



Douglas George

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Subject Transparency

It has come to my attention the HK Schools Speech and Music Association is not entirely accountable to the public in the administration of its annual month long speech and music festival. It has a strict no pictures, recording and no filming policy. I recently ran up against this regulation while filming a high school orchestra in the competition. I have been informed by numerous off-the-record sources that the association's no filming policy is enforced to minimize evaluation of its judgements by outside experts.

For a group that receives more than \$3 million in public funds, the HKSSMA has an obligation to the public for greater transparency.

I appealed to EDB and the LCSD to intercede on our behalf. After discussions we were encouraged to seek a compromise with the association.

However, Its 'concession' was to allow still photography of the announcement of the championship, following the performance. STILL pictures? Obviously this wasn't a sincere effort to work out a compromise. Plus, it's sniffy attitude borders on the governmental.

The association made 3 excuses rejecting my request. 1) There wasn't enough room in the backstage area for our crew. I attended the performance, walking liesurely through the backstage area. There is an abundance of space in the backstage area. Hundreds of students and truckloads of equipment moved easily in and out of the stage area with little or no hiccups. 2) The performers don't need distractions from TV crews. We filmed our high school numerous times prior to the performance. They won. Distraction? 3) It's in the regulations: no filming has been a rule since 'the beginning on time'.

It's high time this publicly subsidized group inject a large dose of transparency into its rules.

I feel the panel should demand more accountability in the operation of the festival. I leave this in your care. Please do inform me of any action or enquiries taken.

Sincerely

Douglas George
Supervising Producer
The Pearl Report

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<http://programme.tvb.com/news/pearlreport>