



Progress Report on the Education Reform (2)

June 2003

Learning for Life
Learning through Life

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

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Foreword

The reform of our education system has been implemented for over two years since the proposals were put forward by the Education Commission (EC) and accepted by the Chief Executive in his Policy Address in October 2000. In the last two years, some of these reform proposals were put into practice progressively by the major implementation bodies. These proposals include firstly, changing the examination-oriented mode of learning to encourage students to be more proactive in learning. We have introduced reform to the Primary One Admission System to eliminate any incentives for drilling so as not to subject young children to excessive pressure. We have also abolished the Academic Aptitude Test for secondary school admission. Secondly, we also promote diversity in school operation. In the last few years, many special and unique schools/channels of learning have been developed under this policy. They include "through-train" schools, Direct Subsidy Scheme schools, senior secondary schools, Project *Yi Jin* courses and associate degree courses. Thirdly, we focus on promoting teaching effectiveness. Efforts have been made to improve the school curriculum and methods of teaching and to promote a new culture of assessment. Fourthly, to support the Education Reform, we strive to promoting the quality and professionalism of our frontline educators. Efforts have been made to provide training and support for teachers and to establish a suitable framework of qualifications and standards of the teaching profession.

To ensure the effective and smooth implementation of the Education Reform, the EC has followed up diligently on the reform initiatives and coordinated the work of the major implementation and advisory bodies. This will continue to be so after its merger with the Education Board in early 2003. We firmly believe that effective communication and full cooperation is the key to the success of the reform. This booklet, the second progress report prepared by the EC in collaboration with various major executive and advisory bodies to inform the public of the overall Education Reform, is one of the channels to maintain effective communication. We hope that this regular reporting will help the public understand better the key tasks, progress and future development of the Education Reform.

We have made significant progress towards the attainment of the Education Reform. What we have achieved so far is the result of the hard work of every member of the education profession. In order to achieve the objective of the reform, namely to enable our students to enjoy learning, enhance their effectiveness in communication and develop sense of commitment and their creativity, the Government and every stakeholder including the school sponsoring bodies, school principals and teachers, parents and students, must work in close partnership in securing the successful implementation of the Education Reform.



(Rosanna WONG Yick-ming)
Chairman
Education Commission

Chapter 1: Background

The 21st century is characterised by the availability of abundant information, advanced technology, a rapidly changing society, greater convenience in daily lives, and keener international competition. In response to these changes, our Education Reform should aim at nurturing in the new generation characteristics and abilities capable of meeting the challenges of the new century. With this in mind, the EC embarked on an in-depth review of the education system in Hong Kong in 1998. The review, covering the curriculum, academic structure, admission system, school places allocation system and assessment mechanism at various stages of education, was completed in two years. Following extensive public consultation, the EC submitted to the Government a detailed report on the reform proposals for our education system 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.

Quality and quantity are of equal importance in reforming the education system. Our reform measures therefore focus both on increasing post-secondary education opportunities and improving the quality of education. The objective is to provide students with a good learning environment and diversified learning. By so doing, all students will have the opportunity to attain proper and all-round development. Education Reform must be student-focussed. The aim of the reform is to develop the potential and personalities of students. This student-focused spirit underlines the education and curriculum reforms, improvement to the learning environment and enhancement of teachers training.

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. Based on the blueprint for Education Reform, the EC has consolidated the reform efforts into seven key areas. They include curriculum reform, language education, support for schools, professional development, admission systems, assessment mechanisms and increase in post-secondary education opportunities.

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)" issued in January 2002, the EC reported to the public the first year's reform progress. The progress made in the various areas in the past one and a half year is summarised in the following table.

Stage of education	Measures planned to be implemented from the 2001/02 school year onwards	Progress
Early Childhood Education	<p>2001/02 school year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">To recommend the monitoring structure, subsidy mode and teacher training of Kindergartens (KGs) and Child Care Centres (CCC)s.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Recommendations on the harmonisation of pre-primary services have been finalised. These include:<ol style="list-style-type: none">Monitoring Structure - the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) and Social Welfare Department will set up a Joint Office to monitor KG-cum-CCCs.Subsidy Mode - the Kindergarten Fee Remission Scheme and the Kindergarten Subsidy Scheme will be expanded to cover CCCs.Teacher Training - to attain the target of a fully-trained pre-primary workforce by the 2004/05 school year.

Stage of education	Measures planned to be implemented from the 2001/02 school year onwards	Progress
Early Childhood Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To implement the quality assurance mechanism in Kindergartens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality assurance inspections allow a thorough and holistic review of kindergartens in the aspects of management and organisation, learning and teaching, support to children and school culture. To enhance transparency, quality assurance reports are uploaded onto the EMB homepage for public information. A web-based data bank has been set up to promote the good practices on "learning and teaching" as well as the experiences of "school self-evaluation".
	<p>2002/03 school year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To require all new kindergarten principals to have completed the Certificate in Early Childhood Education Course. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented as scheduled.

Stage of education	Measures planned to be implemented from the 2001/02 school year onwards	Progress
Early Childhood Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote school self-evaluation through external evaluation. • From 2003/04 school year onwards, to have all new kindergartens teachers completed one-year pre-service qualified kindergarten teacher (QKT) training. (Degree holders may be exempted on condition that they must complete QKT training within the first two years of their service.) • To produce performance indicators for "Child Development" to facilitate pre-primary institutions to conduct a thorough school self-evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus inspections were conducted on 90 kindergartens. The aim of the inspections is to urge more kindergartens to be actively involved in self-improvement and conduct self-evaluation systematically. • A total of 730 one-year full-time pre-service early childhood education training places have been provided from the 2000/01 to 2002/03 school year. • The professional training requirement for new kindergarten teachers will be enforced with effect from 1 September 2003. • Expected to be issued in 2003.

Stage of education	Measures planned to be implemented from the 2001/02 school year onwards	Progress
School Education	<p>From 2001/02 school year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary and secondary schools to decide whether they will adopt the "through-train" mode. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed arrangements for implementing the "through-train" mode were announced in the 2001/02 school year. • To date, there are six pairs of primary and secondary schools adopting the "through-train" mode. • In the 2003/04 school year, five additional pairs of subsidised schools will adopt the "through-train" mode.
Higher Education	<p>From 2001/02 school year onwards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reform the admission criteria progressively to encourage all-round development of students. • To reform the curriculum progressively to cater for the needs of society and to enhance students' quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The universities have gradually adopted more diversified admission criteria to enable a more comprehensive assessment of students' performance. • Being implemented by the universities.

Stage of education	Measures planned to be implemented from the 2001/02 school year onwards	Progress
Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote the development of community colleges and to increase the participation rate of post-secondary education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide assistance to students and providers to promote the development of full-time accredited self-financing post-secondary courses. The relevant age cohort receiving post-secondary education has increased to 42%.
Continuing Education	<p>From 2002/03 school year onwards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To implement the qualifications framework and its associated quality assurance mechanism progressively to promote the development of continuing education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have consulted the public on the establishment of a qualifications framework and quality assurance mechanism. The EMB, the Manpower Development Committee and the community would study the implementation details.

Section 1: Curriculum Reform

Target

To enhance the knowledge and abilities of all 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

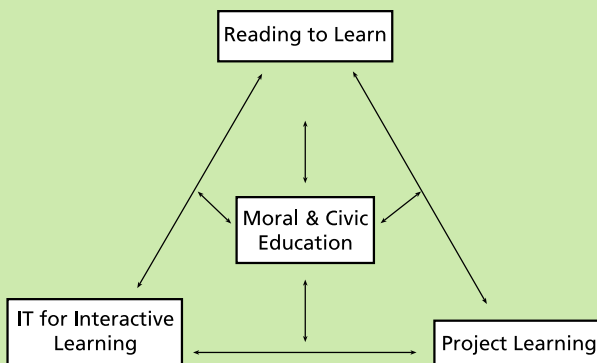
In line with the aims of education and the overall aims of school curriculum, the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) has set out the seven learning goals that our students should achieve in 10 years' time.



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

To achieve the above seven learning goals, schools should

- (i) use the 4 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) to develop students' independent learning capabilities in the acquisition and construction of knowledge;
- (iii) formulate the whole-school curriculum plan (e.g. schools' five year plan) by adopting the KLA curriculum framework and initiating school-based components.

Last Year's Progress

(1) Curriculum Guides for Schools and Other Curriculum Reviews

- In response to the need for curriculum development of schools, CDC's "Basic Education Curriculum Guide - Building on Strengths" set out 11 themes essential for Whole-school Curriculum Development.
- CDC developed 8 Key Learning Areas and General Studies (Primary) Curriculum Guides.
- CDC and the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) jointly developed the Curriculum and Assessment Guides of Integrated Humanities, Science and Technology, Computer and Information Technology, History as well as Chinese History for Secondary 4 to Secondary 5.

(2) Primary School Master/Mistress (Curriculum Development) [PSM(CD)]

- The first batch of 232 PSM(CD)s are appointed for 5 years to support primary school heads to lead curriculum development in schools.
- Interim evaluation reflects that most PSM(CD)s provide effective support to the curriculum reforms in schools.

(3) Teachers' Professional Development and Training

- The nature of professional discourse of teachers and school heads focuses more on meeting the learning needs of students, i.e. it focuses on the paradigm shift from a teacher-centred to a student-centred pedagogy.

- A Moral Civic Education (MCE) network of teachers has been set up to promote MCE good practices and share relevant experience with a view to achieving cross fertilisation of ideas.
- Apart from teacher training sessions organized at Fung Hon Chu Gifted Education Centre, specialty clusters on gifted education have been formed to enhance sharing of experiences, resources and professional dialogue as well as providing training sessions on parenting.

(4) Seed (Research & Development) Projects

- Secondary and primary schools, university academics as well as Curriculum Development Institute (CDI) colleagues have worked together to generate useful knowledge and experiences on key emphases of curriculum reforms for other schools' reference.
- The second Knowledge Fair on Learning to Learn was held on 12 November 2002 to disseminate and help schools transfer useful knowledge and experiences arising out of projects conducted in 2001/02. More than 80% of the participating schools noted the positive impacts on student learning and the professional development of teachers.
- The Chinese Language and English Language projects had obvious impact on students' habit of reading and communication skills.

(5) Learning and Teaching Resources

- A range of learning and teaching resources to support the new curricula have been developed by the CDI. These include, for example, resources based on authentic experiences of schools, reading package, series for catering students' learning diversity, and electronic curriculum planners, etc.
- A brand new MCE resource net (<http://resources.emb.gov.hk/mce>) has been launched to facilitate teachers in designing school-based MCE programme.

(6) On-site Support to Schools

- Teachers were observed to have reduced their dependency on textbook and were able to use textbooks and other teaching resources more flexibly.
- Schools were able to generate useful knowledge and experiences in effective pedagogy, assessment in reading, project learning, Chinese, English, Mathematics and General Studies as indicated in 40 action research reports.
- Through various advisory service, collaborative lesson preparation, and action research, schools were able to build up their curriculum reform capacity and achieve the following:
 - (i) Gradual emergence of collegial and collaborative culture;
 - (ii) Professional knowledge and skills of teachers has increased;
 - (iii) More effective practice to enhance school-based curriculum development, e.g. time-tabling, curriculum continuity and assessment, etc.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

In 2003/04, the CDC/CDI will focus on the following:

(1) Curriculum Guides for Schools and Other Curriculum Reviews

- Review existing Secondary 4-7 examination subjects in collaboration with HKEAA.
- Develop combined Curriculum and Assessment Guides, in collaboration with HKEAA, for more examination subjects to align assessment with curriculum, and learning with teaching.
- Form one CDC/HKEAA Committee for all senior secondary school subjects.
- Launch the pilot scheme of Career-Oriented Diversified Curriculum.
- Develop Chinese Language (Primary 1-6) and English Language (Primary 1-6) Curriculum Guides.
- "Guidelines on School-based Gifted Development Programmes" will be issued and uploaded on the web for teachers' reference.

(2) Primary School Master/Mistress(Curriculum Development) [PSM(CD)]

- Appoint more PSM(CD)s for 5 years in the current round of application.

(3) Teachers' Professional Development and Training

- Apart from courses to support new curricula, teacher networking will be strengthened for cascading curriculum reform changes. E-networking has been adopted for experience sharing. More courses on changing assessment practice and culture to improve learning and teaching have been provided. The setting up of specialty and regional clusters on gifted education and provision of training sessions on parenting will continue.

(4) Seed (Research & Development) Projects

- Apart from continuing with projects on curriculum planning and effective pedagogy, more projects would focus on learning to learn skills in Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics KLAs, as well as assessment practice to improve learning and teaching.
- Useful knowledge and experiences generated would be promoted through professional development courses, self-learning packages, exemplars, etc. for adaptation by teachers and schools.

(5) Learning and Teaching Resources

- Develop more resources on the Internet with HKEdCity for convenient access by teachers and schools.
- Develop more resources on learning, teaching and assessment to support the Primary curricula of Chinese Language and English Language.
- Support measures for exceptionally gifted students would be extended to include science and technology.

(6) On-site Support to Schools

The vision of our support service is to nurture a culture for learning, collaboration and improvement among the school community.

- Facilitating the development of 20+ learning communities among PSMs to enhance networking and knowledge generation.
- Developing teachers as change agents in different KLAs and at school levels and networking them.
- Exploring effective practices to enhance school-based curriculum (e.g. school-based assessment and whole-school curriculum plan).

Section 2: Language Education

Target

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

Last Year's Progress

Standing Committee on Language Education and Research's (SCOLAR) Language Education Review

In early 2001, the SCOLAR began a review of the language education policy and measures in Hong Kong. Literature review, school visits, in-depth discussions with key stakeholders as well as a survey on students' motivation for language learning were conducted as part of the review. After almost two years of research and deliberation, the SCOLAR issued a consultation document titled 'Action Plan to Raise Language Standards in Hong Kong' in January 2003 for an eight-week public consultation. A total of 193 submissions were received from education-related bodies, schools, tertiary institutions, political parties, and individual members of the public.

The following recommendations made by the SCOLAR are generally supported by the public:

(1) Specifying Assessment Competencies Expected of Students and Workforce

- Basic competencies in Chinese and English expected of students, university graduates and junior professionals should be specified.

Students

- The Curriculum Development Council should take into account both educational and vocational considerations in setting the basic competencies for students at the level of Secondary 3 and above.
- For assessing students in Primary 1 to Secondary 3, the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) is working on a Basic Competency Assessment for implementation starting from 2003 to 2006.

- The HKEAA will develop standards-referenced Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examinations on Chinese and English for assessing Secondary 5 students from 2007. It will also try to complete the development of standards-referenced Hong Kong Advanced Level Examinations on Chinese and English for assessing Secondary 7 students from 2009.
- The Government and educators should channel resources to help those students who require additional support to achieve the basic competencies expected of them.

Working adults

- Working adults should enhance their language abilities through continuing education to attain the language competencies expected of them. Employers, including the Government, should adopt the basic competencies as language requirements for recruitment and promotion.
- To assess their English language proficiency, working adults can make use of the internationally recognised English tests available in Hong Kong. We also recommend the HKEAA to develop a general Chinese proficiency assessment suitable for local working adults, to help them assess their Chinese language proficiency.

(2) Creating a More Motivating Language Learning Environment

- School management, teachers, parents, the mass media, and Government should work together to create a more motivating language learning environment for local students and working adults.
- The SCOLAR considers that those teachers who possess specified qualifications to teach languages should have a good grounding in subject knowledge, and be acquainted with the latest theories and practices in language teaching and learning. Teachers should flexibly employ diversified teaching methods to cater to students' interests, needs and abilities. They should also suitably adjust the curriculum to enhance students' interests in language subjects.
- All English Language and Putonghua teachers should meet the Language Proficiency Requirement within the Government-specified time frame.

- New language teachers should hold 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. As for serving language teachers, the SCOLAR recommends that an incentive grant be provided to encourage these teachers to acquire the specified qualifications.
- To facilitate curriculum reform, the SCOLAR supports the Hong Kong Institute of Education to conduct more intensive and focused professional upgrading courses, concentrating on curriculum leadership, development and management, for chairpersons of language subject panels or curriculum leader.
- In addition, a task force of district-based teaching consultants should be set up to help individual schools improve their teachers' knowledge and skills in language teaching.
- School management should gradually assign only those teachers with the required qualifications to teach language subjects and critically review their schools' work processes and deployment of resources to reduce the non-teaching workload of language teachers.
- Moreover, school management should strengthen language-across-the-curriculum approach, promote greater use of information technology and multi-media resources, open up new opportunities for experiential learning, and actively explain to parents the school's language teaching approaches.
- Parents should cultivate in their children an interest in reading and language learning, and support teachers in implementing the curriculum reform.
- Schools, parents and students should make better use of the mass media, particularly English and Putonghua television and radio programmes, as a resource for language learning.

(3) Medium of Instruction (MOI)

- The SCOLAR supports adopting the students' mother tongue as the MOI. If a second language is to be adopted as the MOI, three pre-conditions - teachers' proficiency, students' proficiency and the provision of suitable support measures - must be fulfilled.
- The MOI policy review to be conducted later this year should re-examine the mechanisms used to ensure those three pre-conditions are being met by schools using or wishing to use English as the MOI for all subjects.
- No firm policy or timetable for adopting Putonghua as the MOI for Chinese Language is recommended pending further studies on the conditions required to ensure a successful switch. Schools that believe they have the preconditions for success in place are strongly encouraged to try using Putonghua in teaching Chinese Language. As a basic condition, these schools should ensure that the Chinese Language teachers deployed to teach the subject in Putonghua satisfy the Language Proficiency Requirement for Putonghua teachers in speaking and classroom language.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

After taking into account views received from the public, the SCOLAR has forwarded its final recommendations to the Government for consideration. The SCOLAR has planned to issue its final report in end June or early July, and by that time the Government will also put forward timetables for implementing various recommendations.

Section 3: Support for Schools

Target

In the course of implementing the Education Reform, schools and teachers will inevitably face many challenges and problems. 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) On-site Support to Schools in Curriculum Development

Please refer to Section 1 for details.

(2) Capacity Enhancement Grant

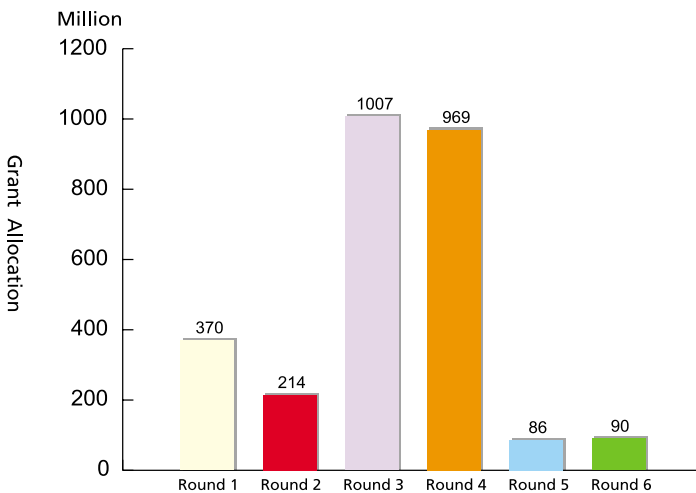
- To relieve the workload of teachers, the Government has, starting from the 2000/01 school year, provided schools with the Capacity Enhancement Grant. The amount is adjusted according to the movement of the Composite Consumer Price Index. Schools can make use of the grant to employ additional staff or hire outside services so as to relieve teachers' workload, thus enabling them to concentrate more on the Education Reform. In the 2000/01 school year, each primary school was provided \$450,000 or \$550,000 and each secondary school \$250,000 or \$300,000. (The higher rates were applicable to schools with 19 or more classes and the lower rates to schools with less than 19 classes.) From the 2001/02 school year onwards, the grant to secondary schools has been increased by 50%.
- In the 2001/02 school year, schools used the grant to employ a total of 2 743 full-time and 2 562 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.

- We obtained, on 3 June 2003, the approval of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council to refining the existing two-tier rate structure with effect from the 2003/04 school year by introducing more funding levels to the grant for more effective use of public money.

(3) Quality Education Fund (QEF)

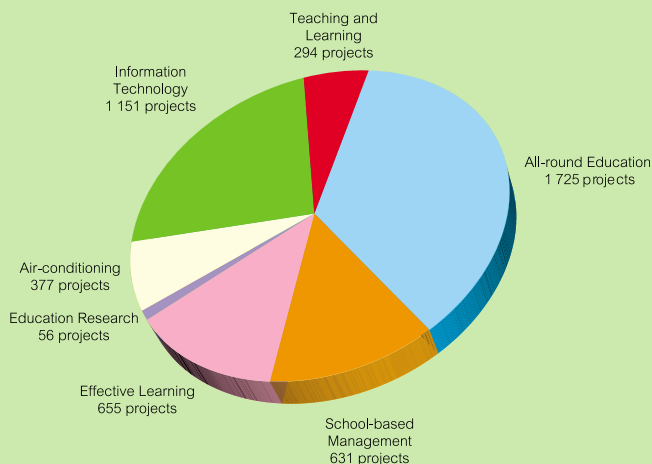
- The QEF has completed six rounds of grant allocation. A total of 4 889 projects have been approved with funds amounting to \$2.94 billion. Over 1 350 schools have benefited from the projects. Please refer to Tables (3.1) and (3.2) for details.
- Following the recommendation of a consultant on an evaluation model for QEF projects, a series of seminars cum training on performance indicators and evaluation methodology for school heads and project leaders to implement QEF projects were conducted in November and December 2002.

Six Rounds of Grant Allocation by the QEF



**Information Source: The Education and Manpower Bureau
Table (3.1)**

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



Source: The Education and Manpower Bureau

Table (3.2)

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

- For parent education, the emphasis will be placed on producing parent education reference materials and training of parent education programme organizers.
- Training courses are provided for parents to be counselors for their peers, and teachers for the role of parent education workers.
- The Parent Education Programme Grant is set up to offer assistance to schools in implementing parent education activities and to provide further support to parents with special needs and those not easy to get in touch with.
- It is anticipated that Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) will play a significant role in school management. To cope with this trend, one of the focuses of the Committee on Home-School Co-operation will be further promoting the setting up of PTAs with a view that PTAs are established in all public sector schools.

(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 EMB 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. Details of the support activities are as follows:

Organisation	Support Activities
Social Welfare Department (SWD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise regional youth services meetings and other related liaison activities. Implement "Understanding the Adolescent Project" in secondary schools.
Social Services Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide school social workers, out-reaching social workers and integrated youth services. • Provide support to schools such as adaptation courses for New Arrival Children, tutorial and guidance services for students with learning differences and guidance services for students with behavioural problems. • Promote public concern for education development activities. • The Student Guidance Section of the EMB commissioned the Breakthrough Limited, The Boys' and Girls' Association of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong to pilot the "Understanding the Adolescent Project" in primary schools from the 2000/01 to 2003/04 school years.
Disciplinary Forces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Student Discipline Section of the EMB, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Police Force, the Civil Aid Service, Fire Services Department, the Customs and Excise Department and the Correctional Services Department, jointly organised the Smart Teen Challenge Project. Through a series of discipline and physical activities, the Project aims to develop students' self-discipline, confidence and resilience.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

(1) Quality Education Fund

- Entering into its sixth year, the QEF will shift its work focus to promoting experiences and outcomes of successful projects. Among the four thousand plus projects approved by the QEF in the past five years, many of them have been completed and borne fruits. The QEF has developed strategy to promote systematically the products of projects on different themes to the education sector for experience sharing and reference. It has also commissioned the Chinese University of Hong Kong to conduct highlight studies on successful experiences of winners of the "Outstanding Schools Awards". Their experiences will be promoted to the education sector later this year.
- 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.

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

Please refer to Section 1 for details.

Section 4: Professional Development

Target

Frontline education workers are the key players in implementing the Education Reform. To support the reform, the Government strives to enhance the quality and professionalism of the teaching force, through providing training and support as well as formulating appropriate professional standards for teachers. In realizing the vision of providing quality education, school principals play a very vital role. The Government places much emphasis on promoting the continuing professional development among school principals, and assisting them in enhancing their professional leadership so that they can lead teachers and students in facing the changes and challenges of the new millennium. We also encourage sharing among school principals.

Last Year's Progress

(1) Teachers' Professional Development

- A draft Teacher Competencies Framework (TCF) was endorsed by the Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications (ACTEQ) in March 2003.
- A Task Force was set up under ACTEQ to review pre-service teacher education. The Task Force has completed a preliminary review on the content and processes of pre-service teacher education.
- ACTEQ is deliberating on a proposal to introduce internship requirement on beginning teachers, who will be given mentoring support throughout the internship period and be required to meet accreditation standards prior to their professional registration.
- An amendment bill on raising entry qualification requirements of teachers was introduced to the Legislative Council in April 2003.
- 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

- Principals' Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework has been implemented from September 2002.
- For appointment to principalship, aspiring principals would have to attain the Certification for Principalship (CFP) from the 2004/05 school year.
- The EMB and the SWD are jointly arranging an abridged course in Certificate in Early Childhood Education for qualified serving kindergarten principals and child care centre supervisors.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

(1) Teachers' Professional Development

- Upon further refinement of the TCF, consultation with the education sector will begin.
- Liaison with teacher education institutions to map out action plans in reforming pre-service teacher education.
- Setting out accreditation standards and operational details of internship for consultation with the education sector, and launching training programmes for internship mentors.
- The EMB will continue to provide/ commission training programmes on the education/ curriculum reform and other policy-related initiatives.
- The District Teachers' Network (DTN) Scheme Secretariat will continue to co-organise the second Teachers' Experience Sharing Month in March 2004 with the QEF, Hong Kong Teachers' Centres, Regional Education Offices and other educational organisations.

(2) Principals' Professional Development

- To implement the CFP in the 2004/05 school year.
- From the 2002/03 school year, serving principals will have to undertake CPD activities in a 3-year cycle. The EMB will organise a series of CPD programmes for serving principals on such issues as curriculum and leadership training.

Section 5: Admission Mechanism

(1) Reform of the Primary One Admission System

Target

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

Last Year's Progress

- Primary 1 places for the 2003/04 school year have been allocated to applicants through the Discretionary Places Admission stage and Central Allocation stage in accordance with the short-term Primary One Admission (POA) mechanism recommended by the EC.
- The number of POA school nets for the 2003/04 school year has been adjusted to 55.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- To review the Points System before the implementation of the long-term POA mechanism.
- To continue to review the POA school nets where appropriate.

(2) Reform of the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System

Target

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

Last Year's Progress

- The pre-set boy/ girl pupils' quotas in co-educational schools were abolished. Both boy and girl pupils have been grouped together throughout the whole process of Central Allocation.
- A 'Guidebook on Internal Assessments' was compiled to encourage diversified assessment modes.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- To review the Secondary One Places Allocation System together with the policy of Medium of Instruction.

(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

- 6 pairs of aided primary and secondary schools applied to adopt the "through-train" mode. Collaboration plans from 4 pairs of "through-train" primary and secondary schools were endorsed.
- Started to explore the feasibility of deployment of teachers in "through-train" schools.
- Continued to monitor the implementation of "through-train" mode and provide support to "through-train" schools through the Regional Education Offices and the Curriculum Development Institute.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- In the light of the latest development of the "through-train" mode, to continue to review and revise the arrangements for this mode of school operation.
- To work together with those feeder and nominated schools which currently do not comply with the "through-train" principles to formulate feasible solutions during the period from 2003 to 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

- Interviews, where appropriate, were more extensively used by HEIs to gauge students' aptitude and skills. Four HEIs have already implemented their students' self-recommendation scheme to take into account non-academic achievements of applicants.
- HEIs were given greater flexibility to take in students at various levels. The Early Admission Scheme, which aims at attracting and retaining a small number of talented S6 students, was introduced. Meritorious graduates of community colleges and other post-secondary institutions were also admitted into senior years of undergraduate study.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- The University Grants Committee will continue to encourage the local HEIs to broaden their admission criteria and to introduce further flexibility to enable multi-entry.

Section 6: Assessment Mechanism

(1) Basic Competency Assessments

Target

The *Student Assessment* helps teachers better understand the learning needs and problems of students, so that timely assistance can be provided to enhance their learning effectiveness. The *System Assessment* provides the Government and school management with useful information on students' standards at the levels of Primary 3, Primary 6 and Secondary 3 on a territory-wide and school basis.

Last Year's Progress

- The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority introduced the computer-aided Student Assessment programme to all primary schools in June 2003 and connected it to the supportive learning and teaching materials through the Internet.
- Views are being collected from schools on the basic competencies which students are expected to attain for the three subjects of Chinese, English and Mathematics.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- Improve and extend the Student Assessment to cover secondary schools.
- Administer the System Assessment at Primary 3 level in mid-2004.

(2) Public Examination Reforms

Target

The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) strives to enhance the flexibility 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

- Appropriate questions were set for the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) and Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) to put more emphasis on the assessment of candidates' ability to apply what they have learnt to solve problems. A flexible approach in awarding marks was adopted to encourage independent and critical thinking.
- A school-based assessment (SBA) component was introduced to some subjects of the HKCEE and HKALE so as to assess students' performance more comprehensively.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- To conduct seminars to enhance communication with teachers and to share with them the rationale underlying the setting of questions and what are expected of candidates.
- To work closely with the CDI to turn the Chinese Language and English Language examinations in the HKCEE into standards-referenced examinations.
- To gradually extend SBA to other subjects in the HKCEE and HKALE.

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.

(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 academic year.

Last Year's Progress

- The overall post-secondary participation rate for the 17-20 age cohort rose to 42%.
- Approved interest free start-up loans to support non-profit-making education providers in providing accredited self-financing post-secondary programmes.
- Invited applications for 5 pieces of land to be granted by private treaty to non-profit-making post-secondary education providers for construction of purpose-built premises.
- Increased the total commitment of accreditation grant scheme for post-secondary education providers to conduct institutional reviews and programme validations.
- Provided financial assistance to post-secondary students.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- Subject to the availability of resources, plan to increase second and third year of undergraduate places to provide more articulation opportunities for sub-degree graduates.
- Continue to step up publicity to enhance the public's understanding of sub-degree qualifications and its prospects for employment or further studies. This should help promote recognition of these qualifications.

(3) Promoting Continuing Education

Target

To provide a favorable environment for the development of continuing education through the promotion of mutual recognition and transfer of qualifications and to increase education opportunities.

Last Year's Progress

- The public was consulted on the proposal of setting up a qualifications framework and associated quality assurance mechanism. The Government and the Manpower Development Committee are examining these comments.
- A \$5 billion Continuing Education Fund was set up in June 2002 to subsidise eligible Hong Kong residents to study in reimbursable courses. As at March 2003, there were 1 215 reimbursable courses and more than 28 000 applications.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- To gradually implement and promote the qualifications framework, to introduce legislative proposal to set up an effective quality assurance mechanism, and to enlist the support and input of the stakeholders in the process.
- To review the eligibility for and operation of the Continuing Education Fund.

Section 8: Review Progress

(1) Review on the Harmonisation of the Systems of Kindergartens and Child Care Centres

Following a public consultation in mid-2002, the Working Party formed between the EMB and the SWD to advise the Government on harmonisation of pre-primary services has finalized its recommendations in early 2003. Preparatory arrangements, including making legislative amendments, are in progress with a view to implementing the harmonisation measures from the 2004/05 school year onwards.

- (i) The edu-care services for children aged 3 to 6 should be provided at kindergartens (KGs) and regulated by the Education Ordinance, while child care services for children aged 0 to 3 at child care centers (CCCs) should be regulated by the Child Care Services Ordinance;
- (ii) A Joint Office will be set up to monitor KG-cum-CCCs;
- (iii) The Kindergarten Fee Remission Scheme will replace the existing Child Care Centre Fee Assistance Scheme and be expanded to cover children attending CCCs;
- (iv) The 5% Subsidy Scheme for CCCs will no longer be in place. The Kindergarten Subsidy Scheme should be expanded to cover CCCs;
- (v) All serving and trained Child Care Workers (CCWs) and KG teachers would be recognized as Registered Teachers/ Qualified Kindergarten Teachers and CCWs;
- (vi) Only one performance monitoring system for KG-cum-CCCs would be used; and
- (vii) Harmonization measures would be implemented from the 2004/05 school year onwards.

(2) Review of Language Education

Please refer to Section 2 (Language Education) for details of the Review.

(3) Review of Teacher Education and Development

In support of the Education Reform, the ACTEQ has embarked on a comprehensive review of teacher education to :

- (i) advance the overall professional standard of the teaching force by building on existing strength, so that the spirit of the Education Reform can be realized more effectively at the school and classroom levels; and
- (ii) foster a culture of lifelong learning among teachers in Hong Kong.

The review cuts across the whole spectrum of teacher preparation and development, i.e. from initial, induction to in-service continuing professional development (CPD). The review places great emphasis on the personal development of teachers and their quest for excellence in caring for and bringing out the best potential in students. Task Forces comprising ACTEQ members and frontline practitioners are set up to study in depth specific issues and to formulate proposals on :

- (i) raising entry qualifications of teachers;
- (ii) reviewing and enhancing pre-service teacher education;
- (iii) strengthening induction support and ensuring quality of beginning teachers through mentoring and internship accreditation; and
- (iv) formulating a teacher competencies framework to provide reference for teachers' professional development.

To achieve a shared vision, synergy and ownership among education practitioners, ACTEQ attaches great importance to engaging in dialogues with frontline teachers, principals, school councils, teacher education institutions and teacher/ education bodies in the course of formulating its views and recommendations. It has also looked into current practices in other countries/ regions. ACTEQ plans to complete the review together with a coherent set of recommendations by mid-2003 for wider consultation within the education sector.

(4) Review of the Senior Secondary Academic Structure, Post-secondary Education and Continuing Education

In its *Reform Proposals for the Education System in Hong Kong* published in 2000, the Education Commission (EC) put forward the idea of a 3-year senior secondary academic structure. It then set up a Working Group to examine the feasibility, specific measures, transitional arrangements and timetable of implementing the new structure. The review on the senior secondary academic structure has been completed.

The EC considers that a 3-year senior secondary academic structure will provide more room for a more coherent and diversified senior secondary education. It also allows the objectives of the overall Education Reform to be fully realised. Nonetheless, the successful implementation of the new structure hinges on securing all the necessary pre-conditions, including the new curriculum design, development of a new public examination, articulation with the university curriculum and admission system, sufficient preparation allowed for schools and teachers, etc.

Since the development of these pre-conditions take time and the implementation of the new structure needs to take account of the progress made in other Education Reform measures, the EC estimated that the earliest commencement date of the 3-year senior secondary academic structure should be around the 2010/11 school year. In addition, the implementation of the new structure would require significant additional resources. Part of the expenditure, such as that for constructing new schools and developing the new curriculum, would need to be incurred at the initial preparatory stage. In addition, the new senior secondary academic structure is a major structural change. As such, before firming up the implementation timetable, apart from taking into account the change in learning, teaching, and assessment culture, the Government should consider the capacity of schools and implementation agencies to cope with changes over and above the reforms underway. The EC suggests that the period between the years 2003/04 and

2006/07 can be taken as the early preparatory phase. During this time, the Government should continue to take forward and consolidate the ongoing Education Reform such as the curriculum reform, public examination reform and enhancement of principals' and teachers' professional training. They are the essential elements of, and give substance to, the proposed structural changes to senior secondary education. The Government is urged to announce by 2006/07 at the latest, when the first cohort of the 3-year senior secondary programme will be in place. In any circumstances, parents will be informed at least three years prior to the year the first Senior Secondary One is in place. The EC encourages the education sector and other interested parties in the community to make proposals on how to raise funds or reduce the additional resources required for implementing the proposed new academic structure.

(5) Review of Higher Education

The Higher Education Review, under the guidance of a Steering Committee comprising mainly local UGC members, was launched in May 2001 and was completed in March 2002. A report entitled 'Higher Education in Hong Kong' was issued by the UGC for public consultation.

In the Report, the UGC, in line with the direction of the Education Reform which aims to encourage a diversified and interlinked system of higher education, advocated role differentiation among institutions, as well as the concentration of resources to reward performance and to encourage the growth of centres of excellence. To achieve these objectives, various improvements to the funding mechanism and the strengthening of university governance are proposed. These recommendations, accepted by the Government in November 2002, will serve as a blueprint for the further development of higher education in Hong Kong.

Chapter 3:

Going Forward with the Education Reform

First introduced in 2000, the Education Reform measures have been progressively implemented over the last two years. These include reforming the Primary One Admission (POA) System and Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System, increasing access to post-secondary education and developing the Basic Competency Assessments in Chinese, English and Mathematics. In addition, a number of measures have also been introduced to provide support for teachers and schools, one of which is increasing the rate of Capacity Enhancement Grant for secondary schools to further reduce the teaching and non-teaching duties of teachers.

In its first public forum held in early 2002, the EC reported the achievements of the reform in its initial stage of implementation. It also collected the views of frontline educators and members of the public on the proposals and progress of the reform. The forum aimed to enhance the transparency of the reform process and to allow the public to have a better understanding of the timetable and measures of the reform.

The Way Forward

The EC will, in collaboration with the EMB, continue to take forward a series of yet-to-be-completed reform measures. We will review the SSPA system in tandem with the MOI policy in 2003/04. The basic principle of the MOI policy is to enable students to learn in an environment without any language barrier, so that they can acquire knowledge and develop high-order thinking more effectively. The MOI policy should dovetail with the long-term arrangement of the SSPA system. The review, with a focus on the learning effectiveness of students, should also work towards identifying a long-term policy that is acceptable to schools, parents and teachers.

We will prepare some statistics to allow assessment of the effectiveness of the reform some time after its implementation. Later on, we will consult the education profession on the proposed statistics.

Concluding Remarks

The ultimate aim of education is to help every single individual achieve whole-person development and to groom quality manpower to contribute to the prosperity and advancement of Hong Kong. It is therefore a community responsibility to support education and contribute to the Education Reform. We firmly believe that, with the concerted efforts and better communication, the desired objectives of the reform will be realised.

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