



Task Force on Home School Co-operation and Parent Education

Positive parenting, cross-sector collaboration
and innovation foster healthy child development.

Report
April 2019

Foreword

Parents play a vital role in their children's development and learning. Influenced by the competitive climate in this information age, many parents place too much value on children's performance in studying and examinations, regarding it as the only measure of children's success. Therefore, they push their children so hard that they overlook the importance of physical and psychological well-being of their children. As a result, both parents and children are brought under an energy-draining vicious cycle which affects parent-child relationship.

In the Policy Address delivered in October 2017, besides announcing a series of priority measures to support quality education, the Chief Executive invited education experts to take leadership in reviewing and following up on other areas. As one of the foci, enhancement to home-school co-operation and parent education seeks to correct the culture of excessive competition and enable children's healthy and joyful development. Readily accepting the invitation from the Education Bureau, the Education Commission set up the Task Force on Home-School Co-operation and Parent Education (Task Force) in December 2017 to carry out the review.

During the review, the Task Force not only examined the promotion of home-school co-operation and parent education in Hong Kong and other regions, but also looked at the findings of relevant local studies and the provision of parent education programmes and activities by local tertiary institutions and non-governmental organisations. In-depth discussions were held to identify improvement measures. To solicit the views of different sectors on its recommendations to enhance home-school co-operation and parent education, the Task Force arranged a number of consultation sessions for the public and stakeholders. Besides, the Task Force released a public consultation paper to collect public views. This report examines the current practices of home-school

co-operation and parent education in Hong Kong and other regions, and on this basis, proposes six long-term development directions, promotion strategies and 18 specific recommendations.

On behalf of the Task Force, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all individuals and organisations engaged in the exercise. Also, I would like to extend my deep gratitude to all members of the Task Force. Their profound experience in frontline and research work, insightful advice and enthusiastic participation make the review a success. In particular, their significant contributions are instrumental in working out the development directions and specific recommendations for home-school co-operation and parent education. We would also like to extend our appreciation to the Task Force Secretariat for its dedicated support to the Task Force.

The smooth implementation of the proposed recommendations hinges on the support and collaboration of the community. Therefore, I appeal to all sectors to work together to enhance home-school co-operation and parent education for the benefit of the future pillars of our society.

Tim LUI Tim-leung

Chairman

Task Force on Home-School Co-operation and Parent Education

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Executive Summary

1. Home-school co-operation and parent education are vital elements of the education system. In the 2017 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced the establishment of a task force to review home-school co-operation and parent education, with the aim of avoiding the culture of excessive competition, so that children would grow up healthily and happily. At the invitation of the Education Bureau (EDB), the Education Commission (EC) set up on 1 December 2017 the Task Force on Home-School Co-operation and Parent Education (Task Force) to review the existing approach to promoting home-school co-operation and parent education, and formulate the directions, strategies and measures for fostering home-school co-operation and parent education.

2. Besides examining the policies, government support, academic research and practices pertinent to home-school co-operation and parent education in the local context, the Task Force has made reference to the experience of promoting home-school co-operation and parent education in other regions (including the Mainland, Finland, Singapore, Taiwan, Australia and the United Kingdom). Upon in-depth discussion based on the information gathered, the Task Force sees the need for the Government to further promote home-school co-operation and parent education, and enhance parents' competency in nurturing and parenting.

3. On concrete improvement measures, the Task Force considers that the Government should strengthen support for Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) of schools and Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations (FPTAs) of districts so that they could perform a fuller role in promoting parent education. Moreover, the Task Force finds it necessary to promote parent education and public education in order to strengthen the happy and positive mindset among parents and weaken their mindset of negative thinking and excessive competition so that they will not drive their children too hard to excel academically.

4. In 2018, the Task Force held a series of consultation sessions and embarked on a public consultation exercise to canvass stakeholders' views on the directions, strategies and improvement measures initially proposed. After considering the findings from relevant studies as well as reviews and consolidating the views collected during the consultation, the Task Force has come up with the following six long-term directions for promoting home-school co-operation and parent education:

- (i) Enhance parents' capacity, knowledge, skills and attitude in nurturing children and parenting;
- (ii) Assist parents in acquiring a more comprehensive understanding of the development/alternative pathways available to their children, as well as their children's abilities and personalities to set the direction of their plan for raising their children
- (iii) Deliver diverse and innovative parent education and home-school co-operation activities;
- (iv) Foster better collaboration between parents and schools, strengthen mutual connection and communication, and build partnerships;
- (v) Further strengthen the role of PTAs and FPTAs and the competency of their members; and
- (vi) Devote effort to promote home-school co-operation and parent education to the public.

5. On promoting home-school co-operation and parent education, the Task Force reckons that the Government should employ appropriate strategies to effectively implement measures that cater for the needs of parents. Specifically, a parent-oriented approach should be adopted in

promoting home-school co-operation and parent education, and the promotion should demonstrate extensiveness, commonality, target-oriented and timeliness. Also, when promoting home-school co-operation and parent education, support strategies (through schools as primary platform and the community as complementary, and public education) and development strategies (through early education, cross-sector collaboration, and evidence-based approach) should be pursued as appropriate to take initiatives forward.

6. On the basis of the above-mentioned long-term directions and strategies for promoting home-school cooperation and parent education, the Task Force has made the following 18 recommendations:

Short-term measures

- (i) The EDB should provide more resources to increase the amount of Subsidy for Home-School Co-operation Activities for schools and PTAs.
- (ii) The EDB should increase the number of activities which FPTAs could apply for Subsidy for Home-School Co-operation Activities, and set up a new type of subsidy for FPTAs to organise joint-district parent education activities.
- (iii) The amount of Set-up Grant and Annual Grant for PTAs of kindergartens (KGs) should be increased to encourage more KGs to set up a PTA;
- (iv) Publicity and education should be stepped up to help KGs and their school sponsoring bodies better understand the procedures and matters pertaining to the setting up of PTAs;
- (v) Tertiary institutions (TEIs) or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should be commissioned by the EDB to develop a

curriculum framework or a set of curriculum guidelines on parent education;

- (vi) Short training courses for teachers should be provided to enhance their skills in promoting home-school co-operation and parent education, as well as skills in relation to mediation and home-school communication;
- (vii) The EDB's parent education website "Smart Parent Net" should be developed to become a more popular parent education learning platform;
- (viii) A territory-wide "Positive Parent Campaign" should be launched and promoted through different platforms. The EDB should also produce videos and articles on the theme of "Positive Parent Campaign";
- (ix) The EDB should provide funding for KGs and public sector schools to implement school-based activities under "Positive Parent Campaign";
- (x) NGOs should be commissioned to conduct out-reaching promotion activities such as photo-taking, games and arts activities in places including public housing estates, shopping malls and markets so as to reach more parents of different backgrounds for promoting the "Positive Parent Campaign";

Medium-term measures

- (xi) TEIs or NGOs should be commissioned by the EDB to design and organise structured and evidence-based parent education courses in accordance with the curriculum framework or guidelines on parent education developed by the Government, whose targets include parents in general, grandparents, single

parents, and parents of students with special educational needs (SEN), non-Chinese speaking, newly arrived and non-attendance students;

- (xii) TEIs should be encouraged or commissioned to conduct various researches on home-school co-operation and parent education;
- (xiii) NGOs should be commissioned to provide free parent talks or workshops on various topics regularly in different regions, whose targets include parents in general, grandparents, single parents, and parents of SEN, non-Chinese speaking, newly arrived and non-attendance students;
- (xiv) TEIs or NGOs should be commissioned to develop and provide e-learning parent education courses to enable self-learning through computers or mobile phones;

Long-term measures

- (xv) Parent education courses specifically developed for fathers, mothers, grandparents and single parents should be optimised with a view to covering members of different family status and meeting their needs in nurturing children;
- (xvi) TEIs or NGOs should be commissioned by the EDB to optimise tailor-made parent education for parents of SEN, non-Chinese speaking, newly arrived and non-attendance students, etc.
- (xvii) TEIs or NGOs should be commissioned by the EDB to design and provide workplace parent education courses specially for working parents; and
- (xviii) Companies should be encouraged to join workplace parent education courses through media such as Announcements of

Public Interest. Opportunities to co-operate with other organisations which promote programmes on corporate social responsibility could also be explored.

7. The Task Force trusts that with the concerted efforts of the Government, TEIs, NGOs, schools, parents, the media, the community, etc, and through the implementation of improvement measures in line with the proposed directions and strategies, not only will home-school co-operation and parent education be strengthened, but parents' physical and psychological well-being will be promoted, and a favourable learning and living environment for students to grow up happily and healthily will also be created.

Chapter 1: Introduction

I. Background

1.1 A healthy and pleasant environment is essential for children to flourish, and parents play a vital role in their children's development and learning. Nowadays, most parents have become more knowledgeable, so it is understandable that they are concerned about their children's future and wish to provide them with the best education. However, some parents may unwittingly drive their children too hard academically and hold unrealistic expectations for them. This would undesirably exert pressure on both parents and children and make an adverse impact on parent-child relationship.

1.2 In the 2017 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced the establishment of a task force to review home-school co-operation and parent education, with the aim of helping parents acquire knowledge of children's growth and developmental needs, enhance parenting skills, as well as discouraging the culture of excessive competition so that children can grow up healthily and happily .

II. Composition and terms of reference of the Task Force

1.3 At the invitation of the Education Bureau (EDB), the Education Commission (EC) set up on 1 December 2017 the Task Force on Home-School Co-operation and Parent Education (Task Force) to review the existing approach to promoting home-school co-operation and parent education, and formulate the directions and strategies for fostering home-school co-operation and parent education.

1.4 The Task Force has a membership of 15 members chaired by Mr Tim LUI Tim-leung, Chairman of the EC. Others members include EC members, scholars and experts on parent education, representatives of

Committee on Home-School Co-operation (CHSC), principals from secondary schools, primary schools and kindergarten (KG) as well as parents representatives. Besides reviewing the existing approach to promoting home-school co-operation and parent education, the Task Force would, on the basis of the review findings, formulate the directions and strategies for fostering home-school co-operation and parent education, so as to discourage the culture of excessive competition. The membership list and terms of reference of the Task Force are at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 respectively.

III. Work of the Task Force

1.5 Between December 2017 and February 2019, eight meetings were held by the Task Force to review and discuss the current practices in promoting home-school co-operation and parent education in Hong Kong and other regions, and to devise strategies and specific measures on the basis of the review findings. When examining the promotion of home-school co-operation and parent education in Hong Kong and other regions, the Task Force not only gathered information from the EDB, local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and tertiary institutions (TEIs) (Appendix 3) that conduct studies, courses and activities on parent education, but also solicited inputs on the promotion of home-school co-operation and parent education in other regions through different consulates or representative offices in Hong Kong.

1.6 Based on the information and views collected, the Task Force thoroughly explored and discussed relevant issues, and initially proposed the directions, strategies and improvement measures as the basis of consultation. To canvass stakeholders' views on home-school co-operation and parent education, the Task Force conducted six consultation sessions in June and July 2018 for the CHSC, Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations (FPTAs), Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), secondary schools, primary schools, KGs, primary and secondary school councils and school sponsoring bodies (SSBs).

1.7 In early August 2018, three public consultation sessions were held to seek public views on the promotion of home-school co-operation and parent education. These public consultation sessions were attended by representatives of NGOs, scholars from TEIs, principals, teachers, members of PTAs, FPTAs and parent groups, parents and the public. In mid-2018, the Task Force embarked on a public consultation exercise of about two months to invite the public to offer views in written form on the directions, strategies and improvement measures initially proposed by the Task Force.

1.8 The Task Force briefed the EC on the progress of the review in December 2018, and sought its views on its final report in March 2019.

1.9 This report summarises the Task Force's discussion outcomes based on in-depth analysis and study of the views given by the education sector and stakeholders, and presents six long-term development directions, promotion strategies and 18 specific recommendations for home-school co-operation and parent education.

Chapter 2: Analysis of Current Situation

I. Definition of home-school co-operation and parent education

2.1 Parent education encompasses all education activities that equip parents with the abilities, knowledge, skills and attitudes in connection with child-rearing and parenting. With an extensive coverage, it ranges from maternal and child health, parenting skills, children's physical and psychological development, parent-child communication and harmonious family, proper use of the Internet, to the prevention of juvenile drug abuse and crime. Parent education enables parents to gain a thorough understanding of the needs of their children, and such knowledge could guide them in supporting their children's physical, emotional, language and cognitive development¹. Research suggests that parent education can bring benefits not only to children's development but also to parents' psychological well-being². When parents become confident in their parental role and effectively master problem-solving skills, they can more readily help their children develop well physically and psychologically and in terms of social adaptation³.

2.2 Home-school co-operation refers to active participation of schools and parents in home-school activities, with the aim of strengthening mutual connection, communication and forming close partnership to collaboratively foster children's academic, physical and psychological development. According to some scholars, parents' participation in children's learning at home is not enough; their

¹ Lee, NY Amelia (2013). *A Framework for Planning Parent Education Programmes*. Unpublished Manuscript. School of Continuing Education, Hong Kong Baptist University.

² Samuelson, A. (2010). Best practices for parent education and support programs: What works, *Wisconsin Research to Practice Series*, 10.

³ Leung, M Cynthia, Tsang, KM Sandra (2003)。「香港家長教育之實證研究」。*中國家庭教育*, (1), 18-23。

involvement in school could help enhance school quality⁴. Through more positive communication with schools, parents could not only get informed about their children's learning, but also improve their children's balanced development in academic performance and self-concept. Communication is a two-way process, and thus both schools and parents should proactively interact with each other⁵.

II. Historical developments in home-school co-operation and parent education

2.3 On a recommendation made in the EC Report No. 5, the CHSC⁶ was set up in 1993. Since establishment, it has actively promoted home-school co-operation and parent education and encouraged schools to establish PTAs.

2.4 In the 2000 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced that to further promote parent education, a non-recurrent provision of \$50 million would be earmarked to support parent education and encourage parents to participate in educational affairs. At end-2000, the Steering Committee on Parent Education was set up to explore how the above provision could be used effectively. Composed of representatives from the former Education Department, the Department of Health and the Social Welfare Department, the Steering Committee was entrusted to: (1) devise an overall strategy on the promotion of parent education to encourage wider participation of the community in parent education; (2) co-ordinate the efforts of relevant government departments and NGOs to promote parent education; (3) ensure the effective deployment of the

⁴ Henderson, A.T. (1988). Parents are a school's best friends. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 70(2), 148-53; Steinberg, L., Brown, B.D. & Dornbusch, S.M. (1996). *Beyond the classroom: Why school reform has failed and what parents need to do*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

⁵ Ho, SC Esther, Tsoi, LY Susanna (2001)。「家庭與學校合作研究計劃」：成功指標及實踐的探索研究報告，香港中文大學香港教育研究所大學與學校夥伴協作中心。

⁶ The CHSC comprises a chairperson, an ex-officio member from the EDB, educators teaching at kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools and special schools, parents of students studying in local schools, and professionals.

non-recurrent provision of \$50 million earmarked in the 2000 Policy Address; and (4) monitor, review and evaluate the implementation of relevant initiatives. From 2001 to 2003, the Parent Education Implementation Team formed by the EDB was in operation to carry out the recommendations of the Steering Committee. These included designing parent education materials tailored to children at different developmental stages, promoting parent education, and providing training on parent education for student guidance personnel and psychologists. Upon accomplishment of the above tasks, the Steering Committee and the Implementation Team were dissolved in end-2002 and early-2004 respectively. Thereafter, government bureaux/departments have been making efforts within their respective purview to promote parent education. As for the EDB, parent education has been promoted through CHSC with schools serving as a platform.

2.5 In December 2007, the Family Council⁷ was established by the Government as a cross-sector and inter-bureau platform for studying family-related policies and promoting a culture of caring families in the community.

III. Existing measures for promoting home-school co-operation and parent education

2.6 All along, the Government has been promoting parent education through various bureaux/departments, including the EDB, Home Affairs Bureau, Social Welfare Department, Department of Health, Narcotics Division and Hong Kong Police Force. They help promote parent education through responsibilities under their purview. The measures

⁷ The Home Affairs Bureau provides secretarial support for the Family Council, which comprises a non-official chairperson, 15 non-official members from different sectors (including academic, commercial, education and social welfare sectors), three ex-officio members (i.e. chairpersons of Youth Development Commission, Elderly Commission and Women's Commission), and four government representatives (namely Secretary for Home Affairs, Secretary for Education, Secretary for Labour and Welfare and Head of the Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office).

currently taken by the EDB to promote home-school co-operation and parent education are detailed in paragraphs 2.7 to 2.17 below.

Encouraging schools to establish PTAs

2.7 The EDB and CHSC have been actively encouraging schools to establish PTAs. PTAs and district-based FPTAs open up a communication channel to strengthen communication and co-operation between parents and schools, and promote parent education through talks and activities. This not only helps parents better grasp their children's physical and psychological development and needs as well as establish a strong parent-child bond, but also facilitates mutual support and learning through sharing of parenting experience among parents.

2.8 Currently, about 1,400 schools (i.e. all government and aided secondary and primary schools and nearly one-third of KGs) in Hong Kong have established PTAs. In the 2018/19 school year, a Set-up Grant of \$5,000 is provided for a newly-established PTA, and a recurrent Annual Grant of \$5,474 is offered to an existing PTA for meeting the recurrent expenditure. Training activities are also organised by the EDB for PTAs' executive committee members.

2.9 Meanwhile, self-initiated FPTAs are established in the 18 districts for co-ordinating PTAs in their respective districts and organising district-based activities for parents. In the 2018/19 school year, a recurrent grant of \$27,367 is provided for each FPTA.

Providing Subsidy for Home-School Co-operation Activities

2.10 Apart from the Set-up Grant and the recurrent Annual Grant, each year, a school may apply for the EDB's Subsidy for Home-School Co-operation Activities (capped at \$5,000 per activity) to organise up to two activities on parent education or parental training. Individual schools/PTAs under the same SSB or in the same district may apply for the Subsidy for Joint Home-School Co-operation Project (capped at \$10,000 per activity) to organise larger-scale activities for parents.

2.11 Every year, FPTAs may apply for the Subsidy for Home-School Co-operation Activities to conduct three district-based activities for

parents. The amount of subsidy is subject to the number of participants and the nature of activity. The activities should seek to support children's learning and development, nurture positive values or respond to the themes of the Happy Kids Charter⁸.

2.12 In the 2017/18 school year, PTAs and FPTAs, with the EDB's subsidies of around \$27 million, organised about 3,500 activities on home-school co-operation and parent education, covering topics such as supporting children's learning or development, nurturing positive values and raising happy kids.

Organising activities for parents

2.13 Every year, the CHSC collaborates with other organisations to conduct various home-school activities, such as the annual Parents-Also-Appreciate-Teachers Drive, which encourages parents to cultivate in their children a sense of gratitude towards teachers, and there are large-scale home-school activities launched in collaboration with Ocean Park and Hong Kong Disneyland. On its own, the CHSC also organises a variety of talks, workshops and sharing sessions for parents. In the 2017/18 school year, over 70 workshops and talks were organised or co-organised for parents by CHSC for promoting home-school co-operation and parent education, elaborating education initiatives and policies, and equipping parents with parenting techniques and other knowledge and skills essential to children's learning and development.

⁸ The Happy Kids Charter was drawn up in 2005 by the organising committee of a scheme on relieving stress on parents and schools and promoting mental health among parents and students (家校齊減壓——提昇家長及學童的精神健康計劃). The scheme is jointly organised by the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry of Queen Mary Hospital under the Hospital Authority, Student Health Service of the Department of Health, Jockey Club South Horizons Children and Youth Integrated Services Centre of the Boys' & Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong, Caritas Community Centre - Caine Road, Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council Limited, Hapi Reading Club, and Queen Mary Hospital's Medical Social Services Unit under the Social Welfare Department. The Charter contains ten articles covering: (1) parents' relationship; (2) rest and relaxation; (3) adjustment of expectations; (4) stress-free life; (5) leisure activities; (6) love of nature; (7) communication and interaction; (8) daily exercise; (9) adequate sleep; and (10) parent-child reading.

Encouraging kindergartens to establish PTAs

2.14 At present, only nearly one-third of KGs have established PTAs. The EDB encourages KGs to establish PTAs. It is mentioned in chapter 10 of the Operation Manual for Pre-primary Institutions⁹ that KGs “can enhance their relationship with parents by establishing PTA to build up a formal link between the institutions and the parents. This will strengthen the communication and understanding between the two parties and provide more opportunities for parents to participate in the affairs of the institutions so that the services of the institutions can better gear to children’s needs”. Besides, chapter 6 of the Kindergarten Administration Guide (2017/18 School Year)¹⁰ states that through the provision of subsidy for home-school co-operation activities, the EDB encourages KGs to establish PTAs and organise home-school co-operation and parent education activities (e.g. talks for parents and volunteer services), so as to motivate parents to engage in school affairs and support their children in learning. In recent years, the CHSC has strived to, through different activities such as school visits, and sharing sessions or workshops on a territory-wide, district and SSB basis, acquaint KGs and SSBs with the procedures and considerations pertaining to the setting up of PTAs and disseminate relevant successful experience of PTAs.

2.15 Through contact with the KG sector, the EDB has learnt that KGs might encounter difficulties in setting up and operating PTAs. Some believe that the short span of three years in KG education will result in a high turnover of parent members on PTAs, which in turn hinders the succession of executive committee members and undermines

⁹ The Manual is compiled by the Focus Group on Operation Manual for Pre-primary Institutions, which comprises representatives from the Social Welfare Department and the EDB and experienced professionals from the pre-primary sector. The Manual provides a comprehensive guide to help operators understand the statutory requirements as well as the statutory requirements of the Social Welfare Department and the EDB in regulating child care centres and kindergartens so that operators can provide quality education and care for children.

¹⁰ The Kindergarten Administration Guide (2017/18 School Year) drawn up by the EDB aims to help kindergartens implement the Free Quality Kindergarten Education Scheme (the Scheme). The EDB also encourages KGs not joining the Scheme to make reference to the Guide for enhancing the quality of education services. The Guide has elaborations on, among others, the partnership among families, schools and the community.

the stable development of PTAs. There are concerns that without sufficient manpower for pertinent administrative work, the establishment of KG PTAs would create extra workload for teachers. Moreover, some KGs indicate that since the number of parents is relatively small, it would be quite difficult to identify parents who are enthusiastic about school/education matters. Some KGs also mention that their school premises have no adequate space for parents to hold meetings and organise activities. Besides, individual KGs find it a considerable challenge to enable communication between parents of non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students and local teachers or parents.

Providing useful information for parents

2.16 The CHSC website has been serving as a platform for parents to easily access up-to-date school information or other useful materials, such as School Profiles, and information on home-school activities and parent education. The archive of Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) programmes on the website enables parents to review radio and television programmes on parenting. Meanwhile, important messages and hot topics about education are delivered to parents through the E-bulletin for Parents on the EDB website.

2.17 To further enhance the support for parent education, the EDB launched in February 2018 a parent education website called “Smart Parent Net”, which enables parents of KG, primary and secondary school levels to easily access useful information on supporting the physical and psychological development of students (include parent-child relationship, character development, discipline of children, emotional management of parents, etc.). Parents can also make use of the calendar on the website to check details of parent education activities and other important events, such as the dates of making choices to Primary One and the release of central allocation results. In addition, parents can visit other parent education websites through the parent education directory.

IV. Courses / programmes on parent education

2.18 Currently, a number of local TEIs and NGOs are running parent education courses of various sorts, ranging from certificate courses with a

duration of a few days to two-year master's degree courses. Seeking to address the physical, intellectual and psychological needs of children at different stages, these courses cover the growth and needs of young children and adolescents, children's development of emotional, social and communication skills, parenting techniques and personal growth of parents, so that participants are equipped with the attitudes, knowledge and skills appropriate to parenting.

2.19 In addition, large-scale parent education schemes are carried out by TEIs and NGOs either individually or collaboratively. Some of these programmes involve training, treatment and support for parents, and systematic evaluation of services. Some NGOs, through the Internet and other learning platforms, self-study groups and parent-child activities, help parents acquire the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills, and resolve difficulties with parenting. While these parent education schemes are district-based or school-based, there are others that adopt an integrated approach to offering training and support services to parents, teachers and students.

2.20 The Task Force notes that a number of scholars from TEIs and counselling professionals (e.g. educational psychologists, clinical psychologists and social workers) from NGOs have been making enormous efforts to study, deliver and promote parent education, and thus have amply gathered experience and information and developed relevant experts. However, many courses and programmes are merely supported by short-term funding and hence cannot be run continuously or extensively.

V. Promotion of home-school co-operation and parent education in other regions

2.21 To further explore the development directions and improvement measures for home-school co-operation and parent education in Hong Kong, the Task Force has made reference to the promotion of home-school co-operation and parent education in other regions (including the Mainland, Finland, Singapore, Taiwan, Australia and the United Kingdom).

Policies on parent education

2.22 Given the diverse social, historical and cultural backgrounds, the legal systems, parenting requirements and delivery modes of family education vary from place to place. While the promotion of family or parent education is mainly under the charge of central authorities in the Mainland and Taiwan, such work is undertaken by social services departments in Finland and Australia, and by education departments in Singapore and the United Kingdom. In the United Kingdom, courts may mandatorily require parents of juvenile offenders to receive parent education, and in Singapore and Taiwan, legislation with a similar effect is enacted, ordering parents who fail to take due care of children's physical and mental development to receive parent education.

2.23 In the United Kingdom, school inspections conducted by the Office for Standards in Education cover home-school relationship and communication. This is much the same as the practice in Hong Kong, where home-school co-operation is taken as a performance indicator under the School Development and Accountability Framework.

Parent associations and parent support groups

2.24 In the Mainland, Singapore, Australia and Finland, parent associations or parent support groups in schools strengthen the connection and communication between schools and parents and facilitate home-school co-operation, performing a role similar to that of PTAs in Hong Kong schools. Through these associations and groups, parents can give their views on school development and policies. Also, activities, including parent education courses, are organised by such parent associations and parent support groups. In Australia, the Department of Education in each state and territory provides guidelines for parent associations in schools. This is similar to the CHSC's provision of the Parent-Teacher Association Manual for PTAs in Hong Kong schools.

2.25 Moreover, district-based parent associations in Finland and Australia serve functions closely resembling those of our CHSC and FPTAs. In Finland, district-based parent associations are responsible for

connecting parents associations of different schools, promoting co-operation among parents, schools and the government, and relaying to the government parents' views on education. In Australia, parent-supporting NGOs focus on the needs of parents and their children's learning and well-being, and offer advice to the government on such matters.

Resource support for parent education

2.26 In the Mainland, short-term training programmes on family education are organised for teachers, and in Australia and Singapore, funding is provided for schools, NGOs and parent support groups to conduct parent education or parent-child activities. For example, parents in Singapore receive a subsidy for participation in parent education programmes, and starting from 2009, there have been parent education programmes tailor-made for fathers. Moreover, in Australia, Singapore, the Mainland and Taiwan, websites on parenting are set up to provide, through electronic means, parents with useful information, such as practical skills for engaging in children's learning, articles written by experts, study and research reports, and video clips on parenting. In Singapore and Australia, mobile applications designed to support parents with children under the age of six are launched by the governments to facilitate parents' access to information on parent education, child development, parenting skills, etc.

2.27 Details on how home-school co-operation and parent education are promoted in other regions (including the Mainland, Finland, Singapore, Taiwan, Australia and the United Kingdom) are set out in Appendix 4.

VI. Local studies on home-school co-operation and parent education

2.28 So far, there have been few large-scale studies on parent education in Hong Kong. The Family Council has released findings from certain family-related studies and researches, including the Report on Parenting Practices in Hong Kong conducted by the Department of Applied Social Sciences of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University in

2017. The study reveals that parenting practices are associated with children's development in various aspects, and that the concerted efforts of society are a must for good parenting and children's positive development. The study also explores the policies and schemes on parenting practices in other regions, including the United Kingdom, Singapore, Taiwan and Korea.

2.29 Other local studies¹¹ on parent education have come up with the following conclusions and recommendations:

- (a) Mothers' support and encouragement have a positive correlation with children's learning motivation.
- (b) Early empowering parents to manage children's emotions is essential in parent education programme for parents of pre-school children.
- (c) Innovative parent education focusing on emotional management, problem-solving skills and community support is recommended because stress on the part of parents may affect parent-child relationship.
- (d) A good parent-child relationship has a positive correlation with youngsters' sense of satisfaction in different aspects of life (e.g. school or family life).
- (e) Some parents tend to link their own worth with the school grades of their children. Research shows that parents with this mindset are more manipulative in raising children and therefore prone to display negative emotions, such as anger, irritation and

¹¹ Other local studies include:

- i. Cheung, C.S., & McBride-Chang, C. (2008). Relations of perceived maternal parenting style, practices, and learning motivation to academic competence in Chinese children. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 54(1), 1-22.
- ii. Chan, S.M., Bowes, J. & Wyver, S. (2009). Parenting style as a context for emotion socialization. *Early Education and Development*, 20:4, 631-656.
- iii. Lam, D. (1999). Parenting stress and anger: The Hong Kong experience. *Child and Family Social Work*, 4, 337-346.
- iv. Man, P. (1991). The influence of peers and parents on youth life satisfaction in Hong Kong. *Social Indicators Research*, 24, 347-365.
- v. Ng, F.Y., Pomerantz, E.M. & Deng, C. (2014). Why are Chinese mothers more controlling than American mothers? "My child is my report card". *Child Development*, 85(1), 355-369.

weariness, in parent-child relationship when children do not perform well academically.

VII. Views of the Task Force

2.30 The Task Force considers that at present schools are in general able to maintain communication and co-operation with parents through different channels, including PTAs. That said, activities organised for parents by schools and PTAs are mostly for socialising. In this connection, the Government may provide schools and PTAs with more resources so that they can take a more active role in promoting parent education. Besides, while the Government and various groups have, through different activities and endeavours, called upon parents to take into account children's character, abilities and interests when choosing study pathways, it is common for parents in the Chinese communities to have high hopes for the achievement of their children. Amidst a culture of competition, studying in prestigious schools and universities is the goal that many parents set for their children. To ensure that their children can make a flying start, some parents push their children to study hard all the time or make them join various extra-curricular activities to boost competitiveness. In doing so, these parents overlook the physical and psychological well-being of their children and undermine the quality of bonding between parent and children. Not only do these parents bring themselves and their children under pressure, but their children may also develop negative emotions and anxiety.

2.31 The Task Force reckons that the unhealthy culture of excessive competition needs to be corrected. Parent education, public education and home-school co-operation should be strengthened to help parents master the knowledge and skills for nurturing children, and to urge them to reflect on the meaning of education and the needs of their children. It is hoped that parents would refrain from driving children too hard and neglecting the importance of physical and psychological well-being.

2.32 The Task Force learns that courses or activities on home-school co-operation and parent education are now organised by government bureaux/departments, TEIs, NGOs, schools, CHSC, PTAs and FPTAs. However, since these programmes or activities are not conducted in a

co-ordinated manner, they are overlapping, and what is more, neither stage-specific nor sustainable. Besides, local large-scale studies on parent education are few in number. The Task Force opines that all these hinder the development of home-school co-operation and parent education in Hong Kong.

VIII. Summing up

2.33 The Task Force has critically examined the practices of home-school co-operation and parent education in Hong Kong and in other regions, and looked at the findings of relevant academic studies. Upon in-depth discussion based on the information gathered, the Task Force considers that home-school co-operation and parent education can be further promoted to enhance parents' ability to nurture and teach their children. In this way, parents can play a greater part in facilitating their children's effective learning as well as healthy and happy development, and protecting their children from excessive competition.

Chapter 3: Consultation

I. Consultation

Consultation with stakeholders

3.1 The Task Force attaches great importance to the views of stakeholders. To canvass stakeholders' views on home-school co-operation and parent education, the Task Force conducted six consultation sessions in June and July 2018, which were attended by around 500 stakeholders, including representatives of CHSC, FPTAs, PTAs, secondary schools, primary schools, KGs, primary and secondary school councils and SSBs.

Consultation with the public

3.2 To more widely and comprehensively collect public opinions, the Task Force embarked on a public consultation exercise of about two months in mid-2018. A consultation paper (Appendix 5) was released on 23 July 2018 to invite the public to offer views in written form on the directions, strategies and improvement measures initially proposed by the Task Force. A total of 22 written submissions were received by the close of consultation. In addition to individual parents, parent groups, organisations delivering parent education, SSBs, educational bodies, education staff associations, school head associations, NGOs and political groups have voiced their views. A list of these organisations is at Appendix 6.

3.3 On top of the consultation paper, three public consultation sessions were held in early August 2018 to seek public views on the promotion of home-school co-operation and parent education. These public consultation sessions were attended by around 100 people, including representatives of NGOs, scholars from TEIs, principals,

teachers, members of parent groups, parents, etc.

3.4 The overwhelming response to the consultation indicates the extent to which the community is concerned about home-school co-operation and parent education. Both the consultation with stakeholders and the consultation with the public reflect that the majority support the directions, strategies and improvement measures recommended by the Task Force. The proposed measures are considered comprehensive, capable of catering for the needs of parents of different types and different backgrounds. The views collected primarily touch on the implementation details of the measures initially proposed by the Task Force. On the whole, stakeholders and the public opine that the development of home-school co-operation in schools has been satisfactory in recent years. Whether at secondary schools, primary schools or KGs, co-operation and communication between schools and parents are closer than ever. Yet, the focus of home-school co-operation is mainly on the organisation of parent-child activities and parent volunteer programmes, while parent education receives a varying level of attention among schools and thus is needed to be strengthened and promoted. The views collected, as consolidated by the Task Force, are set out in paragraphs 3.5 to 3.20 below.

II. Summary of views

Curriculum framework for parent education

3.5 Strongly supporting the development of a curriculum framework for parent education, stakeholders and the public present a lot of thoughts about the contents and delivery modes under the curriculum framework. For example, most respondents indicate that parent education should cover different stages of child development, and equip parents with the knowledge and skills necessary for nurturing children of different ages, including children studying at KG, junior primary, senior primary, junior secondary and senior secondary levels. Also, parent education courses

should be holistically designed to meet various needs of children and parents by, among others, promoting children's emotional, physical and mental well-being, strengthening relationships among family members, improving parents' understanding of and hence their support for multiple pathways, helping parents understand and address child addiction to the Internet and electronic games, and enabling parents to learn about the needs of and services for students with special educational needs (SEN). Meanwhile, on the part of parents, their mindset, physical and mental health, emotional intelligence, stress management etc. should be areas of concern too. Apart from expressing views on the contents of parent education, some respondents expect that the curriculum framework to be developed will facilitate the delivery of parent education in different learning modes, such as experiment-based activities, activity-based games and parent-child activities. Moreover, stakeholders opine that parent education courses should be evidence-based. The Task Force considers such comments immensely valuable to the design and implementation of parent education courses.

Coverage of parent education

3.6 The proposed measure of providing parent education for family members of different status and parents of students with special needs has won support from the vast majority of respondents. They opine that parent education should have a broad coverage, pointing out that many fathers have participated in home-school activities in recent years, while it was usually the mothers that were engaged in parent education activities in the past; and that in Hong Kong today, many children are taken care of by their grandparents. These respondents therefore appreciate the Task Force's proposal to tailor-made parent education courses for fathers, grandparents or other carers. It is also suggested that parent education courses designed specifically for single parents, domestic helpers and child carers should be offered to meet the needs of society. As regards parents of students with SEN, the Task Force suggests customising parent education courses, including

community-based and school-based training courses or activities, to serve their needs. This proposal is fully supported by teachers and parents of students with SEN as they consider home-school co-operation and parent education particularly important to the parents of these students. There are views that apart from supporting parents of students with SEN, the Government should render assistance to parents of NCS, newly-arrived, non-attendance and cross-boundary students.

3.7 There was a mainstream opinion that parent education should be provided as early as possible, even for prospective and new parents, through inter-departmental co-operation. For example, the EDB and the Department of Health may collaborate in organizing parent education activities or talks for parents of infants. A few respondents even think that parent education should reach students at tertiary level, young people and parents-to-be as well.

New delivery modes of parent education

3.8 Respondents in general support the two delivery modes, i.e. e-learning courses and workplace parent education, newly proposed for parent education by the Task Force. The majority find it worthwhile to develop and promote e-learning courses because with the extensive application of mobile phones and tablets in Hong Kong, such courses could enable busy parents to engage in learning in their spare time. There are also views that extended activities should be arranged for parents who have completed the e-learning courses.

3.9 On workplace parent education, a few respondents think that for small firms or certain industries (e.g. catering and construction), it might not be feasible to arrange parent education activities at workplace; and some are concerned that parents may need to work longer hours to make up for the time spent on related activities and as a result, have less time for their children. That said, the majority of respondents are in favour of the provision of workplace parent education for working parents. They

consider that workplace parent education courses could suit the needs of working parents who are unable to squeeze time out of their busy life for parent education. There are views suggesting that the Government should encourage, through family-friendly employment practices, employers to engage in the workplace parent education courses, and government departments and other public organisations should be selected as pilot points and larger-scale firms as targets of promotion.

Government support

3.10 A number of respondents indicate that the Government should allocate more resources to support the promotion of home-school co-operation and parent education at different levels. The majority of respondents take the view that the Government should provide TEIs, NGOs, FPTAs in various districts, schools and PTAs with additional resources to enhance community-based and school-based home-school co-operation and parent education courses/activities.

Community-based support

3.11 There are views that the Government should devote more resources to NGOs and FPTAs for promoting community-based home-school activities and running district-based parent education courses. With extra resources, FPTAs may organise a wider range of parent or parent-child activities, such as film shows, and activities that promote parent-child reading, students' mental health and career and life planning. Meanwhile, it is suggested that the Government should offer training and guidelines to FPTAs to enhance the capabilities of their members. Stakeholders also agree that the Government should provide funding for NGOs in various districts to conduct diverse, quality parent education courses free of charge, and promote such courses to parents through schools.

School-based support

3.12 In general, the sectors consider that the Government should increase the subsidy for PTAs. Making use of the additional resources, PTAs may procure services from tertiary institutions or NGOs, in a bid to offer structured or continuous parent education courses or conduct a greater variety of home-school co-operation activities.

3.13 However, some schools and teachers are worried that the provision of additional subsidy for schools may create extra workload for teachers. It is suggested that in addition to enhanced subsidy, the Government should concurrently provide schools with more manpower resources or relevant information. For example, information on parent education courses and activities should be made available to enable schools to procure services or seek assistance from NGOs or TEIs. It is also suggested that a designated teaching post should be created in schools to co-ordinate and undertake the tasks related to home-school communication and parent education.

3.14 Concerned about the role of teachers in parent education, stakeholders generally support the Task Force's preliminary recommendation of providing frontline teachers with short-term training courses on promoting parent education. It is suggested that teachers should acquire the skills of communicating with parents, handling parents' complaints, etc.

Support for kindergartens

3.15 Some respondents consider that home-school co-operation and parent education should start as early as the KG level, and thus strongly support the increase in the amounts of Set-up Grant and Annual Grant to encourage more KGs to set up PTAs. Regarding the Task Force's proposal to provide funding for public sector primary schools to organise school-based activities that promote positive parent education, some

respondents request that such funding should also be provided for KGs. Besides, some stakeholders consider that more sharing sessions on PTAs should be held so that KGs could share and exchange their experience of and insights about establishing and operating PTAs.

Multi-disciplinary co-operation

3.16 In general, respondents strongly agree that the Government should encourage and commission TEIs to conduct more studies on parent education to explore the best modes for the local context. Moreover, some stakeholders suggest that TEIs should engage schools in the studies, and the successful experience thus gathered should be shared with other schools.

3.17 Some experts from TEIs and representatives of NGOs indicate that with their profound experience in designing and conducting parent education courses, they are capable of assisting the Government in developing the curriculum framework for parent education, carrying out studies in the local context, designing and delivering diverse courses for parents (including e-learning courses and workplace parent education courses), and organising outreaching promotional activities. They call upon the Government to provide adequate resources for TEIs and NGOs.

Launch of “Happy Kids Campaign”

3.18 To promote positive parent education that helps parents recognise the importance of fostering children’s healthy and happy development as well as avoiding excessive competition, the Task Force recommends the launch of a three-year “Happy Kids Campaign”. It is hoped that through the Campaign, parents could contribute to the healthy and happy development of children by having reasonable expectations and demands for them and by not driving them hard to excel in curricular and extra-curricular spheres. Stakeholders and the public generally support the Campaign and agree that the EDB should provide funding for KGs

and public schools to conduct school-based activities under the Campaign. Yet, many respondents do not find the name of the Campaign appropriate. Some point out that since the Campaign seeks to promote parent education, its name should be parent-led (e.g. Happy Parents Campaign), and some take the view that the definition of “happy” is quite ambiguous and arbitrary. In respect of implementation strategies, some respondents consider that the Campaign must be complemented with concrete actions, lest it should become a publicity effort that carries a slogan but lacks substance. They suggest that the Campaign should be conducted on a long-term basis so that its momentum and penetration will bring about a paradigm shift of parents’ mindset towards children’s healthy and happy development. As such, the Campaign should focus on the enhancement of children’s physical and mental well-being and resilience.

III. Pace of implementation

3.19 The Task Force opines that the efforts to promote home-school co-operation and parent education should be phased, sustainable and universal. Many respondents agree with this because the current promotion of parent education is lacking in these attributes. Since the Task Force has preliminarily proposed a number of improvement measures that cover very widely various areas to address the different needs of parents, it is suggested that the Government should not take forward the work hastily. Rather, there should be prudent planning so that priorities are set in light of actual circumstances to guide phased and progressive implementation and to ensure sustainability.

IV. Other related education policies

3.20 Some stakeholders consider that besides strengthening parent education to convince parents not to over-drill their children to learn, the Government should also review other related education policies, such as examination systems, curriculum planning and homework policy, so as to

relieve the stress on parents and students and discourage the culture of excessive competition. There are also views that efforts should be made at the education system level to value non-academic achievements, so that students' talent and ability in different realms could be recognised.

V. Summing up

3.21 During the consultation, stakeholders and members of the public put forward many views and suggestions through different channels. They not only give views on home-school co-operation and parent education, but also advise the Government to facilitate parents' participation in school activities through refinements to its family-friendly policy. In a nutshell, the directions, strategies and improvement measures proposed by the Task Force for home-school co-operation and parent education are widely supported. On actual implementation of the related measures, stakeholders and the public offer advice and suggestions that are valuable and constructive, and identify issues that merit the Government's attention. The Task Force is deeply grateful to the sectors for providing such invaluable inputs during the consultation, and finds it encouraging to see that stakeholders and the public generally support the promotion of home-school co-operation and parent education. After careful deliberation on the views and suggestions received during the consultation, the Task Force has appropriately modified its preliminary proposals, and drawn up final recommendations for submission to the Government.

Chapter 4: Recommendations

4.1 The Task Force has thoroughly examined the policies and practices related to home-school co-operation and parent education in other regions (including the Mainland, Taiwan, Singapore, Australia, the United Kingdom, and Finland) and in Hong Kong, and looked at the courses and activities organised by local TEIs and NGOs. Upon in-depth discussion at meetings, the Task Force initially proposed the directions, strategies and improvement measures in mid-2018, and conducted a large-scale consultation exercise from June to September 2018.

4.2 After careful deliberation on the views collected, the Task Force has made necessary refinements of the directions, strategies and improvement measures initially proposed, with a view to formulating practical measures capable of catering for the different needs of parents and students.

4.3 It is observed that the competitive climate is so prevalent in society that some parents would go to any lengths to give their children a head start, and that parents in the Chinese communities are often preoccupied with taking their children to success. Many parents have endless demands or plans for their children's learning, and this creates ever-increasing pressure on parents, students, schools and teachers. The Task Force hopes that through parent education and public education, home-school co-operation will be strengthened, and parents will have the right perspective in fostering their children's healthy and happy development.

I. Directions

4.4 Enhancing parents' capabilities and changing their attitudes are not an overnight process. The Task Force opines that in improving home-school co-operation and parent education, the first step should be working out directions to provide guiding principles for related strategies and improvement measures. There is consensus among stakeholders that strengthening home-school co-operation and parent education is conducive to children's healthy and happy development. Many stakeholders concur with the Task Force that the Government should, in light of the rapid advancement in communication technology and the hectic life in Hong Kong, arrange diverse, innovative activities on home-school co-operation and parent education to meet the different needs of parents.

4.5 Having examined the findings from relevant studies conducted by local TEIs and pertinent reviews undertaken by the Government in recent years, the Task Force learns that home-school co-operation and parent education are promoted in a proactive and systematic manner in many regions (including the United Kingdom, Singapore and Taiwan), where support is provided at different stages to help family members address issues about child development and understand the profound influence of parent-child relationship on child development. After considering the suggestions put forward in the above studies and reviews and consolidating the views collected during the consultation, the Task Force has worked out six long-term directions for promoting home-school co-operation and parent education:

- (i) Enhance parents' capacity, knowledge, skills and attitude in nurturing children and parenting so that they could understand children's developmental needs, abilities and potentials, and nurture their children in ways that promotes emotional health so as to help them learn effectively, grow healthily and happily, as well as avoid excessive competition.

- (ii) Assist parents in acquiring a more comprehensive understanding of the development/alternative pathways available to their children, as well as their own abilities and personalities to set the direction of their plan for raising their children. They should be advised not to over-emphasize academic attainment, and neglect play and rest. They should also be advised to choose schools for their children according to their children's needs and attributes and not to regard attending university as the only pathway but to understand and accept alternative pathways for further studies and help their children make appropriate career planning according to their aspirations and abilities.
- (iii) Deliver diverse and innovative parent education and home-school co-operation activities to reach different types of parents, including "hidden" parents¹², parents of students with SEN and those of different backgrounds.
- (iv) Foster better collaboration between parents and schools. Mutual connection and communication should be strengthened and partnerships should be built in order to jointly foster the healthy development of children in academic attainment, mental and physical well-being. For instance, a better understanding between the school and parents regarding the school's homework and assessment policies and parents expectations in these matters will help parents better assist their children to handle homework and the schools to adjust their policies to take into account difficulties of parents.
- (v) Further strengthen the role of PTAs and FPTAs and the competence of their members and to provide, through these associations which already have parent networks, more parent education programmes.

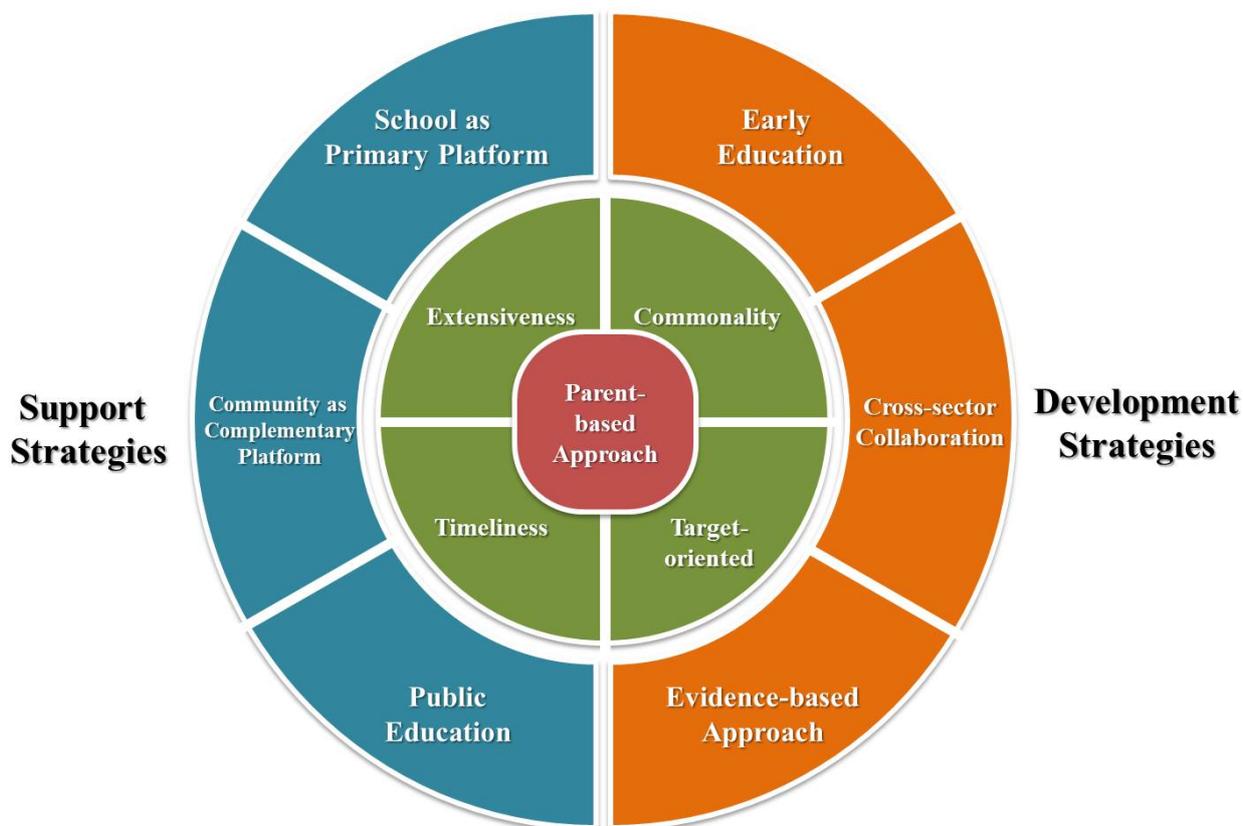
¹² "Hidden" parents refer to parents who are difficult to reach for different reasons

- (vi) Devote efforts to promote home-school co-operation and parent education for people other than parents with a view to enhancing the understanding and concern of the public (including grandparents, employers and even people without children yet) about positive parent education, nurturing children to grow healthily and happily through organising various promotion activities and avoiding excessive competition, as successful parenting relies not only on parents' efforts but also the co-operation of and facilitation by members of the extended family, the work place etc. Hopefully, the community will widely agree that appropriate parent education is beneficial to parents, children and the community as a whole.

II. Strategies and proposed measures

4.6 As mentioned in paragraph 4.3 above, the Task Force opines that to address the current situation, it is necessary to raise parents' awareness of the importance of happy child development and to further strengthen home-school co-operation through two-pronged efforts on parent education and public education. The strategies for implementation proposed by the Task Force are illustrated in the figure below, and the proposed measures under each strategy are detailed in paragraphs 4.7 to 4.41 below.

Strategies for Promoting Home-School Co-operation and Parent Education



(1) Parent-based approach

4.7 The Task Force considers a “parent-based” approach central to promoting home-school co-operation and parent education. The primary goal of parent education is not just children’s wholesome development. Parents’ physical and psychological well-being should also be looked after under the parent-based approach. During consultation, many of the views indicated that only happy parents could nurture happy children. Sharing this view, the Task Force recommends that the learning objectives of the core curriculum for parent education should be specified so as to enhance the commonality of parent education. The curriculum should cover the knowledge and skills for nurturing children (e.g. developmental needs of children and adolescents, ways of handling children’s emotions and stress, understanding SEN, study and career pathways for youngsters, means to fostering home-school co-operation and communication, and

establishment of a parent-child relationship which is good and conducive to children's development), and touch on parents' mindset, attitudes and mental health (e.g. emotional management, stress relief, and enhancement of problem-solving capability) to help them stay happy and positive. Such areas should also be included in the curriculum framework or curriculum guide that the Government would develop for parent education. The Task Force is of the view that the Government's efforts to promote parent education should not only reach the majority of parents extensively, but also cater specifically for the parents who have different needs. Besides, the Government should move with the times by developing new learning modes, such as mobile applications and online self-study courses, so that parents can engage in learning according to their own pace and schedule.

Extensiveness

4.8 The Task Force opines that the Government's promotion of parent education should benefit as many parents as possible. It is recommended that the Government should conduct activities on home-school co-operation and parent education at different levels and with different modes, so that most parents could receive basic parent education. There should be school-based, community-based and territory-wide parent education programmes and home-school activities to reach targets at different levels. As regards delivery modes, apart from the traditional forms of training such as courses, talks and workshops, the Government is advised to provide parent education at workplace or e-learning courses, in order that more parents could have greater and more different access to parent education. This is to achieve the effect of parent education "springing up everywhere".

4.9 Schools are where most parents can be reached, and hence the most extensive and direct channel to promote parent education. The Task Force recommends that the Government should increase the provision of resources for PTAs so that all KGs, primary schools and

secondary schools could conduct higher quality school-based parent education courses and activities to benefit parents of every school. Please see paragraph 4.23 below for details.

4.10 Regarding community-based parent education, the Task Force recommends that FPTAs and NGOs should be given additional resources to arrange a greater number of more diversified parent education courses and activities, in a bid to reach and support more parents, including grass-roots parents and “hidden” parents. Community-based parent education courses could be linked up with school platforms for promotion and enrolment purposes. Please see paragraphs 4.26 to 4.28 below for details.

4.11 Given the higher qualifications possessed by parents nowadays, the Task Force recommends that the EDB should commission TEIs or NGOs to design and deliver structured and evidence-based parent education courses that are more intensive and comprehensive.

4.12 As for parent education at workplace, the Task Force recommends that the EDB should commission TEIs or NGOs to design and deliver workplace parent education courses for working parents, starting with government bureaux/departments or other public organisations. These courses should be open for enrolment to all trades, all companies, and business associations and unions. Employers should be encouraged, through Announcements in the Public Interest (APIs) and other media, to support workplace parent education courses. Collaboration with organisations having a strong sense of corporate social responsibility may be explored.

4.13 E-learning courses are suitable for parents who cannot find time for other sorts of parent education courses, because they could make use of mobile phones or tablets to engage in learning whenever they can. Please see paragraph 4.20 below for details.

4.14 All in all, the Task Force recommends that the Government should provide various kinds of parent education courses and activities so that parents with different needs, qualifications and socio-economic backgrounds could all benefit from parent education.

Commonality

4.15 In the course of reviewing parent education in Hong Kong, the Task Force learns that a variety of activities on home-school co-operation and parent education are now organised by government departments, local TEIs, NGOs, CHSC, schools, FPTAs, PTAs, etc. However, these are just fragmented activities and their provision lacks coherence or continuity. To make parent education more coherent, the Task Force recommends that a core curriculum for parent education should be provided by the Government.

4.16 Since TEIs and NGOs have a number of experts on parent education, the Task Force recommends that the EDB should commission these establishments to develop a curriculum framework or curriculum guide for parent education. The framework or guide should be able to meet the changing needs of parents in Hong Kong, and equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary for bringing up children at different stages, including those studying at KG, junior primary, senior primary, junior secondary and senior secondary levels. The curriculum framework should encourage the delivery of parent education in more diverse modes, such as experimental and activity-based training, and experience sharing sessions, parent-child activities or games during talks and within courses.

4.17 The Task Force expects that the developed curriculum framework or curriculum guide will be adopted as a basis for all parent education courses, including territory-wide, community-based, school-based, e-learning and parent education at workplace courses, to cater for the needs of parents at different stages and achieve different

objectives.

Target-oriented

4.18 The Task Force considers that the Government should make parent education both extensive and specific. Simply put, apart from the education for general parents, customised courses for parents with specific needs should be provided. The Task Force observes that parent education courses and activities tailor-made for fathers have been widely promoted in some regions (e.g. Singapore) in recent years, and that local study reports and participants in the consultation sessions suggest that parent education should target single parents or separated parents as well. Since people of different family status and backgrounds may have different needs, the Task Force recommends that on top of the education courses and activities for general parents, the Government should commission TEIs or NGOs to design and deliver parent education courses and activities specifically for mothers, fathers, grandparents, single parents, etc.

4.19 Besides, the Task Force opines that when providing parent education, the Government should not lose sight of parents with special needs, such as those of students with SEN and those of NCS, newly-arrived and non-attendance students. The EDB may commission TEIs or NGOs to specifically design and deliver parent education courses that suit the needs of such parents.

Timeliness

4.20 With the advancement in information technology, going online with mobile device has become an everyday practice for most parents in Hong Kong. In the Mainland, Taiwan, Singapore and Australia, websites on parenting have been set up; and in Singapore and Australia, mobile applications are used to provide parents with easy access to information about parent education, child development, parenting skills,

etc. In view of this, the Task Force recommends that the EDB should commission TEIs or NGOs to develop and deliver e-learning courses for parents to engage in self-study on mobile phones or computers according to their own pace and schedule, and arrange extended activities, such as parent-child activities, talks and sharing sessions, for participants of e-learning courses.

4.21 The Task Force recommends that the EDB should enhance the existing parent education website “Smart Parent NET” as a more popular and informative learning platform linked to relevant courses organised by TEIs and NGOs. The EDB may also encourage TEIs and NGOs to make available video clips and articles on positive parent education to facilitate parents’ self-learning.

(2) Support strategies

4.22 To engage more parents in parent education, the Task Force recommends that schools should be made the primary platform and the community as the complementary in the promotion of parent education, and that public education should be a means of promoting the importance of parent education and the correct practices and right attitudes of parenting.

Schools as primary platform

4.23 Seeing school as the most direct and effective platform, the Task Force advises that the promotion of home-school co-operation and parent education should adopt schools as a primary platform and the community as a complementary. In such places as the Mainland, Singapore, Taiwan and Australia, parent education is also delivered through schools. On school-based parent education, the Task Force considers that the EDB should encourage schools and PTAs to organise more school-based home-school co-operation activities and parent education courses to benefit more parents by increasing the amount of Subsidy for

Home-School Co-operation Activities. With extra resources, schools and PTAs could organise more quality activities on home-school co-operation and parent education, including parent education courses and parent-child activities, and establish support networks to strengthen mutual support among parents.

4.24 Teachers play a pivotal role in promoting home-school co-operation and parent education in schools. According to some studies, teachers find improvement to their communication skills with parents a positive factor for better home-school co-operation. Therefore, the Task Force recommends that the EDB should provide short-term training courses for teachers to enhance their capabilities to promote home-school co-operation and parent education, and to sharpen their skills in mediating and communicating with parents.

4.25 The Task Force also recommends that the EDB should provide subsidies for public sector secondary school, primary schools, and KGs so that they could help the Government in promoting the “Positive Parent Campaign”. These schools may organise school-based activities, such as talks and courses for parents, to promote positive parent education. Please see paragraph 4.29 for details of the “Positive Parent Campaign”. Schools joining the “Positive Parent Campaign” could fine-tune their policies (e.g. school-based homework policies and assessment methods) to alleviate the stress on parents and students, and procure, with enhanced resources from the Government, associated services from NGOs or TEIs for the provision of positive parent education activities.

Community as complementary platform

4.26 At the community level, the Task Force opines that FPTAs may organise more community-based parent education courses or activities. For example, FPTAs should be allowed to apply for the Subsidy for Home-School Co-operation Activities for a greater number of activities, so that FPTAs of different districts have better support in promotion of

parent education. In this connection, the Task Force recommends that the EDB should allocate more resources to FPTAs and introduce new subsidies for co-organising cross-district parent education activities. The activities organised by FPTAs may take a greater variety of forms, such as free film shows and game activities on different themes, and pre and post sessions for parent education activities.

4.27 The Task Force also considers that the EDB may commission NGOs to arrange free thematic talks or workshops at regular intervals and in different districts, so as to expand the coverage of community-based parent education. These talks or workshops should target “hidden” parents, parents of students with SEN and grass-roots parents as well. On the part of the Government, inter-departmental co-operation may contribute to more effective promotion of parent education. For example, the Social Welfare Department, Department of Health and Hospital Authority may collaborate in organizing activities, talks and parent education programmes. Sharing of information on parent education among departments would also promote parent education more effectively. In addition, FPTAs may work with NGOs to support parents in the community, including “hidden” parents and grass-roots parents.

4.28 Curriculum-wise, FPTAs and NGOs should all adopt the curriculum framework or curriculum guide developed for parent education by the Government. On publicity efforts, schools could serve as a publicity platform, through which information about community-based parent education courses is disseminated and invitation for enrolment is tendered to parents.

Public education

4.29 The Task Force has grave concern about the impact of the culture of excessive competition on parents and children. Some parents may put unbalanced emphasis on their children’s academic performance and overlook the development of their children in other areas. Parents may

even implant in their children a misbelief that excellent academic performance is everything about personal achievements. With this mindset, children may easily neglect character development, civic responsibility and knowledge not covered by school subjects, and in consequence, their happy and healthy development will be undermined. Besides, parents' excessive expectations for their children and comparison among peers may exert tremendous pressure on parents and children, and affect their emotions and parent-child relationship. The Task Force considers it necessary to help parents change their deep-seated belief, have reasonable expectations for children, make appropriate plans and arrangements for children's learning and daily routine according to children's abilities, interests and aspirations, and avoid overtaxing their children. To achieve this, efforts must be devoted to public education in addition to parent education. During the consultation, participants generally agreed that parent education should be promoted through territory-wide campaigns. Therefore, the Task Force recommends that a whole community campaign "Positive Parent Campaign" should be launched to vigorously promote public education. It is hoped that through the Campaign, the importance of raising happy and healthy children could be brought home to the public, so that parents would recognise the futility of meaningless competition and comparison, and have a greater awareness of positive parenting, and a better understanding of the proper ways and attitudes of raising children. The Task Force opines that for the "Positive Parent Campaign" to serve the purpose of discouraging the culture of excessive competition, there should be impactful and continuously universal and widespread publicity.

4.30 The Task Force opines that the success in territory-wide promotion of the "Positive Parent Campaign" requires the delivery of messages that are clear and easy to understand, thought-provoking and impressive. It is recommended that the public should be involved in the preparatory stage of the Campaign. For example, a territory-wide

slogan competition could be organised or a mascot¹³ could be designed to remind parents not to give undue weight to their children's academic performance or homework, and to effectively spread the message of positive parent education. It is hoped that through these endeavours, the phenomenon of "monster parents" will be changed, and the importance of moral, civic, physical and arts education would receive more attention among parents and children.

4.31 The ingrained belief of parents cannot be changed overnight. The Task Force reckons that the "Positive Parent Campaign" should not be a one-off event. It should be maintained as an ongoing and extensive exercise, like the large-scale anti-drug and cleanliness campaigns that run continuously through several years. It is recommended that the EDB should provide subsidies for KGs and public sector schools so that they could organise school-based activities under the "Positive Parent Campaign" (i.e. school-based activities for promoting positive parent education mentioned in paragraph 4.25 above).

4.32 The Task Force recommends that the EDB should promote the "Positive Parent Campaign" through traditional media and social media, such as APIs, EDB's parent education website, websites for parents set up by private organisations and NGOs, billboards in government buildings (including community centres, hospitals and libraries), MTR stations and tunnel portal areas, and television programmes. Promotional efforts should seek to widely spread the message of positive parent education, avoid excessive competition among students, stress the significance of whole-person development, and help parents understand the importance of their children's holistic, happy and healthy development.

4.33 The Task Force also recommends that NGOs should be engaged to conduct outreaching publicity activities, such as photo contests and play- and arts-related activities in public housing estates, shopping malls

¹³ For example, "Big Waster" for promoting environmental education and "Keep Clean Ambassador Ah Tak" for the Keep Hong Kong Clean Campaign.

and markets, to ensure that the “Positive Parent Campaign” could reach parents of different backgrounds, including “hidden” parents, parents of students with SEN, and people of different family status. The EDB may also produce video clips and write articles or invite written contributions on the theme of “Positive Parent Campaign”.

(3) Development strategies

4.34 To take the development of home-school co-operation and parent education further, the Task Force considers that parent education should start early at the stage of early childhood. To ensure quality of the activities, the Task Force recommends that parent education activities and home-school co-operation activities should be evidence-based, and should be organised through collaboration among government bureaux/departments, TEIs and NGOs.

Early education

4.35 During the consultation, participants generally agreed that the earlier parent education starts, the more desirable the outcomes are. Studies conducted in Hong Kong and other regions (e.g. the Mainland, Singapore and Australia) suggest that parent education should start with parents with child early at the stage of early childhood. At this stage, parents generally show more concern about children’s physical and psychological well-being, and have more enthusiasm to learn about and engage in parent education activities provided by KGs. Therefore, the Government should actively encourage more KGs to establish PTAs, and allocate more resources to KGs for organising activities related to parent education.

4.36 At present, most kindergartens are without PTAs. The Task Force understands that these kindergartens have concerns and worries about the establishment of PTAs, given the small scale of operation, the short duration of schooling of students and the constraint of human

resources. The Task Force, while appreciating that the absence of PTAs would not discourage parents from taking an active part in school activities, upholds that the setting up of PTAs could contribute to more effective promotion of home-school co-operation and parent education. To further strengthen home-school co-operation and parent education in KGs, the Task Force opines that the EDB should step up publicity and training to familiarise KGs and their SSBs with the procedures of establishing PTAs and pertinent matters. The EDB should also disseminate the successful experience of PTA operation among KGs, and encourage the establishment of PTAs through organizing territory-wide, district-based and SSB-based sharing sessions and workshops. Besides, the Task Force recommends that the amount of Set-up Grant and Annual Grant should be increased to encourage more KGs to establish PTAs.

4.37 In addition, the Task Force recommends that the EDB should collaborate with other government departments such as the Department of Health as well as NGOs, so that all parties could, within their respective purview, early deliver parent education to parents of infants under the age of two.

Cross-sector Collaboration

4.38 The Task Force attaches great importance to cross-sector collaboration. It is believed that effective promotion of home-school co-operation and parent education requires collaboration among different stakeholders, including the EDB, other government departments, TEIs, NGOs, private organisations, CHSC, schools, FPTAs and PTAs. All should have varying degrees of participation at different levels and in different aspects. Their collaboration is illustrated in the figure below:



4.39 The Task Force recommends that the Government should draw on the expertise of TEIs and experts on parent education in developing the curriculum framework or curriculum guide for parent education, and borrow NGOs’ experience of organising parent education courses in districts when designing and offering community-based parent education. The EDB may also collaborate with other government departments, such as the Department of Health and Social Welfare Department, to provide parent education for parents of different backgrounds. Moreover, the EDB may also collaborate with private organisations to provide parent education activities at workplace.

4.40 When soliciting the education sector’s views on the promotion of home-school co-operation and parent education, the Task Force learns that though supporting the directions for strengthening home-school

co-operation and parent education, schools and teachers were concerned about the extra workload that might be generated. The Task Force also observes that in recent years, NGOs, particularly those rendering social work services to secondary schools, student guidance services to primary schools and social work services to KGs, have actively organised activities on home-school co-operation and parent education that are appropriate to the needs of schools, and some NGOs have collaborated with TEIs in rolling out evidence-based school-based parent education courses that achieve pleasing results. The Task Force recommends that the EDB should, in encouraging schools to promote home-school co-operation and parent education, provide schools with adequate information and subsidies so that they could seek professional support from TEIs and NGOs. This could help raise the quality of activities through enhanced cross-sector collaboration, and avoid burdening schools and teachers with additional work pressure.

Evidence-based approach

4.41 Having looked at the local studies conducted on parent education in the past, the Task Force finds that large-scale studies on parent education in Hong Kong are few in number. It opines that home-school co-operation activities and parent education courses should be based on evidence derived from studies to address parents' genuine needs. For instance, studies may be undertaken to examine the connection between parenting and children's psychological and emotional well-being, the influence of parent-child relationship on children's values and learning motivation, parent-child communication skills for the 21st century, prevention against children's deviant behaviour, and parents' role in shaping children's career and life planning. Also, the Task Force suggests that apart from conducting more studies on home-school co-operation and parent education, findings from studies should be shared with schools. The Task Force recommends that the EDB should encourage or commission TEIs to carry out thematic studies on home-school co-operation and parent education.

III. Recommended enhancement measures

4.42 The directions, strategies and measures proposed by the Task Force for promoting home-school co-operation and parent education are elucidated in paragraphs 4.7 to 4.41 above. In summary, a total of 18 recommendations have been made. As they cover a wide range of areas, the Government is advised not to take forward the work hastily but to adopt a progressive approach. The Task Force recommends that the 18 recommendations should be grouped as short-term, medium-term and long-term measures and be implemented in phases. Details are set out below:

Short-term measures

- (i) The EDB should provide more resources to increase the amount of Subsidy for Home-School Co-operation Activities for schools and PTAs.
- (ii) The EDB should increase the number of activities which FPTAs could apply for Subsidy for Home-School Co-operation Activities, and set up a new type of subsidy for FPTAs to organise joint-district parent education activities.
- (iii) The amount of Set-up Grant and Annual Grant for PTAs of KGs should be increased to encourage more KGs to set up a PTA;
- (iv) Publicity and education should be stepped up to help KGs and their school sponsoring bodies better understand the procedures and matters pertaining to the setting up of PTAs.
- (v) TEIs/NGOs should be commissioned by the EDB to develop a curriculum framework or curriculum guide on parent education;
- (vi) Short training courses for teachers should be provided to

enhance their skills in promoting home-school co-operation and parent education, as well as skills in relation to mediation and home-school communication;

- (vii) The EDB's parent education website "Smart Parent Net" should be developed to become a more popular parent education learning platform;
- (viii) A territory-wide "Positive Parent Campaign" should be launched and promoted through different platforms. The EDB should also produce videos and articles on the theme of "Positive Parent Campaign";
- (ix) The EDB should provide funding for KGs and public sector schools to implement school-based activities under "Positive Parent Campaign";
- (x) NGOs should be commissioned to conduct out-reaching promotion activities such as photo-taking, games and arts activities in places including public housing estates, shopping malls and markets so as to reach more parents of different backgrounds;

Medium-term measures

- (xi) TEIs/NGOs should be commissioned by the EDB to design and organise structured and evidence-based parent education courses in accordance with the curriculum framework/guide on parent education developed by the Government, whose targets include parents in general, grandparents, single parents, parents of SEN, NCS, newly arrived and non-attendance students;
- (xii) TEIs should be encouraged or commissioned to conduct various researches on home-school co-operation and parent education;

- (xiii) TEIs/NGOs should be commissioned by EDB to develop and provide e-learning parent education courses to enable self-learning by parents through computers or mobile phones, whose targets include parents in general, grandparents, single parents, and parents of SEN students and NCS, newly arrived or non-attendance students ;
- (xiv) NGOs should be commissioned to provide free parent talks/workshops on various topics regularly in different regions;

Long-term measures

- (xv) Parent education courses specifically developed for fathers, mothers, grandparents and single parents should be optimised with a view to covering members of different family status and meeting their needs in nurturing children;
- (xvi) TEIs/NGOs should be commissioned by the EDB to optimise tailor-made parent education for parents of SEN students and NCS, newly arrived and non-attendance students;
- (xvii) TEIs/NGOs should be commissioned to design and provide workplace parent education courses specifically for working parents; and
- (xviii) Companies should be encouraged to join workplace parent education courses through media such as APIs. Opportunities to co-operate with other organisations which promote programmes on corporate social responsibility could also be explored.

IV. Summing up

4.43 As reflected by the views expressed in the consultation sessions and written submissions, stakeholders and the public generally support the directions, strategies and improvement measures proposed by the Task Force for strengthening home-school co-operation and parent education. They also give valuable advice on the implementation of relevant measures. Besides, local research and experience and those of other regions affirm that home-school co-operation and parent education, as vital elements of the education system, have a profound influence on child development. Over the years, local TEIs and NGOs have strived to develop and deliver related courses and activities, and have accumulated considerable experience. As such, the Task Force recommends that the Government should allocate more resources and strengthen co-ordination to enhance the extensiveness, commonality and diversity of home-school co-operation and parent education, so that more parents could obtain support as appropriate. Concerned about parents' entrenched belief about child-rearing and the culture of excessive competition in society, the Task Force recommends that the Government should strengthen public education to underscore the importance of raising happy and healthy children, and widely promote the proper ways and attitudes of parenting.

4.44 The Task Force trusts that with the concerted efforts of the Government, TEIs, NGOs, the school sector and the community, there would be enhancements to the quality of home-school co-operation and parent education if all parties act in line with the agreed directions and strategies. This is instrumental in creating a learning and living environment for students' happy and healthy development.

Chapter 5: Other Related Discussions

5.1 The Task Force is mainly entrusted to review the existing approach in promoting home-school co-operation and parent education, and to advise the Government on the directions, strategies and improvement measures for fostering home-school co-operation and parent education. Views collected from participants and expressed in written submissions during the consultation not only include suggestions on how to promote home-school co-operation and parent education, but also cover teaching manpower in schools, the education system and the family-friendly policy implemented by the Government.

5.2 There are views suggesting that a designated teaching post should be created in schools to co-ordinate and undertake the tasks relating to home-school co-operation and parent education. Upon deliberation on this suggestion, the Task Force opines that it is the current practice to promote home-school co-operation through the teamwork achieved by collaboration between parents of PTAs and all teachers in school. In terms of job nature and workload, it seems inappropriate to create a designated post to co-ordinate the related tasks. Besides, as promoting home-school co-operation is a shared responsibility of teachers, creating the designated post might affect the participation of other teachers. Hence, the Task Force has reservations about the creation of a designated teaching post to co-ordinate home-school co-operation. With the implementation of the measures announced by the Chief Executive in the 2018 Policy Address to improve schools' manpower resources, teachers will have more time and capacity to support the promotion of home-school co-operation and parent education.

5.3 Some participants point out that the stress felt by parents and their children today is partly caused by the examination system, curriculum planning, homework policy, admission requirements of TEIs

etc., and therefore the Government needs to review the policies concerned to relieve the pressure on parents and students. The Task Force agrees that refining education policies and promoting home-school co-operation and parent education are of equal weight, and could complement each other. It is noted that apart from the Task Force on Home-school Co-operation and Parent Education, the Government has set up various task forces to look into other education issues of great concern, which include curriculum arrangements, Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA) and School-Based Assessment (SBA), and promotion of Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET). The Task Force expects that review of relevant policies will contribute to creating a joyful learning environment and releasing capacity for students, and thus alleviate their pressure of study and life. In the long run, the Task Force recommends that the EDB should consider reviewing other related education policies and explore the feasibility of further relieving students' pressure of study.

5.4 Some stakeholders suggest that the Government should introduce more family-friendly policies, such as granting paid leave to working parents for spending more time with their children and taking part in home-school co-operation and parent education courses and activities (e.g. parents' days, parents' talks and parent-child outings). The Task Force acknowledges the contribution of family-friendly policies to parent-child relationship. As the issue falls outside the mandate of the Task Force, the Task Force recommends that the EDB should relay such comments to the relevant Government bureaux/departments for reference.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 It is noted that the Government has all along actively encouraged the provision of a positive, healthy and happy environment for students to learn and develop. It highly values the co-operation and communication between parents and schools, while recognising the magnitude of the public demand for parent education.

6.2 During the review, the Task Force not only examined the studies, policies and practices related to the promotion of home-school co-operation and parent education in Hong Kong and other regions, but also made reference to the courses and activities organised by local TEIs and NGOs on home-school co-operation and parent education. Upon in-depth discussion at a number of meetings, and deliberation on the views and suggestions given by stakeholders and the public during the extensive consultation, the Task Force has come up with 18 final recommendations. It is suggested that a progressive approach should be adopted to implement all the proposed measures in phases, so as to benefit parents and students with different needs.

6.3 The Task Force acknowledges that it is not easy at all to change certain parents' propensity to overvalue their children's academic performance and examination results. It takes time and involves a step-by-step process to change the prevailing social trend. The Task Force trusts that it is a step in the right direction to implement the improvement measures, which could further develop parents' knowledge, skills and attitudes of parenting, enhance the co-operation and communication between parents and schools, and foster the culture of positive parenting, thereby creating a conducive environment for children's healthy and happy development. The Task Force hopes that a general consensus will be reached by society that close home-school co-operation and appropriate parent education are of benefit to schools, parents, students and overall social development, and hence deserve great attention.

Appendix 1

Membership List of Task Force on Home-School Co-operation and Parent Education

Chairman

Mr Tim Lui Tim-leung Chairman of Education Commission

Non-official members

Mr Rock Chen Chung-nin* Representative of Education Commission
Ms Shum Siu-fong Representative of Education Commission
Dr Odalia Wong Ming-hung Representative of Education Commission
Mr Dieter Yih Lai-tak Representative of Education Commission
Mr Henry Tong Sau-chai Representative of Committee On
Home-School Co-operation
Dr Amelia Lee Nam-yuk Representative of Parent Education Scholars
Dr Tik Chi-yuen Representative of Parent Education Experts
Mr Wharlee Yip Wai-yee Representative of Schools (Secondary School)
Mr Sin Kim-wai Representative of Schools (Primary School)
Ms Wong On-mei Representative of Schools (Kindergarten)
Mr Benny Ding Pak-hei Representative of Parents (Secondary School)
Mr Lee Hon-mo Representative of Parents (Primary School)
Mr Patrick Man Ka-wai Representative of Parents (Kindergarten)

Official Member

Ms So Yuen-yi Representative of the Education Bureau

* Up until September 2018

**Term of Reference of Task Force on
Home-school Co-operation and Parent Education**

Terms of Reference of the Task Force:

1. To review the existing approach in promoting home-school co-operation and parent education; and
2. Based on the outcome of the review, to formulate the direction and strategy for fostering home-school co-operation and promoting parent education with the objective of assisting parents to nurture their children grow up happily and healthily and learn effectively through, among others, promotion of correct understanding of developmental needs of children and adolescents as well as avoiding excessive competition.

**List of NGO and TEIs which provided information to the Task Force
on local parent education researches, curriculum and activities**

List of NGOs: (in alphabetical order)

Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service
Caritas Hong Kong
Hong Kong Christian Service
Hong Kong Family Welfare Society
The Boys' & Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong
The Hong Kong Council of Social Service
The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups
Tung Wah Group of Hospitals

List of TEIs: (in alphabetical order)

City University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong Baptist University
Hong Kong Shue Yan University
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
The Education University of Hong Kong
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
The Open University of Hong Kong
The University of Hong Kong

Parent Education and Home-School Co-operation in Other Regions

Mainland China

- In end-2016, a five-year plan for steering the promotion of family education from 2016 to 2020 (《關於指導推進家庭教育的五年規劃(2016-20)》) was issued by the All-China Women's Federation (a recognised Mainland social organisation), Ministry of Education, General Office of the Central Commission for Guiding Cultural and Ethical Progress, Ministry of Civil Affairs, Ministry of Culture, National Health and Family Planning Commission, State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television, China Association for Science and Technology and China Cares for the Next Generation Working Committee. The plan sets out the direction for working out the core content of family education, developing a comprehensive public service network for family education, enhancing the professionalism of guidance service for family education, vigorously expanding new media service platforms for family education, promoting the balanced and co-ordinated development of family education, and strengthening the scientific researches on family education.
- At town and community level, with public service facilities, education organisations and children's homes serving as bases, parent-school/family education guidance service points have been extensively set up, reaching 90% and 80% of the urban and rural communities respectively. To be promoted with greater impetus, family education guidance service should become a key element of the functions of town- or community-based service points. Each year, at least two activities should be organised on family education guidance and another two on family education practice. Parent education schools should be set up in kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools and secondary vocational schools, with the goal of achieving an establishment rate of 90% and 80% in urban and rural

schools respectively. For parent education schools set up in primary and secondary schools, at least one activity on family education guidance and one activity on family education practice should be organised in each school term; for parent education schools set up in kindergartens, at least one activity on family education guidance and two activities on parent-child practice should be organised in each school term; and for parent education schools set up in secondary vocational schools, at least one activity on family education guidance should be organised in each school term.

- In March 2017, the first national-scale training programme for recognition of professional competencies for family education guidance (全國首期家庭教育指導專項職業能力認證培訓班) was offered at the Nanjing Normal University, with an enrolment of over 200 trainees from more than ten provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions (including Jiangsu, Anhui, Hunan and Beijing). These trainees represent the All-China Women's Federation, as well as teaching and social work professions, and comprise principals/school heads, teachers and education researchers of different levels and spheres. The programme consisted of two parts, one on theory and the other on practice. The theory part covered seven days. Trainees may opt for face-to-face instruction or on-line training, depending on their own timetable. The practice part lasted three months. Trainees were required to provide guidance for not fewer than three families by applying the theories they had learnt and compile case reports on the guidance service delivered. Those who passed the test were awarded a standard certificate on professional competencies for family education guidance by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security. Recognised by the Central Government and throughout the Mainland, this is the only certificate that gives nation-wide proof of the holder's ability and standard in provision of family education guidance. The fourth training programme was organised in mid-November 2017 at Fuzhou.

- The China Family Education Institute under the All-China Women's Federation has established a website on family education called “中國家庭教育網”, while the All-China Women's Federation has created an open account “好爸好媽好孩子” on WeChat. The website consists of articles written by experts, study and research reports, and video clips on parent education.
- In 2012, the Ministry of Education released a document to give advice on setting up parents committees in kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools (《關於建立中小學幼兒園家長委員會指導意見》). It is clearly stated in the document that parents committees, as a people-based self-governing body and the bridge between parents and schools, are required to participate in school management, and support and monitor school operation, so that schools perform well in the delivery of education. In the Outline of the National Medium- and Long-Term Programme for Education Reform and Development 2010-2020 (《國家中長期教育改革與發展規劃綱要(2010-2020年)》), it is also proposed that parents committees should be set up in primary and secondary schools to engage relevant professionals and other members of the community in school management and supervision. For schools providing pre-school or compulsory education, parents committees should be set up to strengthen communication and connection, enhance interaction between parents and schools, and promote students' development. Parents committees serve as a platform for parents to express views on school policies, curricula and staff matters, and participate in school management. Parents committees that are formed by means of election can promote democratisation of school affairs and enhance the motivation of parents.

Taiwan

- The Family Education Act (《家庭教育法》) has been amended to stipulate that “municipal and Hsien (County) authorities in charge shall hire family education professionals, set up Family Education Centers”, and that resources from branches under these authorities, schools, community education organisations and social organisations

should be pooled together to strengthen the implementation of family education in a coordinated manner.

- Article 11 of the Act provides for the implementation of family education: “Family education shall be conducted under the principles of diversity, flexibility, and life-long learning conformable and, depending on the actual need of the object party, may be conducted by means of lectures, symposiums/seminars, distance learning, case-by-case counseling, self-learning, workshops and other methods.”
- Article 12 of the Act stipulates that “senior high schools and below shall, during each academic year, provide no less than four hours of family education courses and activities beyond regular curricula and shall, in conjunction with the Parent Associations, conduct parental education”. In Article 15, it is stipulated that “schools at or below senior high level, upon the occurrence of any major disciplinary event or deviant behavior of any student”, shall provide parents with “family education and related advisory or counseling courses”.
- In Taiwan, the Protection of Children and Youths Welfare and Rights Act, upon amendment, was promulgated by the Ministry of Health and Welfare on 2 January 2019. It is stipulated in Article 102 that parents and guardians (or other people looking after children and youth) who violate the regulations will be ordered by the authorised agencies to accept guidance of parental education for no less than four hours and no more than fifty hours. (Anyone who refuses to accept guidance of parental education or complete the required number of hours will be ordered to pay a fine, which will be imposed per violation until acceptance. Those who complete the required guidance of parental education will be exempted from the fine.)

- The Social and Family Affairs Administration under the Ministry of Health and Welfare has established a website on parenting called “育兒親職網”, while the Ministry of Education has launched a website on family education called “家庭教育網”.

Singapore

- FamilyMatters@School under the Ministry of Social and Family Development seeks to promote family education programmes through schools. Funding is provided for kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools and NGOs to conduct family education programmes for parents and students each year.
- The Ministry of Education encourages schools to set up their own Parent Support Groups and provides funding for these Groups to organise parent education or parent-child activities in schools. In early 2017, the Ministry released a guide book *Parent Support Groups – A How-to Guide By Parents For Parents* to help parents set up Parent Support Groups in schools.
- The National Advisory Council COMPASS (COMmunity and PArents in Support of Schools) was established in December 1998 to advise the Ministry of Education on ways to strengthen and promote school-home-community collaboration. COMPASS comprises stakeholders representing parents, self-help groups, industry, the media and early childhood educators. FamilyMatters@School under the Ministry of Social and Family Development provides funding for schools’ family education programmes to equipping parents and young adults with skills to develop positive family relationships. Each school is granted a subsidy of about SG\$5,000 (HK\$30,000) to conduct at least 10 hours of FamilyMatters@School programme. A programme menu is made available by the Ministry for schools’ consideration.

- The Children and Young Persons Act (Chapter 38) stipulates that parents must receive parental education if their children have committed a serious criminal offence. The Act has provisions allowing the Youth Court to make orders requiring both the children (or young persons) found guilty of an offence and their parents to undergo counselling, receive psychotherapy or attend programmes for the purpose of resolving parent-child relationship problems, so as to rehabilitate the children, and enable the parents to manage their children and enhance the well-being and safety of their children.

- The Singapore Ministry of Education operates a website, SCHOOLBAG with key features including "Parent Partnership", where articles and videos are provided to promote parent education, for examples, 5 Questions to Ask Your Kids Over Dinner, Why Relationship Matters and Raising Grateful Children, Not Just Polite Ones.

- The Singapore Government also uses mobile applications to provide parents with easy access to information on parent education, child development and parenting skills, such as the Moments of Life (Families) App, which supports families with children under the age of six. The application enables parents to obtain useful services and information whenever they need them. For instance, they can register a child's birth online and simultaneously make an application under the Baby Bonus Scheme. Furthermore, they can use the application to get parenting resources and search for pre-school information.

- Dads for Life Programme was rolled out in November 2009 with the objective of inspiring, motivating and inviting fathers to act as good influencers in the entire life of their children. The Programme was subsumed under FamilyMatters@School in 2013-14 and renamed as

FamilyMatters@School for Fathers. Targeting on schools, FamilyMatters@School for Fathers provides funding up to SG\$2,000 for registered schools to organise father-based programmes in each financial year. The funding is capped at SG\$40 per father.

Australia

- The Department of Social Services provides funding for organisations through the Family and Community Program to support family education and parent education activities. Funded organisations deliver family and parent education programmes in the context of strengthening parent-child relationship, supporting families, improving children's well-being and increasing participation in community life to strengthen the functions of family and community, so as to reduce the costs of family breakdown.
- The Department of Social Services supports a parent education website called "Raising Children Network" with funding. The website offers useful information to parents on different topics such as pregnancy, newborns and school-age children, as well as children with autism and disability. It also has up-to-date research-based materials on child development, health, nutrition, school, education, etc.
- The Department of Social Services provides funding for the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters, which is a two-year home-based parenting and early childhood learning programme that empowers parents and carers of children aged four and five to perform the role of children's first teacher. The Program helps parents and carers build confidence and acquire skills for creating a positive learning environment to prepare children for schooling, and fosters their leadership in the local community. An early intervention and prevention approach is adopted to enable parents to

contribute to children's transition to school learning.

- The Department of Education and Training engages parents in their children's learning through the mobile application "Learning Potential", which provides parents and carers with practical tips and information on how to be more involved in children's learning. The Department also launched a new website "Learning Potential Resources" for parents of primary school students. It seeks to provide further assistance for parents in supporting their children's development of literacy and numeracy skills through activities aligned with school curriculum.
- Parents and Citizens Associations are set up in schools in Australia to promote home-school co-operation. Apart from parents and teachers, the Associations also consist of interested citizens in the community. The Department of Education in each state and territory provides guidelines for setting up these Associations.
- NGOs such as the Australian Parents Council, Australian Council of State School Organisations, Isolated Children's Parents' Association and Catholic School Parents Australia are recognised and financially supported by the Australian Government. Concerned about the needs of parents and their children's learning and well-being, these organisations promote parental engagement in children's education and offer advice to the Government on such matters.
- The Australian Government actively promotes the understanding of parental engagement in children's learning and well-being through partnership with the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth.
- The Australian Government provides a series of resources for students, parents and educators on student safety and well-being.

The website “Student Wellbeing Hub” contains resources on creation of a safe and supportive school environment. Some of the topics covered are “Being Safe Online”, “Safe and Responsible Choices”, “Healthy Minds and Bodies”, “Protecting Against Bullying” and “Building Positive Relationships”. The Hub offers over 560 resources and a collection of age-appropriate activities for students from Foundation to Year 12. There are separate sections dedicated to parents and students, with information and resources that they may find useful in building a whole-school culture of well-being.

United Kingdom

- Family education in the United Kingdom is mainly carried out at district level in accordance with the framework of the Education Department of the Central Government. For example, Sure Start Centre is set up by the local government to provide support and services for children and parents, and “Family Information Service” website is established to provide parents with information on services available.
- Parents of juvenile offenders are required to receive parent education up to three months according to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- The Office for Standards in Education inspects maintained schools and publishes reports on the state of school operation. Schools that are assessed to be operating poorly may be subject to special measures, which include replacement of board members or teaching staff. Since September 2009, home-school relationship and communication has been one of the Office’s inspection foci. The Office’s reports indicate that the relationship among teachers, students and parents has a major impact on students’ effective learning.

Finland

- While the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is responsible for family policy, matters related to home-school co-operation and education affairs are administered by the Finnish National Agency for Education under the Ministry of Education and Culture.
- Home-school co-operation is based on daily home-school communication. The computer software “Wilma” is one of the home-school communication media commonly used in different Finnish cities. Through “Wilma”, parents can exchange ideas with the school on the learning progress of their children and obtain other school information. In addition, the school arranges at least one meeting with parents each year. If necessary, discussions will be held with parents to examine students’ situation. Parents are invited to home-school activities organised by the school and may participate in school activities through the school’s Parents’ Association. Parent organisations may give views on the development of the school and assess its performance.
- There are local parent organisations which are responsible for connecting Parents’ Associations of different schools to promote the co-operation among parents, schools and the Government. These organisations relay to the Government the views of Parents’ Associations of different schools on education of children and young people.

Consultation Paper

Task Force on Home-school Co-operation and Parent Education

Invitation of Views

Purpose

1. In December 2017, the Education Commission (EC) established the Task Force on Home-school Co-operation and Parent Education (Task Force) to review the existing approach in promoting parent education and home-school co-operation, and formulate the directions, strategies and improvement measures for fostering home-school co-operation and promoting parent education based on the outcome of the review. The objective is to assist parents to help their children learn effectively, grow up healthily and happily, and avoid excessive competition. This document aims to consult the public on the major recommendations made by the Task Force.

Background

2. Parents play a very important role in the growth and learning of their children. Parent education activities can enhance parents' knowledge and skills needed for improving family life and ways in bringing up children. The scope of parent education is very extensive. Child-rearing skills, children's physical and mental development, parent-child communication, harmonious family, teaching students the proper use of the Internet, prevention of drug and crime for adolescents, etc., all fall under parent education. The measures on home-school co-operation and parent education implemented by the Education Bureau (EDB) mainly focus on supporting the parents of students from kindergartens to secondary schools, to help them guide their children to achieve whole-person development.

3. The Government promotes parent education through the collaborative efforts of various policy bureaux and departments based on their respective areas of responsibilities. In other words, apart from the EDB, other Government bureaux and departments such as the Home Affairs Bureau, Social Welfare Department, Department of Health, Narcotics Division and Hong Kong Police Force, have been taking forward parent education work under their respective purview.

4. All along, the Government has been actively fostering home-school co-operation and parent education. However, in recent years there have been opinions that the Government should have clearer goals and directions when implementing parent education, and by phases, and with continuity and universality. The Chief Executive, who actively listens to the views of the education sector and its stakeholders, announced in the 2017 Policy Address that, apart from implementing a series of priority measures to achieve quality education in the 2017/18 school year, education experts will be invited to steer the further review and follow up on other areas, including strengthening parent education and improving home-school co-operation. It is hoped that the culture of excessive competition will be reduced and children's health will be taken care of so that children can grow up happily.

5. The EC accepted the invitation of the EDB to set up the "The Task Force on Home-School Co-operation and Parent Education" in December 2017, to review the existing approach to promoting parent education and home-school co-operation. Based on the outcome of the review, the Task Force would formulate the directions and strategies for fostering home-school co-operation and promoting parent education with the objective of assisting parents to nurture their children to grow up happily and healthily, and learn effectively through, among others, promotion of correct understanding of developmental needs of children and adolescents as well as avoiding excessive competition. Mr Tim Lui Tim-leung, chairman of the Education Commission, serves as the chairman of the Task Force. The members of the Task Force include representatives

from the Committee on Home-School Co-operation (CHSC), schools, parents, the EC, and experts on parent education.

6. The Task Force has drawn reference to the local researches on parent education, as well as the situations in implementing parent education and promoting home-school co-operation in other regions (including the Mainland, Taiwan, Singapore, United Kingdom, Finland, Australia, etc.). The Task Force has also reviewed the parent education courses and activities provided by Tertiary Education Institutes (TEIs) and non-government organisations (NGOs), ranging from certificate courses lasting for a few days to 2-year Master Degree's courses. In the past six months, the Task Force has conducted in-depth discussion on different improvement measures. Based on the information and opinions currently collected, the Task Force has initially proposed directions, strategies and improvement measures for improving home-school co-operation and parent education. The main areas of parent education would include enhancement of parents' understanding of the developmental needs of their children, avoiding excessive competition, providing various articulation pathways, fostering home-school co-operation and establishing a good parent-child relationship.

Current Situation

7. All along, the EDB's strategies for implementing parent education have been premised on schools as the platform to promote home-school co-operation and establish home-school partnership. Schools and parents can work in collaboration to consolidate students' learning and foster their healthy development. As regards the promotion of home-school co-operation, the CHSC was established in 1993 and has been actively facilitating the establishment of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) in schools to strengthen home-school connection and communication. At present, all government and aided schools as well as nearly one third of kindergartens have set up their PTA. The total number of schools with PTA in Hong Kong is around 1,400 (including

kindergartens). In addition, self-initiated district-based Federation of Parent-Teacher Associations (FPTAs) have also been established in 18 districts for coordinating PTAs in their respective districts and organising district-based parenting activities.

8. The EDB also provides subsidies for schools, PTAs and FPTAs in the 18 districts to organise a variety of home-school co-operation and parent education activities. In addition, the CHSC holds a number of parent workshops, seminars and talks annually, and jointly organises large-scale home-school co-operation activities with other organisations. The CHSC has also set up a website to provide parents with information on various parent activities and useful information (such as School Profiles), helping parents understand the developmental and educational needs of their children. According to the information from the EDB, the CHSC has organised or co-organised about 70 parent workshops, talks and other activities in the 2016/17 school year. Besides, the PTAs and district FPTAs have organised a total of around 3,400 subsidised activities on home-school co-operation and parent education, with topics including supporting children in learning or growth, nurturing positive values and raising happy kids, with a total subsidy of about \$26 million from the EDB.

9. In sum, at present schools generally could maintain communication and co-operation with parents through different channels, including PTA. However, there are also views that the activities organised by schools and PTAs for parents are mostly home-school social activities and the Government should provide more resources for schools and PTAs so that they could play a more prominent role in promoting parent education. Moreover, although the Government and different organisations encourage parents to choose the suitable articulation pathway for their children according to their abilities and interests through organising different activities, under the competitive culture, many parents still set the goal of getting admitted to “prestigious schools” and furthering studies at university for their children, and some parents keep pushing

their children to study hard.

10. To further improve the review, the Task Force is now inviting written submissions from the public to provide their comments on the proposed directions, strategies and improvement measures, especially on the issues concerned. The views collected will provide important reference to the review and facilitate the Task Force to formulate its final proposals.

Vision

11. The Taskforce hopes to reduce the culture of excessive competition and safeguard children's healthy and happy development through the review and further enhancement of parent education and home-school co-operation.

Suggestions and focus of consultation

Proposed directions

12. The competitive culture cannot be changed within a short period of time. The following long-term directions are proposed by the Task Force to foster home-school co-operation and promote parent education.

- (i) Enhance parents' capacity, knowledge and skills on nurturing children and parenting so that they could understand children's developmental needs, abilities and potentials, and nurture their children in ways for promoting emotional health, so as to help them learn effectively, grow healthily and happily, as well as avoid excessive competition.
- (ii) Assist parents in getting a more comprehensive understanding of their children's development/alternative pathways, as well as their own abilities and personalities to set the future direction for their plan of nurturing their children. They should be advised not to pay too much attention to academic attainment, and neglect play and rest. They should also be advised to choose appropriate schools for their children according to their needs and not to regard

attending university as the only pathway for children but to understand and accept alternative pathways for further studies and to help their children make better career planning according to their aspirations and abilities.

- (iii) Deliver diverse and innovative parent education and home-school co-operation activities to reach different types of parents, including “hidden” parents¹.
- (iv) Foster better collaboration between parents and schools. Mutual connection and communication should be strengthened and partnerships should be built in order to jointly foster the healthy development of children in school attainment, mental and physical well-being. For instance, parents will understand how to help children complete homework appropriately and prepare for examination in concert with school education.
- (v) Further strengthen the role of PTAs and the competency of their members so as to develop the potentials of parents and strengthen parent-child relationship through planning and organising various developmental and recreational activities; and enable parents to better understand the needs of their children through parent education with a view to supporting students’ whole-person development and improving parent-child communication.

Proposed strategies

13. Based on the directions proposed, the Task Force recommends the following strategies to formulate the improvement measures required to enhance home-school co-operation and parent education.

- (i) Adopt both service delivery (i.e. organising programmes/activities by the Government, NGOs, TEIs) and marketing strategies (e.g. public education campaign, mass media, internet portals, etc.) to enhance parent education.
- (ii) Provide school-based, community-based and territory-wide parent

¹ “Hidden” parents refer to parents who are difficult to reach for different reasons.

education programmes to enable all parents to have the opportunities to take part in the related programmes.

- (iii) For quality assurance of the activities, parent education activities or home-school co-operation activities should be evidence-based and provided in collaboration by different Government bureaux/ departments, TEIs and NGOs.
- (iv) Develop a curriculum framework or a set of curriculum guides on parent education, with main areas covering enhancing parents' understanding of developmental needs of children, avoiding excessive competition, providing various articulation pathways, fostering home-school co-operation and building good parent-child relationship.
- (v) Provide a diversified mode for delivering parent education programmes, including e-learning and programmes run at school, in the community and workplace.
- (vi) Devise structured and thematic parent education programmes, and enhance the competence and leadership of the members of PTAs and FPTAs.
- (vii) Address the needs for parent education of those parents of students with special educational needs (SEN), non-Chinese speaking (NCS), newly arrived and non-attending students.

Question 1: What is your opinion on the directions and strategies proposed by the Task Force to promote home-school co-operation and parent education?

Proposed improvement measures

14. In accordance with the directions and strategies proposed above, the Task Force recommends the following measures to improve home-school co-operation and parent education.

Development of curriculum framework and conducting local researches on parent education

- (i) A curriculum framework or a set of curriculum guidelines on parent education should be developed with the help of TEIs and NGOs. The framework/guidelines should be able to cater for parents with children at different school levels, from kindergarten to secondary school level. The core learning objectives of the curriculum should include enhancing parents' understanding of developmental needs of children and adolescents, avoiding excessive competition, alternative academic pathways, fostering home-school co-operation and establishing good parent-child relationship conducive to children's development.

- (ii) At present, there are only a limited number of large-scale researches on parent education in Hong Kong. It is considered that parent education programmes and home-school co-operation activities should be evidence-based in order to meet for the genuine needs of parents. As such, the Task Force believes that more researches on home-school co-operation and parent education are needed and suggested a number of topics. The following are some examples:
 - (a) Study on parent-child communication skills in the 21st Century
 - (b) The impact of parents' over-drilling on their children
 - (c) How parents support their children in exploring different articulation pathways?
 - (d) How to promote the active participation of parents in the education process in school?

Question 2: What advice do you have for the proposed curriculum framework or curriculum guidelines on parent education from kindergarten to secondary school level?

Question 3: What advice do you have on research topics of parent education?

Community-based parent education programmes

- (iii) TEIs/NGOs should be commissioned by the EDB to design and organise structured parent education courses while NGOs should be commissioned by the EDB to provide free parent talks/workshops on various topics regularly in different regions. The EDB should closely collaborate with other parties which also have interests in the well-being of children such as the Social Welfare Department, Department of Health and Hospital Authority in co-organising parent education activities or talks, jointly promoting parent education programmes, or sharing the information about parent education with each other so as to promote parent education more effectively.
- (iv) The EDB should provide more resources for FPTAs in organising community-based parent education programmes or activities for parents. For example, the number of activities that each FPTA could apply for the Subsidy for Home-School Co-operation Activities should be increased, enabling FPTAs in different districts to promote parent education. At the same time, the EDB should set up a new type of subsidy on an application basis for FPTAs to organise joint-FPTA parent education activities.

Question 4: What are your views on the suggestions of the Task Force on community-based parent education programmes? How to attract different parents to participate? Do you agree that the Government needs to increase the resources currently given to FPTAs in order to organise more home-school co-operation activities?

School-based parent education programmes

- (v) The EDB should provide more resources for schools and PTAs in planning and organising more school-based home-school co-operation activities and parent education programmes so that more parents would be benefited. It is suggested that the number of activities subsidised by the EDB as well as the amount of the

subsidy for home-school co-operation activities and parent education activities should be increased, enabling schools and PTAs to organise parent education activities. At the same time, efforts should be made to avoid increasing teachers' workload.

- (vi) Teachers in school play an important role in promoting school-based parent education and home-school co-operation. Therefore, the EDB should provide short training courses for teachers to enhance their understanding on promotion of home-school co-operation and parent education, as well as enhancement of home-school communication.

Question 5: What is your opinion on the suggestions of the Task Force on school-based parent education programmes? Any other suggestions? Do you agree that the Government needs to increase the resources currently given to PTAs for organising more home-school co-operation activities? How to avoid increasing teachers' workload?

Promoting home-school co-operation and parent education in kindergartens (KGs)

- (vii) Publicity and education should be stepped up to help KGs and school sponsoring bodies (SSB) better understand the procedures and matters pertaining to the setting up of PTAs, disseminate the good practices of PTAs in kindergartens and encourage them to set up PTAs through territory, district and SSB-based sharing sessions/ workshops. The amount of the Set-up Grant and Annual Grant for PTAs of KGs should be increased to encourage more KGs to set up PTAs.

Question 6: What advice do you have on how to encourage kindergartens to set up PTAs?

e-learning courses for parents

- (viii) The EDB should commission TEIs or NGOs to develop e-learning parent education programme to enable self-learning by parents through computers or mobile phones.
- (ix) The EDB's parent education website "Smart Parent Net" should be developed to become a more popular parent education learning platform by linking up with the relevant programmes of TEIs and NGOs, as well as other useful resources, such as the videos and articles about positive parenting produced by TEIs and NGOs in order to facilitate parents' self-learning.

Question 7: In your opinion, how should parent education be provided and home-school co-operation be improved for working, busy or "hidden" parents through e-learning courses for parents?

Happy Kids Campaign

- (x) The Task Force proposes to launch a "Happy Kids Campaign" to advocate positive parenting, let parents understand the importance of healthy and happy development of children, and avoid excessive competition. It is hoped that this campaign could help parents set reasonable expectations and requirements for their children and avoid over-drilling their children for outstanding performance in academic and extracurricular activities so that their children could develop healthily and happily. The EDB could provide a grant for all public sector primary schools as a funding to implement school-based activities under the "Happy Kids Campaign", such as to advocate positive parenting through home-school co-operation, talks and courses for parents. The EDB should provide schools with the relevant guidelines and support.
- (xi) The EDB should promote "Happy Kids Campaign" through different platforms such as Announcement of Public Interest (API), the EDB parent education website, private/ NGO parent websites, Government buildings (community centres, hospitals, and libraries,

etc.), MTR stations and advertisement boards at tunnel exits, or even TV programme production, etc., to widely convey positive parenting messages, reduce excessive competition among students, and let parents understand the importance of healthy and happy development of children.

- (xii) The EDB should produce videos and articles or invite submission on the theme of “Happy Kids Campaign” to disseminate good practices of positive parenting through the EDB’s parent education website.
- (xiii) A territory-wide slogan competition should be organised to produce a thematic and eye-catching slogan to remind parents not to pay excessive attention to their children’s academic performance/homework and effectively deliver positive parenting messages.
- (xiv) NGOs should be commissioned to conduct out-reaching promotion activities such as photo-taking, games, and arts activities in places including public housing estates, shopping malls and markets so as to reach more parents of different levels including "hidden" parents, to promote the "Happy Kids Campaign”.

Question 8: Do you think the implementation of the "Happy Kids Campaign" can help reduce the excessive competitive culture? What advice do you have on how to successfully implement the "Happy Kids Campaign" including how to avoid excessive competition? Do you think parents of different levels or "hidden" parents could be reached effectively through out-reaching promotion activities?

Parent education at workplace

- (xv) Talks/workshops on parent education should be organised for working parents at or near their workplace. TEIs or NGOs should be commissioned by the EDB to design and provide workplace

parent education programmes specifically for working parents. These programmes should be open for application by companies, business associations and unions in various professions.

- (xvi) Promotion through media such as API should be launched to encourage companies to join workplace parent education programmes. Opportunities to co-operate with other organisations on schemes which promote corporate social responsibility could also be explored.

Question 9: What are your views or suggestions on organising talks/workshops on parent education at workplace?

Parent education for members of different family status

- (xvii) Parent education programmes specifically for fathers, mothers and grandparents should be developed to meet their needs in nurturing children. Parent education for different family members should be included in the community-based and school-based curriculum framework and guidelines on parent education.

Question 10: Which types of parent education courses do you think should be specifically designed for fathers, mothers and grandparents?

Providing parent education for parents of students with special needs

- (xviii) NGOs and TEIs should be commissioned by the EDB to provide tailor-made parent education for parents of SEN, NCS, newly arrived, non-attending students.

Question 11: What are your views on providing parent education courses specifically designed for parents of students with special needs?

Invitation of views

15. Any views/comments on the above directions, strategies and improvement measures are welcomed. Please send written comments to the Task Force Secretariat **on or before 14 September 2018 (Friday)** by post, e-mail or fax:

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16. It is optional for any member of the public to supply his/her personal data when offering views on this consultation document. Any personal data thus collected will only be used for the purpose of this consultation exercise. The data will be destroyed after analysis.

17. The Task Force may, as appropriate, reproduce, quote, summarise or publish any written comments received, in whole or in part, in any form and for any purpose without seeking prior permission of the contributing parties. However, the EDB will not disclose the personal data of the respondent when citing the relevant content.

Task Force on Home-school Co-operation and Parent Education

20 July 2018

List of Organisations Providing Written Submissions Public Consultation

As of 14 September, 2018, the Task Force received written comments from 6 individuals and 16 organisations as follows: (in alphabetical order)

1. Catholic Education Office, Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong
2. Chairman of Committee of Home-School Co-operation and Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations
3. HKEd4All
4. Hong Kong Christian Service (Family Ties Integrated Family Service Centre)
5. Hong Kong Christian Service (School Social Work Service)
6. Hong Kong Council of Students Union
7. Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers
8. Hong Kong Parent Education Association
9. Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union
10. Liberal Party
11. New Horizons Development Centre
12. Parents Academy, Tung Wah Group of Hospitals
13. Playright Children's Play Association
14. Side by Side Parent Education
15. The Boys' & Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong
16. The Hong Kong Association of the Heads of Secondary Schools

