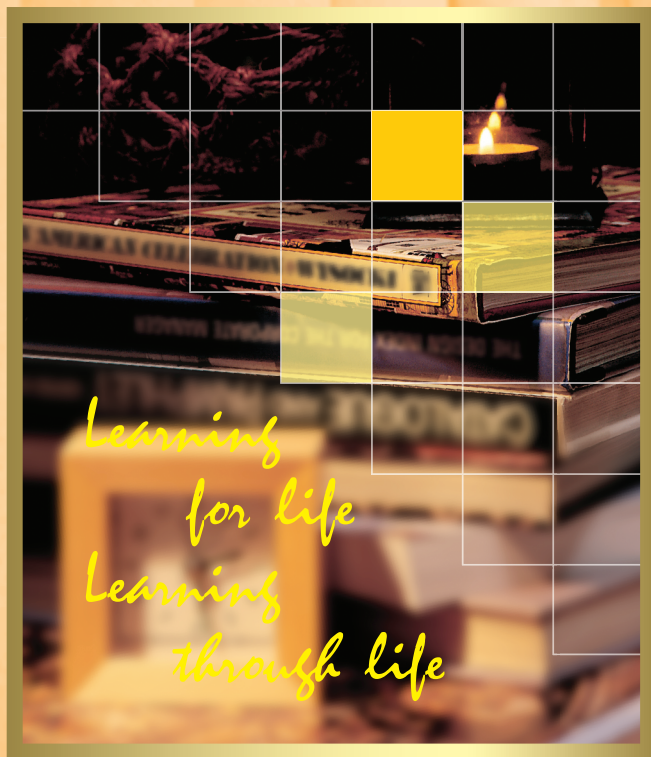


Progress Report On the Education Reform (3)



December 2004

Education Commission
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of
The People's Republic of China

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Foreword

The importance of education cannot be over-emphasized; on it hinges the future development of every student and the society as a whole. Education systems and measures must progress in tandem with relevant developments around the world; and in this connection, the direction and themes of Hong Kong's education reform are in fact similar to the education reforms ongoing in other parts of the world. As an international city, Hong Kong's development must integrate with the prevailing world trends. Hong Kong must also enhance its manpower quality. The recently published consultation document on Reforming the Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education testifies to the Government's commitment on this front.

The Education Reform is a long term and major social and cultural feat. Continuous exploration, reflection and collaboration are essential to realizing the expected benefits. During the implementation process, animated discussions are necessary, healthy and reflective of the passion different sectors have towards education. Colleagues in the Education and Manpower Bureau and I often dialogue with the education frontline. We empathize with the concern and anxiety that the changes have triggered. We are at the same time encouraged by the general consensus on the necessity and direction of the reform as well as the willingness of the education sector to work hard for the opportunities and exciting landscape that the changes can bring about.

Concern prompts discussions. Thus, constructive criticisms and suggestions would not undermine the partnership among stakeholders. On the contrary, they can help clarify the way ahead. Reaching consensus on direction and concepts is relatively easy. Absence of a total agreement on implementation details is just natural. The road to reform has never been smooth and straight. The fruits of success can only be appreciated after overcoming the difficulties and challenges arisen during the implementation process. As long as we are guided by professional considerations and a firm commitment to the welfare of the future generations, we can, I am sure, face all the challenges and problems in an embracing and balanced manner.

The developments over the last two years have vindicated our efforts. The teaching and learning culture in schools is quietly undergoing the changes expected in the Education Reform. Let us renew our commitment to the Reform. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the education sector for their student-oriented work and the community for the support given to the education sector. In particular, I am extremely grateful for the sterling advice given by the Education Commission under the leadership of Dr Rosanna Wong, the Chairman.



Arthur K C LI

Secretary for Education and Manpower

The Education Reform is a mammoth and complex task, which has far-reaching effects on the future of our society. It has been four years since the Education Reform in Hong Kong was launched in 2000. The time has come for us to review its progress and consolidate experiences before moving ahead. The Education Commission thus held a retreat on 18 September 2004 with over 100 educators participating. The retreat aimed to strengthen communication and to put our heads together to reflect on what the Education Reform had brought about in terms of educational effectiveness and new education horizons. Bearing in mind that the ultimate goal of the Education Reform is to improve the quality of education, participants examined the challenges encountered in the course of implementing the Education Reform, reviewed the progress with a view to fine-tuning the pace and revisiting the rationales and strategies.

We are reassured that the Education Reform is progressing in the right direction and should be continued. As a matter of fact, the education sector and the community at large share the vision and objectives of the Education Reform. According to the data we have collected from different sources, positive and encouraging changes are taking place in many areas, such as student performance, learning and teaching, professional development and the provision of educational opportunities. All these are attributable to the hard work of our frontline educators.

The next step of the Education Reform should focus on enhancing teachers' professionalism, nurturing a self-improvement culture, strengthening policy co-ordination and alignment, and improving communication among stakeholders.

We all know that it will take time for the Education Reform to bear fruit. We need to be patient but persistent, and most of all, be united in taking the Reform forward. I have confidence that the various initiatives will have a positive impact on education in Hong Kong.



Rosanna WONG Yick-ming
Chairman
Education Commission



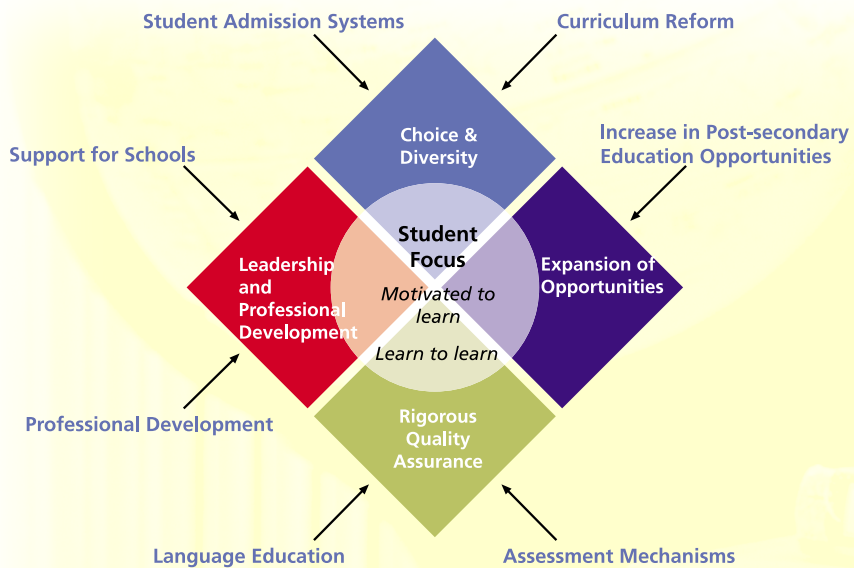
Chapter 1: Background

In the midst of the rapid changes of the 21st Century, timely education reform is necessary to enable us to meet the changing needs of the community and sustain the development of Hong Kong. It was in this context that the Education Commission (EC), after two years of review and extensive consultation, submitted to the Government the *Reform Proposals for the Education System in Hong Kong* in September 2000. The proposals were accepted by the Chief Executive in his Policy Address in October 2000, which kicked off the reform of the education system in Hong Kong.

Students are the focal point of the Education Reform. The tenet behind the Education Reform is “all for the students, for all students and for the good of all students”. To realize this vision, the key is to create a conducive learning environment and condition for students so that they have enough room to fully develop their potentials and to facilitate an all-round development. The objective is to develop our students’ critical and exploratory thinking, creativity and communication skills as well as to empower them for life-long learning. At the same time, school heads and teachers need more room to put their aspirations into practice and to enhance their professional competence. They should be given more flexibility and autonomy in exercising their professionalism in developing appropriate teaching strategies to cater for the needs of the schools and students. We also believe in forming a partnership among the Government, school sponsoring bodies, schools, teachers, parents and community members so that we can join hands to forge ahead with the Education Reform.

Major Initiatives of the Education Reform

The Education Reform initiatives are wide-ranging and intertwining. There are, broadly speaking, seven major initiatives in the blueprint of the Education Reform — curriculum reform, language education, support for schools, professional development, student admission systems, assessment mechanisms and increase in post-secondary education opportunities. They can be summed up in the diagram below:



Chapter 2: Progress of the Education Reform

Since October 2000, the Government has progressively implemented various reform measures according to the timetable as promulgated in the Education Reform. In its *Progress Report on the Education Reform (1)* and *Progress Report on the Education Reform (2)* issued in January 2002 and June 2003 respectively, the EC reported to the public the reform progress in the first two and a half years. The progress made in the various areas in the past one year or so is summarized in the following table.

Stage of education	Measures planned to be implemented from the 2003/04 school year onwards	Progress
Early Childhood Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="236 643 538 847">• To harmonize the monitoring structure, subsidy mode and teacher training of kindergartens and child care centres.<li data-bbox="236 932 493 995">• Quality assurance in kindergartens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="579 643 986 887">• Recommendations on the harmonization of pre-primary services have been finalized after consultation with sector representatives. The recommendations will take effect from the 2005/06 school year.<li data-bbox="579 932 983 1139">• A complete set of performance indicators has been produced in early 2004 and it serves as a common tool used in self-evaluation by schools as well as external evaluation.<li data-bbox="579 1150 981 1394">• Seminars and workshops were organized to enhance the self-evaluation skills of pre-primary practitioners. Focus inspections have prompted kindergartens to further develop their self-evaluation mechanism.

Stage of education	Measures planned to be implemented from the 2003/04 school year onwards	Progress
Early Childhood Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enhance the qualification of new kindergarten teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A pilot exercise on quality review of self-evaluation results of schools has been launched since March 2004, with the participation of kindergartens and child care centres. With effect from the 2003/04 school year as scheduled, all new kindergarten teachers must have completed the pre-service Qualified Kindergarten Teacher (QKT) training (degree holders may be exempted on the condition that they complete QKT training within the first two years of their service).
School Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Through-train" mode. To continue with the Primary One Admission (POA) mechanism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To date, there are 16 pairs of aided primary and secondary schools adopting the "through-train" mode. After consultation with the EC and key stakeholders, the Government has decided to continue to adopt the current POA mechanism in order to maintain stability.

Stage of education	Measures planned to be implemented from the 2003/04 school year onwards	Progress
School Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To administer the Territory-wide System Assessment under the Basic Competency Assessments at Primary 3. • To review the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) mechanism and the Medium of Instruction (MOI) for secondary schools. • To reform the academic structure for senior secondary education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented in mid-2004. • The review, started in July 2003, has largely been completed. A public consultation will be launched in early 2005. • The Government has set the direction for the new academic structure for senior secondary and higher education, it has launched a 3-month public consultation since October 2004 on the design blueprint, timing of implementation and financial arrangement for the reform.

Stage of education	Measures planned to be implemented from the 2003/04 school year onwards	Progress
Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue to implement School-based Assessment (SBA) in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) and Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE). • To broaden the admission criteria. • To increase the opportunity for post-secondary education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBA has been implemented in 13 HKALE subjects and 11 HKCEE subjects in the 2004/05 school year. • As the academic structure of the senior secondary and higher education will undergo a reform, the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB), the University Grants Committee (UGC) and the eight tertiary institutions have set up a working group to study the issues relating to the broadening of admission criteria. • Assistance has been provided to students and education institutions in order to promote the development of self-financed post-secondary courses. • Post-secondary education is available to 53% of the relevant age cohort in the 2004/05 school year.

Stage of education	Measures planned to be implemented from the 2003/04 school year onwards	Progress
Continuing Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To implement the qualifications framework (QF) and its associated quality assurance mechanism progressively to promote the development of continuing education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The establishment of a seven-level cross-sectoral QF and its associated quality assurance mechanism¹ has been endorsed by the Executive Council in February 2004.

¹ The QF is a hierarchy of qualifications, of which the standards are clearly set out to order and support the qualifications. It provides clear information on the progression pathways. Qualifications must be quality assured in order to be registered under the QF. The Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation is tasked with the responsibility of assuring the quality of qualifications, other than those granted by the self-accrediting universities and their continuing education arms.

Section 1: Curriculum Reform

Target

To enhance the knowledge and abilities of students and to help them develop positive values and attitudes, so as to establish a solid foundation for life-long learning and whole-person development.

Seven Learning Goals

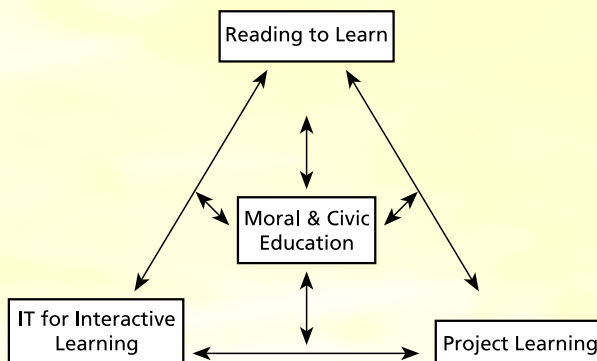
Following the aims of education and the school curriculum, the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) has set out the seven learning goals that students should achieve in ten years' time.



Short-term Targets of Curriculum Reform (2001-2006)

To achieve the above seven learning goals, schools should:

- (i) use the four key tasks to promote learning to learn;



- (ii) infuse the priority generic skills (i.e. communication skills, critical thinking skills and creativity, etc.) into the learning and teaching of existing subjects/ Key Learning Areas (KLAs) so as to develop students' independent learning capabilities in the acquisition and construction of knowledge; and
- (iii) formulate the whole-school curriculum plan (e.g. schools' five year plan) by adopting the KLA curriculum framework and building on the existing strengths of schools.

Last Year's Progress

(1) Four Key Tasks

- Schools were recommended to use the four key tasks, namely moral and civic education (MCE), reading to learn, project learning and the use of information technology for interactive learning as entry points or means to achieve the learning goals and targets as set out in the KLA/subject curricula. The findings of a survey revealed that more than 93% of the schools have started to implement the four key tasks.

(2) Curriculum Guides for Schools and Other Teaching Resources

- The Chinese Language (Primary 1 to 6) and English Language (Primary 1 to 6) Curriculum Guides have been developed.
- *Guidelines on School-based Gifted Development Programmes* have been issued and uploaded onto the Internet for teachers' reference.
- A range of learning and teaching as well as assessment resources that support the new primary curricula of Chinese Language and English Language have been developed.

(3) Primary School Master/Mistress (Curriculum Development) (PSM(CD))

- Since July 2003, 378 posts of curriculum leaders in primary schools (i.e. PSM(CD) or Assistant PSM(CD)) which last for a period of five years have been created. The post-holders are responsible for supporting primary school heads to lead curriculum development in schools.

- In addition, the curriculum leadership grant was provided to 59 schools with one to five classes to help schools develop strategic plan/measures and implement curriculum reform.

(4) Teachers' Professional Development and Training

- The professional development programmes for teachers and school heads have put more emphasis on meeting the learning needs of students and stressing the paradigm shift from a teacher-centred to a student-centred pedagogy. Besides, a series of programmes on changes in assessment practice and culture for improving learning and teaching has been provided.
- Specialty and regional clusters on gifted education were set up and training programmes on parenting would continue.

(5) On-site Support to Schools

- Teachers have been developed and nurtured as change agents in KLA at school level and a teacher network was formed.
- Various modes of collaboration and support have been provided to schools, e.g. regular and intensive mode of collaborative lesson preparation and action research; flexible mode of advisory service, school-based seminars and workshops, etc. In the area of collaboration with teachers, there have been significant changes in breadth as well as depth. Besides, there was an increase in the number of sharing sessions organized and/or co-ordinated for the whole school or at KLA/subject level.

(6) Promotion of MCE

- To strengthen the promotion of MCE, extra efforts were made in the provision of professional training and resource support. Up to the 2003/04 school year, 39 % of primary school leaders and 35 % of secondary school leaders have received intensive professional training on MCE. In the 2003/04 school year, altogether 77 programmes, seminars and


workshops were organized for 7,014 MCE teachers. A series of MCE websites was developed with themes on national education, Basic Law education, flag raising, healthy life style, civic awareness, anti-soccer gambling, etc. to support schools in addressing current personal and social issues. A number of new initiatives were also launched last year, including the 10 letters to the youth from the Permanent Secretary for Education and Manpower highlighting important core values and personal qualities, the organization of the National Education course in Beijing for senior secondary students of 170 schools, the Study Trip to the Mainland of China programme held for primary and secondary schools and MCE school-based support programmes. Besides, a series of celebrity talks was organized to strengthen the promotion of Basic Law education.

Impact of the Tasks

The Division of Social Studies, City University of Hong Kong was commissioned by the Curriculum Development Institute (CDI) to conduct a survey on “The School Curriculum Reform and Implementation of Key Learning Area Curricula in Schools 2003”² in July 2003 in order to ascertain, from the perspectives of frontline practitioners, the progress of the curriculum reform and implementation of KLA curricula in schools. The findings of the survey revealed that the curriculum reform has started to bear fruits:

- Over 70% of the primary school heads and 50% of the secondary school principals considered that their students have shown marked improvement in the areas of communication, independent thinking, learning motivation, innovation and commitment.
- Over 60% of the principals and teachers considered that the curriculum reform has enhanced their personal/professional growth and they were more confident in implementing the curriculum reform. In addition, school team culture was strengthened. All these could facilitate the implementation of the curriculum reform in schools.
- Clearer objectives in curriculum development, closer collaboration among teachers and better quality of learning and teaching were seen in schools with curriculum leaders attributable to the continuous professional

² A total of 148 primary schools and 101 secondary schools took part in the survey. The response rates of primary schools and secondary schools were 85.5% and 75.9% respectively.



development of teachers. Moreover, the development of curriculum leaders into a learning community has not only helped solve some specific and complicated problems but also enhanced the professional development of teachers.

- More than 90% of the participating schools of the Seed Projects noted the positive impact on student learning and the professional development of teachers. In particular, the Seed Projects for Chinese Language and English Language had an apparent effect on the reading habits and communication skills of students. All the participating seconded teachers indicated that they acquired a new understanding of the school-based curriculum development and had tried out new ideas after their return to schools, which resulted in enhancement of the effectiveness of learning and teaching.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

(1) Four Key Tasks

- The implementation of the four key tasks can help students develop independent learning capabilities, which in turn will bring about a more holistic impact on effective learning. In sustaining the strengths with the use of the four key tasks in basic education, EMB will organize more than 100 professional development seminars and workshops for teachers under the theme of the four key tasks in order to support schools in preparing for the reform of senior secondary education.

(2) Development of New Senior Secondary Curriculum


- The curriculum framework for the various subjects of the new senior secondary curriculum will be developed and plans for the related support measures will be made, e.g. class restructuring, flexible adjustment of the teacher-to-class ratio and professional development plan for principals and teachers, etc.

(3) Enhancement of Professional Capacity of Basic Education

- The professional development programmes for school heads and teachers will be enhanced, covering themes with priority in the curriculum reform and those in greater demand. The professional development programmes for school heads will be strengthened to enhance their curriculum leadership in co-ordinating the various educational initiatives and to assist them in making informed decisions in KLAs. To address the needs of teachers, the programmes on MCE will be enhanced. There will also be training on the infusion of critical thinking and creativity in KLAs and gifted education.

(4) Promotion of MCE

- Building on the existing strength, continuous efforts will be made to maintain the momentum in promoting MCE. At least one school leader in each school will receive intensive professional training related to MCE, with a view that these trained school leaders will disseminate the relevant messages more effectively in schools. Updated MCE web resources will be developed to enhance teachers' competency to handle personal and social issues promptly. In order to further strengthen students' capability in making moral judgment, a new series of the letters to the youth from the Permanent Secretary for Education and Manpower will be developed as MCE teaching materials. Continuous efforts will be made to promote the national identity of students through the National Education course to be held in Beijing in December 2004, March and July 2005. In view of the popularity of the Study Trip to the Mainland of China, the scheme will be expanded so that more schools will benefit from it in the 2004/05 school year. To further reinforce students' understanding of the Basic Law, a new series of seminars and celebrity talks will be held.



(5) Continuous Provision of Professional Support

- School-based support services will continue to be provided for nurturing a culture for learning, collaboration and improvement among the school community. Effective practices will be explored to enhance the development of school-based curriculum.
- CDI and Hong Kong Education City will develop more resources on the Internet for easy access by teachers and schools. Moreover, more resources on learning and teaching as well as assessment will be developed to support the curricula of KLAs as well as cross-curricula development.

Section 2: Language Education

Target

The language policy of the Government is to enable students and the working population to be biliterate (in written Chinese and English) and trilingual (in Cantonese, Putonghua and English).

Last Year's Progress

Final Report of Language Education Review by the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR)

SCOLAR issued the *Final Report of Language Education Review* (Final Report) in June 2003 with a basket of final recommendations setting out future directions for language education policies and measures. Major progress in implementation since the release of the Final Report is set out below:

(1) Building up a Professional Language Teaching Force

The Government issued a school circular entitled "Implementation of Recommendations of Standing Committee on Language Education and Research on Language Teacher Education and Qualifications" on 12 March 2004, setting out the academic qualifications required for new language teachers since the 2004/05 school year (new language teachers are required to be holders of a Bachelor of Education degree majoring in the relevant language subject or both a first degree and a Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate in Education majoring in that language subject). Those who do not possess the specified qualifications are required to acquire them within three to five years after their entry into the profession. To provide more incentives for serving language teachers to pursue further studies in the relevant language subject(s) that they teach, SCOLAR has allocated a sum of \$226.68 million from the Language Fund to run a Professional Development Incentive Grant Scheme, providing incentive grants to as many as 7,500 serving language teachers. Since the commencement of the Scheme on 1 April 2004, over 3,800 applications for grants have already been received, for which over \$100 million of the allocated funds earmarked.

(2) Task Force on Language Support

The Task Force on Language Support launched its preparation work in the 2003/04 school year. The Task Force and the Language Resource Centre were then established to provide professional support to schools in both Chinese and English Language subjects. Core teachers with potential to become change agents or teaching consultants were also identified by the Task Force during its provision of support to schools. As at December 2004, over 50 professional staff members were on board in the Task Force, including officers recruited openly, teachers seconded from schools (six of them were recruited to become change agents as described above) and language experts from the Mainland to provide support services for 300 schools, over a half of which have received intensive support services. Useful experiences on language learning were shared among schools through some 20 sharing sessions of different formats on language learning. A support network is also emerging among participating schools. In addition, exemplary school cases, useful learning and teaching materials and gist of professional development events, etc. have also been uploaded onto the website of CDI.

To tie in with the latest development in curriculum trends and education policy, new focuses of development have been identified. They include effective use of assessment data to enhance learning and teaching, and creating a better Putonghua learning environment at schools.

(3) Basic Competency

SCOLAR supports CDC in developing learning outcomes and basic competencies in Chinese Language and English Language from Key Stages 1 to 4 (i.e. Primary 1 to Secondary 5) as reference standards to illustrate student performance. The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) has embedded the basic competencies for Key Stages 1 to 3 in the development of the Basic Competency Assessments, and made reference to the learning outcomes in its development of the 2007 standard-referenced HKCEE on Chinese Language and English Language.

(4) Promotion of Reading

SCOLAR launched the Reading Ambassador and Reading Contract project in 2004 to promote reading. As at October 2004, over 1,500 Reading Ambassadors were recruited and trained to read and share with students coming from about 100 secondary and primary schools. About 1,000 of these ambassadors are parents and another 550 students from tertiary institutions and secondary schools. The rest include teachers-to-be and community leaders. Reading Contracts were distributed at public libraries, non-Government organizations, EMB and through the Internet to encourage reading in summer vacation. The project was very well-received by students. Over 43,000 completed Reading Contracts were collected from those participated through their schools or the Internet.


Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

(1) Specifying Assessment Competencies Expected of Students and Workforce

- To develop standard-referenced HKCEE on Chinese Language and English Language by HKEAA for assessing Secondary 5 students from 2007.
- To launch the development of a common framework of Putonghua proficiency for students and the working population in Hong Kong and strive to make it compatible with the national standards of proficiency in Putonghua set by the State Language Work Committee. The framework and the relevant examination are expected to be completed by the end of 2007 for reference and assessment by Secondary 3 students (or other interested) who had started learning Putonghua at school since 1998.

(2) Creating a More Motivating Language Learning Environment

- To extend the work of the Task Force to help individual schools improve their teachers' knowledge and skills required for implementing the curriculum reform.
- To organize or sponsor various co-curriculum and community-wide activities, including the English Festival, Putonghua Festival, English



Language Camps and the Hong Kong News Awards, in order to widen the scope of the language learning environment outside the classroom through means such as debate, drama and literature arts, and to encourage schools, parents and students to make better use of the mass media as resources language learning.

- Riding on the successful model of the Putonghua Festival, organize the English Festival for the first time in 2005 to promote the use and learning of English at schools and in the community through activities such as debate competition presentation, poetry writing, play stations designed for children with limited opportunity to interact with native English speakers, drama, stage performance and television programmes.
- To continue to encourage parents to cultivate in their children an interest in language learning and to develop good reading habits through projects of Reading Ambassadors and Reading Contract.
- To continue to create an authentic English learning environment in primary and secondary schools through the Native-speaking English Teachers (NETs) Scheme, under which there is a more print-rich environment in schools and general assemblies and meetings are conducted in English. NETs are also responsible for organizing and conducting extra-curricular activities in English and they help cultivate a reading culture in students. Moreover, they assist in the professional development of other teachers in the schools.

(3) Medium of Instruction

- To re-examine the arrangement and support mother-tongue teaching to ensure that three pre-conditions are fulfilled by schools using or wishing to use English as the MOI for teaching all non-language subjects, i.e. teachers' ability to teach in English, students' ability to learn through English and provision of suitable support measures by schools. Regarding the MOI for secondary schools, the review conducted by the Working Group on Review of SSPA and MOI for Secondary Schools under the EC has largely been completed and a public consultation will be launched in early 2005.

Section 3: Support for Schools

Target

Different sectors of the community are very willing to provide support to schools and teachers in the implementation of the Education Reform. Apart from providing direct support to schools in terms of professional support and resources, the Government is also promoting the collaboration between schools and other sectors of the community in the pursuit of quality education for our students.

Last Year's Progress

(1) On-site Support to Schools in Curriculum Development

Please refer to Section 1 for details.

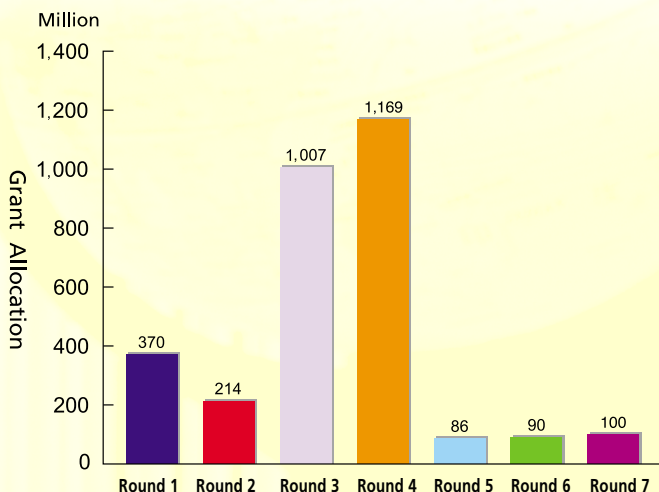
(2) Capacity Enhancement Grant (CEG)

- In the 2002/03 school year, schools used the CEG to employ a total of 3,220 full-time and 2,202 part-time staff and to hire outside services. Majority of the schools and teachers considered that the CEG helped relieve the workload of teachers and enhanced the effectiveness of learning and teaching.

(3) Quality Education Fund (QEF)

- The QEF has completed seven rounds of grant allocation. A total of 5,250 projects have been approved with funds amounting to \$3.04 billion. Over 1,800 schools have benefited from the projects. Please refer to Tables (3.1) and (3.2) for details.
- The “priority themes” approach is adopted to give a sharper focus to the QEF in support of the Education Reform. Under this approach, applications that carry a designated theme would receive priority consideration. Themes which have been designated so far include learning and teaching effectiveness, school-based management, civic and moral education, etc.

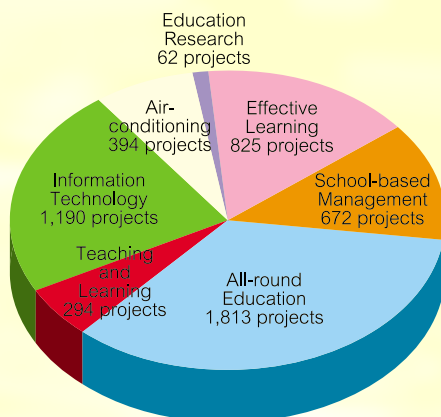
Seven Rounds of Grant Allocation by the QEF



Information Source: EMB

Table (3.1)

Nature of the Projects Approved by the QEF in the Past Seven Rounds



Information Source: EMB

Table (3.2)

(4) School-based Professional Support (SBPS) Programmes

- Starting from the 2004/05 school year, the Government has scaled-up the modes and scope of the school-based professional support in facilitating schools to enhance learning and teaching at KLA levels. The SBPS will be for a period of five years with a grant of \$550 million. The nature of the support service will be tailored to the identified needs of individual school. Site-based professional support for principals and teachers will be provided according to the different needs of the schools in order to assist them in implementing the different initiatives in the Education Reform.
- The SBPS Programmes are built on projects which had been field-tested with good results and recommendations from co-workers. Five programmes are included under the SBPS Programmes, namely the Principal Support Network, the School Support Partners Scheme (Seconded Teacher Scheme), the Professional Development Schools, the University-School Support Programmes and the Collegial Participation in External School Review.

(5) Parent Education and Home-School Co-operation

- The Parent Education Implementation Team completed its tasks in March 2004, including production of parent education reference materials and training of parent education programme organizers. Publications of the Team have been uploaded onto the website of the Committee on Home-School Co-operation (<http://embhsc.hkedcity.net>) for reference by the public.

(6) Support by Other Sectors

- EMB has continued to encourage different Government departments and other sectors of the community to build up partnerships with schools so as to provide students with diversified and enlightening learning experiences. Details of the support activities are as follows:

Organisation	Support Activities
Social Services Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To continue to provide support to the newly arrived children by running induction programme for them.• To implement the Understanding Adolescent Project in primary schools, through which a series of group, adventure-based and parent-child activities will be organized for the students identified with greater needs for guidance.
Disciplinary Forces	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EMB and Hong Kong Police Force, Civil Aid Service, Fire Services Department, Customs and Excise Department and Correctional Services Department jointly organized the Smart Teen Challenge Project. Through a series of discipline training and physical activities, the Project aims to develop students' self-discipline, confidence and resilience.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

(1) QEF

- The QEF will continue to promote systematically the good practices and products of successful projects on different themes to the education sector for experience sharing and reference. The QEF will also solicit the support of the private sector in the dissemination of the fruits of such projects.
- To prepare for the next round of "Chief Executive's Award for Teaching Excellence" to recognize teaching excellence in Mathematics and Science subjects and to promote a culture of collaboration among teachers.

- To maintain the continual operation of the QEF, the QEF Steering Committee will continue to set limits to grant allocation for each call for applications and individual project. This will intensify the competition among projects during the assessment process, and only high quality and worthwhile projects will be approved.
- Under the 8th call for QEF applications, the QEF will provide special matching grants for schools to enhance their IT infrastructure. The objective of sponsoring schools to upgrade their out-dated or unserviceable computer equipment is to help sustain the application of IT in education, in line with the new IT education strategy launched by the Government in July 2004.

(2) On-site Support to Schools in Curriculum Development

- To fully implement the SBPS Programmes, which include the Principal Support Network, the School Support Partners Scheme (Seconded Teacher Scheme), the Professional Development Schools, the University-School Support Programmes and the Collegial Participation in External School Review.

(3) Parent Education and Home-School Co-operation

- Following the development of school-based management, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) will play a more significant role in school management. Apart from the continued promotion of setting up PTAs in schools, the Committee on Home-School Co-operation will focus its work on supporting schools with the capacity to promote parent education and establish parent support network.

Section 4: Professional Development

Target

Frontline education practitioners are the key players in implementing the Education Reform. In support of the Education Reform, the Government strives to enhance the quality and professionalism of the teaching force through providing sufficient training and support as well as formulating appropriate professional standards. As school principals play a vital role in realizing the vision of providing quality education, the Government also places emphasis on enhancing the professional preparation and continuing professional development of principals, so that they can lead teachers and students in meeting the changes and challenges of the new millennium as well as in promoting collegial exchange and support.

Last Year's Progress

(1) Teachers' Professional Development

- A document on *The Teacher Competencies Framework and the Continuing Professional Development of Teachers* was issued by the Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications (ACTEQ) in November 2003 to give recognition and to institutionalize the practice of continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers. A Steering Committee on Teachers' CPD was set up in March 2004 to lend professional support to schools in implementing their CPD policy.
- ACTEQ continued with its review on teacher preparation and is now conducting a Study on Teacher Education to look into how prospective teachers could be more effectively prepared to face the challenges arising from the Education Reform.
- ACTEQ has set up two task forces to conduct an in-depth study on the proposal to introduce an internship system for beginning teachers. The task forces will look into the implementation details and formulate the professional requirements. In support of the internship proposal, the Government has collaborated with teacher education institutions to train up more than 1,000 mentor teachers for about 400 primary and 250 secondary schools to lend induction support for beginning teachers.

- To upgrade the quality of teachers, the Education (Miscellaneous Amendments) Ordinance 2004 was introduced to raise the entry qualification requirements of kindergarten, primary and secondary school teachers with effect from 1 October 2004.
- The District Teachers' Network Scheme launched its second Teachers' Experience Sharing Month in March 2004.
- EMB collaborated with the Faculty of Education, the University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Teachers' Centre in hosting the International Council on Education for Teaching World Assembly 2004 in July 2004 to facilitate professional exchanges among local teachers and principals and overseas education practitioners.
- Different institutes of early childhood teacher education have been providing a variety of training courses, including Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Bachelor of Early Childhood Education programmes, to enable qualified kindergarten teachers to further their studies and raise their professional competency.

(2) Principals' Professional Development

- The Certification for Principalship has been implemented.
- EMB continued to provide professional training and support to newly appointed principals as well as serving principals, such as thematic seminars and workshops by renowned Mainland and overseas experts, and provision of analysis for school principals on their needs for professional development in order to facilitate them in planning and carrying out CPD activities.
- The abridged course in Certificate in Early Childhood Education jointly arranged by EMB and Social Welfare Department for serving kindergarten principals and child care supervisors was held as scheduled.



Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

(1) Teachers' Professional Development

- The Steering Committee on Teachers' CPD will focus on disseminating good practices and providing support to principals, teachers and the school management in developing their school-based CPD policy. The Steering Committee will lay emphasis on the quality of CPD activities through promoting the teacher competencies framework for the enhancement of teachers' professionalism and students' learning effectiveness. It will keep track of the development of the 3-year try-out period of the teachers' CPD framework so as to provide further recommendations to ACTEQ in taking forward teachers' CPD.
- With reference to the findings of the Study on Teacher Education, ACTEQ will further examine pre-service teacher education in collaboration with teacher education institutions in raising the professional quality of new teachers.
- ACTEQ will finalize the professional requirements and operational details of internship for new teachers for consultation with the education sector.
- EMB will continue with the provision of training programmes for mentor teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills.
- The institutes of early childhood teacher education will continue to provide training courses, including Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Bachelor of Early Childhood Education.

(2) Principals' Professional Development

- EMB will review the CPD framework and training programmes for principals in line with the latest development in education.
- EMB will continue to provide training and support to newly appointed principals as well as serving principals to enhance their leadership skills, particularly on instructional leadership and teaching/learning effectiveness.
- EMB will continue to provide the principalship training course for kindergarten principals and child care supervisors.

Section 5: Admission Mechanism

(1) Reform of the Primary One Admission System

Target

To avoid using children's abilities as the admission criteria and to enhance fair opportunities for parents in choosing schools.

Last Year's Progress

- Primary 1 places for the 2004/05 school year have been allocated to applicants through the Discretionary Places Admission stage and Central Allocation stage in accordance with the short-term POA mechanism recommended by the EC.
- The number of POA school nets for the 2004/05 school year has been adjusted to 47.
- Following the EC's recommendations, the Government has sought the views of key stakeholders on the way forward for the POA mechanism. As the existing mechanism has been implemented smoothly over the past few years, they generally found it acceptable. The EC therefore recommended and the Government accepted that status quo should be maintained. The current POA mechanism continues to be adopted from the 2005/06 school year.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- To continue to review the POA school nets where appropriate.

(2) Reform of the Secondary School Places Allocation System

Target

To reduce the labeling effects of the allocation bands on schools and pupils, and to promote the adoption of more diversified admission criteria for allocating Secondary 1 places.

Last Year's Progress

- The various reform measures of the SSPA system were implemented smoothly. The number of students being allocated to their first three choices has been increasing.
- A Working Group was set up under the EC in July 2003 to review the interim SSPA mechanism and MOI for secondary schools.
- As both SSPA and MOI are highly complex and important education issues, the EC endorsed the proposal of the Working Group in May 2004 that more time was required to complete the review. To tie in with the proposed time frame for reviewing SSPA and MOI, the existing interim SSPA mechanism will continue to be adopted in the 2004/06 allocation cycle. Currently, the Working Group has largely completed the review and will launch a public consultation in early 2005.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- To consult the public on the Working Group's proposals on the SSPA mechanism and MOI for secondary schools, and thereafter finalize the long-term SSPA mechanism and MOI arrangement for secondary schools.

(3) "Through-train" Mode

Target

To strengthen collaboration between primary and secondary schools having the same education philosophy so as to provide students with a coherent learning experience.

Last Year's Progress

- 16 pairs of aided primary and secondary schools have been adopting the "through-train" mode.
- The arrangements for implementing the "through-train" mode were revised to give "through-train" schools flexibility in the deployment of teachers and submission of internal assessment results under the SSPA system.
- School visits and experience-sharing sessions for "through-train" schools were conducted.

- Due to the revised time frame of the review of the SSPA mechanism, the deadline for feeder/nominated schools complying with the principles for forming "through-trains" to indicate their decision was postponed from 31 May 2005 to 31 May 2006. The schools were informed of the new deadline through a circular memorandum.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- To continue to promote "through-train" mode.
- To continue to provide professional support to "through-train" schools through the Regional Education Offices and CDI.
- To work together with those feeder and nominated schools which currently do not comply with the "through-train" principles to formulate feasible solutions from now until 2012.

(4) University Admission

Target

Local higher education institutions (HEIs) are encouraged to review their own admission criteria and procedures so as to give due consideration to students' all-round performance and select the most suitable candidates for the relevant programmes.

Last Year's Progress

- HEIs have reviewed their own admission criteria and procedures and will continue to do so in the coming year.
- Four HEIs have already implemented their students' self-recommendation scheme to take into account non-academic achievements of applicants. For HEIs which have not yet implemented the self-recommendation scheme, they would make use of the non-academic information collected through the Joint University Programmes Admissions System as appropriate for the purpose of interviews or selection.
- HEIs exercised greater flexibility in admitting students of varied backgrounds and study levels. Graduates of community colleges and other post-secondary institutions were able to be admitted into senior years of undergraduate study.



Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- UGC will continue to encourage local HEIs to broaden their admission criteria and be more flexible in allowing entry at different levels. HEIs are also encouraged to strengthen their communication with the secondary school sector in this aspect.

Section 6: Assessment Mechanism

(1) Basic Competency Assessments

Target

Basic Competency Assessments consist of two components: Student Assessment and Territory-wide System Assessment. Student Assessment, which is conducted on-line, helps teachers better understand the learning needs and problems of students in Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics so that timely assistance can be provided to enhance their learning effectiveness. Territory-wide System Assessment, which is conducted in paper and pencil, provides the Government and school management with useful information on students' standards at the levels of Primary 3, Primary 6 and Secondary 3 in the three subjects mentioned above. While the Government can understand the teaching effectiveness of schools by reference to the information, schools can adjust their teaching strategy accordingly to enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching.

Last Year's Progress

- HKEAA continued to enrich the online Student Assessment introduced to primary schools in 2003. More than 80% of primary schools are frequent users of the service to assist learning and teaching. HKEAA will launch the service to secondary schools shortly.
- Territory-wide System Assessment at Primary 3 level was administered with the participation of the entire population of Primary 3 students. Speaking assessments of Chinese and English Languages were conducted in May 2004 using random sampling. The written assessments for the three subjects (i.e. reading, writing and listening in both languages as well as Mathematics) were administered in July 2004. The results were announced in early December 2004.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- To fully extend the Student Assessment to all secondary schools.
- To administer the Territory-wide System Assessment at Primary 3 and Primary 6 levels in mid-2005.

(2) Public Examination Reforms

Target

HKEAA strives to enhance the validity and reliability of the public examination system with a view to improving its interface with the curriculum reform and providing a more comprehensive assessment of students' performance.

Last Year's Progress

- Seminars were conducted to enhance communication with teachers and to share with them the rationale underlying the setting of questions and what were expected of candidates. Appropriate questions were set for HKCEE and HKALE to put more emphasis on the assessment of candidates' ability to apply what they have learnt to solve problems. Besides, a flexible approach in awarding marks was adopted to encourage independent and critical thinking.
- HKEAA has reviewed the subjects in HKCEE based on curriculum changes and needs. Two new subjects, namely "Science & Technology" and "Integrated Humanities", and the merged subject of "Computer & Information Technology" (from "Computer Studies" and "Information Technology") will be introduced in the 2005 HKCEE. Based on CDC's proposal, HKEAA has approved abolishing five HKCEE subjects and three HKALE subjects in 2007.
- The HKCEE Chinese Language and English Language examinations have been revised. Reading, writing, listening, speaking skills and integrated language skills will be assessed in the new examinations. The new syllabus and sample papers for Chinese Language have already been approved after consultation with schools. The new syllabus and sample papers for English Language were circulated to schools for comment after consideration by the School Examinations Board.
- SBA was extended to more subjects of the HKCEE and HKALE. SBA was first introduced in A/AS-level Art, A-level Engineering Science, A/AS-level Physics and HKCEE Ceramics for the 2004 examinations and in HKCEE Science & Technology, HKCEE Integrated Humanities, HKCEE Computer & Information Technology, HKCEE Visual Arts and A-level Chinese Literature for the 2005 examinations. SBA is implemented in 13 HKALE subjects and 11 HKCEE subjects in the 2004/05 school year.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- To work closely with CDI to develop standard-referencing assessments in the Chinese Language and English Language examinations in HKCEE, including setting standards for different levels of achievement, and preparing grade descriptors and exemplar materials.
- To continue extending SBA to other subjects in HKCEE and HKALE as follows:

2006	HKCEE	Chinese History, History
2007	HKCEE	Chinese Language, English Language
	HKALE	Computer Studies
- To continue with assessment development and research activities to further improve public examinations, by way of comparability studies between different examinations, e-marking, etc.
- To continue setting appropriate questions in HKCEE and HKALE to assess students' ability to apply what they have learnt to solve problems.
- EMB is now conducting a public consultation on the implementation details of the reform of the new academic structure for senior secondary education and higher education (see Section 8), including the new senior secondary school curriculum framework of various subjects. With reference to views collected and the latest development of the new senior secondary curriculum, HKEAA will work with CDI to design detailed assessment modes for the various subjects.

Section 7: Increase in Education Opportunities

(1) Increase in Senior Secondary Education Opportunities

Target

To provide all Secondary 3 students studying in publicly funded schools, who have the ability and wish to continue with their studies, with subsidized Secondary 4 or training places.

Last Year's Progress

- The Secondary 3 students concerned have been provided with sufficient Secondary 4 or training places.
- In the 2004/05 school year, there are a total of 11 senior secondary schools (SSS) with diversified curricula to meet the different capabilities and learning needs of students.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- To continue supporting SSS in offering diversified curricula to give parents and students more choices.

(2) Increase in Post-secondary Education Opportunities

Target

To support the progressive increase in post-secondary education opportunities so that 60% of senior secondary school leavers will have access to post-secondary education by the 2010/11 school year.

Last Year's Progress

- The overall post-secondary participation rate for the 17-20 age cohort increased to 53% in the 2004/05 school year.
- A series of support measures was provided to support the emergence of education providers for accredited full-time post-secondary programmes.
- There are 20 institutions of accredited full-time post-secondary programme offering 14,200 places for senior secondary school leavers in the 2004/05 school year.

- Interest free start-up loans were approved to support non-profit-making education providers in providing accredited self-financed post-secondary programmes.
- Four pieces of land were allocated to non-profit-making post-secondary education providers for the construction of purpose-built premises through a competitive land grant exercise in mid-2003. Besides, applications for another four pieces of land were invited in 2004.
- Grants were approved for post-secondary education providers to conduct institutional reviews and programme validations.
- Financial assistance was provided to post-secondary students.
- A website containing a study programme database and detailed information on accredited full-time self-financed post-secondary programmes was created and maintained.
- The Career Guidance Handbook on further education opportunities for senior secondary school graduates was published in collaboration with the Hong Kong Association of Careers Masters & Guidance Masters.
- Annual Information Expo for Secondary School Leavers was organized since 2003 to provide one-stop service on further education and employment opportunities.
- EMB has worked with the mass media and non-Government organizations to promote recognition of accredited full-time post-secondary programmes.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- Subject to the availability of resources, there are plans to increase second- and third-year undergraduate places in UGC-funded institutions in order to provide more articulation opportunities for sub-degree graduates.
- To continue to provide support measures for institutions.
- To continue to provide financial assistance to needy students.
- To continue to provide senior school leavers with useful information on further education opportunities.
- To continue to step up publicity to enhance the understanding of the public on sub-degree qualifications and its prospects for employment or further studies so as to promote recognition of these qualifications.



Section 8: Progress of Major Reviews

(1) Review of the Secondary School Places Allocation and Medium of Instruction for Secondary Schools

Since 2000, the Government has abolished the Academic Aptitude Test, increased the Discretionary Places quota from 10% to 20% and reduced the number of allocation bands from five to three. The Government also undertook to review the situation in the 2003/04 school year with a view to putting in place a long-term arrangement. Separately, the Government implemented the *Medium of Instruction Guidance for Secondary Schools* in 1998 and undertook to review its implementation. In the same year, a joint working group was set up with members from the former Board of Education and SCOLAR. The working group recommended in 2000 that in view of the intertwining relationship between the MOI arrangement and the SSPA mechanism, the MOI arrangement should be considered by the EC alongside its review of the SSPA mechanism in the 2003/04 school year. As a result, the EC set up the Working Group on Review of SSPA and MOI for Secondary Schools in July 2003 to take forward the review.

The Working Group has largely completed the review. However, since another consultation on Reforming the Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education has been ongoing until mid-January 2005, the consultation on the SSPA and MOI will be launched in early 2005.

(2) Review of the Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education


The Chief Executive in his 2004 Policy Address set out the direction to develop a new senior secondary and university system that will effectively prepare our next generation to cope with the challenges of the 21st Century and the demands of our rapidly developing knowledge-based society. EMB has also published related documents on reforming the academic structure for senior secondary and higher education, and has launched a 3-month public

consultation since October 2004 on the design blueprint, timing of implementation and financial arrangement for the reform.

The reform in the senior secondary and higher education is based on the reform at the basic education level that started in 2000. It is destined to help students become informed and responsible citizens, who are life-long learners with a global outlook and a sense of national identity at the same time. The new senior secondary and higher education allows students to continue their studies up to a level equivalent to the present Secondary 6 so as to enable them to meet the requirements of the new knowledge-based economy of Hong Kong. The new curriculum proposed at the senior secondary level also offers greater diversity, more choices as well as smoother multiple pathways for advancement, which can suit the different inclination, interest and learning needs of students. As the number of public examinations will be reduced, there will also be ample time for more effective learning. Besides, a 4-year course at university will make room for all-round development of university students.

In order that the public and the frontline personnel in schools can have a better understanding of the reform, EMB has conducted, till now, nearly 100 seminars or briefing sessions for the reform. The seminars and briefing sessions are to acquaint principals, teachers, parents and other members of the public with changes proposed for the curriculum and assessment, the basic content of all subjects, students' possible advancement pathways, as well as administrative matters in secondary schools during the period of transition and thereafter. The seminars and briefing sessions also serve as channels for different stakeholders to express their views.

EMB also has regular contact with the universities to decide on the university entrance requirements and procedures for the new academic structure. It is anticipated that the finalized plan can be released in 2005.



(3) Review of Teacher Education and Professional Development

Taking into account the current situation in Hong Kong, feedback received from wide consultation and similar CPD developments in other regions of the world, ACTEQ published the document on *The Teacher Competencies Framework and the Continuing Professional Development of Teachers* in November 2003. ACTEQ will continue with its holistic review on all processes of initial teacher education, professional development of beginning teachers and continual professional development of practicing teachers. EMB will also review the CPD framework and training programmes for principals (see section 4).

Chapter 3:


Education Reform – The Next Step

Education reform is a worldwide trend in face of the challenges posed by an increasingly globalised economy. In many countries, reforms of the education system, curriculum and teaching pedagogy have been carried out in response to the changing needs and aspirations of the community. As education reform is by nature a complex improvement process, it is only natural that there are challenges in its implementation. The situation in Hong Kong is no exception but the challenges are not insurmountable.

In September 2004, the EC held a retreat with members of various major education advisory bodies to take stock of the progress of the Education Reform over the past four years, and to reflect on the present situation before moving on with the Education Reform.

The Education Reform, which is student-focused, aims “to enable every person to attain all-round development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics according to his/her own attributes so that he/she is capable of life-long learning, critical and exploratory thinking, innovating and adapting to change; filled with self-confidence and a team spirit; willing to put forward continuing effort for the prosperity, progress, freedom and democracy of their society, and contribute to the future well-being of the nation and the world at large”. Experience over the past four years re-affirms that we are moving on the right track.

A number of surveys assessing impact of the Education Reform have revealed encouraging developments. First, students' learning activities have become more diversified with the implementation of the curriculum reform. Over 90% of our primary and secondary schools have been actively promoting the four key learning tasks, viz. moral and civic education, reading to learn, project learning and the use of information technology for interactive learning. Over 70% of the primary school heads and 50% of the secondary school principals consider



that their students have made marked improvement in communication, independent thinking, learning motivation, innovation and commitment. The achievement is most evident in promoting self-confidence as well as the interest and readiness of primary students in reading.

Besides, by enhancing flexibility in the education system, more space has been created for students to learn. Students are found to have participated more actively in extra-curricular activities at school. Nearly 60% of our students spend an average of one or two hours every week on extra-curricular activities, 20% spend three to four hours and 10% even spend five hours or more. Changes are also found in the school internal assessment system in which a more diversified and broadened mode of assessment is adopted. Before the Education Reform, only 40% of school principals expressed that they would include project learning in the school internal assessment. The percentage has risen to 70% after the implementation of the Education Reform.


On increasing learning opportunities and providing diversified choices, we have expanded the post-secondary education and other pathways for continuing education. In the 2004/05 school year, there are a total of 16 groups of schools adopting the "through-train" mode of operation and 55 primary and secondary schools joining the Direct Subsidy Scheme (in which 11 are senior secondary schools). Project Yi Jin and various associate degree programmes have also provided students with more channels to pursue further studies. At present, subsidized Secondary 4 places and vocational training places are provided for all Secondary 3 schools leavers who have the ability and wish to continue their studies. The overall percentage of school age students receiving post-secondary education has increased from about 30% in 2000 to 53% in the 2004/05 school year.

With the enhancement of the academic standard and pre-service as well as continuous professional training for educational workers, the professional and management levels of school principals have been upgraded. The percentages of primary and secondary teachers with degree qualifications have increased from 21% and 79% respectively in 1996/97 to 59% and 89% in 2003/04.

The percentages of kindergarten, primary and secondary teachers receiving training in 2003/04 are 88%, 92% and 91% respectively. On-site professional support is provided and professional experience sharing activities are organized to encourage sharing of successful teaching experiences with a view to cultivating a collaborative culture in the education sector.

To take forward the Education Reform, the EC has identified several key tasks. They include:

- To enhance professional capability of the education professionals through continuous professional development. We believe that the Education Reform should be professional-driven and the culture of self-improvement should be fostered. While it takes time to bring about a paradigm shift in the learning and teaching culture, appropriate support should be provided for schools during the process of change from highly centralized system in the past to a school-based model. We hope that the support for schools would be strengthened to enable them to achieve better results.
- To improve the co-ordination of policies and their implementation so that policy objectives can be better achieved. Policy design and implementation are equally important. By gauging feedback from frontline workers on the practical problems that they encounter, policy-makers will have a better understanding of the issues and be more certain to find solutions to the problems.
- To enhance communication internally and externally to build up mutual trust and support. An effective communication channel conveying bottom-up opinions is essential for a comprehensive review of the policy impact. Messages released by the education advisory bodies and the implementation organizations should be clear and consistent so as to avoid confusion.



The community holds high expectation of the Education Reform and expects results. We all should make joint efforts to overcome difficulties and challenges. We note that the situation is complicated by the decline in student population and teachers' heavy workload. The review of the senior secondary academic structure and that of the SSPA/MOI for secondary schools have attracted much public attention. As a major Government advisory body, the EC will continue to monitor the progress and co-ordinate the various reform initiatives. We will also strive to strengthen the communication with various sectors of our community so that all stakeholders would play their individual roles in a coherent manner towards the goal of the Education Reform.

