

Lai Fong Fung

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Subject Consultation on Reforming the Academic
Structure for Senior Secondary Education and
Higher Education

From: FUNG LAI-FONG
To: Arthur Li, Education and Manpower Bureau Education Commission
Cc: Education and Manpower Panel, Legislative Council
Bcc: The media and various universities
9 Jan 05

Dear Mr. Arthur Li,

I am fully aware of the need to reform the education system of Hong Kong, and I appreciate the efforts put forward by your Bureau. Therefore, **I support the move to the 3+3+4 structure and related proposals.**

☞ It is an international practice to have **the 3+3+4 education structure**. As an international city, Hong Kong should be in line with the world and adopt the 3+3+4 structure.

☞ At present, the education system of Hong Kong is characterised by the duck-feeding approach. Everything taught in the school is ultimately aimed at the examinations that take place at the end of the academic year or at the public examinations. It would therefore be useful and productive if examinations can be reduced. As such, I support the proposal of **combining HKCEE and HKALE into one new examination**.

☞ I am also a supporter of the user-pay principle. In this light, I think it is appropriate for the users to share part of the cost of education, therefore I support the **funding arrangement (i.e. the Reform is financed by tuition fee contribution)** mentioned in the Consultation document.

Nevertheless, it is equally important, if not more important, to maintain stability and continuity in our education system. Since 1997, there have been too many changes to different aspects of the education system. **If the 3+3+4 structure is to be implemented, there should not be any change or reform to the rest of the education system.** These include:

☞ **the use of mother language to teach** – it is an international practice to use the mother language as a medium for teaching. Various studies indicate that it helps raise learning interest and therefore learning efficiency and effectiveness.

☞ **the language proficiency assessment for teachers** – it is a means to ensure that our teachers are up-to-standard and a means to ensure the quality of our students. The competitiveness of Hong Kong ultimately depends on the quality of our human resources. If the standard of teachers is compromised, there is no guarantee to the quality of our students and this will finally undermine the competitiveness of Hong Kong. This is especially important, as many businesses now consider the command of English by fresh graduates is declining and falls behind that of Singapore.

☞ **the admission mechanisms adopted for primary schools and secondary schools** – it is important to maintain the current admission mechanisms adopted for primary schools and secondary schools because it is essential to respect the traditions of different organizations. In addition, as many schools are run by religious and/or voluntary organizations, it is important to respect the practices and culture of these organizations. Respecting traditions and freedom in religions are also ensured and enshrined in the Basic Law.

The Education Commission is reviewing some of these, but my opinion is to keep these unchanged. I think it is more important to keep these unchanged than implementing the 3+3+4 structure. Even if any of these is/are to be changed, it should be after the implementation of the 3+3+4 structure and after consultations with the public. Besides, the process has to be a gradual one, and transition periods are necessary.

I am delighted to share with you some of my thoughts, and I can be contacted by email.

Yours,
FUNG LAI-FONG