

Section 3: Support for Schools

Target

In the course of implementing the education reform, schools and teachers will inevitably face many challenges and problems. At present, different sectors of the community are very willing to provide support to schools and teachers to enhance the quality of education. Apart from providing direct support to schools, the Government is also promoting the co-operation between schools and other sectors so as to enrich the learning experiences of students.

Last Year's Progress

(1) School-based Support

- The Regional Education Offices (REOs) of the Education Department are responsible for providing school-based support, including offering schools advice and facilitating them in formulating and implementing improvement measures.
- District networking activities have been organized according to the needs of schools in different districts to disseminate good practices and to establish a sharing culture among schools.

(2) Capacity Enhancement Grant

- To relieve the workload of teachers, the Government has, starting from the 2000/01 school year, provided schools with the Capacity Enhancement Grant. In the 2000/01 school year, each primary school was provided \$450,000 to \$550,000 and each secondary school \$250,000 to \$300,000. Schools can make use of the grant to employ additional staff or hire outside help so as to relieve teachers' workload, thus enabling them to concentrate more on the education reform.
- In the 2000/01 school year, schools used the grant to employ a total of 2,225 full-time and 2,806 part-time staff, and to hire outside services. The feedback from many schools and teachers was very positive. They generally considered that the grant had helped to relieve the workload of teachers and had enhanced the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

(3) Quality Education Fund (QEF)

- The QEF has completed four rounds of grant allocation. A total of 4,341 projects have been approved with funds amounting to \$2.7 billion. Over 1,200 schools have benefited from the projects.
- In July 2001, adjudication for the Outstanding Schools Award was completed. A total of 24 awards were conferred on 21 schools selected from among 312 nominations.
- In 2001, the QEF organized a large-scale Projects Exposition and a series of experience-sharing sessions to promote and disseminate good practices and successful experiences generated from the QEF projects.

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

- The Steering Committee on Parent Education, comprising representatives from the Education Department, the Department of Health and the Social Welfare Department, as well as community members, is responsible for developing implementation strategies for parent education, monitoring the use of funds, and co-ordinating the work of different government and non-government agencies on parent education.
- The Parent Education Implementation Team was set up in September 2001. It is responsible for the implementation of work relating to parent education, including promotion and compilation of reference materials as well as training of parent education workers.
- The Education Department also promotes the establishment of a home-school co-operation culture through the Committee on Home-School Co-operation.

(5) Support by Other Sectors

- Many different sectors in the community, with abundant resources and talents, are well placed to provide support for schools to enrich the learning experiences of students. The Board of Education also provides advice on the development of a supportive network for life-wide learning. Moreover, the Education Department has actively encouraged 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.

Please refer to Annex II for more details on the progress in the above areas.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- (1) The Education Department will set work priorities in accordance with the emphasis of the education policies, and strengthen school-based support accordingly.
- (2) With effect from the 2001/02 school year, the rate of the Capacity Enhancement Grant for secondary schools has been increased by 50% so as to further relieve the workload of teachers in both teaching and non-teaching duties. For primary schools, a series of measures to increase their manpower resources so as to enhance the quality of teaching and learning will be implemented. These include the provision of an additional graduate teacher for a period of five years to assist in curriculum development, the strengthening of guidance services for students and the provision of Native-speaking English Teachers and English Language Teaching Assistants.
- (3) In the 5th call for applications, the QEF will adopt a more focused approach by accepting only applications from schools and by setting restrictions on the number of applications submitted. At the same time, the QEF is working on a long-term strategy to ensure that the best practices generated from QEF projects can be widely disseminated to the whole school sector.
- (4) For parent education, the emphasis will be placed on reaching out to parents with special needs, or those parents who are difficult to reach, and training parent education workers.
- (5) To enhance collaboration with other sectors, the Board of Education will continue to provide advice on measures implemented by the Education Department to promote life-wide learning through a community support network. The Education Department will continue to cooperate actively with different government departments and non-government organizations.