



Fukushima Prefecture Futaba Future High School

Development of Future-creating Education

January 19, 2016
Futaba Future High School

Opening of the School

With the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear accident, this area was faced with a disaster unprecedented in human history, and even today more than one hundred thousand residents are unable to return to their homes. Not only evacuees, but many other prefecture residents are facing difficulties which continue to this day.

In the Futaba district and all over Fukushima Prefecture, we not only have the serious matter of dealing with damage from the earthquake and tsunami and radiation from the nuclear accident, but as in other parts of Japan, we are facing issues such as a declining birthrate, declining population, and an aging population, and these problems are worsening at an alarming rate. Many areas and communities are also facing problems with declining industry and production due to the disaster. Thanks to this, the Futaba district and Fukushima Prefecture have become an example of a "problem area" for the entire world.

Before the disaster there were five public high schools in the Futaba district (Futaba High School, Namie High School, Namie High School - Tsushima Branch, Tomioka High School, and Futaba Shoyo High School). These schools have continued to hold classes at satellite locations both inside and outside the prefecture, making the best use of the education environment and facilities that they can. However, without a good prospect of resuming classes at the former school buildings, they have stopped accepting applications for new students as of 2015. 2015 is the fourth year in a row with no high schools operating in the district.

In response to this situation, the directors of the boards of education in the Futaba district organized a "Committee for Education Recovery in Futaba District, Fukushima" (established December 2012), and at the end of July 2013 they announced the establishment of a combined junior and senior high school, which will serve as a pillar for the "Vision for Education Recovery in Futaba District, Fukushima." This Futaba Future High School opened in April 2015. At present, as an affiliated high school, it is working in close cooperation with all the junior high schools in the eight towns and villages in the Futaba district. In fiscal year 2019, we plan to open an onsite junior high school, which will then become a combined

junior and senior high school.

With "Be innovators" as our school motto and "independence," "cooperation," and "creation" as our precepts, we are developing advanced education activities to create the future.

Students

In our first year, we welcomed our inaugural class of around 150 first grade students. About 80% of the students at the main school building in Hirono Town were living in the Futaba district at the time of the disaster, with the others coming from Iwaki City and other parts of the prefecture.

While the attention of the whole country is focused on us as we work on developing advanced education, the students and faculty are feeling their way forward in this new venture as they select goals to pursue. Through classes and club activities, they have become able to enjoy a calm school life.

Many of the students come from a harsh environment, as they were moved from one evacuation place to another, but now they are taking a new step forward to overcome those difficulties.

"Future-creating Education" to develop people who can contribute to Futaba's revitalization, and contribute to the nation and world

1. Looking at local issues for revitalization (SGH)

Students divided into groups of 7 and investigated local conditions through visits to town offices, businesses, and Tokyo Electric Power Company. With the guidance of Oriza Hirata from the Futaba School Project Supporters, they performed a drama showing the problems facing the local area. The foundation of our education program will be to have the students look at recovery issues from multiple angles and explain them in their own words, and then go on to plan and implement their own projects for recovery.



2. Involvement in the community, practical experience in solving local problems (SGH)

Beginning in October, we welcomed four members of the support organization who came to hold seminars, and at the school festival in November we did a presentation for the local community.



Ryohei Miyata, head of Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, led a "Power of Art" seminar, in which the students learned pottery skills from Obori Somayaki pottery artisan who had evacuated from Namie. The students worked at making a ceramic art board which expresses the local area.

At Dai Tamesue's "The Power of Sports" seminar, they studied the power that sports has for society, and worked on developing new, previously unknown sports, which could be enjoyed by people in the community.



At Michihiko Yanai's "The Power of Festivals" seminar, while studying the influence and history of festivals, the students developed a recipe for takoyaki, "Futaba Eight," which uses locally-produced ingredients. While they were giving out samples for people to try, children to senior citizens from around the region came together and danced as one to the "Futaba Eight Song."

At Oriza Hirata's "The Power of Drama" seminar the students, using their earlier work as a base, worked on their own original script, direction, costumes, lighting and sound for a play, and constructed a stage set.



This event showed the students that they are connected to the local community and the world, and that their education is not complete if they just study on their own.

3. Research Abroad, Sending Students to the World (SGH)

During the summer break, seven representative students, visited Belarus, which was damaged by the Chernobyl nuclear accident, and performed the above-mentioned drama in English. Then, after returning to Japan, they took the platform at the international forum "Perspective from Hirono: a disaster-affected area" which was held in Hirono Town, and presented their drama for around 20 overseas researchers and local people. They also held a session in which people could exchange their ideas regarding local revitalization.



In August we welcomed Gina McCarthy, Administrator of of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and held an idea exchange. The Administrator commented that she was very impressed with our work, and it was decided that during our US research tour next autumn we would meet again at the Environmental Protection Agency.

At the beginning of the year, 14 students visited Thailand, where they did homestays with