

Chapter 1 : Background

To meet the needs of society in the 21st Century, the Education Commission in 1998 embarked on a two-year comprehensive review of the overall education system in Hong Kong. The review covered curricula, academic structure and assessment mechanisms at various stages of education, as well as the interface between the different stages. Following three rounds of extensive public consultation, a series of recommendations for reforming the education system was submitted to the Government in September 2000. In his Policy Address delivered in October the same year, the Chief Executive endorsed all the recommendations and announced a timetable for implementing the reform measures.

Students are the focal point of the entire reform. By creating space for schools, teachers and students, the reform is implemented to enable every student to attain all-round development in the moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic domains according to his/her own attributes so that he/she will be capable of lifelong learning. It is also hoped that each student will develop the ability for critical and exploratory thinking; be innovative and adaptable to changes; be filled with self-confidence and a team spirit; be willing to put forward effort towards the prosperity, progress, freedom and democracy of society; and contribute to the future well-being of the nation and the world at large.

Key Areas of the Education Reform

As the education reform covers a wide range of complex issues, it is necessary to clearly define the division of responsibilities and closely monitor the progress of each area in order to facilitate effective co-ordination of the reform efforts. In accordance with the blueprint for education reform, the Education Commission has consolidated the work of the reform into seven key areas, including **curriculum reform, language education, support for schools, professional development, admission systems, assessment mechanisms and increase in post-secondary education opportunities.**

A list of major organizations responsible for the work in the seven key areas can be found in Annex I.