

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.