Effects of elementary school consolidation on
teacher-student relations in Japan:
Longitudinal survey

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PURPOSE
Due to declining birth rate, a number of students in electuary school gradually has been decreased since 1980. Recently educational policy of consolidating multiple schools into one school has been promoted by local government. This study aims to clarify how school consolidation influences on students attending a new school.

METHOD
Participants were 202 students of newly consolidated elementary school from three to six grader; 135 students of large school and 67 students of small school. Participants answered a sheet of questionnaire by three times during first academic year after school consolidation; April and October in 2012, and March in 2013. Teacher-student relations were examined by student’s four point scale evaluation on two types of teacher’s involvement; a) after the event involvement for student’s problem behavior and b) active commonly involvement for student.

RESULTS
Three-way ANOVA (Time (3) x Grade(4) x School(2)) revealed statistically significant interaction between time and grade in after the event involvement (p<.01) and active commonly involvement (p<.01). Two types of teacher involvement decreased in fourth grade students during one academic year. Fourth grade students in small school had higher score than that of large school students. Scores of two involvement decreased only in fourth grade.

DISCUSSION
Results showed that school consolidation gave different effects depending on the pre-consolidation school size. Student needed to reconstruct a new teacher-student relation during the consolidation. Students of large school in fourth grade may have met some difficulties to adjust different environment. Close interpersonal relationship in the small school before consolidation may caused a slight positive effect for the interpersonal construction in fourth grade.

LIMITATION AND FURTHER RESEARCH
This study used only students’ self report evaluation to analyze teacher-student relation. Matching data of teacher and student should be needed to clarify whole characteristic of teacher-student relation. School consolidation may have depended on each school context. Collecting and comparing another consolidation data should lead to confirm validity and generality of the obtained results.