

## Chapter 7

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# Education

*Education is the key to enabling our young people to meet the challenges of the knowledge-based world of the 21st Century. It is a vital building block of sustainable economic growth and remains the Government's top spending priority. To help students nurture and develop their potential fully in a globalised world, a new academic structure was introduced in 2009.*

### **Key Achievements in 2009**

#### *Implementation of the New Senior Secondary Curriculum in the New Academic Structure*

The Government introduced a New Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education, from Secondary 4 in September 2009. This covers three years of junior secondary education, three in senior secondary, and four at university. To help schools prepare for the new academic structure, the Education Bureau (EDB) published the Senior Secondary Curriculum Guide in January. The eight tertiary institutions funded by the University Grants Committee updated the General Entrance Requirements of Admission in July. The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) has secured international recognition of the new Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education and details will be announced in early 2010.

#### *Medium of Instruction*

To increase the opportunities for students to be exposed to and to use English, the Government has fine-tuned the medium of instruction arrangements for secondary schools. These will be implemented starting from the 2010-11 school year at Secondary 1 level, progressing each year to a higher form at junior secondary level.

#### *Small Class Teaching*

Small class teaching in public sector primary schools started with Primary 1 classes in the 2009-10 school year, will be extended progressively to Primary 6 classes in the 2014-15 school year. Schools implementing small class teaching are allocated Primary 1 students on the basis of 25 students per class.

### *Promotion of National Education*

To commemorate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the EDB organised a series of activities to increase teachers' and students' knowledge of China's development. The series included thematic competitions, a series of talks by experts and scholars, interchange activities with the Mainland, a national day extravaganza, and production of relevant learning and teaching materials.

The EDB has devoted additional resources and rolled out various programmes to promote national education. Championed by the Bureau, the national education platform "Passing on the Torch" was established early in the year. Through this scheme the EDB established close co-operation with voluntary groups and co-ordinated 45 exchange activities organised by non-governmental organisations benefiting over 20 000 students.

In the 2009-10 school year, the EDB will subsidise participation of 37 000 students in various Mainland exchange programmes.

### *Development of International Schools*

Under the Government's continuing commitment to support the development of a vibrant international school sector, four greenfield sites in Kowloon and the New Territories were allocated in August 2009 to four quality operators. Three of the four sites are for the expansion or relocation of existing international schools. The fourth site, in Tuen Mun, was allocated to an overseas operator to establish a new international boarding school with a view to attracting students from different parts of the world as well as to strengthen Hong Kong's position as an education hub.

### *Establishing the Research Endowment Fund*

In reaffirmation of its continued support to research and development, the Government established an \$18 billion Research Endowment Fund. The investment income generated will replace the bulk of the existing annual funding granted by the Government to the Research Grants Council of the University Grants Committee (UGC). It will also finance research proposals on themes of a more long-term nature that are strategically beneficial to the development of Hong Kong. The fund will also help build up the research capacity of the institutions on a more focused and longer-term basis.

### *Keeping Learning and Teaching Resources Up-to-date*

A Working Group on Textbooks and E-learning Resources Development was established to look into the development of electronic learning and teaching in schools. Information technology experts, parents, school principals, teachers, publishers and others were invited to explore how e-learning could be taken forward in schools and to address public concern on the use and prices of textbooks. The working group drew on international experience in formulating long-term measures to alleviate the financial burden on parents and to facilitate learning. The working group's report was submitted to the EDB for consideration in October.

### *Student Achievements*

As in previous years, Hong Kong students continued to excel in international competitions. Hong Kong teams won five gold, eight silver and six bronze medals in the International Mathematical Olympiad, the International Physics Olympiad, the International Olympiad in Informatics and the International Junior Science Olympiad.

Hong Kong students also won top prizes in other world contests in visual arts and design, including 2009 Évora the 10th International Meeting of Juvenile Art, the 18th International Children's Painting Competition on the Environment, the 6th REMIX International Fur Design Competition and the Small Montmartre of Bitola. One of the students was named one of the Best Six Global Youth Artists. The Hong Kong delegation performed at the World Harmonica Festival 2009 where they won a total of 14 medals, producing five champions, four first runners-up and five second runners-up.

In sport, the Hong Kong Youth Team won five gold, eight silver and five bronze medals and ranked number five among 43 countries or regions in the 1st Asian Youth Games 2009. The Hong Kong Wushu Team also won five gold, nine silver and four bronze medals at the 5th Asian Junior Wushu Championships while the Hong Kong Fencing Team gained a total of 13 medals at the Asian Junior and Cadet Fencing Championships 2009 (including one gold medal won by the Men's Sabre Team) and the Asian Fencing Championships. Hong Kong students were also awarded four gold, six silver and nine bronze medals in the 5th Asian Rope Skipping Championships.

In science and technology, a student won the first prize at the 9th Awards for Little Scientist of Tomorrow and awards were also received in the International Genetically Engineered Machine Competition and the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union Robot Contest.

## **Major Challenges Ahead**

### *Developing Education Services*

Education services is one of the six advantaged industries with good potential for further development. The Government's objective is to enhance Hong Kong's position as a regional education hub, nurturing talent to support various sectors of the economy, thereby increasing its competitiveness. To achieve this, efforts will continue to internationalise and diversify the higher education sector.

Hong Kong is well positioned to provide quality higher education in the region because of its cosmopolitan outlook, strong links with the Mainland, world-class universities and diversified system of education. It is Hong Kong's stated intention to become a regional education centre. Measures have been implemented to attract quality non-local students to study in Hong Kong. This process will further internationalise the city's higher education sector and increase local students' exposure to the world. It is also the Government's aim to persuade non-local students to live and work in Hong Kong after they have graduated. This will enhance Hong Kong's competitiveness in the long term.

Regarding diversification, the Government considers that the self-financing higher education sector has room for further expansion and can complement the publicly-funded sector in providing degree programmes. Support measures have been implemented to provide land at a nominal premium for the construction of purpose-built premises, loans to develop new college premises, the re-provisioning of existing ones and other, one-off, financial assistance measures. Two greenfield sites in the urban areas have been reserved for interested operators to provide self-financing degree programmes. The EDB will continue to identify more sites, as well as provide interest-free loans for self-financing degree-awarding institutions to develop college premises. Pursuant to the 2009-10 Policy Address, the EDB will also review the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance to provide a legal framework to facilitate the development of self-financing post-secondary institutions.

#### *Continuing to support the Implementation of the New Academic Structure*

The Government is working with stakeholders to implement the new academic structure launched in September 2009 from Secondary 4. Professional development programmes will continue to be provided to teachers and school leaders to help them implement the New Senior Secondary (NSS) curriculum.

Funding resources have been made available to enable schools to offer a diversified senior secondary curriculum catering for the diverse needs of students. Communication will be strengthened with various stakeholders including teachers, parents, students, employers and overseas students as well as educators to enhance their understanding and support of the NSS system.

The EDB will enhance inter-sector communication with universities and post-secondary institutions to ensure a smooth interface between the senior secondary education and higher education.

#### *Enriching the Language Environment in Schools*

Starting from the 2010-11 school year at Secondary 1 level and progressing each year to a higher form at junior secondary levels, schools will have greater flexibility in making professional judgements on the adoption of the appropriate medium of instruction at junior secondary levels according to students' abilities, learning progress, interests and school circumstances and taking into account teachers' capability and each school's support measures. This will help students to learn in English in senior secondary and higher education. At the same time, the Government will enhance English teaching and learning in primary schools to help students build a solid foundation. The EDB is committed to stepping up its efforts to attract talented people to the teaching profession, to continue helping serving teachers enhance their professionalism and to enrich the English language environment in schools.

#### *Healthy School Policy*

One of the aims of education in our schools is to help students adopt a healthy lifestyle. The major objective of the Healthy School Policy (HSP) is to help students reach a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being. Prime importance is

given to the development of a healthy lifestyle, positive attitudes and values and helping students to acquire life skills and the ability to resist temptation.

Schools are encouraged to work out their HSP based on four elements: development of a management and organisation system for health matters; fostering of a healthy school environment; development of healthy lifestyles; and identification of students who may need help coupled with establishment of a referral system.

Each school should formulate a plan to help students acquire and develop the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude to resist the temptation to use drugs. The plan should also incorporate themes such as healthy eating, not-smoking and maintenance of mental health.

Since the 2006-2007 school year, the EDB has worked with the Department of Health to promote healthy eating among students through the EatSmart@school.hk campaign. In 2009, the 'EatSmart School Accreditation Scheme' was launched to encourage primary schools to develop a supportive environment for healthy eating.

#### *Developing e-learning and teaching resources*

The Working Group on Textbooks and E-learning Resources Development has made a number of recommendations to promote e-learning. These include implementing a pilot scheme to support schools in trying out different e-learning strategies through collaboration between schools and other sectors, provision of a one-off grant to schools as an additional incentive to purchase e-learning resources, setting up of an e-platform for transactions in e-learning resources to facilitate the online purchase of e-learning resources by students, teachers and parents, and expediting and strengthening the development of an e-depository of curriculum-based learning and teaching resources for the primary and junior secondary school levels. EDB aims to start implementing these measures in 2010.

### **Overall Education Landscape**

#### *Expenditure on Education*

For the 2009-10 financial year, the approved estimate for recurrent government expenditure on education was \$53.8 billion, which was 23.6 per cent of all recurrent government expenditure, while the total estimate for government expenditure on education was \$61.7 billion, or 20.7 per cent of total government expenditure.

#### *Education Commission*

The Education Commission is responsible for advising the Government on education objectives and policies. It co-ordinates the work of all major education-related advisory bodies in the planning and development of education at all levels. The commission also advises the Government on important implementation issues to ensure better co-ordination between policy formulation and implementation.

The commission has a chairman, a vice-chairman who is the Permanent Secretary for Education, seven ex-officio members and a number of non-official members. The seven ex-officio members comprise the chairmen of the Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications, the Curriculum Development

Council, the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority Council, the Quality Education Fund Steering Committee, the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research, University Grants Committee and the Vocational Training Council. The non-official members come from both education and non-education fields.

### *Early Childhood Education*

All kindergartens are required to register under the Education Ordinance. Since 2004, all kindergartens have been required to employ qualified kindergarten teachers. The intention is to upgrade the professional qualifications of all kindergarten teachers to certificate level by the end of the 2011-12 school year. Newly appointed kindergarten principals are required to have a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education with effect from the 2009-10 school year. Quality assurance for kindergartens is enhanced through a self-evaluation system, supported by an external review process.

The Government enables all school-aged children to have access to kindergarten education within a non-compulsory private-sector system by providing financial support for parents in meeting school fees, assisting with rents and rates for non-profit-making kindergartens, and reserving premises for kindergartens in public housing estates.

The Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme, introduced in the 2007-08 school year, provides direct fee subsidy for parents and financial support for professional upgrading of serving kindergarten principals and teachers. About 83 per cent of students and 84 per cent of kindergartens are benefiting under the scheme. Eligible children aged above two years and eight months attending eligible local non-profit-making kindergartens can receive an annual fee subsidy of \$12,000 in the 2009-10 school year and this will be increased progressively to \$16,000 by the 2011-12 school year.

### *School Education*

Twelve-year free education is provided to students in public sector schools with effect from the 2008-09 school year. Admissions to Primary 1 and Secondary 1 in public sector schools are administered through centralised systems. Under the NSS academic structure, Secondary 3 students will normally continue to receive senior secondary education in the same school or attend full-time vocational training courses run by the Vocational Training Council which is fully subvented by the Government.

In September 2009, a total of 289 900 children were enrolled in public sector primary schools and 395 400 children in public sector secondary schools. Public sector school places made up about 83 per cent of school places. In addition, there were 72 Direct Subsidy Scheme schools, offering about 7.9 per cent of the school places.

As of September 2009, there were 51 international schools, including 15 schools operated by the English Schools Foundation. These schools offer different

non-local curricula, including the national curriculum of the United Kingdom, America, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Singapore and others such as the International Baccalaureate programmes, providing about 35 100 school places.

### *Special Education*

Students with severe learning difficulties and multiple disabilities are offered places in special schools for more intensive support. Other students with special educational needs are enrolled in ordinary schools which adopt a Whole School Approach to support them. In September, some 22 000 students with special educational needs were studying in public sector primary and secondary schools. There were 60 special schools, nineteen of which have boarding facilities. Together, they provided around 8 400 school places and 1 000 boarding places for students with severe special educational needs or multiple disabilities.

The Government also helps gifted students to develop their capabilities through different programmes. The Government has set up a thematic support network on gifted education comprising 80 schools to facilitate sharing of experiences and resources.

The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education (The HKAGE) began operation in September 2008. To date, it is responsible for the promotion of gifted education in Hong Kong; the organisation and commissioning of challenging off-site programmes for 3 300 secondary students aged 10-18 years; providing support to over 2 000 teachers through training programmes; offering advice and support to more than 6 000 parents of gifted children through advisory services, talks and seminars; and providing online information through the academy's website for the wider gifted community.

### *Project Yi Jin*

Some 14 000 full-time and part-time students joined the Government's Yi Jin programme in the 2009-10 academic year. It was launched in 2000 to provide an alternative route to continuing education for secondary school leavers and adult learners. Successful completion of the programme earns the students a qualification comparable to five passes in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination for employment and continuing education purposes. The programme is run by member institutions of the Federation for Continuing Education in Tertiary Institutions and has both full-time and part-time modules.

Drawing on the success of the project, the Yi Jin/Secondary Schools Collaboration Project was introduced to 10 secondary schools in 2004. As at September 2009, 483 students in 12 secondary schools were taking part in the project.

### *Vocational Education*

The Vocational Training Council (VTC) is a statutory body established in 1982 to provide a comprehensive system of vocational education and training for school

leavers and adult learners. It provided some 180 000 full-time and part-time places during the 2009-10 academic year.

The VTC provides a range of quality, internationally recognised full-time and part-time courses varying from those designed for craftsmen to those for students seeking higher diplomas. They are offered through the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education, the School of Business and Information Systems, the Hong Kong Design Institute, the Institute of Professional Education and Knowledge, the Youth College, training and development centres and skills centres for people with disabilities. The council also provides services such as the administration of the apprenticeship scheme, trade testing and certification.

### *Post-secondary Education*

Hong Kong has 12 degree-awarding higher education institutions, eight of which are funded by the public through the University Grants Committee (UGC). The other four are the publicly-funded Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts and the self-financing Open University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Shue Yan University and Chu Hai College of Higher Education. Together with providers offering locally accredited sub-degree programmes, there are 23 post-secondary institutions in Hong Kong.

The overall post-secondary participation rate for the 17 to 20 age group increased from 33 per cent in the 2000-01 academic year to over 60 per cent in the 2008-09 academic year. At the degree level, there are 14 500 first-year-first-degree places in institutions funded by the UGC, for about 18 per cent of the relevant age cohort. A further 4 per cent in the same age group enjoyed access to around 3 000 places in self-financing degree programmes. In addition, the UGC-funded institutions and the self-financing degree-awarding institutions provide around 2 000 senior year undergraduate places and 2 000 top-up degree places respectively for graduates of sub-degree programmes and students with other qualifications.

At the sub-degree level, there are around 26 000 available self-financing places. These are in addition to some 9 700 publicly-funded places for sub-degree level courses offered by the City University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the Hong Kong Institute of Education, the VTC and the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts.

The UGC is a non-statutory advisory body appointed by the Chief Executive to advise the Government on the development and funding of higher education and to administer public grants to the eight higher education institutions. It also plays a major role in quality assurance and in promoting research. The committee comprises local and non-local academics, professionals and community leaders.

Each of the eight higher education institutions funded through the UGC is an autonomous statutory body with its own ordinance and governing body. They enjoy a high degree of academic and institutional autonomy, and are free to manage their own affairs within the parameters of the law.



The eight UGC-funded institutions have distinctive and complementary roles that reflect their different origins, missions and the way they have responded to Hong Kong's evolving needs. The UGC is committed to taking a more strategic approach by developing an interlocking yet individually different higher education system, with each institution fulfilling a unique role based on its strengths.

Since 2003 the administration has launched four rounds of a Matching Grant Scheme, each costing \$1 billion, to broaden the funding sources of the eight UGC-funded institutions and to strengthen their fund-raising capabilities. The fourth round ran from January 2008 to February 2009, and for the first time, two self-financed universities also participated with the eight UGC-funded institutions. Over \$2.1 billion in donations was secured under the fourth round, and the \$1 billion matching grant was fully allocated.

Locally awarded degrees up to doctoral level are widely recognised by institutions of higher learning around the world. All UGC-funded institutions have self-accrediting status and well-established quality assurance mechanisms. In April 2007 the UGC set up a semi-autonomous Quality Assurance Council under its aegis to provide third party assurance of quality. The Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) validates courses and programmes offered by higher education institutions that are not self-accrediting.

The UGC has commenced another Higher Education Review to examine areas such as the vision and role of higher education in Hong Kong, its development trend, quality assurance and the research support strategy for the sector. The UGC aims to submit a report to the Government in 2010.

### *Qualifications Framework*

The Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (QF) was formally launched in May 2008 to promote lifelong learning with a view to enhancing the overall competitiveness of Hong Kong's workforce. The QF provides a seven-level hierarchy covering qualifications in the academic, vocational and continuing education sectors. The HKCAAVQ is specified as the Accreditation Authority under the Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (AAVQ) Ordinance, and is entrusted with the responsibility of assuring the quality of academic and vocational qualifications and their associated learning programmes.

Information on qualifications and learning programmes that have been quality assured and recognised under the QF is uploaded to a Qualifications Registry (QR) and made available over the Internet free of charge to the public. The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) mechanism enables workers to obtain formal recognition for the knowledge, skills and experience they acquired at the workplace, and facilitates their further learning without starting from scratch. The RPL mechanism has been implemented, on a pilot basis, for three industries for a period of two years with effect from June 2008.

To ensure relevancy to industry needs, the Government has been assisting various industries in setting up Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITAC), which comprise major stakeholders from the industries concerned. So far, 13 ITACs have

been set up, their first task being to draft the Specification of Competency Standards (SCS) for their respective industries, which maps out the industry's competency requirements and performance standards under different functional areas, and provide a basis for course providers to design training programmes to meet the needs of the industries.

### *Adult Education*

The Financial Assistance Scheme for Designated Evening Adult Education Courses, which provides subsidies for adult learners attending evening secondary courses at designated centres, saw a total of 1 465 students enrolled in the 2009-10 school year.

### *Quality Education Fund*

Up to the end of the 2008-09 school year, the Quality Education Fund (QEF) had provided about \$3.7 billion for the execution of some 7 700 projects. The Fund was established in 1998 with an allocation of \$5 billion to support initiatives that promote quality education and schemes that recognise excellence in schools and teachers. The QEF also identifies good practices that other schools may adopt.

### *School-based Support Services*

The Education Development Fund (EDF) was set up in 2004 with an allocation of \$550 million to support educational reforms. The EDB provided support services, including those financed by EDF, to 325 secondary schools, 431 primary schools, 18 special schools and 128 kindergartens/kindergarten-cum-child care centres through the School-based Support Services Office in the 2008-09 school year.

The Regional Education Offices also offer support services to individual schools. Professionals from these offices work with school heads and teachers on new learning and teaching methods.

### *Support Measures for Non-Chinese Speaking Students*

The EDB has put in place various support measures to help non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students integrate in the local education system and the wider community. Such measures include the provision of intensive on-site support and special grant to 17 designated primary and nine secondary schools in the 2009-10 school year. A supplementary guide has been developed for teaching Chinese Language to NCS students and issued to schools alongside a series of curriculum resources including Adopted School Learning Materials in the form of textbooks. Tertiary institutions have been commissioned to provide on-site support programmes and to run Chinese Language Learning Support Centres offering further support to NCS students and to train Chinese Language teachers in schools with NCS students.

### *Support Programmes for Needy Students*

Under the School-based After-school Learning and Support Programmes, 896 schools and 153 non-governmental organisations received subsidies in the 2009-10 school year for organising after-school activities to help some 167 700 needy students improve their learning effectiveness, broaden their learning experience

outside the classroom and raise their understanding of the community and sense of belonging.

Funding is also available to some 4 200 needy student members of the Uniformed Groups and the Hong Kong Award for Young People to help them buy uniforms or join training courses.

The Hong Kong Jockey Club Life-wide Learning Fund was established by the Education Bureau and the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust in 2002 to support needy students to full participation in life-wide learning activities. In the school year 2008-2009, 202 000 needy students of all levels (P1-S7) have benefited from the fund.

A computer recycling programme was launched in early 2009 to provide students of needy families with recycled computers and one year's free Internet access service. It is expected that about 20 000 families will benefit from this programme.

## **Regulatory Framework and Governance Structure**

### *The Government's Role and Organisation*

The Secretary for Education, who heads the EDB, formulates, develops and reviews educational policies, secures funds from the government budget, and oversees the implementation of educational programmes with the assistance of the Permanent Secretary for Education.

### *Education Ordinance*

School education services are regulated by the Education Ordinance. School operators must comply with its provisions and its subsidiary legislations relating to areas such as registration of schools, teachers and managers, health and safety requirements, fees and charges, and teacher qualifications.

### *Vocational Training Council Ordinance*

The Vocational Training Council Ordinance provides for the establishment, functions and management of the council, which is the main body responsible for vocational education and technical training. Its members comprise representatives of industry, commerce, service sectors, employees and the government.

### *Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance*

The Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance governs institutions offering post-secondary courses. As at December 2009, there were three approved post-secondary institutions registered under the ordinance, Hong Kong Shue Yan University, Caritas Francis Hsu College, and Chu Hai College of Higher Education.

### *Non-local Higher and Professional Education (Regulation) Ordinance*

The Non-local Higher and Professional Education (Regulation) Ordinance regulates non-local courses conducted in Hong Kong through a system of registration. It protects Hong Kong consumers by guarding against the marketing of substandard courses.

### *Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (AAVQ) Ordinance and Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) Ordinance*

The AAVQ Ordinance provides a legal framework for the establishment of the Qualifications Framework and the Qualifications Registry, and the underpinning quality assurance mechanism. The HKCAAVQ Ordinance provides for the establishment, functions and management of the council, which is responsible for quality assurance of qualifications recognised under the QF.

## **Management of Schools and Tertiary Institutions**

### *School-based Management*

School-based management (SBM) is a management framework which is school-based, student-centred and quality-focused. It involves devolving to schools greater autonomy and funding flexibility. In return, schools have to be more transparent and accountable. They have to include all key stakeholders in major decision-making. All aided schools are now practising SBM and they shall include all key stakeholders in their governance.

### *External School Review*

The School Development and Accountability Framework, introduced in May 2003, seeks to ensure sustained school development through school self-evaluation, complemented by an external school review (ESR) to give schools the benefit of feedback and suggestions for improvement from a team of reviewers with perspectives across schools. The new phase of the ESR started in the 2008-09 school year. It will continue to be improvement-oriented, and is expected to cover all schools in the public sector in about six years.

### *Governance of Tertiary Institutions*

Each tertiary institution has its own structure of governance. The structure includes a governing body, called the council or the court, and a body to regulate academic affairs, called the senate or the academic board.

## **Curriculum Development**

### *Curriculum Development Council*

The Curriculum Development Council is an advisory body that makes recommendations to the Government on all matters relating to school curriculum development – from kindergarten to senior secondary levels. Its members include heads of schools, practising teachers, parents, employers, academics from tertiary institutions, professionals from related fields or related bodies, representatives from the HKEAA and the VTC, as well as EDB officers.

### *The Curriculum*

The school curriculum provides five essential learning experiences: moral and civic education, intellectual development, community service, physical and aesthetic development, career-related experiences for lifelong learning and the whole-person

development of students. Curriculum reform progresses with schools adapting to the central curriculum to meet the needs of their students, and building on the strengths and experiences developed to raise the quality of learning and teaching further and to enhance curriculum development. There have been improvements in students' generic capabilities, values and attitudes, and students are becoming independent learners.

### *Applied Learning*

Applied Learning (ApL) courses are elective subjects under the senior secondary curriculum. They are introduced to Secondary 5 and 6 to cater for students' diverse learning needs by offering studies with stronger elements of practical learning linked to broad professional and vocational fields. In the 2010-12 cohort, 30 ApL courses developed by 11 course providers will be offered.

### *Information Technology in Education*

The Government is committed to promoting the use of information technology (IT) to improve learning and to equip students with necessary IT skills to meet the challenges of the information age and to become lifelong learners. All schools are connected to the Internet. The student-to-computer ratios are about 4:1 in secondary schools and 6:1 in primary schools.

### *Language Education*

The Standing Committee on Language Education and Research was set up in 1996 to advise the Government on language education matters. It also advises the trustee of the Language Fund on the policy and procedures governing the fund's operation. The fund was set up in 1994 to provide financial support for initiatives to improve Hong Kong people's proficiency in Chinese, including Putonghua and English.

### *Native-speaking English Teacher Scheme*

The Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Scheme has helped to create an enriched English language learning environment for students. Through the introduction of literacy programmes and language arts, NETs working with local English teachers enhance teaching practices and make learning English more interesting for students. There have been changes in classroom practice, with more innovative teaching strategies being adopted. Students have also shown a positive attitude towards the learning of English. At present, there are some 414 NETs in secondary schools and around 484 in primary schools.

## **Professional Development at Schools**

### *Upgrading Teacher Status*

To raise the status and professional standards of teachers, the EDB has increased the ratios of graduate teacher posts in public sector primary and secondary schools to 45 per cent and 80 per cent in the 2008-09 school year, and further to 50 per cent and 85 per cent with effect from the 2009-10 school year. A deputy head rank in public sector primary schools was created in the 2008-09 school year.

The EDB has continued to organise the Chief Executive's Award for Teaching Excellence (CEATE) to give recognition to accomplished teachers and foster a culture of excellence in the teaching profession. A total of 41 teachers received awards in CEATE 2009.

#### *Teachers' Professional Development*

The Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications issued the 'Third Report on Teachers' Continuing Professional Development (CPD)' which recommended continuation of a 'soft' approach to implementing teachers' CPD.

#### *Principals' Professional Development*

Serving principals continued to engage in professional development to enhance school leadership. Since 2004-05, about 770 aspiring principals have attained the Certification for Principalship and half have become principals.

#### *Hong Kong Teachers' Centre*

The Hong Kong Teachers' Centre endeavours to promote continuous professional development for teachers through organising conferences, seminars, workshops and experience-sharing sessions. Physical and mental health activities are also arranged to help teachers maintain a work-life balance.

#### *Council on Professional Conduct in Education*

The Council on Professional Conduct in Education is a non-statutory body which advises the Government on ways to promote professional conduct in education and on cases of alleged professional misconduct involving educators.

### **Student Finance**

To ensure that no student is deprived of education due to lack of means, the Student Financial Assistance Agency (SFAA) provides means-tested and non-means-tested financial assistance to students at various study levels. The SFAA also administers a number of privately-funded scholarship schemes.

#### *Financial Assistance for Pre-primary Education*

Eligible children at pre-primary level may apply for non-means-tested fee subsidy under the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme, and means-tested fee remission under the Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme. In the 2008-09 school year, fee subsidies and remissions totalling \$1.2 billion and \$309.7 million were granted to 112 939 and 39 392 students respectively.

#### *Financial Assistance for Primary and Secondary Education*

At the primary and secondary school levels, means-tested assistance covers textbook grants and travel subsidies. In the 2008-09 school year, \$470.6 million was disbursed to 294 037 students for purchasing textbooks, \$244.6 million to 197 829 students as travel subsidies. In addition, examination fees totalling \$15.2 million were waived for 11 355 students taking public examinations.

### *Financial Assistance for Post-secondary Education*

Means-tested grants and low-interest loans are offered to eligible full-time students pursuing eligible courses at UGC-funded or publicly-funded institutions. In the 2008-09 academic year, 27 472 students received \$782.9 million of grants and \$288.9 million of loans.

Eligible students pursuing locally-accredited, self-financing full-time post-secondary programmes are provided with means-tested grants covering tuition fees and academic expenses and low-interest loans covering living expenses. In the 2008-09 academic year, \$588.7 million in grants and \$180.8 million in loans were provided to 17 597 students.

Non-means-tested loans operating on a no-gain-no-loss and full-cost-recovery basis are available to students pursuing eligible publicly-funded or self-financing post-secondary programmes, and eligible professional or continuing education courses. In the 2008-09 academic year, 23 344 people received non-means-tested loans amounting to \$995 million.

Travel subsidies totalling \$93.3 million were provided to 39 572 students of post-secondary institutions.

### *Tuition Fee Reimbursement for Project Yi Jin Students and Adult Education*

All eligible students of Project Yi Jin and designated evening adult education courses may receive a 30 per cent tuition fee reimbursement. Those who pass the means test may receive further fee reimbursement.

### *Scholarships*

The \$1 billion Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's Government Scholarship Fund was established to award Government scholarships on the basis of merit to outstanding local and non-local students studying in full-time publicly-funded degree or above level programmes in the eight UGC-funded institutions and the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. Privately-funded scholarships administered by SFAA are provided for local and overseas studies mainly on merit basis.

## **Community Participation in Education**

### *Home-school Co-operation*

Founded in 1993, the Committee on Home-school Co-operation promotes positive attitudes towards home-school co-operation by encouraging the establishment of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs). Up to 2009 more than 1 300 PTAs had been established. In 2009, the EDB funded the PTAs' organisation of about 2 850 school-based and district-based parent education activities.

### *School Business Partnership*

In 2005, the EDB launched the Business-School Partnership Programme to take students out of the classroom to gain a wider perspective of society. In 2009, about

160 business firms participated in the programme, organising more than 270 activities, benefiting over 100 000 students.

### **Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education**

As its name suggests, the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education advises the Government on civic education matters. It also organises events with the Government and other concerned parties to promote civic education outside the school. In 2009, it focused on good citizenship, civic responsibility, building happy families and an integrated and harmonious society, respect for human rights, the rule of law, enhancing understanding of the Basic Law and a sense of national identity.

The committee runs a website to promote civic education themes. National education literature is provided in the National Education webpage. Events organised by the committee in 2009 included an exhibition which carried the theme 'Enrich your Life, Serve the Community'. The committee also produced civic education materials, which included a family magazine, youth magazine, newsletter and a calendar for 2010 the theme for which was 'Great Developments of Our Country'. This theme was adopted as the title of a new series of television APIs (Announcement in Public Interest) which were broadcast with the national anthem.

The committee collaborated with Radio Television Hong Kong to produce two national education TV programmes entitled 'Getting to Know our Cultural Roots' and 'Our Rich Heritage' to enhance young people's knowledge of China.

The Basic Law was also promoted widely. In 2009, the committee sponsored community organisations to carry out civic education activities with the theme, 'Enrich your Life, Serve the Community'.

### **Commission on Youth**

The main task of the Commission on Youth is to advise the Government on matters concerning young people. It also initiates studies on ways to help them develop properly, and promotes moral education and organises exchange programmes with international youth organisations for them.

The commission runs programmes to bring out and cultivate young people's potential. These schemes include the International Youth Exchange Programme to broaden young people's outlook and world perception. In 2009, 55 young people visited Britain, Ireland and Singapore under the programme, while 43 from Britain, Ireland and Singapore made reciprocal trips to Hong Kong.

The commission also continued to run the 'Community Participation Scheme for Organising Study Tours to the Mainland' to enhance young people's knowledge of their home country, foster exchange with Mainland people and strengthen their sense of national identity. The commission sponsored 191 study tours to the Mainland in 2009 and organised a series of events under the new 'Youth National Education Funding Scheme' to promote national education for Hong Kong's young people.



### **The 60th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC)**

To celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the PRC, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's Government co-operated with various sectors of the community in launching a wide range of celebratory activities for the participation and enjoyment of the general public throughout the year. These activities provided the participants with a deeper understanding of the nation's developments and achievements in recent years, and further boosted their national awareness.

The Home Affairs Bureau, in conjunction with the Commission on Youth, the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education, major community and district organisations, District Councils, national education bodies, major youth groups as well as other sectors in the territory, staged different celebratory events in various neighbourhoods to cater for the needs and interest of different people throughout the year. These events included a display of China's Yuanwang-6 Space Tracking Ship, the Cultural Carnival of Chinese Ethnic Groups, Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Youth Cultural Exchange Programme, Young Astronaut Training Camp, Stamp Design Competition, National Day Carnival, Cultural Show, Youth Parade, and a Youth Gala Show.

#### *Websites*

Education Bureau: [www.edb.gov.hk](http://www.edb.gov.hk)

Home Affairs Bureau: [www.hab.gov.hk](http://www.hab.gov.hk)