



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育局
Education Bureau
Government Secretariat, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

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15 July 2016


Miss Polly YEUNG
Chief Council Secretary (4)4
Legislative Council Secretariat
Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong.

Dear Miss YEUNG,

Panel on Education
Follow-up to meeting on 2 July 2016

Regarding the motion passed under the agenda item of "Latest development on 'Using Putonghua as the Medium of Instruction for Teaching the Chinese Language Subject' in primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong" at the recent Panel on Education meeting, the written response of the Education Bureau is enclosed, please. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,


(Ms Jenny Chan)
for Secretary for Education

Encl.

Response from Education Bureau (EDB)
Motion passed under the agenda item “Latest development on ‘Using Putonghua as the Medium of Instruction for Teaching the Chinese Language Subject’ in primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong” at the Legislative Council Panel on Education meeting held on 2 July 2016

Wording of the Motion

(Moved by Hon IP Kin-yuen)

Given that after years of trying out “PMIC” in Hong Kong, there still lacks general evidence showing that students can benefit from “PMIC”, this Panel urges the Administration to abolish the “long-term vision” of using Putonghua as the medium of instruction for teaching the Chinese Language Subject.

Response from EDB

Promotion of biliteracy and trilingualism has always been the advantage of Hong Kong. Embracing the professional autonomy and academic freedom, it has all along been a school-based decision of the primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong on whether to adopt “Using Putonghua as the Medium of Instruction for Teaching the Chinese Language Subject” (PMIC hereafter) having regard to the abilities of their teachers and students, as well as their school environment and support. In PMIC class, Putonghua is used as the Medium of Instruction (MOI hereafter) for teaching the Chinese Language Subject for over 50% of the lesson time. In order to develop students’ biliterate and trilingual abilities, teachers of PMIC class may also use Cantonese to teach the Chinese Language Subject, where appropriate.

2. EDB has never made a mandatory requirement for schools to adopt PMIC. In the 2015/16 school year, 72% and 37% of the primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong operate PMIC classes respectively as a result of schools’ professional decision. Hong Kong students’ language competence has been improving in the international comparative research in the past decade. This shows that the

professional decision of schools can facilitate students' language development and therefore should be respected.

3. The Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) commissioned The Education University of Hong Kong to conduct a longitudinal study on the Implementation of "Using Putonghua as the Medium of Instruction for Teaching the Chinese Language Subject" (the Longitudinal Study hereafter). Participants of the Longitudinal Study were two primary and two secondary schools which participated in the "Scheme to Support Schools in using Putonghua to teach the Chinese Language Subject". The Longitudinal Study adopted a case-study approach to examine the process, changes and impacts to schools in adopting PMIC, as well as the effects of PMIC or using Cantonese as the MOI for teaching the Chinese Language Subject (CMIC) on students' performances. Taking into account the different entry points of students, it would be inappropriate to conclude that PMIC is more effective than CMIC. Nevertheless, the findings reflect that PMIC had no negative impacts on the studying of Chinese Language Subject of the students. Students' performance under PMIC and CMIC varied in different domains (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and stages of schooling (senior primary and junior secondary stages).

4. In conclusion, PMIC is being implemented smoothly at schools' discretion. Schools may consider if Putonghua should be adopted as the MOI for teaching the Chinese Language Subject and the pace of implementation having regard to their own circumstances, such as readiness of teachers, ability of students, language environment of schools, curriculum planning as well as availability of learning and teaching resources/support. EDB respects the professional decision of schools, and there is no need to abolish PMIC as the long-term vision. EDB will also continue to provide schools with appropriate assistance and professional, on-site support for teaching the Chinese Language Subject irrespective of whether the schools' MOI is Putonghua or Cantonese.

Education Bureau
July 2016