이들 이에요” – “Our students live in homes with multi-generation families, while students from other middle schools live in apartments with their immediate family only.” (Hansabong M, Teacher Choi, Interview). Many teachers identify a clear socioeconomic divide between Hyukshin school students and those from surrounding middle or high schools.

***Fall Behind Academically.*** Generally, socioeconomic status is highly related to student academic achievement levels. Out of the 16 Hyukshin schools, teachers from 7 schools stated that their students are falling behind academically. One possible reason could be that many parents avoid sending their children to Hyukshin schools due to the negative perception that the students there do not study hard enough. For example, a teacher from Waehun High School said, “자사고나 외고로 훌륭한 애들이 다 빠져나가서 우리들이 학력이 저하되어있으니...” – “Excellent students generally moved to private or specialized high schools, resulting in their own school students falling behind academically.” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi, Interview).

Because of the preconception that Hyukshin school students do not achieve academically, many talented students go to other schools. A Namseoul Middle School teacher said:

이 동네에서는 영어학원을 다닌 친구들하고 안 다닌 친구들하고의 차이가 크고. 그 다음에 그게 어떤 결과로 되었냐 하면 중 3 이 될 때까지 영어를 못 읽는 친구들이 상당수 있어요. 그럼 수업하게 되기 어려운 것은 맞죠.

There is a big difference between students who went to the English academy and those who didn't. As a result, there are many students who can't read English even in their third year of middle school. It is true that teaching such students is difficult (Namseoul M, Teacher Lee, Interview).

When Hyukshin school students fall behind academically, teachers might feel that there is no space for them to fully incorporate whole-person education. Rather, teachers might feel a more immediate need to address societal or parental pressure for students to focus on academic achievement.

**Behavioral Problems.** In addition to low academic achievement, in 6 out of the 16 schools in our sample, teachers indicated that there are student behavioral issues as well. As one of the main reasons for this, Hyukshin school teachers indicated that it was common for students who are not well accepted in traditional schools to end up at a Hyukshin school. A teacher from Bongjoong High School described it as a vicious cycle. She said,

우리 학교 오는 애들이 공부 잘하고 예의 바른 학생이 온다기보다는 공부 좀 부족하고 좀 약간 예의가 부족한 아이들이 오다 보니, 우리는 되게 사랑으로 감싸고 하는데, 물론 좋은 애들도 많은데 약간 그 예의가 부족한 아이들도 있거든요.

Students who fall academically behind and lack good manners – rather than students who are academically successful and are well-behaved – come to our school. We try to care for them with love, and even though there are good students, there are also students who lack manners (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Because there is a higher proportion of students who have behavioral problems, many parents avoid sending their children to Hyukshin schools.

One reason for such behavioral problems could be that Hyukshin school students do not receive sufficient parental care at home. One teacher from Chumhwa Middle School said, “이 동네 아이들은 ... 부모님 케어가 안 돼요” – In this neighborhood ... parents aren’t able to take sufficient care of their children.” (Chumhwa M, Teacher Hwang, Interview). Lack of parental care is closely linked to the financial status of the family. Generally, adults in the household have multiple jobs and are unable to devote time and effort in ensuring that their children are doing well at school.

### **Addressing Student Characteristics Through a Hyukshin Lens**

In a society where academic excellence is valued, student characteristics such as low SES levels, low academic achievement, and behavioral problems create negative stereotypes of

Hyukshin schools. In contemporary Korea, success is defined by whether students enter a prestigious university and develop a successful career. Hyukshin school students seem to be further away from such measures of success compared to students from traditional schools. This widespread view is reflected through Hyukshin school teachers' interaction with parents. A teacher from Hansabong Middle School said:

한국 사회에서 학부모들이 바라는 것은 성적이거든요... 학교에서 왜 애들 지식 가르치는 데 신경을 안 쓰고 아이들을 체험활동이라든지 그런 활동을 많이 하느냐라고 가끔 몇몇 학부모님들이 말씀하실 때가 있어요. 그럴 때가 조금 답답한 거죠.

Parents in Korea desire good grades...Some parents ask us why our school does not care about teaching since we have our students go on field trips and do other kinds of non-academic activities. It is frustrating (Hansabong M, Teacher Ma, Interview).

Hyukshin school teachers and parents appear to clash frequently, due to the perception that the school do not push students to study hard enough.

Hyukshin school teachers, on the other hand, do not simply see the situation through the lens of whether students work hard enough to succeed academically. Their vision of education is broader and more transformative. They agree that they may be working with students with specific characteristics that may be hard to overcome with the repertoire of strategies used by traditional education, but they disagree that the only way to succeed is through traditional, teacher-centered, closed-text lessons. They work to ensure that students' potential is not limited by such methods, incorporating principles of whole-person education into their lesson plans and giving their students many ways to thrive. A Hansabong Middle School teacher stated, “지금 현재의 교육에 문제가 있다고 생각하고 그것을 그냥 불평 불만만 하는 게 아니라 우리가 할 수 있는 선에서 뭔가 좀 바꾸려고 노력하는 학교라고 저는 생각을 했고” – “Rather than

complaining about problems in the current education system, our school tries to change things that are in our locus of control (Hansabong M, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Hyukshin school teachers such as this one believe that the extra effort and time devoted to their students and their lessons are worth it, because they have internalized the values of their school reform movement and are inspired by its vision of educational change. A Bongjoong High School teacher elaborated on this sense of professional dedication by stating, “더 많은 시간을 투자해야 되고 더 많이 노력해야 되는 어려움, 그걸 감수할 만한 가치가 있다고 생각하기 때문입니다” – “It is worthy of teachers to go through the trouble of spending more time and effort.” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview). Since Hyukshin school teachers believe in Hyukshin principles and want to put them into practice, they appear to be ready to take on extra challenges and responsibilities, in order to help their students to excel in their studies and their lives.

### **Findings Regarding Micro-Level: The Individual Student**

Hyukshin school teachers focused on three facets of whole-person education. In response to the student characteristics that may serve as potential obstacles to students developing into successful adults, Hyukshin school teachers identified the following three micro-level facets of whole person education as sources of positive change:

1. Development of self-esteem;
2. Student happiness and wellbeing; and
3. Meaning and purpose in life.

Teachers strongly emphasized the development of student self-esteem, their sense of socioemotional wellbeing, and their discovery of meaning and purpose as important components of whole person education that would allow students to be successful not only at school but in

life. Table 2 presents the micro-level facets of whole-person education emphasized by each Hyukshin school.

**Table 2.** Micro-Level Facets of Whole Person Education by Hyukshin School

School Name	Self Esteem	Happiness and Wellbeing	Meaning and Purpose in Life
Namseoul Middle School		○	○
Hansabong Middle School	○	○	○
Woolgook Middle School	○	○	
Bongjoong High School		○	
Waehun High School		○	
Chumhwa Middle School	○		○
Haesung Middle School		○	○
Yugok Middle School	○	○	○
Ryuah Middle School			
Jeongsun Middle School	○	○	○
Dosan High School		○	○
Hyunsa Middle School		○	○
Moongok Middle School	○	○	
Samoon High School		○	○
Chonwol Middle School	○	○	○
Ollim Middle School			

### Development of Self-Esteem

Teachers in seven out of the 16 schools saw the development of student self-esteem as a central pillar of whole-person education. They want their students to build a sense of accomplishment. Many Hyukshin school students are not used to winning or achieving, and Hyukshin school teachers provide them with opportunities to develop their self-esteem (자존감).

This theme of boosting confidence was evident in many of our interviews. A teacher from Chumhwa Middle School stated, “조금 자기 확신이 있는 아이로 컸으면 좋겠어요. 왜냐면 이 동네 아이들이 서울 변두리 라서 자신감, 자존감 같은 게 조금 부족하다” – “I hope our students will become confident. The kids living in this area are from the outskirts of Seoul, and they lack confidence and self-esteem.” (Chumhwa M, Teacher Yang, Interview). This

lack of confidence stems from society's tendency to prioritize students who show academic excellence over those who do not. A teacher from Woolgook Middle School said:

이 사회가 조금 '공부를 너가 못했으니까 그런 취급을 당해도 돼'라고 자꾸 이야기 하는 거 같아요. 그래서 나는 공부를 못했으니까 취직을 못하는 게 당연해, 나는 이렇게 사는 게 당연해 ... 이런 식으로 점점 약간, 그런 아이들을 많이 봤어요.

This society tells students, 'since you are not good at studying, you deserve to be mistreated.' As a result, students think because they did not study well, it is natural for them not to get a job. It is natural for them to live that way... I have seen a lot of students with such a mindset (Woolgook M, Teacher Yoo, Interview).

Because of the society's tendency to relay such messages to students, those who end up at Hyukshin schools are left with low self-esteem. They lack the confidence required to succeed.

Hyukshin school teachers expressed the importance they place on developing student self-esteem as an integral component of whole-person education. A Chonwol Middle School teacher stated, "내면이 단단한 사람 이기를 바라거든요" – "that she wished her students would be strong inside." (Chonwol M, Teacher Kim, Interview). According to her teacher, it was a priority for students to develop a high-level of self-esteem as a way for them to successfully navigate through life. A teacher from Moongok Middle School said, "1 등이든 1 등이 아니든 저는 자존감을 지킬 수 있는 아이가 필요하다고 보거든요" – "Regardless of whether a student ranks first in their class or not, we need the student to be able to protect his or her own self-esteem." (Moongok M, Teacher Noh, Interview). According to this teacher, a student should be able to develop self-esteem regardless of whether they achieve academic excellence or not, and it is the schools' and teachers' role to help them do so.

In addition to the specific Korean term pertaining to self-esteem (자존감), the following terms were used, providing insight into Hyukshin school teachers' conceptualization of what it

means to develop student self-esteem. A teacher described it as “자기 자신을 사랑하는” – “the ability to love oneself.” (Woolgook M, Teacher Yoo, Interview). A teacher from Chonwol Middle School defined a student with self-esteem as “자신의 삶을 수호할 줄 아는 사람” – “people who know how to protect themselves (Chonwol M, Teacher Kim, Interview). A teacher from Hansabong Middle School described self-esteem in a slightly different manner. He described self-esteem as, “자기 앞에 놓여진 문제에 대해서 도전하려고 하는 그런 태도” – “the desire to be challenged by a problem that is given to the student (Hansabong M, Teacher Choi, Interview). These different definitions and framings of the problem reveal the range of teacher interpretations of student self-esteem and its absence. Regardless of the exact definition, it was clear that all Hyukshin school teachers hoped that their students would be filled with self-respect and confidence, enough to develop a firm sense of self-esteem.

### **Student Happiness and Wellbeing**

*Positive Attitude Towards Life.* As seen in Table 2, teachers in 12 out of the 16 Hyukshin schools advocated for the importance of developing their students’ happiness and sense of wellbeing. Hyukshin school teachers knew that their students may experience more hardships compared to students from traditional schools. They also knew that these difficulties could result in lower levels of student happiness and wellbeing. The teachers struggled with the question of how they could best promote happiness in their students, in a society where in many ways it is hard for young people to be happy. This sentiment was summarized by a teacher from Chonwol Middle School:

저희 학교에 계속된 저의 고민인데요. 그렇다고 해서 삶이 행복하지 않다고 아이들한테 가르칠 수는 없는 상황 이잖아요. 부정적인 삶을 가지고 있는 비판적인 사고와 반성적인 사고 중에 어떤 걸 가르쳐야 되느냐. 항상 고민이죠. 둘 다 필요한 내용인데 그거를 중용하는 게 저희의 가장 큰 목적인다고 생각하고요.

This is one of the concerns I have while working in this school. We can't really teach them that life is not as happy as it may seem. I always wonder which one to teach them: a critical mindset or a positive mindset. They are both very important. I suppose using each of them moderately and appropriately is one of the biggest goals I have in teaching here. (Chonwol M, Teacher Shin, Interview).

This teacher saw her role as one of guiding students into forming a sense of happiness that is realistic and does not ignore life's harsh realities. She wanted to develop strength in her students that would allow them to overcome negative attitudes towards life, especially those that could be self-defeating. A teacher from Moongok Middle School simply said, “전 행복한 아이로 키우는 게 제일 임무 예요” –“My goal is to make sure my students live happy lives.” (Moongok M, Teacher Noh, Interview). For this teacher, student happiness was a central focus of instruction.

There are various areas of focus that fall into the area of student happiness and wellbeing. When discussing student happiness and wellbeing in the Hyukshin school context, many teachers focused on the formation of students' positive attitudes. A teacher from Chonwol Middle School defined happiness as “욕구를 충족하는 게 아니라, 어떤 긍정적인 삶이, 자기의 정서를 해치지 않는 정도의 자기가 성취한 정서적인” – “Not just a way to satisfy their desires, but rather, living a positive life. It is about accomplishing happiness in a way that avoids choices and actions that could lead them to undermine and hurt their own emotions.” (Chonwol M, Teacher Shin, Interview). This teacher wants her students to develop the capacity to maintain a positive attitude towards life, even in the face of inevitable hardships they will face.

A teacher from Namseoul Middle School shared a similar definition of happiness:

행복해질 수 있는 게 사실은 그런 마음가짐이나, 타인 하교의 관계성 이런 게 중요하잖아요. 그런데 저는 여기에서 생활했던 학생들이 어떤 배움에 대해서 언제든지 다시 배우고자 하는 욕구나 아니면 자신을 긍정적으로 바라보고 행복해지는 데 중요한 바탕이 된다고 생각해요.

For students to be happy, factors such as their attitudes and their relationship with others are important. I think Hyukshin schools form a great foundation for students to develop the attitude to challenge themselves, see themselves in a positive light, and be happy (Namseoul M, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Her remark represents Hyukshin school teachers' hope for students to actively pursue happiness and to work towards developing a positive attitude towards life. This type of happiness is deeper and stronger than simply experiencing a fleeting emotion. It is about developing a world-view and problem-solving skills that students need to deal with life's challenges. The teachers' aspirations are that their students will learn to overcome difficulties while maintaining positive attitudes.

***Balance Between Happiness and Discipline.*** Some Hyukshin school teachers expressed concern over whether there was a good balance between pursuing student happiness, on the one hand, and also maintaining student discipline, on the other. If too much emphasis is given to students' socioemotional wellbeing, some teachers worried that this might result in students taking advantage of the situation and lacking the discipline to work hard. A teacher from Namseoul Middle School stated, “너무 아이들이 편하기만 하고 쉬기만 하고 놀기만 하는 그런 공간은 자꾸 늘어나고” “Students could get too comfortable, with more space to just rest and play.” (Namseoul M, Teacher Yoon, Interview). Simply allowing opportunities for students to enjoy themselves might not be the right way to encourage student wellbeing in the long run, some teachers felt, even if the momentary sensation of relaxation is satisfying. In addition, guaranteeing student happiness might come at the expense of increased teacher stress. A teacher from Jeongsun Middle School said, “기존에 엄한 룰 밑에서 아이들을 통제식으로 하는 게 편한 선생님들이 와서 갈등을 좀 겪어서...룰을 잘 안 지키는 학생들의 비율이 높아지거나 지적인 친구들이 적은 학년일 경우에는 전체적으로 흡족하지 못한” – “teachers who are

used to being in control of student behavior with strict rules have a hard time getting used to Hyukshin schools...If there are students who do not follow rules, or if there is a high proportion of students who do not study hard, the academic year becomes unsatisfactory.” (Jeongsun M, Teacher Kwon, Interview). Some Hyukshin teachers find themselves struggling to clearly define the balance between student happiness and discipline.

The importance of this balance was emphasized by other Hyukshin school teachers as well. A teacher from Bongjoong High School argued, “혁신학교라서 그냥 무한정 자유로운 학교가 아니라 공부도 시키고 또 생활지도도 하는 학교라고 저는 다 같이 가야 할 거 같아요... 밸런스가 맞아야 할 것 같아요” – “Hyukshin schools should not provide unlimited freedom to students. They should encourage students to study, and teachers should discipline them when necessary. At school, everything should be done together...there needs to be balance.” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview). Teachers know that emphasizing happiness and wellbeing at the expense of other factors, such as student discipline and academic achievement, may ultimately be harmful for students and could give their schools a negative reputation. Striking the right balance between student happiness and self-discipline is something that Hyukshin school teachers believe is beneficial for their students and necessary for their academic achievement.

### **Meaning and Purpose in Life**

Supported by teachers in 10 out of the 16 schools in our study, another central micro-level facet of whole-person education is the development of meaning and purpose. From the micro-level, individual student perspective, this means asking students what they like to do and what they are good at doing. A teacher from Hansabong Middle School highlights why

developing a sense of meaning and purpose in life is important for Hyukshin school students. He said:

어떤 환경 속에서 그 학생에게 주어진 과제라고 해야 할까 문제는 그런 것을 스스로 해결하게끔 하는 그런 기회를 주는 것으로서 저는 어떤 교육에서 큰 어떤 역할이라고...아이들 하나하나를 보면서 저는 그렇게 생각을 해요. 이 아이에게 필요한 환경이 뭘까.

Each student, coming from a particular environment, needs to be provided an opportunity to address the challenges they face. That is a huge purpose of education...When I see each student, I think about what the best environment for the student would be. (Hansabong M, Teacher Ma, Interview).

Many Hyukshin school students face hardships that may make it difficult for them to focus on establishing a sense of meaning and purpose in life. Hyukshin school teachers address this by providing many student-centered opportunities for students to contemplate what they like to do.

For example, a teacher from Bongjoong High School said, “본인이 진로와 꼭 연결되지 않더라도, 아이들이 좋아하는 분야를 선택을 하는 거고, 진로와 연결해서 선택하기도 하고.깊이 있게 경험하다 보면 나중에 연결될 수도 있겠죠” – “Even if it is not connected to a career, students experience fields they are interested in. They can also choose areas that are linked to a career path. Once they experience enough in depth, there could be a connection.” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview). Rather than starting with a particular career interest, Hyukshin school teachers flipped the paradigm by focusing on what students truly enjoy doing.

Hyukshin school teachers provided examples of opportunities that are provided for students to develop their sense of meaning and purpose. In the classroom, teachers addressed specific student needs. A teacher from Jeongsun Middle School stated, “다양한 캐릭터의 아이들의 성격을 알게 되고 그 성격에 따라서 똑같은 내용을 어떻게 전달 할지에 대한 훈련이 되는 거죠” – “Teachers are acquainted with various student characteristics and

personalities, and, depending on those, provide different ways of teaching the curriculum.” (Jeongsun M, Teacher Jang, Interview). Similarly, a Haesung Middle School teacher stated, “학생들 자체를 어떻게 이해하고 도와주어야 되느냐 이런 부분으로 비중이 많이 바뀐 것 같아요” – “that his focus shifted towards trying to understand the students themselves and how to best guide them.” (Haesung M, HHD, Interview). A teacher from Yugok Middle School provided the following in-class example:

목공 실습을 지금 하고 있는데...다른 아이들보다 조금 더 특별하게 나타나게 되는 것을 보면서 칭찬을 해주면서 같이 하다 보니까 지금은 목공 수업 파트에 본인이 더 좋아해서 그런지 몰라도 집중력이나 그런 것들이 많이 좋아졌어요...그 친구는 이런 것을 하면서 내가 무엇을 잘하는지 찾아낸 것 같아요.

We currently have carpentry classes...I saw one student especially excel and complimented him, and now, maybe it is because he enjoys the class, but his level of concentration increased...I think he found what he is good at (Yugok M, Teacher Kwak, Interview).

Classroom instruction is scaffolded in a way that encourages students to learn more about themselves, their strengths, and weaknesses, building toward students finding a sense of meaning and purpose in life.

Examples of opportunities for students to develop their meaning and purpose in life outside of the classroom were also provided by Hyukshin school teachers. A teacher from Bongjoong High School described her school the following way:

우리 애들이공부는 조금 부족해도 각각의 재주 많은 아이들이 자신의 그런 재주를 살려서 동아리 활동 이라든가 아니면 학생회 활동 이라든가 이런 거를 굉장히 적극적으로 열심히 참여해요. 그런 분위기가 형성이 되어있기도 하고.

Our students may fall behind academically, but each of them is very talented. So they actively participate in club activities or student council activities. Our school provides such an atmosphere (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Students explored what they enjoyed doing, by participating in activities such as student clubs or student council. Both within and outside of the classroom, Hyukshin school teachers provide opportunities for students to move toward discovering a sense of meaning and purpose in life.

### **Findings Regarding Meso-Level: The School Community**

In the previous section, we have described micro-level facets of whole-person education focused on self-esteem, happiness, and meaning and purpose in life, centered on individual students. In this section, we highlight meso-level facets, which expand whole-person education to the school community. There were two ways in which teachers viewed the role of the school community in providing whole-person education:

1. “Dolbom,” or Community of Care, and
2. Equitable Education.

Both the establishment of a community of care and the provision of equitable education emphasize that all students are able to receive the benefits of whole-person education. Table 3 presents the Hyukshin schools’ areas of focus regarding the meso-level facets of whole-person education.

**Table 3.** Meso-Level Facets of Whole Person Education by Hyukshin School

School Name	Community of Care		Equitable Education	
	Mentorship	Happy School Community	Academic Equity	Beyond Academics
Namseoul Middle School	O			
Hansabong Middle School		O		
Woolgook Middle School	O		O	
Bongjoong High School	O	O		O
Waehun High School		O		
Chumhwa Middle School				
Haesung Middle School	O	O	O	O
Yugok Middle School	O	O	O	
Ryuah Middle School				
Jeongsun Middle School	O		O	O
Dosan High School				

Hyunsa Middle School		O		
Moongok Middle School		O	O	
Samoon High School		O		O
Chonwol Middle School	O	O	O	O
Ollim Middle School				

### Community of Care

There are several major stakeholders around a school community, including teachers, students, school leaders, and parents. This section focuses on the interaction between teachers and students in creating a community of care. The concept of “dolbom” – or a community of care, appeared quite prominently across many Hyukshin school teachers. A teacher from Waehun High School explained “dolbom” in the following way: “서울형 혁신학교 motto 중의 또 하나가 뭐냐면 돌봄의 공동체 예요. 돌봄의 공동체 여서 애들이 학교 와서 편안하고 행복할 수 있게 하는 거에 초점이 주어져 있었거든요” – “A motto of Hyukshin schools in Seoul is to become a community of care. A community of care is where students may come freely and be happy” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi, Interview). A teacher from Yugok Middle School further elaborated on the idea of school as a community of care:

학교 나오기가 즐거운, 학교는 즐거운 곳. 학교 나와서 아이들과 같이 하는게 즐거운 곳. 그런 느낌을 모든 구성원이 가져야 할 것 같아요. 학생도, 교사도, 보내시는 부모님도. 아이들이 학교 가서 즐겁게 잘 생활하고 있구나.

School should be a happy place that students enjoy being a part of. They can have a fun time being with friends. All stakeholders should have that perception, the students, teachers, and parents. Everyone should know that the students are having a great time at school (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview).

Teachers see their role as a mentor to foster student socioemotional wellbeing within a community of care. Also, teachers work to create a happy school community in which students feel the desire to come to school and learn. Such proactive teacher efforts provide students with a space for them to develop a sense of self.

**Mentorship.** Seven out of the 16 Hyukshin schools in our sample had teachers who saw their mentorship as a crucial way for students to attain wellbeing. A teacher from Yugok Middle School said, “올바른 방향을 아이들한테 강요할 수는 없지만 그래도 내가 생각하고 올바른 방향들을 아이들한테 제시를 잘 해줘야 된다” – “I cannot *force* students, but I can *guide* them to be on that path I believe is right for them.” (Yugok M, Teacher Lee, Interview). Her level of student guidance went beyond the classroom with regard to mentoring.

A teacher from Jeongsun Middle School said:

말로 가르치고 지식으로 가르치는 게 아니라 살아가는 모습으로 가르치는 그걸 보여주는 것. 아이들의 어떤 요구가 왔을 때 어른으로서 어떻게 반응을 하고 어떻게 해결하기 위해 노력해야 되고. 이렇게 길을 안내해주는 정도지, 끌고 가고 목표까지 막 이렇게 하려고 하는 것은 그건 아이 몫이라고 생각을 합니다.

We should not teach just by words or knowledge, but teach and show how we live. And when students face challenges as an adult, it is our job to guide them on how to react and resolve them, but it is their responsibility to achieve their goals (Jeongsun M, Teacher Kwon, Interview).

This teacher wants students to have clear life goals and for teachers to be effective mentors.

Teachers are keen to meet the needs of students who struggle emotionally. Hyukshin school teachers try to interact with students on a much deeper and more authentic level than is common in other schools. A teacher from Woolgook Middle School saw her role as a homeroom teacher as helpful in this regard. She stated, “마음의 병이 있다거나 집에 일이 있다거나 그래서 이제 그런 부분이 있다고 하면 이 부분을 담임 선생님이랑 같이 해서 얘기를 해서 그 부분을 먼저 해결하는 게 먼저라고 생각하기 때문” “When students struggle emotionally or have family problems, I believe that homeroom teachers should prioritize talking about it and work with the students in addressing such issues.” (Woolgook M, Teacher Kim, Interview).

Through such teacher-student interaction, Hyukshin school students know that they are in a safe environment, and that their teachers will dedicate extra effort to helping them to flourish as whole people. A Chonwol Middle School teacher said the following:

교육도 물론 중요하지만 여기서는 아무래도 내면적인 지지도 중요한 거 같거든요. 특히 저희 학교에서는. 그래서 아이들이, 이거는 제 교과 때문일지도 모르겠어요. 그냥 살면서 떠올렸을 때 든든하고 지지 받는 어른 하나쯤 있다면 좋지 않을까 라는 생각이 저는 제 나름의 철학이라 할지.

Education is important, but I think inner support is important here also, especially in our school. So the kids, maybe it's because of my curriculum, but I think it would be nice to have a strong and supportive adult in their lives (Chonwol M, Teacher Kim, Interview).

Hyukshin school teachers were eager to take on roles as mentors. They wanted to meet students on their own terms and valued the role of dialogue in problem solving. Teachers wanted to help students address everyday difficulties they were encountering. They understood that their roles entailed helping students on their quest to find a sense of meaning and purpose in life.

***Happy School Community.*** On a school community level, a core Hyukshin value is to create a positive school environment that students enjoy being a part of. Nine out of the 16 Hyukshin schools had teachers who believed that a happy and caring school community was necessary for students to flourish. A positive, healthy school community is where students will be able to develop socioemotional skills. Students will have genuine interaction with peers and teachers, which contributes to a sense of happiness. A teacher from Jeongsun Middle School stated, “친구들 간의 그런 관계가 굉장히 다변화되고 다양화되고 서로 주거나 받거나가 역전이 되기도 하고 이런 것들이 퍼지면서 학교 전체적으로 굉장히 평화로운 분위기가 생겨요.” – “through diversified and healthy interaction among students, Hyukshin schools in general becomes very peaceful.” (Jeongsun M, Teacher Jang, Interview). The formation of a happy school community requires teacher effort as well, which teachers believe is worth the

work. A teacher from Bongjoong High School highlighted the importance of such effort, stating, “아이들하고 행복하게 지내기를 노력하니깐 되더라고요. 아이들은 되게 좋아하고. 학교를 너무 좋아하고 선생님들을 너무 좋아하고 자신들끼리도 너무 좋아하고” – “Teachers can try to have positive relationships with the students. The students love it. They like the school, the teachers, and their friends.” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview). The development of a happy school community is a collective effort.

### **Equitable Education: Focusing on Students who Fall Behind**

Many teachers emphasized the importance of providing equitable education for students. In Table 3, academic equity means that teachers from these Hyukshin schools stated the need for students who are falling behind academically to not be neglected but to be supported. Also, for equity beyond academics, teachers emphasized the need for schools to provide support outside of the classroom, such as counseling for students who may need it.

*Academic Equity.* The teachers we interviewed want to focus on students who are falling behind academically, allowing such students to excel in a society that can be unforgiving towards them. A teacher at Jeongsun Middle School stated, “90%가 잘 사는데 10%가 못 살 가능성이 있다는 거죠. 그래서 저는 그 10%에 집중을 하고 있다고 생각합니다” “I think 90% of the students will lead successful lives, but 10% are not likely to. So, I focus on the 10% who struggle.” (Jeongsun M, Teacher Kwon, Interview). A Woolgook Middle School teacher also confirms this sentiment, stating “하위 그룹은 제가 직접 많이 만나죠” – “I meet frequently with students who are not excelling academically.” (Woolgook M, Teacher Yoo, Interview). This dedication is especially important for Hyukshin school students, who may not have the means to receive support from others because their parents are unable to afford tutoring or counseling services.

*Equity Beyond Academics.* Hyukshin school teachers want to provide all of their students the opportunity to grow into well-rounded adults. Teachers not only play the role of instructors but are also mentors, life coaches, and counselors, in order to provide students with the care that they need. The Hyukshin Head of Department (HHD) at Jeongsun Middle School said that

한 명도 포기하지 않는 배움이 있는 학교. 그게 핵심이에요. 그러기 위해서 그 배움이라고 하는 게 인지적인 배움일 수도 있고, 어떻게 살지? 재량 어떻게 얘기하면서 살아야 되지? 나는 왜 살지? 뭐 이런 배움일 수도 있어요. 어떤 종류의 배움이든 성장하는, 아이가 성장하는 것이 목표이고 성장하기 위해서 교사가 협동을 하는 거고 연수를 하는 거고 고민을 하는 거죠.

The main purpose of education is to establish a school that does not give up on any student. This could regard cognitive learning. Or it could be about, how do I live? How am I supposed to live talking to him or her? Why do I live? Regardless of what kind of learning happens, the goal is for the student to grow. For a child to mature, teachers cooperate, receive training, and think about it together (Jeongsun M, Teacher Yeom, Interview).

Hyukshin school teachers focus on student potential for growth and maturity not only with respect to academics but in other ways as well. A teacher from Haesung Middle School stated, “혁신학교를 하면서는 사소하게 소외되는 아이들 하나하나를 좀 더 챙겨가지고 케어를 하거나 지원을 하는데 도움을 많이 준다고 생각은 하고 있어요” “Hyukshin schools take better care of those students who may be neglected in the little things and help them more (Haesung M, Teacher Yang, Interview). An example that she gives is the *Dolbom*(돌봄) afterschool program for students who are falling behind academically. Haesung Middle School provides *We Class* (위클래스), which is a counseling program for students who are generally neglected (Haesung M, Teacher Yang, Interview). Overall, Hyukshin school teachers believe that a core Hyukshin value is to ensure that all students have equitable education opportunities.

### **Findings Regarding Macro-Level: Societal Level**

The macro-level facets of whole-person education focus on the social impact of attending Hyukshin schools. The 31 May Education Reform Report of 1995 boldly proclaimed the purpose of Korean education to be “the building of a democratic state and promoting the prosperity of all humankind” (Ministry of Education, 1995, p. 3). This means that whole-person education in Korea is inextricably connected with democratic education as well. Given this mission, Hyukshin school teachers identified three macro-level facets of whole person education:

1. Healthy Interpersonal Relationships;
2. Positive Contribution to Society; and a
3. Meaningful and Purposeful Career.

Table 4 shows which of these macro-level facets of whole-person education were emphasized by each Hyukshin school.

**Table 4.** Macro-Level Facets of Whole Person Education by Hyukshin School

School Name	Democratic Citizenship		
	Healthy Interpersonal Relationships	Positive Contribution to Society	Meaningful and Purposeful Career
Namseoul Middle School		O	O
Hansabong Middle School		O	O
Woolgook Middle School	O	O	O
Bongjoong High School	O	O	O
Waehun High School	O		
Chumhwa Middle School		O	O
Haesung Middle School	O	O	
Yugok Middle School	O		O
Ryuah Middle School			
Jeongsun Middle School	O	O	O
Dosan High School			O
Hyunsa Middle School		O	O
Moongok Middle School			
Samoon High School	O	O	O
Chonwol Middle School	O	O	
Ollim Middle School			O

## Democratic Citizenship

Hyukshin school teachers often touched upon the importance of democratic citizenship in their interviews, and they focused on *healthy interpersonal relationships*. They want their students to become *positive contributors to society* and to establish *meaningful and purposeful career paths*. All three of these values start to be developed while students are in school, and teachers viewed them as desirable long-term outcomes of whole-person education.

***Healthy Interpersonal Relationships.*** The teachers view healthy interpersonal relationships as foundational to democratic citizenship. By learning how to interact with peers and teachers, students can learn how to form strong relationships with others. In 8 out of the 16 schools in our study, teachers emphasized relationship-building. A Bongjoong High School teacher said:

남과 어떻게 잘 소통하느냐, 남과 어떻게 협력 하느냐가 더 중요하기 때문에  
중고등학교 때 그걸 배워야 된다고 생각하거든요...지성만 갖춘 아이보다는  
우리가 지성, 인성을 고루 갖춘 아이로 육성하기 위해서 우리나라 뿐만  
아니라 전 세계적인 트렌드가 아닌가 그렇게 생각합니다.

I believe that students should learn how to communicate and collaborate well with others from middle and high school... I think it should not only be a national but also a global trend to ensure students not only grow cognitively but in terms of character (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

One characteristic of healthy relationships is mutual respect. A Samoon High School teacher said that at Hyukshin schools, “상대방에 대한 존중 공감하는 능력 상대방의 아픔을 공감할 수 있는 공감 능력을 키울 수 있는 학교 그래서 공부 잘하는 애도 못하는 애들과 같이 하는 학교” “Students develop the capacity to respect and empathize with others. At such schools, students who study well learn how to interact with those who do not fare so well.” (Samoon H, Teacher Nam, Interview). Students are able to develop their democratic citizenship skills by learning how to interact with peers in a healthy manner.

Teachers provide opportunities for their students to form healthy peer relationships that contribute to their understanding of and commitment to democratic citizenship. A Haesung Middle School teacher described the school's students this way: “주로 힘든 친구들이 있다든지, 아니면은 거기에서 뒤떨어지는 학생들을 다 포용해서 갈 줄을 알아요” “Students know how to support other students who are lagging behind (Haesung M, Teacher Yang, Interview). Hyukshin school students often learn how to be empathic towards their friends, which forms the foundation of interpersonal relationships.

Hyukshin schools provide a community where such democratic values are encouraged. A teacher from Jeongsun Middle School provided an example of peer interaction that results in a better understanding of society:

예전에는 공부 잘하는 애도 못하는 애도 왕따였어요...근데 그게 서로서로 봐주게 되는 거예요. ... 같이 얘기 하면서 수업을 하다 보니까 애를 알게 돼버렸어, 그래서 애를 무시할 수 없고, 해코지를 할 수가 없게 되는 그런 관계들이 형성이 되는 거예요.

Before, students who studied well or did not study well were socially isolated at school... but they learned how to respect each other ... Students get to know each other by talking to each other in class. Relationships start to form where students feel that they cannot ignore or harm each other (Jeongsun M, Teacher Yeom, Interview).

In contemporary workplaces outside of schools, employees often work on teams with colleagues with varying skill levels. Likewise, a democratic society requires citizens to collaborate even when they have different interests and talents. Educators in Hyukshin schools understand this complexity and their responsibility to prepare students to become integrated into their society. They try to provide opportunities for all of their students to learn how to collaborate inside and outside of class. As a result, students experience firsthand the value of healthy interpersonal relationships.

**Positive Contribution to Society.** A more long-term goal of Hyukshin schools that aim to create healthy interpersonal relationships is for their students to be positive contributors to society. This idea was emphasized by teachers we interviewed in 10 out of the 16 Hyukshin schools. Teachers hope that, through their experiences at school, students can grow into adults who can successfully enter society. A Yugok Middle School teacher stated, “우리 아이들이 나아가서 살아갈 미래는 저희처럼 객관식 시험이나 뭔가를 많이 암기하고 있다고 해서 그게 곧 역량이나 능력으로 인정받는 사회는 아니잖아요” “The future society in which Hyukshin students will live will not determine the worth of a person based on whether he or she can do well on exams, or memorize well.” (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview). For Hyukshin school teachers, being positive contributors to society does not necessarily mean simply being intelligent; rather, students should grow into whole people with qualities that go beyond academic excellence.

Times have changed since the age of mass production, when successful workers did repetitive tasks that required little human capital. Contemporary labor markets require workers to be independent thinkers and effective communicators. A teacher from Hansabong Middle School understood these new social realities and stated, “우리나라가 이 정도의 산업적으로 발전을 이루었지만 생활적으로 서로 살고 싶은 방향이 존중되는 그런 사회로 문턱을 넘기 위해서는 민주시민교육 이라는 것이 필요한 영역이라고 생각해요” “Although Korea has successfully achieved this level of industrial development, democratic citizenship is necessary to overcome the threshold of a society where we respect each other's life direction” (Hansabong M, Teacher Choi, Interview). The idea is that, in order for a student to become an adult who makes a positive contribution to society, he or she needs to learn how to show respect for others and how to form healthy interpersonal relationships with others with different talents and aptitudes.

Many Hyukshin school teachers focused on this long-term goal of students being positive contributors to society once they leave school and either enter higher education institutions and the workforce. They saw the role of Hyukshin schools as providing guidance for students to prepare for their future lives in their diverse roles as citizens, workers, and family members. For example, a teacher from Namseoul Middle School believed, “사회에 뭔가 기여할 수 있는 그런 힘과 의지를 가질 수 있도록 그렇게 해줘야 한다고 생각합니다” “Hyukshin schools should help students to build the strength and motivation to contribute to society” (Namseoul M, Teacher Kim, Interview). A Chumhwa Middle School teacher confirmed this sense of education’s responsibilities to society, stating “사회 구성원으로서 자기 역할을 성실히 할 수 있는 사람 되면. 그 정도면 충분하다는 생각이 들어요 저는” “I believe it would be enough for students to become adults who can faithfully fulfill their social obligations.” (Chumhwa M, Teacher Hwang, Interview). Hyukshin teachers do not define student success simply through how well students perform on exams. They want their students to make real social contributions.

***Meaningful and Purposeful Career Path.*** When students enter society as adults, they should be prepared to enter a career that they have freely chosen and will contribute to the prosperity of their country. The 2015 National Curriculum Reform of the Ministry of Education in Korea emphasized the role of schools in helping students to find careers, and this theme has been taken up by the Hyukshin schools in Seoul. This macro-level facet of whole-person education is an extension of the micro-level facet of student-centered instruction, which enables students to develop a sense of meaning and purpose. Teachers in 11 out of 16 Hyukshin schools in our sample indicated the importance of schools guiding students in developing interest in a career they find meaningful and purposeful, both for themselves and for the benefit of the society.

In order to guide students in establishing a firm sense of meaning and purpose in their careers, Hyukshin school teachers shifted their definitions of a successful student. At least part of success now involves helping students to identify their passions and their strengths. A teacher from Hyunsa Middle School explained how she guides students' choice of their career paths. She stated, “옛날에는 ‘야, 공부가 이게 뭐니? 점수가 이게 뭐니?’ 이랬는데 지금은 ‘야, 너 이쪽으로 밀고 나가면 되겠다, 너 이거 잘한다’ 이렇게 아이들의 잠재력을 발견” – “In the old days, I used to say, ‘Hey, are you studying? Why is your score like this?’ Now I say, ‘Hey, you should go in this direction. You're good at this.’ I try to discover their potential.” (Hyunsa M, Teacher Jung, Interview).

While the criteria for identifying a successful student revolved around academic achievement in the past, Hyukshin teachers purposefully deviate from this account of success. Instead, they focused on individual student strengths and also on students' social dispositions. Their hope is that, as a result, students will better find a sense of meaning and purpose in life. A Chumhwa Middle School teacher posed the following question: “애들한테 딱 정해진 걸 알려주는 게 아니라 애들 스스로 찾아갈 수 있도록 도와주고 알려주는 게 아닐까요?” “Shouldn't the school help students to find their own path rather than decide a path for them?” (Chumhwa M, Teacher Kim, Interview). For such teachers, respect for student autonomy means enabling students to study the range of future options available to them and providing a curriculum that helps them to form their own judgments about the kinds of work that will give them a sense of meaning and purpose. By finding their career paths, such teachers believe, Hyukshin school students will become the kinds of productive and engaged citizens a democratic society requires.

There are many opportunities that Hyukshin schools provide to encourage students to find their own meaningful and purposeful career paths. For example, a Jeongsun Middle School teacher stated, “다양한 국면, 그러니까 수업도 그렇거니와 학생자치, 축제, 체육대회 등등 여러 가지 또 3학년 말에는 뮤지컬까지 하면서 색깔이 다양한 상황이 벌어지다 보니까 그 중에서 드문드문 자기 자신을 문득 만나게 되는 거죠” “Students have various opportunities such as student council, school festivals, sports festivals, and musicals at the end of their third year in school. With a wide range of experiences, students get to explore different sides of themselves.” (Jeongsun M, Teacher Jang, Interview). Through the broad range of extracurricular activities provided to students by Hyukshin schools, students are encouraged to start to thinking about what they truly enjoy doing and what they would like to do when they embark on making a living.

This idea is supported by a Chumhwa Middle School teacher. He said, “자기 살 어떤 진로에 대한 목표 같은 것들이 자기가 좋아하는 것, 잘 하는 것. 이런 것들을 좀 찾으면서 그런 것들을 좀 채워 나가는 이런 기회를 많이 주면 좋겠다 생각했습니다” “Hyukshin schools provide many opportunities for students to find what they like to do or do well, eventually identifying career goals for them.” (Chumhwa M, Teacher Hwang, Interview). This attention to career education provides a bridge between the theme of an education for meaning and purpose and the practical necessities entailed in earning a living. Overall, Hyukshin school teachers had long-term goals for their students, especially focused on guiding students to understand how they can meaningfully contribute to the wider society as adults. Their contribution to educational change in this regard involved a faithful implementation of the career education theme that was emphasized in the 2015 National Curriculum Reform of the Ministry of Education.

## **Discussion**

Using Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1994), this cross-case analysis has summarized Hyukshin school teachers' conceptualization of micro-, meso-, and macro-level constructs of whole-person education that they considered important. On the micro-level of the individual student, Hyukshin school teachers focused on students' self-esteem, their happiness and well-being, and their sense of meaning and purpose. On the meso-level of the school community – centered around the interaction between teachers and students – Hyukshin school teachers advocated for developing a community of care and equitable education. Finally, on the macro-level of Korean society, Hyukshin school teachers envisioned their students becoming citizens who will make meaningful contributions to society across their careers. At all three levels, the HSSM is offering a broader and more humanistic vision of education that otherwise appears to be available in Korean schools.

### **Hyukshin School Teachers' Definition of a Successful Student**

One finding from this cross-case analysis concerns the different ways Hyukshin school teachers conceptualized whole-person education when compared to Hyukshin school administrators. The teachers acknowledged that Hyukshin school students may have disadvantages compared to non-Hyukshin school students, coming from low-income families who may have a more difficult time supporting their children. This could mean that such students fall behind academically and manifest behavioral issues. The teachers chose not to shy away from the potential obstacles Hyukshin school students face. They considered it to be their responsibility to develop positive ways in which their students will be able to grow into successful adults.

Hyukshin school teachers' definition of success was distinct from the way mainstream Korean society often defines it. Parents, other school administrators and teachers, and society itself gravitate towards an education system that demands that students excel academically, enter a prestigious university, and have a prestigious job. However, in our teacher interviews, Hyukshin school teachers embraced whole-person education that leads to students who are happy, find meaning and purpose in life, and contribute to society.

### **Whole Person Education as a Whole: How Does It Come Together?**

Perhaps it is this difference in the way society and Hyukshin school teachers define a successful adult that led to contrasting pedagogical and instructional approaches that fully embody whole-person education. Wortham et al. (2020) propose four questions that map out different approaches to education for well-being. Here we apply the four questions in order to summarize Hyukshin school teachers' overall conception of whole-person education.

*1. Which dimensions of human functioning does the approach attend to?* Hyukshin school teachers focus on various dimensions of whole-person education. Teachers emphasized micro-level constructs of student happiness, wellbeing and self-esteem, which all fall under the *emotional* dimension of human functioning. Hyukshin school teachers explicitly expressed the need for whole-person education to help students develop intrapersonal skills that strengthen their capability to challenge obstacles such as coming from a low socioeconomic background, falling behind academically, or dealing with behavioral issues. Another micro-level whole-person education construct was student meaning and purpose in life, which falls under both *emotional* and *vocational* dimension of human functioning. Hyukshin school teachers want their students to understand themselves, what they want to do, and how they want to contribute to society.

These micro-level whole-person education constructs are highly interconnected to each other, and to the meso-level and macro-level constructs as well. Students are better able to build self-esteem and wellbeing at a school with a well-developed meso-level community of care centered around mentorship and healthy interpersonal relationships. Students can also develop meaning and purpose in life, which is connected to macro-level constructs of democratic citizenship, specifically through a meaningful and purposeful career of their own choosing.

Ultimately, these interconnected constructs establish whole-person education as understood by Hyukshin school teachers. This interconnectedness among the constructs reflects the context of the Korean education system. Korean scholars and policymakers have begun advocating for *전인교육*, or a whole-person education, one that views students as many-sided, rather than solely attending to their academic abilities.

***2. How does the approach envision the relationship between individual development and social change?*** The response to this second question is a continuation of the response to the first. The micro-level constructs of meaning and purpose in life, self-esteem, and happiness are placed within the meso-level constructs of community of care and equitable education. These are then placed within the macro-level constructs of meaningful and purposeful career paths, healthy interpersonal relationships, and positive contributions to society. This nested, highly interconnected relationship suggests that individual development in a school system can eventually lead to positive social change in the world at large. Hyukshin school students who receive whole-person education, in this theory of action, will grow into adults who know how to think for themselves, how to work on teams, and how to enter society to make contributions as citizens.

**3. How does the approach treat instrumental ends, and how does it envision intrinsic ends?** The Hyukshin school movement itself started over 20 years ago in small rural schools and eventually grew into a nation-wide reaction against the academically competitive education system in Korea. Whole-person education, a central Hyukshin value, aims to fulfill the intrinsic needs of students more than their instrumental needs. This is particularly true of the Hyukshin emphasis on enabling students to find their own independently developed sense of meaning and purpose in life. Hyukshin school teachers expanded upon the general social conceptualization of a successful student as one who studies well, enters a prestigious college, and gets a good job. They hope that Hyukshin school students would take the time and effort to understand themselves better, to determine what they like doing and how they can be positive contributors to society.

**4. How does the approach engage with life purpose, with the question of individuals' roles in a broader moral order?** While some approaches to whole-person education may focus more on the immediate, short-term outcomes of student wellbeing within the boundaries of the school community, Hyukshin school teachers go beyond the school setting and support meaning and purpose in life as a central, long-term goal of whole-person education. At the micro-level, teachers focused on providing learner-centered instruction to students in order to give them a wealth of opportunities to learn what they like to do and are good at doing. At the meso-level, students are able to participate with others in their school community, both in classes and in extra-curricular activities, and to derive a sense of fulfillment from their intellectual and social development. At the macro-level of the broader society, teachers argued that students should grow into adults who take on jobs that are both meaningful and beneficial for the country as a whole.

## **Conclusion**

What Hyukshin school teachers in Seoul envision as the purpose of education is in harmony with recent national reforms at the ministerial level in Korea. The 2015 Revision of the National Curriculum described six core competencies that an ideal student should embody. These are: (1) self-management; (2) knowledge and information processing; (3) creative thinking; (4) aesthetic sensibility; (5) communication skills; and (6) civic competencies. Although the exact terms may differ, these competencies are congruent with how the Hyukshin school teachers we interviewed envision their students today. What makes Hyukshin schools distinct from non-Hyukshin schools is teachers' willingness to go beyond simply agreeing that the core competencies are important. They embrace whole-person education as a crucial way to support students in developing core competencies that will allow them to live successful lives well into the 21st century.

## **Educational Innovation: Teachers' Perspectives**

### **Introduction**

Classroom innovation is an integral aspect of the HSSM. Current research has demonstrated that, in South Korea, classroom innovation allows for the application of “diverse educational philosophies and teaching practices,” (Sung & Lee, 2018, p. 120), in a manner that both specializes and diversifies the curriculum along a productive path towards “comprehensive (school) growth,” (Song, 2018, p. 29). Ultimately, the need for such innovative approaches comes from Koreans’ aspirations for a more humanistic future in regard to schooling than has been possible in prior eras of educational change (Sung, Lee, & Choi, 2016).

Teachers, the primary sources of the data included in this paper, have begun to utilize a variety of techniques and approaches to education that aim at progressive school change across South Korea. Such shifts in teaching philosophies and pedagogical styles have been promoted and greatly supported by the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education (SMOE) and have spread throughout the HSSM to establish a new way of teaching. In the process, classroom innovation has become one of the most important dimensions of the HSSM, with the potential to contribute to continued experimentation and improvement in Seoul and the country at large.

Like the preceding chapter on whole person themes, this one uses as a framework the Ecological Systems Model developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1994), to conceptualize the ways in which classroom innovation in the HSSM impacts students, as this impact is described by their teachers. In this model, the growth of an individual can be understood through complex interactions among five distinct systems: the micro-, meso-, exo-, macro-, and chronosystems. Figure 1 (see below) provides a conceptual map for this approach as it plays out in the HSSM according to the teachers we interviewed.

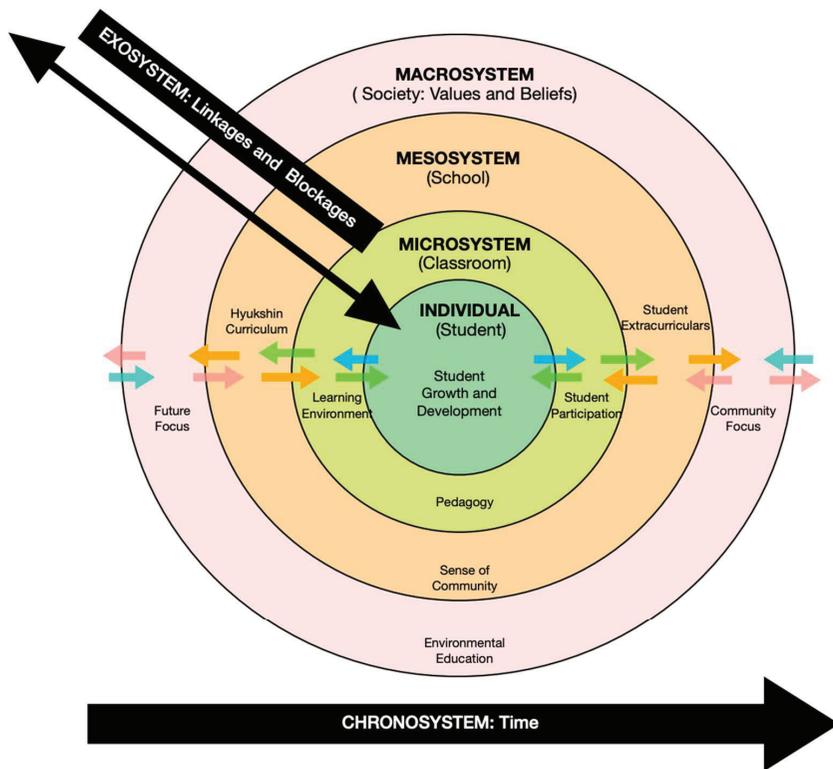


Figure 1. Conceptual Map

### Individual Level: The Student

At the center of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model are the intersections and influences larger systems have on students who are educated in the HSSM and in the SMOE more broadly. These interactions and their influence can be studied to learn how the students develop as individuals who are shaped by their environment and in turn react back upon it.

The following themes surfaced in our 16 sample schools, as conveyed in our interviews:

1. Students’ Growth and Development;

2. Human Rights; and
3. Students as Learners.

**Students' Growth and Development.** Hyukshin schools aspire to be student-centered (SMOE, 2016). The growth and development of their student population, beyond traditional metrics of academic achievement as measured on tests, has been a major goal of the HSSM since its inception. The Hyukshin model promotes student learning and well-being across three dimensions:

- a) Student Growth;
- b) Character Development; and
- c) Positive Changes.

***Student Growth.***

When considering the personal growth that students experience during the time they spend in Hyukshin schools, teachers comment on many aspects of their interactions with students. Multiple areas were considered by teachers across the schools. Almost all mentioned the growth of their students at least once during their interviews.

One teacher said that many students, particularly those that had studied together in previous Hyukshin schools, have grown in their public speaking. One HHD said that “*자존감 자신감 이런 부분에 있어서는 상당히 많이 좀 향상이 되었다고 생각하고,*” “when it comes to self-esteem and confidence, I think they’ve improved a lot” (Hansabong M, HHD Choi, Interview). Many students learn to share their difficulties with teachers and peers in order to request help. Speaking to the way in which teachers respond to students’ requests, one teacher said, “*멘토링을 해서 아이들도 다 일대일로 멘토링을 맺어준 거예요,*” “I mentor all the kids, one-on-one” (Dosan H. Head Teacher interview).

In order to best promote student growth, Hyukshin schools position teachers as individuals whom students can look to for help in all situations – academic, social, or emotional. For example, one interviewee said that middle school staff have a role where “그게 학년의 생활지도 선생님이 계세요,” “there’s a life guidance teacher for the grade level” (Yugok M, Teacher Lee, Interview). The teacher described how this individual works alongside the students, teachers, and homeroom staff to work through students’ problems in a successful manner.

When discussing the role of the HSSM in facilitating student growth, one high school Korean language teacher explained that:

학생들이 교육을 받지 않으면 자기가 무엇을 잘하는지 무엇을 하고 싶어 하는지조차 알 수 없는 경우가 저는 많다고 생각을 하고요. 그래서 기본적으로 배우고 그다음에 자기 자신을 찾을 수 있다고 생각을 합니다. 그래서 학생들이 진짜 자기 자신을 찾기 위해서는 반드시 배움이 선행되어야 한다고.

I don’t think there are many cases where students don’t know what they’re good at or even want to do, unless they’re educated about such things. So basically, I think you can learn and then find yourself. So, in order for students to find their true selves, learning must precede self-knowledge in important ways (Samoon H, Teacher Shin, Interview).

This teacher emphasized that learning is just one aspect of student growth. This emphasis on human development beyond academic achievement alone is essential to the Hyukshin model. It contributes to current reforms in Korea supporting the education of the whole person, and the legitimate quest of students for happiness on their own terms (Ministry of Education, 2015).

### ***Character Development.***

Due to the mission of the HSSM, students develop across many different domains. One change in students who attend Hyukshin schools comes in their character development. Classroom innovation allows for the adjustment of students’ interests, shifting how they interact and engage with others and the world around them. A high school English teacher explained the

development she has seen: “아이들의 개성, 아이들의 재주, 아이들이 각각가진 재능을 살려줄 수 있는 학교,” “the school can help develop children's personalities, their dexterity, and their talents” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

When teachers develop their students' skills and dispositions, many of them find that the leadership and decision-making skills the students exhibit are impressive. Not only is this exhibited through innovations such as student council groups or creative extracurricular activities, but it is also fostered in classrooms through group projects and presentations students are charged with by their teachers. One teacher from Chonwol Middle School said that:

아, 네 명 중에 두 명이잖아요. 그러니까 사실은 네 명 중에 두 명이 리더가 되는 거거든요. 근데 발표를 항상 하는 게 아니고 첫 번째는 가르치는. 그리고 두 번째는 이제 그때부터 진짜 평가 이거는 내가 하는 거에 의미를 뒀서 하나하나 가르치지만 두 번째는 진짜야 그러면 옆에 있는 사람들 배워 이렇게 하잖아요. 그다음에는 다른 아이가 되어 있습니다.

That's two out of four. So, two out of four (students) become leaders. But it doesn't mean they do the presentation. It's not always about presentation. First thing is teaching. Then, second thing is the evaluation. Then, they would be learning from one another. That's how they change. (Chonwol M, Teacher Shin, Interview).

When the students grow in confidence and become leaders in one domain or another, teachers say that their personal development accelerates. Students inspire one another and their growth is contagious.

While such an outcome may appear to be an unexpected consequence of classroom innovation, it is in fact a goal of many pedagogical changes across the HSSM. Hyukshin teachers organize classes where the character development of their students is a central focus, even though the students themselves may not realize this. In this regard the teachers enact the Ministry of Education's recent emphasis on character development, which has become linked with

students' socioemotional learning (Lee & Bong, 2017; Park, 2017) A teacher at Namseoul

Middle School explained:

사실 그 안에 숨겨진 저의 의도는 그 과정을 통해서 자기를 계속 돌아보기 바라는거? 그래서 그런 걸 도울 수 있는 글을 읽었고, 글을 쓰고, 이야기를 하고, 그리고 다른 친구들과하고 사회적인 관계 면에서도 같이 좀 더 어울려서 놀고, 소통하고, 협력하는 과정도 그런 게 수업 안에 들어가 있고요. 그런 걸 하다 보면 본인이 깨닫던, 깨닫지 못하던 자기나 다른 사람들의 모습들을 좀 발견하고, 그리고 자기를 더 긍정하는 데 도움이 되지 않을까 생각하고 있어요.

I hope students reflect on their lives through this process. So, they read articles that help them, write, and talk to each other. Playing, communicating, and collaborating with classmates develops social skills that are built into each class. I think doing this helps students find their own or others' points of view, whether they realize it or not, and helps them affirm themselves. (Namseoul M, HHD Kim, Interview).

By promoting self-affirmation in the classroom, students are able to practice their skills. Thus their talents are also developed alongside their interpersonal relationships. Classroom innovation includes valuable lessons in character development that allows students to become successful in later life.

### ***Positive Changes.***

While classroom innovation promotes a theme of general growth and development, many areas of this growth are not dramatic, but rather indicate a general shift in the schools. These shifts cannot be limited to just one notion of the greater themes of growth and development. Instead, across the HSSM, positive changes and impacts can be seen as exhibited by both the students themselves and their greater school community. This can largely be attributed to the classroom innovations and alternative approaches to education students experience within Hyukshin schools. Without such classroom innovations, the traditional and competitive nature of Korean history would offset any developments the students might otherwise experience.

One of the first general, positive changes shown in the teacher interviews were those amongst the student body. Not only are children happy and enjoying classroom innovation (Yugok M, Teacher Kwak, Interview), but they also participate in group activities and are offered a variety of class topics that pique their interest and maintain engagement with their class materials (Waehun H, Teacher Han, Interview). With self-determination and talents consistently developed, the children are growing up very autonomously and experience and very positive changes (Dosan H, Head Teacher, Interview).

The confluence of autonomy and classroom innovation allows students to be recognized for their achievements without promoting rivalries. One high school history teacher enjoyed being able to “애들이 선생님이 다 개를 계속 봐 주고 이해해 주고 들어 주고 도와주고 하니까 (...) 그랬으니까 또 그것이 에너지가 돼서,” “keep watching students, understanding them, listening to them, and helping them. (...) That's how they become motivated” (Samoon H, Teacher Nam, Interview).

Teachers are able to work with the students in this manner and continuously engage them with their class content. Another high school teacher said that, thanks to the innovative practices of Hyukshin schools, “것만으로도 학생 한 명을 그냥 개성 있는 존재로 볼 수 있게 되고요. 그리고 학생한테 줄 수 있는 기회도 더 많아지고 그런 점에서 긍정적이란 평가도 있습니다,” “You can see a student as something unique. There are more opportunities to give to students, and in that sense, we get a lot of positive feedback” (Samoon H, Teacher Shin, Interview).

One impact classroom innovation has had on the students, explained many teachers, was the opportunities the Hyukshin approach affords teachers and students in supporting the student body. In traditional school settings, the competitive nature of education does not provide

assistance for students who are struggling. However, the HSSM has a vast number of supports. Some Hyukshin schools, for example, are located in neighborhoods that are of low socio-economic status. One middle school teacher explained how the students she teaches in her science classes need some extra support because, “부모님 이 없는 아이들도 있고, 또 부모님이 모두 일을 하느라 돌봄을 거의 받지 못하는 아이들도 굉장히 많아요,” “there are children without parents, and there are a lot of children whose parents hardly take care of because they are both working” (Chumhwa M, Teacher Kim, Interview). These students receive a lot of their support from their Hyukshin school.

Other teachers agree with this sentiment. One said, “이거는 제 교과 때문일지도 모르겠어요. 그냥 살면서 떠올렸을 때 든든하고 지지받는 어른 하나쯤 있다면 좋지 않을까 라는 생각이 저는,” “it would be nice to have supportive adults in the kids’ lives” (Chonwol M, Teacher Kim, Interview). If adequate childcare was not provided to students at home, their teachers felt that the potential of classroom innovation to transform learning was undermined. One Korean language teacher explained:

여기가 굉장히 낙후된 지역이라서, 옆에 보육원도 있고 저쪽에 장애인 아파트 있어요. 그래서 아이들이 되게 돌봄을 잘 못 받은 아이들이어서 좀 거칠어요. 그래서 되게 순박하긴 한데 거칠어서 간혹 어쩔든 그런 아이들 간의 갈등이 좀 있었는데 혁신학교 하고 나서 거의 없어진 거죠. 지금도 거의 없어요.

This is a very poor area. Next to our school is an orphanage. Over there is an apartment building for the disabled. Because students really haven’t been cared for, they are very tough. They are naïve, but tough also. There had been some conflicts amongst students, but after Hyukshin implementation, there were almost none. (Jeongsun M, Teacher Jang, Interview).

After such supports were put in place, conflicts de-escalated. The school attained a very peaceful atmosphere.

**Human Rights.** In the HSSM, students have human rights that are acknowledged by the educators. The human rights of both students and faculty are fundamental principles of the HSSM. These rights inform the process of classroom innovation, and they influence each school's overall environment. The ways in which the teachers conceptualize human rights are twofold, in terms of:

- a) Autonomy; and
- b) Empowerment.

***Autonomy.***

Student autonomy was evident in all the schools we studied. One teacher said that the goals of innovation “그런데 이제 기본적으로 깔려 있는 게 학생 인권하고, 수업 방법 개선,” “are to improve students’ human rights and our teaching methods.” (Dosan H, Teacher Lee, Interview). Everyone agreed that students should grow in autonomy and confidence. Educators can tell when their innovations are working, one teacher said, because “거기에서는 애들이 진짜 목소리를 내고 애들이 원하는 대로 학교가 흘러가는 느낌이에요,” “it feels like kids have a real voice in the running of their schools.” (Chumhwa M, Teacher Kim, Interview).

For some teachers, students learn to be autonomous primarily through the assignments they work on in their courses. Teachers described innovative approaches to topics such as class camping, creating a collection of literary works, or presenting a musical theater. The HHD at Yugok Middle School, for example, contended that such “전교생 대상으로 하는 학생자치활동 “student autonomous activities target the whole school.”

Entrusting students with leadership in classes and extracurricular activities enacts a human right to autonomy that students must exercise appropriately during their time in Hyukshin schools. Thus, while they are granted a certain level of autonomy that they may not otherwise have in a general school, students must also take responsibility as individuals. One teacher said that, “하게 하고 잘못하고 실패하면 책임지면 된다 그게 책임이라고 생각해요,” “In my opinion, expanding responsibility means letting students do what they want, but they also must learn to take responsibility for their failures” (Hyunsa M, Teacher Hong, Interview).

If students fail to take responsibility for the negative consequences of their actions, teachers say that they will then have a conversation with them, so that they can learn from their experiences. At such times, one teacher said, “학생의 입장에서 볼 수 있는 것들이 많고 그런 것들도,” “there's a lot of things that you can see from a student's point of view” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview). Faculty in Hyukshin schools report that they promote autonomy amongst their students while sponsoring their sense of responsibility. Growth in the obligations that come with autonomy ensures that students will become fully functioning members of Korean society when they leave school, enter the workforce, and take on the responsibilities of citizenship.

### ***Empowerment.***

Classroom innovations and changes in pedagogies enacted by teachers in the HSSM promote students' sense of empowerment. One teacher explained how she approaches lesson planning:

그래서 배움의 공동체 플러스업을 합쳐서 디자인을 하는데 수업 시간에 혼자 그러니까 에이플러스 아니 뭐라 불러야 하죠 프로그래밍 학습이라고 해서 혼자 진행할 수 있는 수업을 만듭니다. 그래서 개별 활동을 한 15분 정도를 하고 그 시간에 아이들한테 감정을 같이 얘기합니다. 그 시간에 아이들을 세우죠. 어, 힘들지. 할 수 있어. 선생님 이거 반밖에 못 했는데

전 이거밖에 못 해요. 아니야. 지금 이렇게 극기하면, 뜻은 고등학교 가서 세워도 돼. 지금 어제보다 나아졌잖아. 작년보다 나아졌잖아. 그런 마음가짐을 세우는데 15 분을 씁니다. 나머지 아이들도 스스로 프로그램하고 기초 학력은 사실 제가 알려 주지 않아도 교과서는 다 아이들이 할 수 있어요.

So, we design the class including plus-ups. I would say it's learning programming that students may proceed by themselves. For 15 minutes, they will be doing individual activities, and then, we would talk about their emotions. At that time, we encourage them saying, "you can do it! It could be difficult, but you can do it." Sometimes they would say, "I'm not good enough to complete the entire thing. I can only do half." Then, I would say, "No, it's okay. You can do it later; you are better than yesterday. You are better than last year." We use 15 minutes to build and get their hearts ready. And then, even if we don't teach them, they are able to program and work on basic academic skills. (Chonwol M, Teacher Shin, Interview).

Compared to the competitive classrooms in traditional, non-Hyukshin schools, whose focus is often to prepare for the CSAT through memorization of information, the teachers in our 16 schools focused on enhancing students' mastery of the curriculum.

A teacher from Jeongsun Middle School compared the difference between working in a traditional school and a Hyukshin school in Seoul. He said that classroom innovations have provided students with empowering experiences that have given them a new measure of self-respect. Jeongsun M, HHD Yeom explained that

students thought studying was everything, and if they weren't studying, they thought they were worthless. But here, not only is there studying of school subjects, but also a festival, a club, or a book reading group. There are many events. That's where the kids do what they can. This school gives students a lot of opportunities about not only the cognitive part of the classroom, but also the other stuff. So we say, "I'm good at this! I'm a worthwhile person. I'm a precious person." (Jeongsun M, HHD Yeom, Interview).

Due to the fact that many students in Hyukshin schools live in poor and working-class neighborhoods, many teachers take extra steps to ensure that they grow in confidence in their learning. One Yugok Middle School teacher understood that sometimes students arrive in a bad

condition. So, she works hard to “조금 열심히 한다 그러면 아이를 보고 걱정을 조금 많이 해주려고 하고. 너 무슨 시간에는 열심히 한다며 그러면 이번 시간에도 열심히 할 수 있지 해주려고 하고,” “encourage the children a lot. If they say that they’re going to work hard the next time, I’m going to cheer them up now” (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview).

A teacher at Namseoul Middle School stated that, in order for students to feel empowered and to avoid them giving up on their education due to their life conditions, “... 긍정과 협력과 이런 게 필요한 부분이라고 생각이 들어요,” “self-affirmation and cooperation is necessary” (Namseoul M, HHD Kim, Interview). Overall, the Hyukshin theme of empowerment was shared across our 16 schools: “우리 학교 아이들은 다 그 자체로만의 그런. 자기 자신의 모습 그대로 사랑을 받는다고 그럴까요? 선생님들한테도 사랑을 받고 또 아이들 자체로 빛나요,” “our school children all have their own right to be loved for who they are. They are loved by teachers and shine on their own” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

**Students as Learners.** Students develop as active learners in two ways:

- a) Critical Thinking; and
- b) Creativity.

***Critical Thinking.***

The ability to think critically and to experience deep learning is an important consequence of classroom innovation. As will be described in further detail below, the group activities, discussions, and opportunities for engagement within and outside of the classroom impact the student’s ability to master the curriculum. The HHD of Heesung Middle School said that “such activities became the basis for creativity and deeper thinking” (Heesung M, HHD, Interview).

### ***Creativity.***

Creativity is also identified by teachers as a skill many students develop in Hyukshin schools. Heesung Middle School's HHD explained:

Public schoolteachers still think Hyukshin school students do not study hard, but our programs actually allow students to grow. Students can think freely and creatively to learn how to express their thoughts. These skills help students in their academics. They help students to study on their own. (Heesung M, HHD, Interview).

The creative and innovative approaches Hyukshin teachers utilize with their students help them to grow and develop as learners. Thanks to this creativity, greater engagement with the curriculum is facilitated. This helps students develop a repertoire of skills to apply to their careers once they graduate from Hyukshin schools.

### **Microsystem: The Classroom**

Each individual classroom across our 16 case study schools, when considered through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, can be seen as a distinct microsystem. In secondary schools, students change classrooms frequently, and all teachers have their own repertoire of instructional practices. The classrooms are environments in which individual students build relationships with one another and their teachers. Our interview data reveals that classroom innovation impacts:

1. Student Participation;
2. Pedagogy; and the
3. Class Environment.

**Student Participation.** Since the 1990s, numerous reports from the Ministry of Education in Korea have supported student-centered styles of teaching and learning. The 31 May Education Reform Report of 1995 and subsequent revisions to the national curriculum in 2009 and 2015

promoted “the basic value and principle of free democracy” (Ministry of Education, 1995, p. 5) through greater “student activity” in the country’s schools (Ministry of Education, 2015, p. 29). Hyukshin schools are seen by the much of the public and the education profession as the vanguard in this transformation of its schools. In contrast to traditional approaches that endure in many non-Hyukshin schools, where classrooms appear more lecture based, Hyukshin students are encouraged through curricula and by each other in three ways:

- a) Class Activities;
- b) Classroom Discussions; and
- c) Cooperative Learning.

#### ***Class Activities.***

Many teachers were pleased that the SMOE allocates an additional budget to Hyukshin schools to promote classroom innovations. A teacher at Chonwol Middle School said:

체감상으로 느끼는 혁신학교의 가장 큰 장점은 저의 교과 예산이 많아졌거든요. 그래서 교구나 아니면 뭐 학습 준비물이나 아니면 애들이 쓰는 거 그거를 진짜 좀 자유롭게 살 수 있어서 너무 좋아요. 그 점이 가장 좋은데 예전에는 그게 아무래도 예산이 적다 보니까 이거 사도 돼요? 이렇게 좀 여쭙 봐야 되는데 이제는 눈치 보지 않고 넉넉하게 살고 있습니다.

First of all, the biggest advantage that I feel about an innovative school is that we have a budget to use for the curriculum. So, I like it because I can buy school supplies or things that kids use freely. That's the best part, but can I buy this because the budget used to be small? I have to ask myself this, but now I'm living a generous life without being conscious. (Chonwol M, Teacher Kim, Interview).

Teachers are able to incorporate innovative approaches to a number of lessons. They can provide students with tools and materials rather than just printouts for activities. In this way, students may gain more physical experience. Through this process, the individual’s creativity is promoted and developed by their teachers’ innovative approaches.

One teacher appreciated the additional funding for his classes (Chonwol M, Teacher Kim, Interview). The new activities have impacted students positively, the educators say. One teacher from Chumhwa Middle School said:

대표적으로 이제 선생님들 수업방법이 많이 바뀌니까 학생 참여 수업이 많이 된 거 같아요. 작년부터 좀 굉장히 수업이 많이 바뀌었죠. 대부분 선생님은 강의식으로 수업하다가 지금은 많이 활동을 이렇게. 학생 참여하고.

Teachers' pedagogies have changed a lot. I think there are a lot of classes with high levels of student participation. The classes have changed a lot since last year. Most of the teachers used to teach in expository ways, but now they have a lot of activity and student participation in their classes. (Chumhwa M, Teacher Choi, Interview).

A teacher at Chonwol Middle School expressed a more complex sentiment, saying that, in her experience, teachers started off by including innovative activities in their classrooms because they looked good and fit within the Hyukshin model. However, when she recognized that the students weren't fully benefitting from the activities, she stopped doing them. She didn't return to traditional teaching, but explored other innovative approaches. She now said, “조금은 좀 작고 미미해 보일지 몰라도 조금 꾸준히 할 수 있는 그런 활동들,” “So, I wanted to do some activities that might look small and insignificant, but I could do them consistently” (Chonwol M, Teacher Kim, Interview).

These consistent and beneficial impacts, however, are not always accessed equally across the HSSM. Thus, some schools have reserved a portion of their funding for innovative materials and provided workbooks for various activities, including cultural events (Heesung M, HHD, Interview). Other schools seemed uncertain of what to do with the funding and it was not always clear that the monies were spent on properly educational purposes that would benefit students' learning.

### ***Classroom Discussions.***

Students across classrooms, regardless of the course content, are encouraged to discuss with one another in a collaborative manner and to work on their assignments in groups or on teams. One teacher said that this aspect of group deliberation led her to apply to teach in a Hyukshin school:

선생님들하고 같이 연구하고 그 다음에 어떤 교재를 같이 만들어내고 그런 작업들이 내게 의미 있다고 생각을 했었고 그러면서 수업 방식 중에 하나도 어떤 강의식보다는 그룹 액티비티이나 모둠 활동을 주로 많이 하면서 그런 수업을 좀 잘할 수 있는 학교를 이런 최적화되어 있는 데를 찾다 보니까 여기가 가장 알맞아서 됐어요.

I realized that studying with other teachers and making textbooks together was very meaningful for me. I wanted to work in a school where classes were based on group activities, rather than lectures. I decided that this school is right for me. (Namseoul M, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Teachers and students get to know one another and can then build upon their communities in progressive ways. One HHD explained how, “일반 교과수업 할 때는 저희 학교는 모든 활동을 해서 아이들이 스스로 알아가는 그런 과정을 많이 하고 있는데,” “our school does all kinds of activities, so we encourage the procedure that children figure things out by themselves” (Yugok M, HHD Lee, Interview). Students are able to interact with one another in their classes and can share their opinions about assignments. This opens the door for students to get to know their classmates better. It also increases the academic engagement levels of students when compared to those in non-Hyukshin schools.

Some students in traditional school settings face difficulties in class due to burn-out and academic pressures. In our sample schools, however, one teacher said that “그런데 이제 이 그 협력 참여형 수업에서는 아이들 토론할 때는 옆의 친구한테 배우는 거죠. 그 반에 스물세 명, 스물네 명이 있으면 그 중에 한두 명을 빼고 나머지는 다 그 시간에 뭔가를

배워요, 옆의 친구한테,” – “In classes with high levels of participation, kids learn from their peer during discussions. If there are two dozen students in one class, other than one or two students, everyone does something during the class” (Jeongsun M, Teacher Jang, Interview).

This teacher explained:

그런데 모둠 협력 수업을 하면 잘 수가 없어요. 떠들고 시끄럽고 모둠이 자꾸 깨우고 그러니까 귀찮고 그다음에 또 봤더니 수업할 때 왜 다른 얘기가 중요하냐면 수업 얘기만 계속 하면 그 아이는 재미없을 거예요. 그런데 봤더니 우리 반 1 등 하는 애도 수업 얘기하다가 다른 얘기하는 거죠. 수업하다가 다른 얘기했더니 저건 재미있는 얘기야. 그러면서 그 재미있는 얘기에 관심 가지면서 같이 따라가다 보니까 또 개들이 다른 얘기만 하는 게 아니라 수업 얘기도 하죠. 그러면 얻어들이고, 수업 얘기를.

If students are placed in a cooperative class, they cannot sleep at all. It's noisy and the group keeps waking them up! So, it's bothersome for them. The reason for the importance of talking about something that is presented in a different way is because if we only keep talking about the lecture, students lose interest. Even the best students in the class start to talk about other things and become distracted. While they are interested in a funny story and following along, they also talk about the lecture instead of just talking about something else. Then, they pick up some of the lectures. (Jeongsun M, Teacher Jang, Interview).

The HHD at one school stated that, “그리고 무엇보다 이게 또 혁신학교여서 이런 건지, 아니면 이 동네가 그런 건지는 잘 모르겠지만 자는 아이들은 많지 않아요,” “I don't know if it's because we're a Hyukshin school or if it has something to do with this neighborhood, but not many children fall asleep in class here” (Ollim M, HHD Jeon, Interview). Increased engagement leads “하물며 바닥에 있는 성적 낮은 아이들이 수업시간에 뭔가를 배우거든요, 친구한테. 그럼 그 학생이 시험 보면서 관심 있게 풀면 풀죠. 성적이 확 올라가버려요,” “students with lower grades to learn from their friends during classes. Students start paying attention, which leads them to get better grades” (Jeongsun M, Teacher Jang, Interview).

### *Cooperative Learning.*

Many Hyukshin teachers have developed their skills in cooperative learning. One teacher explained:

저는 우선 저는 원래 수업에서는 모둠 수업을 주로 했었는데, 여기 와서는 항상 모든 수업이 모둠 수업으로 이루어지고 그다음에 학생들이 좀 자유롭게 의견을 말하고 경청하고 다음에 질문을 같이 만들어가고 찾아가는 그런 작업들을 학생들과 같이 해요. 수업 속에서는 그런 활동 중심 수업이나 모둠 수업을 하면서 수업을 많이 하는거.

I used to do group lessons in my classes, but when I come here, I found that all of the classes always work with small groups. Now I work with the students to help them to freely express their opinions. I listen to them, and then we come up with questions together. In class, we do a lot of activities in small groups. (Namseoul M, Teacher Lee, Interview).

This shift in lesson planning towards small group activities has improved students' collaboration.

The HHD from Jeongsun Middle School explained that children find out that there's a lot more to be achieved through cooperation than through competition (Jeongsun M, HHD Yeom, Interview). The HHD at Chonwol Middle expanded upon this idea by stating that, “그 경쟁이 좀 완화되면 그 완화된 안에서 아이들이 협업을 할 수 있는 부분으로 선생님들 계속 접근한다고 볼 수 있을 것 같아요,” “once [competition] is alleviated, teachers [can] try to make an approach for them to cooperate” (Chonwol M, HHD Lee, Interview).

Teachers approach their lessons in a cooperative manner, hand-picking groups based on the students' personalities or abilities. This not only shows the teachers' personal knowledge of their students, but it also ensures a balance that enhances everyone's learning. Regardless of the academic subject matter, teachers found that cooperative learning was beneficial for their students:

그 중에 정말 그 반에서 능력이 지적이건 여러 가지 면에서 떨어지는 아이가 있었는데 그 파트에 있는 구성원들은 어떤 능력 별로 소위 말하면 좀 나누어 놓은, 합쳐서 할 수 있도록 해 놓은 부분이 있어요. 제비뽑기가

아니라. 그래서 능력 있는 아이가 하는데 능력이 좀 부족한 아이가 충분히 도와줄 수 있는 역할이 있더라고요. 그걸 교사가 지시해서 한 게 아니라 아이들끼리 너 이거 하면 되겠구나 라고 해서 참여할 수 있도록 해 줬거든요.

In [their] class, there was a student with low intellectual ability. Then, the group members were assigned, according to their levels and abilities. They were not grouped randomly. There was a talented student who was able to help one who was less talented. That wasn't directed by the teacher. Students cooperated amongst themselves so that everyone could participate. (Chonwol M, HHD Lee, Interview).

Through the purposeful grouping of students by the teacher, cooperation amongst students with varying levels of knowledge supports for each individual. Students learn about not only the course material, but also about other group members and themselves, in beneficial ways. Some teachers, like one at Ryuah Middle School, even assesses students in groups. He explained how the process of pupil learning entails finding things out through conversations with friends. (Ryuah M, Teacher Suh, Interview).

This process extends itself to all aspects of school culture. Heesung Middle School's HHD described these relationships as a sort of partnership, where students both mentor their peers and are mentored by them. She described a culture where, the skilled students could review the material one more time, and the students who were academically behind can understand better when their peers explained the concepts through familiar language (Heesung M, HHD, Interview).

**Pedagogy.** The teaching philosophies held by teachers inform the methods used in their classrooms. With pedagogical styles that specifically align with classroom innovation in Hyukshin schools, many teachers highlighted the following as important to their practice:

- a) Interdisciplinary Classes;
- b) Student-Centered Instruction.

### *Interdisciplinary Classes.*

Many teachers said they develop lessons that transcend the boundaries of traditional learning. Teachers often collaborate with one another in their PLCs and in less formal meetings. They combine their lessons so that the content can be delivered to students in a manner that is both efficient and innovative.

Hyukshin teacher contend that, over time, interdisciplinary lessons have proven to be beneficial for students. One teacher from Ryuah Middle School explained that, at the beginning, interdisciplinary lesson planning was considered to be an oddity, but since then has turned out to be advantageous:

왔을 때 여러 교과가 모여서 수업 연구하는 거가 굉장히 되게 이상하다라고 생각을 했었어요. 왜냐하면 과학 교과면 과학 선생님들이랑 해야 조금 더 깊이 있게 될 텐데 왜 수학도 모이고 음악도 모이고 국어도 모이지라고 생각을 했는데 한 번 해보고 나니까 그게 굉장히 도움이 된다는 생각이 들었어요.

When I first came here, I thought it was very strange to study various subjects together. I thought that science subjects would be better if I had to do it with science teachers. I thought that math, music, and Korean would be better. But after I tried it once, I thought it was very helpful. (Ryuah M, Teacher Suh, Interview).

This teacher described how teachers in Ryuah Middle School have worked together to create unique projects, such as a board game created by students around the topic of environmental science and global warming. Not only were the students able to creatively apply their scientific knowledge to the board game, but they were also then able to expand upon their creations in their math class, where the math teacher utilized it as a method of teaching probability. By combining multiple course lessons and skill sets, this teacher said that the students were able to have their standards met in a way that, “일상과 연결이 되게끔,” “can connect to their daily life” (Ryuah M, Teacher Suh, Interview), making the curriculum easier to understand.

Likewise, a teacher from Woolgook Middle School gave an example of an interdisciplinary course connecting the disciplines of Korean, art, and history. In her class, “스토리보드를 짜는 걸 하고요,” “students [made] a story board” (Woolgook M, Teacher Hong, Interview) based on a script they wrote in their Korean class, pertaining to a historical event that they learned about in their history class. Their scripts were turned into a physical representation of their understandings of the events while simultaneously allowing room for creativity to flourish.

Overall, Hyukshin teachers have learned on a practical level that there are advantages when various subjects are gathered (Woolgook M, Teacher Hong, Interview). Through teachers modeling cooperation and collaboration with one another through cross-disciplinary classes, students are able to learn from their example. Inherently, this leads to unique approaches and beliefs about instruction in Hyukshin schools, which the teacher interviews then went on to illuminate.

### ***Student-Centered Instruction.***

Teachers in our 16 schools found that their instructional approaches were evolving in intriguing ways. One teacher at Yugok Middle School stated that, “저희가 다른 학교에 비해 토론이랑 글쓰기를 많이 하는 편이거든요. 아이들이 자기 생각을 글로 표현하는 것도 많이 늘었어요” This adjustment in assignments has resulted in a trend where, “compared to other schools, we discuss and write a lot. Children's expression of their thoughts in writing has improved a lot” (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview).

Hyukshin teachers often mentioned their dedication to student-centered teaching practices. A teacher at Yugok Middle School said that “주로 학생중심 수업을 많이 하기 때문에,” “we have more student-centered classes” (Yugok M, Teacher Kwak, Interview). This

is common amongst Hyukshin schools. Teachers say it increases student autonomy. Heesung Middle School's HHD explained: "Within] the Hyukshin schools (...) I now hand out activity sheets, form mentor-mentee partnerships, asked students to present, and ask students to come up to solve problems and explain their answers. Before, I just tried to teach as much as possible, and I was physically exhausted" (Heesung M, HHD, Interview).

Heesung's HHD explained the impact this approach to instruction has had. It has "changed my mind. Maybe I thought about it the wrong way before. I realized I didn't understand students" (Heesung M, HHD, Interview). This shift in instruction "improved my understanding and acceptance of students. My teaching changed. I started to enjoy school," (Heesung M, HHD, Interview).

Recent reports (2009, 2015, 2016) from the Ministry of Education in Korea have emphasized the importance of spreading student-centered practices throughout all schools, but research (Yang & Tan, 2019) indicates that this is difficult for educators, especially in classes that prepare students to take the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT). These researchers have found that educators find it easier to integrate student-centered practices into classes that are electives than into those that teach material on the CSAT, where teachers feel pressure to cover large quantities of challenging content. However, they also found that "the acceptance of learner-centeredness does not mean that didactic teaching has been jettisoned. On the contrary, teacher-centeredness co-exists with learner centeredness" (Yang & Tan, 2019, p. 487). We suspect that the signature principles of Hyukshin schools have helped teachers to experiment with student-centered practices, and that they may be more advanced than non-Hyukshin educators in this regard.

Not only does the enjoyment of school overall increase for teachers and students in Hyukshin schools, but the shift in mindset, as described by the HHD of Heesung Middle School, has changed the quality of teaching in entire schools. Teachers say that school leaders have “자율성 발휘할 수 있게 많이 도와주시는 거 같아요,” “helped us to exercise our autonomy” (Chonwol M, Teacher Kim, Interview). Through such supports, teachers are able to focus more on students’ comprehension, and on how to foster student autonomy, as much as on choosing good curricular content for students (Heesung M, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Thanks to student-centered pedagogies, teachers can “다양한 캐릭터의 아이들의 성격을 알게 되고 그 성격에 따라서 똑같은 내용을 어떻게 전달할지에 대한 훈련이 되는 거죠,” “learn about the personalities of their students. They say that they have received professional development about how to deliver content to students with different personalities” (Jeongsun M, Teacher Jang, Interview). Students get “일대일 피드백을 많이 하는, 개별로,” “a lot of one-on-one feedback” (Chonwol M, Teacher Kim, Interview) from their teachers.

One teacher said that student-centered practices are what make a school a Hyukshin school. He felt that a Hyukshin school is “한 사람도 포기하지 않는 배움의 공동체,” “a community of learning that doesn't give up a single student” (Jeongsun M, HHD Yeom, Interview). He was grateful that the SMOE provides “funds for underperforming students. For those students, we can buy workbooks and provide various activities including cultural activities” (Heesung M, HHD, Interview). Supplementary supports for students, such as “방과 후 수업,” “after-school classes” and supplies, help students to realize their full potential, teachers say (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview). In this way, the HSSM aims to educate all students well.

**Class Environment.** At a classroom level, the interrelated ecological systems that are found in Hyukshin schools are furthered by the impact unique innovations have on each of the following factors:

- c) Learning Atmosphere;
- d) Open Classes; and
- e) Classroom Organization.

### ***Learning Atmosphere.***

Instead of lectures, in Hyukshin classrooms, “그 수업은 보통 10 분이나 15 분 정도를 교사가 그 날 배울 주제를 설명을 하고 나머지는 아이들끼리 활동을 하는 거죠,” “for 10-15 minutes, the teachers explain a topic [that] students will learn that day, and the rest of the time is given over to students doing activities themselves” (Jeongsun M, Teacher Jang, Interview). Group projects make sure that “하나는 기본적인 의사소통이 훈련될 뿐만 아니라 사람에 대해서 아는 거예요,” “not only do students learn how to communicate effectively, but also they learn about other people.” (Jeongsun M, Teacher Jang, Interview).

By not focusing solely on “효율이나 결과를,” “efficiency or results” (Chonwol M, Teacher Kim, Interview), students find learning to be enjoyable, their teachers say. This positive atmosphere, as explained by a teacher from Bongjoong High School, is said to be different from that in schools where “이런 애들은 되게 공부만 하려고 하고 대학만 잘 가려고 하는 그런 게 아무래도 더 포커스 되어있다 보니까,” “students are only trying to study and go to college. It's more focused” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

A teacher from Chumhwa Middle School wants her own children to be in Hyukshin schools. She said:

저는 혁신학교에 보내고 싶어요. 근데 큰 이유가 이전 학교에서는 애들이 많이 안 웃었어요. 물론 분위기의 차이도 있겠지만, 여기 애들은 많이 웃어요. 그래서 저는 저의 아이가 아직은 어려서 그렇게 생각할지 모르겠는데. 공부를 잘하기 보다는 그냥 학교 가는 것을 싫어하지 않는 아이였으면 좋겠어요. 그래서 학교 가기 싫어하지 않는 아이로 키우기 위해서는 혁신학교에 보내야 하지 않나. 근데 지금 중화 중학교는 이제 첫발을 내디딘 거 같고. 근처에 신현 중학교가 있거든요. 신현 중학교에 보내고 싶어요.

I want to send my children to Hyukshin schools. The big reason is that the students didn't laugh much at their previous school. Of course, there are differences in school atmospheres, but the students in this school laugh a lot. My child is still young, so I am not sure about whether my child is thinking this way. I hope my child doesn't hate going to school. (Chumhwa M, Teacher Kim, Interview).

Teachers reported feeling as though they all want to create an environment where learning is facilitated through communication among colleagues and students. One HHD we interviewed suggested that teachers in Hyukshin schools have a lighter workload than teachers in other schools because, “설득해야 될 대상이 혁신학교에서는 훨씬 적습니다. 힘이 당연히 덜 들죠,” “there are fewer people we have to persuade, so teaching requires less work” (Namseoul M, HHD Kim, Interview). On the whole, our interviews indicate that teachers enjoy teaching their students “to affirm themselves,” (Namseoul M, HHD Kim, Interview), “수업의 변화를 통해서 수업에서 만들어진 여러 가지 관계들이 학생자치에서의 상호 소통이랄까, 리더십이랄까 그리고 일상생활에서 상호 돌봄의 문화랄까 이런 것들로 파급이 되면서,” and they say that “through classroom innovations, the relationships created in classes facilitate student autonomy, leadership, and a culture of care” (Jeongsun M, Teacher Jang, Interview).

### *Open Classes.*

Hyukshin staff collaborate in what are called “open classes” or “lesson study” to improve their teaching. The use of open classes predates the creation of Hyukshin schools, but it now is closely identified with the HSSM as one of its signature practices (Shin & Son, 2019) Teachers gather together throughout the school year to prepare open classes, to study one another’s instruction, and to deliberate on areas of strength and opportunities for growth.

As a part of the open classroom process, schools break down their open class activities into three stages. First, they host a preliminary meeting where they explain their intended pedagogy to their colleagues. A teacher from Chumhwa Middle School explained that, “제안 수업을 하기 위해서 그 전에 선생님이 모여 가지고 제안 수업을 만들어가기 위해서 토론도 하고, 여러 가지 같이 만들어가는. 그 과정들을 같이 해야 되는. 해야 되죠,” “before doing open classes, teachers get together to prepare for them. Teachers need to go through these processes together” (Chumhwa M, Teacher Choi, Interview). In planning meetings, teachers agree on the curriculum to be taught and prepare the lesson together.

Second, teachers host the open classes. One HHD said, “[their colleagues will] visit their classrooms, evaluate us, something like that. [Then] teachers can discuss their courses” (Heesung M, HHD, Interview). Depending on the school, open classes may either be attended by fellow teachers who focus on similar subjects, or by colleagues from different curricular disciplines. Schools vary in regard to the design of their open classes, with some schools leaving them optional and others requiring them as an obligatory part of teachers’ professional development.

Third, after the lesson is completed, teachers deliberate on what they observed. One teacher said about this debriefing that, “그런데 저는 거기서 되게 많이 배웠다고 생각을 했거든요 (…). 그리고 공개수업이라는 게 단순히 형식적인 게 아니라 교사 개인적인

성장을 이루어낼 수 있는 기회가 되는 거라고 생각을 했고,” “I learned a lot. I think that open classes are not just a formality, but a real opportunity to achieve personal growth” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview). A big part of this has to do with bolstering teachers’ confidence:

뭐든 할 수 있죠 (...). 그리고 무슨 내가 가르치는 아이에게 문제가 있으면, 내 수업에 문제가 있으면, 내 문제가 있으면 그걸 늘 같이 나눌 수 있는 공동체가 생긴 거예요. 그래서 이 집단의 힘으로 아이들이 성장하는 거죠. 저는 그게 가장 크다고 생각해요.

Anything can be done! If I have a problem with the child I teach, or if I have a problem with my class, I have a community where I can share my challenges. In this way, the collective power of teachers grows, and that helps children. I think that’s the biggest thing. (Jeongsun M, HHD Yeom, Interview).

The Ollim Middle School HHD explained that, “제가 다른 데 컨설팅 나가고 다른 데 연수도 나가고 하는 이유가 제 주변의 많은 선생님들하고 같이 갔기 때문에 제가 배운 거지 혼자서는 못하겠더라고요. 그래서 계속 이게 힘을 실어 드려야,” “the reason why I’m doing open classrooms is because I can’t get better all alone. You have to support each other” (Ollim M, HHD Jeon, Interview).

One criticism of open classes made by an HHD is that “또 이런 부분들이 단점이 좀 있어요. 선생님들이 직접 참여를 안,” “some teachers just don’t participate” (Chonwol M, HHD Lee, Interview). This may be because some teachers are not comfortable giving or receiving negative feedback. These kinds of emotional barriers to improvement have to be addressed for open classes to reach their full potential. Otherwise, open classes could turn into rather empty performance rituals in which teachers disengage from the hard work of improving teaching and learning. This would be a great shame as educators all over the world now are getting better at collaborating (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012; Shirley, 2017).

### ***Classroom Organization.***

One part of classroom innovation concerns the ways that teachers organize their courses. Instead of lecture-based classes, the organization of classrooms in the HSSM is shifted to small group projects, presentations, and more democratic spirit of shared inquiry. By shifting the manner in which the classroom is organized, classroom innovation may naturally occur.

A teacher at Hyunsa Middle School explained:

그래서 애들이 수업 시간에도 책상만 딱 돌리면 모듬이 나오게끔 하거든요. 그래서 그거를 똑같이 학급 운영에도 똑같이 반영하죠. (...) 제가 하는 부분은 애들이 규칙을 정하면 제가 그 규칙에 대해서 이제 관리를 하고 그다음에 저는 또 아이들하고 좀 체험을 많이 하려고 해요.

So when they turn their desks, so they are facing one another in class, the group comes out. So they reflect the same thing in the classroom management. When they set the rules, I'll take care of the rules. After that, I try to experience a lot with the kids. (Hyunsa M, Teacher Jung, Interview)

She used these kinds of approaches because, “그냥 교실에 있는 것보다 체험 활동을 많이 하는 게 아이들한테는 지금은 더 좋은 거 같다는 생각이 들거든요” “I think it's best for children to be active.” (Hyunsa M, Teacher Jung, Interview).

Many of these teachers want to veer away from traditional, lecture-based lessons, because they find that their “아이들이 되게 자율성이 신장된 건 사실이에요. 되게 자기 주도적이고 자율적이고 자신감이 확대되었어요,” “children have increased autonomy. They are more self-reliant and confident” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview). Teachers say that they want to “그럴 때도 학급운영 위원회 등을 이끌어내서 학생들이 스스로 할 수 있도록 해요,” “let [the] students do things on their own, by organizing a class management student committee, and so on” (Chumhwa M, Teacher Kim, Interview). Such teachers report seeing their students grow in confidence and independence.

Allowing the classroom to be organized in a more student-centered manner ultimately benefits all groups of individuals, regardless of academic performance, teachers say. Students learn positive ways to talk with each other. They know how to ask for help when necessary. A teacher from Namseoul Middle School explained how, when students feel that they don't know how to do something, “다른 친구들을 어떻게 하고 있는지 보고. 쉽게 묻고 답하는 과정들이 수업 안에서 자연스럽게 일어난다는 생각이 들고요,” “[they can] immediately express that in class and observe how their friends are doing. I think easily asking and answering questions is a natural process in class,” (Namseoul M, HHD Kim, Interview). Organizing the classroom in such a way that students can easily turn to one another facilitates this process of small group deliberation and the benefits that come with it.

Teachers facilitate this process by arranging the desks so that students are in positions to help one another (Namseoul M, Teacher Yoon, Interview). One teacher stated that this is a core part of professional expertise. For example, the teacher's role is to assign seats so students will want to talk to each other (Jeongsun M, Teacher Jang, Interview). In this way, through the efforts of the students and the teachers, proper classroom organization enables innovative approaches to learning that maximize the talents of students and enhance their learning.

Indeed, in the two weeks that the Boston College research team observed Hyukshin schools in Seoul, we saw no classrooms at all in which students' desks were arranged in rows. In general, classrooms were organized so that students were facing one another in small clusters of tables. Teachers moved fluidly throughout the room and still were able to maintain a comfortable degree of authority in interacting with students. Simple structural changes of this nature visibly promote the principles of Hyukshin schools.

### **Mesosystem: The School**

In Bronfenbrenner's model, a "mesosystem comprises the linkages and processes taking place two or more settings containing the developing person," (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40). As an example of such a mesosystem, he describes forms of parental involvement in a child's schooling. Bronfenbrenner believed that more should be done to help children feel that the adults in their lives were communicating with each other and equally dedicated to their well-being and success.

A weakness of Bronfenbrenner's formulation is that it overlooks the degree to which students in secondary schools around the world experience *the school itself* as comprising multiple microsystems. The atmosphere in a mathematics class and a foreign language class is often completely different. The contrast between a core academic subject, an elective, and an extracurricular activity can also be dramatic. Students have to navigate these diverse microsystems on a daily basis. In doing so, they play a part in constructing their school as a mesosystem.

Hyukshin school educators understand that traditional ways of organizing schools can be disengaging for the young (SMOE). We have abundant international evidence (Shirley & Hargreaves, 2021) that schools that are competitive can decrease motivation for all but the top-achieving students. The 16 Hyukshin schools we studied in Seoul address these challenges in four ways.

1. The School as a Community of Care (dolbum);
2. The Curriculum;
3. Extracurricular Activities; and
4. A Focus on Hyukshin Principles and Practices.

**The School as a Community of Care.** The schools we observed had two components:

- a) *Dolbom* (a Community of Care); and
- b) Peer Relationships.

***Dolbom (a Community of Care).***

The Korean term *Dolbom* is used for communities of care in Hyukshin schools. One teacher stated that “돌봄이라는건 오히려 수업중에 일어나는 것 보다는 수업 외적으로 일어나는게 더 많은거 같아요,” “caring is more likely to happen outside of class than in class” (Heesung M, Teacher Yang, Interview). The quality of each school’s administration matters because “the diverse relationships formed through changes in classes are the result of communication among students and school leaders” (Jeongsun M, Teacher Jang, Interview).

Dosan High School’s HHD explained how teachers connect to students, “아이랑 대화를 하고 아이의 상황을 볼 수 있는 그런 분위기가 있지 않나. 그래서 그 속에서 아이들이 자기가 존중받는다는 느낌을 받지 않나 그러면 아이의 삶이 조금은 긍정적이 되지 않나라는 생각을 해요,” “where teachers can talk to the child and can understand the child's situation. So, the children feel that they are respected. Then I think the child's life will be positive as a result” (Dosan H, HHD, Interview). A teacher from Woolgook Middle School also commented on how teachers should recognize that, “하기에는 학생들마다 다 제각기 상황도 다르고 그렇기 때문에 일단 왜 그런지 원인을 파악하는 게 중요하다고 생각을 해서, 네,” “each student has different situation, so what I think important is to figure out the cause of students’ behaviors” (Woolgook M, Teacher Kim, Interview). Misbehavior is more than an irritating classroom management problem. It can be a symptom of a prior problem that the school could help to address.

### Why is *Dolbom* important in the HSSM?

저희는 고등학교보다 중학교는 좀 더 학업적인 면보다도 정서적인 면에 집중을 많이하는거 같아요. 그래서 아이들이 정서적으로 사회생활 안에서 다른 또래들과 잘 어울릴 수 있고, 이거를 선생님들이나 자기 집의 부모님들과 원활한 소통이 잘 될 수 있는가를 계속 인성교육이라던지 접근을 하기 때문에... ‘돌봄’은 그런 식으로 쓰는거 같아요. 정서적인 문제. 상담을 비롯해서, 그런거를 근데 딱히 프로그램을 운영한다기 보다는 선생님들 마다 그 기저에 깔려있는 그 자세, 아이들에 대한 애정과 태도가 정말 중요하다고 생각하거든요.

Children can emotionally socialize well with other peers in their social lives because teachers do character education for students to communicate well with their parents. I think people say “caring” and view it as related to emotional problems. However, it shouldn’t just be to run an additional program. I think that the teachers’ attitude toward children matters. I think affection and a positive attitude towards the children is really important. (Heesung M, Teacher Yang, Interview).

One high school teacher explained how “we wanted to adopt a method in our school where students can learn how to generate compassion towards others. That’s one good way that we can improve our classes” (Dosan H, Teacher, Interview). Such innovations support the Korean Ministry of Education’s Character Education Act (2019).

As compared to traditional, non-Hyukshin schools, teachers in our sample of 16 Hyukshin schools say that they have recognized that “달라진 부분은 학생을 대하는 마음 그리고 동료 교사를 대하는 마음인데요. 양쪽 다 존중하고 존중받는 것이 자연스러워진 마음입니다,” “what has changed is how you treat students and how you treat your fellow teachers. It’s natural to want to be respected, and respected by both sides” (Samoon H, Teacher Shin, Interview). With such levels of respect and caring practices among the school communities, teachers have noticed a shift in the prevalence and importance of contributing to a community of care. They want their students, in turn, to become caring citizens when they have left the school system.

### ***Peer Relationships.***

Teachers create good relationships with their students by devoting attention to them. One Woolgook Middle School teacher said she prioritizes “하위그룹 (...) 이제 많이 많이 만나는 편이에요,” “the lower-income students (...) and I meet a lot with them now” (Woolgook M, Teacher Yoo, Interview) Another teacher said the concept of a community of care informs how she helps students to read texts: “그래서 아이들한테 얘기하고자 하는 건 급하게 चे하듯이 하기보다 천천히 하는 방법을 가르치는 게, 그 방법은 텍스트를 읽는 방법이고 관계를 형성하는 방법이라 생각합니다,” “what I’m trying to teach them is to do it slowly, and in the right way. Learning how to read texts is a good way of building relationships.” (Chonwol M, Teacher Shin, Interview). Teachers hope their students will have “영망인 순간 60 대, 70 대에 행복한 삶을 살지,” “happy lives in their 60 and 70s” (Chonwol M, Teacher Shin, Interview).

In Hyukshin schools, as compared to their general education counterparts,

선생님들의 시선, 그리고 친구들의 시선. 이런 걸 봤을 때 아, 재 너무 굉장해, 대단해. 그런 거 별로 없고. 애 노래 잘해. 대단해. 재 춤을 잘 춰 대단해. 오히려 이런 거로 애들이 좋아한다고나 할까요? 그게 좀 다른 학교랑 다른 분위기라고 저는 생각해요.

At least as seen by their teachers, and as seen by their friends. Here, they don't say, “Oh, he's so amazing.” Instead, students say, “He's good at singing. That's great! He's a great dancer.” I think this makes us different from other schools (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Hyukshin teachers reported few instances of bullying. One teacher stated, “이 학교 와서 싸움을본 적이 없어요. 그래서 아이들이 그런 것에서 오는 안정감이 있고 그게,” “I've never seen any fighting in our school. We feel safe here.” (Bukeseoul M, Teacher Lee, Interview).

One teacher described the virtuous circle that Hyukshin schools try to attain with regard to peer relationships:

We have a lot of classes where children collaborate with each other. Not only does learning happen, but relationships get so good during the process when students can express themselves. They see that what they are learning today is connected to other subjects. Children's relationships get so good, they know the importance of cooperation, how to bring up their own ideas and how to listen to other people, and democratic education spontaneously is done. Now, communication comes out. By that time, student council, self-governance and reading club were formed on a huge scale. They take care of each other. In the past, children who were good at studying were bullied. Children who couldn't study well were bullies. They all had to be the same. But they came to look at each other. (Jeongsun M, HHD Yeom, Interview).

From this teacher's perspective, Hyukshin schools benefit students in part because they foster healthy peer relationships.

**Extracurricular Activities.** Within many Hyukshin schools, students and the greater school community benefit from extracurricular activities. These fall into two categories:

- a) Student Clubs; and
- b) Student Councils.

***Student Clubs.***

Across the HSSM, Hyukshin schools have been provided a special budget by the SMOE that allows students to participate in clubs to further their general interests and education. One

teacher said that the budget “1 억 한 3, 4 천 정도 되는 예산을 주면서 어디에 쓰라는 제한은 또 하지는 않았단 말이죠. 그러니까 혁신 학교에 근무하는 선생님들이 정말 자율적으로 의논을 하면서 아이들을 위해서 필요한 활동들을 만들어 갈 수 있었어요,”

“was somewhere between \$100,000 to \$120,000 USD. The SMOE didn't designate how to spend the money. Teachers could choose good activities for the children” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi, Interview).

This freedom allows programs that benefit the students and has engendered “모든 활동을 해서 아이들이 스스로 알아가는 그런 과정을 많이 하고 있는데,” “many activities for the children to know themselves” (Yugok M, HHD Lee, Interview). By participating in a wide variety of activities, students can “조금 수업 시간에 할 수 없었던 깊이 있는,” “experiment in ways that they couldn't before” (Ryua M, Teacher Suh, Interview). Jeongsun M, Teacher Jang also explained that hyukshin schools, let students experience a lot more to find their own ways.

These benefits have been recognized by traditional schools, particularly when Hyukshin high school students apply to universities. During the beginning stages of the HSSM, one teacher explained:

그런데 혁신 학교는 돈이 있었기 때문에 여러 가지 활동들을 많이 할 수 있었어요. 그리고 그게 생기부에 기재가 되니까 혁신 학교 아이들이 대학 가는 데 좀 유리했어요. 왜냐하면 다른 학교보다는 생기부 기재가 여기가 좀 풍성했었던 거예요. 이해되지요. 그런데 시간이 지나면서 다른 일반계 고등학교도 이거를 캐치를 한 거예요. 아, 학교 활동이 많은 게 좋구나. 그다음에 그전에는 예를 들어 그러니까 국외 활동. 국외에서 어떤 활동한 것도 생기부에 기재하게 되었고.

Hyukshin schools were able to do such things because we had enough money. Because participating in such activities was recorded on student transcripts, students from Hyukshin schools had more advantages than others when applying for college. We had better student records than the general schools did. As time passed, other schools realized it is good to have more activities also. From that time on, they began to record all types of activities too. (Waehun H, Teacher Choi, Interview).

This shift changed the kind of education students received. One teacher said, “지금은 제가 봤을 때는 혁신 학교에서 활동하는 그런 것들과 일반 고등학교 활동하는 것들이 별 차이가 없는 상황이에요,” “there are no longer big differences between the activities offered by general schools and Hyukshin schools” (Waehun H, Teacher Choi, Interview).

### ***Student Councils.***

Hyukshin schools afford students the opportunity to engage in autonomous and democratic aspects of their school communities through their engagement in student run councils. One teacher said that in Seoul's Hyukshin schools, “대표적으로 이제 학생 자치,” “student autonomy is commonplace” (Chumhwa M, Teacher Choi, Interview). This means not only that students are able to participate in traditional roles such as ‘school president or vice president.’ Instead, student councils in the Hyukshin schools we visited are usually larger, often encompassing more than 100 students who are involved in organizing festivals or participating in various forums relevant to the running of their schools (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview).

One middle school Korean literacy teacher said that student councils are often led “보통 교사의 지시에 의해서 이루어지는 경우가 많은 반면에 저희는 거의 학생회 애들이 예산집행에서부터 어떤 식으로 조직할지 거의,” “under the supervision of teachers. However, we let students decide how they will organize themselves, and we give them discretionary power on important matters, including topics such as the allocation of the specialized Hyukshin budget” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview). This kind of freedom and autonomy motivates students to engage in “행사가 많은 게 학생,” “a lot of events” (Ryua M, Teacher Suh, Interview). The delegation of real authority to students creates “제도적으로나 예산, 행정적으로, 문화적으로도 이 학생회를 잘 지원해 주는 구조니까,” “a structure which supports the student council well in terms of its system, budget, administration, and culture” (Ryua M, Teacher Suh, Interview). In Hyukshin schools, student councils are not for show. They have real power that they reveal through decision-making and control of budgetary expenditures.

Teachers report that their students grow in their autonomy and in practices of democratic decision making through their classroom experiences and extracurricular activities. The students are then able to apply these lessons to the events and clubs that the student council runs. Students are empowered to make decisions on dress code, school rules, and other regulations that affect students.

This does not mean that students have complete autonomy in their student councils. Instead, teachers have a specific role in working with the students so that their judgment can be influenced with the creativity and sponsorship of adults. It matters to the teachers that, “아이들과 교사와의 신뢰가 높아져야 되는데 그게 수업을 바꾸니까 서로가 서로에 대한 신뢰가 높아졌어요,” “The trust between students and teachers should be high enough to achieve real growth in awareness. As students mature, the trust for each other should increase.” (Jeongsun M, Teacher Kwon, Interview). Students also have to check in continuously with school administrators.

Hyukshin school educators want to develop autonomous, democratic, and responsible students. One middle school teacher said of her students,

학생들은 졸업하고 나서 인근에 있는 고등학교에 가서 거의 간부를 휘쓸어요. 학생회 활동했던 했던 아이들은 당연하거니와 학생회 활동을 하지 않았던 아이들도 수업시간에 끊임없는 토론을 통해서 계속 리더십 훈련이 돼요.

Once they graduate, they go to the high schools nearby and many of them become the student body president of their schools. It's obvious for the students who were in student councils. Those who did not participate in student council continue leadership training through constant discussions in our classes regardless. (Jeongsun M, Teacher Jang, Interview).

**The Curriculum.** The curriculum is a defining feature of Hyukshin schools and their approach to innovation. Two themes were especially salient in our interviews with teachers about the curriculum:

- a) Equitable Education; and
- b) Exam Free Semesters.

***Equitable Education.***

Hyukshin educators want their curriculum to be open and transparent to everyone, so they convene monthly community meetings (Hansabong M, Teacher Lee, Interview). Even when unable to meet, teachers communicate with one another about topics relating to their curriculum and what has been effective “through Kakaotalk.” (Heesung M, HHD, Interview). The HHD at Heesung Middle School said that this is a large aspect of staff communication, with “176 people on Kakaotalk” (Heesung M, HHD, Interview). Through such meetings and follow-up conversations, education suggest that materials and assignments can be equally and fairly distributed to all Hyukshin students. One teacher at Chonwol Middle School explained,

“요즘에 강조되는 협업 뭐 이런 부분에 대한 그다음에 창의적인 사고 그런 게 없다라고 하면 그냥 학교가 지식위주의, 지식 전달위주의 학교 라고 하면 그런 지식은 이미 이제 인터넷을 통해서 다 습득할 수 있는 시대가 왔잖아요,”

We are of the generation that acquires knowledge through the Internet. School is meaningless if it is focused only on knowledge. That’s why we emphasize cooperation and creativity.” (Chonwol M, HHD Lee, Interview).

It was not clear to our research team, however, if it is possible to hold the kinds of deep and probing conversations educators need to have with one another through platforms such as Kakaotalk. While there doubtless is an element of creativity through such social networks, we are not sure if they contribute to professional judgment, or if they reinforce pre-existing beliefs at times.

### *Exam Free Semesters.*

Thanks to the 2015 National Curriculum Revision, semesters that are exam-free had become incorporated into all of the middle schools in our sample at the time of our visit to Seoul in October 2019. Instead of focusing solely on students' grades and course evaluations, the schools now “크게 뭐 크게 아이들의 이런 특기 적성을 키울 수 있는 뭐 여러 가지 체험이나 이런 것들로 하고 평가도 서술로 해라 이런 식으로 가고 있어요.” “focus on all kinds of activities that can develop students' talents. We have narrative evaluations instead of written evaluations” (Woolgook M, Teacher Yoo, Interview). Through this approach to evaluations, teachers and students are able to look at the bigger picture and develop students' ability to solve the problems in their lives (Chumhwa M, HHD Hwang, Interview).

Jeongsun Middle School teachers report that they have “저희는평가도 아이들이 사지 선단형 객관식 선택형 문제보다는 정말 자신의 생각을 쓰고 발표하고 만들어보고 그런 식으로 평가를 하기로 틀을 바꿔서 쪽 하고 있는데,” “been changing the assessments to write, present, and make students' own ideas and evaluate them in that way rather than through the case of multiple-choice questions that students did before” (Jeongsun M, Teacher Kwon, Interview). The exam-free semester—which has since evolved into an exam-free year—has shown students and teachers that there are different ways to assess learning. Teachers want to use assessments that induce less stress and are fair to all kinds of students.

To provide an overview of the shift that schools have experienced in recent years, a teacher from Hyunsa Middle School explained:

자유학기제는 박근혜 정부의 정책이었고 근데 맥락은 비슷한 게 뭐가 있었냐면 시험을 안 보잖아요. 그랬더니 실제로 수업 혁신이 일어나는 거예요. 선생님들이 진도 부담이 없으니까 다양한 수업 방법을 시도하고

수업 내용도 다양해지고 지역을 나가기도 하고 지역의 자원이 들어오기도 하고 이런 식의 수업 개선 시도가 확 일어난 게 자유학기제인 거 같아요.

The exam-free semester system was a policy implemented by the Park administration at the national level. Once there were no exams, Hyukshin kinds of assessment approaches occurred in many actual classes. Because the teachers are not pressured by a curriculum, they try a lot of different teaching methods and the curricular content became more diverse. There was more regional support for these kinds of attempts at improving classes which define exam-free semesters. (Hyunsa M, Teacher Hong, Interview).

This teacher emphasized that academic performance cannot be turned into a number, but, because parents often focus on such superficial matters, grading persists. He believed that educators in Hyukshin schools, in contrast, wanted to change prevailing concepts about academic achievement and such (Hyunsa M, Teacher Hong, Interview).

Some Hyukshin schools have been misconceived as “아이들을 놀게 한다,” “making students play” (Jeongsun M, Teacher Kwon, Interview), instead of focusing on exams.

According to one teacher, the biggest challenge is that the CSAT exam is against the spirit of Hyukshin schools (Jeongsun M, Teacher Jang, Interview). Another teacher also echoed “그다음 또 하나는 그 입시결과가 학생들한테 인생에 있어서 너무 큰 영향을 끼치는 거죠,” “the test result is just far too much of a determinant of students’ future lives” (Jeongsun M, Teacher Jang, Interview).

As a result of such pressures, Hyukshin schools have begun promoting the inclusion of what they call “life records,” or additional pieces of information on who the student is as a person, as well as the various activities they have been a part of outside of their academic classes. This differentiated body of evidence allows for Hyukshin students’ achievements to stand out, as “판 학교는 시험 봐서 점수만 냈기 때문에 점수밖에 없어요,” “other schools have only scores because they took exams” (Waehun H, Teacher Interview). This difference not

only becomes evident during the college entrance application, but it also shapes students throughout their school experiences. One teacher said that “보니 결국은 활동을 많이 하고 뭔가 자기 주도성이 높은 아이들이 더 유리하게 된 거죠,” “in the end, children who are self-directed while they are in school have more advantages” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

On the whole, the shifts experienced within Hyukshin schools have helped to “입시문제까지 싸워야 되는 상황이 되는 거죠,” “fight the college entrance examination” (Jeongsun M, Teacher Jang, Interview) and to prevail. As a result of public pressure in which Hyukshin schools played a leadership role, college entrance materials now include more than just test score results. The Korean Ministry of Education now enables all college applicants to include materials that go beyond traditional academics (*Jeonsi*) to include broader, more formative evidence of students’ growth and development (*Susi*). This is a major transformation of a system and a culture that still relies heavily on credentialism.

Based on the evolution of college entrance materials, Hyukshin teachers are optimistic. They acknowledge the benefits of Hyukshin schools on college entrance, in other respects. “그러니까 대학 전형이 바뀌었기 때문에 오히려 혁신학교가 더 메리트가 있다라고 저는 이야기할 수 있을 거 같아요,” “since the college entrance exam has changed, I think I can say that the Hyukshin school has more credibility” (Bongjoong H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

**A Clear Hyukshin Focus.** Hyukshin educators know that their school reform movement was not created in a vacuum. The SMOE, according to one middle school teacher, wanted to create “학생이나 교사나 학부모나 다 배우면서 공부할 수 있는 성장할 수 있는 그러니까 즐겁게 배우고 성장을 함께 나눌 수 있는 학교라고 저는,” “a school where students, teachers, parents can grow up and learn, so that they can enjoy learning and share their growth.” (Hansabong M, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Teachers want their HSSM to succeed. One said that “저희는 처음부터 수업 혁신만을 중심으로 하는 학교였어요,” “we've been focusing on classroom innovation since the beginning” (Ollim M, HHD Jeon, Interview). Another middle school teacher said,

근데 혁신학교에서도 어 모든 걸 다 이노베이션 할 수 없으니까, 이제 주력하는 부분이 여러 가지가 있는데 뭐 학생들의 생활 지도면이라든지 수업이라든지 몇가지로 나누는 걸로 알고 있는데 저희 학교는 그 중에서도 수업에 그 정말 학생과 교사가 상호작용을 하는 그 수업적인 측면을 좀 더 새롭게 해보자, 로 추진하고 있는 학교로 알고 있습니다, 저는.

But even in Hyukshin school, it is not easy to innovate with everything. There are some core foci in Hyukshin schools. These can be student life guidance or lessons. There are several branches. This school focuses on teaching, especially about the interactions between teachers and students. This school is motivated. We say things like ‘Let’s do something new about the lesson’. (Woolgook M, Teacher Kim, Interview).

In some ways it doesn’t seem to matter in particular, “자발성이라던지, 창의성이라던지, 아이들 민주성이라던지,” “whether it's autonomy, creativity, or children's democracy” (Heesung M, Teacher Yang, Interview) that is promoted in Hyukshin schools, teachers say. The heart of the matter is whether students feel that they are supported by teachers, that they have a chance to find a sense of meaning and purpose, and that they have a fair chance to succeed in their society.

### **Macrosystem: The Society**

The macrosystem “may be thought of as a societal blueprint for a particular culture or subculture” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40). The macrosystem centrally includes the values and beliefs of the society. It is an “overarching pattern,” that is in a constant state of evolution. In our interviews, two dimensions of the macrosystem were evident:

1. Community Focus; and
2. Future Focus.

**Community Focus.** Hyukshin schools aspire to be democratic. This entails that students both learn from and develop alongside with their neighboring communities. As part of their dedication to classroom innovation, some teachers have brought their lessons beyond the walls of the classroom to include the local community. One teacher at Chonwol Middle School explained:

저 같은 경우는 지금 마을과 결합할 수 있는 부분들, 또는 저는 기술이다 보니 메이커 교육이 들어와야 되는 부분들, 뭐 이런 것들 통해서 아이들이 다양한 경험을 할 수 있도록 해 주는 거.

In my case, I work on classes that engage with the town. Also, because I'm in charge of technology, I work on education that has to do with making things. In this way, students gain various experiences. (Chonwol M, HHD Lee, Interview).

By engaging with their local community and meeting various professionals, students are introduced to the concept of “네트워킹,” “networking” (Bongjoong H, HHD Ahn, Interview). This concept helps students to broaden their perspectives about the nature of their society and how it can be navigated, so that they can be successful in meeting their various needs after graduation. This also piques students' interest with respect to what they may want to choose as future careers, and thereby it fits with the Ministry of Education's 2015 National Curriculum Revision.

As part of their community focus, many Hyukshin schools incorporate aspects of environmental education that are relevant to their district into their curricula. Examples of such undertakings include, “야외 체험,” “field trips in the outdoors” (Samoon H, HHD Young, Interview), and “informational booths in classes or starting a trail non-profit at ecological festivals” (Hansabong M, HHD Choi, Interview). Hansabong Middle School in particular is highly regarded for its environmental education and a community garden that students and staff maintain (Hansabong M, HHD Choi, Interview). One math teacher said:

저는 아이들 생활지도를 하면서 아이들 스스로 생활 자기 행동을 좀 되돌아보고 그 다음에 또 어떤 지식적인 것에서 아이들이 되게 힘들어하면 체험적인 활동을 통해서 아이들이 그래도 뭔가 자기 자신을 깨닫고 자기의 어떤 내적인 힘이라고 해야 할까요? 그런 것을 자꾸 찾을 수 있는 어떤 환경은 체험할 때 생기거든요.

I as I guide a child's life / as I guide children's lives I want them to look back on their own behavior. When students find they have a hard time with knowledge, through experiential activities, they can better realize who they are and what kind of inner strength they have. Some environments help, where you can keep looking to experience new insights. (Hansabong M, Teacher Ma, Interview).

Teachers created events open to all communities across the HSSM, “교사를 모집을 해서 조직을 만들고,” “they would recruit teachers and organize events” (Chonwol M, HHD Lee, Interview), according to one HHD. One middle school science teacher stated that, in her experience, “그래서 계속 이게 힘을 실어 드려야 그래도 여러분들이 조금 자립하시면 많이 도움이 되지 않아요. 그래서 아이들 뿐만 아니라 선생님들도 같이 연대에서 서로 이렇게 같이 배우는 게 되게 중요하다는 생각을 여기 와서 많이 해요,” “we were encouraging each other. So, I think this is important in order to grow together. I think learning in groups and teaching each other is not only important to the students, but also to teachers” (Ollim M, HHD Jeon, Interview).

**Future Focus.** One part of innovation is the forward thinking that allows individuals to envision and plan for their future contexts and future outcomes. Thus, through classroom innovation, one is able to see the focus that Hyukshin education places on planning for the future via career exploration.

In an effort to promote future planning, many Hyukshin schools have included options for students to explore careers that interest them. Beyond the traditional options of going to university or into lucrative jobs that students in the past may have been directed toward,

Hyukshin educators want to give their students genuine choice in determining their own future careers.

Thanks to their exam-free semesters, Hyukshin schools are able to have the free time necessary for students to explore their career paths. So, there are many career experience activities. There are not only career exploration activities, but schools also provide career education. The Ministry of Education sends instructors who can provide career education (Heesung M, HHD, Interview). Many of these experiences begin for students in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, but some also continue into high school, depending on the specific school. For example, Bongjoong High School works in conjunction with the “동대문 수련관이라고,” Dongdaemun Training Center (Bongjoong H, HHD Ahn, Interview), to help students explore and choose their careers with the help of professional instructors.

In some schools, these experiences in career exploration go so far as to allow students to participate in apprenticeship style lessons (Woolgook M, Teacher Kim, Interview). In Heesung Middle School, the HHD shared an example as if a student wants to become a barista and wants to study the process, they can invite an instructor to school, or the student can go to a location to receive barista education (Heesung M, HHD, Interview). A Dosan High School teacher described such hands-on experiences: “수업 들을 수 없고, 드론도 체험시키고, 바리스타도 체험시키고,” “if you can't take classes, you can experience drones, you can experience baristas” (Dosan H, Teacher Lee, Interview).

One teacher summarized the shifts over time in terms of the differences exhibited between both traditional and Hyukshin schools. She said:

하나는 혁신학교에 있는 아이들은 자기 진로에 대한 고민이 빨리 시작돼요. 이 빠르다는 것은 두 가지 의미인데 실제 시기가 빠르다는 것 하고 실제 자기 고민을 빨리 한다는 거예요, 자기 고민을. 무슨 이야기냐.

다른 여타의 일반 학생들도 고민을 해요. 그런데 그 고민이 자기 고민이 아닌 경우가 많아요. 엄마의 바람, 아빠의 바람, 사회적인 통념, 우리 아이들도 거기에 많이 젖어 있어요. 그런데 다양한 그런 혁신학교의 다양한 프로그램 속에서, 다양한 지점에서 자기 자신을 만나게 되면서 비로소 그게 엄마의 바람이었는지 아빠의 바람이었는지 또는 사회적인 통념이었는지 아니면 나의 바람이었는지 나를 만날 시간이 많아지는 거죠. 그러면 그래서 자기한테 적합한 진로를 빨리 찾게 되고 그런 고민을 하는데 문제는 물론 그런 고민이 시작됐다고 해서 그만큼 가리란 보장은 여전히 많이 부족하긴 해요, 사회 상황 자체가. 어쨌든 자기 고민, 자기 자신의 고민을 빨리 시작했기 때문에 잘 찾아가지 않을까 또는 찾아가려고 싸우지 않을까 생각을 하는 거죠.

For example, students at Hyukshin school think about their careers early. The actual thinking period is earlier, and they think about themselves early as well. Students at general schools think and worry as well. But these worries are not their own worries. These worries are their parents' worries and social common ideas. The various programs at Hyukshin school allow students to reflect upon their own aspirations more. They will be able to see if choices they make are based upon their own aspirations or the expectations of someone else. Even though thinking early doesn't necessarily mean that they will go that far, but they get to find a career that is right for them. Since they were able to think about their own path early, they would not be fighting on whether they are going in the direction or not. (Jeongsun M, Teacher Jang, Interview).

Hyukshin schools aim to promote their students' autonomy in choosing their own career paths.

In this way, they enable students to engage with their own quest for meaningful and purposeful lives.

### **Discussion**

In this discussion, special attention will be placed upon both the complaints and suggestions expressed within the teacher interviews. The following will be broken down into:

1. Positive Comments;
2. Challenges; and
3. Suggestions.

**Positive Comments.** Among the teachers we interviewed, a number of individuals recognized positive changes they have experienced as a result of their time in the greater Hyukshin educational movement. Many teachers discussed not just the transformations of their schools, but also changes they themselves experienced personally. The HHD from Heesung Middle School explained that, through the ability to know and personally interact with students, the relationships she had formed influenced (Heesung M, HHD, Interview).

A math teacher at Namseoul Middle School expressed similar emotions, saying that “삶의 의미와 목적까지는 잘 모르겠는데,” “I didn’t know the meaning and purpose of life” (Namseoul M, Teacher Yoon, Interview). The relationships she formed with her students caused her to feel more favorably towards her job. Now, “학교에 오면 저도 같이 아이들과 함께 좀 행복하기는 해요 예전보다는,” “when I come to school, I’m happy to be with my students, as compared to before” (Namseoul M, Teacher Yoon, Interview).

Beyond the relationships formed with their students, teachers have also been positively impacted by their work with one another in many ways. Communities of professionals have been created to work alongside one another in delivering an innovative and comprehensive education to students. To explain the collaborative efforts they have experienced, the HHD from Hansabong Middle School stated:

그 선생님 바뀐 뒤로 가장 많이 바뀐 건 학교의 운영 시스템이에요.  
교사들의 의견이나 학생이나 학부모의 의견을 적극적으로 듣고  
반영하려고 하고 합의를 통해서 문제를 풀어가려고 하고 이런 것들이 가장  
많이 바뀌었고. 교사들이 하고자 하는 바에 교사 뿐만 아니라 학교  
학생들이 하려고 하는 일을 굉장히 적극적으로 지원을 해주세요.

The biggest change involves how the school is managed. I listen to and reflect on the opinions of teachers, students, and parents. I try to solve problems through consensus. Things have changed so much! We are very active in supporting what not only teachers, but also students, are trying to do. (Hansabong M, HHD Choi, Interview).

The high level of collaboration among faculty has allowed for Hyukshin schools to create a change in the essence of teaching itself. Another HHD, at a different middle school, explained:

그 전에는 가르침만 있었어요. 그리고 혼자 했어요, 선생님 혼자. 각자 각 교실에서 자기 반 아이들 데리고 내가 수업하는 반 아이들 데리고 각자 혼자 수업을 했어요, 자기 역량껏. 연대가 없었어요. 같은 학년, 같은 교과 연대가 전혀 없었어요. 그래서 각자 선생님들은 다 같이 열심히 했는데 아이들의 변화가 없었어요. 그 때 저희 되게 힘들었거든요, 학교가.

Previously there was only teaching. Teachers taught by themselves. Teachers were alone in their classrooms, they taught students by themselves to their full capacity. There was no solidarity among teachers. There was no solidarity at the same grade level, no solidarity even among teachers who taught the same subjects. Each teacher worked hard, but children didn't learn. We had a hard time. (Jeongsun M, HHD Yeom, Interview).

He continued, however, to explain that, after innovation occurred in their school, both teachers and students were able to experience positive changes. Through hard work, “수업도 조금씩 조금씩 변화된다 라고 하는,” “the class changes, little by little.” (Chonwol M, HHD Lee, Interview).

**Challenges.** As a relatively new part of the wave of educational change and reform that has been implemented in South Korea, the HSSM is not without its challenges. Some teachers expressed frustration about their experiences during our interviews with them.

One particular set of complaints that arose were those that centered around the theme of discipline. While many Hyukshin schools have sanctions in place, “징계위원회 같은,” “like a disciplinary committee” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview), one middle school teacher did not like it that “저희 학교는 벌점도 없고 특별히 정해진 벌이 거의 없는 편이에요,” “our school has no penalty points and there are few specifically set penalties” (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview).

One middle school HHD said that that students in the past had a stronger tendency to follow school rules and regulations, but kids have changed today (Heesung M, HHD, Interview). In some cases, even the parents of the students wish the teachers disciplined their classes more (Hyunsa M, Teacher Jung, Interview). They know that the Hyukshin aversion to the kinds of corporal punishment that were common in Korean schools in the past is an innovation, but they are ambivalent about the shift.

In regard to the parents and guardians of students, the greatest complaint teachers face is the remaining shift in parents understanding that, “지필평가,” “written work” (Yugok M, Teacher Kim, Interview) is no longer the only measure of achievement in their child’s education. Even some teachers assigned to work within Hyukshin schools have been wary of adapting innovative practices in their teaching. Due to it being such a shift from lecture-based learning, some teachers believe that classroom innovations do not lend themselves well to all subjects.

When teachers come from a teacher-centered environment, the shift towards running a student-centered classroom can be difficult. One mathematics teacher from Namseoul Middle School believed that the internal logic of her discipline made it better suited for lecture-based than student-centered learning. She said that she was, “부분에서는 한 7,80% 정도 만족하지만 사실 과목별로 특성이 있으니까 그 특성에 따라서 해야 된다고 생각하고,” “satisfied about 70 - 80% of the time, but there are specific characteristics of each subject, [and] so I think we should (teach) acknowledging its own disciplinary integrity” (Namseoul M, Teacher Yoon, Interview).

Other teachers supported their colleague in this belief and explained how even their students sometimes suggest there are too many group activities (모둠활동) (Ryua M, Teacher Moon, Interview). One Namseoul Middle School teacher said:

모둠 수업의 가장 큰 단점은 시끄러운 거고, 시끄러워서 예전부터 수업했었을 때 주변에서 되게 불만이 많았어요. 뭐 그게 단점이고. 그다음에 내용 전달이 아주 많이 되지는 않죠. 강의식 수업에 비해서... 모둠 수업의 장점은 뭐냐하면 교사의 의견이나 교사의 생각보다 다양한 학생들의 의견이 같이 공유되기 때문에 생각의 폭이 확장되요. 그다음에 학생들이 어떤 의사 표현이나 아니면 자기 생각을 정리하는 걸 잘 안다고 생각해요.

The biggest drawback of the group class is that it is so loud. There have been a lot of complaints from people around me about this. That's the downside. And then there's not a lot of content compared to the lecture format. The advantage of the group class is that the opinions of teachers and students are shared together, so the scope of thought expands. I think students learn how to express their opinions and to organize their thoughts. (Ryua M, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Students' scattered concentration, and difficulties involved in leading them to follow lesson plans, are two of the teachers' biggest concerns. One middle school teacher said, “특별히 여기선 그렇게 힘든게,” “it's especially hard in Hyukshin schools” (Ryua M, Teacher Lee, Interview).

Some teachers said that the networking approach of the HSSM could be strengthened. While some schools participate in professional learning networks or open classes to varying degrees, others do not. While some appreciate the freedom schools have to choose their own paths to improvement, one teacher said that “네트워크가 되게 면밀히 이어져있다는 생각은 잘 못하고 있는 것 같아요,” “I don't really think there's a very tight network,” (Jeongsun M, Teacher Kwon, Interview). This perspective is noteworthy given teachers' beliefs that it would be beneficial “저는 모든 선생님들의 방법을 공유할 수 있는 방법이 있으면 좋겠다고 생각해요,” “if there were a way to share teaching methods” (Chumhwa M, Teacher Kim, Interview).

Research (Choi, 2017; So, 2013; So & Hu, 2019) indicates that it is hard for teachers to change their pedagogies once these have become established through years of experience. Korean educators commonly experienced teacher directed, closed-text approaches to teaching when they themselves were in school and when they were trained as teachers. Consequently, when adjusting to the Hyukshin model, some teachers believe that “한 발 내딛는 게 제일 어렵죠,” “stepping out of the traditional mindset is the most difficult part” (Moongok M, Teacher Noh, Interview). Teachers are “수업 조직 문화의 변화 이런 거에 대한 두려움이 있고요,” “afraid of changing the usual ways their classes work” (Moongok M, Teacher Noh, Interview).

### **Suggestions**

At the end of our interviews, we asked teachers if they had any suggestions of things that could be changed for the better in the HSSM. Teachers had several ideas that they shared with our research team. We are reporting their suggestions here and do not necessarily agree with all parts of them.

First, teachers found that the practice of rotating teachers and administrators in and out of schools every five years did not match well with the developmental needs of educators to adjust to Hyukshin schools. Further, in some schools, one administrator would be appointed by the SMOE, while another would have been elected by school staff. This made for a rather schizophrenic leadership culture, some educators told us. One HHD contended that for Hyukshin schools, “직접 선출이 사실은 가장 좋아요. (...) 교장 선출제 이런 것들이 되게 필요할 것 같아요,” “direct elections are best. We should elect our principals” (Hansabong M, HHD Choi, Interview).

If such a system were put into place, Hyukshin school leaders would be able to ensure that principles are disseminated throughout the schools. When traditional administrators have been placed in Hyukshin school at random, on the one hand, they frequently feel unprepared to lead innovation. On the other hand, when the schools have democratically elected administrators, Hyukshin schools will be able to keep up the 4th industrial revolution (Chonwol M, HHD Lee, Interview).

Second, many teachers spoke about outside pressures that have hindered their innovations. One middle school teacher said that, “모든 사람이 똑같이 그게 아무리 좋은 거라도. 모든 사람이 똑같이 뭔가를 해서 똑같은 결과를 내야한다고 생각하는. 그런 생각을 좀 하지 않았으면 좋겠고,” “regardless of how good traditional learning is, I think everyone should abandon the thought that everyone should do the same thing to get the same result” (Namseoul M, HHD Kim, Interview).

On the whole, teachers were optimistic about the future of Hyukshin schools. They found that “학생들이 참여하는 과정이 많아지면 많아질수록 이게 결국 혁신으로 가는 방향이다,” “the more students participate in the process, the more they end up heading toward innovation” (Hyunsa M, Teacher Jung, Interview). They were hopeful that Hyukshin schools would contribute to a broader renewal and improvement of Korean education.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the comprehensive teacher input, four of our own suggestions for change may be considered. First, many teachers seem to believe that introducing a more streamlined approach to networking, through options such as PLCs and PLNs, may help schools across the movement share ideas on classroom innovation in a more effective manner. By streamlining these approaches, teachers will be able to more easily access and utilize other approaches and

methodologies, shared between schools and school districts. Secondly, some teachers, particularly newly arrived staff, may benefit from a series of teacher trainings where they can be introduced to Hyukshin principles. Through this, appointed staff who have previously had no experience in Hyukshin schools can learn how to best approach innovative lesson plans with an open mind.

Third, it became clear through the teacher interviews that some subjects may benefit from increased flexibility in the curriculum in relation to classroom innovation. For example, mathematics or science courses may benefit from a balance of classroom innovation and the traditional, lecture style courses on the foundations of each topic, which may be more conducive to the learning process than group discussions or projects. Finally, and most importantly, teachers across many of the schools expressed a belief that students need to engage in freedom *with* responsibility, in order to best engage with classroom innovations. This may be provided via a guided lesson, leading them into their autonomous futures with a focus on an appropriate understanding of boundaries and responsibility.

## **Discussion**

The Hyukshin school movement in Korea began through grassroots initiatives by parents and teachers in rural schools to reconceptualize the nature of schooling so that it could better serve the needs and interests of their children (Chung, 2011). It rapidly spread and by 2009 it was introduced to Gyeonggi, the largest school system in Korea, by Superintendent Kim Sang-Gon. From there it spread to Seoul, the capital city, in 2010, and then throughout the country. The election of progressive superintendents in 13 of Korea's 17 provinces in 2014 provided further support for the Hyukshin movement and "has been dramatic in reshaping the national landscape of education in subsequent years" (Sung & Lee, 2018, p. 240). Its aspirations for a new way of educational change have been ambitious. One of its advocates, the Superintendent of the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education (SMOE), has contended that "the Hyukshin school movement was not only an experiment in Korean education, but is also a model of educational reform in post-industrial society" (Cho, 2018, p. 11).

A confluence of social and educational forces has supported the rise of the Hyukshin school movement. First, a generation of change leaders, forged in the student movement to overthrow the country's military dictatorship in 1987, understood the relationship between education and democracy and wished to secure their mutual support in defense of human rights. Second, while Korea has taken pride in its outstanding achievement on international large-scale assessments such as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (OECD, 2014), these data (OECD 2017a, 2017b) have also shown that many Korean students may also experience low levels of life satisfaction. Third, the country is trying to find its way between the maintenance of a traditional, Confucian, East Asian style of teaching and learning and newer, alternative

approaches. In particular, Manabu Sato's "School as Learning Community" (SLC) is often cited (Pang, 2016; Sato, 2019; Shin & Son, 2019; Sung, Lee, & Choi, 2016) as an inspiration for the Hyukshin movement. The gentle and humanistic support of dialogue and dignity for all stakeholders has won SLC many admirers and advocates. Consequently, it has been disseminated not just throughout East Asia but also across the world, sparking important innovations and adaptations in Australia, Norway, Taiwan, Vietnam, and the United States.

Three interacting levels of concern—in terms of (i) strengthening the link between democracy and education, (ii) promoting student well-being, and (iii) clearing the way for the emergence of alternative ways to enact teaching and learning—characterize the Hyukshin movement. There is great respect for the individual autonomy of students, horizontal relationships of inquiry and dialogue among teachers, and the active participation of parents and community members in the process of education. The specifically Korean character of the Hyukshin school movement warrants attention. For example, the promotion of democracy and education may be an attractive slogan for those who take their rights for granted, but for the Hyukshin educators who were expelled from the profession for many years because of their activism against the dictatorship, it is a deeply felt moral imperative. Likewise, a trend towards rising levels of student anxiety and depression around the world must be addressed; given the high levels in Korea, this is a priority for the Ministry of Education (So, 2020). Finally, calls for the improvement of teaching and learning are evident virtually everywhere, but given the persistence of rote memorization, "closed text" approaches to instruction, and competition for a narrow sliver of openings in top universities, the Korean educational system appears especially ripe for innovation.

According to the SMOE, Hyukshin schools in Seoul promote five fundamental values. For the first value of *human rights and peace*, each school should aim to respect human rights and provide a safe learning environment. For the second value of *responsibility and public spirit*, the school should strive to support moral values that are needed for the formation of a free and just society. For the third value of *self-determination and creativity*, a school should create a student-centered curriculum based on each school's conditions. For the fourth value of *initiative and participation*, the school should respect students, teachers, parents, and the local community in their aspirations to create a truly democratic school. Last, for the fifth value of *communication and collaboration*, a Hyukshin school in Seoul should aim to create a school that collaborates and communicates with the community.

Noble as these values are, their attainment has been difficult for educators in recent years. Korean society has not been immune to internationally felt pressures to privatize education, to promote testing for accountability purposes, and to prioritize tested subjects over electives and extracurricular activities (Sung, 2011). In spite of the lower results on international assessments in the US, Korea has adopted similar testing practices in recent years (Sung & Lee, 2017). The country introduced census-based testing of all secondary school students on the National Assessment of Educational Achievement (NAEA) examinations in the sixth, ninth, and eleventh grades in the subjects of English, science, math, and social studies. School results were published hierarchically, and schools that fail to meet pre-established standards have been penalized. More recent reforms may have changed some of these practices. While this may have contributed to gains in some subjects at some grade levels in some schools, it also appears to have contributed to the same kinds of curricular distortions that are found in many other school systems around the world (Abrams, 2016; Shirley, 2017; So & Kang, 2014).

Ironically, some of the very same national curriculum reforms that elevate more market-oriented and test-based approaches to school improvement have been combined with efforts to encourage students to exercise independent judgment in choosing electives, and in honing their abilities to collaborate with others in small groups or when developing presentations (Sung, 2011). Likewise, efforts to promote student choice and joy in learning co-exist with heightened pressures for them to exercise consumer judgment in maximizing their strategic advantage in the educational marketplace and to endorse the dominant educational ideologies. Market-oriented approaches appear to co-exist comfortably with an inherited East Asian culture of teaching and learning in which respect for teachers, fidelity to texts, and the legitimacy of examinations are venerated. Thus the promotion of democratic norms, egalitarian values, and a highly participatory culture for students, educators, and parents all working together to better their schools and their society seems likely to confront contradictions and difficulties.

The HSSM faces three major challenges in this environment. First, secondary teachers undergo a particular kind of professionalization that develops identities which place a premium on expert knowledge and not on the kinds of democratic commitments or concern for student well-being that are favored by the Hyukshin movement. Research (Choi, 2017; So, 2013; So, Shin, & Son, 2010) indicates that some teachers actively resist reformers' efforts to introduce open classes. They view them as irrelevant and intrusive impositions. Even more innocuous forms of PLCs that do not involve others in observing and potentially criticizing their instruction are sometimes seen as beside the point and a waste of time. Defenders of the status quo in Korea point to the country's "condensed modernization" as indicating a successful blend of Confucian morality, entrepreneurial capacity, and selective appropriation of the strengths of other schools and systems.

Second, the CSAT primarily measures students' cognitive abilities, and while efforts have been made in recent years to include social and developmental indicators as well, ones that might address matters like initiative and character, it is not clear that these are important for admission to the country's most prestigious "SKY" universities (Seoul National University, Korea University, and Yonsei University). Our school profiles and cross-case analyses provide abundant data that indicate how much students and parents worry about the CSAT. While they appreciate the electives and extracurricular activities the HSSM offers, they worry that these are of minor significance when admissions committees review applicants' files at the higher education level.

Third, students and parents may view the values espoused by Hyukshin educators as laudable in theory, but ultimately impractical, given the competitive nature of contemporary Korean schools and society. While the themes of student voice and parent engagement are popular in North American and Australian research (Charteris & Smardon, 2017; Mitra, 2018; Quaglia & Corso, 2014), it should be noted that students and parents often are opponents of educational change. If these groups view reformers' aspirations as idealistic and not grounded in the reality of how society and the world actually work, they can undermine educators' well-intentioned reforms. They can instead pursue individualistic agendas that they view as best aligned with their chances to attain status and power in the long run. We spoke with many parents who, in principle, liked their child's Hyukshin school, but felt that the teaching in their Hagwon was more essential to success. In this way parents sustain the traditional "grammar of schooling" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995) in spite of their sympathies with the HSSM.

Educators' professional socialization, the pressures of the CSAT, and the reluctance of students and parents to wholly embrace the principles and practices of the HSSM are formidable obstacles to the success of this change model. This explains why Professor Kyunghee So (2020, p. 174) of Seoul National University has written that "Despite reforms in the school education system, there has been little change in actual school practice." As is the case in many countries, even when progressive superintendents are in power and encourage educators to try out new things, "the unchanging textbook system, college entrance exam, and government-imposed academic content all limit teachers' agency." (So, 2020, p. 179). For this reason, "teachers stick to their own ways of teaching and wait for the government to be replaced, rather than enthusiastically responding to the reforms" (So, 2020, p. 176).

Nonetheless, it is clear from our data that there is also a craving for a different kind of education in Seoul. In our interviews, students conveyed how much they enjoyed interdisciplinary classes, creative experiential activities, and extra-curricular activities like their student councils. Teachers are not a monolithic group, and our data indicated that younger teachers especially appreciated the freedom to redesign their classes so that they were more participatory and democratic. Midcareer and older teachers, even if more cautious generally, acknowledged the many opportunities they were given to hone their professionalism. While it was difficult for some school leaders to share power with others, their determination to put democratic norms and protocols into place in their schools was admirable. Even those parents who worried about insufficient academic emphasis in the HSSM acknowledged the real benefits that their children were experiencing by attending schools where educators went to extra lengths to get to know their students well.

Hyukshin schools, then, are meeting a real societal need. They form a vanguard in promoting the kinds of commitments to democratic education, student well-being, and character education that have appeared in numerous curricular revisions and policy reforms in Korea in recent years. While our interviews surfaced points of contention in the schools—for example, when teachers disliked open classrooms because of the extra work involved, or when student councils made judgments that others viewed as lacking in social responsibility—it must be recalled that schools are complicated places in which many different perspectives, personalities, and values are at play. We did not find anything in our data to indicate that the core principles of the HSSM are not well aligned with the current challenging moment in educational change. Rather, we found the opposite: The HSSM provides an alternative approach to education with great potential, as it enters its second decade in Seoul.

## **Recommendations**

Our research findings lead us to nine recommendations for the improvement of Hyukshin schools in Seoul:

1. *Expand supports for PLCs, classroom innovation, and open classrooms.* Some of the schools we studied had flourishing classroom innovations under way, but others struggled to transform teaching and learning in accord with Hyukshin principles. Educational change is difficult, and many goals of the HSSM require teachers to fundamentally rethink their identities as educators and their everyday interactions with their colleagues, students, and parents. To meet these challenges, there appeared to be a need for greater technical expertise, as well as sufficient emotional support, in the provision of effective ways to scaffold teachers' learning, so that they are able to grow in confidence and competence.
2. *Establish a PLN* to facilitate communication and learning across the HSSM. High quality innovation is occurring in the schools, but it is scattered and shared unevenly. Administrators in particular often seemed isolated and felt that when they met with colleagues their meetings were procedural and did not help them to address challenges that they faced in leading Hyukshin schools. A well-resourced PLN could ensure that transformational practices in schools are brought to light rapidly and shared efficiently. This PLN could also serve an important public relations role. This is important, since it appears that some Koreans have negative stereotypes about Hyukshin schools.

3. *Anchor the PLN in a university or establish it as a non-profit organization.* Placing the PLN under the auspices of a trusted third-party entity will give it a measure of independence that will encourage innovations. It will ensure that the PLN is used for learning, and not for purposes of surveillance and control. If the PLN is placed in a higher education institution, it should not be isolated, but should instead be charged with providing meeting spaces, technical support, and regular interaction for Hyukshin educators.
4. *Establish an ombudsman's office with protocols and support for resolving conflicts in schools.* Our research shows that many common issues of educational change are apparent in the Hyukshin schools, but there did not appear to be protocols for resolving conflicts. Our informants identified tensions between those who were active in the KTU and those who were not, between younger and older teachers, and between students and teachers about matters of autonomy and authority. While most of these issues can be resolved within schools, it is at times helpful to have a third party from outside of the school to assist with re-establishing harmony and recovering momentum.
5. *Consider ways to connect Hyukshin and non-Hyukshin schools.* All educators in Korea now should be following the democratic principles of the 1995 national curriculum revision and the innovative guidelines of the 2015 Ministry of Education reforms calling for interdisciplinary curricula, creative experiential activities, and career education. These reforms are congruent with the mission of Hyukshin schools in Seoul. However, our interviews did not uncover evidence of educators in the HSSM learning from schools outside of their network or vice-versa. We suspect there

may be some non-Hyukshin schools in Seoul that are also experimenting with their pedagogies and curricula. Educators and their students could benefit from greater communication and exchange across the school system.

6. *Redesign the nature of school-university partnerships to promote the HSSM.* One model for this would be the creation of “laboratory school” relationships between a university and a Hyukshin school. Based in a formal relationship between the two entities, the university will conduct research focusing on HSSM needs. The university will also provide on-going professional development. HSSM schools will provide a site for rigorous research, and they will modify their practices based on the evidence collected. In general, more constant feedback and support is needed to build sustainability and ongoing improvement of the HSSM. Even though three universities in Seoul offer masters’ degrees in Hyukshin education, we learned little about how these universities were uplifting HSSM-style learning. There are many ways that universities are working with schools around the world that both give educational practice a conceptual depth and provide educational theory with empirical evidence. We encourage the universities and the SMOE to study these models and, insofar as is practically possible, to encourage universities to make sure that they teach about the HSSM so that teachers do not arrive in Hyukshin schools unprepared.
7. *Conduct research to explore the relationship between academic and non-academic processes and outcomes in the HSSM.* Hyukshin schools are at the vanguard of schools in Seoul in promoting a broader vision of excellence and achievement than has been the case previously in the SMOE. The HSSM is aligned with many international trends in education today, such as those that give greater attention to

student well-being, socio-emotional learning, and character education. This is producing a more balanced vision of the education of the whole person, one that is not easily reconcilable with the emphasis upon preparation for the CSAT and credentialism that is still widespread in Korean society. While the SMOE cannot on its own transform this culture, it can conduct work with its educators to incorporate issues such as the education of the whole person toward lives of meaning and purpose more centrally into its goals for the system. This points towards issues about the evolution of Korean society that lie beyond the scope of this report, but nonetheless merit consideration as the HSSM continues to evolve in its second decade.

8. *Revisit innovations and innovative uses of funding to spread Hyukshin principles and practices.* After the COVID pandemic, education has been changed dramatically and will never go back. HSSM can lead a change in education at this historical moment. When schools apply for Hyukshin status, we propose that applicants indicate how their extra funding will contribute to the uplift of other schools in the SMOE. Examples of innovation could include (a) a conference for student councils to exchange ideas and experiences; (b) support for clusters of teachers to generate their own research on their best practices in areas like small group work or interdisciplinary curricular design; or (c) the generation and publication of protocols that are used in providing feedback to teachers in open classrooms.
9. *Enhance the visibility of Hyukshin schools internationally.* The HSSM has stood the test of time and is now entering its second decade in Seoul. Outside of Korea, however, the HSSM is not well known among practitioners and researchers. This lack of recognition deprives schools of the valuable resource of critical friends who share

similar values, are undergoing similar challenges, and can bring fresh ideas to the challenges of leading change. There is no need for Hyukshin schools at this stage of their development to be reticent about sharing their achievements. Educators elsewhere could benefit from their experiences and from their collegiality.

## References

- Abrams, S. (2016) *Education and the commercial mindset*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Adamson, F. Astrand, B., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016) (Eds.) *Global education reform: How privatization and public investment influence education outcomes*. New York: Routledge.
- Ainscow, M. (2015). *Towards self-improving school systems lessons from a city challenge*. Routledge.
- Armstrong, P. W., Brown, C., & Chapman, C. J. (2020). School-to-school collaboration in England: A configurative review of the empirical evidence. *Review of Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3248>
- Bourdieu, P. (1985) 'Forms of capital' in J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory of Research for the Sociology of Education*. Greenwood Press, pp. 241–258.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Ecological models of human development. In *International Encyclopedia of Education*, 3(2), 37-43. Oxford: Elsevier.
- Charteris, J., & Smardon, D. (2018) Student voice in learning: Instrumentalism and tokenism or opportunity for altering the status and positioning of students? *Pedagogy, Culture, and Society* 27(2), 305-323.
- Cho, H.Y. (2018). Beyond the authoritarian and statist educational system: Hyukshin School as an experiment in Korean school innovation and a model of East Asian educational reform

- In: Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education (Ed.) *Policies and practices of Hyukshin Schools in Seoul: Selected Writings*. Seoul: Author, 7-22.
- Choi, T-H. (2017) Hidden transcripts of teacher resistance: A case from South Korea. *Journal of Educational Policy* 32(4), 480-502.
- Chung, B. (2011) A qualitative study of self-initiated change in South Korea. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation) Chestnut Hill, MA: Lynch School of Education.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Crippen, C. (2005). The democratic school: First to serve, then to lead. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, (47).
- Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education. An introduction to the philosophy of education*. The Macmillan Company.
- Fullan, M. (2001) *The new meaning of educational change*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Greenleaf, R. K. (1970). *The servant as leader*. The General Center for Servant Leadership Publisher.
- Hargreaves, A. & Fink, D. (2006) *Sustainable leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Hargreaves, A., & Shirley, D. (2009) *The fourth way: The inspiring future of educational change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Hargreaves, A., & Shirley, D. (2012) *The global fourth way: The quest for educational excellence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

- Hargreaves, A., & Shirley, D. (2018) *Leading from the middle: Spreading learning, well-being, and identity across Ontario*. Toronto, ON: Council of Ontario Directors of Education.
- Hwang, J.I. (2016). 교육부, 2016 전국 100 대 교육과정 우수학교 선정 결과 발표.  
Retrieved from <http://www.civilreporter.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=39249>.
- Jang, S.B. (2019) Considering the Hyukshin school policy and education for promoting democracy in South Korea. *The Journal of Social Studies Education in Asia* 8, 27-33.
- Kang, M.O. (2012). Chapter 6: Why not national standardized testing? A Policy ecologies analysis regarding national testing in South Korea and its impacts on democratic education. *Counterpoints*, 427, 89-109. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42981836>.
- Kim, D. (2018). Elementary English learners' use of reading strategies with culturally relevant and culturally distant stories. *Journal of Language, Identity and Education*, 1-19.
- Lee, H.B. (2018). Aspects of curriculum-lesson-assessment and student participation in Hyukshin School. In *Policies and practices of Hyukshin Schools in Seoul: Selected Writings*, 57-70.
- Lee, S.K., & Bong, M. (2017) Social and emotional learning as a solution for adolescent problems in Korea. In: Freydenberg, E., Martin, A.J., & Collie, R.J. (Eds.) *Social and emotional learning in Australia and the Asia-Pacific*. Singapore: Springer.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. London, UK: Sage.
- Little, J. W. (1990). The persistence of privacy: Autonomy and initiative in teachers' professional relations. *Teachers College Record*, 91(4), 509-536.
- Mehta, J., & Fine, S. (2019) *In search of deeper learning: The quest to remake the American high school*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Ministry of Education (1995) *The school curriculum of the Republic of Korea*. Gyeonnggi-do: Author.
- Ministry of Education (2009). *The Explanation of Creative Experience Activities Curriculum in Elementary, Middle, High School Levels*. Gyeonnggi-do: Author.
- Ministry of Education (2015) *The national curriculum for the primary and secondary schools*. Gyeonnggi-do: Author.
- Ministry of Education. (2016) *Education in Korea*. [August version] Gyeonnggi-do: Author.
- Ministry of Education (2019) *Character Education Promotion Act*. [December version] Gyeonnggi-do: Author.
- Mitra, D.L. (2008) *Student voice in school reform*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Moore, S.M. (2019) *Where teachers thrive: Organizing schools for success*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Noguera, P. A. (2002). Beyond size: The challenge of high school reform. *Educational Leadership*, 59(5), 60-64.
- OECD (2014) *Lessons from PISA for Korea: Strong performers and successful reformers in education*. Paris: Author.
- OECD (2017a) PISA 2015 results (Volume 3): *Students' well-being*. Paris: Author.
- OECD (2017b) *Country note: PISA result from PISA 2015 students' well-being*. Paris: Author.
- Pang, J.S. (2016) Improving mathematics instruction and supporting teacher learning in Korea through lesson study using five practices. *Mathematics Education* 48, 471-483.

- Park, S.Y. (2017) Clarifying the characteristics and exploring the collaboration of citizenship and character education in South Korea. *Journal of Social Science Education* 16(3), 22-28.
- Quaglia, R.J., & Corso, M.J. (2014) *Student voice: The instrument of change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Sato, M. (2019) Spread and progress of school as learning community in Asia. In: Tsukui, A., & Murase, M. (Eds.) *Lesson study and schools as learning communities: Asian school reform in theory and practice*. New York: Routledge, 3-13.
- Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education (2019) (Ed.) *Policies and practices of Hyukshin Schools in Seoul: Selected Writings*. Seoul: Author.
- Shin, J. & Son, W. (2019) School reform practices through building learning community in Korea: Toward restructuring the image of learning. In: Tuskui, A. & Murase, M. (Eds.) *Lesson study and schools as learning communities: Asian school reform in theory and practice*. New York: Routledge, 45-58.
- Shirley, D., & MacDonald, E. (2016) *The mindful teacher*. (2<sup>nd</sup> edition.) New York: Teachers College Press.
- Shirley, D. (2017) *The new imperatives of educational change: Achievement with integrity*. New York: Routledge.
- Shirley, D., & Hargreaves, A. (2021) *The five paths of engagement: Blazing the trail to learning and success*. Indianapolis, IN: Solution Tree.

- Shirley, D., Hargreaves, A., & Washington-Wangia, S. (2020) The sustainability and unsustainability of teachers' and leaders' well-being. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 92, 1-12.
- So, K. (2013) Knowledge construction among teachers within a community based on inquiry as stance. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 29, 188-196.
- So, K. (2020) Whom is the national curriculum for? Politics in the national curriculum system of South Korea. In: Fan, G., & Popkewitz, T.S. (Eds.) *Handbook of Education Policy Studies*. Singapore: Springer, 165-184.
- So, K. & Hu, Y. (2019) Understanding creativity in an Asian school context: Korean teachers' perspectives. *Thinking Skills and Creativity* 33, 1-9.
- So, K., & Kang, J. (2014). Curriculum reform in Korea: Issues and challenges for twenty first century learning. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 23(4), 795-803. Doi: 10.1007/s40299-013-0161-2.
- So, K., Shin, J., & Son, W. (2010) A comparative study of classroom teaching in Korea and Japan: A case study on reforming schools into learning communities. *Asia-Pacific Education Review* 11, 273-283.
- Song, S.L. (2018). The growth and significance of Hyukshin school. In *Policies and practices of Hyukshin Schools in Seoul: Selected Writings*, 23-37.
- Sung, Y.K. (2011) Cultivating borrowed futures: The politics of neoliberal loanwords in South Korean cross-national policy borrowing. *Comparative Education* 47(4), 523-538.
- Sung, Y.K., Lee, Y., & Choi, I.S. (2016). Contradiction, mediation, and school change: An Analysis of the pedagogical practices in the Hyukshin School in South Korea. *KEDI Journal of Educational Policy*, 13(2), 221-244.

Sung, Y.K., & Lee, Y. (2018). Politics and the practice of school change: The Hyukshin School movement in South Korea. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 48(2), 238-252. Doi: 10.1080/03626784.2018.1435976.

Sung, Y-K, Lee, Y. & Choi, I-S. (2016) Contradiction, mediation, and school change: An analysis of the pedagogical practices in the Hyukshin school in South Korea. *Korean Journal of Educational Policy* 13(2), 221-244.

Synott, J. (2007). The Korean Teachers and Educational Workers Union: Collective Rights as the Agency of Social Change. *International Electronic Journal for Leadership and Learning*. 11(23). Go to: <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Korean-Teachers-and-Educational-Workers-Union%3A-Synott/f01cbc03f38f953cd632c4824ce4dfb04f99550f>

The Seoul Research Data Service. (2016). 2016 Seoul Survey. Seoul Open Data Plaza. <https://data.seoul.go.kr>

Tyack, D., & Cuban, L. (1995) *Tinkering toward utopia: A century of public school reform*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wallace, M. (2003). Managing the Unmanageable?: Coping with Complex Educational Change. *Educational Management & Administration*, 31(1), 9–29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263211X030311002>

Wortham, S., Love-Jones, R, Peters, W., Morris, S., & García-Huidobro, J. (2020). Educating for Comprehensive Well-being. *ECNU Review of Education*, 3(3), 406–436. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2096531120928448>

Yang, J. & Tan, C. (2019) Advancing student-centric education in Korea: Issues and challenges.

*Asia-Pacific Educational Research* 28(6), 483-493.

You, R.J. (2007). 전인교육 실현에 관한 고찰 - 초·중등학교 교육을 중심으로. *교육논총*, 26(2), 217-245.



## **Appendix**



BOSTON COLLEGE

LYNCH SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

## Interview Protocol

### English

We are conducting this study because we are trying to understand how educators and students are experiencing teaching and learning in Hyukshin Schools. We know that educational change is difficult and that many educators, students, and parents want a more student-centered, cooperative, and democratic school system in Korea.

We are trying to understand how education in the Hyukshin schools is understood by diverse constituencies. That is why we are grateful for your assistance in this research.

Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in this project. I will ask you some general questions to get us started in talking about your impressions of education in Hyukshin schools.

Please feel free to chime in with your own impressions and thoughts at any point. We are interested in your story.

### Korean

이 연구는 혁신학교에서 교육자와 학생이 경험하는 교수와 학습을 이해하기 위해 설계되었습니다. 우리는 교육에서의 변화가 얼마나 힘든 것인지 알고 있습니다. 많은 교사와 학생, 학부모들은 한국의 교육 시스템이 더 학생 중심이고 협동적이며 민주적인 방향으로 나아가길 원하고 있습니다.

우리는 혁신학교 교육을 다양한 지반 위에서 이해하려고 노력할 것입니다. 선생님/학생/부모님께서 그 과정에 큰 도움을 주실 것이며 이에 저희 팀은 부모님께 감사를 표합니다.

저희의 연구에 참여해주셔서 다시 한번 감사드립니다. 지금부터 혁신학교 교육에 대한 몇가지 일반적인 질문으로 설문을 시작하도록 하겠습니다. 자유롭게 부모님의 느낌이나 생각을 말씀해주시요. 선생님/학생/부모님의 어떤 이야기라도 저희는 관심이 있습니다.



BOSTON COLLEGE

LYNCH SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

### a. Teacher

1. What is your name? 성함이 어떻게 되십니까?
2. Please tell me your educational background, teaching experience, and current position. 학력과 교육 경력, 나이, 현 근무 직책을 말씀해주세요.
3.
  - a. Can you think of the first time you ever heard of Hyukshin schools? Please describe briefly. 처음 혁신학교에 대한 이야기를 들었을 때 어떤 생각이 들었나요? 간략히 말해주세요.
  - b. Can you think of the time that you heard that your school was chosen to be the Hyukshin school? Please describe briefly. 혁신학교로 된다고 들었을 때 어떻게 생각했어요?
  - c. How would you describe what the Hyukshin school means to the people who are not familiar with the Hyukshin school? 혁신학교에 대해서 외부인에게 대해 설명한다면 어떻게 할까요?
  - d. Please tell us the story of your experiences with education in Hyukshin schools in general. 혁신학교에 대한 전반적인 경험을 들려주세요.
  - e. Please describe some of your experiences working with Hyukshin innovation as one educational change model. 교육 변화 모델의 일환으로 '혁신' 운동을 적용시켰던 선생님의 사례를 들려주세요.
  - f. What do you like most about the model? 혁신 모델에서 어떤 부분이 가장 마음에 드십니까?
  - g. What do you find difficult or challenging about it? 혁신 모델에서 무엇이 가장 어렵고 도전적이었습니까?

- h. When you experience difficulty with the Hyukshin approach, who do you turn to for help? 혁신 접근으로 어려움을 겪을 때 누구에게 도움을 청하십니까?
  - i. What do you think might be the most common misconception about Hyukshin schools? 혁신학교에 대한 가장 일반적인 오해는 무엇이라고 생각하십니까?
  
- 4. What are your views about the role of education in helping people to develop meaning and purpose in their lives? 사람들의 삶의 의미와 목적을 발전시키기 위한 교육의 역할은 무엇이라고 생각하십니까?
  - a. Can teachers develop a sense of meaning and purpose in their work? If so, how? 교사는 그들의 일을 통해 삶의 의미와 목적에 대한 의식을 키워줄 수 있을까요? 만약 그렇다면, 어떻게 그것이 가능한가요?
    - 1) How a teacher thinks of the meaning and purpose of her/his life
    - 2) How a teacher help their students to find their meanings and purposes of life
  - b. How do you feel that students can find meaning and purpose through their education? 학생들이 교육을 통해 삶의 의미와 목적을 찾을 수 있다는 점에 대해 어떻게 생각하시나요?
  
- 5. How do you feel that Korean schools in general and Hyukshin schools in particular are doing with providing young people with a sense of meaning and purpose? 한국의 일반교육과 특히 혁신학교가 젊은이들에게 삶의 의미와 목적을 제공하는 일에 대해서 어떻게 생각하십니까?
  - a. In what ways could giving students more opportunities to pursue their interests in non-competitive school environments help young people to develop lives of meaning and purpose? 학생들에게 경쟁적이지 않은 학교 환경에서 자신의 관심사를 추구할 많은 기회를 주는 것이 삶의 의미와 목적을 발달시키는데 어떤 방식으로 도움이 될 것이라 생각하시나요?
  
- 6. Educators' work lives are very busy and many demands are placed upon them. Does Hyukshin education make your work easier or more difficult? 교육자로서 우리는 바쁘고 때론 많은 요구도 받습니다. 혁신 교육이 당신의 일을 더 쉽게 만들었나요 아니면 더 어렵게 만들었나요?

- a. How do the principles of Hyukshin schools influence your everyday work? 혁신학교의 기본 원칙이 당신의 일상 업무에 어떤 영향을 주고있습니까?
  - b. Are you observing positive transformations of education through Hyukshin schools? 혁신학교를 통해 교육의 긍정적인 변화가 나타나고 있다고 생각합니까?
  - c. Do you ever learn from other schools in the Hyukshin network? If so, please provide examples. 혁신 네트워크 안의 타 학교에서 무언가를 배운 적이 있습니까? 그렇다면 예시를 들어 주십시오.
  
7. What are your views about the future of education? 한국 교육의 미래에 대해 어떻게 생각하십니까?
  - a. To what extent do you feel optimistic? Pessimistic? 어느 정도로 낙관적이십니까? 아니면 어느 정도로 비관적으로 느끼십니까?
  
8. What are your thoughts about the socio-political landscape with respect to the future of education? 한국의 정치 상황이 교육의 미래에 어떤 영향을 미칠 것으로 보십니까?
  - a. How do you think shifting political winds might affect education in the Hyukshin schools? 변화하는 사회정치적 상황이 혁신학교 교육에 어떻게 영향을 미칠 것이라 생각하시나요?
  - b. Do you support the concept of a more democratic school system? What does that mean to you? 당신은 한국의 민주적인 학교시스템이라는 개념을 지지하십니까? 그 개념이 당신에게 어떤 의미가 있습니까?
  - c. How can political engagement help to provide young people with meaning and purpose? If so, how should schools promote their students' political engagement? 정치적 참여가 학생들의 삶의 의미와 목적을 탐색하는 것에 어떤 도움이 된다고 생각하십니까? 만약 도움이 된다면, 학교가 학생들의 정치적 참여를 어떻게 장려해야 한다고 생각하십니까?
  
9. How do you think of academic performance?
 

학업 성취에 대해서 어떻게 생각하나요?

10. Do you have any final thoughts that you would like to share with us about Hyukshin schools? 혁신학교에 대해 마지막으로 나누고 싶은 생각이 있으십니까



BOSTON COLLEGE

LYNCH SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

## b. Student

1. What is your name, grade, and school? 이름, 학년, 학교가 어떻게 되나요?
2. When and how did you come to be a student at this school? 언제, 왜 이 학교에 오기로 결정했어요?
3. Please tell us about your experiences in your school. 이 학교에서 어떤 경험을 했나요?
4. What are the differences of this school from other schools? 이 학교와 다른 학교 차이가 뭐예요?
5. How do your parents think about Hyukshin schools? 부모님은 혁신학교에 대해 어떻게 생각하세요?
6. Would you recommend this school to other students? Why or why not? 이 학교를 다른 친구한테 추천하고 싶나요? 왜 그렇게 생각하나요?
7. Please tell us the story of your school activities (i.e., classroom activities, extracurriculars, school events) and in Hyukshin schools in general. 학교 활동(예. 교실 수업, 방과후, 학교 행사) 들과 혁신학교 전반적인 것에 대해서 이야기를 해주세요.
8.
  - a. What are your favorite school activities in Hyukshin school and why? 혁신학교에서 가장 좋았던 학교 활동은 무엇인가요, 왜 그렇게 생각하나요?
  - b. What are some types of school activities that have helped your personal development, and why? 어떤 학교 활동들이 자신을 성장시키는 데 도움이 된 것 같나요, 왜 그렇게 생각하나요?
9. What classes, activities or events inspire you to think about the meaning of your life? 어떤 교실 수업, 활동, 행사들이 삶의 의미와 목적을 생각하게 해주었나요?
10. What kind of person do you want to be? 어떤 사람이 되고 싶어요?

11. Do you feel more comfortable to participate in class discussions or activities in Hyukshin school? Why or why not? 혁신학교에서 교실 토론과 활동들을 할 때 더 편안하게 느껴지나요, 왜 그렇게 생각하나요?
12. What do you think about your relationship with your teachers? Do you think Hyukshin schools improve student-teacher relationships? If yes, would a more established student-teacher relationship help you be more engaged in school? 학교 선생님이랑은 관계가 어때요? 혁신학교가 학생과 선생님의 관계를 더 좋게 하나요? 그렇다고 생각한다면, 학생과 선생님의 관계가 잘 다져졌을 때에 학교에 더 참여하고 소속되어 있다고 느끼게 하나요?
13. Please tell us how you perceive your academic performance. In what ways, if any, does your school help you to improve your academic performance? Does it help more or less than in a traditional school? 자신의 **학업능력** 면에 대해서 어떻게 생각하는지 이야기해주세요. 이 학교가 공부하는 데 어떤 방식으로 도움을 주나요? 다른 일반학교랑 비교했을 때 더 도움이 되나요, 아니면 도움이 덜 되는 것 같나요?
14. Do you think emphasizing other factors (ex: extracurricular, morals & ethics) assists you academically? Why or why not? 학교에서 여러 활동, 예컨대 방과후 활동이나 윤리 등을 강조하는 데 이런 면이 학업 활동에 도움이 되나요? 왜 그렇게 생각하나요?
15. Would collaborative classes overcome a sense of competition among students, and will this yield a positive or negative effect? Explain why such effect could happen. 협동 활동이 학생들 간의 경쟁심을 극복하게 하나요? 이런 활동이 긍정적인 효과가 있나요 아니면 부정적인가요? 왜 그런 효과가 일어나는 것 같은지 설명해주세요.
16. Please tell about your open class experiences. How do you feel about them? 공개 수업 경험에 대해서 이야기해주세요. 어떻게 느꼈나요?
17. Please tell us your experience of interdisciplinary classes in Hyukshin schools. 혁신학교에서 교과 간 수업을 합치는 주제 중심 수업에 대한 경험을 이야기해주세요.
18. What are your teachers' teaching styles? How do you think about the values that your teachers emphasize in lessons (i.e. creativity, democracy, and so forth)? 학교 선생님의 수업 스타일은 어떤가요? 선생님이 수업에서 어떤 가치를 강조하나요? 예컨대 독창성, 민주성, 또 다른 것이 될 수도 있어요.

19. When and what advantages do you have as a Hyukshin School student, compared to traditional school students? 혁신학교 학생으로서, 다른 학교 학생들이랑 비교했을 때 어떤 이점이 있는 것 같아요?
20. What motivated or not motivated you to choose this school? 이 학교를 오려고 결정하는 데 어떤 것들이 영향을 주었나요? 동기가 무엇인가요?
21. How do you feel about your school climate? Do you think it is democratic? If yes, why do you think so? If not, why not? What does democracy mean to you? 학교 전반적인 분위기에 대해서 어떻게 생각해요? 민주적인 것 같아요? 왜 그렇게 생각해요? 민주주의가 어떤 의미인 것 같아요?
22. What do you think is important in life? 삶에서 어떤 게 중요한가요?
23. What are the important moral values that you would like to pursue? How does your school help you develop a sense of moral values? 삶에서 추구하는 어떤 윤리적 가치가 있나요? 어떻게 이 학교가 그걸 추구하도록 도와 주나요?
24. What are the most important lessons you've learned in your Hyukshin school? 혁신학교에서 배운 중요한 삶의 레슨이 있나요?
25. What are the characteristics of a Hyukshin school that you wouldn't have had a chance to experience in a non-Hyukshin school? 혁신학교가 아닌 학교에서는 경험할 수 없는 혁신학교 만의 특별한 점은 어떤 것 같아요?
26. What values and meaning do you think teachers and principal emphasize in this school? To what extent do you agree or disagree, and why? 학교 선생님과 교장선생님이 어떤 것에 가치를 두고 의미를 두는 것 같아요? 거기에 대해 동의하나요, 왜 그렇게 생각하나요?
27. Does your school help you pursue what you think is most important in life? If so, please tell us. 학생이 중요하다고 생각하는 것을 학교가 추구하도록 도와 주나요? 그렇게 생각한다면 자세히 이야기해주세요.
30. Has your school changed what you think is important to do with your life? 학교가 학생이 인생에서 중요하다고 생각하는 것을 바꾸게 했나요?



BOSTON COLLEGE

LYNCH SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

### c. Parents

1. What is your name, educational background, and current work or role?  
성함이 어떻게 되십니까? 본인의 학력과, 현재 직업 및 직책을 말씀해주세요.
2. What do you hope your child will learn in a Hyukshin school?  
혁신학교에서 자녀가 어떤 것들을 배우길 기대하십니까?
3. What do you think about the activities emphasized in your child's Hyukshin school?  
자녀의 혁신학교가 중점을 두고 있는 활동들에 대하여 어떻게 생각하십니까?
4. Challenges and benefits: What do you worry about? What do you feel satisfied about in the Hyukshin school?  
혁신학교에 대한 걱정이 있습니까? 만족하고 있는 점은 어떤 부분입니까?
5. Did you choose for your child to attend a Hyukshin school and if so, why?  
자녀를 혁신학교에 보내는 것을 본인이 결정하셨습니다까? 만약 그렇다면, 왜 그런 결정을 하셨습니까?
6. Do you get involved in this school? If so, tell us what you do.  
학교 활동에 참여하고 있으십니까? 만약 그렇다면, 어떻게 참여하고 있으십니까?
7. Do you see any positive / negative changes in your child since attending this school?  
혁신학교를 다닌 후 자녀에게서 긍정적이거나 부정적인 변화를 목격하셨습니다까?
  - A. Are you pleased with your child's academic achievement? 자녀의 학업 성취에 대하여 만족하십니까?
  - B. Do you think a traditional school would do better with academics? 일반 학교가

자녀의 학업 성취에 더 긍정적일 것이라고 생각하십니까?

C. Are you pleased with the development of your child's personality? 자녀의 인성 발달에 만족하십니까?

D. Is your child happy? 당신의 자녀는 행복하다고 생각하십니까?

E. Is your child being assisted in developing a sense of direction and a meaning and purpose in life? If so, how? 당신의 자녀가 삶의 의미와 목적을 찾아가는 것에 학교로부터 도움을 받고 있다고 생각하십니까? 만약 그렇다면, 어떻게 도움을 받고 있습니까?

F. Do you think it is important for schools to help students develop a sense of meaning and purpose? 학교에서 학생들의 삶의 의미와 목적을 발전시키는 것이 중요하다고 생각하십니까?



BOSTON COLLEGE

LYNCH SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

## 서울시 교육자 설문조사

선생님 안녕하세요?

저희 연구팀은 서울시교육청의 학교혁신정책을 국제협력 관점에서 비교, 분석하기 위해 설문을 진행하고자 합니다. 설문에는 학교 구성원의 삶의 의미와 목적에 대한 인식, 학교 혁신에서의 주안점에 대한 인식 등을 확인하기 위한 문항이 포함되어 있습니다. 다소 문항 수가 많지만 연구의 목적에 맞추어 설정된 것이므로 성의있게 답변해주시면 큰 도움이 되겠습니다.

참여해 주셔서 감사합니다.

아래에 표기함으로써, 설문조사 절차와 본인에게 요구되는 일이 무엇인지 이해하며, 자발적으로 설문조사에 참여하는 것임을 확인합니다.

- 설문조사 참여에 동의합니다.
- 설문조사 참여에 동의하지 않습니다.

1. 현재 재직중인 학교 이름이 무엇입니까?

---

2. 학교가 소재한 지역 (구)를 선택해주세요.

- 강남구
- 강동구
- 강북구
- 강서구
- 관악구
- 광진구
- 구로구

- 금천구
- 노원구
- 도봉구
- 동대문구
- 동작구
- 마포구
- 서대문구
- 서초구
- 성동구
- 성북구
- 송파구
- 양천구
- 영등포구
- 용산구
- 은평구
- 종로구
- 중구
- 중랑구

3. 학교에서 맡은 역할을 선택해 주세요. (해당하는 모든 항목에 체크해 주세요.)

- 교장선생님
- 교감선생님
- 업무부서 부장(혁신업무 부장)
- 학년부장
- 교사

4. 2020 년에 어떤 과목을 지도하고 있나요? (해당하는 모든 항목에 체크해 주세요.)

- 국어
- 수학
- 사회
- 영어
- 과학
- 체육
- 음악
- 미술
- 도덕
- 제 2 외국어 (예, 독일어, 중국어 등) - 명시해주세요

- 
- 한문
  - 기술
  - 가정
  - 정보
  - 진로
  - 기타 - 명시해주세요 \_\_\_\_\_

5. 2020 년에 어떤 학년을 지도하고 있나요? (해당하는 모든 항목에 체크해 주세요.)

- 중학교 1 학년
- 중학교 2 학년
- 중학교 3 학년
- 고등학교 1 학년
- 고등학교 2 학년
- 고등학교 3 학년

6. 교직에 계신 기간이 얼마나 됩니까?

- 1 년 이상 ~ 5 년 미만
- 5 년 이상 ~ 10 년 미만
- 10 년 이상 ~ 15 년 미만
- 15 년 이상 ~ 20 년 미만
- 21 년 이상

7. 성별이 무엇입니까?

남자

여자

기타

8. 연령대를 알려주세요.

20 ~ 29 세

30 ~ 39 세

40 ~ 49 세

50 ~ 59 세

60 세 이상

9. 최종학력을 표기해 주세요.

학사

석사

박사

10. 몇 년도에 현재 소속된 학교에서 근무를 시작했나요?

1970

1971

1972

1973

1974

1975

1976

- 1977
- 1978
- 1979
- 1980
- 1981
- 1982
- 1983
- 1984
- 1985
- 1986
- 1987
- 1988
- 1989
- 1990
- 1991
- 1992
- 1993
- 1994
- 1995
- 1996

- 1997
- 1998
- 1999
- 2000
- 2001
- 2002
- 2003
- 2004
- 2005
- 2006
- 2007
- 2008
- 2009
- 2010
- 2011
- 2012
- 2013
- 2014
- 2015
- 2016

- 2017
- 2018
- 2019
- 2020

11. 현재 재직 중인 학교에 어떻게 근무하게 되셨나요?

- 발령받았다
- 전입요청 또는 초빙되었다 (예시. 교장공모제, 교사초빙제)

12. 현재 혁신학교에 재직중인가요?

- 네
- 아니오

13. 현재 소속된 학교에 오기 전, 혁신 학교에서 근무한 경험이 있나요?

- 네
- 아니오

*Display This Question:*

*If 현재 혁신학교에 재직중인가요? = 네*

*Or 현재 소속된 학교에 오기 전, 혁신 학교에서 근무한 경험이 있나요? = 네*

14. 혁신학교에서 근무하신 전체기간을 년차로 선택해주세요.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

15. 왼쪽 항목 중 당신의 인생에서 가장 의미 있는 세 가지를 클릭하여 오른쪽 박스에 하나씩 옮겨 놓으세요.

1 순위	2 순위	3 순위
_____ 직업에서의 성취	_____ 직업에서의 성취	_____ 직업에서의 성취
_____ 나의 꿈과 목표	_____ 나의 꿈과 목표	_____ 나의 꿈과 목표
_____ 나의 행복	_____ 나의 행복	_____ 나의 행복
_____ 후회없는 삶	_____ 후회없는 삶	_____ 후회없는 삶
_____ 물질적 안정	_____ 물질적 안정	_____ 물질적 안정
_____ 가족과의 관계	_____ 가족과의 관계	_____ 가족과의 관계
_____ 친구와의 관계	_____ 친구와의 관계	_____ 친구와의 관계
_____ 학교 동료와의 관계	_____ 학교 동료와의 관계	_____ 학교 동료와의 관계
_____ 교장, 교감선생님과의 관계	_____ 교장, 교감선생님과의 관계	_____ 교장, 교감선생님과의 관계
_____ 학교 공동체 구성	_____ 학교 공동체 구성	_____ 학교 공동체 구성
_____ 사회적 지위와 명예	_____ 사회적 지위와 명예	_____ 사회적 지위와 명예

\_\_\_\_\_ 사회 공익 추구

\_\_\_\_\_ 사회 공익 추구

\_\_\_\_\_ 사회 공익 추구

16. 앞에서 선택한 세 가지 항목을 인생에서 가장 의미가 있다고 생각한 이유를 적어주세요.

---

---

---

---

---

17. 본인의 삶의 목적이 무엇인지 분명하게 알고 있나요?

- 분명하게 알지 못한다.
- 조금 분명하게 알고 있다.
- 어느 정도 분명하게 알고 있다.
- 상당히 분명하게 알고 있다.
- 매우 분명하게 알고 있다.

18. 무엇이 본인의 삶을 의미 있게 하는지 얼마나 잘 알고 있나요?

- 전혀 이해하지 못한다.
- 조금 이해하고 있다.
- 어느 정도 이해하고 있다.
- 상당히 잘 이해하고 있다.
- 매우 잘 이해하고 있다.

19. 당신이 만족할만한 삶의 목적을 찾았는지 얼마나 확신하나요?

- 전혀 확신하지 못한다.
- 조금 확신한다.

- 어느 정도 확신한다.
- 상당히 확신한다.
- 매우 확신한다.

20. 당신의 삶이 가치있게 느껴지도록 만드는 것들이 무엇인지 분명하게 이해하고 있나요?

- 분명하게 이해하지 못한다.
- 조금 분명하게 이해하고 있다.
- 어느 정도 분명하게 이해하고 있다.
- 상당히 분명하게 이해하고 있다.
- 매우 분명하게 이해하고 있다.

21. 당신은 인생의 장기 목표를 이루기 위해 얼마나 열심히 노력하고 있나요?

- 전혀 노력하지 않는다.
- 조금 노력하고 있다.
- 어느 정도 노력하고 있다.
- 상당히 노력하고 있다.
- 매우 노력하고 있다.

22. 당신은 일상에서의 목표를 이루기 위해 얼마나 노력하고 있나요?

- 거의 노력하지 않는다
- 조금 노력하고 있다.
- 어느 정도 노력하고 있다.

상당히 노력하고 있다.

매우 노력하고 있다.

23. 당신은 스스로 세운 계획을 수행하는데 얼마나 노력하나요?

전혀 노력하지 않는다

조금 노력한다.

어느 정도 노력한다.

상당히 노력한다.

매우 노력한다.

24. 당신의 하루 일과 중 얼마 만큼이 인생의 장기 목표를 이루는데 역할을 하나요?

전혀 역할을 하지 않는다.

조금 역할을 한다.

어느 정도 역할을 한다.

대부분 역할을 한다.

전부 역할을 한다.

25. 당신은 세상을 더 좋은 곳으로 만들고 싶다는 생각을 얼마나 자주 하나요?

거의 안한다.

가끔 한다.

때때로 한다.

자주 한다.

거의 항상 한다.

26. 당신은 더 넓은 세상을 위해 의미 있는 역할을 하고싶다는 생각을 얼마나 자주 하나요?

거의 안한다.

가끔 한다.

때때로 한다.

자주 한다.

거의 항상 한다.

27. 세상을 어느정도 더 나은 곳으로 만드는 것이 당신에게 얼마나 중요한가요?

전혀 안 중요하다.

약간 중요하다.

어느 정도 중요하다.

상당히 중요하다.

매우 중요하다.

28. 당신은 자신이 하는 일이 다른 사람들에게 긍정적인 영향을 미치기를 바란다는 생각을 얼마나 자주 하나요?

거의 안한다.

가끔 한다.

때때로 한다.

자주 한다.

거의 항상 한다.





33. 올해 학교 내에서 근무하는 교육자에게 교육과정과 교수학습에 관한 조언 또는 정보를 구했나요? 해당하는 교육자의 직위, 교과목, 담당 학년을 알려주세요.

	직위	과목	담당 학년	빈도					조언과 정보를 구한 이유
				일주일 에 3회 이상 (1)	일주일 에 1- 2회 (2)	한 달에 1- 2회 (3)	한 학 기 에 1- 2회 (4)	1년에 1-2회 (5)	
교육 자 A (1)	▼ 교장선 생님 (1... 학습공 동체 (6)	▼ 국어 (1... 해당없 음 (18)	▼ 중학교 1 학년 (1... 해당 없음 (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	▼ 학교 운영모델 중 초점을 두는 점이 비슷해서 (1... 동일한 연구 공동체에 소속되어 있어서 (6)



35. 올해 타 학교에서 근무하는 교육자에게 교육과정과 교수학습에 관한 조언 또는 정보를 구했나요? 해당하는 교육자의 직위, 교과목, 담당 학년을 알려주세요.

\*담당 학년: 담임교사이며 여러 학년을 담당할 시, "담임"인 학년을 선택해 주세요.  
 담당하는 학년이 없을 시 "해당 없음"을 선택해 주세요.

교육자 C (1)	직위	과목	담당 학년	빈도					조언과 정보를 구한 이유
				일주일 에 3회 이상 (1)	일주일 에 1- 2회 (2)	한 달에 1- 2회 (3)	한 학 기 에 1- 2회 (4)	1년에 1-2회 (5)	
▼ 교장선 생님 (1... 학습공 동체 (6)	▼ 국어 (1... 해당없 음 (18)	▼ 중학교 1 학년 (1... 해당 없음 (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	▼ 학교 운영모델 중 초점을 두는 점이 비슷해서 (1... 동일한 연구 공동체에 소속되어 있어서 (6)	

37. 학교에서 자신의 인생이나 생각에 변화를 준 계기나 상황에 대해 설명해주세요.

---



---



---



---



BOSTON COLLEGE

LYNCH SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

### 서울시 학생 설문조사

학생 여러분 안녕하세요?

본 설문조사는 학생들이 학교에서의 만남과 배움을 통해 어떻게 삶의 의미와 목적을 키워가는지 이해하기 위해서 진행합니다. 성심껏 답변해주시기 부탁드립니다.

설문조사의 참여는 자발적이며, 중간에 참여를 중단하더라도 학생 개인에게 부정적인 영향이 가해지지 않습니다. 본 설문에는 정답이나 오답이 없으며, 답변 내용은 공개되지 않을 것입니다. 설문조사에 참여해 주셔서 감사합니다.

아래에 표기함으로써, 설문조사 절차와 본인에게 요구되는 일이 무엇인지 이해하며, 자발적으로 설문조사에 참여하는 것임을 확인합니다.

- 설문조사 참여에 동의합니다.
- 설문조사 참여에 동의하지 않습니다.

1. 현재 재학중인 학교 이름을 적어주세요.

---

2. 학교가 소재한 지역 (구)를 선택해주세요.

- 강남구
- 강동구
- 강북구
- 강서구
- 관악구
- 광진구
- 구로구
- 금천구

- 노원구
- 도봉구
- 동대문구
- 동작구
- 마포구
- 서대문구
- 서초구
- 성동구
- 성북구
- 송파구
- 양천구
- 영등포구
- 용산구
- 은평구
- 종로구
- 중구
- 중랑구

3. 현재 재학중인 학교가 혁신학교인가요?

- 네
- 아니요

4. 현재 학년을 선택해 주세요.

- 중학교 1학년
- 중학교 2학년
- 중학교 3학년
- 고등학교 1학년

고등학교 2 학년

고등학교 3 학년

5. 성별이 무엇입니까?

남

여

6. 다음 중 집에서 사용하는 언어를 모두 선택해 주세요.

한국어

영어

중국어

일본어

베트남어

태국어

필리핀어 (타갈로그어)

크메르어

몽골어

기타 \_\_\_\_\_

7. 다음 분들의 출생지가 한국입니까?

네

아니오

아버지 또는 다른 남성 보호자

어머니 또는 다른 여성 보호자

본인

8. 다음은 다양한 사람들을 묘사하는 12 가지의 시나리오를 포함하고 있습니다. 자신의 현재 모습이 각 시나리오에 묘사되고 있는 사람에 비해 어떤지 선택해 주세요. 다음을 주의 깊게 읽고 각 시나리오에 묘사되는 사람이 자신에 비해 어떤지 생각하고 선택해 주세요.

나래는 자신의 삶의 목적이 무엇인지 분명하게 알고 있습니다. 삶의 의미가 무엇인지 항상 고민하고, 또한 삶의 가치가 무엇인지 이해하기 위해 많은 노력을 기울입니다.

나는 나래보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷하다

나는 나래보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷한 것 같다

나는 나래와 삶의 방향성이 비슷하다

나래가 나보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷한 것 같다

나래가 나보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷하다

준서는 자신의 삶의 목적이 꽤 분명하며, 무엇이 중요한지 정기적으로 생각하려고 노력하는 편입니다.

- 나는 준서보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷하다
- 나는 준서보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷한 것 같다
- 나는 준서와 삶의 방향성이 비슷하다
- 준서가 나보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷한 것 같다
- 준서가 나보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷하다

현지는 자신의 삶의 목적이 어느 정도 분명한 편입니다. 현지는 삶의 가치가 무엇인지 때때로 생각하고, 무엇이 삶을 의미 있게 하는지 이해하기 위해 노력하는 편입니다.

- 나는 현지보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷하다
- 나는 현지보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷한 것 같다
- 나는 현지와 삶의 방향성이 비슷하다
- 현지가 나보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷한 것 같다
- 현지가 나보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷하다

비록 도윤이는 삶의 목적이 무엇인지 확실하지 않지만, 때때로 무엇이 삶을 더 의미 있게 만들어 주는지 생각하려고 노력하는 편입니다.

- 나는 도윤이보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷하다
- 나는 도윤이보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷한 것 같다
- 나는 도윤이와 삶의 방향성이 비슷하다
- 도윤이가 나보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷한 것 같다
- 도윤이가 나보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷하다

재호는 가끔 무엇이 자신의 삶을 만족스럽게 하는지에 대해 생각해 보지만, 무엇이 삶을 의미 있게 하는지 이해하기 위한 실질적 노력을 기울이지 않습니다. 그래서 삶의 목적이 전혀 명확하지 않습니다.

- 나는 재호보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷하다
- 나는 재호보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷한 것 같다
- 나는 재호와 삶의 방향성이 비슷하다
- 재호가 나보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷한 것 같다

- 재호가 나보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷하다

미경이는 자신의 삶의 목적이 없고, 삶의 가치가 무엇인지 생각하는데 아무런 시간이나 노력을 들이지 않습니다.

- 나는 미경이보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷하다
- 나는 미경이보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷한 것 같다
- 나는 미경이와 삶의 방향성이 비슷하다
- 미경이가 나보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷한 것 같다
- 미경이가 나보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷하다

찬수는 자신의 목표를 실현하는 방법을 알고 있으며, 목표를 달성하기 위해 끊임없이 많은 노력을 기울입니다.

- 나는 찬수보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷하다
- 나는 찬수보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷한 것 같다
- 나는 찬수와 삶의 방향성이 비슷하다
- 찬수가 나보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷한 것 같다
- 찬수가 나보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷하다

은비는 자신의 목표를 달성하는 방법을 알고 있다고 믿고 있습니다. 자신의 목표를 실현하기 위한 노력을 적극적으로 하고 있으며, 더 노력할 수 있기를 원합니다.

- 나는 은비보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷하다
- 나는 은비보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷한 것 같다
- 나는 은비와 삶의 방향성이 비슷하다
- 은비가 나보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷한 것 같다
- 은비가 나보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷하다

한결이는 자신의 목표가 어떻게 실현될 수 있는지 안다고 생각합니다. 그는 가끔 목표를 실현하기 위해 노력하는 편입니다.

- 나는 한결이보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷하다
- 나는 한결이보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷한 것 같다
- 나는 한결이와 삶의 방향성이 비슷하다

- 한결이가 나보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷한 것 같다
- 한결이가 나보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷하다

지영이는 자신의 목표를 실현하는 방법에 대해 어느 정도 확신하지만, 실현시키기 위한 노력은 거의 하지 않습니다.

- 나는 지영이보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷하다
- 나는 지영이보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷한 것 같다
- 나는 지영이와 삶의 방향성이 비슷하다
- 지영이가 나보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷한 것 같다
- 지영이가 나보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷하다

인호는 자신의 계획을 어떻게 실현할 수 있는지 잘 모릅니다. 비록 목표를 이루기 위한 활동에는 거의 참여하지 않지만, 목표를 향한 노력을 어느정도 하는 편입니다.

- 나는 인호보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷하다
- 나는 인호보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷한 것 같다
- 나는 인호와 삶의 방향성이 비슷하다
- 인호가 나보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷한 것 같다
- 인호가 나보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷하다

동현이는 자신의 목표를 실현하는 방법을 모르며, 목표를 향한 시간이나 노력을 들이지 않습니다.

- 나는 동현이보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷하다
- 나는 동현이보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷한 것 같다
- 나는 동현이보다 삶의 방향성이 비슷하다
- 동현이가 나보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷한 것 같다
- 동현이가 나보다 삶의 방향성이 더 뚜렷하다

8. 다음에 제시된 문구들을 자신의 인생에서 가장 의미 있는 순서대로 순위를 정해주세요. (1)에는 가장 의미 있다고 생각하는 문구를, (6)은 가장 덜 의미있다고 생각하는 문구를 배치하면 됩니다. 클릭하셔서 위아래로 제시된 문구들의 순서를 바꿀 수 있습니다.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 나의 행복
- \_\_\_\_\_ 나의 꿈과 목표
- \_\_\_\_\_ 후회없는 삶
- \_\_\_\_\_ 학업성취도
- \_\_\_\_\_ 친구와의 관계
- \_\_\_\_\_ 가족과의 관계

9. 왜 [선택사항]이/가 자신의 삶에 가장 의미가 있나요?

---

---

---

10. [선택사항]이/가 중요한 삶의 의미로 형성되는 데 다음 중 어떤 요소들이 가장 영향을 주었나요? (3 개까지 선택가능)

- 부모님의 영향
- 친구들의 영향
- 선생님의 영향
- 학교 수업의 영향
- 학교 축제
- 학생 자치기구의 영향 (예시: 학생회, 학생단체)
- 학교 동아리 활동
- 교내 방과후 활동
- 학원의 영향
- 과외의 영향
- 책의 영향
- 미디어 영향
- 사회적 기대
- 기타 \_\_\_\_\_

11. 본인의 학교가 다음 사항들에 관해 얼마나 도움이 되고 있습니까? 학교 선생님, 친구들, 수업, 동아리 활동, 축제 등 전체적인 경험을 고려하여 답해 주세요.

	학교가 전혀 도움이 안된다	학교가 약간 도움이 된다	학교가 적당히 도움이 된다	학교가 꽤나 도움이 된다	학교가 많은 도움이 된다
내 꿈을 실현하기 위해 노력하는 것	<input type="radio"/>				
내 진로를 찾는 것	<input type="radio"/>				
나에게 의미있는 것이 무엇인지 이해하는 것	<input type="radio"/>				
내 감정을 이해하는 것	<input type="radio"/>				
행복감 형성	<input type="radio"/>				
삶의 만족감 형성	<input type="radio"/>				
결단력 형성	<input type="radio"/>				
자율적인 학습능력 형성	<input type="radio"/>				
적극적인 수업 참여도	<input type="radio"/>				
내 생각을 표현할 수 있는 능력	<input type="radio"/>				
타인에 대한 관심	<input type="radio"/>				
글로벌 이슈에 대한 관심	<input type="radio"/>				
민주적 가치에 대한 이해도	<input type="radio"/>				
시민 도덕성 형성	<input type="radio"/>				
윤리적 마인드 형성	<input type="radio"/>				

12. 본인의 학교 생활과 개인적 성향에 따라 다음 내용에 얼마나 동의하는지 선택해 주세요.

	매우 동의하지 않는다	동의하지 않는다	동의하지도 반대하지도 않는다	동의한다	매우 동의한다
나는 수업시간 중 토론활동에 기여를 한다.	<input type="radio"/>				
나는 우리 모두가 목표를 성취할 수 있도록 이끌 수 있다.	<input type="radio"/>				
나는 친구들과 다양한 주제로 의사소통하는 것을 즐긴다.	<input type="radio"/>				
나는 상황에 따라 의사소통 방법이 달라진다.	<input type="radio"/>				
나는 내 의사소통 능력을 발전시키기 위해 노력한다.	<input type="radio"/>				
나는 수업에 적극적으로 참여하지 않는다.	<input type="radio"/>				
나는 호기심이 많다.	<input type="radio"/>				
나는 새로운 해결책을 생각해 내는것이 어렵다.	<input type="radio"/>				
나는 떠올린 아이디어를 행동으로 옮긴다.	<input type="radio"/>				
나는 문맥 안에서 핵심내용을 잘 발견할 수 있다.	<input type="radio"/>				
나는 문제를 해결할 때 다양한 방법으로 접근한다.	<input type="radio"/>				
나는 학교에서 배운 지식을 실제 상황에 적용한다.	<input type="radio"/>				
나는 지식을 암기하기보다 능동적으로 지적 학습에 참여하고 있다.	<input type="radio"/>				
나는 사회에서 일어나는 현상을 교과 학습과 연관지어 분석할 수 있다.	<input type="radio"/>				
나는 학교에서 기본 지식을 잘 쌓고 있다.	<input type="radio"/>				
나는 학교에서 다양한 수업 방식을 통해 학습하고 있다.	<input type="radio"/>				
나는 우리 학교에서 학문적으로 더 깊이 있게 성장하고 있다.	<input type="radio"/>				
나는 우리 학교를 다니면서 진로가 뚜렷해졌다.	<input type="radio"/>				

13. 자신의 삶의 목적이 무엇인지 얼마나 분명하게 알고 있나요?

- 분명하게 알지 못한다.
- 조금 분명하게 알고 있다.
- 어느 정도 분명하게 알고 있다.
- 상당히 분명하게 알고 있다.
- 매우 분명하게 알고 있다.

14. 무엇이 자신의 삶을 의미 있게 하는지 얼마나 잘 이해하고 있나요?

- 전혀 이해하지 못한다.
- 조금 이해하고 있다.
- 어느 정도 이해하고 있다.
- 상당히 잘 이해하고 있다.
- 매우 잘 이해하고 있다.

15. 당신이 만족할만한 삶의 목적을 찾았는지 얼마나 확신하나요?

- 전혀 확신하지 못한다.
- 조금 확신한다.
- 어느 정도 확신한다.
- 상당히 확신한다.
- 매우 확신한다.

16. 당신의 삶이 가치있게 느껴지도록 만드는 것들이 무엇인지 분명하게 이해하고 있나요?

- 분명하게 이해하지 못한다.
- 조금 분명하게 이해하고 있다.
- 어느 정도 분명하게 이해하고 있다.
- 상당히 분명하게 이해하고 있다.
- 매우 분명하게 이해하고 있다.

17. 당신은 인생의 장기 목표를 이루기 위해 얼마나 열심히 노력하고 있나요?

- 전혀 노력하지 않는다.
- 조금 노력하고 있다.
- 어느 정도 노력하고 있다.
- 상당히 노력하고 있다.
- 매우 노력하고 있다.

18. 당신은 인생의 목표를 이루기 위해 얼마나 노력하고 있나요?

- 거의 노력하지 않는다
- 조금 노력하고 있다.
- 어느 정도 노력하고 있다.
- 상당히 노력하고 있다.
- 매우 노력하고 있다.

19. 당신은 스스로 세운 계획을 수행하는데 얼마나 노력하나요?

- 전혀 노력하지 않는다
- 조금 노력한다.
- 어느 정도 노력한다.
- 상당히 노력한다.
- 매우 노력한다.

20. 당신의 하루 일과 중 얼마만큼이 인생의 장기 목표를 이루는데 역할을 하나요?

- 전혀 역할을 하지 않는다.
- 조금 역할을 한다.
- 어느 정도 역할을 한다.
- 대부분 역할을 한다.
- 전부 역할을 한다.

21. 당신은 세상을 더 좋은 곳으로 만들고 싶다는 생각을 얼마나 자주 하나요?

- 거의 안한다.
- 가끔 한다.
- 때때로 한다.
- 자주 한다.
- 거의 항상 한다.

22. 당신은 더 넓은 세상을 위해 의미 있는 역할을 하고 싶다는 생각을 얼마나 자주 하나요?

- 거의 안한다.
- 가끔 한다.
- 때때로 한다.
- 자주 한다.
- 거의 항상 한다.

23. 세상을 어느정도 더 나은 곳으로 만드는 것이 당신에게 얼마나 중요한가요?

- 전혀 안 중요하다.
- 약간 중요하다.
- 어느 정도 중요하다.
- 상당히 중요하다.
- 매우 중요하다.

24. 당신은 자신이 하는 일이 다른 사람들에게 긍정적인 영향을 미치기를 바란다는 생각을 얼마나 자주 하나요?

- 거의 안한다.
- 가끔 한다.
- 때때로 한다.
- 자주 한다.
- 거의 항상 한다.

25. 행복한 삶을 살기 위해 학교가 어떤 도움을 주면 좋을지 적어주세요.

---

---

---

---

26. 학교에서 자신의 인생이나 생각에 변화를 준 계기나 상황이 있었나요? 있었다면 상황을 설명해 주시고, 어떻게 인생이나 생각에 변화를 주었는지 적어주세요.

---

---

---

---

**서울형혁신학교 성과분석 및 운영개선을 위한 국제협력연구**

**- 2차년 보고서 (국외팀 영문 보고서) -**

인쇄일 : 2021년 2월 28일

발행일 : 2021년 2월 28일

발행처 : 서울특별시교육청교육연구정보원

인쇄처 : 흥익사 (TEL : 02-338-7119)