

For information on
8 December 2014

Legislative Council Panel on Education Parent Education

Purpose

This paper highlights for Members' information the policy framework, objectives and measures to promote parent education by the Education Bureau (EDB).

Background

2. Parent education is being promoted collaboratively by different government departments and bureaus with focus and contexts appropriate to their policy portfolios. The EDB aims to provide students with quality education, develop students' potential to the fullest extent and prepare them for challenges ahead. Its parent education measures thus mainly centre on kindergartens, primary and secondary schools as the platform in providing support to parents to guide their children at home and through home-school co-operation in promoting the whole-person development of students.

3. Over the years, many different types of parent education publicity programmes and activities have been organised to enhance the awareness of good practices in parenting. Parent education pamphlets and resource materials covering topics such as fostering good parent-children relationship, promoting children's self-esteem, promoting learning in children, managing emotion, cultivating children's responsibility, etc., have been produced for parents of pre-school and school age children.

Objectives of parent education

4. Parents being one of the key stakeholders of schools play an integral part towards the fulfillment of schools' educational objectives as their constructive and positive involvement and support could reinforce and consolidate the value-adding processes of school education. To garner this

positive reinforcement requires parents' understanding of the learning and development needs of their children so that they can help their children learn effectively, grow healthily and become responsible and caring members of the community. Cooperation between schools and parents can bring important benefits to the education process of children. Through improving home-school co-operation, this partnership between schools and parents can be fostered.

The framework and implementation

Supporting schools in promoting parent education

5. The Committee on Home-School Co-operation¹ (CHSC), set up since 1993 pursuant to Education Commission Report No.5 (1992), has placed emphasis on promoting home-school interface as parent-school co-operation has significant contributions towards the whole-person development of students. Since its inception in 1993, the CHSC has been actively encouraging schools to set up Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) in different school levels. As to date, the number of PTAs has increased from some 70 in 1992 to some 1 400 in 2014, and all government, aided primary and secondary schools have set up their PTAs. The PTAs have acted as a bridge between parents and teachers to foster communication, understanding and mutual support in promoting the educational well beings of students. Over the years, the PTAs have also helped promote parental involvement in a wide range of school activities² and successfully nurtured a culture of home-school cooperation in Hong Kong. Overall, the feedback from schools and parents to the formation and operation of PTAs is very positive.

6. To support smooth running of PTAs, the CHSC has published the "Parent-Teacher Associations Handbook" for PTAs and schools' reference. Training programmes for PTA executive committee members are also organised by EDB to help members to get familiar with the operation and development of

¹ CHSC comprises the chairperson, ex-officio member from the Education Bureau (EDB), educators (drawn from kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools and special schools), parents of children in local schools and professionals.

² Such as parent-child reading scheme, interest groups, major school events, meal arrangements and fundraising activities etc.

PTAs. With a shared vision on supporting child development through parental involvement, self-initiated district-based Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations (FPTAs) have also been established in 18 districts, with support by CHSC and EDB, to enhance the coordination and communication of PTAs in their districts and promote parent education through district-based activities, such as schools tours, thematic seminars and parent support network.

Project grants in organising parent education activities

7. As of the 2014/15 school year, apart from the provision of a \$5,000 Set-up Grant and an annual grant of \$4,989 for subsidizing the recurrent expenditure of existing PTAs, each school can apply for project grants for a maximum of two activities aim at organising activities related to parent education and parenting training, assisting parents to support their children in learning and training parents to support the learning activities in schools, etc. PTAs under the same Sponsoring Body or PTAs in the same district may apply for project grant for joint home-school co-operation project, while FPTAs can receive subsidy to support district-based activities.

8. In the 2013/14 school year, over \$23 million were provided to schools' PTAs and FPTAs for organizing home-school and parent education activities. About 3 150 such funded activities were organised by around 1 500 schools and FPTAs on a wide range of topics covering students' positive values and life style, understanding the New Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and the new teaching modes, learning to read, information technology projects to enhance the involvement of parents in students' learning, home-school co-operation, parenting skills, etc.

Parent education resources

9. To equip parents with knowledge in supporting their children's personal growth and educational development, the CHSC promotes parent education through a variety of publicity programmes, sharing of good practices, publications and seminars. A website has been developed by the CHSC to disseminate the latest development in education, school information and parenting skills. The CHSC Website (<http://www.chsc.hk>) aims at providing parents with a platform for easy access to up-to-date school information through the annual publication of School Profiles, parent education information and home-school co-operation activities. Starting from 2013, the RTHK

Parenting TV Programme Archive has provided an online platform for parents to revisit the programmes on parenting, alongside the radio programme “Education Families” (家家有教) between 2004 and 2012 on promotion of home-school cooperation and dissemination of new education initiatives. A new radio programme on parenting of young infants and children in the primary school stage is under preparation and will be broadcast in 2015.

10. Since 2010, the revised parent booklet published by EDB, “Helping Your Children of Kindergarten Age”, has been sent to parents of KG students annually. This school year, together with this booklet, another two parent booklets which were published by the Department of Health, “Understanding Your Child’s Development – For Parents of Preschool Children” and “To Nurture or To Pressure”, have been dispatched to parents whose children are enrolled in nursery classes. Seminars for parents are also organised by EDB to dovetail with the distribution of parent booklets for the promotion of parent education. Other than the above, the CHSC further promotes parent education through parents’ talks and seminars.

Parental involvement in school activities

11. To support the healthy growth and development of students and pave way for them to lead a healthy and enjoyable life, the EDB has encouraged schools to formulate a school-based Healthy School Policy starting from the 2010/11 school year. Resources kits have also been developed to promote, among others, parental partnership with schools in ensuring the physical and psychological well-being of students, and empowering them with positive values and proactive attitude, thereby enhancing their resilience and immunization against adversity.

12. A number of 15-hour Structured Manager Training Programmes are run each school year for school managers including parent managers. One of the training sessions is about home-school co-operation and connecting parents and the community. The objective is to enhance participants’ awareness of the importance of building up close partnership between schools and parents and giving support to parents to foster all-round development of students.

Other measures

13. Parent education permeates other aspects of EDB activities. For

example, the EDB held different types of talks for parents regularly so as to keep them abreast of the latest education development. Through the e-bulletin and 《教育update》 of Headline Daily, etc., important messages on education initiatives and hot education issues are conveyed to parents. To facilitate schools in their parental work, EDB has also launched from time to time preventive and developmental guidance programmes for schools, for instance the “Understanding Adolescent Project” for primary schools and the ‘Enhanced Smart Teen Project” for secondary schools which aim to strengthen parent-child relationship. We are also planning to harness the parent education network including CSHC and PTAs to supplement life planning education initiatives. “Working with Parents and Community” has become one of the compulsory modules in the one-year part-time Certificate Course on Student Guidance and Discipline for Teachers commissioned by EDB.

14. Close communication and collaboration with parents in facilitating school and student development is one of the performance indicators in the School Development and Accountability framework. The EDB also provides schools with the Stakeholder Survey to facilitate their collection and analysis of views from parents.

Advice Sought

15. Parent education has achieved much progress since the establishment of the CSHC in 1993. The EDB will through the different strands of support mentioned above continue to enhance parent education with a view to promoting pleasurable and healthy childhood for students. In this connection, the EDB will seek advice from CHSC to extend PTAs to more schools, to further promote positive attitudes towards home-school co-operation and parent education through publicity programmes, workshops and seminars; and to disburse grants to schools which have ideas for innovative approaches to improving home-school co-operation and enhancing parent education.

16. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

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