

Education

Education has become the most important interest and concern for modern Koreans. Education is closely related to all aspects of society at all levels, such as family planning, population structure, household expenditure, residence selection, and city planning. In addition, a high level of enthusiasm for education and the high level of education spending, including private education expenditures, are conspicuous characteristics of Korean society.

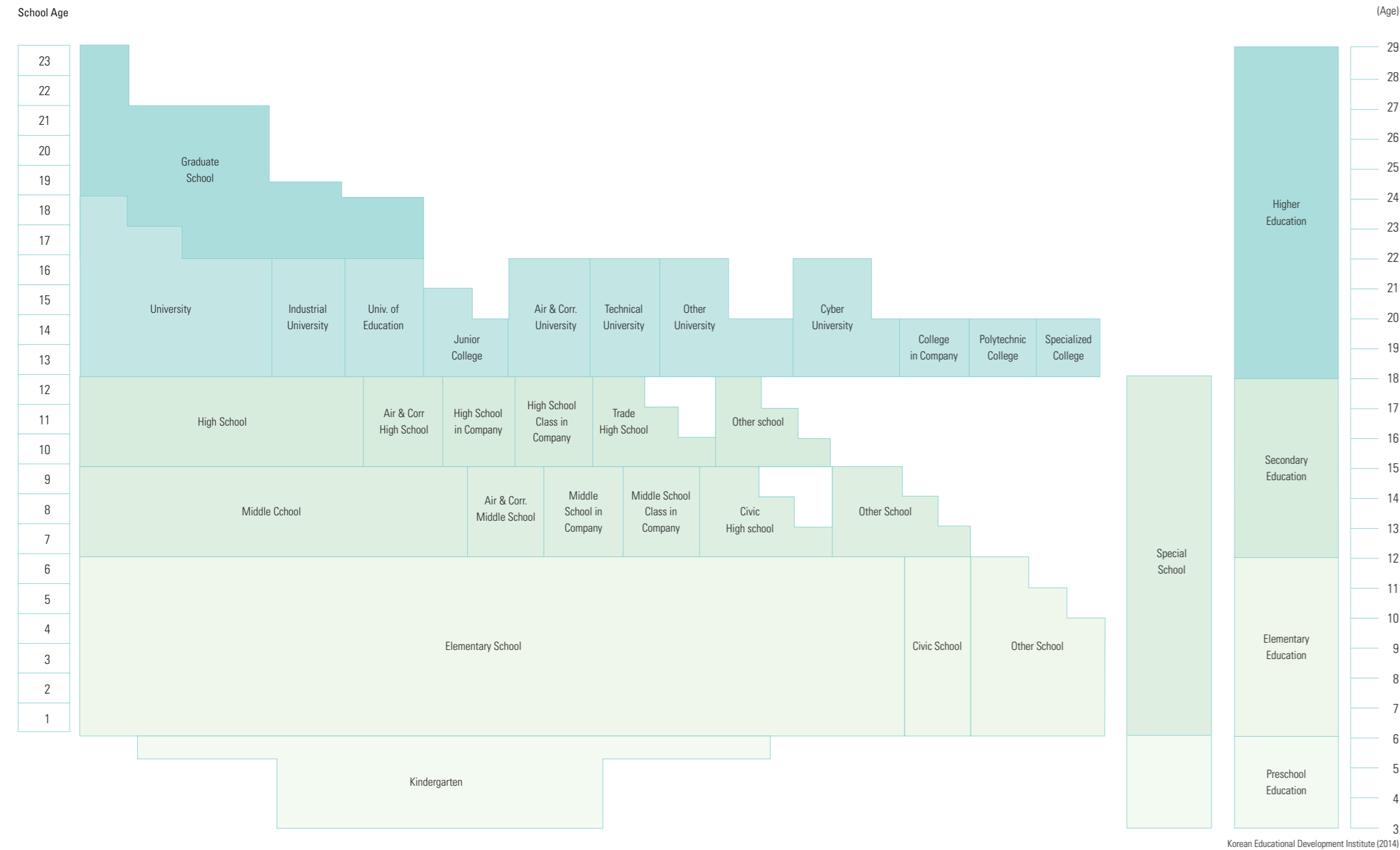
As with many countries, where modern education begins at the birth of the nation-state, Korean education has undergone significant changes through its modernization process. The Korean school system is composed of elementary education for kindergarten and elementary school, secondary education for middle and high school, and higher education for college and related levels. Most Koreans acquire at least six years of elementary education and another six years of

secondary education, and the proportion entering higher education institutions, including college, is among the highest in the world.

Each education level is offered by various educational institutions. Elementary and secondary education is provided by public educational institutions established by the state, along with a variety of private educational institutions. Various schools have been established for special purposes in accordance with the characteristics of stu-

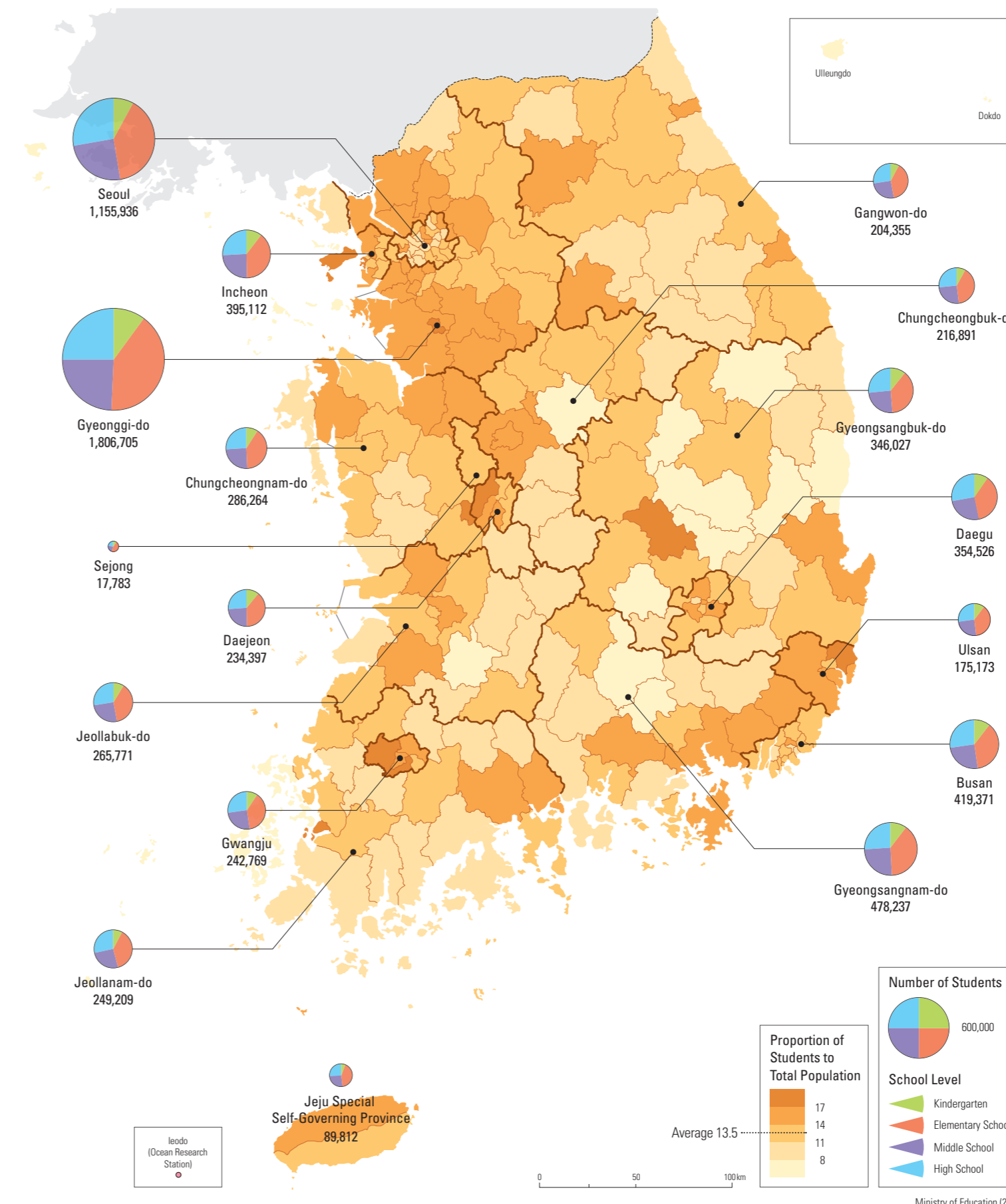
dents. At the high school level, more choices such as college prep, vocational, and technical high schools are available. Higher education is based on four-year universities and two-year community colleges. There are also technical colleges covering various professions. Recently, online and extension colleges and degree programs have been developed. Masters and doctoral degrees are offered by many graduate schools, and many students also pursue graduate study abroad.

Educational System in the Republic of Korea

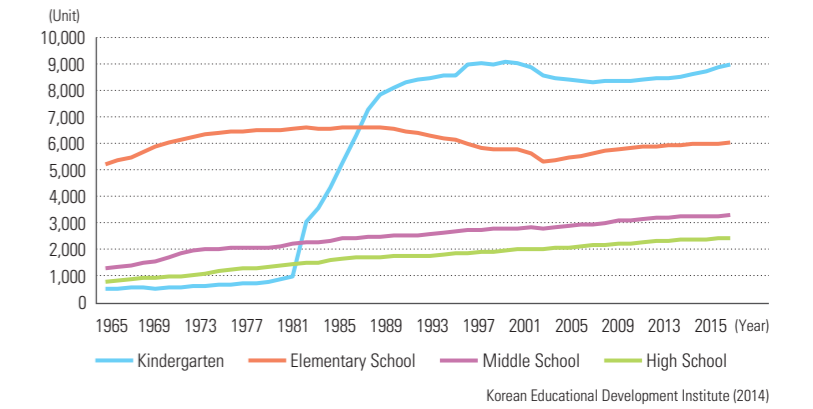


Overview of and Changes in Education

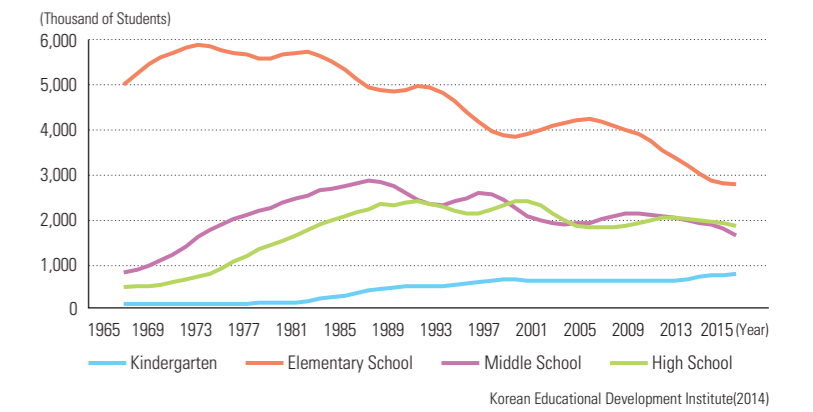
Number of Students by School Levels by Administrative Units (2014)



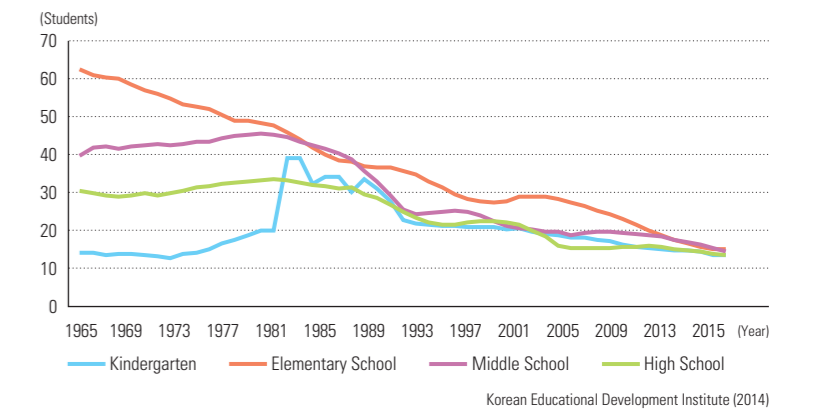
Number of Schools



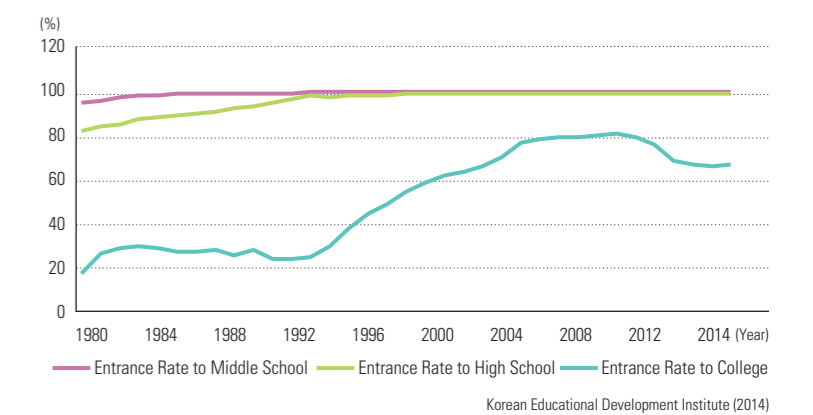
Number of Students



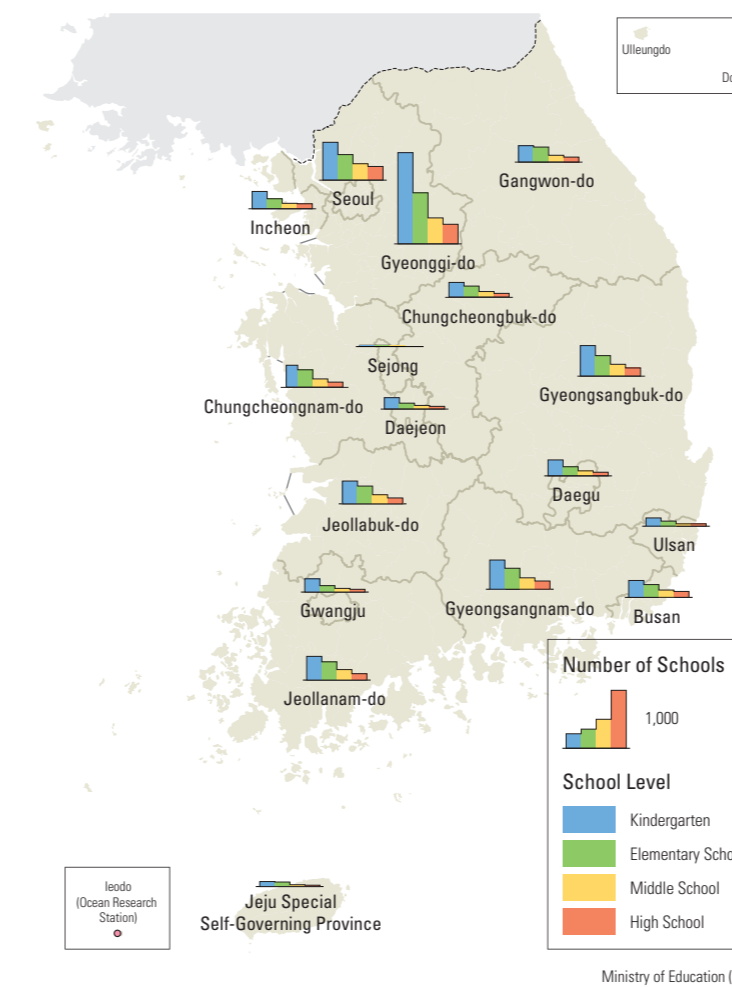
Students per Teacher



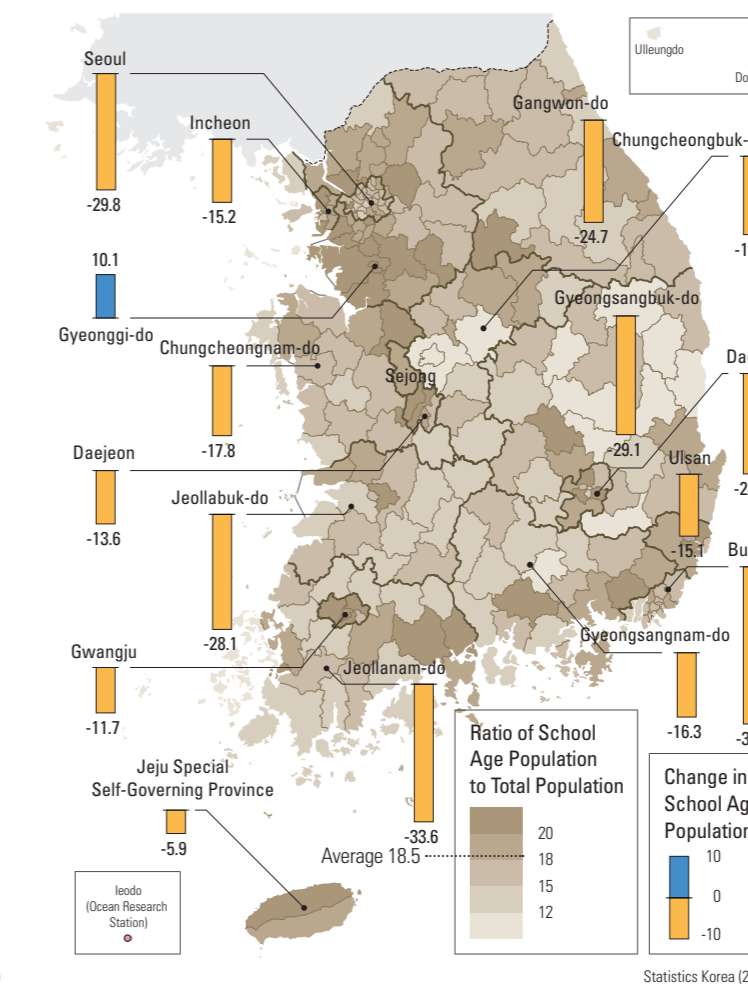
Entrance Rate



Number of Students by School Levels (2014)



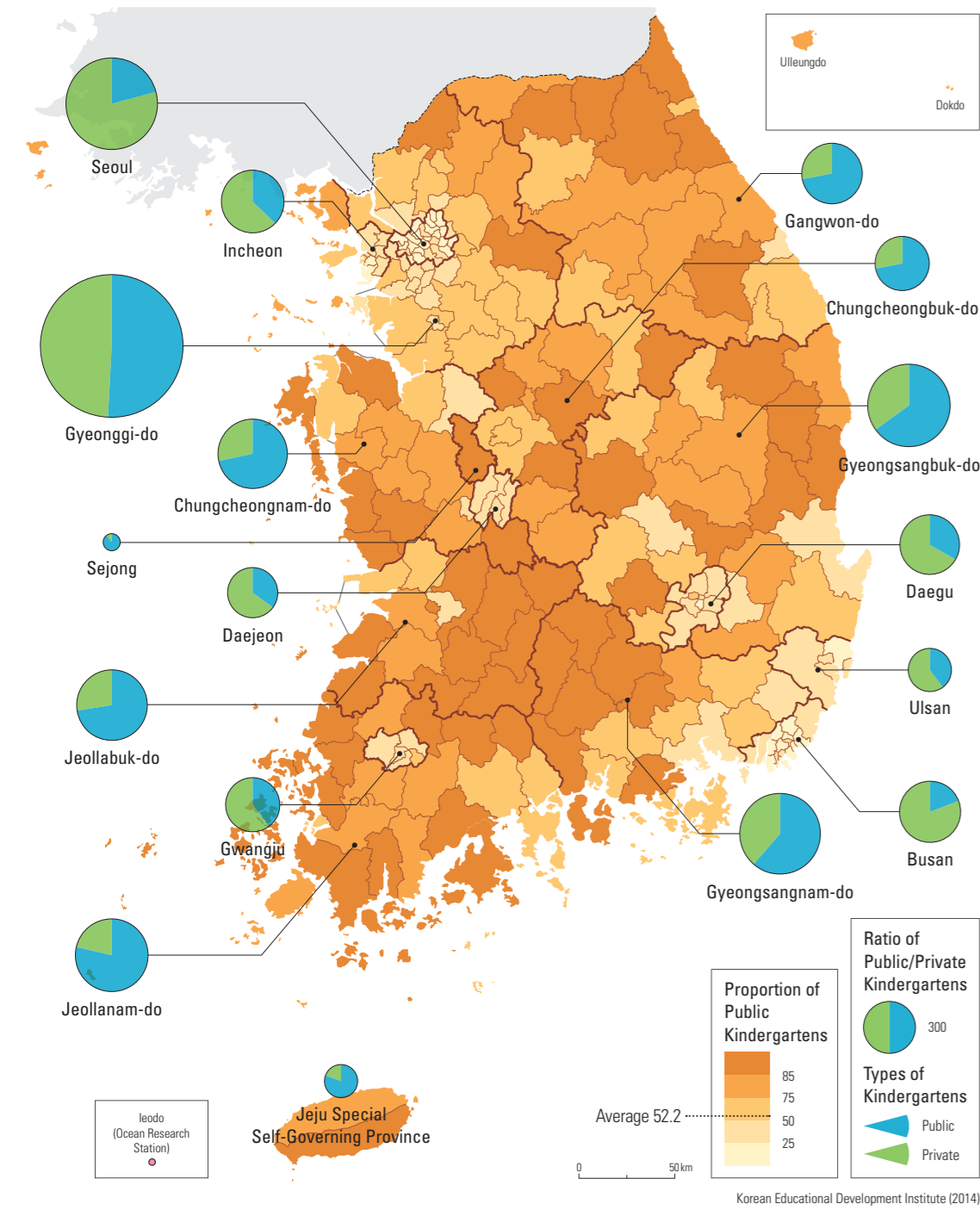
Changes in School Age Population (2000 - 2014)



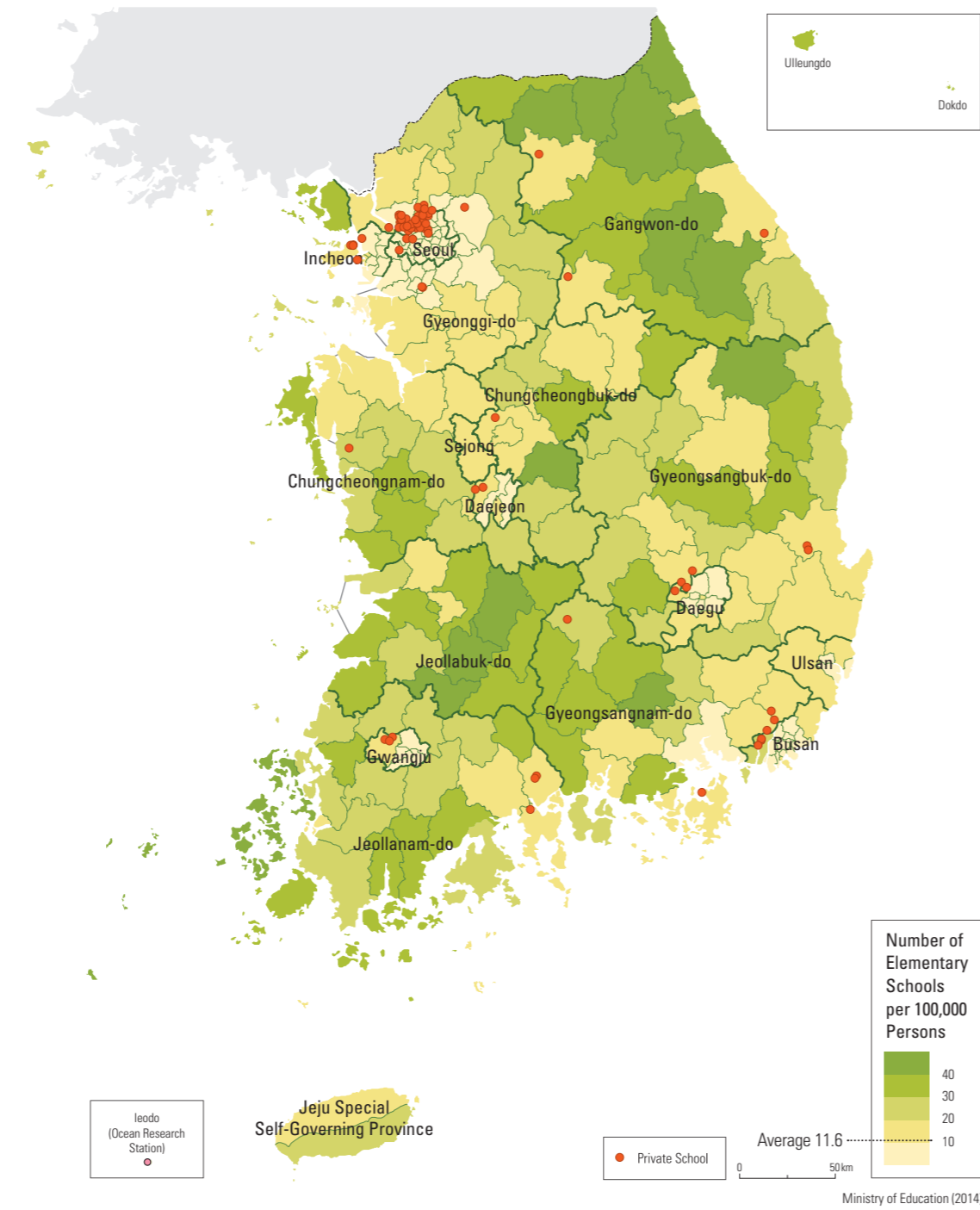
The middle school entrance rate in Korea has reached a perfect 100 percent since the late 1980s, and the high school entrance rate has been close to 100 percent since the mid-1990s. Accordingly, the number of schools has been consistently increasing, though a large number of elementary schools were closed in areas of population decrease after the 1990s. Kindergarten enrollment has significantly increased since the 1980s as kindergarten education has become more widely available. On the other hand, the total number of students differs by age group, with the number of elementary students decreasing steadily due to decreasing fertility rates. A declining fertility rate has also resulted in a decrease in the middle and high school populations since the late 1980s. As a benefit, an increase in teacher hires has reduced the number of students per teacher. Changes in the school age population varies greatly by region. Gyeonggi-do has experienced an increase in its school age population, while other regions show large decreases from 2000 to 2014.

Preschool and Elementary Education

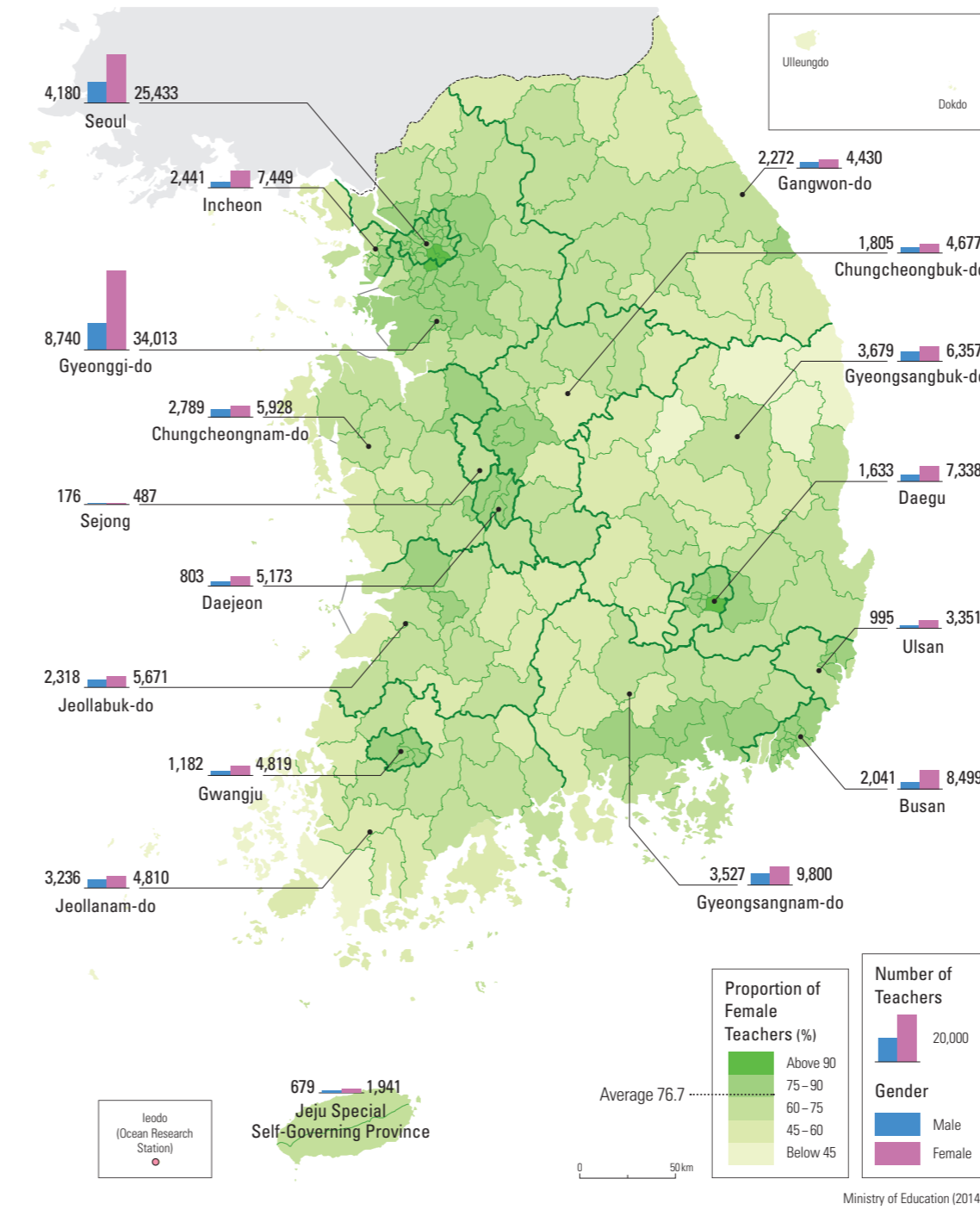
Distribution of Kindergartens (2014)



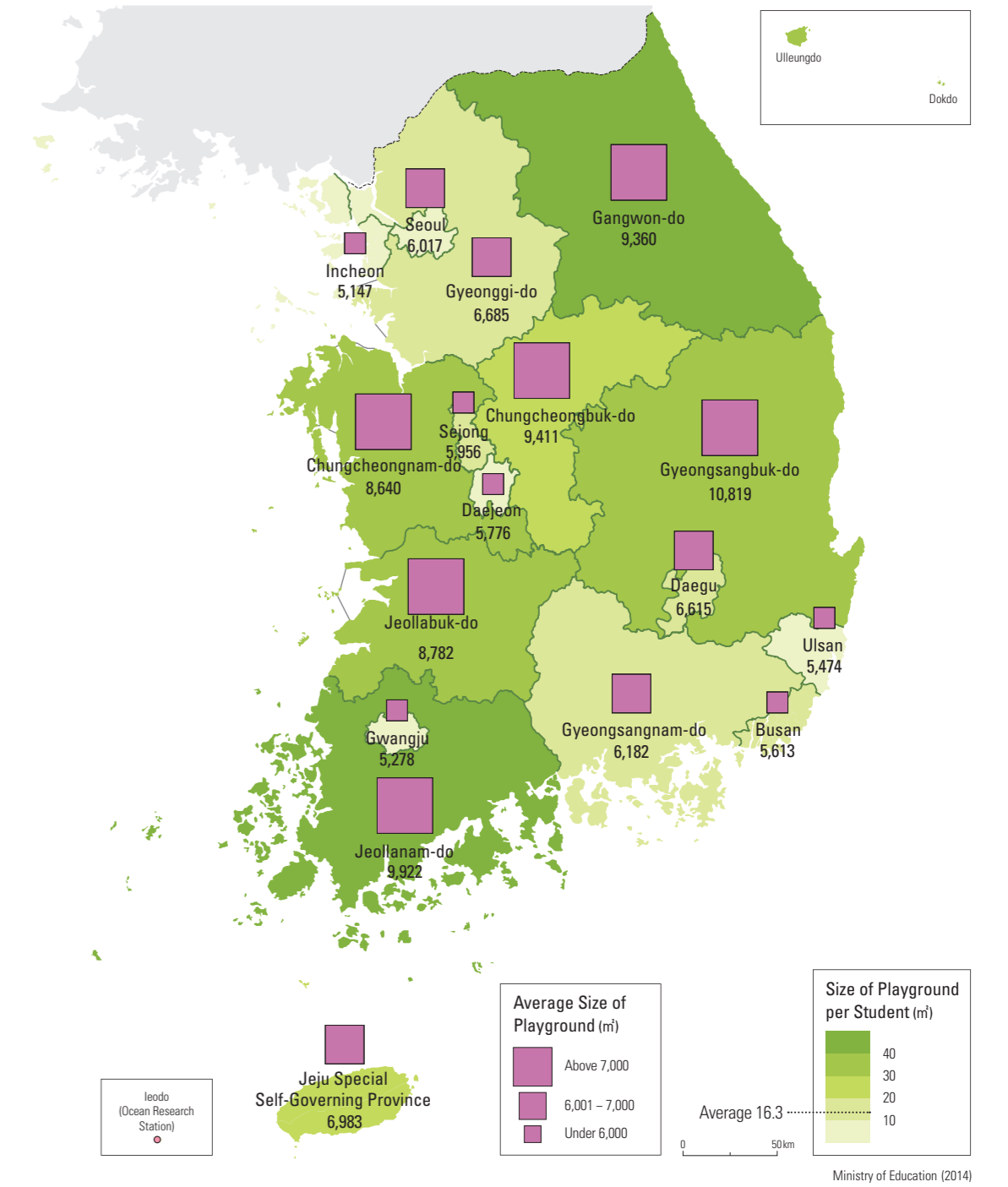
Distribution of Elementary Schools (2014)



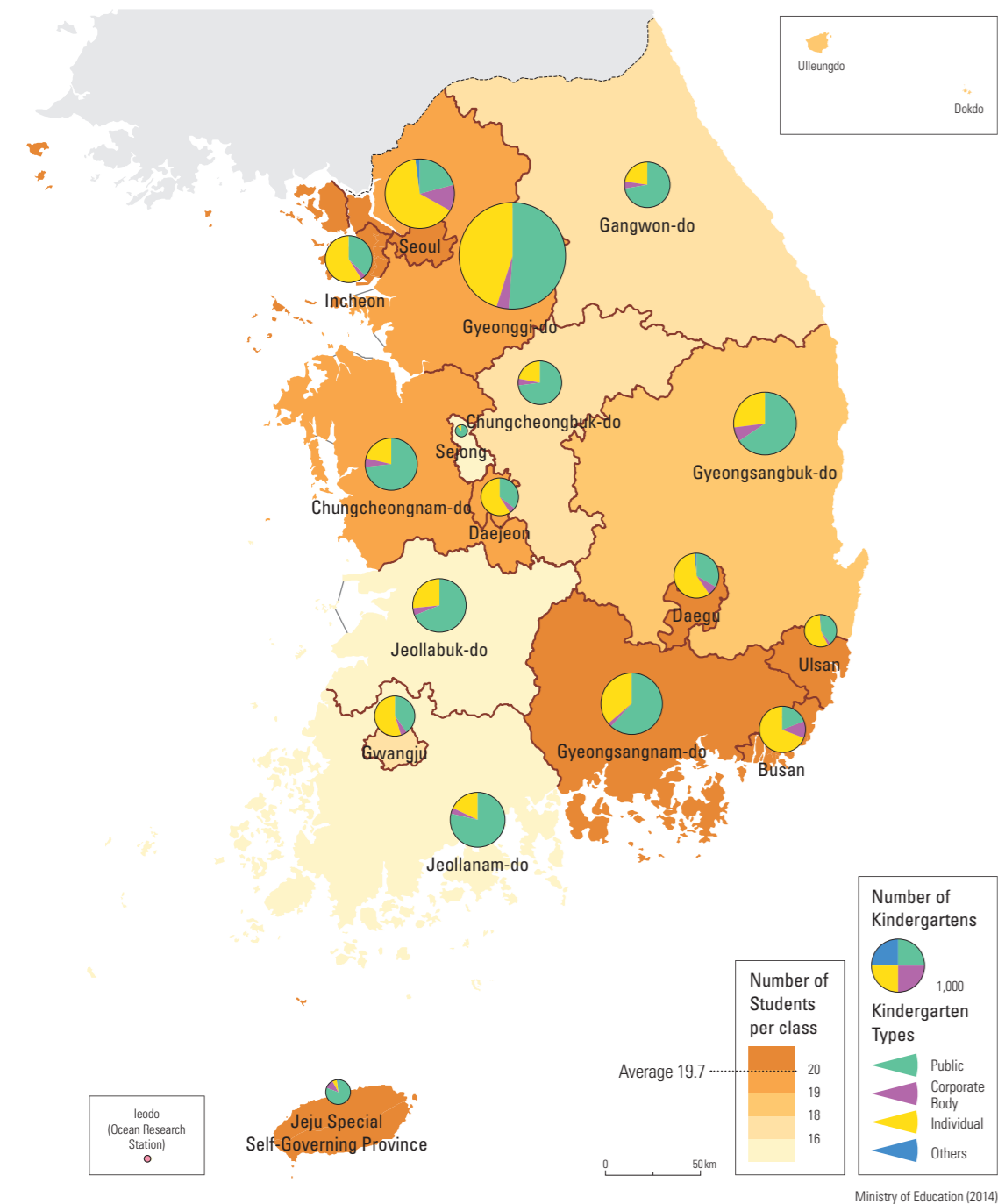
Gender Ratio of Elementary School Teachers (2014)



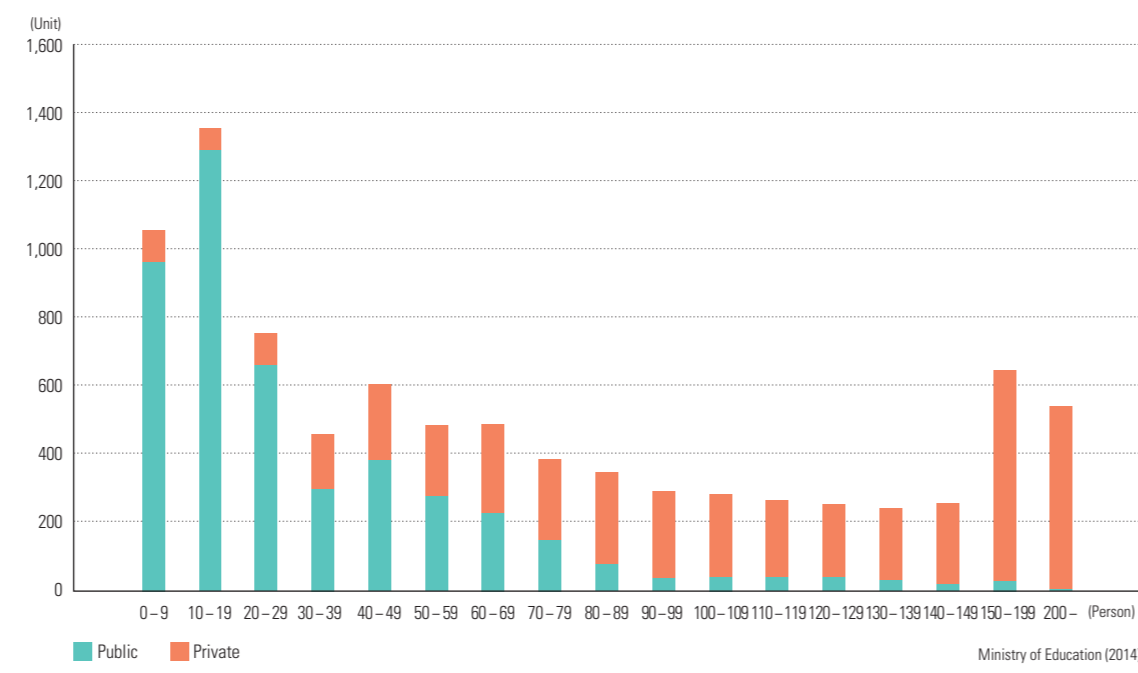
Playground Size in Elementary Schools



Distribution of Kindergartens by Type (2014)



Kindergartens by Number of Students (2014)



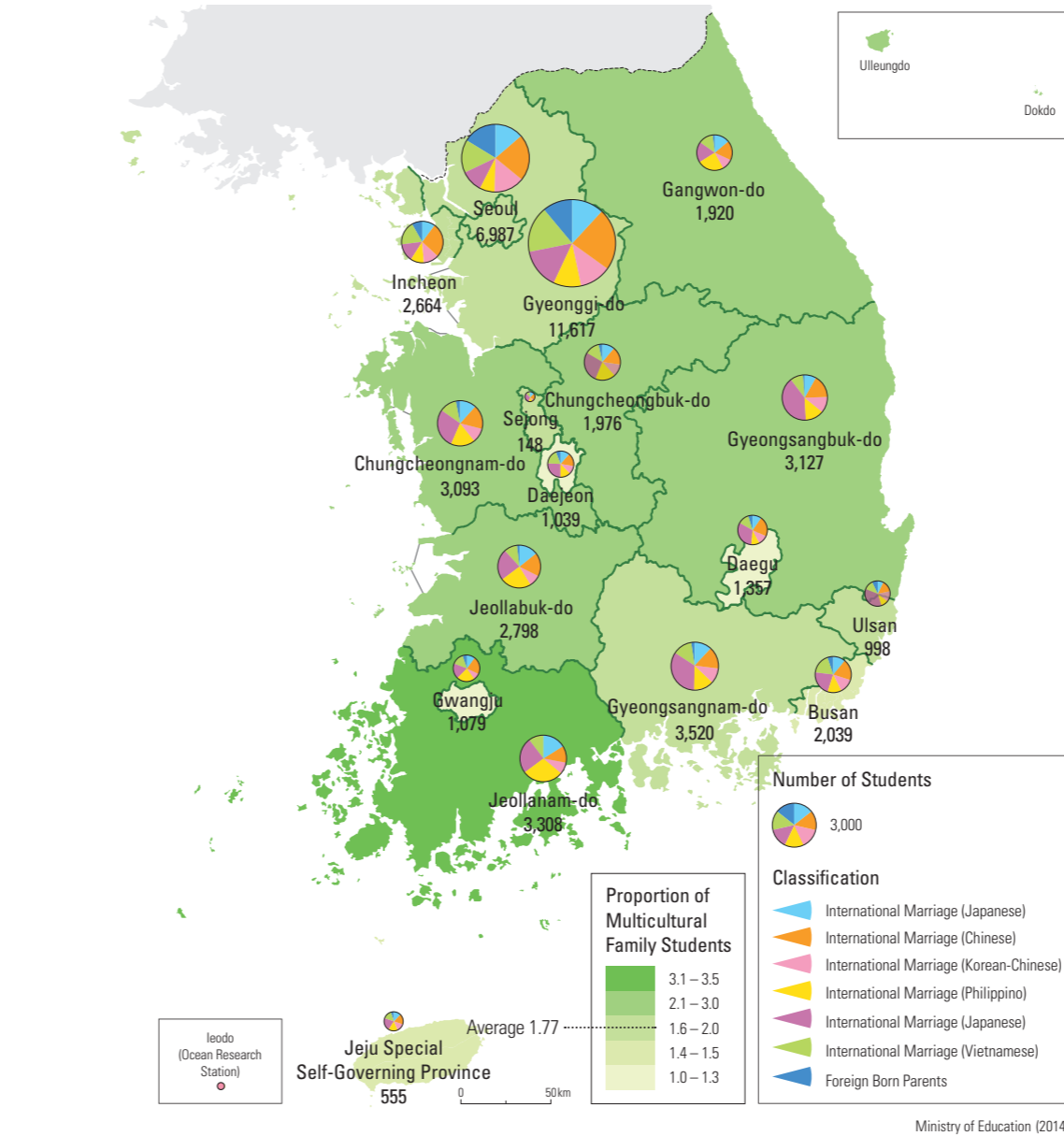
Kindergartens are operated by national and public, corporate, and private institutions. National and public kindergartens primarily operate as elementary school-affiliated kindergartens. Various types of private kindergartens with unique educational goals operate in areas with a large kindergartener population. National and public kindergartens are important for preschool education in areas with typically few kindergartener-age children.

Most elementary schools are national and public. Private elementary schools are concentrated in certain areas. The number of female teachers is

three times that of male teachers; such imbalance in the gender ratio is consistent across the nation but is greater in urban areas than in rural areas. Many elementary schools have been closed in areas with declining populations, while a large number of schools have been newly established in newer towns that are experiencing a continuing population influx. However, the sites of newly established elementary schools are generally smaller than those of the existing elementary schools because of the financial burden of purchasing a new site for the school.

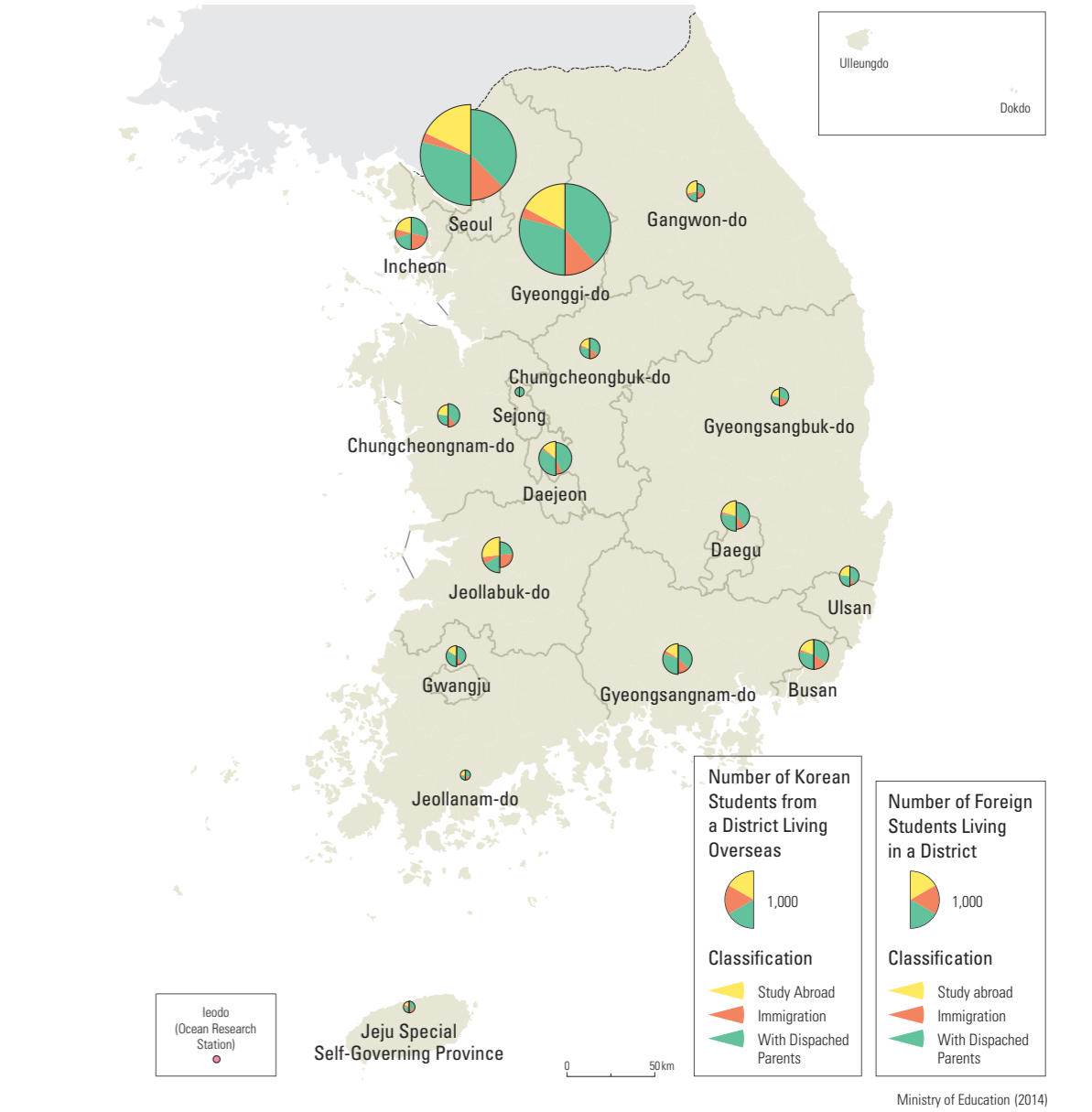
With the increasing influx of immigrants, the

Multicultural Family Students in Elementary School (2014)



number of elementary school children of international marriage families and foreign families has increased. Students of foreign families are concentrated in Seoul and Gyeonggi-do while many students of international marriage families live in areas where the proportion of international mar-

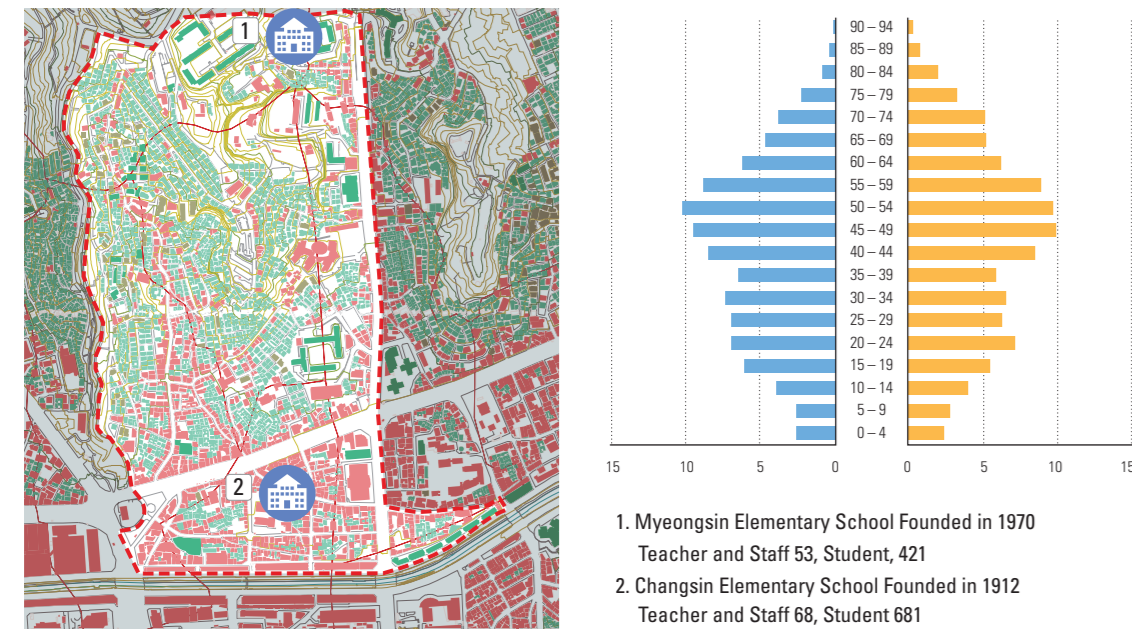
Study Abroad Students in Elementary Schools (2014)



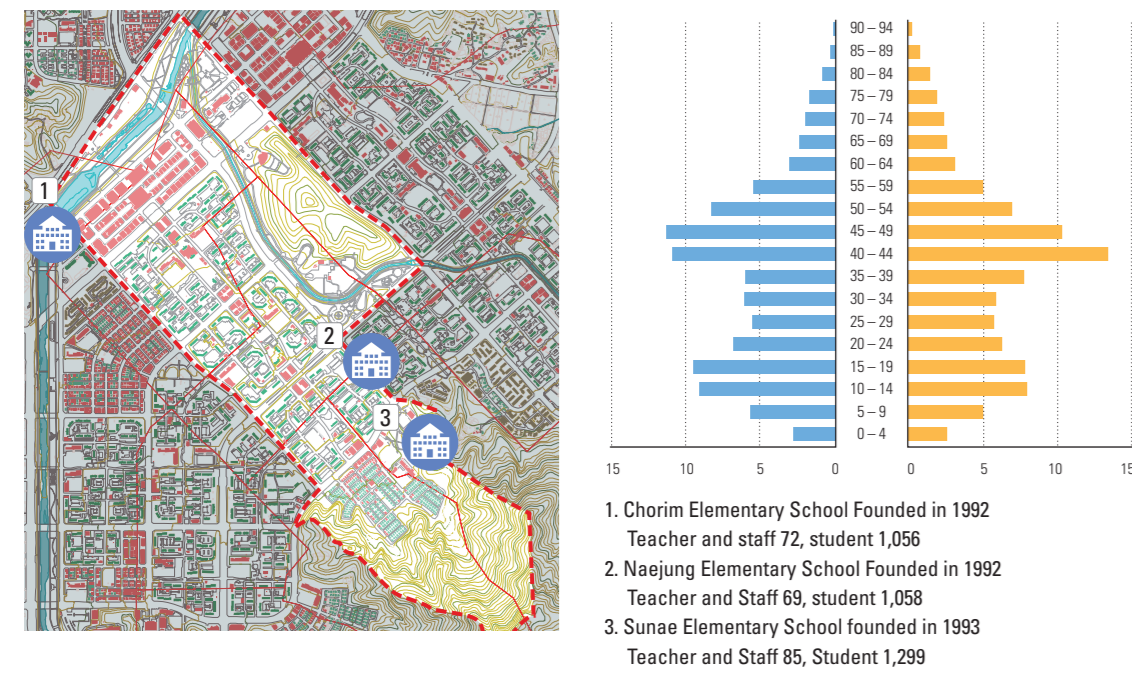
riages is high. In addition, elementary students study abroad due to emigration, their parents working overseas, and a choice to study abroad at

an early age.

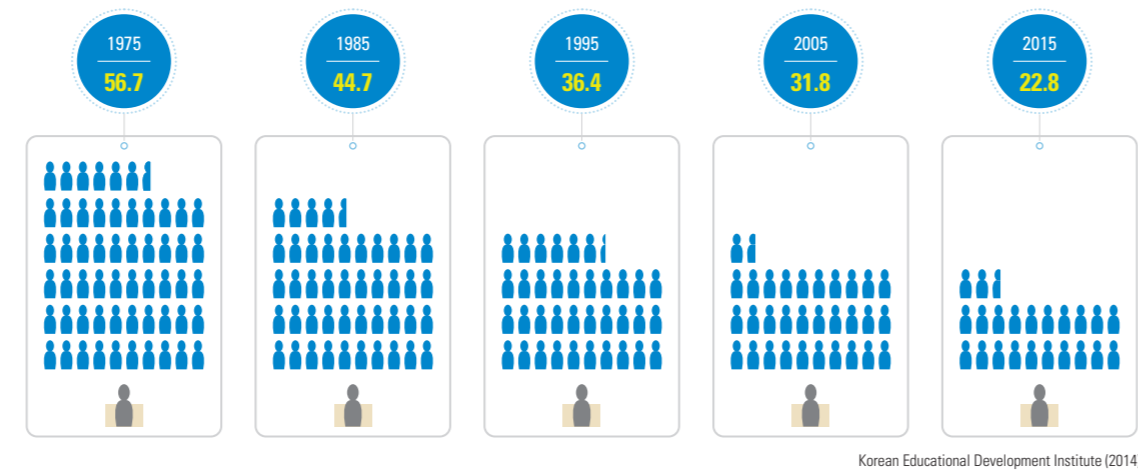
Location of Elementary Schools in Inner City Areas (Changsin-dong, Jongno-gu, Seoul)



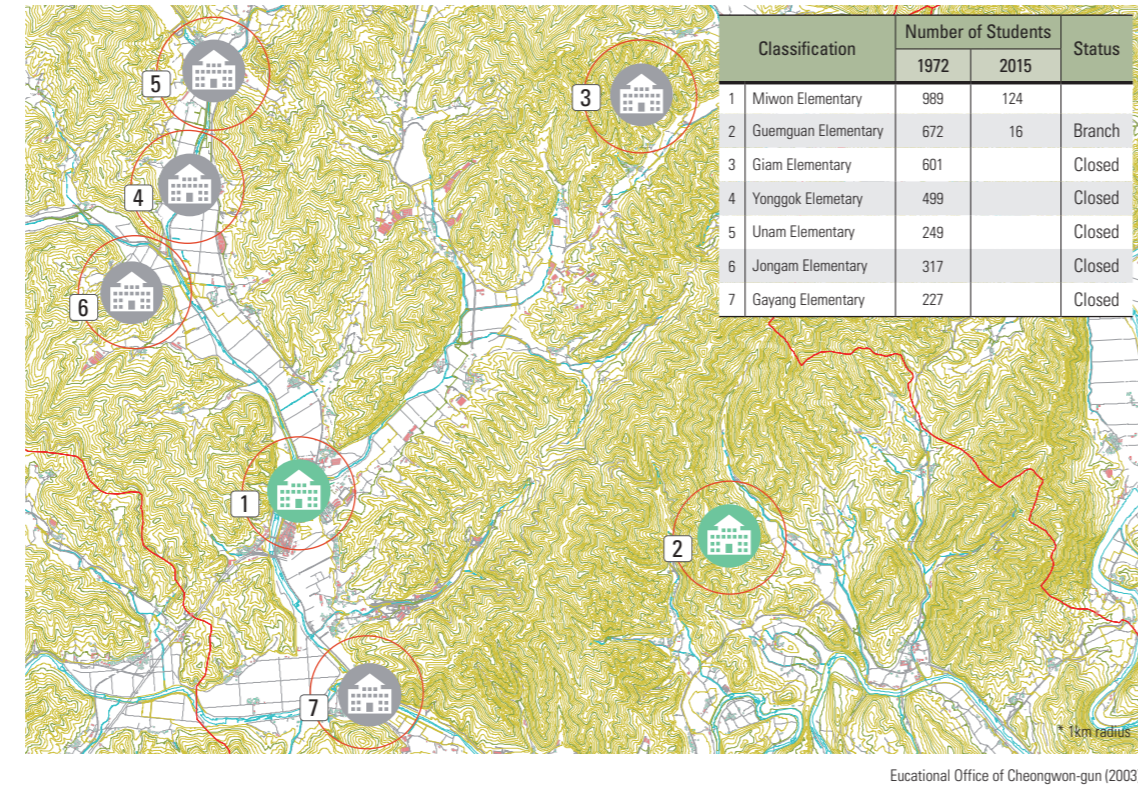
Location of Elementary Schools in New Cities (Sunae-dong, Seongnam-si, Gyeonggi-do)



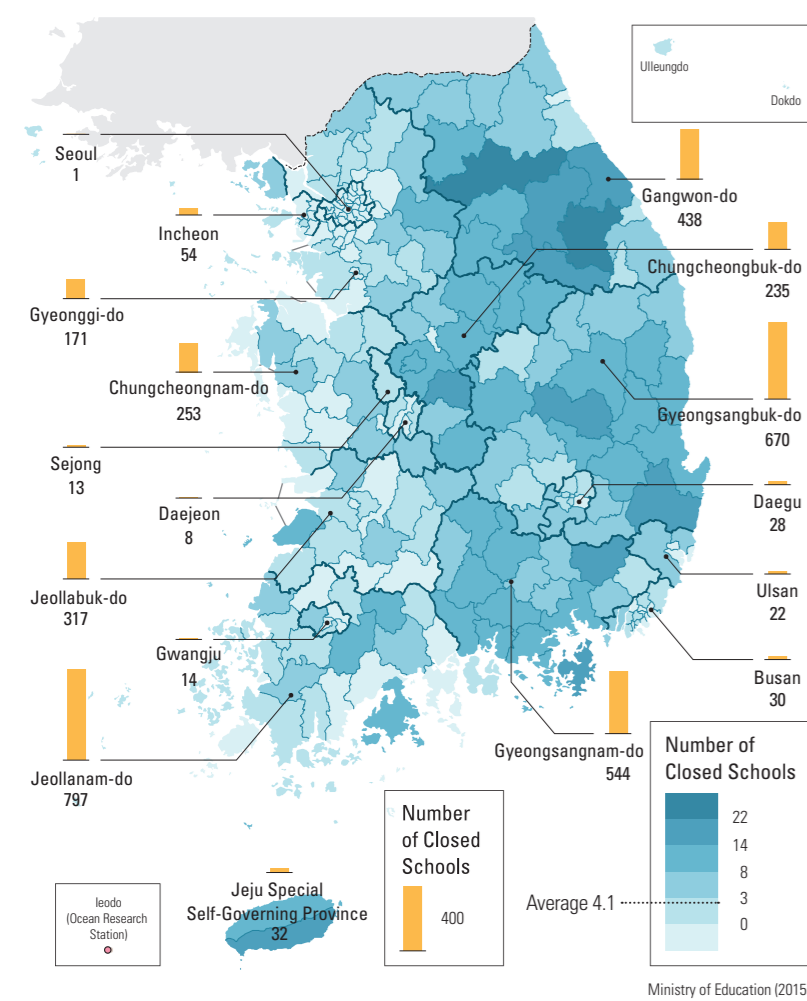
Change in the Number of Students per Class



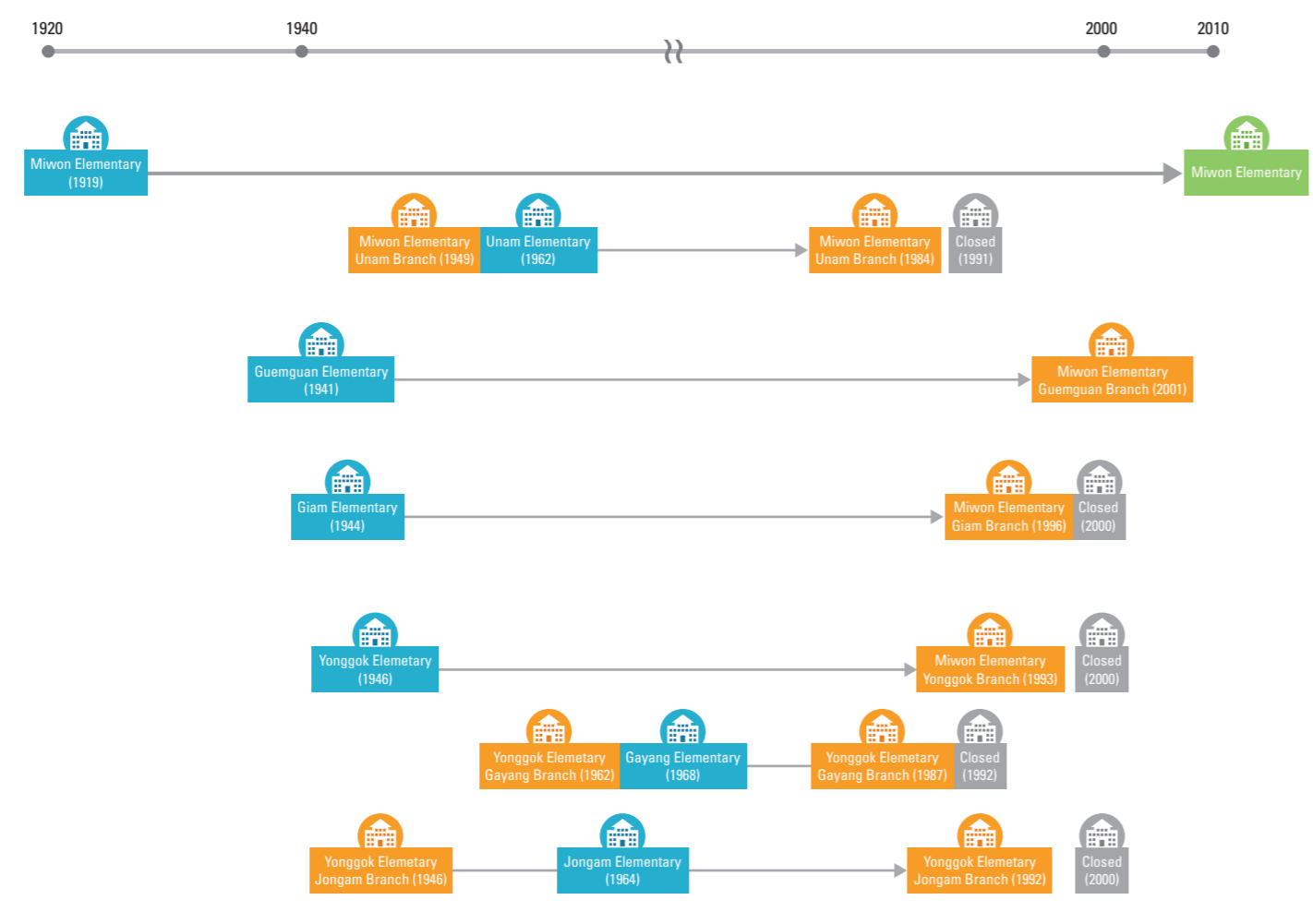
Closings of Elementary Schools (Miwon-myeon, Cheongju-si, Chungcheongbuk-do)



Closed Schools (2015)



Examples of Foundations and Closings of Elementary Schools (Miwon-myeon, Cheongju-si, Chungcheongbuk-do)



The location of elementary schools is closely related to residential zones in urban areas and to settlement conditions in rural areas. Elementary schools in old downtown areas were often established in the early stages of urban development and rapid urbanization. These areas tend to have fewer students and classes due to population loss to the suburbs. On the other hand, in the new res-

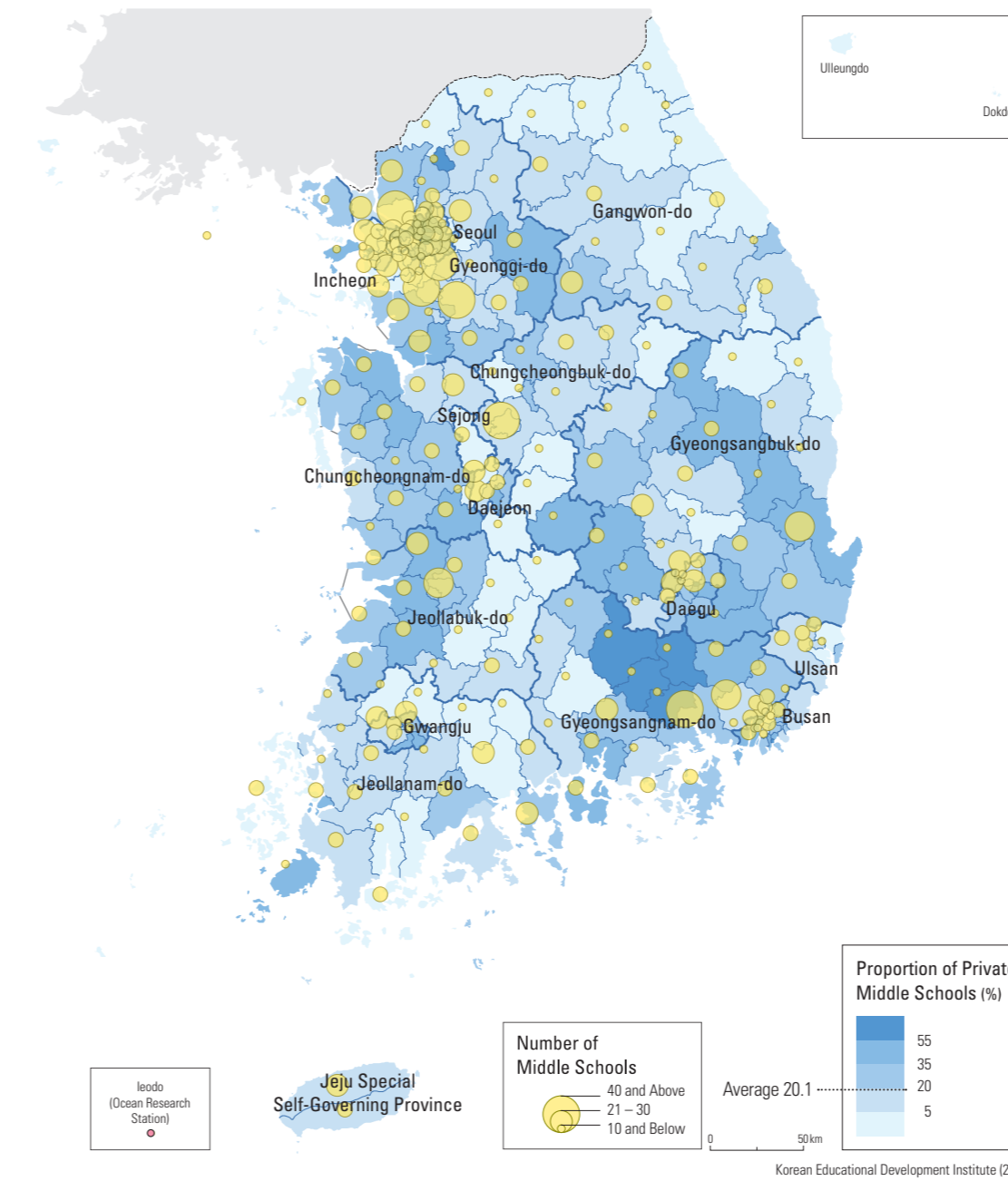
idential areas the location of elementary schools is generally determined by the planning process. The commuting distance to an elementary school is very short in these newly developed areas, which is a basic reason why families with school-age children prefer the newly developed areas. On the other hand, many rural elementary schools have been closed because of declines

in the number of school-age children. As indicated on the map, Miwon-myeon, Cheongju-si, Chungcheongbuk-do, as a typical rural area, has experienced an outflow of young people, resulting in the closing of many elementary schools. Looking at this by time periods, many schools were established during the 1970s when many Korean baby boomers entered elementary school.

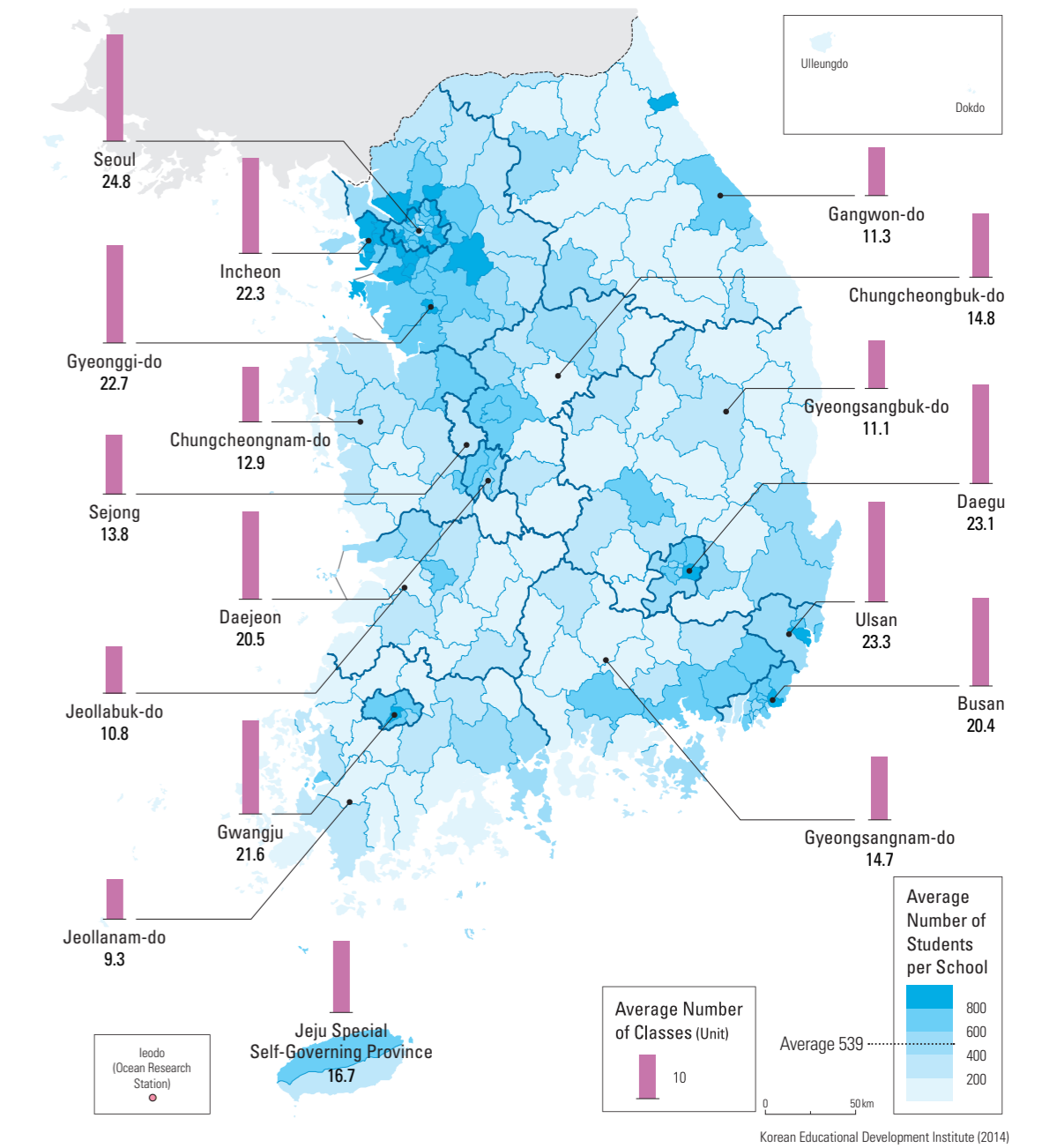
Since the mid-1980s, branch schools that had been added were closed down, usually leaving only schools in the rural centers. Recent trends also indicate that school closings are not confined to rural areas, but also are occurring in old town sections of cities due to the lack of students.

Secondary Education

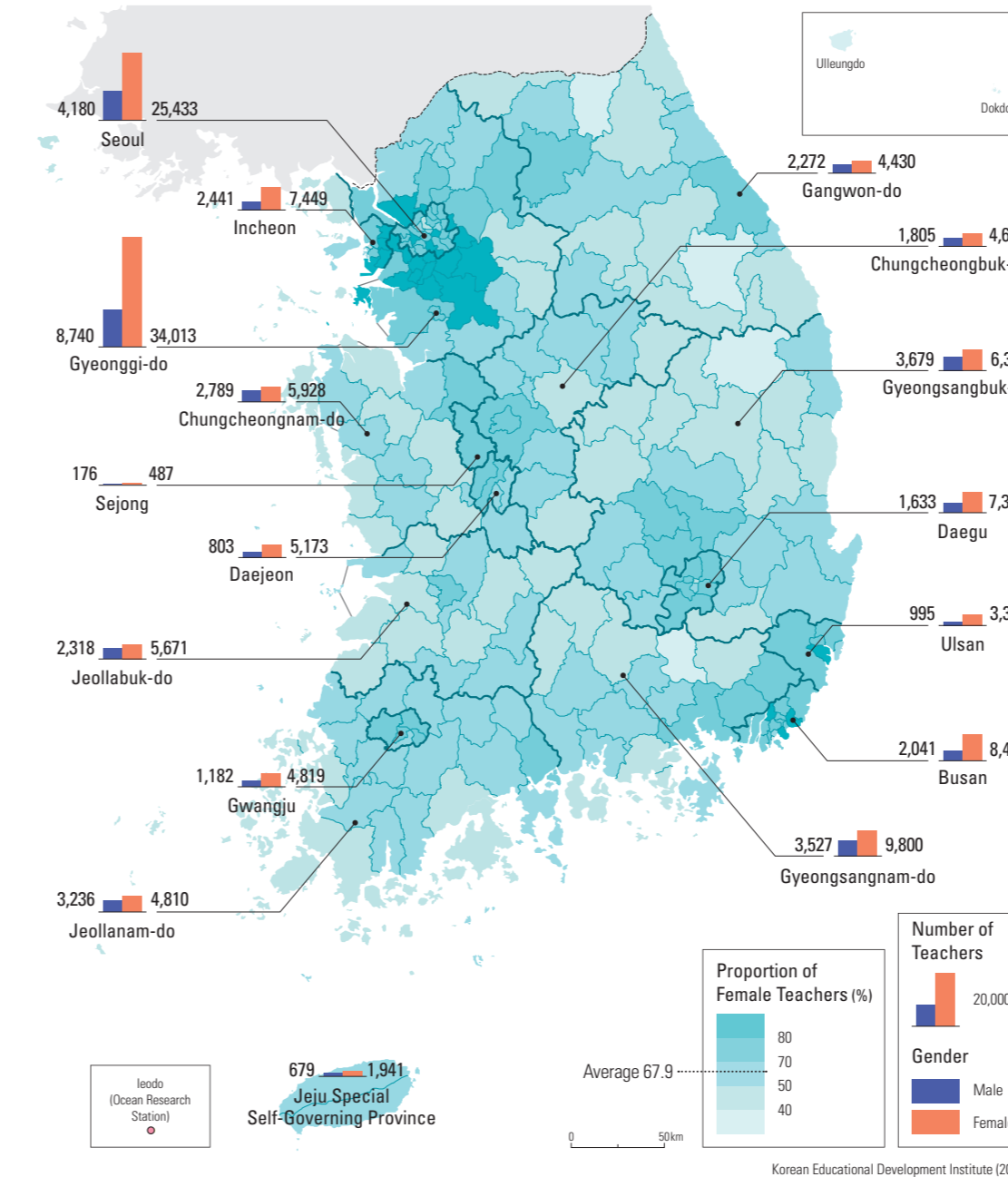
Distribution of Middle Schools (2014)



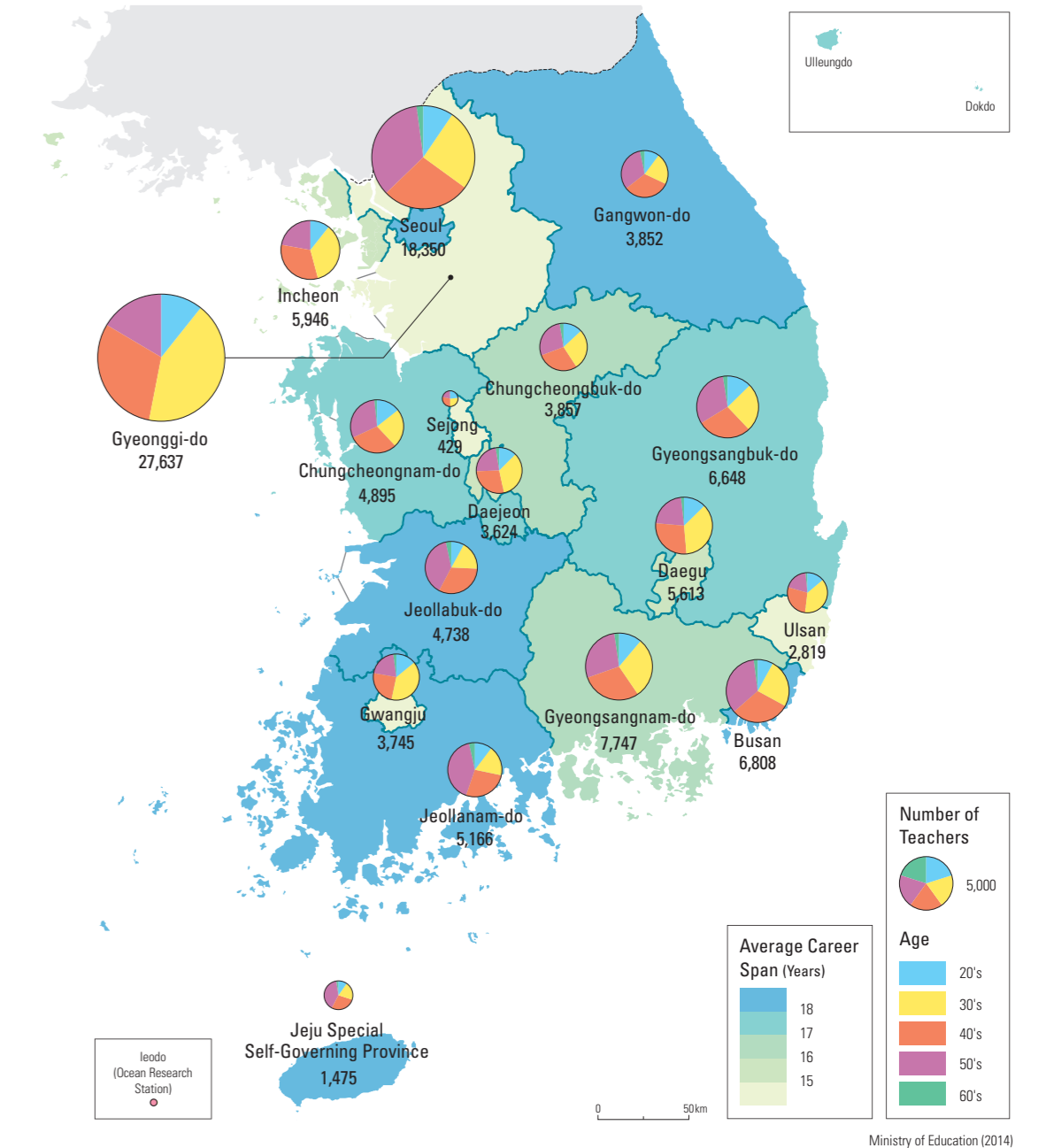
Size of Middle Schools (2014)



Gender Ratio of Middle School Teachers (2014)



Age of Middle School Teachers (2014)



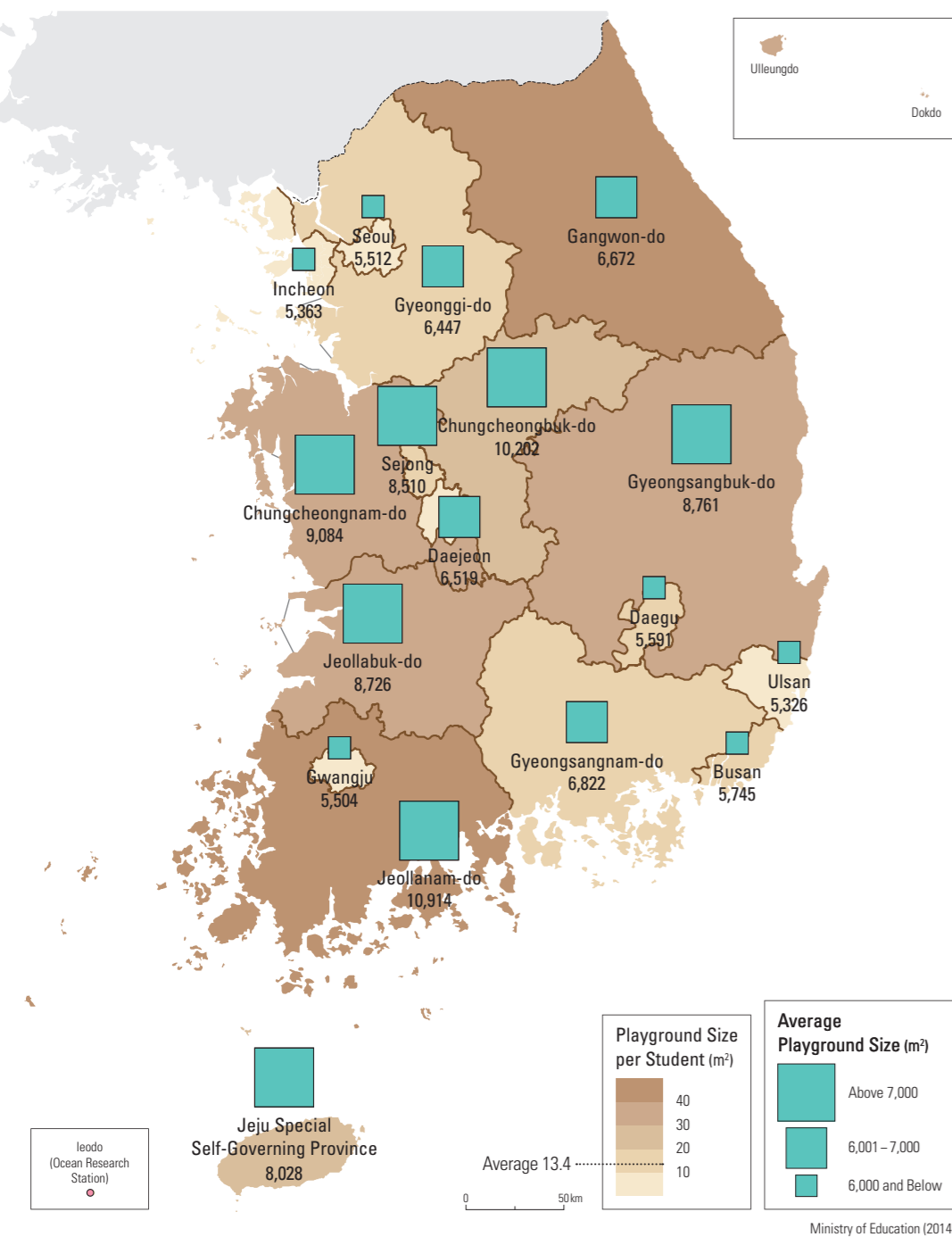
Middle schools are classified as national and public. The numbers of middle school classes and students in rural areas are relatively smaller than those in urban areas.

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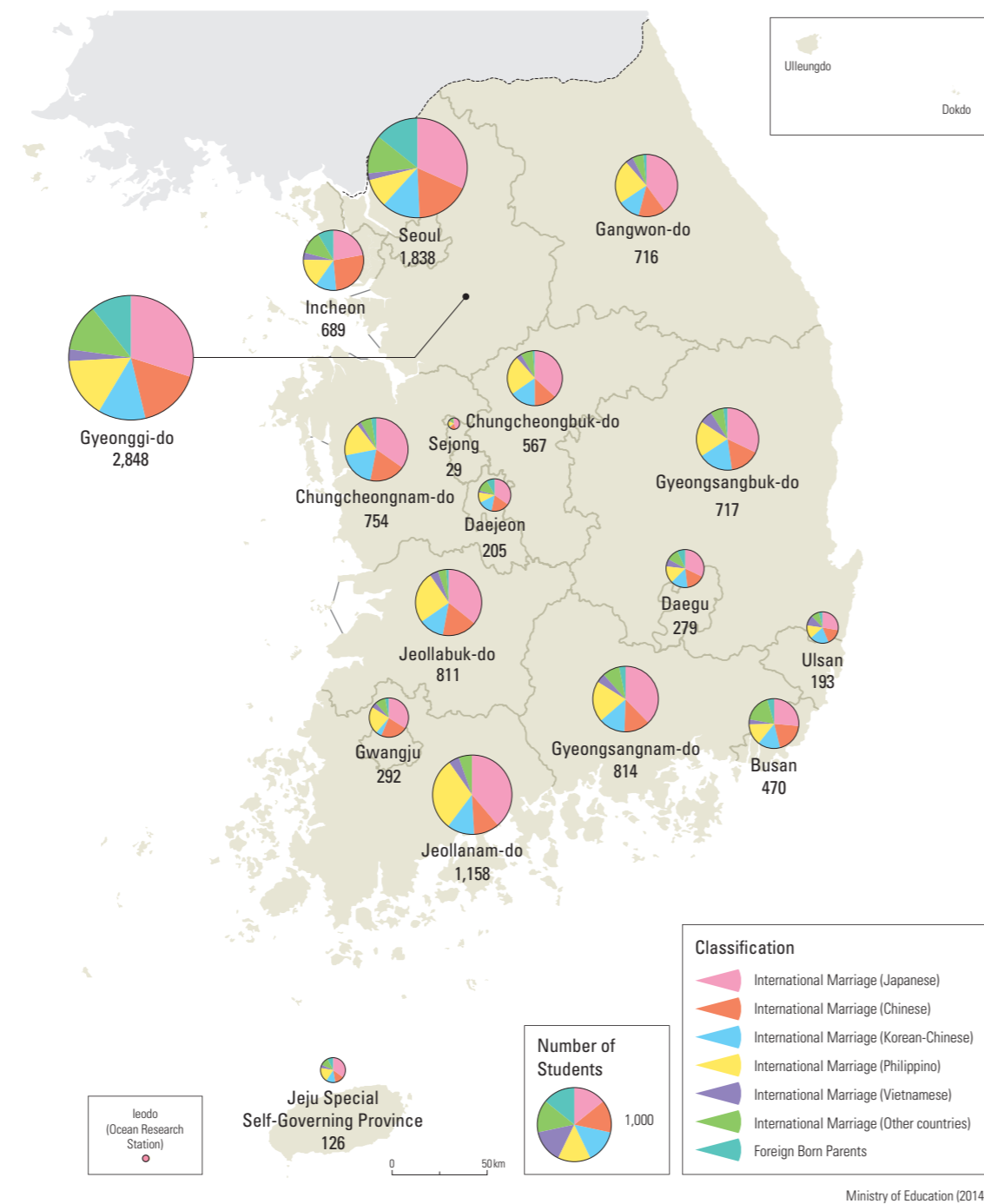
As with elementary schools, there are more female middle school teachers than males in urban areas compared to rural areas. In addition, teach-

ers in both rural and urban areas tend to be older because fewer new teachers are recruited due to the decreasing number of students.

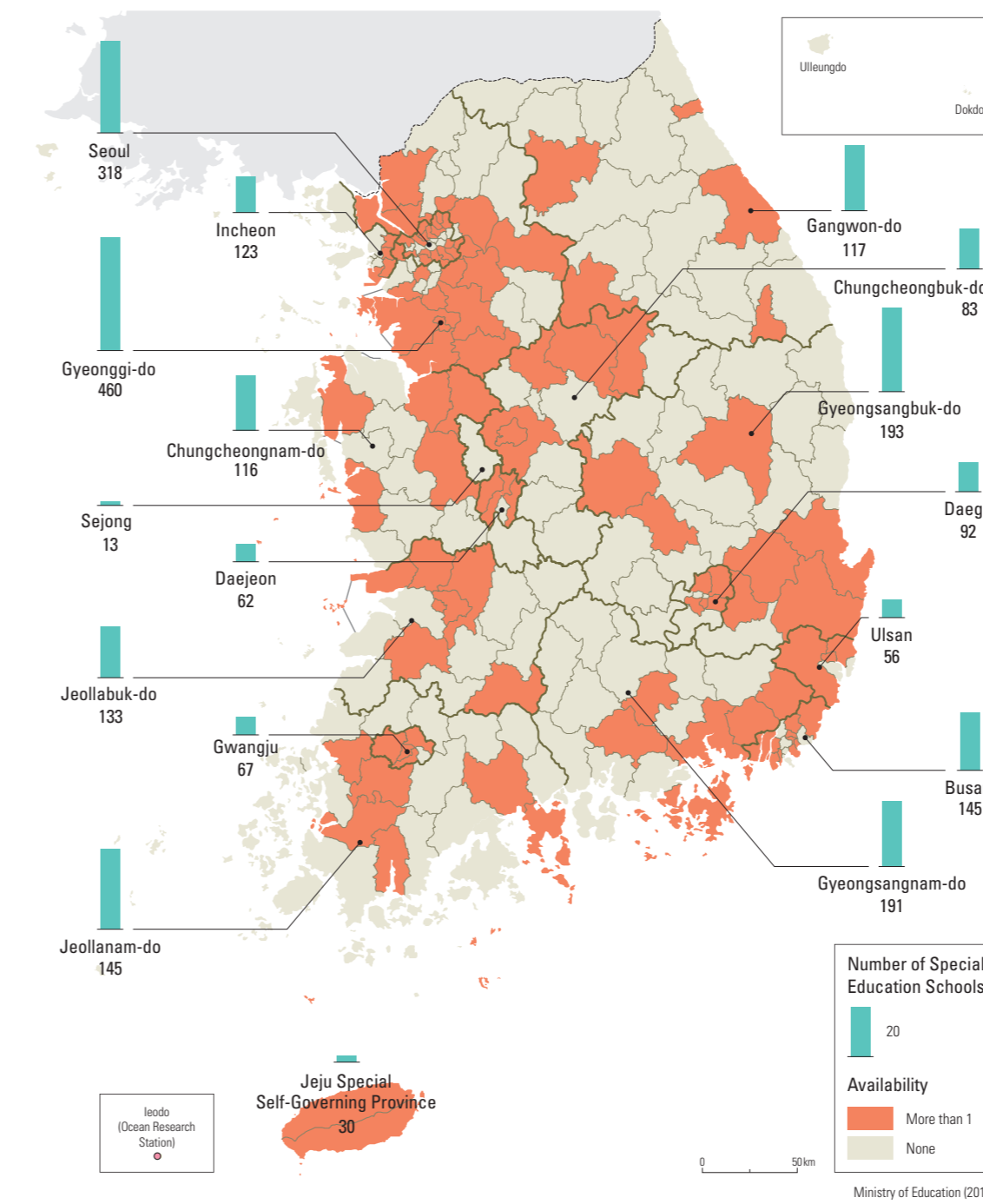
Playground Size in Middle Schools (2014)



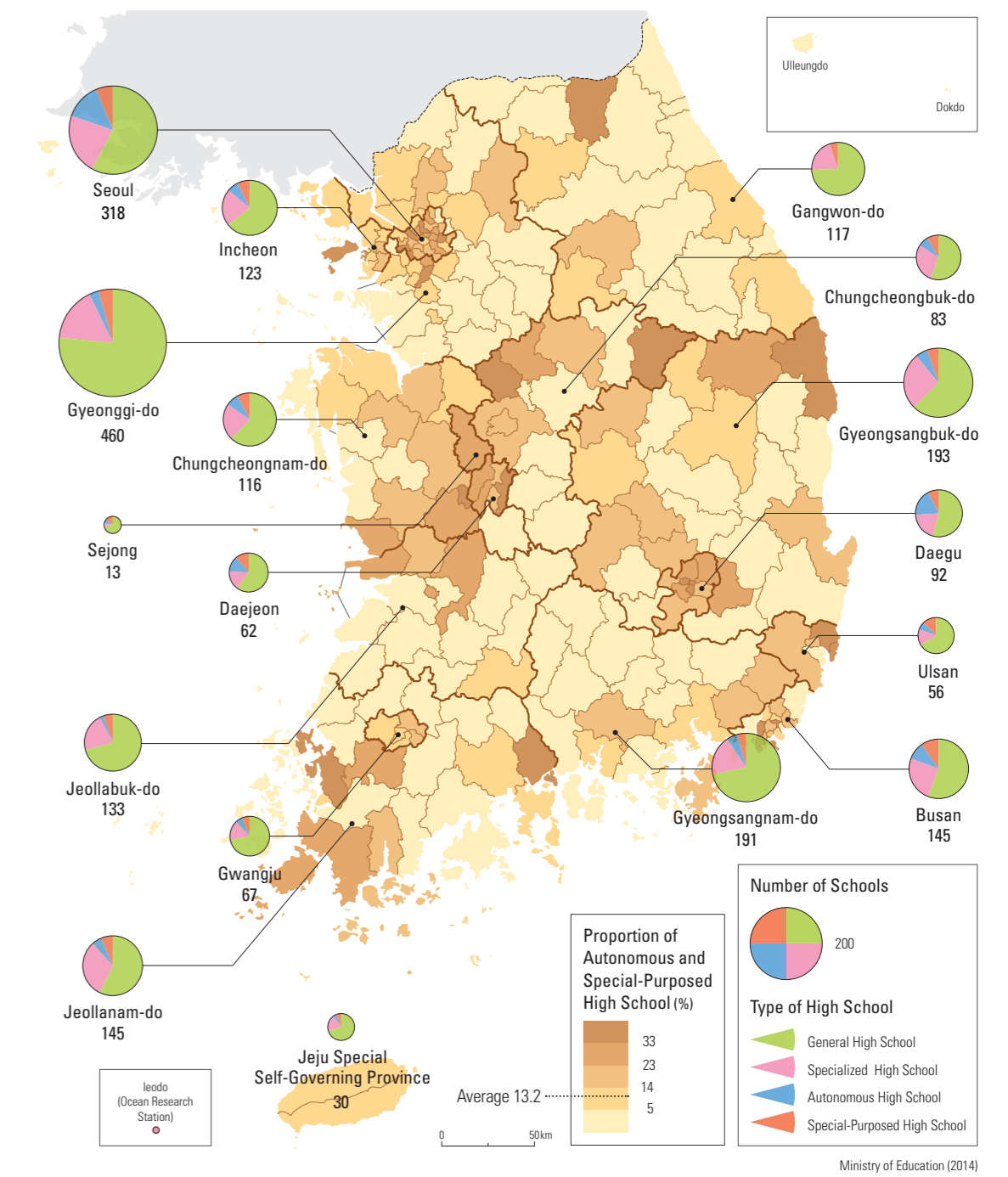
Multicultural Family Students in Elementary School (2014)



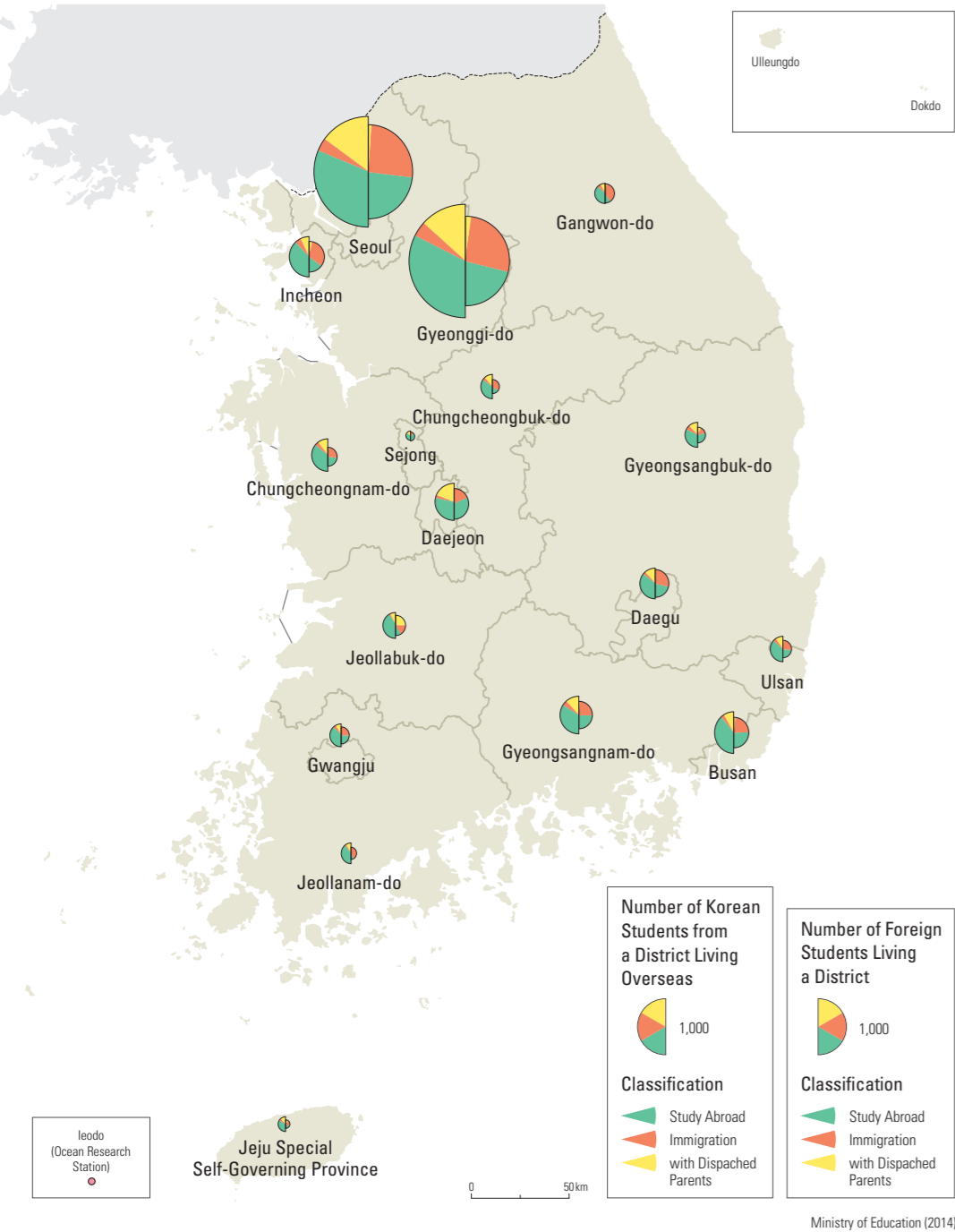
Special Education (2014)



General, Autonomous and Special-Purpose High Schools (2014)



Study Abroad Students in Middle School (2014)



Playgrounds and physical training facilities are very important for the physical strength and development of middle school-age youth. The size of the middle school playground varies greatly by region. Also, the per capita size of school playgrounds in metropolitan cities is small compared to other areas.

Multicultural diversity has rapidly increased in middle schools too. Students of foreign families are mainly concentrated in Seoul and Gyeonggi-do while students of international marriage families are distributed across the whole country, including rural areas. It is documented that the number of middle school students leaving Korea to study abroad is larger than that of student returning after studying abroad.

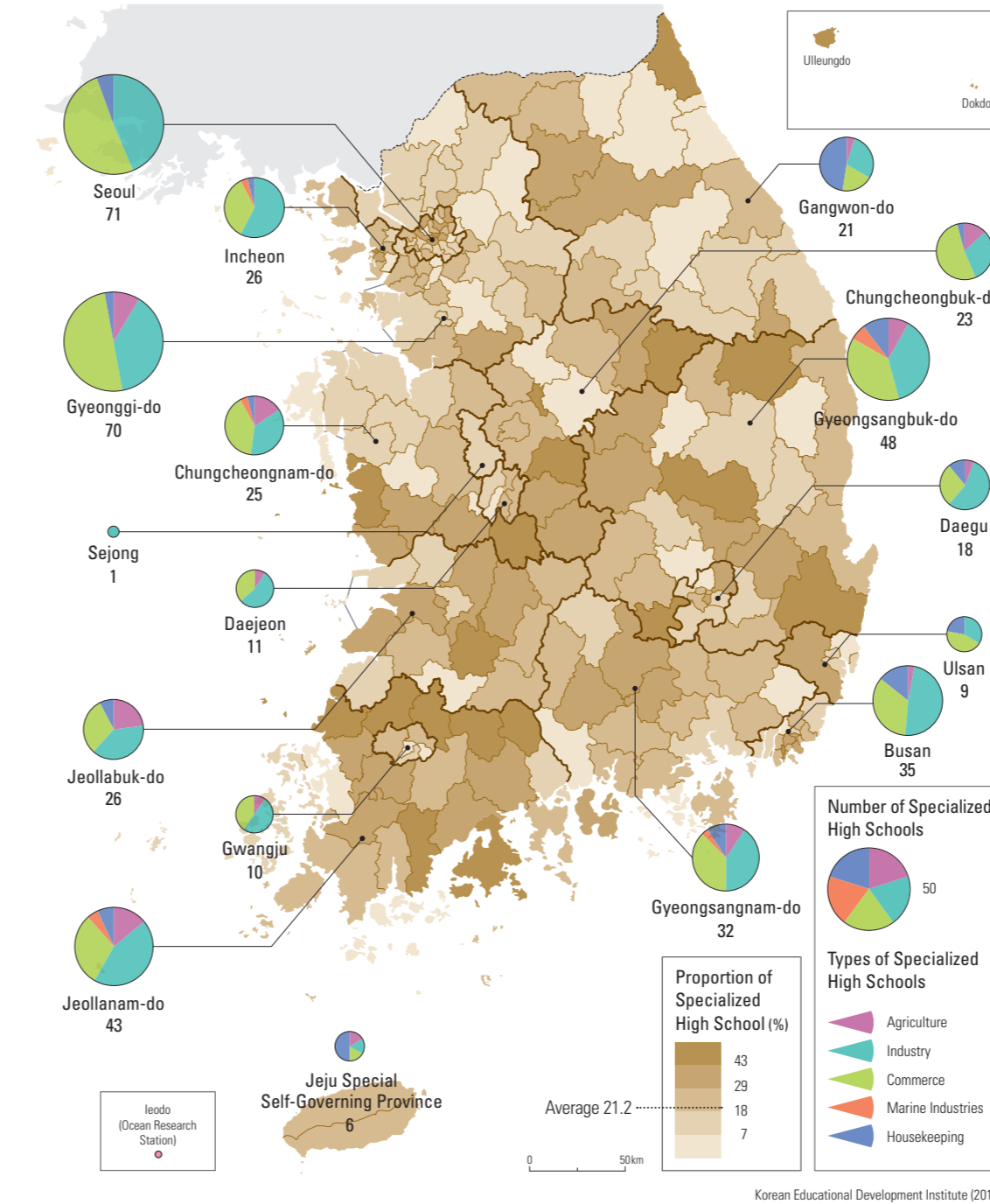
Special education schools are responsible for educating students with disabilities. These special education schools have been established in metropolitan cities and in some small and medium-sized cities. Many rural areas do not have such schools; thus, students with disabilities study with other students in the general schools through a type of integrated education.

Korea's high schools are classified as regular high schools for students planning to attend colleges and universities and as specialized high schools for students planning to seek industrial employment after acquiring specialized techniques and skills. In addition, special-purpose high schools have been established for education in foreign languages and the sciences. Recently, many autonomous private schools, which have

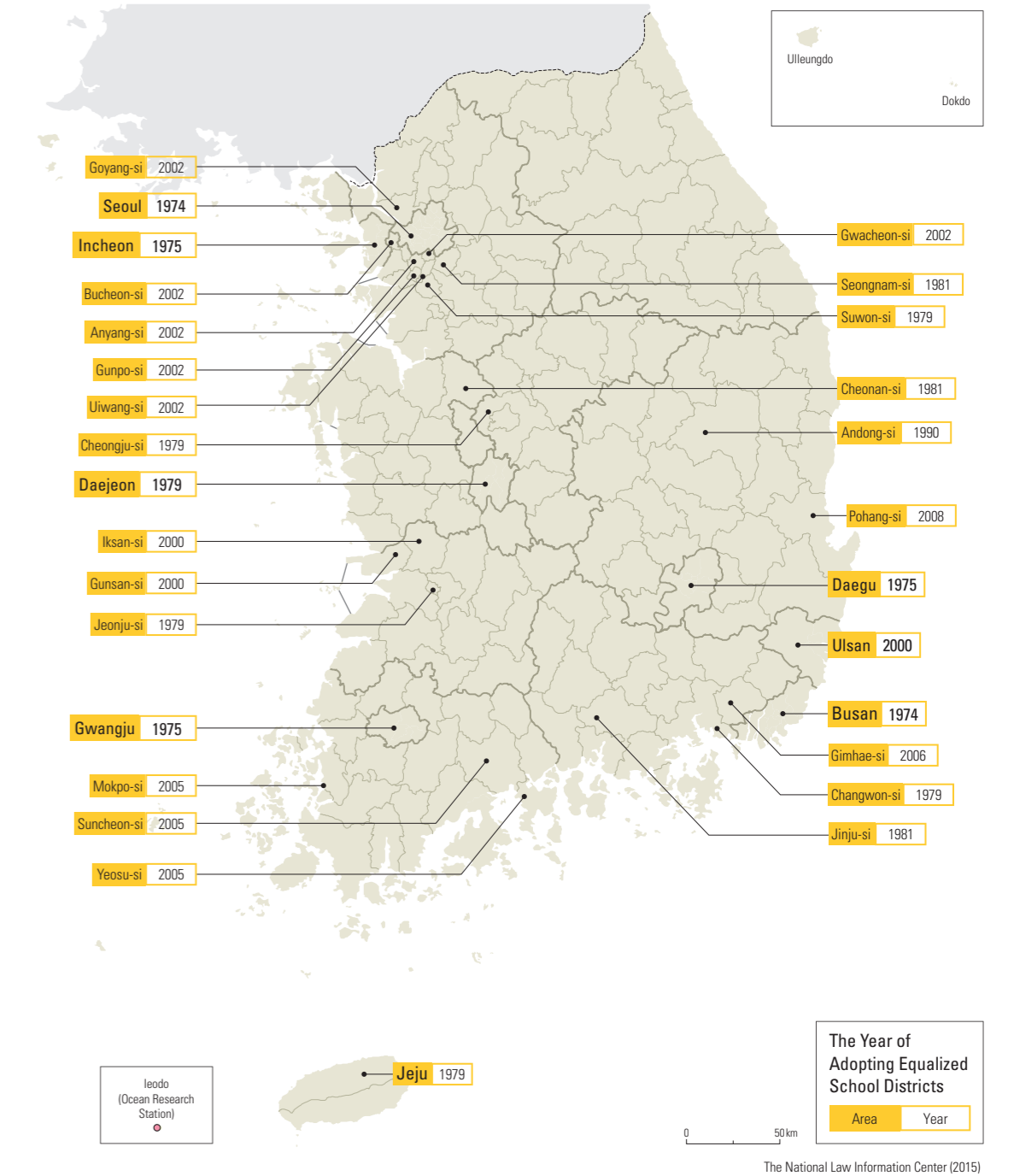
autonomy in education and financial operations, have been established. Specialized high schools offer a unique education that conforms to the characteristics of the local industries including agriculture, industry, commerce, and marine industries.

Korean high school districts are classified as equalized and un-equalized school systems according to their student selection method. The equalization system has been mainly implemented in metropolitan areas, where the students' commute is not a factor even when the school is randomly assigned. Prestige schools, characterized by high student achievement, have emerged in areas that have not used the equalization system, and students compete fiercely for admission to prestige schools. These prestige schools have had a significant impact on Korean society and local communities through excellent study achievements and a network of alumni. Recently, as the equalization system has spread, special-purpose high schools have emerged as new prestige schools with focuses in the sciences or foreign languages.

Specialized High Schools (2014)

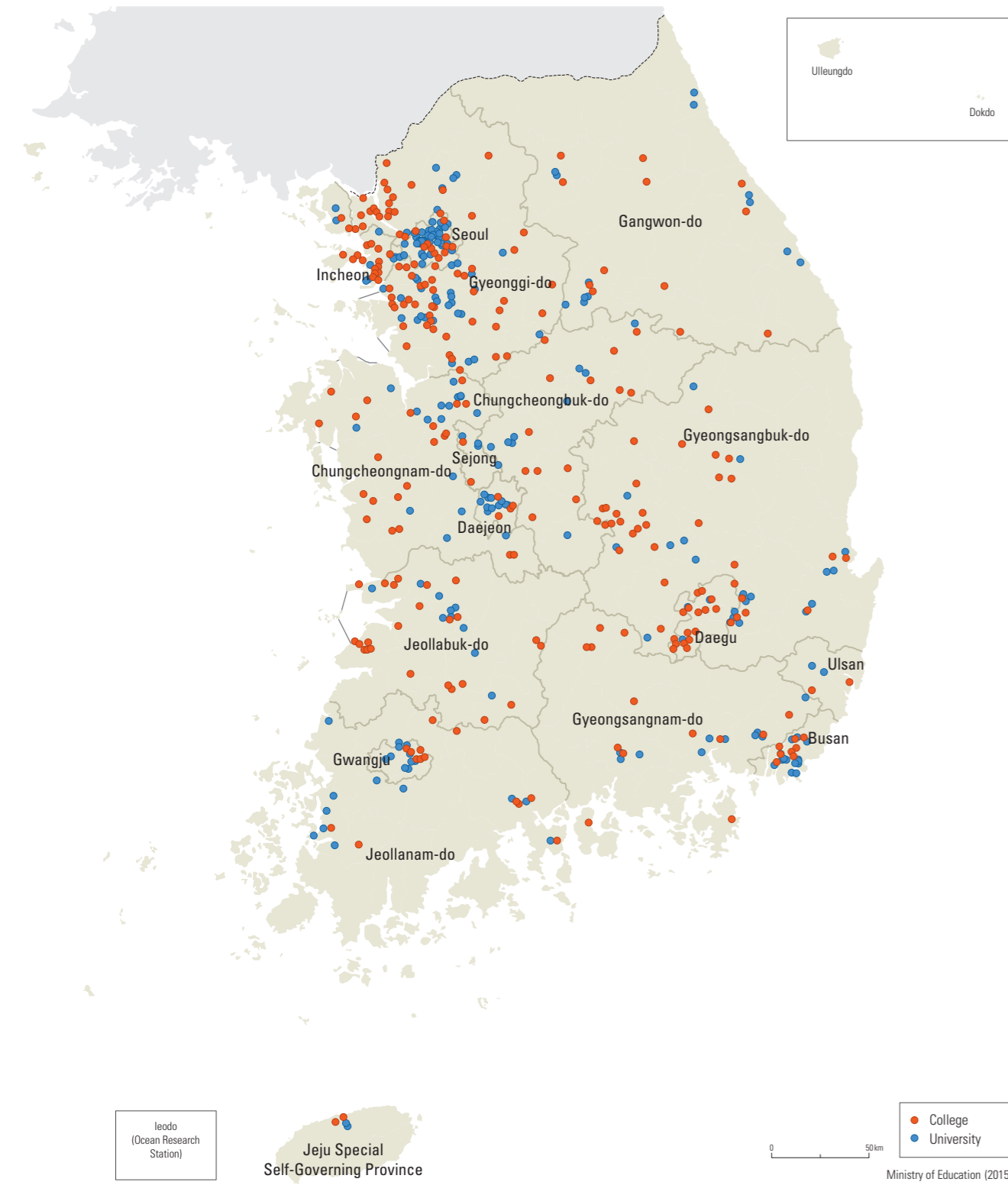


Timeline for Equalized School District Adoptions

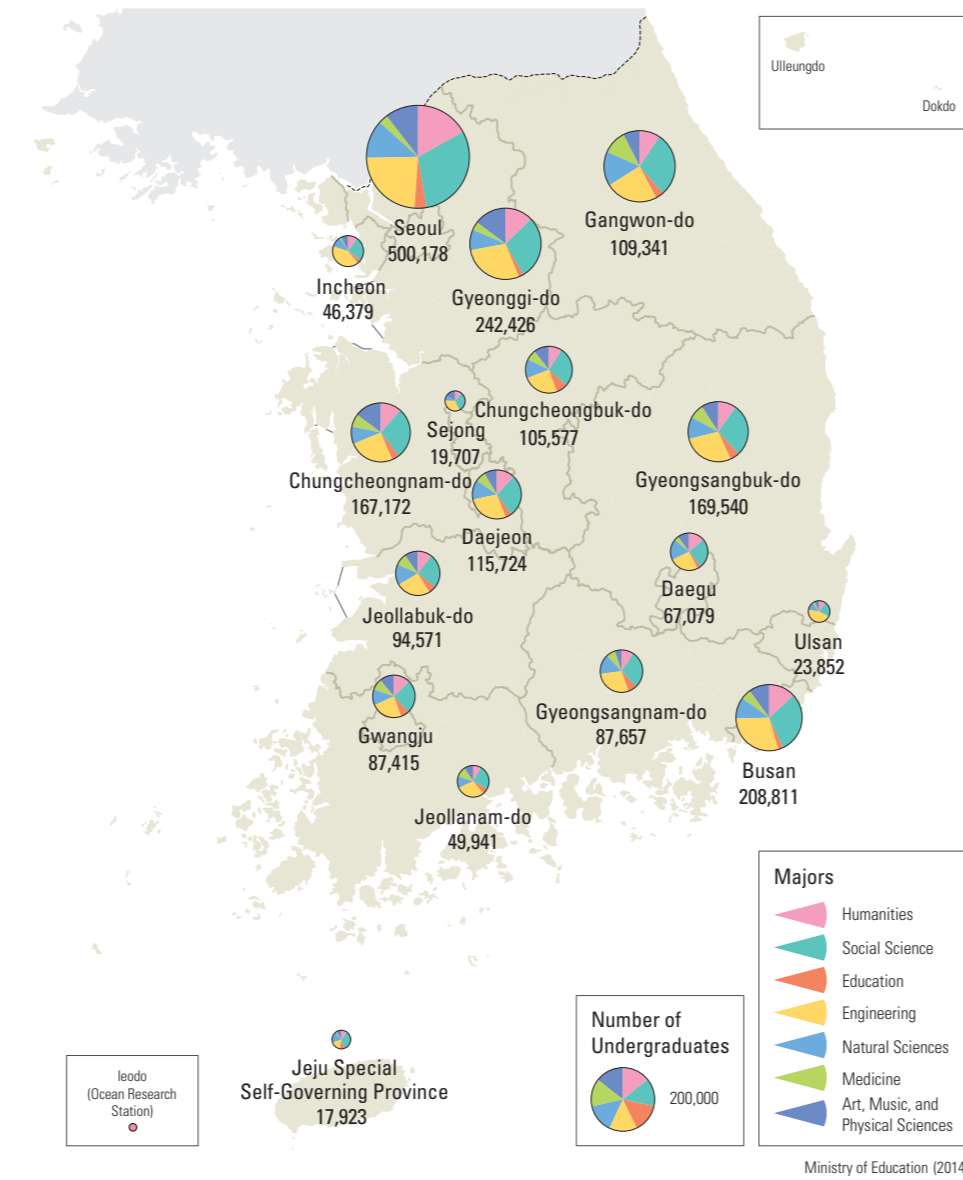


Higher Education

Distribution of Colleges and Universities (2015)



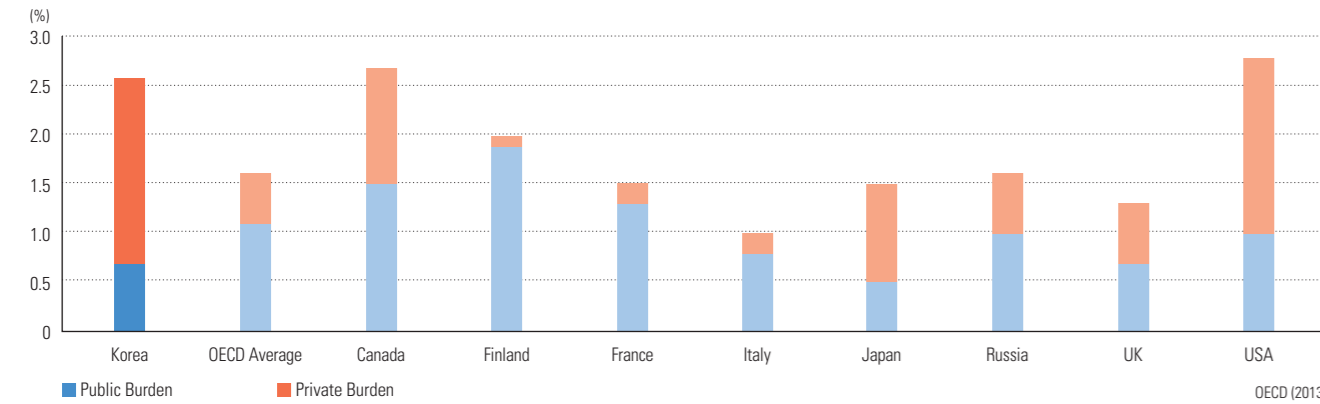
Number of Undergraduates by Major (2014)



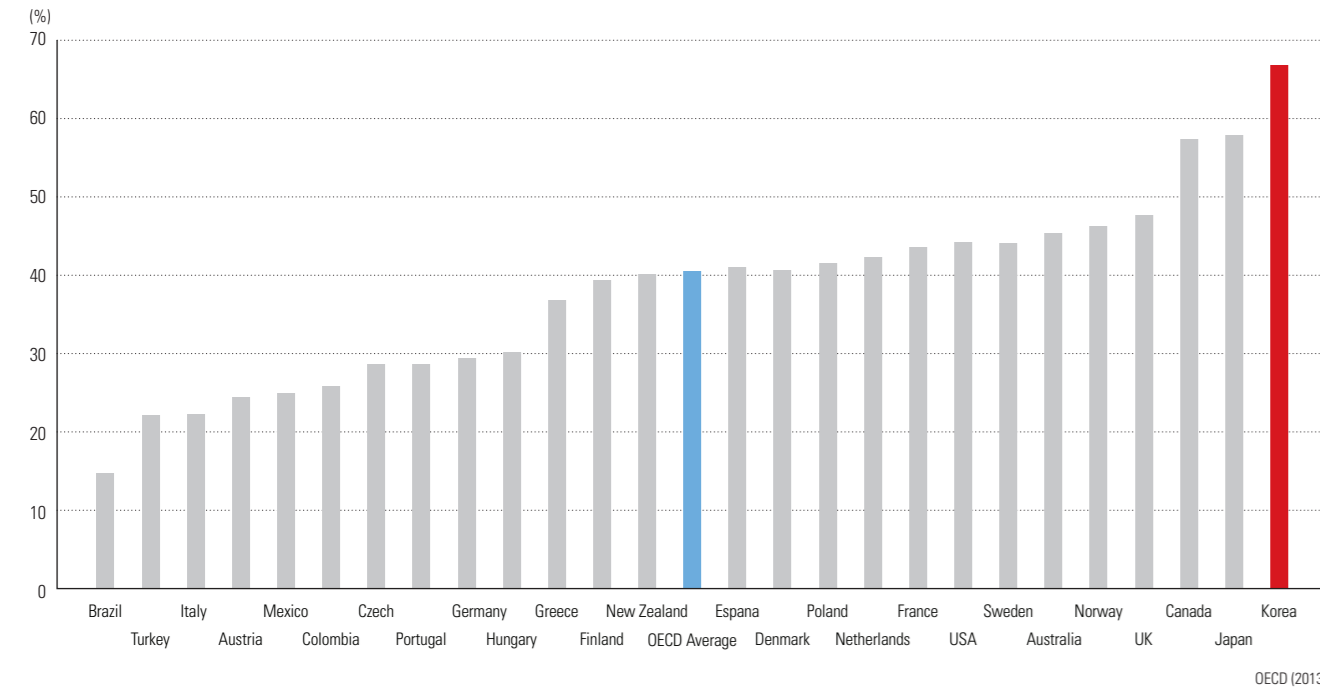
Classification and Number of Universities (2014)

Classification	Numbers
Junior College	139
Univ. of Education	10
University	189
Air & Corr. University	1
Industrial University	2
Technical University	University: 1, College: 0
Other Colleges	1
Cyber University	University: 17, College: 2
Remote Education University	1
Offering Junior College Diploma School	1
University In Company	3
College In Company	5
Specialized College	3
Polytechnic College	12
Graduate School	1,209

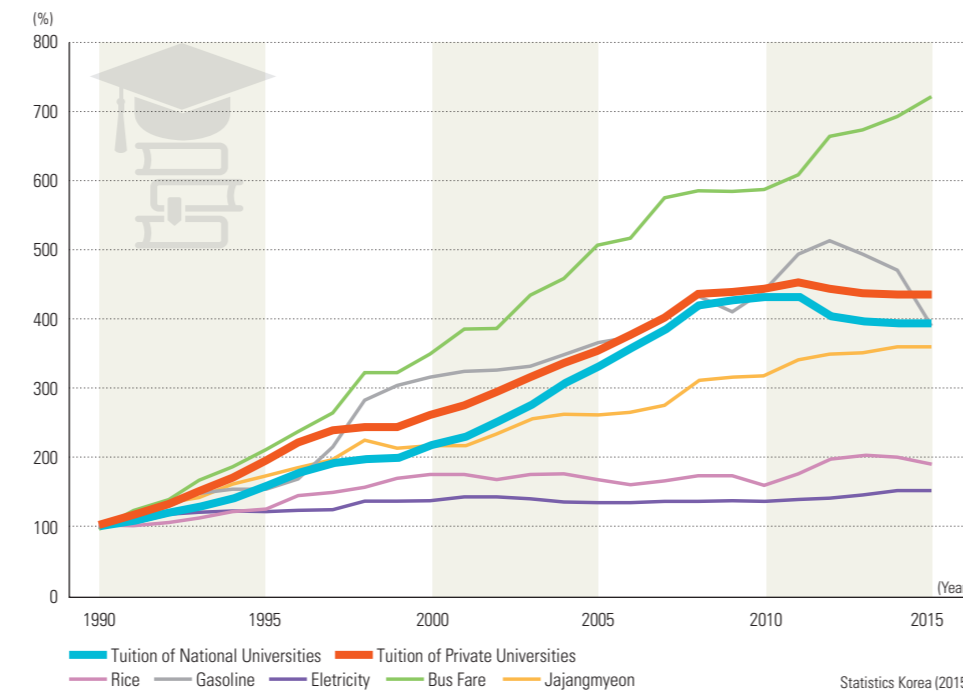
Proportion of Expenditure on Higher Education to GDP (2013)



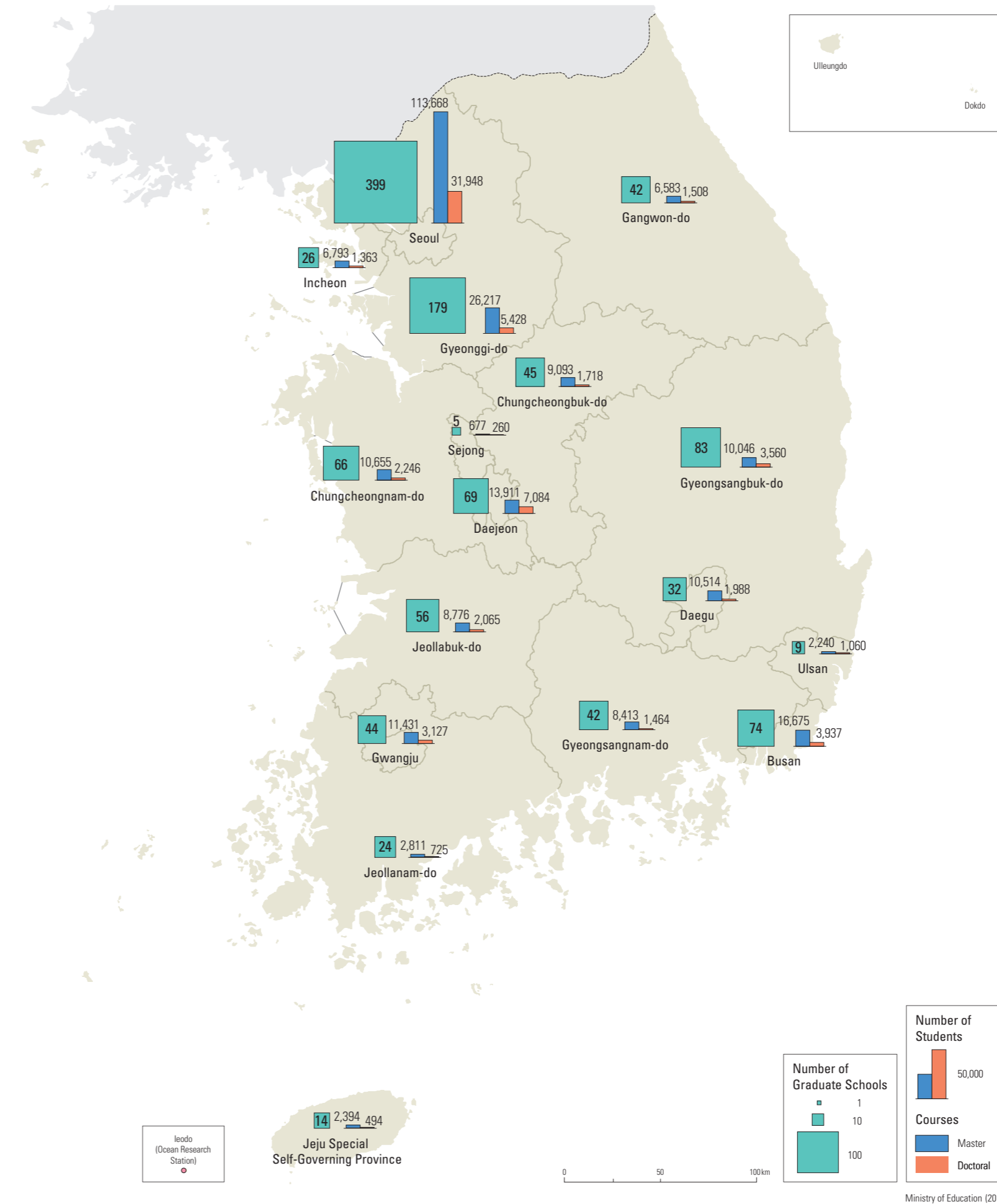
Students Pursuing Higher Education (Age 25 - 34, 2013)



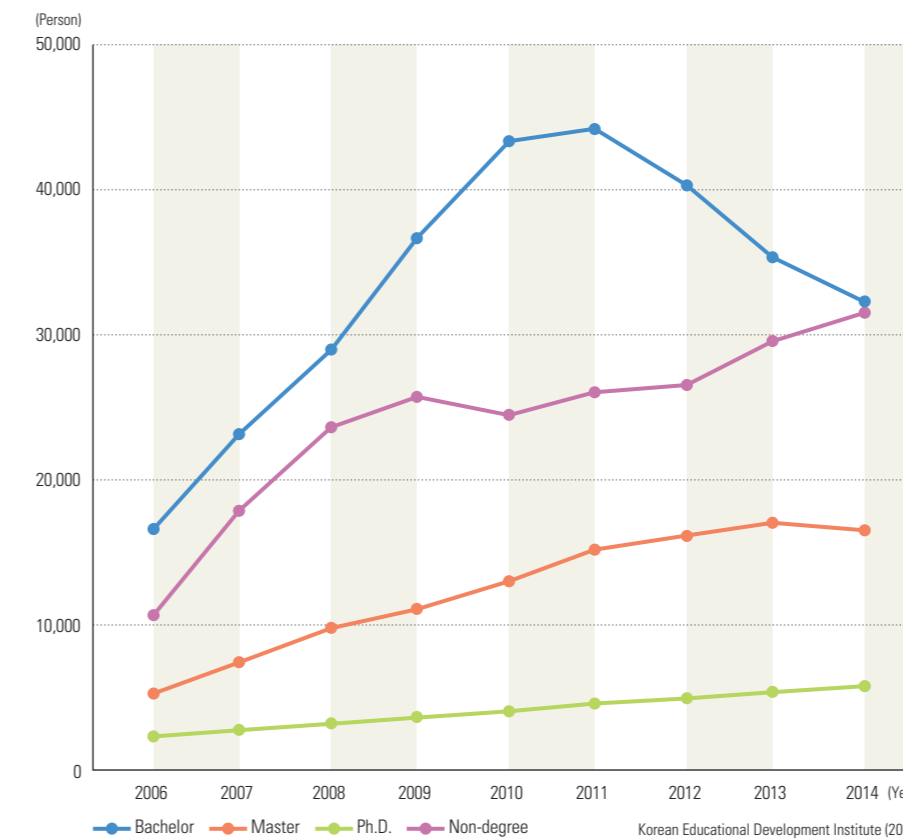
Percentage of Price Increase for Higher Education and Other Goods and Services (1990 - 2015)



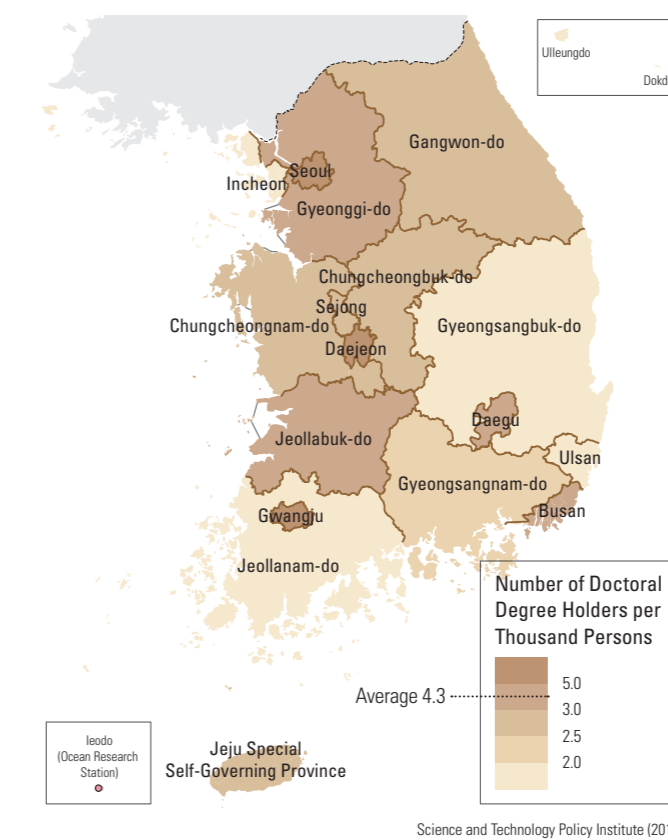
Distribution of Graduate Schools (2014)



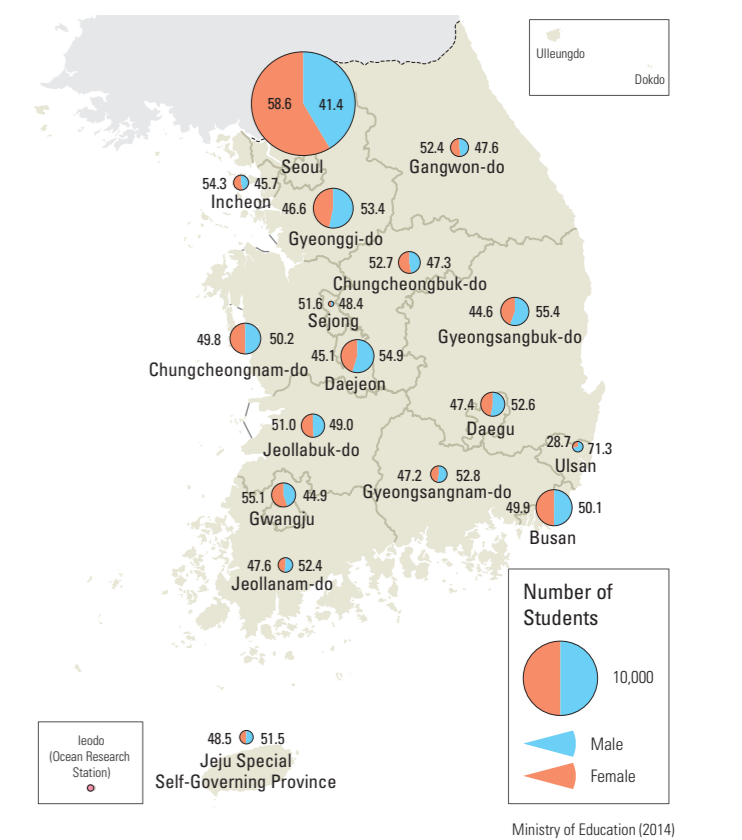
International Students (2014)



Doctoral Degree Holders (2012)



International Students by Region (2014)



Korea's higher education has undergone significant changes. The number of colleges and college enrollments have increased rapidly, and various types of colleges have been established. There are many types of colleges: four-year universities and two-year colleges, teacher education colleges for training elementary school teachers, and universities that offer education through remote access. In addition, there are many other colleges such as military academies and academies that offer training for various professions.

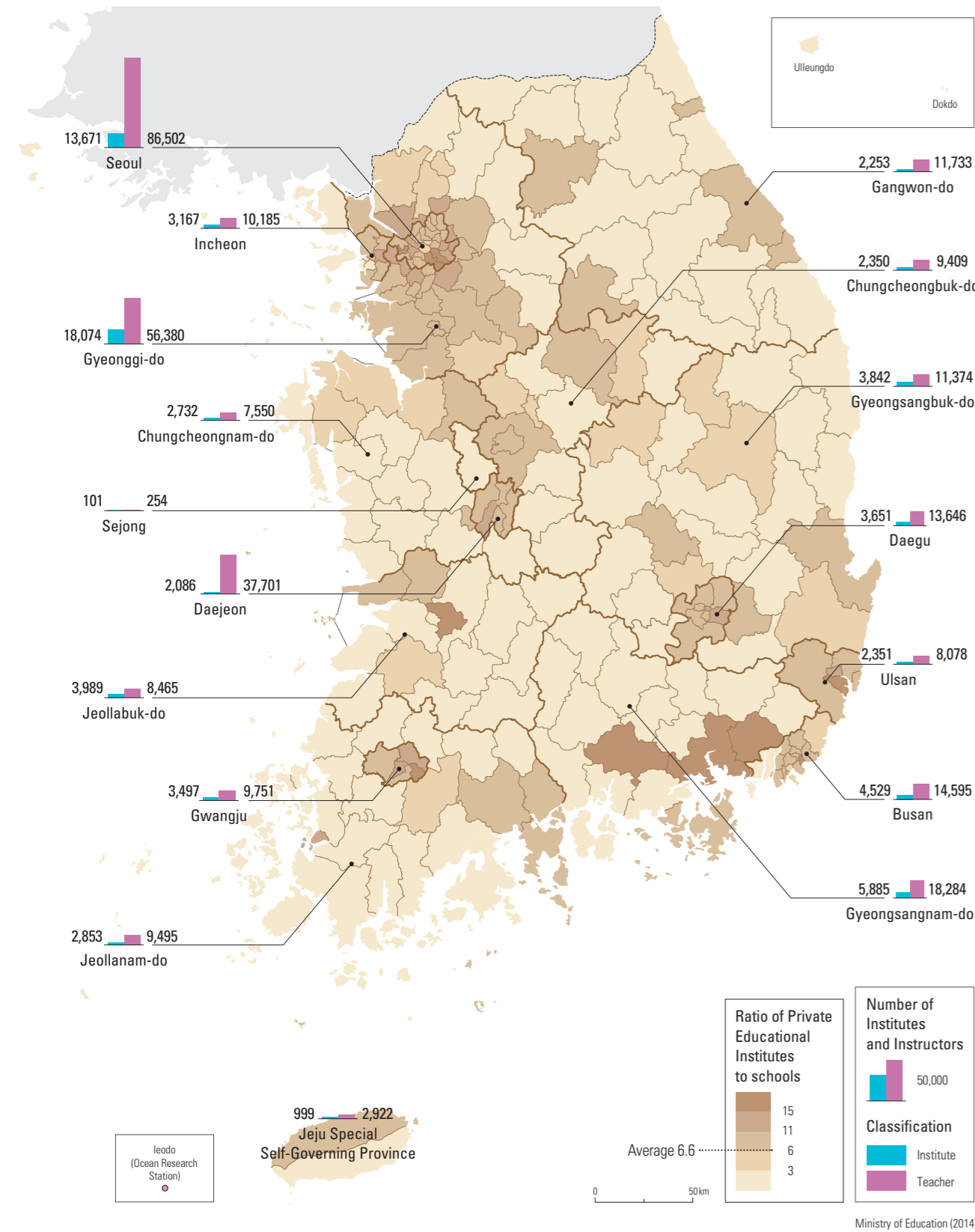
Universities are classified into national and private universities; a few national universities were established in the central city of each province. Private universities have been established on the basis of their unique educational goals. Since the 1990s, as the number of private universities has significantly increased, the percentage of students entering universities has also grown at a dramatic rate, to the point where the current percentage of students entering university in Korea is the highest among the OECD countries. The positive aspect of this phenomenon is the achievement of a highly educated workforce, but this also results in significant economic burden to the students. The appropriate level of college tuition, the state's scholarship support, and the maintenance of fiscal sustainability of both public and private universities have emerged as important agenda items. Majors in universities are largely classified under humanities, social sciences, education, natural sciences, engineering, medicine, arts, music, and physical sciences.

Many graduate schools have been established in accordance with increasing demands for development of higher education and professional knowledge. While many graduate schools operated by universities account for a large share, there are many graduate schools for religious training, executive development, medical expert training, and legal profession training.

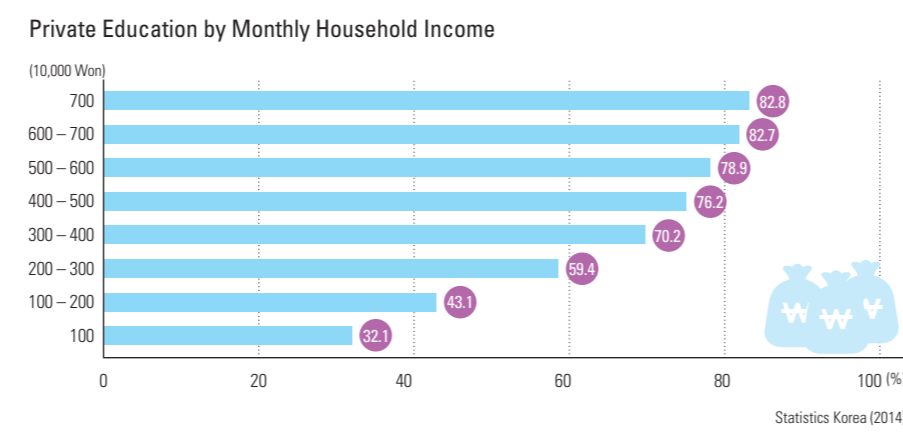
University professors mostly have doctoral degrees, and doctoral degree are obtained at both domestic universities and foreign countries, such as the United States, Japan, and Germany. In addition, many foreign students have recently entered Korean colleges and graduate schools to take Korean language courses and to obtain a degree due to the increased quality of higher education garnered by Korean universities internationally.

Private Education and Other Schools

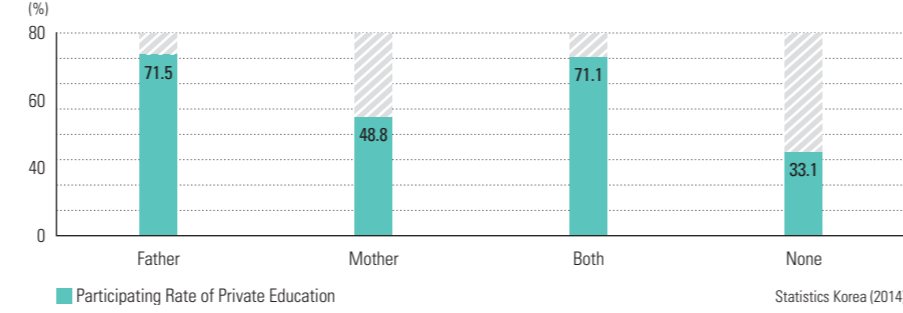
Private Educational Institutes (2014)



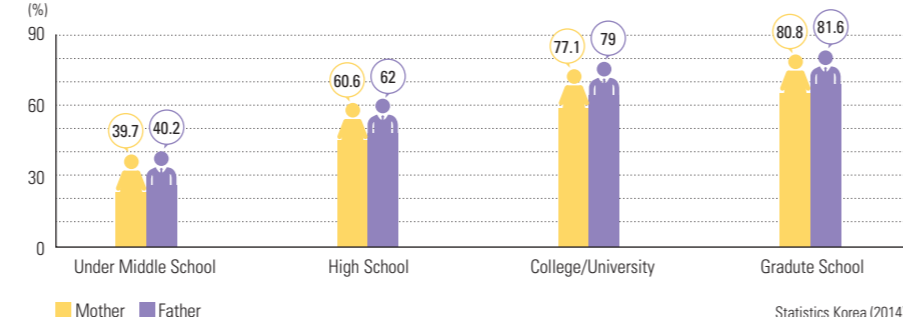
Participation Rate for Private Education (2014)



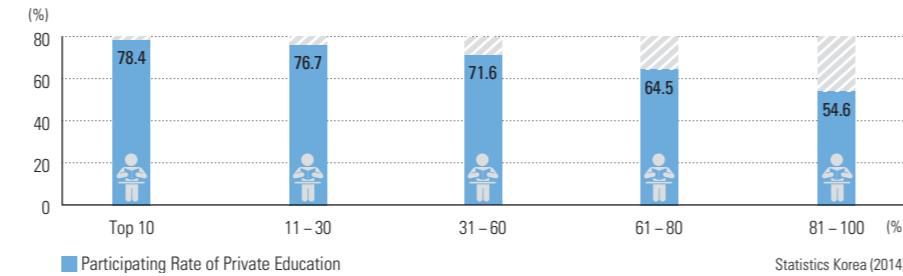
Private Education by the Number of Breadwinner



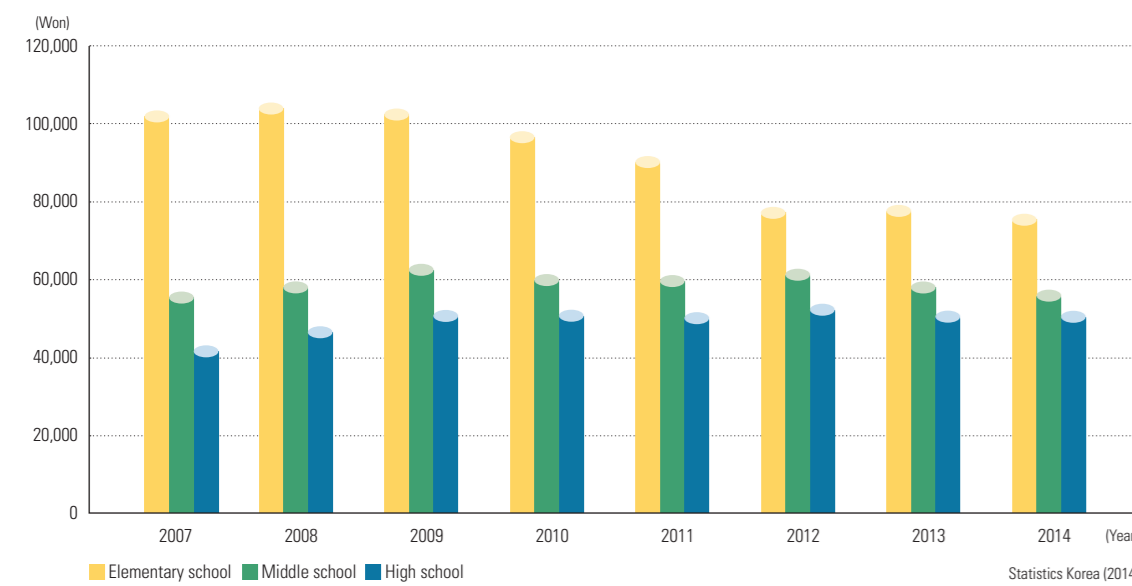
Private Education by Educational Achievement of Parents



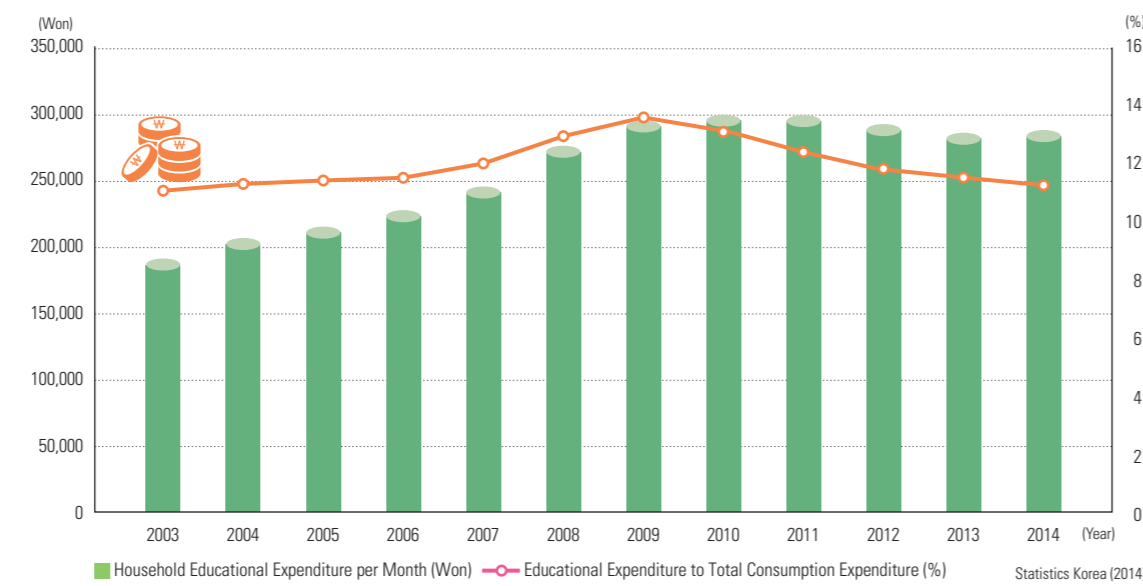
Educational Achievement by Private Education Experience



Monthly Expenditure on Private Education per Student (2014)



Household Expenditure on Education (2014)



The enthusiasm for education in Korea has been praised for promoting and developing excellent human resources in Korea. However, excessive private education is a large part of the problem for Korean education in terms of parents' financial burden and the disparity of available private education opportunities between regions and social strata. Recent statistics reveal that a very high proportion of students begin private education in elementary school.

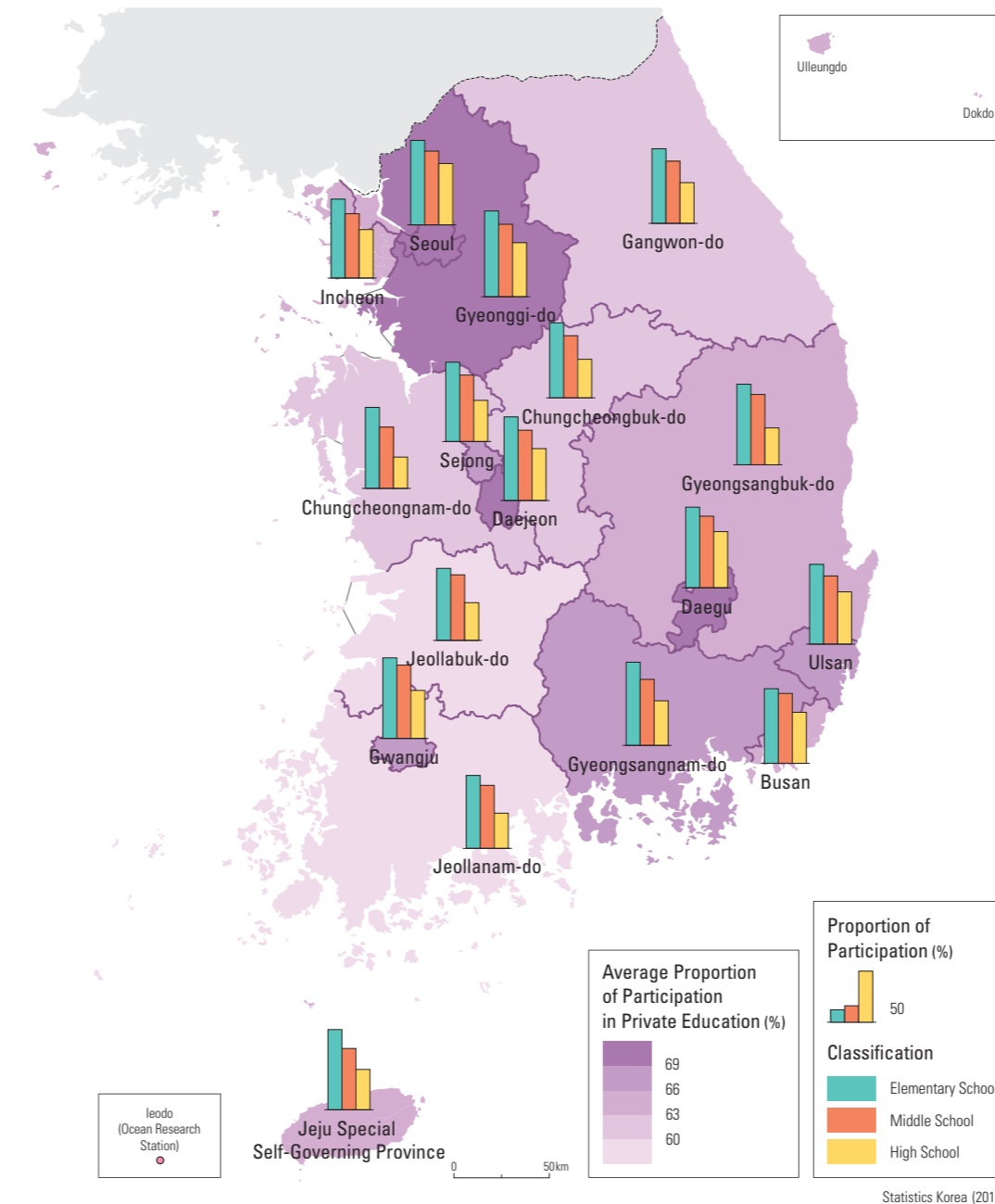
The total private education expense has de-

creased in recent years, but is still over 18 trillion won according to a 2014 survey. This amount is about 44 percent of the elementary and middle school education budget. The average household spending on education is about 280,000 won, which is about 11 percent of total household expenditures. The proportion of household expenditure on education declined to 13.5 percent from its peak in 2009. Government policies, such as a reform of the college entrance exam system, banning prerequisite learning, and enforcing edu-

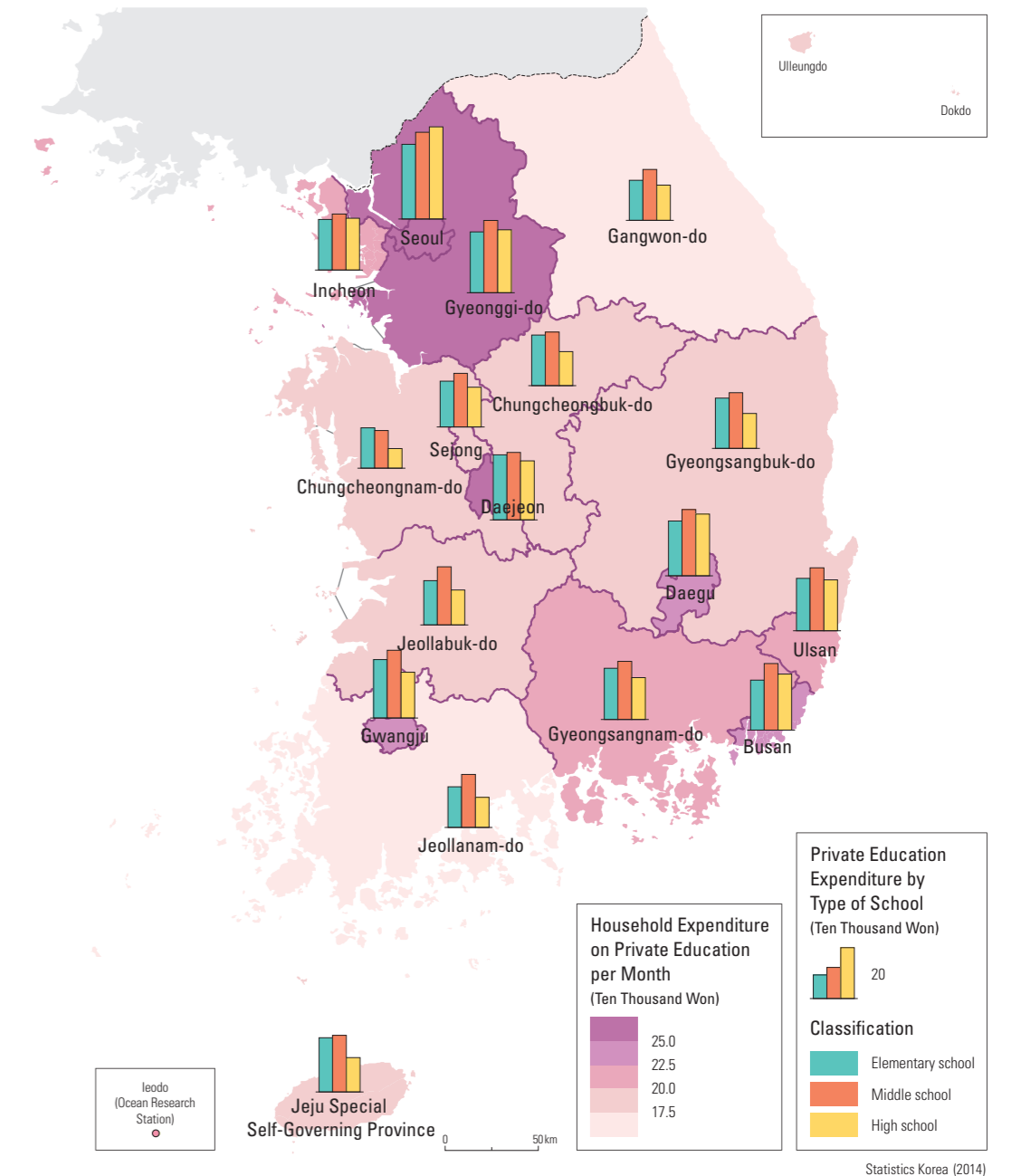
ational broadcasting, have been implemented to lower private education costs. In addition, it is reported that the choice for private education is closely related to the social and economic condition of the parents. Survey shows that the higher the household income level and academic degree of the parents, the more likely it is that they spend more for private education for their children. Differences in children's academic achievement may occur depending on participation rates in private education.

Regionally, private institutes are concentrated in the Greater Seoul Metropolitan area and other metropolitan cities. In addition, a difference in expenditure on private education between metropolitan regions and other regions exists, which has prompted a concern that educational gaps between social classes as well as between regions will be enlarged.

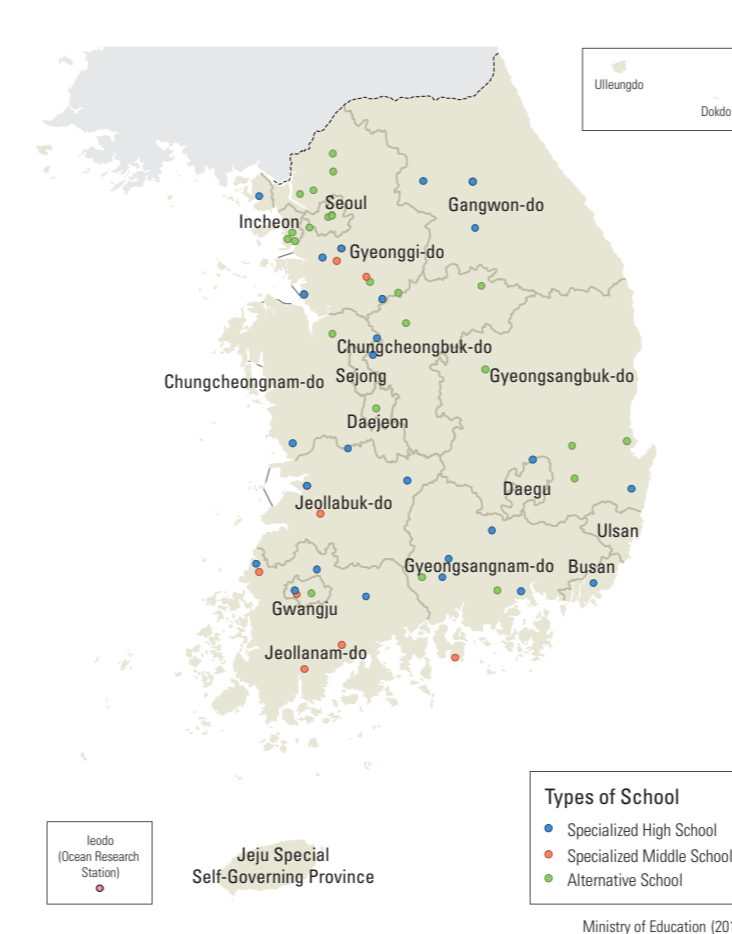
Participation Rate in Private Education by Educational Stage (2014)



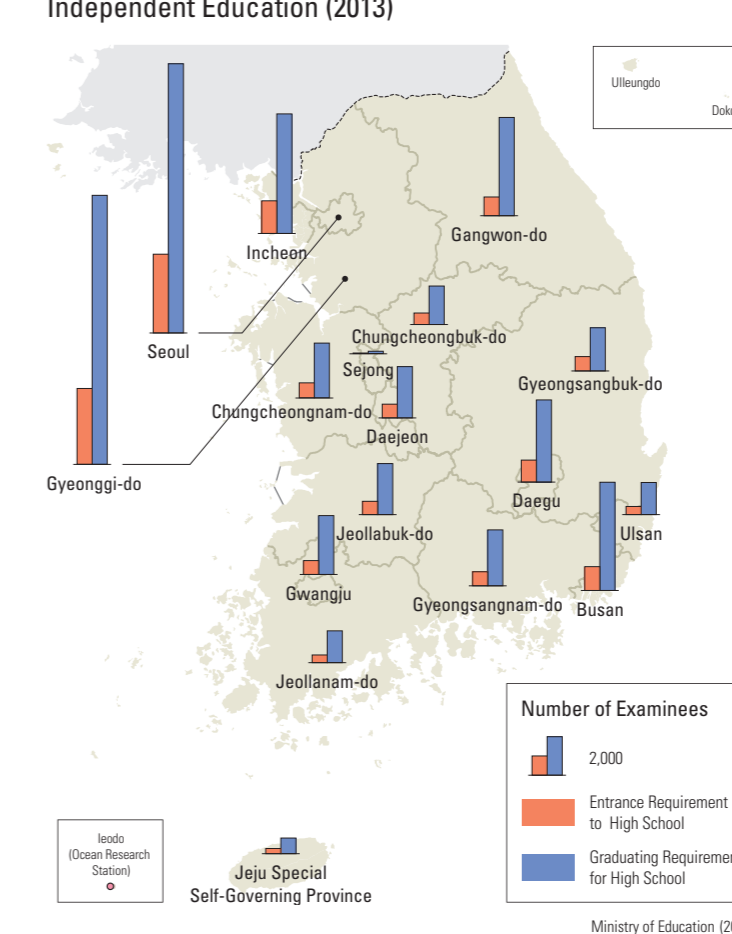
Expenditure on Private Education by Educational Stage (2014)



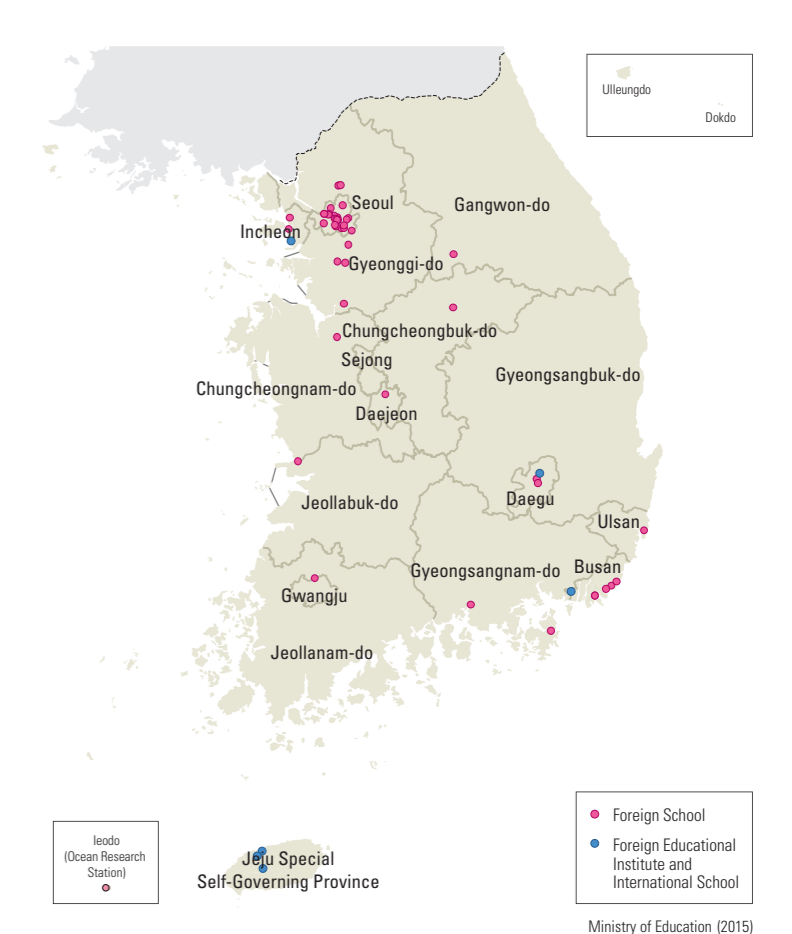
Alternative Education and Specialized Schools (2015)



Number of Examinees for the Qualification Exam after Independent Education (2013)



Schools for International Education and Foreigners (2015)



Foreign Educational Institute and Foreign Schools (2015)

Classification	Official Language						Schools				
	English	Chinese	Japanese	French	German	Mongolian	Kindergarten	Elementary school	Middle school	High school	University
Foreign School	27	14	2	2	1	1	37	41	33	26	
Foreign Educational Institute	7	1					2	2	2	2	5
Jeju International Schools	3						2	3	3	3	

As the number of foreigners residing in Korea has increased, foreign educational institutions and foreign schools are increasing. Foreign educational institutions are established by a corporate body operating foreign educational institutions in Korea, and foreign schools are established to provide a cultural home education for children of foreigners staying in Korea. In addition, Jeju international schools, which specialize in international education in Jeju Global

Education City, were established by the Jeju Special Self-Governing Province. Various foreign schools, including English, Chinese, French, and German, are being established in Korea in the wake of an increasing number of foreign residents. These foreign schools provide education tailored to each country's curriculum and admit foreigners and some Koreans students who have lived in the relevant foreign country. Foreign educational institutions are di-

rectly operated by the educational institutions of foreign countries in designated areas. Alternative schools and specialized schools provide unique education that cannot be adequately addressed in a traditional school environment. These schools offer specialized education in accordance with their educational goals, such as instruction in religion, music, global education, and environmental studies.