



1 June 2009

Dear Panel members,

Calling for Equal Chinese Exam Fee for Ethnic Minority Students

On 28 May 2009, we have organized a protest, in which over 100 ethnic minority (EM) students and parents have joined, calling for equal Chinese examination fee as their Chinese counterparts.

To support our cause, the Chairperson of your Panel, Hon Cyd HO, and Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung were also with us during the protest. On behalf of EM students and parents, we would like to thank for their presence and concern.

For EM students, passing the British GCSE (Chinese) Exam is so crucial as it constitutes the minimum requirement for entering universities. Yet the Exam fee is extraordinary high. They need to pay \$965 to sit in the Exam, which is five times that of HKCEE (Chinese) Exam.

We find the situation unsatisfactory and unfair as EM students need to pay more than their Chinese counterparts in taking Chinese exam. Given that most of them come from low-income families, it has imposed a heavy burden to their parents.

We understand that the Government has a policy of encouraging ethnic minorities to learn Chinese for better integration to the mainstream society. Yet the above differential treatment clearly points to the opposite direction. We sincerely wish your Panel look into the issue and urge the Government taking proper steps to rectify the unfair situation.

Attached please find our letter to the Secretary for Education, Mr. Michael M Y Suen, for your reference. We shall be grateful if your Panel follows the issue.

Should you have further enquires, please feel free to call our Campaign Director, Ms. Fermi Wong or our Project Officer, Mr. Alan Din at 2789 3246.

(Alan Din)

For Fermi Wong

Campaign Director, Hong Kong Unison



Encl.

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Mr. Michael M Y Suen
Secretary for Education
15/F, Wu Chung House,
213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai

28 May 2009

Dear Mr. Suen,

We are a group of ethnic minority students who has treated Hong Kong as our permanent home.

Like our Chinese counterparts, we have our dream towards the future. We wish to finish tertiary education, making contributions to our family and the society as whole. Yet owing to our weaker Chinese proficiency, it has never been easy for us to enter into universities. Very often, we even don't have a chance to knock the door.

Starting from the coming academic year, we could apply for universities based on the results of British GCSE (Chinese) Exam, thanks to the change of government policy. On the surface, we now have a higher chance to receive tertiary education (as British GCSE (Chinese) is much simpler than HKCEE (Chinese) Exam). However, the Exam fee is extraordinary high. We need to pay \$965 to sit in the Exam, which is five times that of HKCEE (Chinese) Exam. Besides, the GCSE Exam is not fall within the Senior Secondary Fee Remission Scheme. Bearing in mind that most of us come from low-income families, it is really an undue burden to our parents.

For better integration into the mainstream society, we recognize the importance of learning Chinese. That is why we opt to take Chinese instead of French as our language subject. Yet we are upset by the unfair situation that we have to pay much more than our Chinese counterparts in taking Chinese exam. What makes us more frustrating is the Government is currently providing subsidies to candidates taking the IGCSE (French) Exam. In fact, many of the students taking the Exam are Chinese students from middle and high-income families.

Given that we have only started learning Chinese for recent years, there is a long way to go before we could catch up with ethnic Chinese students. Obviously we are not competitive enough in HKCEE (Chinese) Exam and the British GCSE (Chinese) Exam is our only way out. Sitting in the Exam is so critical to our future.





Hong Kong Unison

香港融樂會有限公司

As one of the international cities in Asia, we believe Hong Kong embraces the value of racial equality. We therefore urge our Government taking into account of our situation and providing us with subsidies so that we only need to pay the same amount as that of candidates of HKCEE, i.e., \$195, for sitting in British GCSE (Chinese) Exam. We hope your Secretary would appreciate that we are not asking for preferential, but only equal treatment.

Finally, we would like to draw you attention that Hong Kong Unison, together with Members of Committee on Promotion of Racial Harmony had recently written a letter to Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, requesting for provision of subsidies to candidates taking British GCSE (Chinese) Exam. Yet they replied that it is something beyond their financial means. So we could now only pin our hope to you and your Bureau.

For enquiries, please don't hesitate to call Ms. Fermi Wong, our social worker and Campaign Director of Hong Kong Unison at 2789 3246.

We look forward to hearing your reply.

Yours sincerely,

A group of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong

c.c. Members of ExCo

Members of Education Panel, LegCo

