

Education

The inaugural Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination in 2012 marks a significant step forward for the smooth implementation of the New Academic Structure. The broad and balanced senior secondary curriculum allows students with different abilities, interests and aptitudes to give full play to their talents. The encouraging examination results have gained positive feedback internationally.

Supporting Hong Kong's Development as an International Education Hub

Development and Internationalisation of the Higher Education Sector

By continuing its efforts to internationalise and diversify the higher education sector, the Government aims to enhance Hong Kong's position as a regional education hub, nurturing talents to support the growth of the economy and enhance Hong Kong's competitiveness. Various internationalisation measures taken by the Government since 2008 (including doubling the non-local student quotas of the publicly-funded programmes, establishing scholarships for outstanding non-local students, and relaxing the immigration and employment requirements for non-local students) have begun to bear fruit. In the 2011-12 academic year, about 21,000 non-local students from more than 70 countries were studying at post-secondary education institutions in Hong Kong, and there were over 4,400 non-local exchange students at UGC-funded institutions in Hong Kong, and over 4,200 local students of UGC-funded institutions were on exchange studies abroad.

The sixth round of the Government's Matching Grant Scheme (MGS) makes \$2.5 billion of Government grants available for matching from August 2012 to July 2014 in the post-secondary education sector to help institutions tap more funding sources, improve the quality of education and foster a philanthropic culture. The MGS has now been extended to cover all statutory and approved post-secondary institutions to further consolidate their development.

Reflecting the Government's support for research activities in the higher education institutions, about a quarter of the recurrent grants for institutions funded by the University Grants Committee (UGC) are for research work. Established with an original endowment of \$18 billion, the Research Endowment Fund (REF) aims at providing a more stable source of competitive research funding for institutions. The Government has injected a further \$5 billion into the REF,

and the \$3 billion investment income will support the self-financing degree sector to enhance its academic and research development.

To attract high quality non-local students to study in Hong Kong and to retain them after graduation, the Government has doubled the non-local student quotas of the publicly-funded programmes to 20 per cent, allowed non-local students to take on summer jobs and on-campus part-time jobs, and launched the Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates (IANG) which enables non-local students to stay in Hong Kong without limitations for 12 months after graduation to seek employment locally. These measures have seen a substantial increase in the number of non-local students studying in Hong Kong, with about 21,000 non-local students enrolling in UGC-funded programmes and locally-accredited self-financing post-secondary programmes in the 2011-12 academic year. About 22,000 non-local students have been approved to stay in or return to Hong Kong after graduation since the implementation of the IANG.

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 city's economic competitiveness. 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 place for education.

International School Development

As of September 2012, there were 49 international schools, including 15 schools (one of which is a special school) operated by the English Schools Foundation, providing around 38,600 places. These schools offer different non-local curricula, including those of the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Singapore, the USA and others such as the International Baccalaureate programme. Four greenfield sites and four vacant school premises have been allocated for international school development since 2007 and in 2012 the Education Bureau (EDB) launched an exercise to allocate another four vacant school. These measures are expected to make around 5,000 places available in the next few years.

School-based gifted development programmes have been advocated and supported by the EDB through piloting programmes, teacher training and production of resources and further development programmes have been made available through the efforts of non-governmental organisations, tertiary institutes and the business sector.

Broadening Students' Horizons

In the 2011-12 academic year, the Government launched the five-year Pilot Mainland Experience Scheme for Post-Secondary Students. In the same academic year, the Government allocated about \$25.6 million to post-secondary institutions under the scheme in the form of matching grants to benefit over 8,000 students. The scheme aims to promote better understanding of the prevailing social, cultural and economic developments in the Mainland by subsidising the participation of post-secondary students at sub-degree and undergraduate levels in learning programmes or internships in the Mainland.

In addition, two new scholarships and awards for both students studying publicly-funded and self-financing post-secondary programmes, the Talent Development Scholarship (TDS) and Reaching Out Award (ROA), were established in 2012 to recognise not only outstanding academic performance, but also achievements and talents in other non-academic fields such as sports and arts. The TDS and ROA are expected to benefit about 4,000 students in the first year, gradually increasing to 10,000 in the long run.

The EDB nominates and sponsors outstanding primary and secondary school students to take part in various national and international competitions. The study tours alongside these competitions help broaden the students' horizons by providing them with valuable learning experiences, including the opportunities for exchanging and sharing information and ideas with their peers from other parts of the world.

Key Achievements in 2012

Enhancing Transparency of Qualifications

To enable learners to make informed choices about learning programmes and better facilitate recruitment and training by employers, the Government announced in October 2012 the introduction of the Award Titles Scheme (ATS) and Use of Credit under the Qualifications Framework (QF). The ATS will simplify and standardise titles to reflect more clearly the level of qualifications. The adoption of QF credits will provide clear and transparent information on the size or volume of learning and the efforts and outcome expected from learners to complete the programmes.

Developing Publicly-funded and Self-financing Post-secondary Education

The Government promotes the development of both the publicly-funded and self-financing sectors to provide young people with a wide range of study options.

To meet the future development needs of Hong Kong, the Government continues to invest heavily in the publicly-funded sector. Starting from the 2012-13 academic year, the number of first-year-first-degree (FYFD) places has increased to 15,000 per annum, and the number of senior year places will be doubled, to 4,000 intake places by 2014-15. The number of undergraduates in publicly-funded institutions will rise by about 40 per cent by 2016, and by 2014-15 the annual recurrent grants for the eight publicly-funded institutions will increase by about \$3 billion (or 27 per cent) to \$14.3 billion.

The Government actively supports the sustainable development of the self-financing post-secondary sector through a basket of measures, including providing land at a nominal premium, interest-free start-up loans, student finance, quality assurance subsidies and a \$3.5 billion Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund to provide scholarships and support quality enhancement efforts of institutions.

In February, the Government launched the Electronic Advance Application System for Post-secondary Programmes which enables students to lodge advance applications via the internet for full-time locally-accredited post-secondary programmes not covered by the Joint University Programmes Admissions System.

The Government expects that in two years, over one-third of the relevant age cohort will have access to degree-level education. Taking sub-degree places into account, nearly 70 per cent of young people will have access to post-secondary education.

Enhancing Support Services for Schools

The Task Force on Language Support has initiated a number of measures to enhance the capacity of Chinese and English panel heads and teachers. In 2012-13, about 300 primary and secondary schools were supported through on-site support, network activities, and territory-wide seminars and workshops. Key support included Language Across the Curriculum, teaching Chinese to non-Chinese speaking students, using Putonghua to teach Chinese, new Senior Secondary language curricula and Curriculum Leadership Development.

In February, the Task Force launched a new Professional Development (PD) Framework to empower teachers to make school-based decisions on how to cater for the needs of gifted students. The EDB works closely with the Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education to provide PD programmes at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. Courses are also designed specially for teachers who are assigned as Gifted Education Managers or Gifted Education Co-ordinators.

Developing e-Learning Resources in Schools

To support the implementation of e-learning in schools, the Government has established an online Depository of Curriculum-based Learning and Resources for major subjects at the primary and junior secondary school levels. Teachers can also refer to these e-learning resources via the 'One-stop Portal for Learning and Teaching Resources'.

e-Textbook Market Development Scheme (EMADS) and Partner Schools Scheme

The Government launched the EMADS in 2012, aimed at facilitating and encouraging potential and aspiring e-textbook developers to develop e-textbooks for the local curricula as well as trying out a quality vetting and assurance mechanism for e-textbooks. Thirty applications to develop e-textbooks for a range of subjects at primary and junior secondary levels were approved. Schools participating in the Partner Schools Scheme will try out the new e-textbooks and provide feedback for the developers to enhance the e-textbooks' design and contents. The EMADS e-textbooks are expected to be available for use in the 2014-15 school year.

Enhancing Internationalisation of School Guidance

In July, the EDB in collaboration with the Baptist University of Hong Kong (and supported by East China Normal University, Taiwan Normal University, Taichung University of Education and the University of Macao) hosted the First International Conference on School Guidance in the Chinese Communities in Hong Kong. The conference attracted 700 educators and counselling professionals, with about 300 coming from different provinces of the Mainland, Taiwan and Macao as well as Australia, Germany, Japan, Singapore and the USA. Over 120 presentations were made on a wide range of topics, including guidance curriculum, assessment for guidance services, adventure-based guidance, caring school culture, peer counselling and mental wellness. The conference will be held every two years, to sustain this international sharing

platform on school guidance, with the next conference scheduled to take place in Shanghai in 2014.

Student Achievements

As in previous years, Hong Kong students excelled in international competitions in 2012. Hong Kong teams won two gold, 14 silver and six bronze medals in the International Mathematical Olympiad, the International Physics Olympiad, the International Junior Science Olympiad, the International Olympiad in Informatics and the International Sustainable World (Energy, Engineering, and Environment) Project Olympiad.

In music, Hong Kong students performed outstandingly in the World Choir Games 2012, winning gold medals for Youth Male Choirs, Youth Choirs of Equal Voices and Musica Sacra. One student received first prize in the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod Instrumental Folk Solo class.

As to visual arts, a Hong Kong participant won the championship for the 16–19 age group at the 34th International Fine Arts Competition for Children and Youth held in Poland, and six students won Grand Prizes in the International Students' Visual Arts Contest-cum-Exhibition of Hong Kong: Image • Imagination.

In sports, Hong Kong young athletes garnered 18 gold, 19 silver and 13 bronze medals in the ninth World Rope Skipping Championships with four new world records set. At the Schools Inter-port Swimming and Athletics Championships, Hong Kong lead the medal table with a total of 36 gold, 34 silver and 17 bronze medals. In badminton and gymnastics events, Hong Kong students achieved the overall second runner-up at the Asian School Badminton Championships and the second runner-up at the Women's A Team at the National Youth Gymnastics Championships 2012. A student from Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (IVE) of the Vocational Training Council (VTC) also won the Silver medal in Wheelchair Fencing Men Individual Epee (Category B) in Paralympics 2012.

IVE students of Higher Diploma in Digital TV and Motion Picture Engineering won three prizes in the seventh Tech-ex Cup International University Student Video Contest, and a team of IVE engineering students won the second prize in Solar Prototype Class of Shell Eco-marathon Asia 2012. In addition, Hong Kong Design Institute and IVE students/graduates won the Gold Award in Window Display Design, the Silver Award in Intelligent Home Appliance Installation and Bronze Award in Web Design and Merit Award in Mechatronics at the seventh Guangzhou/Hong Kong/Macao/Chengdu Youth Skills Competition.

Major Challenges Ahead

Reviewing the New Academic Structure

With the completion of its first three-year cycle in July, the EDB, the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) and the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) have launched a joint review to improve and fine-tune the New Academic Structure and the delivery of the senior secondary curriculum. Since August, suggestions from stakeholders have been collected through different channels including forums, seminars, liaison meetings, focus group

interviews and written submissions. Taking account of those suggestions, it is expected that recommendations addressing schools' practical concerns at both the system/school and subject level will be submitted to the Joint CDC-HKEAA Public Examinations Board for discussion and endorsement in early 2013, and implemented in the 2013-14 school year leading to the 2016 Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination.

Supporting Development of Self-financing Post-secondary Education Sector

The Government is committed to promoting the sustainable development of the self-financing post-secondary sector. In 2012, the Government granted two land sites at nominal premium, expanded the ambit of the Start-up Loan Scheme to support the development of student hostels for the self-financing tertiary sector, and injected \$1 billion into the Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund to set up more scholarships and awards to give recognition to post-secondary students not only of outstanding academic performance but also with achievements and talents in other non-academic fields.

In addition, the Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education was established on 1 April to oversee the development of the fast-developing self-financing post-secondary education sector in Hong Kong and advise the Secretary for Education.

Supporting Schools to Enhance Learning and Teaching

The Government provides ordinary schools with additional resources, professional support and teacher training to help them cater for students with special educational needs. The EDB's professional staff pay regular visits to schools to render professional advice on school policies and support measures to implement integrated education. Educational psychologists, audiologists and speech therapists conduct case assessment, provide consultation and support services for schools. In addition, resource packages are also developed for teachers.

To further enhance the support for schools to cater for students' diverse educational needs, the Government will extend progressively the provision of School-based Educational Psychology Service to cover all public sector primary and secondary schools by the 2016-17 school year. To strengthen teachers' capacity to cater for students with special education needs, structured training programmes are arranged. The number of primary and secondary school teachers having received such training has increased significantly in recent years.

The EDB reviews and enhances the support measures for integrated education on an ongoing basis. With continuous concerted efforts from relevant stakeholders, an inclusive culture has gradually taken root in schools. The EDB will continue to monitor the implementation of various measures with a view to further enhancing the effectiveness of integrated education.

Overall Education Landscape

Expenditure on Education

In the 2012-13 financial year, the approved estimate for recurrent government expenditure on education was \$59.7 billion, or 22.6 per cent of all recurrent government expenditure, while the total estimate for government expenditure on education was \$79.1 billion, or 20.1 per cent of total government expenditure.

Education Commission

The Education Commission advises the Government on education objectives and policies and 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 comprises 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 chairpersons 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.

Kindergarten Education

To enable all school-aged children to have access to kindergarten education within a non-compulsory private-sector system, the Government introduced the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS) in the 2007-08 school year.

It provides a non-means-tested direct fee subsidy for eligible children aged above two years and eight months attending eligible local non-profit-making kindergartens. In the 2012-13 school year, about 164,800 children were enrolled in 957 Kindergartens/Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centres in Hong Kong. About 80 per cent of them receive an annual fee subsidy of \$16,800 and 77 per cent of kindergartens benefit under the PEVS. A means-tested fee remission scheme is also available to needy families to ensure that no child will be deprived of kindergarten education because of lack of means. Under the PEVS, quality assurance for kindergartens is enhanced through a self-evaluation system, supported by an external review process.

There has been continuous upgrading of professional qualifications of kindergarten education and all kindergartens are required to employ qualified kindergarten teachers. By the end of the 2011-12 school year, kindergarten teachers were expected to upgrade their professional qualifications to certificate level. With effect from the 2009-10 school year, all newly appointed kindergarten principals must have a bachelor degree in Early Childhood Education.

School Education

Twelve-years' free education has been 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 New Senior Secondary (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 2012, a total of 258,530 children were enrolled in 455 public sector primary schools and 347,850 children in 397 public sector secondary schools. Public sector school places made up about 80.7 per cent of school places. In addition, there were 73 Direct Subsidy Scheme schools, offering about 8.4 per cent of the school places.

Special Education

Under the prevailing policy, subject to the assessment and recommendation of specialists/medical practitioners and upon the consent of the parents, students with severe or multiple disabilities are referred to special schools for intensive support services. Other students with special educational needs are encouraged to attend ordinary schools. There were 60 special schools, 20 of which have boarding facilities, providing around 9,000 school places and 1,100 boarding places. In September 2012, some 31,400 students with special educational needs were studying in public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools.

The Government also helps gifted students develop their capabilities through the promotion of gifted education and schools have been supported by the EDB to design and implement gifted development programmes for their students. Teacher professional development programmes and teachers networks have been organised throughout the year to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills in gifted education. Curriculum resources in the form of curriculum packages have been developed and disseminated to schools for reference. Various territory-wide competitions have been organised to provide platforms for students to learn from one another and to demonstrate their areas of strength. Outstanding students from these local competitions have been provided with further training and nominated to take part in international competitions.

In 2012, the Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education provided over 6,500 places for students on a range of courses, workshops, competitions, mentoring and online learning. Nearly 3,000 places were offered to train teachers through thematic courses, outreach services, and the beginning of the new Professional Development Framework. Nearly 5,800 places were offered to parents who benefited from the Parent Education Programme, Outreach and Conference. The Consultation and Assessment Centre further provided services to parents through their email, hotline and face to face consultation.

Yi Jin Diploma Programme

From the 2012-13 school year onwards, the Government has put in place a Yi Jin Diploma programme to provide an alternative pathway for secondary 6 school leavers and adult learners. Successful completion of the programme earns the students a qualification comparable to the attainment of Level 2 standard in five subjects including Chinese Language and English Language in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination for employment and continuing education purposes. There are both full-time and part-time programmes, run by member institutions of the Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education. In the 2012-13 school year, over 5,000 students enrolled in the Yi Jin Diploma programme.

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 260,000 full-time and part-time places during the 2012-13 academic year.

The VTC provides a range of quality, internationally recognised full-time and part-time courses from post-secondary 3 up to degree level covering a wide range of study areas ranging from applied science, design, engineering, hospitality, child education and community services, business and information technology. They are offered through its member institutions such as the Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong, Institute of Professional Education and Knowledge, School for Higher and Professional Education, Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education, Hong Kong Design Institute, Hospitality Industry Training and Development Centre, Chinese Cuisine Training Institute, Maritime Services Training Institute and Youth College.

The VTC also provides services such as the administration of the apprenticeship scheme, trade testing and certification.

Post-secondary Education

Hong Kong has 17 degree-awarding higher education institutions, eight of which are funded by the public through the University Grants Committee (UGC). The other nine are the publicly-funded Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) and the self-financing Open University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Shue Yan University, Chu Hai College of Higher Education, Hang Seng Management College, Tung Wah College, Caritas Institute of Higher Education, Centennial College and Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong, Vocational Training Council. Together with providers offering locally-accredited sub-degree programmes, there are around 30 post-secondary institutions in Hong Kong.

There were around 30,300 first-year-first-degree places in the HKAPA and institutions funded by the UGC in the 2012-13 academic year and around 7,700 places in self-financing degree programmes. In addition, the UGC-funded institutions and the self-financing degree-awarding institutions provided around 2,500 senior year undergraduate places and 6,600 top-up degree places respectively for graduates of sub-degree programmes and students with other qualifications. At the sub-degree level, there were around 30,200 intake places and 9,300 intake places respectively for self-financing and public-funded sub-degree programmes for the 2012-13 academic year.

Qualifications Framework

Launched in May 2008, the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (QF) provides a transparent and accessible platform to promote lifelong learning and help enhance the competitiveness of the workforce. It covers academic, vocational and continuing education qualifications. The QF is underpinned by a robust quality assurance mechanism. All qualifications recognised under the QF are locally accredited by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications or by the self-accrediting institutions in Hong Kong. The Government maintains a Qualifications Register, a web-based database that lists the qualifications and their associated learning programmes recognised under the QF.

As at December 2012, the Government has assisted 18 industries¹ in setting up Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITACs) covering about 45 per cent of Hong Kong's total labour force. A major task of each ITAC, which comprises key stakeholders from the industry concerned, is to draw up Specification of Competency Standards (SCS) for its sector, setting out the skills, knowledge and outcome standards required of employees in the sector's different functional areas, and enabling course providers to design training programmes to meet the sector's needs. SCSs are gaining wider acceptance by employers as useful guides for the development of in-house training and human resources management, such as staff recruitment and performance assessment.

The Government has also developed a Recognition of Prior Learning mechanism under the QF to enable practitioners to obtain formal recognition for the knowledge, skills and experience they have acquired in the workplace, and facilitate further learning without the need to start from scratch.

Adult Education

In the 2012-13 school year, around 1,350 adult students enrolled on evening secondary courses at designated centres operated by Approved Course Providers under the Financial Assistance Scheme for Designated Evening Adult Education Courses. Eligible students obtained subsidies under the scheme.

Quality Education Fund

Up to the end of the 2011-12 academic year, the Quality Education Fund had approved around \$3.96 billion for some 8,200 projects to promote high quality education and schemes that recognise excellence in schools and teachers.

School-based Support Services

School-based support services aim to foster leadership at schools, in particular at the middle managers' level, widen the dissemination of informed practice to improve learning methods, teaching and assessment strategies in the classroom, and support professional learning among teachers. In the 2012-13 school year, the EDB is providing school-based support services, including those financed by the Education Development Fund, to 279 secondary schools, 415 primary schools, 20 special schools and 187 kindergartens/kindergarten-cum-child care centres.

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 Government is committed to encouraging and supporting early integration of non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students into the community, including facilitating their adaptation to the local education system and mastery of the Chinese Language. The Government has put in

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; Retail; Insurance; Manufacturing Technology (Tooling, Metals and Plastics) and Elderly Care Service.

place various support measures to enhance NCS students' learning. These include a supplementary guide to the Chinese Language curriculum, adapted school learning materials in the form of textbooks, provision of internal assessment tools, school-based support and an annual grant to some schools for developing school-based support programmes specifically arranged for NCS students.

A pilot project is being carried out in collaboration with non-governmental organisations to encourage, motivate and support NCS students aged between three and nine to learn Chinese through interesting and interactive ways such as drama, singing and playing in groups.

Tertiary institutions have been commissioned to provide on-site support programmes, to operate the Chinese Language Learning Support Centres offering after-school support to NCS students and to train Chinese language teachers of schools with NCS students.

To address NCS students' aspirations for higher education, the UGC-funded institutions have provided greater flexibility for acceptance of alternative Chinese language qualifications, including the General Certificate of Secondary Education, International General Certificate of Secondary Education, General Certificate of Education (GCE) AS-Level and GCE A-Level under specified circumstances for application under the Joint University Programmes Admissions System. NCS students are subsidised for taking these Chinese Language examinations, and those with financial needs may receive half or full remission of the 'subsidised examination fee'.

Support Programmes for Needy Students

Under the School-based After-school Learning and Support Programmes, 879 schools and 167 non-governmental organisations received subsidies in the 2012-13 school year for organising after-school activities to help some 217,000 needy students improve their learning effectiveness, broaden their learning experience outside the classroom and raise their understanding of the community and sense of belonging.

During the 2011-12 school year, the Hong Kong Jockey Club Life-wide Learning Fund, established in 2002 by the EDB and the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, allocated about \$67.15 million to 944 participating schools, providing financial aid to around 230,000 students in need from Primary 1 to Secondary 7 to participate in 'life-wide learning' through a range of learning experiences in authentic settings organised or recognised by schools.

Regulatory Framework and Governance

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.

With the first cohort of students taking the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination in 2012, the Education Regulations have been amended to accept the HKDSE Examination as one of the qualifications for permitted teachers.

Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance

The Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance governs institutions offering post-secondary courses. As at December 2012, there were six approved post-secondary institutions registered under the ordinance — Hong Kong Shue Yan University, Caritas Institute of Higher Education, Chu Hai College of Higher Education, Hang Seng Management College, Tung Wah College and Centennial 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 to ensure that the standard of the courses and qualifications are comparable to those of their home countries. It protects Hong Kong consumers by guarding against the marketing of sub-standard courses.

Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Legislation

The Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Ordinance provides a legal framework for the establishment of the Qualifications Framework (QF) and the Qualifications Register, and the underpinning quality assurance mechanism. The Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) Ordinance provides for the establishment, functions and management of the council, which is responsible for quality assurance of the qualifications recognised under the QF.

Governance of Tertiary Institutions

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

Quality Assurance of Higher and Further Education

There are three quality assurance bodies in Hong Kong to monitor the quality of the post-secondary education sector. The HKCAAVQ is a statutory body responsible for the quality assurance of all operators and programmes except the UGC-funded institutions which enjoy self-accrediting status. The Quality Assurance Council (QAC), a semi-autonomous non-statutory body under the aegis of the UGC, conducts quality audits of the UGC-funded institutions and programmes offered at degree level and above, however funded. The Joint Quality Review Committee (JQRC), established by the Heads of Universities Committees, provides peer review of the quality assurance processes of self-financing sub-degree programmes offered by the UGC-funded institutions.

The Government is working with the HKCAAVQ, JQRC and QAC to identify ways in which the quality assurance required for self-financing post-secondary regime can be enhanced and rationalised, so as to provide a stronger platform for the sector's continuous development.

Management of Schools

School-based Management

Aided schools are devolved with considerable autonomy and funding flexibility to implement school-based management. In return, they have to be more transparent and accountable in their operation and include all key stakeholders in their governance structure, including school sponsoring body representatives, the principal and elected teacher, parent and alumni representatives and independent members.

External School Review

The current phase of the External School Review, which started in the 2008-09 school year, takes account of schools' varying stages of development and aims to improve their capacity for self-evaluation. An independent study of the effectiveness of the School Development and Accountability (SDA) framework has prompted measures to enhance support to schools and improve school self-evaluation, such as enhancing the E-platform for SDA and launching the Online Interactive Resource.

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, HKEAA and VTC representatives, and EDB staff.

The Curriculum

The school curriculum provides five essential learning experiences: moral and civic education, intellectual development, community service, physical and aesthetic development, and career-related experiences for lifelong learning and the whole-person development of students. Curriculum reform progresses in tandem with schools' adaptation of the central curriculum to meet the needs of their students. The aim is to nurture students' general capabilities, positive values and attitudes, and independent learning capabilities.

New Senior Secondary Curriculum and the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination

The New Senior Secondary (NSS) curriculum was launched in 2009 for Secondary 4 to 6. Students sit for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination in Secondary 6. The NSS curriculum itself is flexible, coherent and diversified and it aims at catering for students' varied interests, needs, aptitudes and abilities. It requires students to take four core subjects and acquire other learning experiences. In addition, they can choose two to three

elective subjects from 20 NSS subjects, a range of Applied Learning (ApL) courses and 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 2012-14 cohort, 35 ApL courses are offered under six areas of studies – Creative Studies; Media and Communication; Business, Management and Law; Services; Applied Science; and Engineering and Production.

The first HKDSE Examination was held in 2012 with students attaining encouraging results. The new HKDSE qualification has gained extensive recognition in international benchmarking studies such as the National Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) report and the Tariff System of the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) in the United Kingdom. Over 140 tertiary institutions worldwide, including renowned universities such as Oxford and Yale, have recognised the new qualification for admission purposes, and more are being added. The State Ministry of Education announced that 70 Mainland higher education institutions will consider the admission of students based on their results in the HKDSE Examination and Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination in 2013 and exempt them from taking the Joint Entrance Examination for Universities in the Mainland. More opportunities have been opened up for further studies and progression of students outside Hong Kong, enhancing student mobility internationally.

Information Technology in Education

The Pilot Scheme on e-Learning in Schools is one of the measures recommended by the Working Group on Textbooks and e-Learning Resources Development to promote e-learning in Hong Kong. The scheme is a three-year project spreading across the 2011-12 to 2013-14 school years.

The selected 21 school projects involved 61 primary, secondary and special schools. They will serve as research and development centres to develop school-based e-learning resources, validate when and how e-learning works best, bring about effective interactive learning, cater for learner diversity and help find ways to promote e-learning in local schools.

Language Education

The Standing Committee on Language Education and Research advises the Government on language education matters. It also advises the trustee of the Language Fund (which funds initiatives to improve Hong Kong people's proficiency in Chinese (including Putonghua) and English) on the policy and procedures governing the fund's operation.

To increase students' opportunities for exposure to, and use of, English, the Government has fine-tuned the medium of instruction (MOI) arrangements in secondary schools, starting with Secondary 1 from the 2010-11 school year and progressing each year to a higher form of the junior secondary levels. Under the fine-tuned arrangements, secondary schools have flexibility to decide professionally their own school-based MOI arrangements. Feedback on schools' MOI arrangements is given through the MOI focus inspections for continuous improvement.

To support schools in the teaching and learning of English and the implementation of the fine-tuned MOI arrangements, from the 2010-11 school year, funding has been made available, under the Refined English Enhancement Scheme, for secondary schools to implement their whole-school language policy and finance the related support measures. To enhance teachers' professional capacity, tertiary institutions have been commissioned to organise in-service professional development programmes on using English as the MOI for content subjects and for promoting language across the curriculum within schools.

Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Scheme

There are some 410 NETs working in secondary schools and about 460 NETs working in primary schools. NETs collaborate with local English teachers to enhance teaching and to make learning English more interesting for students. Their presence has helped create an enriched English language learning environment for students and contributed to the adoption of more innovative teaching strategies. With the implementation of the scheme, there have been favourable changes in classroom practice and students have shown a more positive attitude towards the learning of English.

Moral, Civic and National Education

Values education, which includes moral education, civic education and sex education, has been part of the Hong Kong school curriculum since 1981. It includes teaching positive values and developing students' ability to analyse and judge various life issues on the basis of long-term principles. Following a review of the curriculum begun in 2010, the Government proposed making moral and national education a separate subject and published a draft curriculum guide for consultation in May 2011. In the light of the views received, an extensively revised guide was published in April 2012, setting out a framework aimed at cultivating students' positive values and attitudes and developing their ability to judge personal, family, social, national and global issues, and enhancing their willingness to commit and contribute in different aspects of life. The guide made specific provision for schools and school sponsoring bodies to integrate their education/social/religious/philanthropic missions with the curriculum objectives.

The publication in July 2012 of 'The China Model Handbook' by the National Education Services Centre (a non-governmental organisation which received general sponsorship from the Government) as reference material for teachers triggered fears of brainwashing in the general public. Taking heed of public sentiment, the Government announced on 8 September that the moral and national education subject would not be mandatory and that schools and their sponsoring bodies could exercise their professional judgement as to whether or not to implement the subject and, if so, the format and timetable for its implementation. The Government subsequently announced on 8 October 2012 that the curriculum guide would be formally shelved and that the Government would not request schools to adopt the guide, nor would it use the guide as the basis for school inspection.

Professional Development at Schools

Teachers' Professional Development

The Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications advises the EDB on the professional qualifications, competencies and development of the teaching profession, from student teachers to experienced teachers.

The Chief Executive's Award for Teaching Excellence (CEATE), organised by the EDB, aims to give recognition to accomplished teachers and foster a culture of excellence in the teaching profession. A total of 54 teachers received CEATE awards or certificates of merit in 2011-12.

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 work-life balance.

The Council on Professional Conduct in Education (CPC), a non-statutory body, advises the Government on measures to promote professional conduct in education and on alleged misconduct cases involving educators that are lodged with the CPC.

Principals' Professional Development

To help principals enhance their leadership knowledge and skills, there are different professional development requirements for aspiring principals, newly appointed principals and serving principals to address their developmental needs at different career stages. Some 1,000 aspiring principals have attained the Certification for Principalship and about half of them have become principals.

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 enjoy 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 2011-12 school year, fee subsidies and remissions totalling \$2 billion and \$399.5 million were granted to 129,100 and 36,117 students respectively.

Financial Assistance for Primary and Secondary Education

At the primary and secondary levels, means-tested assistance covers textbook grants, travel subsidies and subsidies for internet access charges. In the 2011-12 school year, \$657.2 million was disbursed to 276,003 students to purchase textbooks, \$288.5 million to 183,017 students as travel subsidies, \$186.5 million to 181,747 families to subsidise internet access by students at home, and \$75.1 million in examination fees was reimbursed to 38,798 students sitting public

examinations. In addition, school-based and district-based grants are disbursed by the Government to support needy students' whole person development.

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 2011-12 school year, 26,330 students received \$931 million of grants and \$253.2 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 2011-12 school year, \$952.2 million of grants and \$276.2 million of loans were provided to 22,878 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 2011-12 school year, 21,279 people received loans amounting to \$1.1 billion.

The Government completed a review of the operation of the non-means-tested loan schemes in 2012 and implemented a number of improvement measures to relieve the burden of repaying student loans, to prevent excessive borrowing by students, and to encourage enhancement in quality assurance of eligible courses in the 2012-13 school year.

Travel subsidies totalling \$128.3 million were provided to 43,737 students of post-secondary institutions.

Tuition Fee Reimbursement for Yi Jin Diploma Students and Adult Education

All eligible students of Yi Jin Diploma and designated evening adult education courses may receive reimbursement of 30 per cent of the tuition fee reimbursement, with an additional amount for those who pass a means test.

Scholarships

The \$2.25 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 sub-degree and degree level or above in the eight UGC-funded institutions, the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts and the Vocational Training Council. In the self-financing higher education sector, a \$3.5 billion Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund was set up to provide scholarships to outstanding students pursuing full-time locally-accredited self-financing sub-degree or bachelor degree programmes, and to support worthwhile initiatives and schemes to enhance and assure the quality of self-financing post-secondary education.

The Government's Scholarship for Prospective English Teachers aims to attract persons proficient in English to pursue local bachelor degree programmes and/or teacher training programmes majoring in English or a relevant subject which will qualify them to become English teachers on graduation. Other scholarships and award schemes recognise not only post-secondary students' outstanding academic performance but also achievements and talents in other non-academic fields.

Community Participation in Education

Home-school Co-operation

The Committee on Home-school Co-operation promotes home-school co-operation by encouraging the establishment of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs). As at 2012, about 1,400 PTAs had been established and in 2012 the EDB funded the PTAs' organisation of about 3,000 school-based and district-based home-school co-operation activities.

School Business Partnership

The EDB's Business-School Partnership Programme takes students out of the classroom to gain a wider perspective on society. In 2012, about 170 business firms participated in the programme, organising more than 300 activities and benefiting over 180,000 students.

Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education

The Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education advises the Government on civic education, collaborates with the Government and other parties in arranging civic education activities, and funds community organisations to organise activities promoting civic education outside school. In 2012, the committee concentrated on encouraging a positive attitude towards life, fostering family harmony with a view to cultivating an integrated and harmonious society, instilling core civic values and respect for human rights and the rule of law, promoting understanding of the Basic Law, and enhancing a sense of national identity.

The committee's website promotes various aspects of civic education and provides information on national education. In 2012, the committee organised a range of activities, including a TV programme on national education, a civic education exhibition and a competition about the Basic Law. The committee also produced civic education materials, including a family magazine, a youth magazine and a calendar.

The Civic Education Resource Centre (CERC) in Chai Wan is open to the public. The CERC comprises a 'Resource Corner', where reference materials and teaching kits on civic education and youth development are kept, a 'Civic Square' and a 'Gallery'. Equipped with audio/visual facilities, the Civic Square can be used for training courses, seminars, sharing sessions and youth activities and film shows about civic education. The Gallery allows visitors to experience and explore different aspects of civic education with the aid of videos and interactive games. Guided tours are provided for groups and exhibitions are held periodically to promote core civic values.

Commission on Youth

The main tasks of the Commission on Youth include advising the Government on youth development, initiating studies on youth, helping to promote youth development, enhancing communication between young people and the Government, and providing young people with exchange opportunities in the Mainland and overseas.

To enhance communication between young people and the Government, the commission held the biennial 'Youth Summit 2012', attended by the Chief Executive and several principal

officials, who heard presentations and exchanged views with participants on youth development policies and other topics of concern, and answered questions from participants and the public through an online platform. The summit's discussion topics were determined by online votes, and the summit was broadcast live on the internet. Young people led the summit's discussions and proceedings to maximize youth participation. To maintain communication between young people and the Government, the commission will continue to invite senior Government officials to attend 'Youth Exchange Sessions' from time to time, and to communicate directly with young people and to gather their views on relevant policy issues.

To promote youth development, in 2012 the commission launched the Large-scale Youth Programme Funding Scheme and approved sponsorship to 12 programmes run by qualified organisations to organise large-scale youth programmes in Hong Kong.

In 2012, the commission sponsored 142 study tours to the Mainland under a scheme to enhance young people's awareness and understanding of their home country, foster exchanges with Mainland people and strengthen their sense of national identity. During the year, 65 youth delegates visited the UK, Ireland, Japan and Singapore under the International Youth Exchange Programme, designed to broaden young people's outlook and world perspective, and the commission played host to 50 young people from these countries who made reciprocal visits to Hong Kong.

In collaboration with the 18 District Youth Programme committees, the commission's Youth Programme Co-ordinating Committee (YPCC) provides a wide range of cultural, arts, sports and general development activities for children and young people aged between six and 29. The YPCC co-ordinates and organises territory-wide youth development activities, such as the '18 Districts Cheering Team Competition' and the 'Outstanding Youth and Outstanding Youth Activity Commendation Scheme Award Presentation Ceremony'. Meanwhile, to tie in with the commission's core values on youth development, the Home Affairs Department also co-ordinates youth development activities among young people of different age groups at district level. In addition, a total of 4,235 activities were organised in the summer of 2012 with the support of sponsorship from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust.

Children's Rights

The Government supports various initiatives to strengthen awareness of children's rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including setting up the Children's Rights Forum for exchanging views on children's rights with children and advocates of children's rights, and establishing the Children's Rights Education Funding Scheme to provide financial assistance to non-governmental organisations to promote children's rights.

Promotion of Racial Equality and Harmony

The Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony

The Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony was established in 2002 to advise the Government on the promotion of racial harmony and equality, including provision of support

services to ethnic minorities, and on proposals for race related public education and publicity. Secretariat support is provided by the Home Affairs Department's (HAD) Race Relations Unit.

Support Services for Ethnic Minorities

Since 2009, the Government has commissioned non-governmental organisations ('NGOs') to run four support service centres for ethnic minorities to help them integrate into the community. In December 2012, the HAD set up an additional support service centre and two sub-centres to enhance the support services. These centres provide various tailor-made learning classes, counselling and integration programmes. One of the centres also provides a free language interpretation service on the telephone to assist ethnic minorities in their use of public services. The HAD also sponsors two community support teams to provide special services for the ethnic minority groups through members of their own communities. In addition, it funds radio programmes and publishes service guidebooks in a number of ethnic minority languages, implements the Harmony Scholarship Scheme recognising students' performance in school and community services (particularly activities promoting racial harmony) and provides other support services to meet the needs of ethnic minorities.

In 2011, the HAD set up a dedicated team to step up efforts to facilitate the early integration of ethnic minorities into the community and the HAD uses its district networks, including District Offices and the services of NGOs and local organisations, to advance the cause. Various initiatives have been put in place, including the District-based Integration Programmes to help ethnic minorities better understand the districts they live in and facilitate their participation in community activities through adaptation courses, mutual help networks and visits, etc. In addition, the 'Ambassador Scheme' arranges for persons with similar backgrounds and experiences to proactively reach out to ethnic minorities, and makes referrals to government departments where necessary.

Websites

Education Bureau: www.edb.gov.hk

Home Affairs Bureau: www.hab.gov.hk

Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau: www.cmab.gov.hk

Home Affairs Department: www.had.gov.hk

Race Relations Unit: www.had.gov.hk/rru/