



1. Opening statement

We thank the Honourable Chairman and members of the PAC for the opportunity to give evidence in relation to the observations of the Director of Audit.

When the new members of the Executive Committee of the English Schools Foundation (ESF) took office in March of this year we were acutely aware of the many problems and deficiencies within the organization. In order to have a comprehensive understanding of the problems and demonstrate our resolve for reforms and accountability we invited the Director of Audit to conduct a Value for Money Audit. In addition we invited the Corruption Prevention Department of the ICAC to provide advice on ways to improve the ESF administrative process.

We thank the Director of Audit and his colleagues for conducting such a thorough study at such short notice and in such a narrow time frame.

Despite deficiencies relating to governance and management the schools within the ESF system have consistently provided high quality education. This evidenced by:

- **Examination results:** 99 percent of our students achieved pass levels in this year's GCE A-levels examinations with 40 percent of our entries achieving Grade As
- **University entrance:** In 2004-05, ninety five percent of our graduates have gained entrance to universities: 7% in Hong Kong, 43% in the UK, 20% in North America, and 30% in Canada, Australia and other countries. This is despite the fact that we are non-selective in our student intake provided the child can benefit from an English medium of instructions and the fact that 10% of our students have special educational needs.
- **Parent satisfaction:** An overwhelming majority of our parents express satisfaction with the teaching and learning experience of the their students.
- **Student satisfaction:** An overwhelming majority of our students enjoy going to school.

The larger question we need to address is: What does the HKSAR need? We respectfully submit that:

1. It needs to support a segment of its educational system that has consistently provided high quality affordable education in the English medium.
2. It needs to provide students with a learning environment that is multicultural and bilingual.
3. It needs to provide more opportunities for mainstreaming students with special needs.
4. It needs a curriculum that is based on investigative, "liberal" methods of teaching and learning and has international recognition.

To fulfil these needs the ESF is willing and able to work with the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) and the community at large to achieve better integration with local schools in terms of improving the standard of English, continuing professional development for teachers, training of student teachers and school leadership.