

統籌局的信頭
Letterhead of EDUCATION AND MANPOWER BUREAU

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22 July, 1998

Ms Constance Li
Clerk to the Bills Committee on
the Holidays (Amendment) Bill 1998
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms Li,

Bills Committee on the Holidays (Amendment) Bill 1998

At the meeting of the Bills Committee on 16 July 1998, I undertook to provide a written response on two issues raised by members, namely :

- (a) that a school day be designated for organising commemorative/educational activities on national history for students; and
- (b) that the Administration do more to commemorate Sino-Japanese War Victory Day.

I am writing to set out the Administration's response.

Designating a school day for organising commemorative/educational activities on national history for students

Since national and civic education is a continuing process, I should like to take this opportunity to explain in some detail how the school curriculum deals with the subject of national identity and major national events of historical significance.

First of all, civic education forms part of the school curriculum. The aim of civic education is to inculcate in the minds of our students the essential civic responsibilities which they should develop towards their families, neighbouring community, regional community, national community and the international community. By offering a balanced view of these five aspects of learning, the civic education curriculum aims to provide our students with a sense of belonging both to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and to their mother country, as well as providing them with a global perspective. As far as developing a national identity is concerned, one of the objectives of the civic education curriculum is to strengthen students' identity with Chinese culture and history as well as to develop their ability to reflect on various aspects of development in their mother country. Apart from the civic education syllabus, major national events of historical significance, e.g. the Sino-Japanese War, are also covered in such subjects as Chinese History and Social Studies at the secondary level, and General Studies at the primary level. Schools are also encouraged to cover such major national events through extra-curricular activities.

The Administration encourages and supports schools to design civic education activities which meet their own need. A recurrent civic education grant is available to primary and secondary schools that wish to organise appropriate activities. A Chinese Cultural Projects Incentive Award Scheme has also been set up to promote student activities in learning about Chinese culture and history.

We take note of the suggestion of designating a school day for organising commemorative/educational activities on national history for students. We will put this to the Board of Education for further consideration. However, as you will appreciate, our schools are given the

autonomy to design and arrange their own programmes, including civic education. Any changes would have to be discussed with school councils, school-sponsoring bodies, and advisory committees in the education field.

Additional Commemorative Activities on Sino-Japanese War Victory Day

As I said at the Bills Committee meeting on 16 July 1998, although the third Monday in August would no longer be a general holiday from 1999 onwards, it would continue to be known as Sino-Japanese War Victory Day to honour those who took part in the war and the resistance movement.

Furthermore, starting from 1998, the Government will take the lead in honouring those who died in the defence of Hong Kong by holding an annual official ceremony on the day of the Chung Yeung Festival (28 October this year) to pay tribute to them. The official ceremony will be held at the Memorial Shrine in City Hall. It is intended that the event will be attended by the Chief Executive, senior officials and community leaders. Representatives of war veteran groups and associated community organisations will also be invited to attend.

In addition, there will continue to be commemorative activities organised by community groups, and led by the Hong Kong Ex-Servicemen's Association, to commemorate the war dead on Remembrance Sunday (being the Sunday nearest to 11 November).

I should be grateful if you could convey our response to the members of the Bills Committee.

Yours sincerely,

(Matthew K C Cheung)
for Secretary for Education and Manpower