

# Korea's Technical & Vocational Skills Development Policies:

## Achievements, Limits and Future Challenges

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# I. Korea's Technical and Vocational Education and Training(TVET) System

## Korea's TVET: Dual Scheme

	Vocational Education	Vocational Training
Ministry concerned	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Employment and Labor
Implementing institutions	Vocational high schools Junior technical colleges Open colleges	Public vocational institutes In-plant vocational institutes Authorized vocational institutes Authorized vocational courses
	Life-long education institutes	Authorized vocational courses offered by life-long education institutes
Period of education/training	2 to 3 years	Depending on courses

# Vocational Training and Government

- 'Vocational Training Act' (1967)
- 'Act on Special Measures for Vocational Training' (1976)
- 'Employment Insurance Act' (1995)
- 'Vocational Training Promotion Act' (1999)

- ✓ **Employment Insurance Scheme** under the authority of the Ministry of Employment and Labor (MOEL)
- ✓ Three pillars:
  - 1) Job Skills Development Program
  - 2) Employment Stabilization Program
  - 3) Unemployment Benefits

# Formal Education System of Korea

## Schooling System (6-3-3-4 pattern)

Graduate school

**University** (4 yrs)

**Vocational College** (2-3 yrs)

**General High School** (3 yrs)

**Vocational**  
(Specialized, Meister)

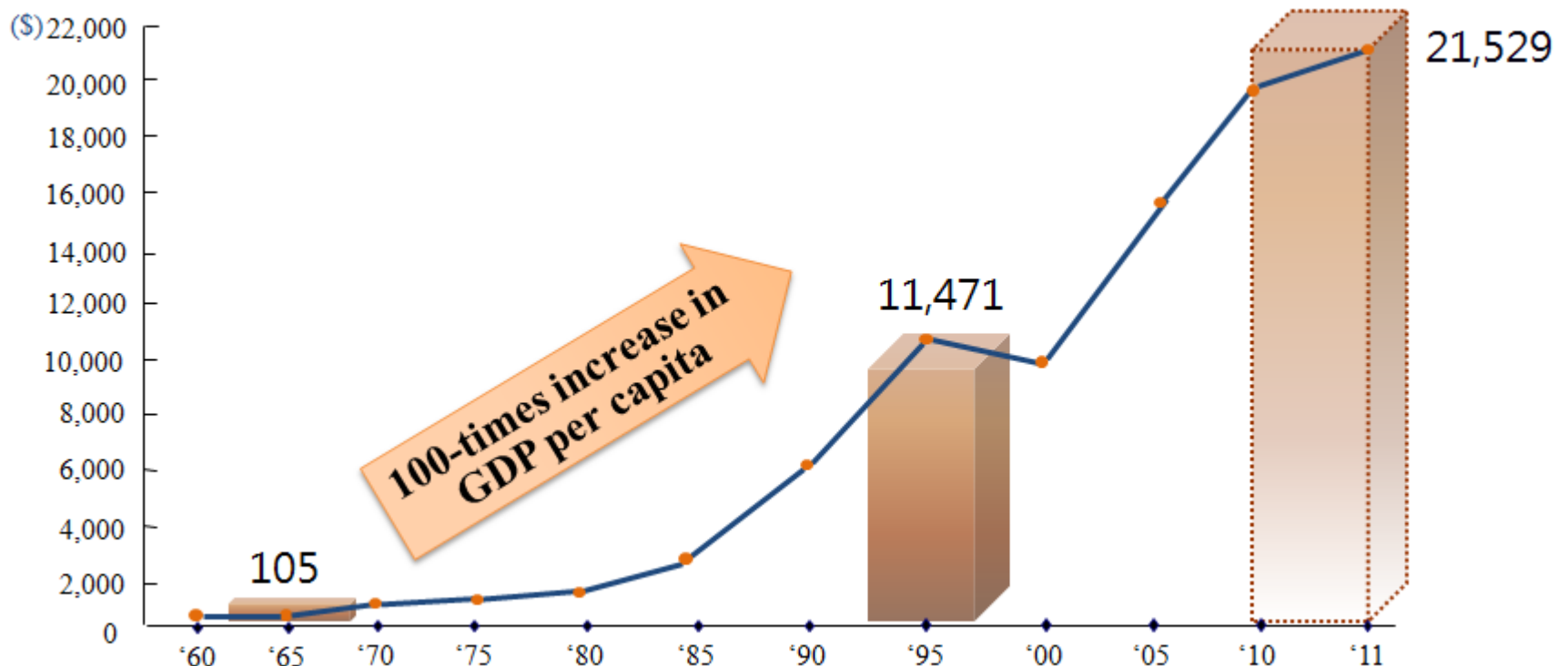
**Middle School** (3 yrs)

**Primary Education** (6 yrs)

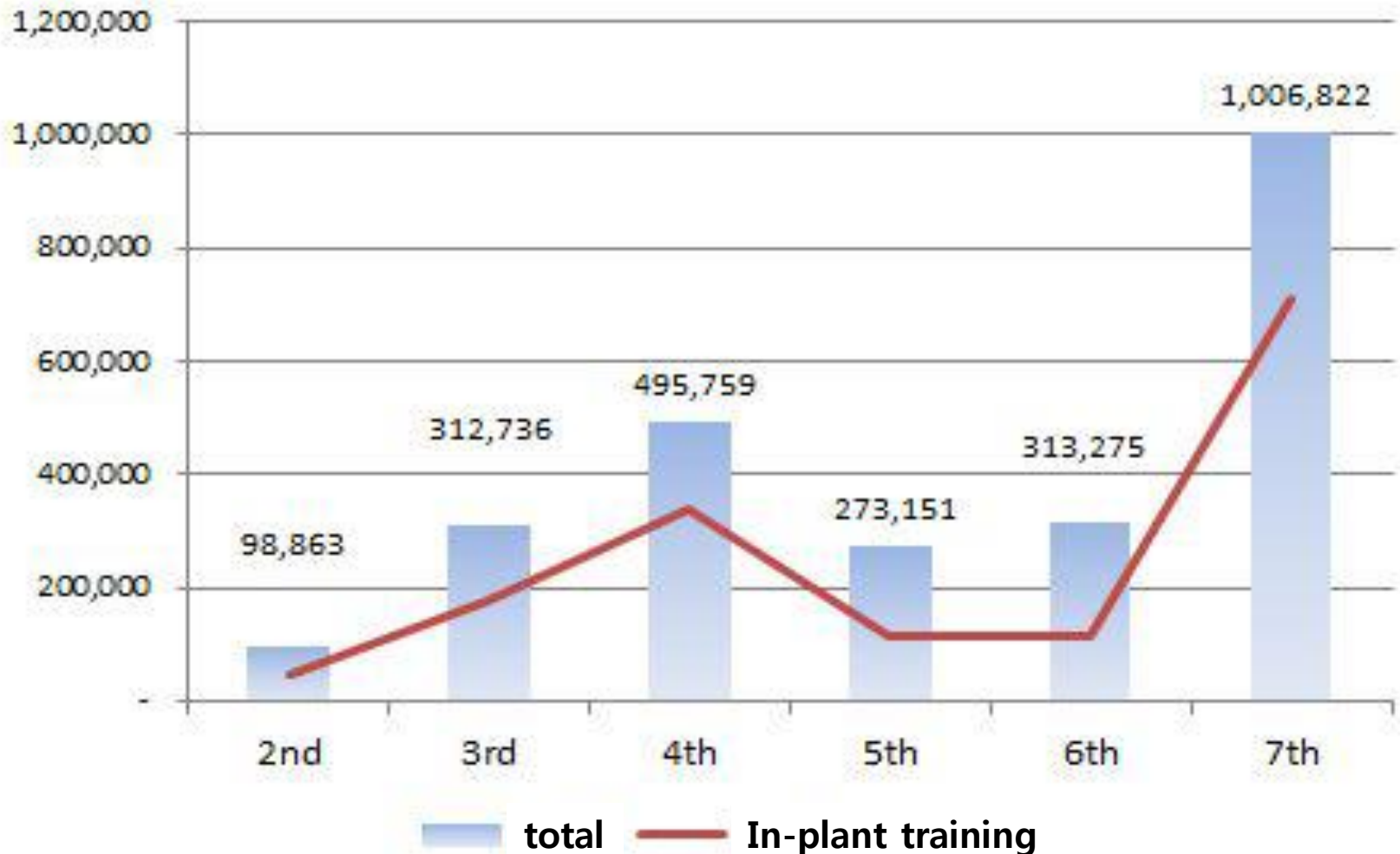
Kindergarten (3 yrs)

## II. Developments of Korea's Technical and Vocational Education and Training

### Changes in GDP per Capita since 1960s



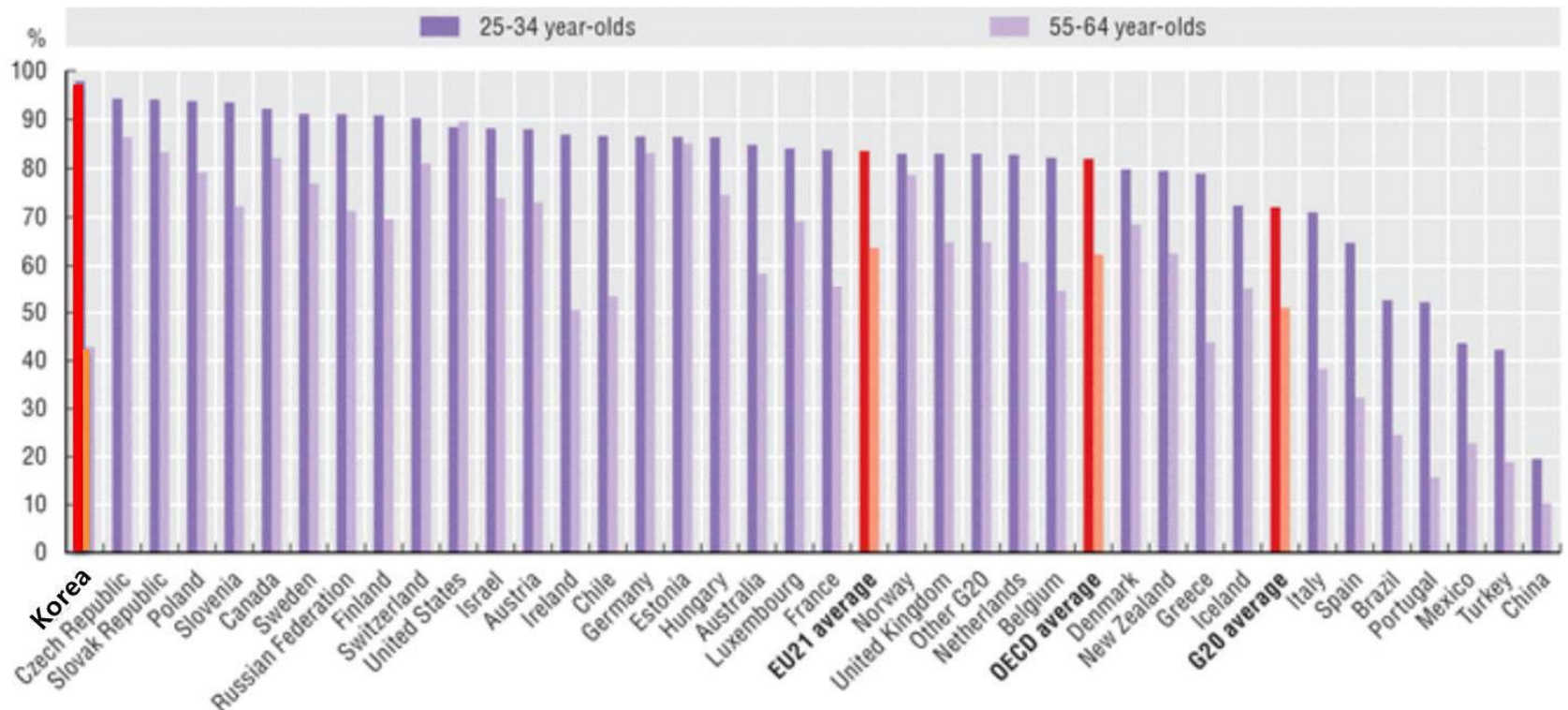
# Number of Trainees who underwent Vocational Training During the 2nd to 7th National Economic Development Plans



# Comparison of the High School Completion Rates by OECD Country and Ages

Figure 1.1 Population that has attained at least upper secondary education, 2010

This figure shows the percentage of 25-34 year-old and 55-64 year-olds who have been through at least upper secondary education. The rapid expansion of education in recent decades means younger people tend to have higher levels of education



Source: OECD (2012), *Education at a Glance 2012*, Table A1.2a, available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932664176>.

# Measures for Advancement of TVE

- Foundation of a large number of vocational high schools (authorization of founding 22 schools in 1954)
- Increase in junior college capacity (10,160 students in 1962 → 17,920 students)
- Setting up of practice factory in vocational schools (42 practice factories in 1967)
- Setting up of 'Skills Youth Center' in preparation for World Skills Competition (6 centers founded in 1969)
- Promotion of the policy of 4:6 general-to -vocational high school ratio (1969)
- Provision of benefits to outstanding vocational school students (National technical qualification as master craftsman, tuition exemption, job placement, military service benefits, etc. (1970))
- On-the-job training made compulsory (1973)
- Capacity of science & engineering junior colleges increased by 4,000 persons every year to a total of 16,000 in order to ease the shortage of technical manpower (1991)
- Increase in in-house technical workers by 16,000 (1991)

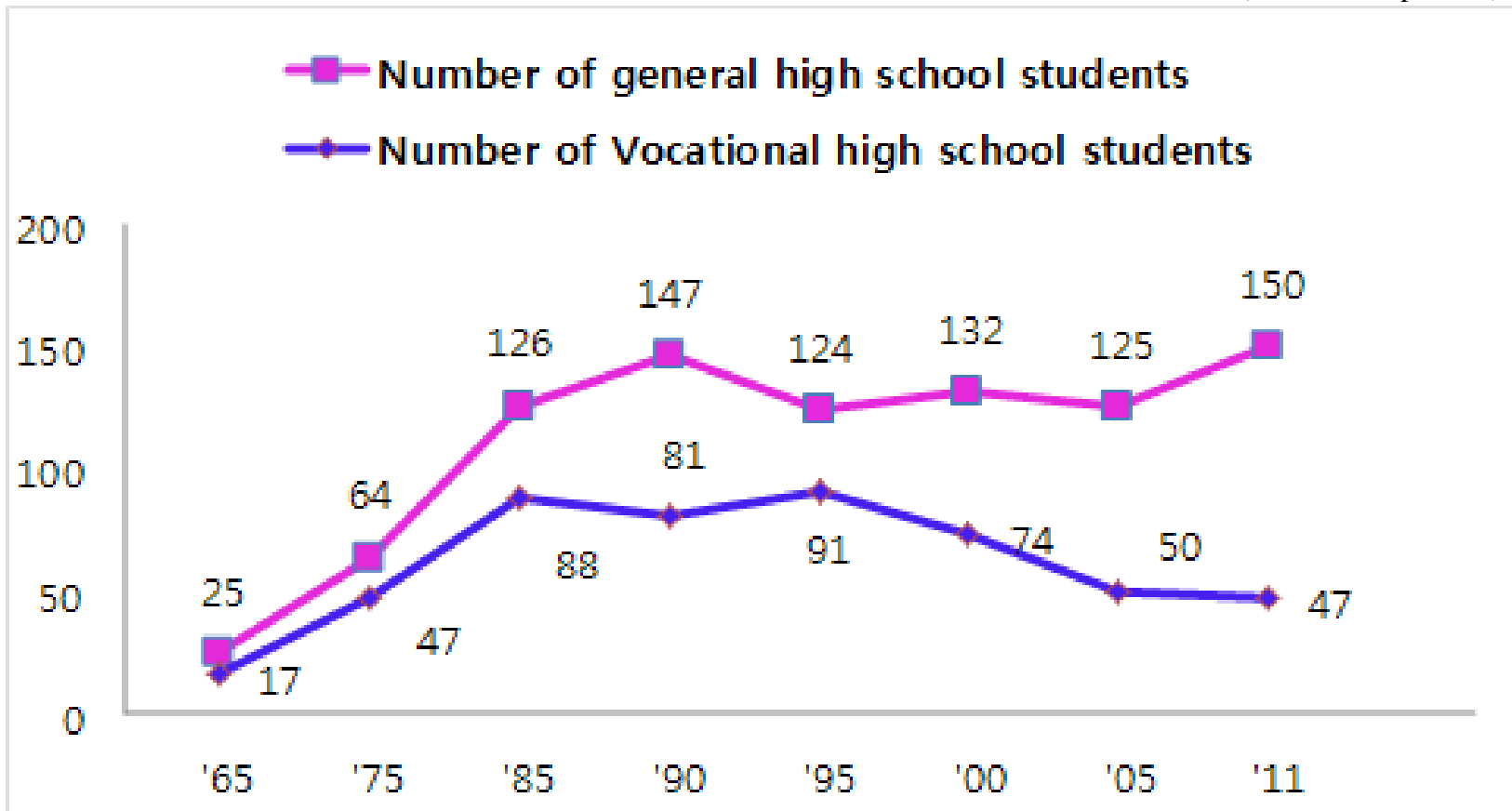


# Year of 1995

- **Employment Insurance System**
- Fewer regulations on establishments of Higher Educations Institutions
  - Rapid increase in higher education institutions in non-Seoul metropolitan area

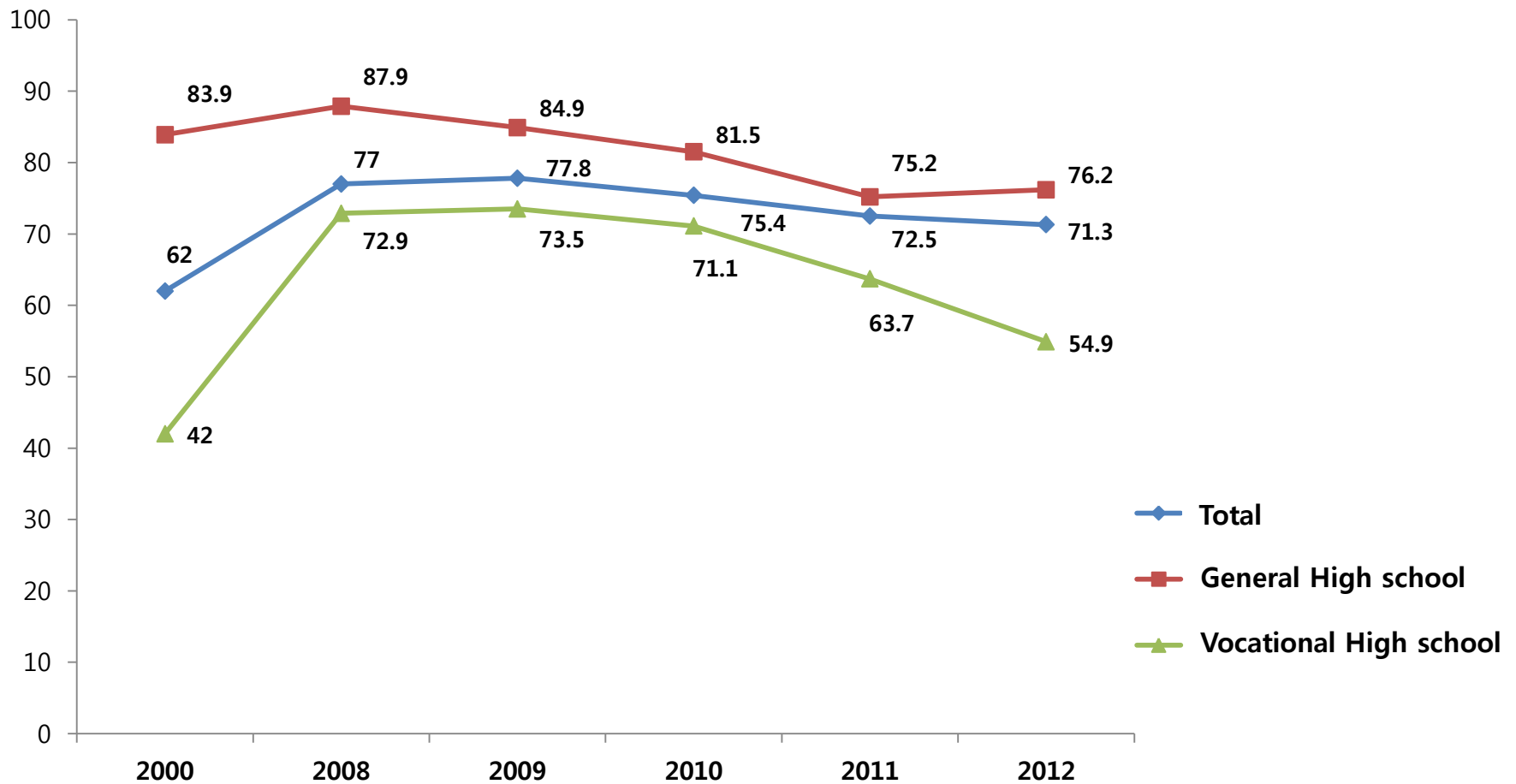
# Trends in Number of VHS Students (1965-2011)

(unit: 10,000 persons)

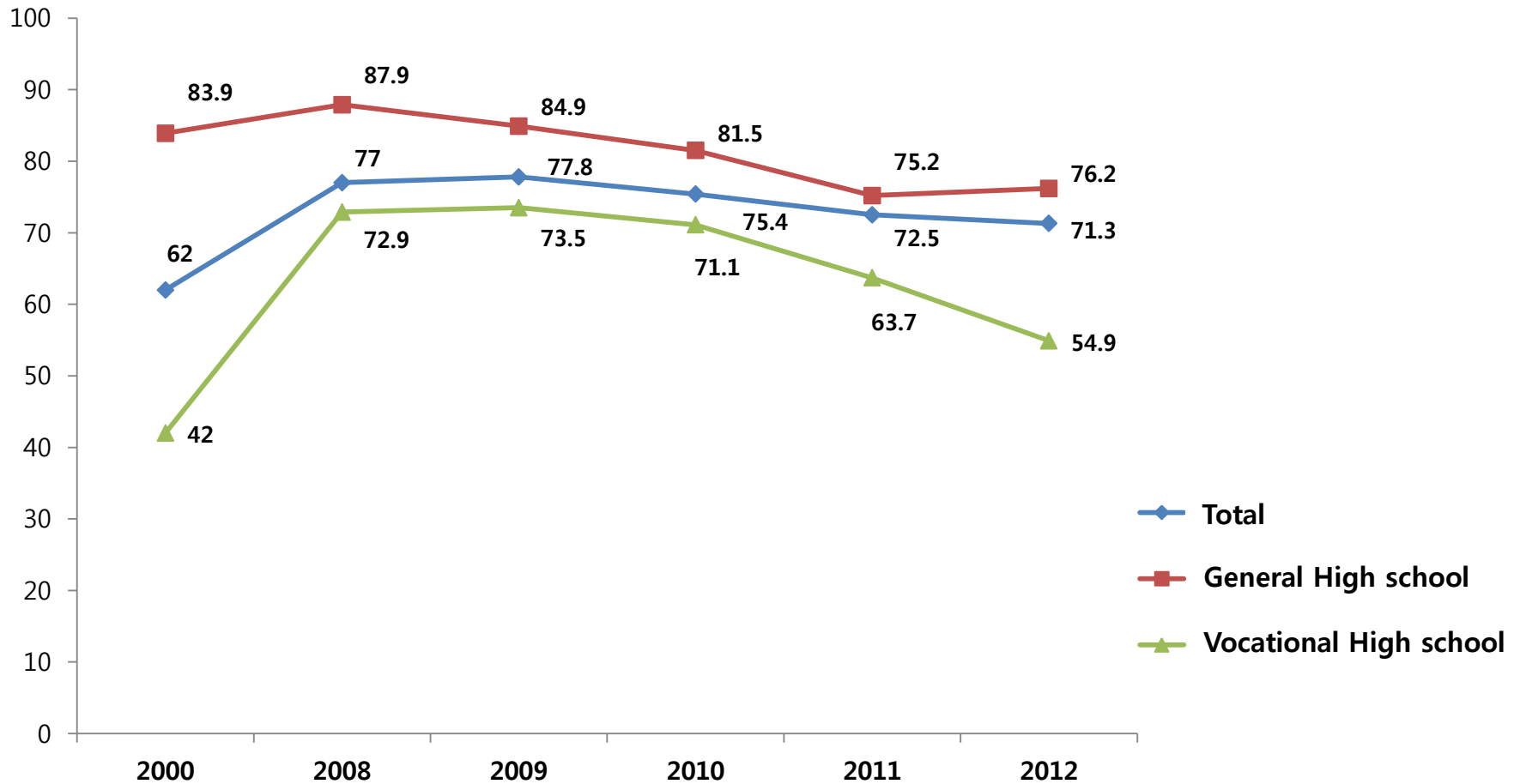


- Number of Meister High Schools: 28 (2012)
- Number of Meister High School students: 4,430

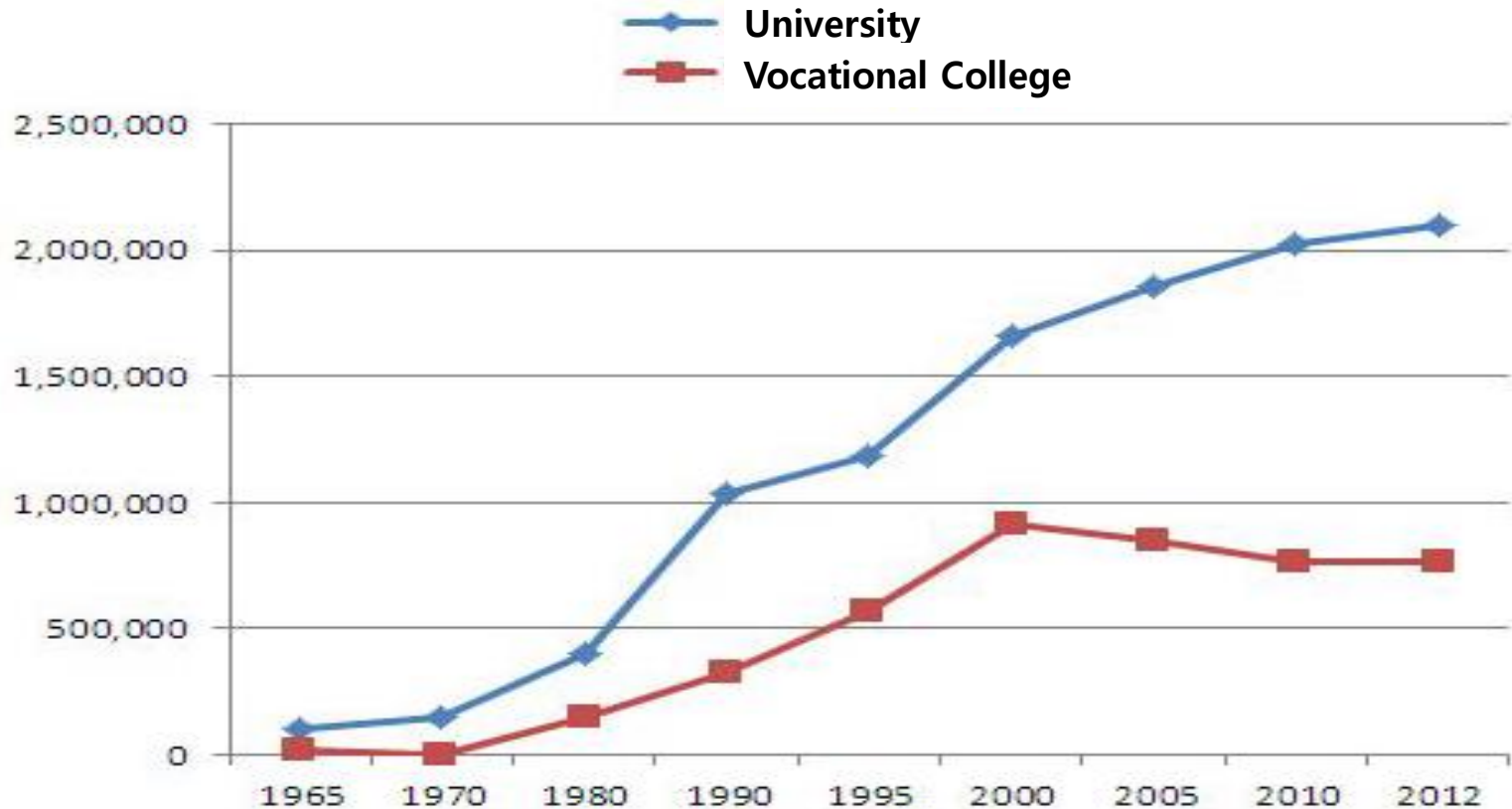
# Advancement rate (%) to tertiary education by school type



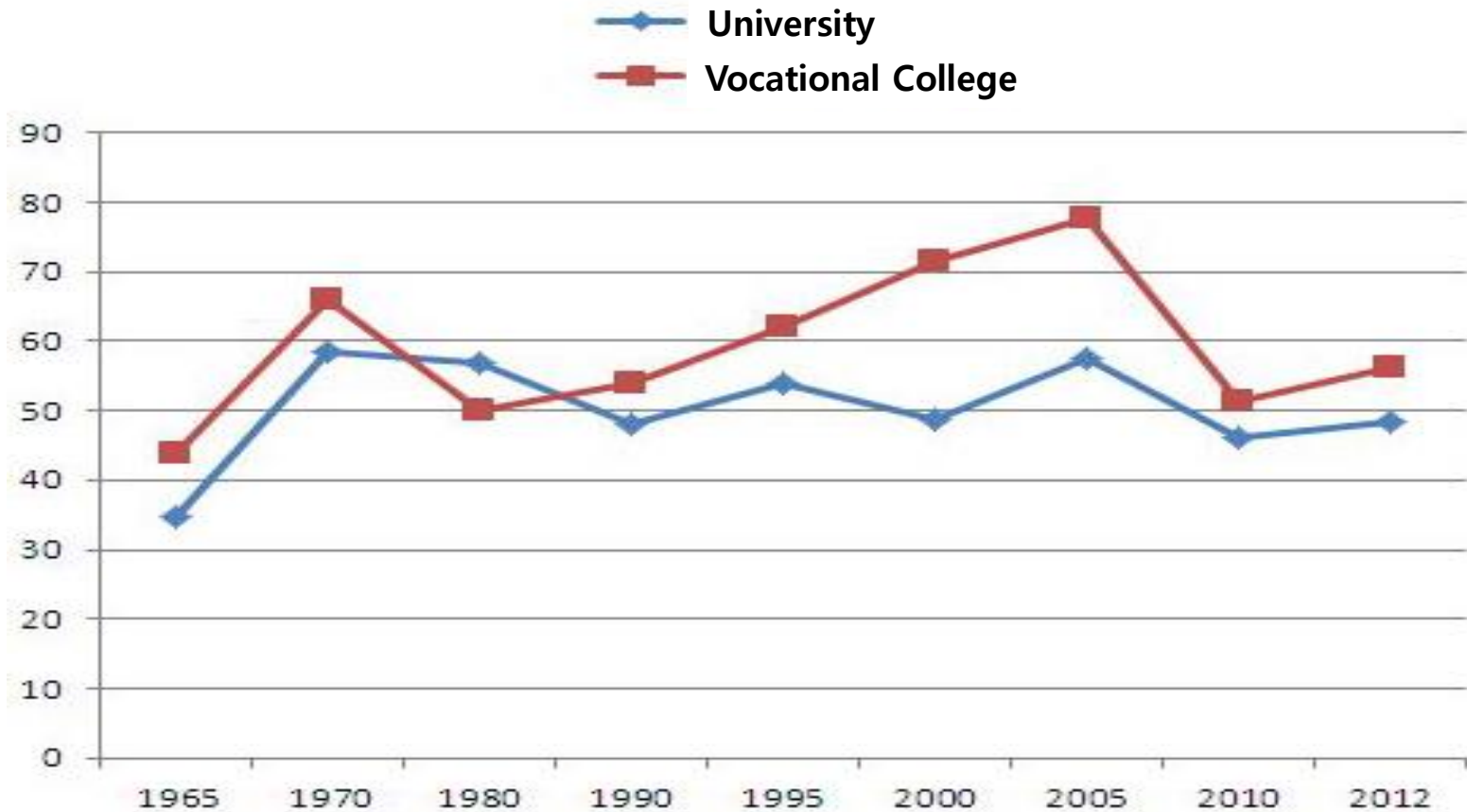
# Advancement rate (%) to tertiary education by school type



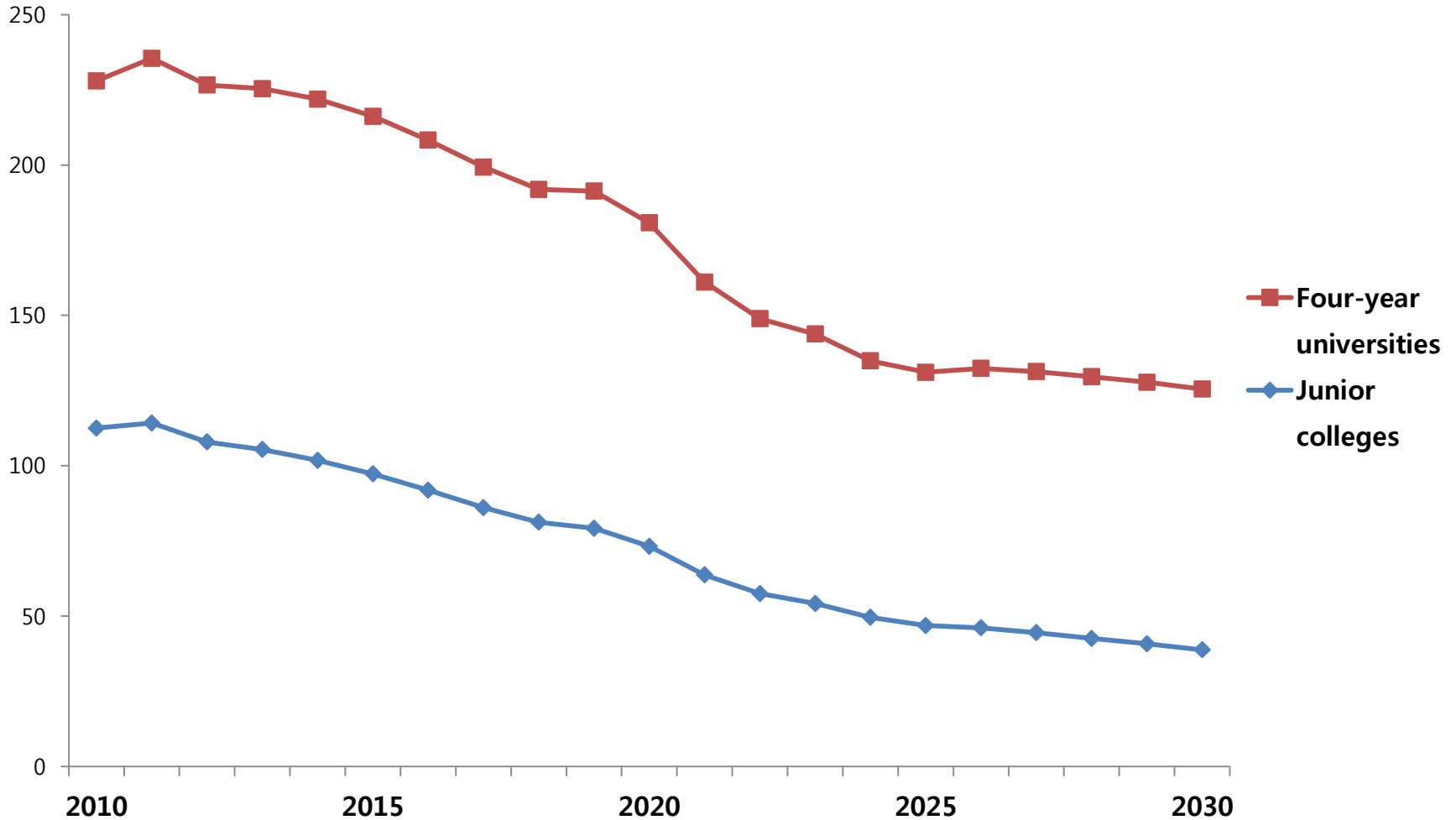
# Number of Students attending Higher Education Institutions



# Employment Rate of Graduates by Education Levels



# The Forecast of the Enrollment Rate for Junior Colleges and 4-Year Universities



# Achievements: Benchmarking Model for Developing Economies

- In the early stages of industrialization, it helped to supply abundant high-quality labor in a timely manner which leads the rapid economic growth. Under the framework of employment insurance system, all the firms, workers and unemployed persons were absorbed as a subject of vocational skills development policies.
- Conduction of large-scale training for the unemployed during the 1997's Asian financial crisis played a role as a social safety net.
- Since the 2000s participation in vocational skills development increased drastically.



# Limits

- Korea's higher education enrollment rate or its growth rate is one of the highest in the world.
  - High unemployment rates vs. labor shortages of SMEs.
- By contrast, Korea's adults' participation rate in education and training is lowly ranked among OECD countries
- Little interests in human resource development of own employees: Employers so accustomed to government-provided human resources
  - Supply-initiated vocational education and training: lack of teachers with actual workplace experiences
- Inequality of participation opportunities in vocational skills development.
  - One thirds of workers are irregular and many of them are not covered by the Employment Insurance System

# III. Challenges for Korea's Technical and Vocational Education and Training

## The New Administration's Major Policies on TVET:

### MOEL-initiated Skills Development Measures

- ✓ Development of industry demand-based National Competency Standards(NCS)
- ✓ Promotion of NCS-based National Qualifications Framework & skills development
- ✓ Establishment of a Korean dual system of work and learning
- ✓ Establishment of industry demand-oriented skills development system

### Specialized High Schools

- ✓ Development of specialized high schools linked to related ministries, local gov't & industry
- ✓ Development & implementation of curriculum oriented towards National Competency Standards(NCS)
- ✓ Expansion of vocational education opportunities for students with talent, aptitude & willingness to work
- ✓ Continued expansion of employment among high school graduates & establishment of degree-earning system for workers

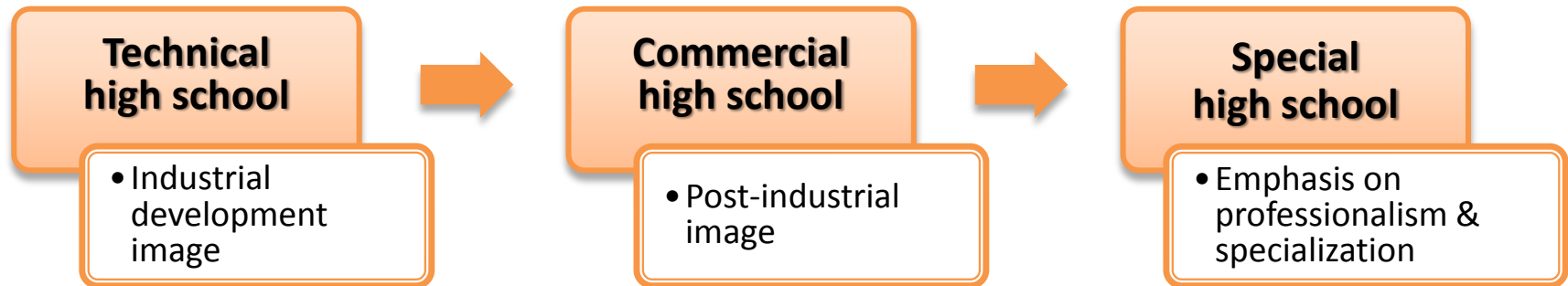
### Junior Colleges

- ✓ Development of 100 specialized junior colleges
- ✓ Diversification of study years & degree programs in junior colleges
- ✓ Establishment & development of meister graduate schools for industrial technology
- ✓ Development of lifelong vocational education university
- ✓ Promotion of globalization project

# 1. 'Employment first-University later' Policy and Meister schools

## ● Reform of VE system for sustainable development

### ● Change of the name of vocational high school



- Together with change of name came changes in curriculum

### ● Establishment of Meister High School system

- Improved image of vocational education through establishment of quality vocational high schools

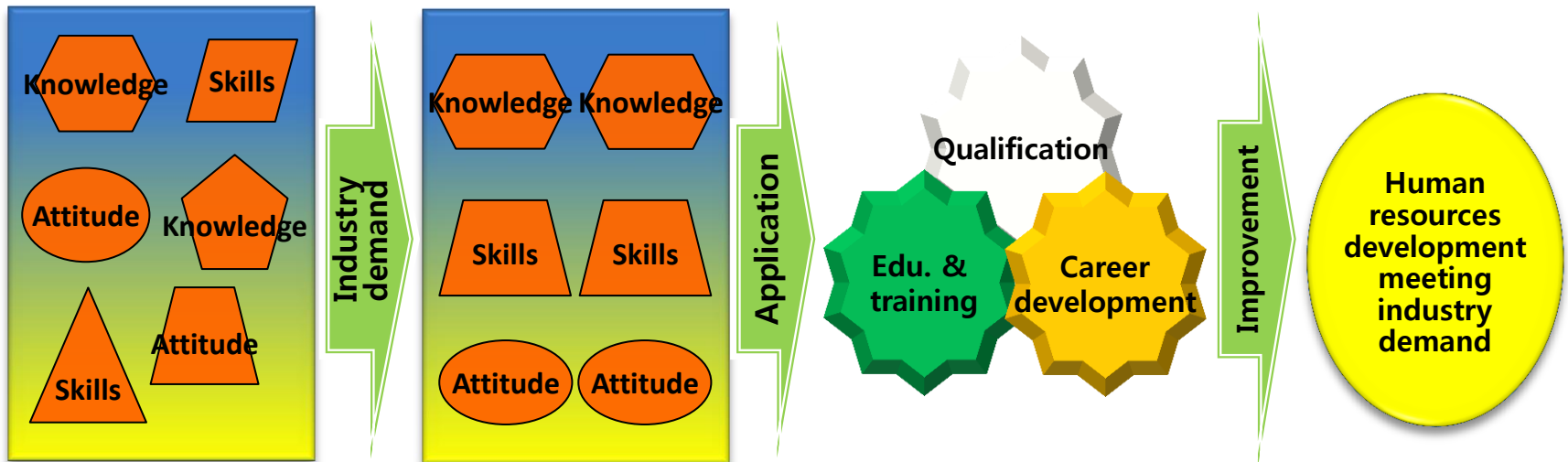
: Full financial support from gov't., a select few of elite schools (42 Meister high schools in the country: distribution by region) providing employment first-university later vocational education

## 2. National Competency Standards (NCS) & NCA Learning Modules

### ● System reform for sustainable development

#### ● Improvement in TVET system in response to environmental changes: Introduction of National Competency Standards in curriculum

➔ Transforming theory- & process-oriented education & training system into job- & result-oriented education and training system



Source: Ministry of Employment & Labor · Human Resources Development Korea (2013), "NCS Development Manual"

<Diagram> Conceptual model of National Competency Standards (NCS)

# 3. Work-Learning Dual System

## ● System reform for sustainable development

### ● Improvement in TVET system in response to environmental changes:



Introduction of job-oriented education system through dual system of work & learning

- Companies select high caliber workers, education and training curricula combine OJT and Off-JT
- Academic achievement or qualification is granted upon evaluation of results following completion of education and training
- Companies: Manpower utilization  
Individuals: Income earning through employment + Possibility of acquiring both academic achievement & qualification
- Similar to apprenticeship system in Europe, wage is partially supported by the government