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The Hon. Yeung Sum, Chairman  
Panel on Education  
Legislative Council  
3/F Citibank Tower  
3 Garden Road, HKSAR

2 December 2000

Dear Sir,

About School-based Management Consultation Document  
Views Submitted to the Legislative Council on 11 December 2000

1. We are writing on behalf of the Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China.
2. Our Council agrees with the thinking and direction proposed in Part 1 of the Document. We further support the notion that the School-based Management Committee (SBMC) should be more transparent and accountable for its performance. In fact all our 19 secondary and 31 primary schools have already set up their school-based management committees and all are doing well. At present we still maintain the central School Management Committee (SMC), which functions are to select and employ the principal, to ensure the vision of the sponsoring body is maintained and executed in earnest, to provide support and to give advice to individual SBMC when needed. We believe our two-tier system, the central SMC with the local SBMC under it, works fine and is achieving all the objectives described in Part 1 of the Document. The existing constitutions of our SMC and SBMC embrace almost all the roles assigned to each body (Role of SSB in 3.17-3.19 and Role of SMC in 3.19). Our Council is determined to devolve authority from our SMC to individual SBMC. That being said, we remain flexible and progressive, as far as building an effective school management system is concerned, and are willing to accommodate new ideas proposed by the Advisory Committee on School-based Management, **provided that the Education Department is also willing to respect our tradition, beliefs and practice**. We believe the crux of the matter is to continue promoting what is said in 3.17 “Their (different school sponsoring bodies) vision for education has combined with their individual characteristics to add diversity to an otherwise homogeneous aided school sector”. This is the basic principle and pretext of school-based management and we hope all parties concerned will continue to honour and uphold this ideal for the sake of quality education in our schools.
3. Regarding the points raised in the Document, we have the following comments and suggestions to make:
  - 3.1 We welcome the idea that a school “will have the flexibility over the deployment of its funds (para.1.13)”. This we take it to mean that the Education Department will soon be giving the schools a lump-sum Block Grant (1.13) in lieu of different grants contained in the Code of Aid. We welcome such move provided that the Education Department will **exclude the teachers’ salary grant and the non-recurrent grant elements from the**

**package.** Any unilateral change made by the Education Department in this regard without public consultation and proper legislature will cause contempt from the teachers and will have serious consequences. We do not think this issue should be taken lightly and we do not think this is the occasion for reaching a quick decision.

- 3.2 We have reservation regarding implementing monetary “reward and compensation (1.14)” in the schools and we wish to seek clarification and amplification from the Education Department.
- 3.3 It is most encouraging to learn that “the school will have flexibility to design its own curricular and teaching practices, including format, time allocation, teaching resources, grouping of students and assessment” (1.15). But can the SBMC do it alone without reforming and transforming the whole education system at the same time? Or is it just a high-sounding statement amounting to nothing but some hollow promise. We would very much like to see the Education Department translating the rhetoric into reality in the near future.
- 3.4 Regarding the processes to be used in the selection of the principal (3.5), we strongly believe that, in the spirit of mutual trust, there is no need to co-opt any independent selection panel member. We do not think it is right or proper to infringe this very basic principle. The SSB is capable and has the absolute authority to employ any person to be the principal of a school provided that the candidate meets the qualifications specified in the Code of Aid and the selection process is legal, open and fair. Insistence on co-opting independent selection panel member will seriously tamper with the spirit of mutual trust, and will lead us into believing that the Education Department is taking advantage of the school-based management process to intrude into the normal operation of the school.
- 3.5 We spot a flaw when your Committee suggests that the SMC should draft its first constitution for a new school (3.4 & 3.5), bearing in mind that it is the SSB that starts a school and proposes to register a SMC. Logically speaking, the SSB should, a priori, have a constitution in place before the SMC is organized and presented to the Education Department for registration. We agree that the authority to approve a constitution rests with the SSB and the SSB may make subsequent amendments to the existing constitution in consultation with the Education Department as outlined in Appendix C (b).
- 3.6 Regarding the membership and composition of SMC (3.6), we propose the following:

Managers nominated by the SSB: up to 60% of the total number of managers;  
Teacher manager: numbering one to be elected from the teaching staff;  
Parent Manager: numbering one to be elected by members of the PTA;  
Alumni Manager: numbering one to be elected by a registered alumni association;  
Independent Manager: numbering one to be nominated by the SMC amongst community member or relevant professional.

We firmly believe that each SSB should have its say in deciding the number of representatives best for its SMC. For example, we already have two teacher representatives in our secondary school SBMC and four in our bi-sessional primary school SBMC. A unitary model proposed top down from the Education Department does not serve the interest of the education sector of Hong Kong.

- 3.7 Regarding (3.8), we would like the Advisory Committee on School-based Management to clarify and delineate the liabilities of the government (Education Department), the SSB, and the SMC. Further, we are of the opinion that when the SMC discharges its liabilities, it should do so in the priority of: first, insurance agent, secondly, the government and thirdly, the SSB.
- 3.8 We appreciate Education Department's endeavour and commitment to prepare a manager's handbook and to provide relevant training for the managers (3.11).
- 3.9 We agree that school managers may not register as a manager of more than five schools (3.12) except when such person is a paid staff of the SSB employed to manage the schools under the aegis of the SSB. Again, we think the Education Department should be more flexible and **allow the SSB to decide for itself how its managers can best serve their schools**, provided that the schools are properly managed and are providing quality education in their schools.
- 3.10 We agree with the age limitation imposed on the school managers (3.15), provided that it does not go against the age discrimination law of Hong Kong.
4. Generally speaking, we agree with the proposal regarding the way the SMC is set up. However, we also believe that the SSB plays a very important role in the well being and continuity of a school. After all, it is the SSB that desires and pays for the setting up of the school. It is also the SSB, and the SSB alone, that defines its vision and mission for its schools. **The Education Department should respect the best of intention of the SSB whilst simultaneously developing its working relationship with the SMC.**

We understand the Education Department is in the process of re-writing the Codes of Aid, amending the Education Ordinance, and rewording the SSB service agreement etc. for another round of consultation. We believe the Education Department should wait until an overall public consultation is completed before reaching a decision. By then the total picture would be clear and the public would know exactly which direction our education is heading for.

Yours faithfully,

YEUNG Po Kwan  
Chairman of the School  
Management Committee

(Rev.) LUK Fai  
General Secretary

**Hong Kong Association of Sponsoring Bodies of Schools**

**Membership List**

The Baptist Convention of Hong Kong

Caritas - Hong Kong

The Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong

Church of Christ in China (Hong Kong)

The Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Scheut Mission Hong Kong Limited

The Director in Hong Kong of Saint Joseph's College

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong

The Evangelical School Development Incorporation Limited

The Hong Kong Buddhist Association

Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui

Hong Kong Taoist Association

Institute of The Canossian Daughters of Charity

Kowloon Tong Church of the Chinese Christian & Missionary Alliance

The Lok Sin Tong Benevolent Society

Lung Kong World Federation School (Hong Kong) Limited

The Lutheran Church Hong Kong Synod

Marynoll Fathers and Brothers

The Methodist Church, Hong Kong

Po Leung Kuk

Salesians of Don Bosco

Shun Tak Fraternal Association

Sik Sik Yuen

Sisters of the Precious Blood

Sisters of St Paul de Chartres

Tsung Tsin Mission of Hong Kong

The Tung Koon District General Association

Tung Wah Group of Hospitals