

For information

## **Legislative Council Panel on Education**

### **Home-school Co-operation and Parent Education**

#### **Purpose**

This paper reports to Members on the recommendations of the Task Force on Home-School Co-operation and Parent Education (Task Force) and the follow-up actions of the Education Bureau (EDB).

#### **Background**

2. Parents play a vital role in their children's development and learning. In promoting home-school co-operation and parent education, the EDB's major strategy is to forge home-school partnership through the platform of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools to facilitate students' effective learning and healthy development. The Chief Executive announced in her 2017 Policy Address the establishment of several task forces to carry out in-depth reviews on eight key areas of education, home-school co-operation and parent education being one of the areas. The review on this area aimed to avoid excessive competition so that children would grow up healthily and happily. In December 2017, the Education Commission (EC) set up the Task Force to review the existing approach to promoting home-school co-operation and parent education, and to formulate the directions, strategies and measures for facilitating home-school co-operation and parent education.

3. The Task Force has made reference to the practices of promoting home-school co-operation and implementing parent education in Hong Kong and other regions, the findings of relevant local studies, as well as parent education courses and activities offered by local tertiary institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In the process, in-depth discussions with stakeholders were held and a consultation paper was published for extensive consultation (including public consultation sessions) between June and September 2018.

#### **Progress Update**

4. On 29 April 2019, the Task Force submitted its report to the Government. The full report is at **Annex I** and has been uploaded onto the EC's website<sup>1</sup> for public access. The

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<sup>1</sup> The report is available at the EC's website:

[https://www.e-c.edu.hk/en/publications\\_and\\_related\\_documents/education\\_reports.html](https://www.e-c.edu.hk/en/publications_and_related_documents/education_reports.html)

Government has fully accepted the recommendations. Relevant measures, as summarised below, are implemented progressively.

5. The Task Force put forward the following six long-term directions for promoting home-school co-operation and parent education:

- (i) Enhance parents' capacity, knowledge, skills and attitude in nurturing children and parenting;
- (ii) Assist parents in acquiring a more comprehensive understanding of the development/alternative pathways available to their children, as well as their children's abilities and personalities to set the direction of their plan for raising their children;
- (iii) Deliver diverse and innovative parent education and home-school co-operation activities;
- (iv) Foster better collaboration between parents and schools, strengthen mutual connection and communication and build partnerships;
- (v) Further strengthen the role of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and Federation of Parent-Teacher Associations (FPTAs) and the competency of their members; and
- (vi) Devote effort to promote home-school co-operation and parent education to the public.

6. Besides, the Task Force opined that the Government should launch a curriculum framework or guide on parent education to enhance commonality in parent education. In the promotion of parent education, it should not be only extensive so that most parents have the opportunity to receive some basic education, but also be specific so that the needs of different parents could be catered. In tandem, parent education should keep pace with the development of information and technology, hence e-learning courses and websites on parent education should be provided to enable parents to participate in parent education activities according to their own pace and schedule. The Task Force put forth 18 recommendations in the report. They are set out in **Annex II**.

#### Additional Resources

7. Seeing schools as the most direct and effective platform for promoting parent education, the Task Force recommended the approach of "schools as primary platform and the

community as complementary” in promoting home-school co-operation and parent education. Therefore, it recommended to the Government that more resources should be allocated to PTAs of schools to strengthen home-school co-operation and promote parent education. In this connection, we will increase relevant subsidies starting from the 2019/20 school year as detailed below.

### *Schools as Primary Platform*

8. Currently, on top of the Subsidy for PTA (including Set Up Grant and Annual Grant<sup>2</sup>), school PTAs can apply for the Subsidy for Home-School Co-operation Activities and the Subsidy for Joint Home-School Co-operation Project<sup>3</sup> to organise two home-school co-operation activities and one joint home-school co-operation project respectively. With reference to the recommendation of the Task Force, the EDB will double the ceilings of these two subsidies<sup>4</sup> starting from the 2019/20 school year for school PTAs to organise more home-school co-operation and parent education activities. Moreover, to support teachers in promoting close home-school co-operation and parent education, we will provide training courses for teachers to enhance their skills in mediation and home-school communication.

9. Besides, with reference to the recommendation of the Task Force, we will encourage more kindergartens (including kindergarten-cum-child care centres) to set up PTAs. Starting from the 2019/20 school year, we will double the Subsidy for PTA of kindergartens<sup>5</sup> (including Set Up Grant and Annual Grant) and help kindergartens and their school sponsoring bodies better understand the procedures and matters pertaining to the setting up of PTAs with a view to promoting home-school co-operation and parent education more effectively.

### *Community as Complementary Platform*

10. Currently, FPTAs can apply for subsidy from the EDB for organising three district-based activities for parents every year. The amount of subsidy is subject to the number of participants and the nature of activity. With reference to the recommendation of the Task

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<sup>2</sup> Existing school PTAs can apply for an Annual Grant for subsidising their recurrent expenditure, such as expenses for purchasing furniture, publishing newsletters, procuring stationeries and other materials.

<sup>3</sup> The activities can be jointly organised by individual school/PTA with schools/PTAs of the same school sponsoring bodies, or with schools/PTAs in the same district.

<sup>4</sup> The ceiling of the Subsidy for Home-School Co-operation Activities will be increased from \$5,000 to \$10,000 per year while that of the Subsidy for Joint Home-School Co-operation Project will be increased from \$10,000 to \$20,000 per year.

<sup>5</sup> The amount of Set Up Grant that a kindergarten can apply will be increased from \$5,000 to \$10,000 while the amount of Annual Grant will be increased from \$5,474 in the 2018/19 school year to \$11,266 in the 2019/20 school year (already adjusted in accordance with the Composite Consumer Price Index).

Force, the number of activities which FPTAs can apply for subsidy will be increased from three to four. Besides, a new grant for FPTAs to co-organise cross-district parent education activities will be introduced starting from the 2019/20 school year. This is to encourage FPTAs to co-organise more district-based parent education courses and activities.

11. We briefed schools, PTAs and FPTAs on the above enhancement measures in writing in January 2019. We plan to announce the details about application and financial arrangements through a circular to schools and a letter to FPTAs in June and July 2019. We expect that they will make good use of the new resources to strengthen and deepen, on the existing basis, their work in organising more courses and activities on home-school co-operation and parent education.

### Curriculum Framework

12. The Task Force noted that activities on home-school co-operation and parent education are now organised by different government departments, tertiary institutions, NGOs, the Committee on Home-School Co-operation, schools, PTAs, FPTAs, etc. However, generally speaking, these activities are relatively fragmented, lacking coherence or continuity. The Task Force recommended the Government to provide a core curriculum on parent education, and to commission tertiary institutions or NGOs to develop a curriculum framework or curriculum guide on parent education. The framework or guide should be able to meet the changing needs of parents in Hong Kong, and the content should cater for different needs of parents of students at kindergarten, junior primary, senior primary, junior secondary and senior secondary levels.

13. With reference to the recommendation of the Task Force, we plan to commission tertiary institutions or NGOs to develop a curriculum framework on parent education in the latter half of this year. Like the Task Force, we expect that upon its launch, the curriculum framework will be adopted as a common basis for all parent education courses, including territory-wide, community-based, school-based, e-learning and workplace parent education courses, to cater for the needs of parents at different stages and achieve different objectives. To set an example in this regard, the EDB will also commission tertiary institutions and NGOs to organise relevant courses and activities in accordance with the curriculum framework for parent education. Apart from the needs of parents in general, these courses and activities will also cater for the needs of parents with different family status and backgrounds (such as fathers, mothers, grandparents and single parents, etc.) and parents with special needs (such as working parents, parents of non-Chinese speaking students, parents of newly-arrived students and parents of students with special educational needs).

14. All along, the Government adopts relatively traditional approach to promoting parent education, mainly by organising talks and workshops. Yet, working parents find it difficult to

spare the time to participate. The Task Force put forward two brand new recommendations, including workplace parent education courses (for example, by collaborating with employers to provide relevant courses for their employees) and e-learning parent education courses to enable parents' self-learning through computers or mobile phones. On the other hand, the existing parent education website "Smart Parent Net" of the EDB enables parents of students from kindergarten to secondary school levels to have access to information on supporting the physical and psychological development of students, including parent-child relationship, character development, discipline of children, management of children's emotions, etc. The website could be further developed into a more popular parent education platform. We will roll out the relevant measures progressively having regard to the actual circumstances. Upon the launch of the curriculum framework on parent education, we will consider commissioning tertiary institutions or NGOs to develop electronic teaching and learning materials for parents to engage themselves in self-study according to their own pace and schedule.

### Public Education

15. At present, while the Government and various groups have, through different activities and endeavours, called upon parents to take into account children's character, abilities and interests when choosing study pathways, some parents still push their children to study hard or make them join various extra-curricular activities, expecting their children to win at the scratch line. Both the Government and the Task Force have grave concern about the impact of the culture of excessive competition on parents and children. Parents who put unbalanced emphasis on their children's academic performance may overlook the development of their children in other areas, and undermine their happy and healthy development. The Task Force recommended that a territory-wide "Positive Parent Campaign" should be launched to vigorously foster public education and extensively promote the proper ways and attitudes of raising children. The Task Force opined that the campaign should be run as an ongoing, extensive, impactful, continuous and sustainable exercise.

#### *"Positive Parent Campaign"*

16. With reference to the recommendation of the Task Force, the EDB will launch the territory-wide "Positive Parent Campaign" to enable the public to understand the importance of happy and healthy development of children and enhance parents' awareness of positive parenting through a series of publicity activities. The campaign will be promoted through a wide variety of publicity channels, including Announcements of Public Interest on television and radio, exhibitions, leaflets, competitions, talks, etc. with a view to promoting positive thinking, ways and attitudes in respect of raising children. We also encourage schools to make good use of the additional resources to support the campaign by organising relevant school-based parent education activities, such as talks for parents and parent-child activities.

17. We are actively preparing for the implementation of the “Positive Parent Campaign” and expect to roll out relevant activities in the latter half of this year. As recommended by the Task Force, to introduce a shift of emphasis from boosting children’s competitiveness, the campaign has to be implemented as an ongoing, universal and extensive exercise. To this end, we will continue to review the implementation of the campaign for continuous development and enhancement, and fostering of a paradigm shift among parents towards positive thinking to facilitate the happy development of children.

### **Concluding Remarks**

18. Members are invited to note the recommendations of the Task Force on the promotion of home-school co-operation and parent education, which have been fully accepted by the EDB. We are currently implementing relevant measures progressively.

Education Bureau  
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