



番禺會所華仁小學家長教師會
Pun U Association Wah Yan Primary School
Parents Teachers Association

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Ms Rosanna Wong
Education Commission
Room 1101, 11/F.,
Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East,
Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

23 May 2005

Dear Ms. Wong

Review of Medium of Instruction (MOI) for Secondary Schools

Following a joint meeting amongst Parents Teachers Associations of La Salle Primary School, Marymount Primary Schools, Pun U Association Wah Yan Primary School, Wah Yan College Hong Kong, St. Francis' Canossian School and St. Stephen's Girl's School, we have decided to write to you direct and request for a meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss the education issues which concern many parents.

On 23 April, we met with Mr. Michael Tien and his Working Group (WG) members on the MOI issue. An open letter dated 6 May (enclosed) was sent to him with a copy to you. WG has responded to us by letter dated 13 May (enclosed).

Let us first clarify **two misunderstanding contained in the WG's reply** letter. Firstly, we are not asking the WG to confirm whether to accept our demands. We are asking them to clarify the basis upon which they have formulated their proposals that have far-reaching impact on Hong Kong and our children. We have not received these clarifications in their letter. This is of paramount importance in order that one can make a fair judgment on the acceptability of their proposals. Just to give you a few examples here:

- Why, despite the national language being Putonghua, mother-tongue has been, arbitrarily and without public consensus, defined as Cantonese?
- How can we be convinced by evidence cited to support the WG's proposition which is limited, anecdotal, selective and open to different interpretations? We have yet to see research and studies that are impartial, scientific and comprehensive.

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- Why is performance in (English, Chinese and Mathematics) examinations at Primary 6 arbitrarily equated to “ability” of a student to “be able to learn effectively through English”?

We listed some serious defects in the WG’s Review for the WG to respond, but they have not addressed them either. Again, to name a few:

- We are not assured how Hong Kong’s competitive advantage and the future of our children will not be undermined.
- We are not assured that students’ and parents’ right to have choices for schools are not being taken away.
- We are not assured that schools will be able to deliver quality education as they are under continual pressure to cope with the constant, substantial and often contradictory and inconsistent educational policies and practices.

Secondly, the WG claimed that they “have serious difficulty” with our view that in their “process of policy making, parents as major stakeholders are being excluded from involvement”. As part of the process of formulating the policy, the WG claimed that parents have been consulted. What we can find in the WG’s Review is this; “Many frontline educators and parents agree that mother-tongue teaching can help achieve the objectives of education as described in paragraph 1.4...” (paragraph 2.10). However, we want to know what the sample size is and how it can represent parents in CMI and EMI schools. What about parents in primary schools who will eventually be affected by the proposals? It is no point of saying that WG have consulted parents if they cannot demonstrate that the consultation is thorough and embraces the views of parents across the board.

The WG also acknowledged that responses from parents and the public are very diverse. Surely this suggests there is no consensus for one view or the other. Imposing such proposals in a diverse opinion environment is potentially divisive and very unfavourable to HK’s stability. More importantly, they are ignoring this diversity of HK as an international city, and depriving the right of parents to choose for their children.

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What we have been told in their letter, and in our meeting of 23 April, is that, the fundamentals of the issue/problem that concerned us are “not under the WG’s purview”. We understand. But we are very worried. We are very worried because the WG is using a defective framework to rationalize their arguments. Their claim leads us to believe that since it is not in their “terms of reference”, they do not have the mandate to evaluate the source of all the problems inherited from the 1998 Guidance. We, therefore, have to come to you, the Chairperson of Education Commission, and hope you will have a meeting with us to discuss our concerns. We trust you will understand that parents are naturally anxious about the future of their children and earnestly hope that you will attend to this issue and please listen to us.

Yours sincerely,

May Woo (Mrs.)
Chairperson

c.c. Acting Chief Executive, HKSAR
Legislative Council – Panel on Education
Secretary for Manpower & Education
Chairman, Working Group on Review of Secondary School Places Allocation &
Medium of Instruction for Secondary Schools
PTAs of Wah Yan College, Hong Kong, Marymount Primary School, St.
Francis’ Canossian School, Salesian English School (Primary), La Salle
Primary School and St. Stephen’s Girl’s School