

Chapter 7

Education

The new senior secondary curriculum, which provides a broad and balanced curriculum for students with different abilities, interests and aptitudes, continued its successful implementation in 2013 and gained further positive feedback internationally.

Key Achievements in 2013

Development of the New Academic Structure

The New Academic Structure (NAS) has been implemented at both the senior secondary level and post-secondary education levels. The senior secondary curriculum provides a broader, more balanced education for students. ‘Applied Learning’ now supplements the more traditional academic learning, and ‘Other Learning Experiences’ include moral and civic education, community service, aesthetic development, physical development and career-related experiences. The NAS aligns better with the major academic systems outside Hong Kong, which enhances student mobility and Hong Kong’s development as a regional education hub. More than 160 universities worldwide have already accepted the HKDSE qualification for admission purposes.

In 2013, the second three-year cycle of the new senior secondary curriculum was completed and approximately 67,600 day-school candidates attempted the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination.

Following a joint review of the senior secondary curriculum by the Curriculum Development Council, the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, and the Education Bureau at the end of the first three-year cycle, the first progress report, *The New Senior Secondary Learning Journey – Moving Forward to Excel*, was released in April 2013. Its short-term recommendations to fine-tune the curriculum and assessment to address schools’ practical concerns were implemented in September, starting at Secondary 4 and leading to the 2016 HKDSE Examination. A medium-term review was launched in October, with medium-term recommendations to be made in July 2014 and July 2015.

Developing Hong Kong into a Regional Education Hub

The government has continued its efforts to internationalise and diversify the higher education sector to enhance Hong Kong's position as a regional education hub, nurturing talents to support the growth of the economy and strengthen 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 to 20 per cent, 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 2012-13 academic year, about 26,600 non-local students from more than 70 countries pursued post-secondary studies in Hong Kong. Moreover, there were over 4,600 incoming exchange students at University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions in Hong Kong, and a similar number of local students of UGC-funded institutions were on exchange studies abroad, meaning that about one in four Hong Kong undergraduates had the opportunity to join an exchange programme.

Other measures to be implemented in early 2014 include extending student exchanges to sub-degree programmes and aligning the length of stay of non-local students to the normal duration of their study programmes. The government has worked with post-secondary education institutions to step up efforts to encourage more non-local students to choose Hong Kong as a preferred place for education. The UGC has launched new initiatives to promote internationalisation, including funding student-initiated projects that encourage multi-cultural integration.

As of September 2013, there were 50 international schools, including 15 schools (one of which is a special school) operated by the English Schools Foundation, providing around 39,700 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 seven vacant school premises have been allocated for international school development since 2007.

Development of Self-financing Post-secondary Education

The government promotes the sustainable development of the self-financing post-secondary sector through a basket of support measures, including providing land and premises at nominal premium and rent, interest-free start-up loans, the Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund, student finance and quality assurance subsidies.

As at the end of 2013, \$7 billion of start-up loans to post-secondary institutions out of the total \$9 billion commitment had been approved. An additional \$20 million was injected into the Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund in 2013 to set up scholarships for post-secondary students with special educational needs. In addition, grants totalling more than \$73 million from the fund were approved for 11 projects in the first round of applications for the new Quality Enhancement Support Scheme in 2013.

Student Achievements

Hong Kong students excelled in international competitions in 2013. Hong Kong teams won a total of five gold, nine silver and nine bronze medals in the International Mathematical

Olympiad, the International Physics Olympiad, the International Junior Science Olympiad and the International Olympiad in Informatics.

In music, Hong Kong students won gold medals in the Male Choir Class of the 3rd Asia Pacific Choir Games, and the Youth & Young Adult Choirs Class of the 24th Concorso Internazionale di Canto Corale (International Competition of Choral Singing), and also won the first prize in the Marimba Class of the Italy Percussion Competition 2013. Two students received first prizes in the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod Instrumental Solo Classes.

In visual arts, a Hong Kong student won Grand Prize in the International Students' Visual Arts Contest-cum-Exhibition of Hong Kong – Photography, and one student received Second Prize in the On-site Painting at the 'International Children Painting Competition in Hong Kong'.

Hong Kong students came first in a variety of sports at the Interport Secondary Schools Championships and the Interport Primary Schools Championships. Hong Kong young athletes won a gold, a silver and a bronze medal in the 2nd Asian Youth Games; three gold, five silver and two bronze medals in the 7th Asian Junior Wushu Championships; 33 gold, 33 silver and 35 bronze medals in the 7th Asian Rope Skipping Championships; and won the East Asian Football Federation U-18 Youth Tournament 2013, the Equestrian CSIY-B - International Jumping Open, the Asian Junior Figure Skating Challenge 2013-2014 and the 2013 Macau China International Tenpin Bowling Championships, Youth Open.

Major Challenges Ahead

Enhancing Kindergarten Education

Providing free and better quality kindergarten education is one of the priorities of the current-term government. In this connection, the Education Bureau set up a committee in April 2013 to make specific proposals on how to practicably implement free kindergarten education. The committee will complete its tasks in 2015.

Enhancing Support to Non-Chinese Speaking Students

Funding support for schools admitting non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students has been revised with effect from the 2013-14 school year so that it is no longer confined to the so-called 'designated schools'. Instead, all public sector schools and schools in the Direct Subsidy Scheme admitting 10 or more NCS students receive the additional funding to support their NCS students in learning Chinese language. This will rectify the misunderstanding that NCS students are only allowed to study in so-called 'designated schools'; enhance NCS students' Chinese language learning and widen the parental school choices in the long run. NCS parents are encouraged to send their children to schools with a rich Chinese language environment to help them master the language. In collaboration with non-governmental organisations and with funding provided by the Language Fund, the government organises various programmes for NCS children aged 3 to 9 in districts with a greater concentration of NCS children to encourage them to learn Chinese language through fun activities such as games and creative art.

Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Ordinary Schools

The government has been providing ordinary schools with additional resources, professional support and teacher training to help them cater for their 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.

The government is progressively extending the School-based Educational Psychology Service to cover all public sector primary and secondary schools by the 2016-17 school year. To strengthen teachers' capacity in catering for students with special educational needs, structured training programmes are arranged. As at November 2013, over 42 per cent and about 18 per cent of the teachers in public sector primary and secondary schools respectively had completed such training. To strengthen the support for schools that have a larger number of students with special educational needs, the ceiling of the Learning Support Grant for public sector primary and secondary schools has been raised from \$1 million to \$1.5 million per school per annum with effect from the 2013-14 school year.

E-Textbook Market Development Scheme (EMADS)

The government launched Phase One of EMADS in 2012 to facilitate and encourage the development of e-textbooks for the local curriculum. The e-textbooks developed under Phase One are expected to be available for use in the 2014-15 school year. Phase Two (covering more subjects) was launched in 2013 and 20 applications for development of e-textbooks have been approved.

Overall Education Landscape

Expenditure on Education

The total budgeted expenditure on education in the 2014-15 financial year is \$75.4 billion (18.3 per cent of total government expenditure), of which \$67.1 billion is recurrent expenditure on education (21.8 per cent of total recurrent 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.

The commission comprises a chairman, a vice-chairman who is the Permanent Secretary for Education, eight ex-officio members and a number of non-official members. The eight ex-officio members comprise the chairpersons of the Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals, the Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education, 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's Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS) (introduced in the 2007-08 school year) 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 2013-14 school year, about 169,800 children were enrolled in 969 kindergartens/kindergarten-cum-child care centres in Hong Kong. About 78 per cent of them received an annual fee subsidy of \$17,510 and 95 per cent of local non-profit-making kindergartens benefited 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.

The professional qualifications of kindergarten teachers have been continuously upgraded 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 NAS, 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 2013, a total of 259,870 children were enrolled in 453 public sector primary schools and 323,690 children in 396 public sector secondary schools. Public sector school places made up about 80.1 per cent of school places. In addition, there were 74 Direct Subsidy Scheme schools, offering about 9.5 per cent of the school places.

Special Education

Subject to the assessment and recommendation of specialists and with parents' consent, students with more severe or multiple disabilities are placed in special schools for intensive support. Other students with special educational needs may attend ordinary schools. In September 2013, there were 60 special schools, 20 of which have boarding facilities, providing around 9,000 school places and 1,100 boarding places. Some 33,830 students with special educational needs were studying in public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools.

The government helps gifted students develop their capabilities through various programmes and the EDB supports schools in designing and implementing gifted development

programmes for students. Learning and teaching resource packs are disseminated to schools and put on the web. Professional development programmes and teachers networks equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills in gifted education. Various territory-wide competitions provide platforms for students to learn from one another and to demonstrate their areas of strength. Outstanding students thus identified are provided with further training and nominated to participate in international competitions.

In 2013, the Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education extended its existing services from secondary to primary students, covering a wide range of courses, workshops, competitions, conferences, mentoring and online learning. Professional development programmes were offered to teachers through thematic courses, outreach services, and the Professional Development Framework co-organised with the EDB. Services for parents of gifted children included the Parent Education Programme, outreach and assessment and consultation.

Post-secondary Education

Hong Kong has 17 local degree-awarding post-secondary 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 the Vocational Training Council's (VTC) Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong. Together with providers offering locally-accredited sub-degree programmes, there are around 30 post-secondary institutions in Hong Kong.

In the 2013-14 academic year, around 15,160 publicly-funded first-year-first-degree intake places were provided by the UGC-funded institutions and the HKAPA and about 7,000 places in the self-financing undergraduate programmes. In addition, the UGC-funded institutions and the self-financing degree-awarding institutions provided around 3,000 senior year undergraduate places and 7,600 top-up degree places respectively for graduates of sub-degree programmes and students with other qualifications. At the sub-degree level, there were around 30,100 and 9,800 intake places respectively for self-financing and publicly-funded sub-degree programmes for the 2013-14 academic year.

Vocational Education

The VTC is a statutory body established to provide a comprehensive system of vocational education and training for school leavers and adult learners. It provided some 250,000 full-time and part-time places during the 2013-14 academic year.

The VTC provides a range of quality-assured, internationally recognised full-time and part-time courses from post-secondary 3 up to degree level, covering a wide range of study areas including applied science, design, engineering, hospitality, child education and community services, business and information technology. Courses are offered through the VTC's 13 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 administers the apprenticeship scheme and provides trade testing and certification.

Yi Jin Diploma

The Yi Jin Diploma Programme provides an alternative channel for Secondary 6 school leavers and adult learners to earn a formal qualification for employment and continuing education purposes. The programme is run by seven self-financing institutions and may be taken either full-time or part-time. In the 2013-14 academic year, over 4,000 students enrolled in the programme.

Qualifications Framework

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 2013, the government has assisted 19 industries¹ in setting up Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITACs) under the QF covering about 46 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 provide useful guides for the development of in-house training and human resources management, such as staff recruitment and performance assessment. Starting from the 2013-14 financial year, \$10 million per year will be allocated to support ITACs in launching new initiatives to further enhance workers' knowledge and skills.

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.

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), Elderly Care Services and Security Services.

Adult Education

In the 2013-14 school year, around 1,500 adult students enrolled in 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 2012-13 school year, the Quality Education Fund had approved around \$4 billion for some 8,300 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, teaching and assessment strategies in the classroom, and support professional learning among teachers. In the 2012-13 school year, the EDB provided school-based support services, including those financed by the Education Development Fund, to 290 secondary schools, 391 primary schools, 15 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 place various support measures to enhance NCS students' learning. These include a supplementary guide to the Chinese language curriculum, adapted textbooks, provision of internal assessment tools, school-based professional support and funding support to schools admitting NCS students.

The universities have been commissioned to provide on-site support programmes, alongside 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 help NCS students, UGC-funded institutions accept alternative Chinese language qualifications, including the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), General Certificate of Education (GCE) AS-Level and GCE A-Level under specified circumstances for application under the Joint University Programmes Admissions System. The fees payable by NCS students taking these Chinese language examinations are subsidised so that they are the same as those for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (Chinese Language) examination. NCS students with financial needs may receive half or full remission of the subsidised examination fee.

Support Programmes for Needy Students

In the 2013-14 school year, 877 schools and 183 non-governmental organisations received subsidies under the School-based After-school Learning and Support Programmes for organising activities to help some 209,000 needy students improve their learning effectiveness, broaden their learning experience outside the classroom and raise their understanding of the community and sense of belonging.

The Hong Kong Jockey Club Life-wide Learning Fund, established by the EDB and the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, allocated about \$69.84 million to 944 participating schools during the 2012-13 school year, providing financial aid to around 230,000 students in need from Primary 1 to Secondary 6 to participate in activities organised or recognised by schools for students' whole-person development.

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. Schools must comply with its provisions including its subsidiary legislation relating to areas such as registration of schools, teachers and managers, health and safety requirements, fees and charges, and teacher qualifications.

Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance

The Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance governs the registration and operation of post-secondary colleges. As at December 2013, there were six approved post-secondary colleges 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. As at December 2013, 1,173 non-local courses were registered or exempted from registration under the ordinance.

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 Post-secondary Institutions

All UGC-funded institutions, the Open University of Hong Kong and the HKAPA are statutory bodies governed by their own ordinances. Approved post-secondary colleges are governed by the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance. Each post-secondary institution has its own structure of governance, normally 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 collaborates with the HKCAAVQ, JQRC and QAC through the Liaison Committee on Quality Assurance to identify ways to enhance and rationalise the quality assurance required for the self-financing post-secondary regime, so as to provide a stronger platform for the sector's continuous development. The government plans to implement periodic external quality audits on sub-degree operations of UGC-funded institutions.

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.

School Development and Accountability

The School Development and Accountability Framework seeks to foster sustained school development through school self-evaluation (complemented by the external school review) to give schools the benefit of feedback and suggestions for improvement from reviewers with perspective across schools.

Curriculum Development

Curriculum Development Council

The Curriculum Development Council advises 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 for students: moral and civic education, intellectual development, community service, physical and aesthetic development, and career-related experiences for lifelong learning and whole-person development. 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 September 2009 at Secondary 4. Students will take the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination on completion of Secondary 6. The NSS curriculum is flexible, coherent and diversified and aims to cater for students' varied interests, needs, aptitudes and abilities. Students must 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.

ApL courses are introduced at Secondary 5 and 6 and include more practical learning linked to broad professional and vocational fields. In the 2013-15 cohort, 37 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 new 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. The Australian Government recognised HKDSE as comparable to the Australian Senior Secondary School Certificate in 2008. Over 160 tertiary institutions worldwide, including renowned universities such as Oxford and Yale, have recognised the new qualification for admission purposes, and more are being added.

Under the State Ministry of Education's Scheme for Admission of Hong Kong Students to Mainland Higher Education Institutions rolled out in the 2012-13 academic year, some Mainland higher education institutions will admit Hong Kong students on the basis of their results in the HKDSE Examination and exempt them from taking the Joint Entrance Examination for Universities in the Mainland. More than 6,500 Hong Kong students submitted applications under the scheme in the 2012-13 and 2013-14 academic years, and about 2,200 Hong Kong

students were admitted by Mainland institutions. In the 2014-15 academic year, the number of participating institutions will increase from 70 to 75, located in 14 Mainland provinces and municipalities.

Information Technology in Education

The Pilot Scheme on e-Learning in Schools is a three-year project spreading across the 2011-12 to 2013-14 school years. The 21 selected 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.

Starting with Secondary 1 from the 2010-11 school year and progressing each year to a higher junior secondary level, secondary schools (taking account of their students' ability and interests, their teachers' capability and readiness, and school support measures) can have the flexibility to decide their own medium of instruction arrangements to increase students' opportunities for exposure to, and use of, English.

From the 2010-11 school year, funding has been available under the Refined English Enhancement Scheme to support secondary schools in the teaching and learning of English. Tertiary institutions have been commissioned to organise development programmes for teachers on using English as the medium of instruction and for promoting its use.

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. The scheme has brought about changes in classroom practice and students have shown a more positive attitude towards the learning of English.

Moral, Civic and National Education

The EDB accords great importance to students' all-round development. Moral, civic and national education is one of the Hong Kong school curriculum's five essential learning experiences, alongside intellectual development, community service, physical and aesthetic development and career-related experiences.

Schools in Hong Kong, though funded largely by the government, are run by school sponsoring bodies (SSBs), many of which are religious and philanthropic non-governmental

organisations. Schools can develop their school-based moral, civic and national education by taking into account the SSBs' and schools' mission and religious background, if any. The EDB encourages teachers to adopt a balanced approach and to explore issues with students from multiple perspectives.

The EDB organises professional development programmes, provides teachers and students with learning opportunities, offers school-based support services and develops learning and teaching resources to promote the effectiveness of moral, civic and national education.

Professional Development at Schools

Teachers' Professional Development

The Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals (formerly the Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications) advises the EDB on policies relating to the professional development of the teaching profession at different career stages and provides a platform for professional sharing, collaboration and networking.

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. In the 2012-13 school year, 59 teachers received CEATE awards or certificates of merit.

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 1,100 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 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 2012-13 school year, fee subsidies and remissions totalling \$2.2 billion and \$448.2 million were granted to 131,400 and 38,735 students respectively.

Financial Assistance for Primary and Secondary Education

At the primary and secondary levels, means-tested assistance covers textbook grants, travel subsidies, subsidies for internet access charges and examination fee remission. In the 2012-13 school year, \$647.2 million was disbursed to 252,216 students to purchase textbooks, \$286.3 million to 168,157 students as travel subsidies, \$175.6 million to 169,856 families to subsidise internet access by students at home, and \$52.4 million in examination fees was reimbursed to 25,575 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 2012-13 academic year, 30,184 students received \$1,111.1 million of grants and \$285 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 2012-13 academic year, \$1,225.7 million of grants and \$266.6 million of loans were provided to 28,383 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 2012-13 academic year, 27,767 people received loans amounting to \$1,276 million.

Travel subsidies totalling \$159.9 million were provided to 51,753 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, with an additional amount for those who pass a means test.

Scholarships

The \$2.27 billion Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government Scholarship Fund awards 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 post-secondary education sector, a \$3.52 billion Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund provides scholarships and awards to outstanding students pursuing full-time locally-accredited self-financing sub-degree or undergraduate

programmes, and supports worthwhile initiatives and schemes to enhance and assure the quality of self-financing post-secondary education.

In the 2012-13 academic year, 5,622 scholarships and awards were distributed by the two funds.

In the 2013-14 academic year, the two funds have introduced new scholarships/awards for deserving post-secondary students with special educational needs.

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.

Community Participation in Education

Home-school Co-operation

The Committee on Home-school Co-operation encourages the establishment of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs). As at 2013, about 1,400 PTAs had been established. The EDB funded about 3,100 school-based and district-based home-school co-operation activities in the 2012-13 school year.

School Business Partnership

The EDB's Business-School Partnership Programme takes students out of the classroom to gain a wider perspective of society. In the 2012-13 school year, more than 300 activities were organised which benefited 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 2013, the committee concentrated on encouraging a positive attitude towards life, fostering family harmony to cultivate an integrated and harmonious society, instilling core civic values, and promoting understanding of the Basic Law and the Mainland.

The committee's 'Respect and Inclusiveness' campaign implemented in 2013 aimed to encourage mutual respect in the community for those from different cultural backgrounds and with different points of view. Two sets of television and radio Announcements in the Public Interest were produced with a similar theme. Other projects included a civic education exhibition, a competition about the Basic Law and a TV programme jointly produced with Radio Television Hong Kong to enhance understanding of the Mainland. Civic education materials produced included a family magazine, a youth magazine and a calendar.

The Civic Education Resource Centre at the Youth Square in Chai Wan comprises a 'Resource Corner', with reference materials on civic education and youth development, a 'Civic Square' and a 'Gallery'. Equipped with audio/visual facilities, the Civic Square is used for training courses,

seminars, sharing sessions and youth activities and film shows about civic education. The Gallery's videos and interactive games help visitors to experience and explore different aspects of civic education. Guided tours are provided and periodic exhibitions promote core civic values.

Commission on Youth

The Commission on Youth's main tasks include advising the government on youth development, initiating studies on youth, promoting youth development, enhancing communication between young people and the government, and providing young people with exchange opportunities in the Mainland and overseas, and internship opportunities in the Mainland.

To enhance communication between young people and the government, the commission invites senior government officials and representatives from advisory bodies to attend 'Youth Exchange Sessions', so that they can communicate directly with young people and gather their views on relevant policy issues. The commission also organises a biennial 'Youth Summit' to provide a platform for principal officials to exchange views with youth participants. The next summit is planned for 2014.

To promote youth development, in 2013 the commission approved sponsorship under the Large-scale Youth Programme Funding Scheme for 19 large-scale youth programmes run by qualified organisations in Hong Kong.

In 2013, the commission sponsored 123 study tours to the Mainland under a scheme to enhance young people's awareness and understanding of their home country, strengthen their sense of national identity and foster exchanges with Mainland people. The commission also launched a new scheme sponsoring community organisations to provide young people with internships in the Mainland so as to strengthen their understanding of the Mainland employment market, work culture and development opportunities. During the year, youth delegates visited 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 young people from these countries on 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 'Short Film Contest for the Youth', the 'Outstanding Youth Commendation Scheme' and the 'Outstanding Youth Activity Commendation Scheme'. 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, 4,258 activities were organised in the summer of 2013 with sponsorship from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust.

Children's Rights

The Children's Rights Forum (CRF) is a platform for children's organisations, children and the government to exchange views on matters that concern children. In 2014, the CRF will help the Family Council to assess the impact of government policies on the family by relaying to the council children's views on government initiatives expressed at the forum. To enhance understanding of children's rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Children's Rights Education Funding Scheme has supported non-government bodies to implement around 230 projects since its establishment in 2006.

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 2012, the HAD set up an additional support service centre and two sub-centres to 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.

Since 2011, the HAD has put in place various initiatives to help ethnic minorities integrate into the community. These initiatives include the 'District-based Integration Programmes' to help ethnic minorities better understand Hong Kong and encourage them to participate 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, introduce public services to them and make referrals to government departments where necessary.

Websites

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

Education Bureau: www.edb.gov.hk

Home Affairs Bureau: www.hab.gov.hk

Home Affairs Department: www.had.gov.hk

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