

Foreword

In the face of globalization and the development of a knowledge-based society, education reform assumes an important role in meeting the ever-changing expectations and demands of the community.

The education reform is not only an arduous task, but also an enormous and complex exercise involving different sectors and implementation agencies. In order to achieve the vision of “life-long learning and all-round development”, the close coordination and cooperation among various stakeholders is of supreme importance.

The Education Commission is responsible for coordinating the work of various major education executive and advisory bodies on the reform, dealing with issues relating to the interface between different education sectors or bodies and reporting on the progress to the public regularly so as to maintain transparency. This booklet, the first Progress Report on the overall education reform, is published by the Education Commission in collaboration with various major education executive and advisory bodies. It is hoped that through the enhanced communication with various sectors, mutual understanding and trust may be promoted and close partnerships forged in order to proceed with the reform.

The community holds high expectations for the education reform. However, the enhancement of the quality of education is a long development process and, as for reforms implemented in other places of the world, difficulties and challenges are inevitable. This may be especially true for frontline educators. We must, therefore, render them the greatest support and encouragement, and provide them with concrete assistance, to enable them to make real improvements in the quality of education and develop students’ potential to the full.



(Rosanna WONG Yick-ming)
Chairman
Education Commission

Chapter 1 : Background

To meet the needs of society in the 21st Century, the Education Commission in 1998 embarked on a two-year comprehensive review of the overall education system in Hong Kong. The review covered curricula, academic structure and assessment mechanisms at various stages of education, as well as the interface between the different stages. Following three rounds of extensive public consultation, a series of recommendations for reforming the education system was submitted to the Government in September 2000. In his Policy Address delivered in October the same year, the Chief Executive endorsed all the recommendations and announced a timetable for implementing the reform measures.

Students are the focal point of the entire reform. By creating space for schools, teachers and students, the reform is implemented to enable every student to attain all-round development in the moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic domains according to his/her own attributes so that he/she will be capable of lifelong learning. It is also hoped that each student will develop the ability for critical and exploratory thinking; be innovative and adaptable to changes; be filled with self-confidence and a team spirit; be willing to put forward effort towards the prosperity, progress, freedom and democracy of society; and contribute to the future well-being of the nation and the world at large.

Key Areas of the Education Reform

As the education reform covers a wide range of complex issues, it is necessary to clearly define the division of responsibilities and closely monitor the progress of each area in order to facilitate effective co-ordination of the reform efforts. In accordance with the blueprint for education reform, the Education Commission has consolidated the work of the reform into seven key areas, including **curriculum reform, language education, support for schools, professional development, admission systems, assessment mechanisms and increase in post-secondary education opportunities**.

A list of major organizations responsible for the work in the seven key areas can be found in Annex I.

Chapter 2 : Progress of the Education Reform

Since October 2000, the Government has been implementing a series of reform measures according to a planned timetable. The progress made in various areas is summarized in the following table.

Stage of education	Measures planned to be implemented in the first three years	Progress
Early Childhood Education	2000/01 school year - to examine ways to improve the Kindergarten Fee Remission Scheme - to enhance the self-evaluation and external evaluation mechanisms	- The enhanced scheme will be implemented in 2002/03. - Performance indicators have been announced. The conducting of quality assurance inspections has started.
	2001/02 school year - to raise the entry qualifications requirement of kindergarten teachers to 5 passes in HKCEE (including Chinese and English) - to relax the minimum age to enter kindergartens from 3 years to 2 years 8 months - to formulate recommendations on the monitoring mechanism, mode of subsidy and teacher training in respect of kindergartens and child care centres (CCC)	- Implemented as scheduled. - Implemented as scheduled. - The review will be completed soon. Public consultation will be conducted in 2002.

Stage of education	Measures planned to be implemented in the first three years	Progress
School Education	2000/01 school year - to progressively reform the school curriculum to provide students with comprehensive learning experiences - to abolish the Academic Aptitude Test and to implement the interim mechanism for the Secondary School Places Allocation - to set up a working group under the Education Commission to study the feasibility of implementing a 3-year senior secondary academic structure	- The development strategy has been formulated and the implementation of the supportive measures is underway. - Implemented as scheduled. - The working group is undertaking the review. Public consultation will be conducted in 2002.
	2001/02 school year - to develop the Basic Competency Assessments in Chinese, English and Mathematics progressively - to abolish the fine grades in the HKCEE and HKALE	- Action in progress. Pilot run of the Prototype of the Student Assessment at Primary 3 level will be conducted in June 2002. - Abolition announced.
	2002/03 school year - to implement the interim mechanism for the Primary One Admission System - some primary and secondary schools may apply to form "through-trains" - to extend the Teacher Assessment Scheme to include students' performance in schools in the results of certain subjects of the HKALE - to provide Secondary 4 or training places to all Secondary 3 graduates who have the ability and wish to do so	- Implemented as scheduled. - Detailed arrangements have been worked out. Four pairs of schools have formed "through-trains". - Preparation work is underway with a view to implementing the scheme in HKALE Physics, Engineering Science and Art in 2004. - Six school premises have been allocated for the establishment of senior secondary schools in the 2003/04 school year.

Stage of education	Measures planned to be implemented in the first three years	Progress
Higher Education	2000/01 school year and beyond - to reform the admission criteria progressively to encourage the all-round development of students - to reform the curriculum progressively to cater for the needs of society and to enhance students' quality - to develop a flexible credit unit system progressively	- The universities have gradually adopted more diversified admission criteria in order to make a more comprehensive assessment of students' performance. - Being implemented by the universities. - Being examined jointly by the University Grants Committee and the universities.
Continuing Education	2000/01 school year to set up a working group under the Education Commission to examine measures to promote the development of continuing education	The working group is undertaking the review. Public consultation will be conducted in 2002.

Section 1: Curriculum Reform

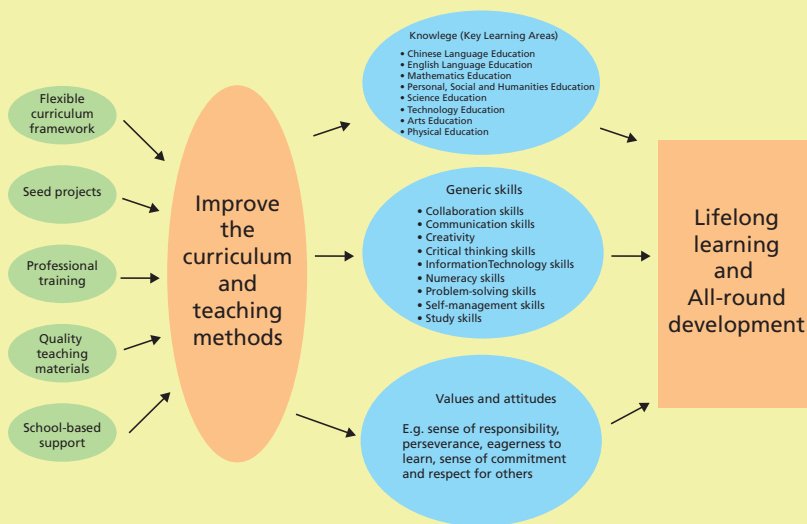
Target

To enhance the knowledge and abilities of all students, and to help them develop positive values and attitudes, so as to establish a solid foundation for life-long learning and whole-person development.

Ten-year Curriculum Development Plan

The Curriculum Development Council (CDC) has announced the following ten-year plan for curriculum development:

Short-term (2001/02 to 2005/06)	• The Education Department (ED) will prepare new curriculum guides, key learning area curriculum guides and exemplars, based on the principles of the curriculum reform. It will also conduct research and development ("seed") projects to generate successful reference experiences for schools. • Schools and teachers are encouraged to place more emphasis on enhancing students' communication skills, critical thinking and creativity in the teaching of the existing subjects. • Schools and teachers are encouraged to promote the key tasks of the curriculum reform to enhance students' learning capacity. • Schools and teachers should take gradual steps to adapt to the new curriculum framework. For those schools which are ready, they may start to develop their own school-based curricula step by step.
Medium-term (2006/07 to 2010/11)	• Building on the strengths and experiences developed during the short-term phase, schools should further improve the teaching methods and develop appropriate school-based curricula according to the abilities and aptitude of their students, as well as to the mission of the schools.
Long-term (Beyond 2011)	• Making good use of effective learning/teaching strategies and adopting appropriate school-based curricula to meet the needs of students.



Last Year's Progress

In the last year, great effort was made to promote a new learning and teaching culture, as well as to implement a number of supportive measures for the curriculum reform.

(1) Developing Curriculum Guides

- The report, "Learning to Learn - The Way Forward in Curriculum Development", was issued by the Curriculum Development Council in June 2001.
- All Key Learning Area (KLA) Committees worked on the new curriculum guides.
- The CDC worked with the Hong Kong Examinations Authority (HKEA) to develop combined curriculum and assessment guides for different subjects, so as to ensure that the scope and modes of assessment were in line with the learning objectives and contents.

(2) Conducting Research and Development Projects

- The first stage of the collaborative research and development ("seed") projects started in September 2001. The themes of the projects included general learning and teaching strategies, key elements in various KLAs, the four key tasks and school-based curriculum development. Around 170 secondary schools and 140

primary schools participated in these “seed” projects to generate successful experiences in collaboration with the Curriculum Development Institute (CDI) and experts from tertiary institutions.

- A three-year longitudinal research project is underway to identify effective strategies to cater for the diverse learning abilities of primary school students.
- A three-year cluster school gifted project was started in 2000 to pilot a three-level structure for implementing gifted education in schools. 30 schools participated in this project.

(3) Promoting a New Culture of Assessment for Learning

- A Knowledge Fair on “Assessment for Learning” was held in November 2001 to promote effective and diversified assessment methods for use by schools. Around 5,000 principals and teachers participated in the Fair to share valuable experiences in assessments, in particular with regard to the use of appropriate assessment methods to enhance the learning effectiveness of students.

(4) Facilitating the Development of the Four Key Tasks

(i) Project Learning

The CDI developed a “web-based project learning tool” to facilitate self-learning by students. Through electronic devices, students may record their own learning processes, set targets for different stages and work towards these targets in a step by step manner. Students may also report their progress to their teachers who could then provide them with feedback and assistance as appropriate.

(ii) Promoting Reading

The following was done to promote a reading culture in schools and to enhance students’ interests in reading:

- Mobile library services were provided to 82 schools which did not have their own libraries.
- A recommended book list was provided.

(iii) Moral and Civic Education

- An Ad Hoc Committee on Moral and Civic Education was set up under the CDC to consider issues relating to the promotion of moral and civic education. Recommendations will be submitted by the Committee in 2002.

(iv) *Using Information Technology (IT) for Interactive Learning*

- Apart from providing resources to schools for setting up intranets and for purchasing computers, a number of educational software packages were developed and web-sites on different themes were set up to further support the implementation of Information Technology (IT) in Education.
- A series of subject-related refresher training courses and workshops were organized to help teachers integrate IT into learning and teaching.
- A questionnaire survey on the implementation of IT in education in primary schools was launched to provide useful information for reviewing the junior secondary IT curriculum.

(5) Other Supportive Measures

(i) *School-based Curriculum Development Support*

On-site support was provided to 88 primary schools and 130 secondary schools with a large number of academically low achievers. The school-based curriculum development teams assisted teachers in lesson planning, adapting appropriate strategies for teaching and learning, preparing teaching resources as well as developing school-based curricula.

(ii) *Provision of Teaching Resources and Exemplars*

- A curriculum bank of exemplars (http://cd.ed.gov.hk/cdb/public/exemplar_c.asp) was established in 2000 to provide teachers with useful reference and ready-to-use learning and teaching resources. It also served as a platform for teachers to share their practices and successful experiences.
- The *Exemplars of Curriculum Development in Schools* was published in June 2001, providing examples of real experiences in local schools to illustrate how the vision and proposals for the curriculum reform could be put into practice.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

In the coming year, the CDC and the CDI will continue to promote a new culture for learning and teaching, and to further strengthen various supportive measures. The foci of work are as follows:

(1) Developing Curriculum Guides

- New curriculum guides for basic education (P1 - 6, S1 - 3) and for all KLAs in basic education are scheduled to be completed by mid-2002.
- Combined curriculum and assessment guides for new examination subjects will be jointly developed by the HKEA and the CDC.

(2) Strengthening the Various Supportive Measures

The various supportive measures mentioned above will be strengthened. Emphasis will be on developing the curriculum leadership of school principals and enhancing the professional competence of teachers for implementing the new curriculum and improving teaching methods.

(3) Providing an Additional Primary School Master/Mistress

Each public-sector primary school will be provided with an additional primary school master/mistress for a period of five years to assist in leading the curriculum development in schools.

Section 2: Language Education

Target

The language policy of the HKSAR Government is to enable students and the working population to be biliterate (in Chinese and English) and trilingual (in Cantonese, Putonghua and English).

Review

The community in general supports the policy of biliteracy and trilingualism. There are, however, different views as to how best to achieve this policy. There has also been concern about the lowering of language standards in the community as a whole, and among the student population in particular. Therefore, in early 2001, the Government commissioned the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) to conduct a review on language education.

Last Year's Progress

The SCOLAR not only conducted a literature review on studies relating to language education and official documents relating to language policy, but also visited a number of primary and secondary schools. In August 2001, nine Expert Groups were formed, each headed by a SCOLAR member and comprising academics, school principals and teachers, parents and other professionals, to look into specific areas. They then submitted progress reports to the SCOLAR in December 2001. Deliberations by the Expert Groups and the SCOLAR are ongoing. Below are the major issues which have been discussed so far and the workplan ahead.

(1) Language Standard and Measurement Mechanism

- The SCOLAR considered it necessary to align the existing language standards and measurement mechanisms (HKCEE, HKALE) with those which are being developed (Basic Competency Assessments, English language proficiency test) in order to form a coherent and transparent system, with grade descriptors and exemplars to illustrate the specific listening, speaking, writing and reading skills represented by the different levels of proficiency.

(2) Medium of Instruction

- In the context of reviewing language education in Hong Kong, the SCOLAR is also considering whether a long-term strategy for the medium of instruction policy should be formulated.

(3) Language Teachers

- Language teachers are central to the teaching of languages. They are role models of language learning for students and implementation agents of the curriculum as promulgated by the Government. Their proficiency in the language they teach, subject knowledge, as well as pedagogical knowledge and skills, have a direct bearing on the effectiveness of their teaching. The SCOLAR is currently looking into these issues.

(4) Curriculum and Pedagogy

- As mentioned above, the SCOLAR will work with the HKEA and the CDC to set out, as early as possible, clear standards for the HKCEE and for different key stages of education, as well as transparent measurement mechanisms. The SCOLAR will also consider funding the development of research-based teaching materials for English, Chinese and Putonghua in the new curriculum framework for pre-primary, primary and secondary levels. Apart from providing teaching packages, ancillary teacher training on the use of the materials and teaching methods will also need to be provided.

(5) Attitudes and Motivation of Students

- The literature review suggests that the attitudes and motivation of students are important factors in affecting their language learning. While there have been some isolated local research in this area, the SCOLAR considers it useful to conduct a more structured survey to ascertain the factors which affect students' attitudes and motivation in language learning.
- Preparation work for this survey is underway. The survey will be conducted in early 2002, and the findings will provide input to the further deliberations of the SCOLAR on the other components in the review, such as curriculum and pedagogy, as well as school and parental support.

(6) School Management Support in Language Education

- The SCOLAR will, in consultation with the ED, identify measures to reduce the workload of language teachers and help school management deploy resources more effectively.

(7) Parental Support

- During school visits conducted by the SCOLAR, many students indicated that their interest in language learning was affected more by their parents than by their teachers. The SCOLAR considers that parent education should include information about the basic principles of children's language acquisition and learning, how to inculcate good reading habits, and how parents should act as role models of life-long learning. The SCOLAR considers that such materials should be published and that a publicity campaign targeted at parents should be launched (see item (8) below).
- The SCOLAR also considers that assistance should be provided to parents themselves (for example, through Parent-Teacher Associations) so as to enable them to support schools in organising various language learning activities. This could provide strong support for language learning.

(8) Wider Environment

- The SCOLAR considers it necessary to launch a large-scale publicity campaign to raise the public's awareness of the importance of biliteracy and trilingualism, as well as of the ways to improve language proficiency. The campaign should target students, parents, employees and employers.
- The media plays a crucial role in the development of good language standards. The SCOLAR is considering possible ways to draw the public's attention to this and encourage the community to make better use of language learning resources available through the media.
- The SCOLAR is also considering launching a Workplace Putonghua Campaign and Funding Scheme which is similar to the Workplace English Campaign.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- The above are still preliminary deliberations. The SCOLAR and its Expert Groups will continue to discuss the various issues with relevant parties with a view to drawing up concrete recommendations by mid-2002.

Section 3: Support for Schools

Target

In the course of implementing the education reform, schools and teachers will inevitably face many challenges and problems. At present, different sectors of the community are very willing to provide support to schools and teachers to enhance the quality of education. Apart from providing direct support to schools, the Government is also promoting the co-operation between schools and other sectors so as to enrich the learning experiences of students.

Last Year's Progress

(1) School-based Support

- The Regional Education Offices (REOs) of the Education Department are responsible for providing school-based support, including offering schools advice and facilitating them in formulating and implementing improvement measures.
- District networking activities have been organized according to the needs of schools in different districts to disseminate good practices and to establish a sharing culture among schools.

(2) Capacity Enhancement Grant

- To relieve the workload of teachers, the Government has, starting from the 2000/01 school year, provided schools with the Capacity Enhancement Grant. In the 2000/01 school year, each primary school was provided \$450,000 to \$550,000 and each secondary school \$250,000 to \$300,000. Schools can make use of the grant to employ additional staff or hire outside help so as to relieve teachers' workload, thus enabling them to concentrate more on the education reform.
- In the 2000/01 school year, schools used the grant to employ a total of 2,225 full-time and 2,806 part-time staff, and to hire outside services. The feedback from many schools and teachers was very positive. They generally considered that the grant had helped to relieve the workload of teachers and had enhanced the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

(3) Quality Education Fund (QEF)

- The QEF has completed four rounds of grant allocation. A total of 4,341 projects have been approved with funds amounting to \$2.7 billion. Over 1,200 schools have benefited from the projects.
- In July 2001, adjudication for the Outstanding Schools Award was completed. A total of 24 awards were conferred on 21 schools selected from among 312 nominations.
- In 2001, the QEF organized a large-scale Projects Exposition and a series of experience-sharing sessions to promote and disseminate good practices and successful experiences generated from the QEF projects.

(4) Parent Education and Home-School Co-operation

- The Steering Committee on Parent Education, comprising representatives from the Education Department, the Department of Health and the Social Welfare Department, as well as community members, is responsible for developing implementation strategies for parent education, monitoring the use of funds, and co-ordinating the work of different government and non-government agencies on parent education.
- The Parent Education Implementation Team was set up in September 2001. It is responsible for the implementation of work relating to parent education, including promotion and compilation of reference materials as well as training of parent education workers.
- The Education Department also promotes the establishment of a home-school co-operation culture through the Committee on Home-School Co-operation.

(5) Support by Other Sectors

- Many different sectors in the community, with abundant resources and talents, are well placed to provide support for schools to enrich the learning experiences of students. The Board of Education also provides advice on the development of a supportive network for life-wide learning. Moreover, the Education Department has actively encouraged different government departments and other sectors of the community to build up partnerships with schools so as to provide students with diversified and enlightening learning experiences.

Please refer to Annex II for more details on the progress in the above areas.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- (1) The Education Department will set work priorities in accordance with the emphasis of the education policies, and strengthen school-based support accordingly.
- (2) With effect from the 2001/02 school year, the rate of the Capacity Enhancement Grant for secondary schools has been increased by 50% so as to further relieve the workload of teachers in both teaching and non-teaching duties. For primary schools, a series of measures to increase their manpower resources so as to enhance the quality of teaching and learning will be implemented. These include the provision of an additional graduate teacher for a period of five years to assist in curriculum development, the strengthening of guidance services for students and the provision of Native-speaking English Teachers and English Language Teaching Assistants.
- (3) In the 5th call for applications, the QEF will adopt a more focused approach by accepting only applications from schools and by setting restrictions on the number of applications submitted. At the same time, the QEF is working on a long-term strategy to ensure that the best practices generated from QEF projects can be widely disseminated to the whole school sector.
- (4) For parent education, the emphasis will be placed on reaching out to parents with special needs, or those parents who are difficult to reach, and training parent education workers.
- (5) To enhance collaboration with other sectors, the Board of Education will continue to provide advice on measures implemented by the Education Department to promote life-wide learning through a community support network. The Education Department will continue to cooperate actively with different government departments and non-government organizations.

Section 4: Professional Development

Target

Frontline education workers are the key players in implementing the education reform. To support the reform, the Government is putting in lots of efforts to enhance the quality and professionalism of the teaching force, through providing training and support as well as formulating appropriate professional standards for teachers. In realizing the vision of the reform, school principals play a very vital role. The Government places much emphasis on promoting the continuing professional development among school principals, and assisting them in enhancing their professional leadership so that they can lead teachers and students in facing the changes and challenges of the new millennium. We would also encourage sharing among school principals.

(1) The Professional Development of Teachers

Last Year's Progress

Kindergarten Teachers

- (i) To meet the target that all new kindergarten teachers should obtain the qualified kindergarten teacher qualifications by the 2003/04 school year, the Education Department has commissioned a number of one-year full-time pre-service early childhood education courses to provide 200 and 440 training places in the 2000/01 and 2001/02 school years respectively. The ED is reviewing the supply and demand of teachers in order to decide on the number of training places to be provided in the 2002/03 school year.
- (ii) To enable qualified kindergarten teachers to further their studies, different early childhood teacher education providers are now providing Certificate in Education (Kindergarten) training places. As at the end of 2001, some 600 serving kindergarten teachers had completed the Certificate in Education (Kindergarten) training. A number of post-secondary institutions have also started to provide Certificate in Education (Kindergarten) training or Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Education) programmes. It is estimated that around 330 teachers will complete the two types of courses described above in 2002.

School Teachers

- (i) The Education Department has provided a subsidy to the District Teacher Network scheme for supporting 20 projects a year to disseminate good teaching practices.
- (ii) To support the curriculum reform, a series of professional development programmes and activities were organized to help teachers enhance their knowledge and skills in curriculum development, teaching and learning, assessment and school-based curriculum development.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

The Government will continue to work closely with the Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications and teacher education providers to proceed with the following tasks:

- (i) Developing a professional development ladder for teachers.
- (ii) Enhancing support for new teachers and actively exploring the feasibility of establishing a mentorship scheme.
- (iii) Reviewing the qualification requirements for teacher registration to bring it in line with the upgrading of teachers' professional status.
- (iv) Actively considering the mechanism for giving recognition to distinguished teachers with a view to further enhancing teachers' professional status.
- (v) Strengthening the pre-service and in-service teacher education in support of the implementation of the education reform.
- (vi) Improving the Education Department's Training Calendar System and setting up a teacher databank to facilitate teachers, schools, the Education Department and education providers in planning for the provision of training and teachers' professional development.

(2) The Professional Development of Principals

Last Year's Progress

Early Childhood Education

- (i) Starting from the 2001/02 school year, serving kindergarten principals and child care centre supervisors will be provided with 150 additional Certificate in Education (Kindergarten) training places every year. The target is to enable all serving

principals and supervisors to receive the training before the end of the 2005/06 school year.

- (ii) Starting from the 2001/02 school year, a principalship training course specifically designed for kindergarten principals and child care centre supervisors was introduced. A total of 120 places will be provided each year.
- (iii) An Expert Group on Certificate in Early Childhood Education was formed in January 2001. The Group comprises representatives from related education institutes, kindergartens, child care centres, the Education and Manpower Bureau, the Education Department and the Social Welfare Department. A course framework for the Certificate in Early Childhood Education Course has been drawn up. Those who have completed courses designed according to this framework are recognised by the Education Department and the Social Welfare Department as having fulfilled the training requirement for kindergarten principals/child care centre supervisors.

School Education

- (i) A series of specialised training programmes have been provided to new school principals, including needs assessments, induction programmes, leadership development programmes and continuing professional education programmes. A total of 173 newly appointed principals have received or will receive such training in the 2000/01 and 2001/02 school years.
- (ii) A variety of programmes covering curriculum development and leadership, as well as the continuing professional development of teachers were organized for serving principals. In addition, these principals were encouraged to establish and expand their own networks to facilitate professional sharing.
- (iii) Offshore programmes were organized to broaden the exposure of serving principals to overseas developments on the basis of which they could reflect on their current practices and try out new ideas.
- (iv) A framework has been mapped out to outline different professional development channels for potential, newly appointed and serving principals to meet their development needs and those of the schools and the community. The proposed framework was endorsed by the Board of Education in late 2001.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- (i) Providing professional development programmes to meet the needs of serving and newly appointed principals.
- (ii) Consulting the education sector on the proposed framework for the continuing professional development of principals and how it should be implemented.

Section 5: Admission Mechanism

(1) Reform of the Primary One Admission System

Target

To avoid using children's abilities as an admission criterion so as to reduce the incentive for drilling children in early childhood education, and enhance the fair opportunities for parents in choosing schools.

Last Year's Progress

- The implementation of the short-term Primary One Admission (POA) mechanism was started in September 2001 to process applications in the 2002/03 school year. Results of the allocation of discretionary places were released on 3 December 2001.
- Out of the 63,978 applicants for discretionary places, over half (33,799, 52.8% of all applicants) were offered a place. The corresponding percentage for the last year was 56.3%.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- To conduct the central allocation under the short-term POA mechanism to allocate remaining places to those applicants who have not secured a discretionary place.
- To strengthen communication with parents and the public to enhance their understanding of the new allocation system.

(2) Reform of the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System

Target

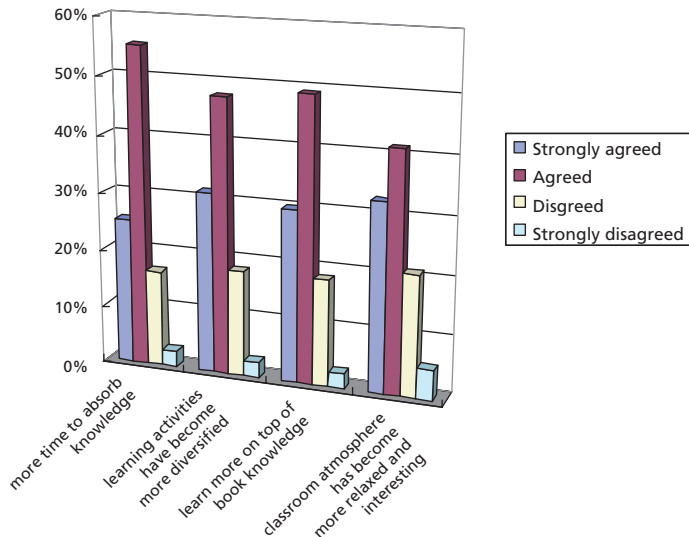
To remove the obstacles to learning in the nine-year basic education arising from the public assessment implemented for school place allocations; to reduce the labelling effects of allocation bands on schools and pupils; and to promote the adoption of more diversified admission criteria for allocating Secondary One places.

Last Year's Progress

(i) Abolition of the Academic Aptitude Test (AAT)

- The AAT was abolished in 2000 and the new interim SSPA mechanism was implemented.
- According to a study commissioned by the Government, most schools made use of the room created by the abolition of the AAT to enhance the all-round development of students, such as by strengthening project learning, extra-curricular activities and language learning. The majority of students stated that learning in schools had become more interesting and diversified, and they were better able to grasp the content.

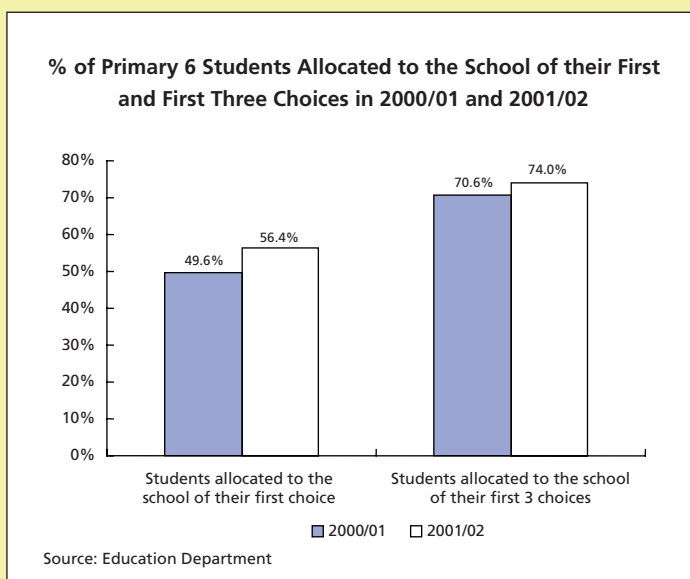
Changes in Classroom Learning as Perceived by Students after Abolishing the AAT



Source: Study on the effect of abolishing the AAT on teaching and learning in primary schools conducted by the Faculty of Education of HKU

(ii) Students'/Parents' Choices

- The percentages of students allocated to the school of their first choice and their first three choices have increased to 56.4% and 74% respectively in 2001 (the corresponding percentages in 2000 was 49.6% and 70.6% respectively). This indicates that more students were allocated to their preferred schools under the new mechanism.



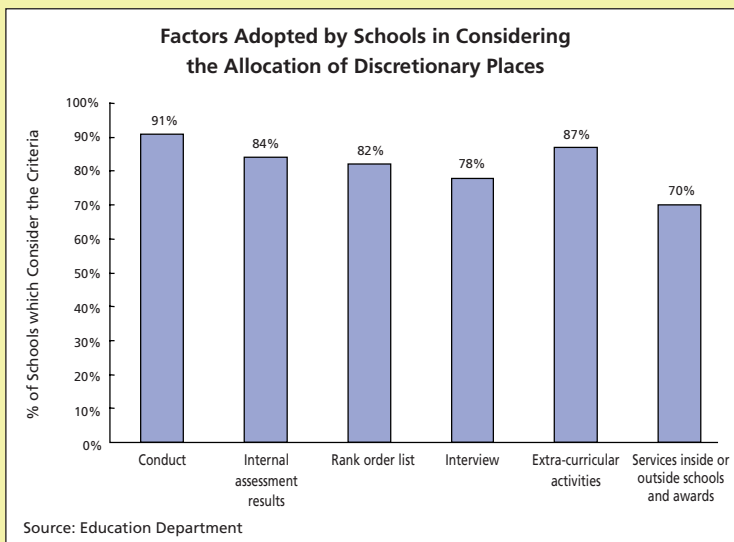
(iii) Diversity of Student Ability

- Under the new mechanism, the number of allocation bands has been reduced from five to three. At the same time, the percentage of discretionary places has been increased from 10% to 20%, which has increased the chances of schools directly selecting students according to the schools' culture and circumstances.
- Prior to the reduction of allocation bands, the ability range of students within secondary schools, on average, spread across three bands out of the old five bands. Therefore, schools have already accumulated some experiences in handling the diverse abilities of students.

- According to actual statistics —
 - In 2001, the ability range of students in the majority of schools (about 70%) remained more or less the same as in past years. Among them:
 - about 20% of schools had no change;
 - the ability range within about 20% of schools was reduced;
 - the ability range within the remaining 30% of schools has been slightly widened, but the extent of change was within one band of the old five bands.
 - The diversity of student ability in the rest of the schools (about 30%) was widened, and some people expressed concern about the effects of this change on the quality of education. Nevertheless, according to actual statistics, the number of students involved was usually rather small. About 20 schools which used to admit mainly Band 4 students in the past have received some students belonging to the old Band 5 this year.
- The Education Department provided support to schools in need, so as to help them cope with the diverse abilities of students. These included providing additional manpower resources to schools which admitted a large number of academically low achievers, providing on-site support to these schools, as well as assisting them in curriculum tailoring.

(iv) Diversified Admission Criteria

- Guidelines were issued to all primary and secondary schools to remind them to pay attention to the relevant ordinance(s) and to abide by the principles of fairness, justice and openness when setting their admission criteria.
- In April 2001, a survey on “Handling Applications for Secondary One Discretionary Places” was conducted by the Education Department. The findings indicated that secondary schools considered the following factors in setting their admission criteria:



Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

(i) Conducting Research

To conduct studies to monitor the impact of the new SSPA mechanism on students and teachers of primary and secondary schools. This would facilitate the provision of appropriate support measures to both schools and students, and pave the way for the interim review to be conducted in the 2003/04 school year.

(ii) Internal Assessments

To encourage schools to adopt a diversified mode of assessments in schools. Apart from publishing a Guidebook on Internal Assessments in January 2002, in which exemplars will be used to elaborate the new concepts for assessments, the Education Department will also invite all core subject teachers to participate in relevant seminars to be held in February 2002. Moreover, the Education Department will also encourage and assist different educational bodies and professional associations to organize relevant workshops to promote experience sharing among schools and educators.

(iii) **Changes to the SSPA**

To comply with the Court's Judgement in June 2001, the SSPA system will be revised to remove the three gender-based features with effect from 2002.

(3) **"Through-train" Mode**

Objective

To strengthen collaboration between primary and secondary schools having the same education philosophy, and to enhance continuity in the curriculum so as to improve the learning effectiveness of students and promote their all-round development.

Last Year's Progress

- At present, there are four pairs of primary and secondary schools adopting the "through-train" mode.
- Through the 1999, 2000 and 2001 School Allocation Exercises, 18 additional pairs of primary and secondary schools adopting the "through-train" mode will come into operation in the coming years.
- After conducting public consultations, the guidelines on the arrangements for implementing the "through-train" mode were announced in January 2002 to facilitate schools in considering whether or not to apply to form "through-trains".
- Taking into account the views received during the public consultation, the Education Commission decided that the deadline for those existing feeder/nominated schools which have fulfilled the requirements for forming "through-trains" to indicate their intention should be changed from 31 May 2002 to 31 May 2005. This was to allow these schools to have more time to make consideration and to take into account the results of the interim review on SSPA to be conducted in the 2003/04 school year before making a decision.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- To provide assistance to those schools which have taken the lead to adopt the "through-train" mode to consolidate and disseminate their experiences.
- To monitor the implementation of the "through-train" mode, and to provide support to these schools through the Regional Education Offices and the Curriculum Development Institute.

- To work together with those feeder/nominated schools which currently do not fulfil the requirements for forming “through-trains” to formulate feasible solutions during the 10-year period from 2002 to 2012.

(4) University Admission

To encourage the all-round development of students, local universities are encouraged to review their own admission criteria and procedures so as to give due consideration to students’ all-round performance and select the most suitable candidates for the relevant programmes.

Last Year’s Progress

- As shown by the preliminary statistics on university admission for the 2001/02 school year, the number of students admitted through non-JUPAS increased notably by 22% as compared with last year. These students generally possessed academic qualifications equivalent to HKALE, or had demonstrated outstanding performance in non-academic fields. At present, about 10% of the student intake of the universities come from non-JUPAS admissions.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- The University Grants Committee will continue to rally the active participation of local universities in and support for implementing the reform measures. A review on the development of higher education is underway and a report will be submitted to the Government in the first half of 2002.

Section 6: Assessment Mechanism

(1) Basic Competency Assessments

Target

Basic Competency Assessments (BCA) are comprised of the Student Assessment and the System Assessment. In line with the curriculum reform, the Student Assessment provides an effective tool for use at the discretion of schools in combination with other internal assessment methods. It will help teachers understand the learning needs and problems of students, so that timely assistance can be provided to enhance their learning effectiveness. The System Assessment will provide the Government and school management with useful information on students' standards in Chinese, English and Mathematics at the levels of Primary 3, Primary 6 and Secondary 3 on a territory-wide basis.

Last Year's Progress

- (i) Based on the curriculum, the relevant committees under the Curriculum Development Council initially mapped out a set of proposed 'Basic Competencies' which Primary 3 students should attain in Chinese, English and Mathematics. In parallel, the Curriculum Development Institute is developing the remedial packages.
- (ii) The Hong Kong Examinations Authority is developing a computer system as well as the assessment items in the learning areas of Chinese, English and Mathematics at the Primary 3 level.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- (i) The Curriculum Development Council will consult the education sector on the tryout version of the proposed "Basic Competencies" for Primary 3 students in the areas of Chinese, English and Mathematics.
- (ii) The pilot run of the Prototype of the Student Assessment at the Primary 3 level will be conducted in a number of schools in mid-2002. It will be extended gradually to more schools and the scope of the Prototype will be expanded to pave the way for the full launch of the Student Assessment at Primary 3 to 6 levels in June 2003.

(2) Public Examination Reforms

Public examinations provide a fair and objective assessment mechanism for certification and selection purposes. However, they do have limitations as they do not assess the abilities and performance of students in a comprehensive and continuous manner. Therefore, the Hong Kong Examinations Authority (HKEA) strives to improve the public examination system with a view to making it more flexible and more comprehensive so as to tie in with the curriculum reform.

Last Year's Progress

(i) Extension of the Teacher Assessment Scheme (TAS)

Preparatory work for extending the Teacher Assessment Scheme to more HKALE subjects (including Physics, Engineering Science & Art) in 2004 is now underway.

(ii) HKCEE Core-competence Initiative

The HKEA and the CDI are currently preparing for the implementation of the core-competence approach in the HKCEE English Language examination. The implementation of this approach for other subjects, including Chinese Language, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology, is still being considered.

(iii) Allowing S6 Students to Sit the HKALE

The HKEA has decided to allow S5 students who perform well to take the HKALE in S6 as private candidates. It is now considering how to apply this scheme to those subjects having a TAS component (such as the Chinese Language and Culture subject) in order to enhance its effectiveness. The implementation details are being worked out. It is estimated that the proposal will be implemented in the 2003 HKALE at the earliest.

(iv) Abolition of Fine Grades in HKCEE and HKALE

The HKEA has announced that fine grades [i.e. the approach of sub-dividing students' Grade A to F results into 12 fine grades from A(01) to F(12)] would be abolished with effect from the 2002 HKCEE and HKALE.

(v) Mounting an Independent English Language Proficiency Test

The HKEA will work out the implementation details for mounting an English language proficiency test which is independent of the HKCEE and HKALE English language examinations and can meet the needs of society. This test will specify different levels of grading according to clear criteria for assessing candidates' English language proficiency. The test will be open to all members of the public, including students, who wish to obtain certification for their English language proficiency for employment or study purposes.

(vi) Conducting the HKCE CEM Examinations Twice a Year

After careful consideration, the HKEA has decided not to implement this proposal at the present stage as the benefits it could bring to students are limited. The HKEA will focus its resources on other projects which are expected to exert a more significant and positive impact on teaching and learning.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- (i) To implement good practices for setting questions in order to support the curriculum reform:

The HKEA will enhance the relevance of the examination questions to the daily life experiences of students. The format of the questions will also be improved to provide more room for students to demonstrate their creativity and critical thinking, rather than encouraging them to learn by rote. Markers will be encouraged to exercise their professional judgement to accept logical and relevant answers, instead of taking marking schemes as absolute.

- (ii) To work closely with the CDI in developing combined curriculum and assessment guides.
- (iii) To continue implementing the various reforms of public examinations.

Section 7: Increase in Education Opportunities

(1) Increase in Senior Secondary Education Opportunities

Target

To provide all Secondary Three students studying in publicly funded schools, who have the ability and wish to continue with their studies, with subsidized Secondary Four or training places, starting from the 2002/03 school year.

Last Year's Progress

- We have allocated six school premises for setting up senior secondary schools. Another two will be allocated soon. These schools will come into operation in the 2003/04 school year.
- The senior secondary schools mentioned above will have their own characteristics and offer diversified curricula to cater for the varying needs and abilities of different students. For example, some schools will place emphasis on IT, computer software and hardware, finance, financial management, creative design or communication.

(2) Increase in Post-secondary Education Opportunities

Target

To support the progressive increase in post-secondary education opportunities so that 60% of senior secondary school leavers will have access to post-secondary education by the 2010/11 school year.

Last Year's Progress

(i) Common Descriptors of Associate Degree (AD) Programmes

In consultation with the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation and the Federation of Continuing Education in Tertiary Institutions, the Education and Manpower Bureau announced in June 2001, a set of common descriptors for AD programmes in Hong Kong to ensure a consistency of standards in AD qualifications.

(ii) Recognition of AD Qualifications by the Government

The Government announced in June 2001 that it would accept the qualifications of accredited local AD programmes for appointment to all civil service and non-civil-service contract posts with general entry requirements set at the Higher Diploma level.

(iii) Financial Assistance for Students

With effect from the 2001/02 academic year, financial assistance has been provided to students pursuing self-financing accredited full-time post-secondary education courses to ensure that no students are deprived of education due to a lack of means.

(iv) Financial Assistance for Providers

With effect from the 2001/02 academic year, start-up loans have been provided to non-profit-making education providers for running accredited post-secondary programmes on a self-financing basis.

(v) Quality Assurance

To be eligible for the above financial assistance scheme, students have to select those programmes which meet the accreditation requirements that have been stipulated in order to ensure quality.

(vi) Accreditation Grant

Financial assistance to education providers has been granted for institutional reviews and programme validation.

(vii) List of Accredited Post-secondary Programmes

With information provided by post-secondary education institutions, a list of accredited self-financing full-time post-secondary programmes has been compiled for public reference.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

Publicity will be stepped up in order to enhance the public's understanding of sub-degree (including Associate Degree, Higher Diploma and Professional Diploma) qualifications and the prospects for employment or further studies. This should help to promote recognition of these qualifications.

(3) Promoting Continuing Education

Target

To provide a favourable environment for the development of continuing education through the promotion of mutual recognition and transfer of qualifications and enhancing co-operation among various sectors. The ultimate aim is to provide diversified and multi-channel education opportunities to encourage lifelong learning.

Last Year's Progress

- A working group has been set up by the Education Commission to provide advice on the overall strategy for promoting continuing education. The working group has examined the current situation of continuing education from different angles, and proceeded to assess ways to promote co-operation among different continuing education providers, enhance the database on Continuing Education, as well as provide different learners with more continuing education opportunities.
- The working group has mapped out a preliminary proposed qualifications framework, which outlines progression pathways in mainstream academic education, vocational education, professional education and continuing education. This would serve as a basis for promoting mutual recognition and the transfer of qualifications among different institutions.
- In respect to the existing regulatory framework for continuing education, the working group will explore ways to provide continuing education providers with more room for promoting the development of continuing education.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- The working group will submit proposals on the above issues to the Education Commission by mid-2002. The Education Commission will consider these proposals and consult the public before submitting its recommendations to the Government.

Chapter 3 : Going Forward with the Education Reform

The implementation of the education reform commenced in October 2000. Over the past year, a number of reform measures were put in place incrementally, including the reform of the POA and SSPA systems, as well as increasing opportunities for senior secondary and higher education. In addition, a number of measures were introduced to strengthen support for schools and teachers. In light of past experiences and views received from frontline educators and members of the community, improvement will be made in implementation arrangements and support measures.

The progress in the initial stage of reform implementation may be summarized as follows:

For students, learning has become more interesting. The curricula have become more diversified, providing students with more exposure to different life experiences and opportunities for developing different potentials and enhancing their personal quality. Moreover, the learning environment has been further improved. Talented students are allowed to excel, while the academically low achievers are provided with additional support.

For school principals and teachers, their opportunities for professional development have been enhanced and they are provided with greater autonomy in designing curriculum and teaching strategies. The resource support for schools and teachers has also been improved. There are more professional sharing activities among schools and teachers and the collaboration between schools and other sectors has also become more frequent.

For the community at large, the school system has become more diversified; parents are provided with more choices; and more and more young people have the opportunity to receive post-secondary education.

The Way Forward

In the course of proceeding with the education reform in the future, we hope to enhance the public's understanding of various reform measures for different stages of education, and to strengthen communication with various sectors and promote their participation in the reform. With the support and cooperation of schools, teachers, students, parents and the community at large, the education reform will bear fruit before too long.

Comprehensive and systematic research will be conducted to understand the impact of various reform measures on schools, teachers and students. They will provide useful reference for monitoring the effectiveness of the education reform, assessing the quality of education and carrying out various interim reviews. Through these researches, it will be easier to identify successful experiences for consolidation and dissemination.

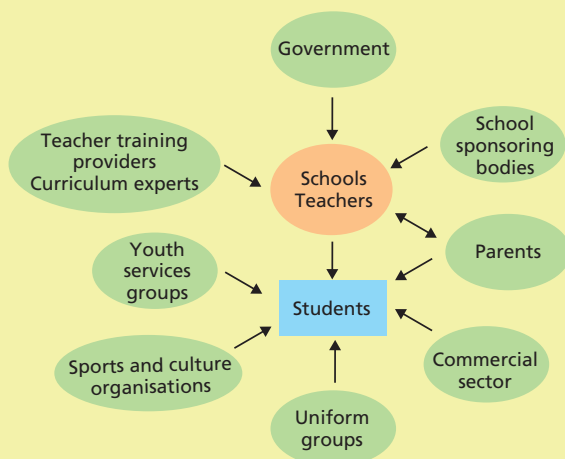
In 2002, the following reviews will be completed and public consultations will be conducted:

- i. Review of the systems of kindergartens and child care centres (conducted by the Joint Working Group set up by the Education Department and the Social Welfare Department);
- ii. Review of language education (conducted by the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research);
- iii. Review of teachers' professional development (conducted by the Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications);
- iv. Review of the senior secondary academic structure, post-secondary education and continuing education (conducted by the Education Commission); and
- v. Review of higher education (conducted by the UGC).

Concluding Remarks

The success of the education reform hinges on the support and cooperation of various stakeholders. Communication and partnerships among the Government, school sponsoring bodies, principals, teachers, parents, students and other sectors will be strengthened. With concerted effort, we are confident that the education reform will be implemented effectively. For transparency of the reform implementation, we will report progress to the public and exchange views with various stakeholders on the reform implementation on a regular basis.

The Success of the Education Reform Relies on the Support and Cooperation of Different Stakeholders



Annex I

List of Major Bodies in Charge of Key Areas of the Education Reform

Key area of the Education Reform	Sub-item	Executive/advisory bodies involved	Party overseeing this area
Language Education	(i) Language Education Policy and Strategy	Curriculum Development Council / Curriculum Development Institute: – formulate the curriculum and implement supportive measures Standing Committee on Language Education and Research: – advise on language education policy Board of Education: – promote “learning to read and reading to learn”	Standing Committee on Language Education and Research
	(ii) Medium of Instruction Policy	Education and Manpower Bureau, Education Department, Standing Committee on Language Education and Research, and Board of Education: – review the medium of instruction policy in 2003 Steering Committee on the Study on the Enrichment of Language Learning Environment: – oversee a study on cross-curricular English enrichment curriculum and related supportive measures	

Key area of the Education Reform	Sub-item	Executive/advisory bodies involved	Party overseeing this area
Curriculum Reform		Curriculum Development Council/ Curriculum Development Institute: – formulate the school curriculum and implement supportive measures Board of Education: – promote “learning to read and reading to learn”	Curriculum Development Council
Support for Schools	(i) School-based Support	Education Department: – provide various types of support to schools to assist them in enhancing the quality in teaching and learning Tertiary institutions: – organize or participate in various schemes for supporting schools Professional associations: – promote sharing of successful experiences and good practices as well as professional development of teachers	Education Department
	(ii) District Teacher Network	Education Department	
	(iii) Quality Education Fund	Quality Education Fund Steering Committee under the Education Commission: – consolidate and disseminate good practices and experiences	

Key area of the Education Reform	Sub-item	Executive/advisory bodies involved	Party overseeing this area
	(iv) Parent Education	– Steering Committee on Parent Education – Board of Education Working Group on Promoting Parent Education – Committee on Home-School Cooperation	
	(v) Support by Other Sectors	Board of Education and Education Department – enhance the co-operation between schools and different sectors	
Professional Development	(i) Professional Development of Teachers	Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications: – advise on various issues related to teacher training and education University Grants Committee: – teacher education programmes provided by the UGC-funded institutions Education Department: – commission and provide in-service teacher education courses	Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications
	(ii) Professional Development of Principals	Board of Education Sub-committee on the Professional Development of Principals	

Key area of the Education Reform	Sub-item	Executive/advisory bodies involved	Party overseeing this area
Admission Mechanism	(i) Primary One Admission System	Education Commission Working Group on School Places Allocation Systems: – provide advice on issues relating to the direction and principles of the reform measure Board of Education – monitor the implementation of the reform measure Primary One Admission Committee – advise on implementational details	Education Commission Working Group on School Places Allocation Systems
	(ii) Secondary School Places Allocation System	Education Commission Working Group on School Places Allocation Systems: – advise on issues relating to the direction and principles of the reform measure Board of Education – monitor the implementation of the reform measure Secondary School Places Allocation Committee – advise on implementational details	

Key area of the Education Reform	Sub-item	Executive/advisory bodies involved	Party overseeing this area
	(iii) Through-train	Education Commission Working Group on School Places Allocation Systems: – advise on issues relating to the direction and principles of the reform measure Board of Education – monitor the implementation of the reform measure Secondary School Places Allocation Committee – advise on implementation details	
	(iv) University Admission	University Grants Committee and the universities	University Grants Committee
Assessment Mechanism	(i) Basic Competency Assessments (BCA)	Education Department: – coordinate the development and implementation of the BCA, as well as provide training and professional support to teachers Hong Kong Examinations Authority: – develop the student and system assessments	Education Department
	(ii) Public Examinations	Hong Kong Examinations Authority: – implement the reform of public examinations	Hong Kong Examinations Authority

Key area of the Education Reform	Sub-item	Executive/advisory bodies involved	Party overseeing this area
Increase in post-secondary education opportunities to reach the 60% target		Education and Manpower Bureau: – put in place financial support schemes and a regulatory framework Education Commission Working Group on Development of Post-secondary Education: – advise on how the 60% target may be achieved	Education and Manpower Bureau

Annex II

Support for Schools Provided by the Education Department and Other Sectors

(1) *School-based Support*

- The target of conducting school development visits to 50% of public-sector schools in the 2000/01 school year has been achieved. Through the visits, the REOs enhanced their partnership with schools and assisted them in assessing their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- In the 2000/01 school year, the REOs provided school-based support to 136 public-sector schools, including assisting them in formulating and implementing improvement plans, providing advice on business process re-engineering, promoting the dissemination of good practices and arranging sharing sessions, participating in schools' staff development days and conducting school-based workshops.
- In the 2000/01 school year, the REOs had met the target of organizing 54 networking activities for schools in 18 districts according to the schools' needs.

(2) *Parent Education and Home-School Co-operation*

(i) **Compilation of parent education reference materials**

- The Parent Education Implementation Team produced the first 2 parent education pamphlets in November 2001. The preparation of other reference materials is underway.

(ii) **Promotion of parent education**

- The results of the fund allocation for the first round applications were announced in mid-November 2001. The total amount allocated was close to \$1,500,000.
- A series of parent education programmes in workplaces and housing estates were organized.
- The Parent Education Implementation Team plans to organize training courses to train more parent educators.

(iii) Home-school co-operation project grants

- In the 2001-02 financial year, about \$9,700,000 was allocated to subsidize about 1,700 home-school co-operation projects organized by schools and parent-teacher associations.

(iv) Launching of "New Century Learning Family Campaign"

- The Campaign provided opportunities for around 8,000 families to put the concept of "Learning Family" into practice. The Campaign included the Family Volunteering Scheme, the Parent Peer Counselling Programme, training courses for parent-teacher association committee members, talks on parent-teacher associations and parent-child relationship as well as an "Exploration on Learning Family" symposium.

(3) Support by Other Sectors

Organization	Support Activities
Social Welfare Department	– Organize regional youth services meetings and other related liaison activities. – Implement the "Understanding Adolescent Project" in secondary schools. In the 2001/02 school year, 150 secondary schools benefited. The project will be extended to 304 secondary schools in the 2002/03 school year.
Social Services Agencies	– Provide school social workers, out-reaching social workers and integrated youth services. – Provide support services to schools (e.g. adaptation courses for New Arrival Children, tutorial and guidance services for students with learning differences and guidance services for students with behavioural problems). – Promote public concern for education development activities.

Organization	Support Activities
	– The Education Department commissioned the Breakthrough Limited and the Chinese University of Hong Kong to pilot the Understanding Adolescent Project in primary schools from 2001/02 to 2003/04 school years. The Project aims at developing an assessment tool, a series of preventive programmes and counselling services for Primary 4 to Primary 6 pupils to strengthen their resilience to meet challenges. The Project has been piloted in 18 schools in Tai Po and North districts. It will eventually be extended to 400 primary schools in the 2005/06 school year.
Hong Kong Police Force	– Implement “Public Community Relations Officer Scheme”, “School Ambassador Scheme”, “One-school-one-policeman Scheme” and “Fight Crime Scheme”. – In the “Enhanced School Liaison Programme” launched in September 2001, 33 additional School Liaison Officers paid regular visits to schools so as to strengthen collaboration.
Other Disciplinary Forces	– The Student Discipline Section of the Education Department, in collaboration with the Police Training School, the Fire Services Training School and the Civil Aid Service, organized 48 Smart Teen Challenge Camps in the 2000-01 and 2001-02 financial years to develop students’ self-discipline, confidence and resilience. The Project served around 3,400 Secondary 1 to Secondary 4 students in the first two years and the number will be extended to 4,600 each year from the 2002-03 to 2003-04 financial years.

Organization	Support Activities
Leisure and Cultural Services Department	– Provide schools with sports, leisure, cultural and recreational facilities for sports days and dance, music and drama activities. – “Culture Day” is earmarked to open up facilities for schools to promote cultural activities. – Provide library services to meet the information technology and learning needs of students. – The Physical Education Section of the Education Department and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department jointly organized the “School Sports Promotion Programme” to develop students’ generic skills and promote the culture of life-long participation in sports. The programme was launched in April 2001. At the end of December 2001, a total of 232 secondary schools, 207 primary schools and 21 special schools participated in the programme. More than 3,000 activities have been organized.

Organization	Support Activities
Uniform Groups	– A Steering Committee on Uniform Group Enhancement Scheme, chaired by the Director of Education, was set up. The Committee consists of representatives from various government departments, non-government organizations and major educational partners. The Scheme aims at developing students' skills in organization, communication, leadership and creativity and at the same time inculcating in them self-discipline, the spirit of co-operation and a sense of commitment to society. The 2000 Policy Address promulgated that an amount of \$50 million would be earmarked to promote uniform group activities over the next three school years. The first batch of applications were approved in October 2001 with the number of participants estimated to be 10,000.
Business Enterprises	– Provide schools with resources for purchasing equipment or setting up scholarships. – The Curriculum Development Institute of the Education Department is exploring how to provide career-related learning experiences to students. Discussions are being held with other sectors such as the Hong Kong Productivity Council and the Airport Authority to explore the feasibility of broadening opportunities for students to acquire different learning experiences.

Annex III

Glossary

Chapter 2

Section 1

School-based
Curriculum

In accordance with the learning targets and contents prescribed in the central curriculum, schools may adopt appropriate teaching materials and strategies according to the needs of students to help them attain the learning targets.

Seed Projects

Collaborative research and development projects. The objectives are to (i) develop and disseminate useful experiences for reference by schools and teachers; (ii) cultivate a pool of curriculum reform pioneers and curriculum leaders (e.g. teachers, principals and teacher librarians); and (iii) promote the development of school-based curricula.

Section 2

Workplace English
Campaign

The Campaign was implemented by the Government in February 2000 to enhance the English language standards of the working population. So far, English language benchmarks have been established for six job categories, so as to reflect the employers' requirements on employees' English language proficiency. Financial assistance has been provided to help employees undertake training and to facilitate the development of new training programmes.

Section 3

School-based
Support

Support services tailored to the needs of individual schools are provided to help schools enhance teaching effectiveness, develop school-based curriculum, improve school management and strengthen support for students.

Life-wide Learning . Learning through a variety of activities in
 . different settings, including in classrooms, in
 . schools, at home and in outdoor environments
 . to develop different generic abilities, as well
 . as values and attitudes.

The Quality .
 Education Fund . The Quality Education Fund (QEF) was
 . established in 1998 on the recommendation
 . of the Education Commission. It aims to
 . provide a flexible mechanism for funding
 . projects initiated by schools or non-school
 . sectors for the promotion of quality education
 . in Hong Kong and to disseminate good
 . experiences generated from successful
 . projects.

Section 4

Qualified .
 Kindergarten . Completion of a one-year full-time
 Teacher Qualification . kindergarten education programme
 . recognized by the Education Department and
 . the Social Welfare Department, or an
 . equivalent qualification.

Mentoring System . A professional support system in which
 . experienced teachers act as mentors for new
 . teachers to provide them with guidance so as
 . to help them adapt to the work environment
 . and enhance professional development.

Section 5

Short-term .
 Mechanism of . The reform of the Primary One Admission
 Primary One . system will be implemented in two stages
 Admission (POA) . viz. a short-term mechanism from 2002/03
 System . to 2004/05, and a long-term mechanism
 . from 2005/06 onwards.

Discretionary Places Allocation (POA)

Discretionary place allocation is the first stage of the Primary One Admission system. Parents may apply to one government or aided primary school in any school net. Schools must admit all applicants with siblings studying or parents working in the schools applied for, and then allocate the remaining discretionary places according to the point system.

Central Allocation (POA)

The second phase of POA, which is conducted by computer according to parents' choices and school nets.

New Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) Mechanism

Starting from the 2000/01 allocation cycle, the Academic Aptitude Test (AAT) has been abolished and the number of allocation bands has been reduced from five to three. Under the new interim mechanism, the past AAT results in 1997/98, 1998/99 and 1999/2000 are used to replace the AAT as the scaling tool. A review will be conducted in 2003 to decide on the long-term SSPA mechanism.

Discretionary Places Allocation (SSPA)

Each school may reserve a certain percentage of Secondary 1 places for direct application by parents before the central allocation stage. Schools may set their own admission criteria, but they are required to publicize such criteria for reference by parents and students.

Allocation Band

In the process of allocating S.1 places, students in each allocation net are divided into three allocation bands according to the scaled scores of students. Students in Band 1 will be allocated places first, to be followed by students in Band 2 and then Band 3. (The mechanism for scaling students' internal assessment results is based on the prevailing SSPA mechanism. Please refer to the section on the "New SSPA Mechanism" above.)

Through-train	“Through-train” is a new mode of school operation. Primary and secondary schools meeting the following principles may apply to the Education Department to form “through-train” schools: • primary and secondary schools should have the same education philosophy and should collaborate to enhance continuity in primary and secondary education; • the number of Secondary 1 places in a “through-train” school must exceed the number of its Primary 6 graduates; the linked secondary school must admit all Primary 6 graduates of its linked primary school and reserve a portion of Secondary 1 places for admitting graduates of other primary schools; • primary and secondary schools must have the same financing mode
Feeder and Nominated Schools	After deducting Secondary 1 places for repeaters and discretionary places, feeder and nominated secondary schools may reserve 85% (feeder schools) / 25% (nominated schools) of the remaining Secondary 1 places for students of their feeder/nominated primary schools.
All-round Development	Comprehensive and balanced development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics.
Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS)	Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS) is a scheme implemented jointly by the eight institutions funded by the University Grants Committee (UGC). It aims to facilitate students in applying for admission to UGC-funded degree and sub-degree programmes run by these institutions on the basis of students’ Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination results.

Section 6

Basic Competencies

“Basic competencies” are what students should be able to do in relation to the set of learning targets and objectives set out in the curriculum in different strands/dimensions and at each key stage of learning.

Teacher Assessment Scheme

This is an assessment mode in which teachers assess their own students over a certain period in a specified skill area of the syllabus (e.g. practical skill) in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Hong Kong Examinations Authority. The guidelines indicate what to assess, how to assess and when to assess.

The marks given by the teachers are normally moderated statistically by the Authority to maintain comparability of marking standards among teachers. They will be included in the students’ public examination results.

The TAS component complements the external component making the assessment of the students more comprehensive. This mode of assessment helps to enhance the validity of public examinations. There are a number of subjects with a TAS component, most of them within the HKALE.

Core-competence Approach

Subject experts identify the basic or core competence of a subject on the basis of the curriculum, and set the standard expected of a Secondary 5 graduate in the basic or core competence of the subject. This will be the grade E standard for the subject. Candidates who attain the prescribed standard will be awarded a grade E, irrespective of the performance of other candidates.