

For discussion on  
1 June 2018

**Legislative Council Panel on Education**  
**Updates on Promotion of Reading**

**Purpose**

This paper briefs Members on the enhanced measures undertaken by the Education Bureau (EDB) to sustain the promotion of and support for reading in schools.

**Background**

2. The EDB attaches great importance to developing students' reading abilities and habit, and over the years various strategies have been employed to support schools in promoting reading. Ever since the curriculum reform in 2001, "Reading to Learn" has been adopted as one of the Key Tasks. In the updated *Secondary Education Curriculum Guide (2017)*, schools are encouraged to extend "Reading to Learn" to "Reading across the Curriculum" with a view to broadening students' knowledge base and connecting their learning in different subjects. In addition to delineating the related principles and providing examples of school practices through curriculum documents, the EDB arranges teacher professional development activities for sharing schools' successful experience, conducts school visits, provides on-site support etc., for the purpose of supporting schools in promoting "Reading across the Curriculum".

3. Over the past ten years or so, a lot of effort has been expended by schools on promoting reading and students have demonstrated considerable ability in reading. However, their reading styles and habits have changed because of the technological advances such as the widespread use of smartphones and tablet computers in society. According to statistics available, there is a downward trend in the number of printed books being borrowed from public libraries. In this connection, our strategies for promoting and supporting reading have to move with the times to meet students' practical needs, enhance their engagement in reading and eventually develop in them a love of reading.

4. In support of the HKSAR Government's initiative to promote a territory-wide reading culture and develop Hong Kong into a reading city under the theme "Discover and Share the Joy of Reading", the "2018 World Book Day Fest – Towards a Reading City", co-organised by the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research and the EDB, was held on 21 April as a curtain-raiser to a city-wide reading promotion campaign.

### **Future Directions**

5. Building on the existing foundation and strengths, the EDB will capitalise on the synergy among stakeholders to create a reading atmosphere, and develop a working partnership with schools and the community to foster a reading culture. Through innovative, interesting and diverse reading activities, we hope to nurture students' reading interest and help them develop a reading habit from a young age so that they will enjoy reading and develop their thinking skills and creativity through reading.

## **Developing Reading Interest and Habit from a Young Age**

6. The EDB has given deliberate attention to nurturing children's reading interest and the formation of a reading habit from early childhood education. In light of children's developmental needs at the kindergarten (KG) level, abilities and traits, we will adopt "parent-child reading" as a direction for promoting reading and synergise different measures to promote children's reading, including:

- (a) collaborating with the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) to provide the block loan service through public libraries to supply a wider selection of books to KGs and child care centres; we will also advise on the procurement of books that are appropriate to children's interests and growth for the LCSD's forthcoming outreach programme "Book Carts";
- (b) conducting a pilot scheme with the LCSD focusing specifically on the development of children's reading interest and habit through pilot-running six workshops from February to May this year in three public libraries under the LCSD: Ping Shan Tin Shui Wai Public Library (Yuen Long District), Quarry Bay Public Library (Hong Kong Eastern District), Ngau Chi Wan Public Library (Wong Tai Sin District). Kindergarten principals, teachers and parents in these districts were invited to participate. The workshops, themed "How to nurture children's good moral character through storytelling?", covered sharing seminars, book selection activities and a library tour. The participants rated the workshops highly in the evaluation questionnaires collected. We, together with the LCSD, will hold workshops in more districts and

further enhance the delivery of such activities in ways that are lively, interesting, close to everyday life and connected to the growth and life of children. We will also set themes on parent-child reading and invite KG teachers, parents or elderly caregivers to engage them in the activities along with the children;

- (c) organising more volunteer groups, e.g. volunteers under the Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Scheme, to promote parent-child reading; and
- (d) discussing with KGs participating in the New Kindergarten Education Scheme how to further promote reading and the resources required.

### **Measures to Promote and Support Reading in Primary and Secondary Schools**

7. The EDB will continue to adopt a multi-pronged approach to support primary and secondary schools to promote reading effectively. The measures adopted are as follows:

#### **Promotion of Reading Grant and Resources**

- (a) Starting from the 2018/19 school year, we will disburse a new recurrent Promotion of Reading Grant to all public sector primary and secondary schools. Depending on the number of operating classes, each primary school will be allocated annually a maximum of \$40,000, and each secondary school a maximum of \$70,000. Each special school will

receive a maximum of \$30,000. Deployment of the new grant is not limited to the Chinese Language and the English Language subjects. Nor should it be confined to the procurement of reading resources such as books. Schools should use the grant more flexibly to organise reading promotion activities, such as seminars on reading, theme-based reading and for subscriptions to web-based reading schemes, to nurture a good reading culture and enable students to derive pleasure and enjoyment from reading while enhancing further their reading abilities;

- (b) We will provide recommended booklists on different reading themes such as STEM education, healthy living, moral education, Chinese history and culture. Schools can encourage students to borrow books on the related reading themes and organise different types of reading activities such as writer talks, parent-child reading activities, storytelling competitions, play-acting, online book sharing and post-reading creations. Schools are also encouraged to film the reading activities and upload the clips to the Hong Kong Education City (HKEdCity) portal for sharing with other schools;
- (c) With the prevalence of e-learning, we have implemented different e-reading schemes such as the “Space Town Literacy Programme”, which includes fun learning activities, home-reading programmes, e-story books and an e-book app for lower primary students to develop their interest in reading stories;
- (d) We will continue to produce a variety of reading-related resources for teachers’ and teacher-librarians’ use. Examples include learning and

teaching resource packages, recommended booklists and storybooks;  
and

### Teacher Professional Development Programmes

- (e) To help schools to draw up their school-based reading plans, arrange reading activities and nurture a reading atmosphere, we will continue to provide professional development programmes of various kinds to facilitate school leaders and teacher-librarians in undertaking holistic curriculum planning, making good use of the new Promotion of Reading Grant, encouraging collaboration of different subjects, conducting interesting reading activities, and implementing school-based “Reading across the Curriculum” plans. The EDB will also organise professional development programmes and experience sharing sessions of different nature (e.g. activities in collaboration with community organisations that promote reading, sessions on sharing the implementation of theme-based reading) and in different forms (e.g. joint-school book sharing, in-house sharing in the school library) with a view to enhancing the related knowledge and skills of principals, teachers and school-librarians for the development of reading skills and strategies while nurturing in them a love for reading, which is conducive to the cultivation of a reading atmosphere in school.
8. In addition, in view of the popularity of e-reading among young people,

we will launch the “e-Read Pass” Scheme<sup>1</sup>, which is built upon the existing provision of online reading services by the HKEdCity. The existing platform will be enhanced so that different stakeholders (including teachers, students and parents), different knowledge areas and different reading experiences are connected, thereby facilitating the effective promotion of electronic reading. The “e-Read Pass” Scheme will engage different stakeholders, e.g. publishing organisations, schools, teachers and parents to create a richer reading environment for students. Some examples are working with publishing organisations to provide a larger number of appropriate e-books for students at different key stages of learning, implementing a pilot scheme to provide reading accounts for parents to encourage parent-child reading, and encouraging parents, teachers and students to participate in diverse reading and sharing activities via the online / electronic platform. The Scheme is expected to be launched in the 2018/19 school year.

### **Other Diversified Plans for Promoting Reading**

9. We will enhance the existing e-platform of the EDB for dissemination of reading-related information, including regular production of e-posters to provide schools with up-to-date news on reading activities and information on reading. Celebrities will be invited to share their reading experiences and recommend good books to students via the e-platform and social media to raise public interest and awareness about reading. We will also leverage other media platforms such as newspaper interviews to feature the successful experiences of schools in promoting

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<sup>1</sup> The “e” in the “e-Read Pass” represents “easy”, “enjoyable”, “extensive”, “electronic” and “experiential”. The “Pass” symbolises a passage connecting different areas of knowledge through reading, and signifies the close collaboration between the EDB and other organisations in the promotion of reading across the city. The “e-Read Pass” Scheme will provide an opportunity for students and parents to achieve *extensive* reading through *electronic* platforms, making reading an *easy*, *enjoyable* and *experiential* activity.

reading. In addition, the ETV Unit is producing a promotional series of programmes to feature good practices in the promotion of reading. The episodes and promotional trailers are being broadcast in succession on RTHK31 and TVB Pearl. The first episode “The Lifetime Joy of Reading — an episode on school culture”, with a focus on the sharing by teachers from six primary and secondary schools to bring out the importance of reading, was released this April. The episode also highlighted how the schools engaged different stakeholders through appropriate set-ups and diverse reading activities to create a reading atmosphere.

### **Strengthening Collaboration with Different Organisations**

10. The EDB will work in partnership with key stakeholder groups to organise reading activities, in the hope of extending the impact from schools to the community to build up a city-wide reading culture.

(a) We have started our collaboration with the LCSD. For example, since the start of 2018, we have been contributing articles to the bimonthly newsletter of the LCSD to promote reading, while the Libraries Section of the LCSD helps to introduce related library resources. We will continue to work with the LCSD and roll out different measures to foster a strategic partnership with the education sector, community organisations, the District Councils and the publishing sector in the promotion of a reading culture. These measures include:

- promoting reading with “Discover and Share the Joy of Reading” as the theme for a city-wide campaign - we helped produce the



- promotional video and its dissemination via different platforms;
- organising the “Reading KOL (Key Opinion Leader) Short Video Competition 2018” to encourage the public to share the joy of reading or their experience in promoting reading - we will assist in adjudication and promotion of the event;
  - recruiting and training book lovers and volunteers as storytelling ambassadors to take up co-ordination and liaison work related to the promotion of reading, such as providing storytelling services in public libraries, schools, community libraries and organisations; and
  - designing and producing mobile “Book Carts” to deliver picture books and storybooks to partner KGs across the 18 districts in Hong Kong.

(b) We will maintain close contact with the Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) in different districts and the Committee on Home-School Co-operation to forge collaboration on the promotion of parent-child reading. For example, more “Storytelling Mom / Dad / Grandparents” workshops will be organised.

(c) To create a city-wide reading atmosphere, we supported the Hong Kong Publishing Federation Limited in organising the “FUNful Reading Carnival” in March 2018. We will continue to work closely with publishers to provide more reading materials for parents, teachers and students, as well as to organise more district-based book exhibitions and reading activities.

## **Regular Review**

11. We believe that the successful promotion of reading hinges upon the combination of different factors, e.g. schools' holistic planning, teachers' professional knowledge, provision of resources, support from parents and other stakeholders, as well as the reading culture in society. The EDB will synergise the efforts of different parties and keep in view the implementation of reading in schools through different channels, such as making reference to findings and recommendations from large-scale international assessments (e.g. Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)) and collection of views from different stakeholders. Regular reviews will be conducted to formulate directions and strategies for the promotion of reading in the future, as well as to provide recommendations for fine-tuning, resources and support for schools.

**Education Bureau**

**May 2018**