

To: "pid@legco.gov.hk" <pid@legco.gov.hk>
From: "Daswani, Anil "
Date: 07/04/2011 10:04AM

Subject: Subvention for ESF Schools

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my views with regard to the subvention given by the Hong Kong Government to ESF schools. I was educated at South Island School from 1981 to 1988 and I have two children who currently attend ESF schools. I was born and raised in Hong Kong, attended university in the UK and returned to Hong Kong in 1991. Both my parents, my grandparents and my family are Hong Kong permanent residents and Hong Kong has been the family home since the early 1950s.

I understand the ESF was established in 1967 as a subvented education organisation to provide English medium education to children who could not be educated through the local school system. Over the last 44 years the ESF has provided excellent education to the children of Hong Kong at an affordable price. When I attended Island School over 70% of the students were Caucasian. Today the demographics are completely different. Walking the halls of any ESF secondary school you will now see that the majority of children are ethnically Chinese and the vast majority of all students are Hong Kong permanent residents. The ESF is no longer a school system for expatriates; it has become a Local School with an International Curriculum and instruction in English. The ESF is essentially a Direct Subsidy School with an International Curriculum. That being said, why is the ESF being treated differently to the Aided and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools of Hong Kong? Why are ESF schools receiving a lower subsidy than the Direct Subsidy Schools such as Diocesan Boys School; Diocesan Girls School, St Paul's and St Stephen's College? The ESF provides what many Hong Kong parents want, a good English medium education with an International Curriculum that teaches our children to be creative thinkers, to be global leaders. This is truly beneficial for Hong Kong and should be encouraged.

It is clear to me and to many others that:

The ESF provides the only affordable choice for thousands of non-Chinese speaking permanent residents;

The ESF provides the only affordable choice for many returnee children who cannot fit in to the local educational system;

The ESF provides a choice of English liberal and creative education for local students and there are many families who prefer the ESF style of education;

The ESF provides affordable school places to attract and retain talented employees from overseas who do not get "expatriate" packages. There are a large number of these people in education, IT, hospitality; sourcing. We should be encouraging these people to come and work in Hong Kong.

With all this said, I cannot understand why there should be any question of continuing with a subvention for the ESF schools and I cannot understand

why there should be any question on whether the subvention should be the same as that for other Aided and Direct Subsidy Schools.

I truly hope that LegCo and the Government will continue to support the ESF and to ensure the subvention stays on par with the other DSS schools in Hong Kong.

Yours faithfully,
Anil Daswani