

Chapter 7

Education

Education is the key to enabling our young people to develop their potential, acquire knowledge and nurture personal qualities so that they are well-equipped to meet the challenges of the globalised and knowledge-based world of the 21st Century. It optimises the demographic structure of the community and remains the Government's top spending priority.

Key Achievements in 2010

Developing Education Services

Education services is one of six advantaged industries with good potential for further development. The Government aims to enhance Hong Kong's position as a regional education hub, nurturing talent to support the growth of the economy and increasing Hong Kong's 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 of China, world-class universities and diversified system of education. Measures have been implemented to attract quality non-local students to study and, after graduation, to work and to live in the city. The Government believes that by attracting these students, Hong Kong will enlarge its talent pool and improve the quality of its population, and in turn support various sectors of the economy and increase the competitiveness of the economy. The Government has been working together with higher education institutions to step up exchange and promotion efforts overseas to encourage more students to choose Hong Kong as a preferred destination for education.

A more diversified higher education sector will provide more education opportunities and wider choice. In order to promote the development of the self-financing sector, support measures have been implemented to provide land at a nominal premium for the construction of purpose-built premises, loans to develop new premises, and other one-off, financial assistance measures. A site in Queen's Hill has been reserved for the development of self-financing tertiary institutions with

boarding facilities. With a gross floor area of more than 100 000 square metres, the site can accommodate at least 8 000 students. An expression of interest exercise was launched in December to invite institutions, local and non-local, to indicate their interest in developing self-financing higher education institutions at the site.

The Government has also continued to invest heavily in the publicly-funded higher education sector. The Theme-based Research Scheme, financing research proposals on themes of a more long-term nature that will be strategically beneficial to the development of Hong Kong, was formally launched with the support of \$4 billion of capital from the Research Endowment Fund.

Since 2003 the Government has launched four rounds of Matching Grant Scheme, each costing \$1 billion, to broaden the funding sources of the higher education sector and strengthen their fund-raising capabilities. The scheme helped encourage the emergence of a philanthropic culture for the higher education sector. In view of its success, the Government launched the fifth round in June 2010, targeting the award of matching grants of up to another \$1 billion and to further extend the coverage to 12 degree-awarding institutions in Hong Kong.

Progressive Implementation of the New Academic Structure

The New Senior Secondary (NSS) curriculum has been implemented smoothly from Secondary 4 since the New Academic Structure was launched in 2009. Some progress has been observed through school visits, focus group interviews and surveys on areas relating to curriculum, learning and assessment. For instance, schools have provided a broader and more balanced curriculum, and have made greater efforts to smooth the interface between the junior secondary and senior secondary levels.

The eight tertiary institutions funded by the University Grants Committee have announced the minimum requirements for application for admission. Institutions' support of students' whole-person development was reflected in the recognition of the recording of students' achievements in the Student Learning Profile.

The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) has secured international recognition of the new Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education from countries including the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia and Canada. The new qualifications guarantee smooth articulation to further studies and employment after students' completion of senior secondary education.

Enhancement of Language Learning Environment in Schools

The fine-tuned medium of instruction (MOI) arrangements commenced at Secondary 1 level in the 2010-11 school year and will progress each school year to a higher level at junior secondary levels. The Government has invested substantially in developing measures to support schools in grasping the golden opportunity to achieve the aim of 'Enriching Our Language Environment and Realising Our Vision' under MOI fine-tuning.

An additional funding of about \$320 million was earmarked for a two-year Refined English Enhancement Scheme. More than 400 secondary schools have expressed their interest in joining to refine their existing school-based measures or

initiate new measures to further enhance students' exposure to and use of English through their school education. To help students build a solid foundation, the Government has provided some \$110 million to enhancing the learning and teaching of English in 230 primary schools under the English Enhancement Grant Scheme for Primary Schools. Another \$590 million was put aside to revamp the professional development programmes for teachers using English as the MOI.

A 'Scholarship for Prospective English Teachers' was newly introduced in 2010-11 school year to attract talent to the teaching profession. Students with good English proficiency who will start pursuing English major first degree and/or teacher training programmes in local higher education institutions are eligible. Upon graduation, successful applicants are required to teach English full-time in a primary or secondary school in Hong Kong.

Fostering a Healthy School Environment

School education plays an important role in helping students reach a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being. Starting from the 2010-11 school year, all schools are encouraged to formulate a school-based Healthy School Policy (HSP) that should be integrated as a long-term goal of schools' development. The HSP has four elements: developing a management and organisation system for co-ordinating health matters; fostering a healthy school environment; developing students' healthy lifestyles; and identifying needy students and putting in place a referral system. Prime importance is given to inculcating positive attitudes and values in students and helping them acquire life skills and the ability to resist temptation.

Since the launching of the 'EatSmart@school.hk' campaign in the 2006-07 school year, the Education Bureau (EDB) has been working with the Department of Health to promote healthy eating among students. The 'EatSmart School Accreditation Scheme', launched in 2010, received a good response from primary schools in developing a supportive environment to help students develop good eating habits and make wise decisions.

Development of Textbook Review System

The Working Group on Textbooks and e-learning Resources Development submitted its report to EDB in October 2009. With regard to its recommendation on the arrangements for application for textbook revision, EDB has extended the 'three-year rule of no revision' to 'five-year rule of no revision' starting from the 2010-11 school year.

Student Achievements

As in previous years, Hong Kong students continued to excel in international competitions. Hong Kong teams won a total of five gold, six silver and nine bronze medals in the International Mathematical Olympiad, the International Physics Olympiad, the International Olympiad in Informatics and the International Sustainable World (Energy, Engineering, and Environment) Project Olympiad.

In science and technology, creative secondary students with talents in digital animation garnered top prizes and awards from different film festivals hosted in Croatia, Argentina, Australia and the United States.

In the areas of visual arts, languages and creativity, our students also had achievements in various renowned international competitions. Primary and secondary students were awarded a total of six out of 12 Grand Prizes in the International Students' Visual Arts Contest cum Exhibition of Hong Kong (2010) in which 3 200 entries were submitted from 25 countries in the five continents. Other awards included the 11th International Meeting of Juvenile Art — Evora 2010 (Best Collection and First Individual Prize), the 15th International Competition of Children's Art Works — Slovenia (First Prize), the 19th International Children's Painting Competition on the Environment (Global First Prize), the 29th International Public Speaking Competition (First Runner-up), and the Odyssey of the Mind — 2010 World Finals (First Prize).

In music, Hong Kong students also achieved excellent performance at the 64th Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod, 6th World Choir Games and 2010 Busan Choral Festival & Competition with a total of six champions and three first runners-up.

In sports, Hong Kong students won a number of medals in various high-level international events including, in squash, five bronze in the Guangzhou 2010 Asian Games, two silver in the 1st Youth Olympic Games, and one gold and two bronze at the 2010 Asian Junior Individual Championship; in rope skipping, 20 gold, 13 silver and 15 bronze as well as the World Cup, which is the highest award of the 8th World Rope Skipping Championships; in rowing, three gold, four silver and five bronze in the Asian Cup Junior Championships; in baseball, one bronze in the Asian-Pacific Regional Tournament 2010 (Little League); in table tennis, 36 gold, 32 silver and 32 bronze in the Junior and Cadet Open — ITTF Junior Circuit run in 10 different countries/cities; in swimming, three bronze in the 2nd Asian Beach Games (Women's 5 kilometres Marathon Swimming); and in orienteering, ten gold, four silver and four bronze in the 2nd Asian Championships and two gold in the All China Championships. The students also broke four Hong Kong records in the Asian Grand Prix and demonstrated excellent performance in the Asian Schools Table-tennis and Handball Championships as well as the Schools Interport Athletics, Cross Country, Swimming, Football, Basketball, Table-tennis and Hockey Championships.

Major Challenges Ahead

Facilitating Parallel Development of Publicly-funded and Self-financing Post-secondary Education

To provide more diversified study pathways for youngsters, the Government adopts a two-pronged strategy to promote the parallel development of publicly-funded and self-financing post-secondary education sectors.

For the publicly-funded sector, the Government plans to double the number of University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded senior year undergraduate intake places

to 4 000 per annum by phases starting from the 2012-13 school year. This initiative will help foster a flexible, diversified and multiple-entry, multiple-exit education framework with greater inter-flow between the self-financing and publicly-funded sectors, and between the sub-degree and degree sectors. In addition, the Government aims to increase the UGC-funded first-year first-degree places from 14 620 to 15 000 per cohort starting from the 2012-13 school year.

The UGC has conducted another Higher Education Review and submitted to the Government its report 'Aspirations for the Higher Education System in Hong Kong'. The report reflects a wide range of issues pertinent to the post-secondary education sector, and offers recommendations on appropriate strategies for developing Hong Kong's post-secondary education. The Government is studying the recommendations and will consult stakeholders in the post-secondary education sector.

To support the long-term development of the self-financing sector, the Government will set up a \$2.5 billion Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund to provide scholarships and enhance quality of teaching and learning to provide students with more quality articulation opportunities and choices.

Upon full implementation of the above new initiatives, it is estimated that over 30 per cent of young people in the relevant age group will have opportunity to study publicly-funded or self-financing degree programmes. Including sub-degree places, young people attending local post-secondary programmes will account for about 65 per cent of the age group.

Enriching the Provision of Moral and National Education in Schools

One of the aims of education in schools is to foster among the students a sense of responsibility towards the family, the community, the country and the world. The major objective of the provision of Moral and National Education in schools is to help students understand their national identity and be committed to contributing to the nation and society.

The Government aims to deepen national education by aligning experiential learning with curriculum objectives and content. The EDB will strengthen the elements on China in various key learning areas under the primary and secondary curricula. Exchange activities with the Mainland for students will become part of the national education programme.

Promoting national education can be done through different means and channels, such as classroom teaching, teacher education, extra-curricular activities and exchanges with young people from the Mainland. The EDB aims to subsidise every primary and secondary school student in joining at least one Mainland exchange programme. With the support of voluntary groups, the EDB will continue to administer the national education platform 'Passing on the Torch' and provide some 4 000 additional places a year starting from the 2011-12 school year. Additional resources will be provided for teachers to participate in relevant professional study courses in the Mainland.

Supporting Internationalisation of Education

Internationalisation is one of the key components underpinning the success of our higher education system. Hong Kong has a unique character of having both Chinese and Western elements in its culture. The Government firmly believes that it is critical to nurture talents with a global perspective in order to maintain Hong Kong's position as Asia's world city. Only then will Hong Kong be able to continue to thrive in the global arena.

To achieve this goal, the Government spares no effort to support the internationalisation of education. Apart from implementing measures such as financing government scholarships/fellowships and relaxing employment and immigration restrictions to attract non-local students to study in Hong Kong, the Government also works hand in hand with institutions to step up exchange and promotion. By attracting quality non-local students, the Government will enlarge the talent pool and improve the quality of the population, and in turn support various sectors of the economy and increase the competitiveness of the economy.

To promote the development of the international school sector, four greenfield sites were allocated in 2009 for the development of international schools. Coupled with other facilitating measures, more than 5 000 new international school places are expected to come on stream in the coming few years.

Strengthening the Enriched Language Environment in Schools

The fine-tuned medium of instruction (MOI) arrangements for secondary schools have been implemented from the 2010-11 school year at Secondary 1 and will be extended progressively to other junior secondary levels. Under the fine-tuned MOI framework, schools can exercise their professional judgement on the most appropriate MOI arrangements. In making their decisions, schools are expected to give consideration to their own contexts, including teachers' capability in teaching in English and students' abilities and needs as well as the school support measures in place. It is hoped that more opportunities will be provided for students to use and receive quality exposure to English so that they are better equipped for their future studies and careers.

At the same time, the Government has allocated extra funding to both primary and secondary schools to help them implement or refine their school-based English enhancement measures. 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 enrich the English language environment in schools. Focus inspections are conducted to help schools review the effectiveness of their MOI arrangements and to give recommendations to help them make improvements. A range of measures is in place to share good practices and experience, provide resource support and address teachers' professional development needs with respect to the use of English for learning and teaching.

Preparing for e-learning in Schools

The Working Group on Textbooks and e-learning Resources Development has made a number of recommendations to promote e-learning and the EDB started

implementing these measures in 2010. The EDB is developing a Depository of Curriculum-based Learning and Teaching Resources to provide a wide variety of digital resources for teachers to choose from and has just completed one for Chinese, English, Mathematics and General Studies at the primary levels. The Depository for Chinese, English, Mathematics, Science, Technology Education and Personal, Social and Humanities Education at the junior secondary levels is expected to be launched in early 2011.

The EDB will continue to sharpen teacher's IT pedagogical skills in adopting e-learning in schools by providing them with professional development training programmes.

Start-up capital of \$500 million was approved in 2010 to help primary and secondary students with e-learning at home, including the implementation of a subsidy scheme from the 2010-11 school year to assist children of low-income families receiving primary or secondary education in gaining access to the Internet at home.

Overall Education Landscape

Expenditure on Education

In the 2010-11 financial year, the approved estimate for recurrent government expenditure on education was \$52.2 billion, which was 22.7 per cent of all recurrent government expenditure, while the total estimate for government expenditure on education was \$63.7 billion, or 20.1 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, the 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 EDB aims to upgrade further the professional qualifications of 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, rates and government rents 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 80 per cent of kindergartens benefit 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 \$14,000 in the 2010-11 school year and this will be increased progressively to \$16,000 in 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 fully subvented by the Government.

In September 2010, a total of 275 340 children were enrolled in 462 public sector primary schools and 376 730 children in 402 public sector secondary schools. Public sector school places made up about 82 per cent of school places. In addition, there were 73 Direct Subsidy Scheme schools, offering about 7.8 per cent of the school places.

As of September 2010, there were 48 international schools, including 15 schools operated by the English Schools Foundation. These schools offer different non-local curricula, including the national curricula of the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Singapore and others such as the International Baccalaureate programmes, providing about 36 100 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. There were 60 special schools, 20 of which have boarding facilities. Together, they provided around 8 700 school places and 1 100 boarding places for students with severe special educational needs or multiple disabilities. In September 2010, some 25 640 students with special

educational needs were studying in public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools.

The Government also helps gifted students to develop their capabilities through various 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 16 000 full-time and part-time students joined the Government's Yi Jin programme in the 2010-11 school 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.

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 210 000 full-time and part-time places during the 2010-11 school 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 its member institutes such as the Institute of Professional Education and Knowledge, School for Higher and Professional Education, Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education, Hong Kong Design Institute, School of Business and Information Systems, Hospitality Industry Training and Development Centre, Chinese Cuisine Training Institute, Maritime Services Training Institute, Pro-Act Training and Development Centres, Youth College, Integrated Vocational Development Centre and Shine Skills Centres. The council also provides services such as the administration of the apprenticeship scheme, trade testing and certification.

Post-secondary Education

Hong Kong has 13 degree-awarding higher education institutions, eight of which are funded by the public through the UGC. The other five are the publicly-

funded Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) and the self-financing the Open University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Shue Yan University, Chu Hai College of Higher Education and Hang Seng Management College. Together with providers offering locally-accredited sub-degree programmes, there are 22 post-secondary institutions in Hong Kong.

The overall post-secondary participation rate for the 17 to 20 age group has increased to over 60 per cent, more than double the level of about 30 per cent a decade ago. At the degree level, there were around 14 800 first-year-first-degree places in institutions funded by the UGC and the HKAPA in the 2010-11 school year. The same age group also enjoyed access to around 3 500 places in self-financing degree programmes. In addition, the UGC-funded institutions and the self-financing degree-awarding institutions provided around 2 000 senior year undergraduate places and 3 000 top-up degree places respectively for graduates of sub-degree programmes and students with other qualifications. Overall, around 27 per cent of the relevant age cohort enjoyed access to local degree-level education.

At the sub-degree level, there were around 26 700 self-financing intake places. These were in addition to some 8 700 publicly-funded intake 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 HKAPA.

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.

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.

Qualifications Framework

Launched in May 2008, the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (QF) provides a transparent and accessible platform to promote lifelong learning and hence helps enhance the competitiveness of the workforce. It is a seven-level hierarchy that orders and supports qualifications of academic, vocational and continuing education. The QF is underpinned by a robust quality assurance mechanism. All qualifications recognised under the QF are locally accredited by HKCAAVQ or by the self-accrediting institutions in Hong Kong.

As a public face of the QF, the Government set up a Qualifications Register (QR), a web-based database that lists out all the qualifications recognised under the QF and their associated learning programmes. Learners can make use of the QR to map out their own study pathways.

The EDB has so far assisted 15 industries¹ to set up Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITACs), which comprise key stakeholders from the industries concerned. The ITACs are tasked with drawing up Specifications of Competency Standards for the relevant sectors, which set out the skills, knowledge and outcome standards required of employees in different functional areas of the respective sectors, and provide a basis for course providers to design training programmes to meet the needs of the sectors. The EDB also developed the Recognition of Prior Learning mechanism in parallel with the implementation of QF to enable employees to obtain formal recognition for the knowledge, skills and experience they have acquired in the workplace, and facilitate further learning without starting from scratch.

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 1 460 students enrolled in the 2010-11 school year.

Quality Education Fund

Up to the end of the 2009-10 school year, the Quality Education Fund (QEF) had provided about \$3.82 billion for the execution of some 7 940 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 311 secondary schools, 431 primary schools, 17

¹ Printing and Publishing, Watch and Clock, Chinese Catering, Hairdressing, Property Management, Electrical and Mechanical Services, Jewellery, Information and Communications Technology, Automotive, Beauty, Logistics, Banking, Import and Export, Testing, Inspection and Certification and Retail.

special schools and 148 kindergartens/kindergarten-cum-child care centres through the School-based Support Services Office in the 2009-10 school year.

The Regional Education Offices also offer school-based support services to schools in response to the needs of students, teachers, schools and other stakeholders they serve.

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. Such measures include the provision of focused support and annual grant to 19 designated primary and nine secondary schools in the 2010-11 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 learning materials in the form of textbooks. Tertiary institutions have been commissioned to provide on-site support programmes, run Chinese Language Learning Support Centres offering further support to NCS students and train Chinese Language teachers of schools with NCS students.

Support Programmes for Needy Students

Under the School-based After-school Learning and Support Programmes, 849 schools and 157 non-governmental organisations received subsidies in the 2010-11 school year for organising after-school activities to help some 163 100 needy students improve their learning effectiveness, broaden their learning experience outside the classroom and raise their understanding of the community and sense of belonging. The funding has significantly been increased by \$100 million to \$175 million to strengthen further support to the needy students.

Funding is also available to some 4 000 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, established in 2002 by the Education Bureau and the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, provides financial aid to needy students to participate in life-wide learning activities organised or recognised by schools. In the 2009-2010 school year, about \$44 million was allocated to 961 participating schools, benefiting 201 800 students (Primary 1-Secondary 7).

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

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 legislation 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 2010, there were four approved post-secondary institutions registered under the ordinance — Hong Kong Shue Yan University, Caritas Francis Hsu College, Chu Hai College of Higher Education and Hang Seng Management College.

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 (QF) and the Qualifications Register, 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 under which schools are devolved with greater autonomy and funding flexibility. In return, they 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 structure.

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 in tandem with schools' adaptation to the central curriculum to meet the needs of their students. There have been improvements in students' generic capabilities, values and attitudes, and students are becoming independent learners. Through experience and reflective practice, schools' professional competence is rising and the quality of learning and teaching will be further enhanced.

The New Senior Secondary (NSS) curriculum, implemented in 2009, is supported by a flexible, coherent and diversified curriculum aimed at catering for students' varied interests, needs, aptitudes and abilities. Students are required to take four core subjects and acquire Other Learning Experience. In addition, they can choose two to three subjects from 20 NSS elective subjects, a range of Applied Learning (ApL) courses or six other language subjects according to their interests.

ApL courses 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 first cohort (2010-12), 30 ApL courses are offered with the participation of about 7 000 students from about 300 schools. In the second cohort (2011-13), 35 ApL courses will be offered by 12 course providers.

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 create an enriched English language learning environment for students. Through implementing literacy programmes and using language arts resources, 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 more positive attitude towards the learning of English. At present, there are some 410 NETs working in secondary schools and around 480 NETs working in primary schools.

Professional Development at Schools

Upgrading Teacher Status

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

The EDB 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 61 teachers received awards or certificates of merits in the CEATE (2009-2010).

Teachers' Professional Development

With the issue of the 'Third Report on Teachers' Continuing Professional Development (CPD)' in 2009, schools continued to adopt a soft approach to implementing teacher's CPD.

Principals' Professional Development

Serving principals continued to engage in professional development to enhance school leadership. Some 900 aspirants have attained the Certification for Principalship and more than half have become principals.

Hong Kong Teachers' Centre

The Hong Kong Teachers' Centre organises conferences, seminars, workshops and experience-sharing sessions to promote continuing professional development for teachers. 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 (CPC) is a non-statutory body advising the Government on measures to promote professional conduct in education and on alleged misconduct cases involving educators that are lodged with the CPC.

Student Finance

To ensure 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 2009-10 school year, fee subsidies and remissions totalling \$1.4 billion and \$271.7 million were granted to 118 974 and 31 662 students respectively.

Financial Assistance for Primary and Secondary Education

At the primary and secondary levels, means-tested assistance covers textbook grants and travel subsidies. In the 2009-10 school year, \$433.7 million was disbursed to 281 899 students for purchasing textbooks and \$242.7 million to 192 478 students as travel subsidies. In addition, examination fees totalling \$15.6 million were waived for 11 835 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 University Grants Committee-funded or publicly-funded institutions. In the 2009-10 school year, 28 406 students received \$829.9 million of grants and \$281.9 million of loans.

Eligible students pursuing locally-accredited, self-financing full-time post-secondary programmes are also provided with means-tested grants and low-interest loans. In the 2009-10 school year, \$706.9 million in grants and \$231.9 million in loans were provided to 20 497 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 2009-10 school year, 26 670 people received non-means-tested loans amounting to \$1.22 billion.

Travel subsidies totalling \$102.7 million were provided to 43 225 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 a means test may receive further fee reimbursement.

Scholarships

The \$1 billion Hong Kong Special Administrative Region 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 programmes at degree level or above in the eight UGC-funded institutions and the HKAPA.

Another government scholarship entitled 'Scholarship for Prospective English Teachers' was set up in the 2010-11 school year to attract talent to join the teaching profession. The scholarship was awarded to the first batch of 48 students, each of whom was granted a scholarship worth \$50,000 (local student) or \$80,000 (non-local student) per annum.

Privately-funded scholarships administered by SFAA are provided for local and overseas studies mainly on a 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 2010, more than 1 300 PTAs had been established. In 2010, the EDB funded the PTAs' organisation of about 2 950 school-based and district-based home-school co-operation 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 on society. In 2010, about 170 business firms participated in the programme, organising more than 300 activities and benefiting over 150 000 students.

Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education

The Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education was set up to advise on civic education and to implement activities in conjunction with the Government and parties concerned to promote civic education outside schools. In 2010, the committee concentrated its efforts on developing a positive attitude towards life, building happy families and an integrated and harmonious society, instilling positive moral values, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and 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 2010 included a civic education exhibition which carried the theme of 'Develop a Positive Attitude towards Life, Build Happy Families', production of civic education materials including a family magazine, a youth magazine, a newsletter and a pocket-sized book containing national education articles.

The refurbished Civic Education Resource Centre (CERC), located on the 7th floor of the Youth Square in Chai Wan has been reopened with a new look for the public. The CERC comprises a 'Resource Corner', a 'Civic Square' and a 'Gallery'. The 'Resource Corner' keeps reference materials and teaching kits on civic education and youth development. Equipped with audio and visual facilities, the 'Civic Square' can be used for holding training courses, seminars, sharing sessions and organising youth activities and film shows on civic education. The concept behind 'the Gallery' is a journey through which visitors can experience and explore issues of civic education and national education from different perspectives through short inspirational videos and interactive games. Periodic thematic exhibitions are held to promote civic core values and national education.

Commission on Youth

The main task of the Commission on Youth is to advise the Government on matters concerning youth development and to strengthen youth national education through various funding schemes. It also initiates studies on youth development, helps promote youth moral education, enhances communication between young people and the Government and organises exchange programmes with international youth organisations.

The commission continues to implement youth programmes to bring out and cultivate young people's potential. These include the International Youth Exchange Programme to broaden young people's outlook and world perspective. In 2010, 27 youth delegates visited Ireland and Japan under the programme. The commission played host to 53 young people from Ireland, Japan and Singapore who made reciprocal visits to Hong Kong.

The commission continues to run the 'Community Participation Scheme for Organising Study Tours to the Mainland' to enhance young people's awareness and understanding of their home country, foster exchange with Mainland people and strengthen their sense of national identity. In 2010, the commission sponsored 199 study tours to the Mainland.

To enhance communication between young people and the Government, the commission organised 'Youth Exchange Sessions' regularly. The commission invites senior Government officials (Secretary/Permanent Secretary/Under Secretary) of Bureaux attending the exchange sessions to communicate directly with the young participants and gather their views on relevant policy issues.

Volunteer Services for World Exposition 2010 Shanghai China, Guangzhou 2010 Asian Games and Guangzhou 2010 Asian Para Games for the Disabled

The Home Affairs Bureau sponsored youth groups to recruit and provide training and management services for some 100 Hong Kong volunteers to serve in the World Exposition 2010 Shanghai China for about two weeks in July 2010 and some 300 volunteers to serve in the Asian Games and the Asian Para Games for the Disabled in Guangzhou in November and December 2010 respectively.

Through participation in these big national events, these young people were able to gain first-hand experience in the Mainland's development and enhance their understanding of the country and their sense of national identity.

Websites

Education Bureau: www.edb.gov.hk

Home Affairs Bureau: www.hab.gov.hk