

For discussion on
13 May 2011

Legislative Council Joint Panels on Home Affairs and Education

Promotion of Sport in Schools

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the measures that we are taking to promote sport in schools; to provide opportunities for school students to engage in regular training and competition; and to identify and nurture student athletes with the potential to achieve results at the highest level.

Background

2. In 2002, the Government published the review report on long-term sports policy entitled “Towards a more sporting future” (“2002 Report”), which set out the strategic objectives for sports development¹. The report recognised that sport plays an important part in the education and general development of young people. The 2002 Report emphasised the importance of providing more sport for students and recommended -

- (a) adopting a more focused approach for school sport;
- (b) expanding the School Sports Programme of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD);
- (c) establishing student-oriented facilities planning and management; and
- (d) providing more support within the education system for outstanding young athletes, for example, encouraging educational institutions to offer more flexible arrangements to accommodate the training and competition needs of student athletes.

¹ The strategic policy objectives proposed are “develop a strong sporting culture in the community, achieve greater excellence by our elite athletes and raise our international profile on sport”

3. Separately, in its report on education reform issued in September 2000, the Education Commission (EC) emphasised that physical development should be one of the “five types of essential learning experience” within the framework of the curriculum. Accordingly, physical education was identified as a Key Learning Area (KLA) in respect of which the EC recommended that “every student should gain a balanced exposure in all eight KLAs”. In addition, “to lead a healthy lifestyle and develop an interest in and appreciation of aesthetic and physical activities” has been identified as one of the learning goals of the school curriculum.

4. The Administration has undertaken a number of measures – many in collaboration with relevant stakeholders – in line with the objectives described in paragraphs 2 and 3 above, with a view to promoting sport in schools and strengthening support for student athletes. These measures are elaborated in ensuing paragraphs. In recent years, Hong Kong student athletes have recorded improved results in both local and overseas competitions - most notably a Hong Kong student won two gold medals at the World University Games in 2009, which is the best result ever achieved by a Hong Kong student athlete at this level. Hong Kong students have also achieved good results in Schools Interport Championships. For example, in the secondary section, Hong Kong student athletes have in recent years won championships in basketball (2008), hockey (boys) (2008), swimming (2008 and 2010), handball (boys) (2009), table-tennis (2009), athletics (2010), and cross country running (2010). Between 2006 and early 2011, the number of student athletes supported by the Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI) increased from some 300 to about 600, indicating a steady improvement in the standard of our student athletes and an increase support from the HKSI for high-level student athletes and young athletes with potential.

A more focused approach to school sport

(A) Physical Education (PE) in schools

5. The promotion of sport in schools mainly begins with PE lessons, for which schools are required to allocate at least 5% of total lesson time. The Education Bureau (EDB) encourages schools to provide opportunities for students to develop their potential through a three-tier system, as outlined below.

Level 1 – Whole-class (school-based)

6. EDB encourages schools to engage students in various physical activities through PE lessons and recommends that students should learn the basic skills in at least eight different physical activities in not less than four areas to gain an all-around development in sport. This provides the exposure conducive to discovering students' potential and developing their interests, as well as allowing teachers to identify students' talents and adopt teaching strategies to meet their needs, e.g. through appropriate grouping with enrichment activities and extended learning.

7. At senior secondary level, students with sporting potential may opt to study the PE Elective for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education. The number of students taking this subject has increased from about 800 in the 2009-12 cohort to about 1 000 in the 2010-13 cohort. Students may also study Applied Learning courses that allow them to integrate physical skills with theoretical learning and gain an understanding of sports-related professions.

Level 2 – Pull-out (school-based)

8. EDB encourages schools to organise - or to make use of the LCSD's School Sports Programme (see paragraphs 13 to 14 below) - to provide "pull-out" programmes such as interest groups and team training to provide students with systematic and intensive training in selected sports outside the classroom and to give them the chance to compete in inter-school sports events.

Level 3 – Off-site support for the exceptionally gifted

9. Elite training is not under EDB's purview. However, it provides a subvention to the Hong Kong School Sports Federation (HKSSF) (see paragraph 11 below) to organise and train Hong Kong student teams to compete in national and international events. It also encourages schools to refer students with exceptional potential to "national sport associations" (NSAs) for further training; allows teachers and school administrators to take leave to take student teams to international sports events; and helps schools to make arrangements for high-level student athletes to attend make-up classes, defer studies or apply for leave to take part in training and competitions.

(B) Support for schools' sports organisations

10. The HKSSF organises inter-school competitions in 13 sports for primary schools and 23 sports for secondary schools. In 2009-10, over 95% of all schools and about 15% of all students in Hong Kong took part in inter-school sports competitions. The total number of teams participating exceeded 20 000, involving more than 123 000 students.

11. In 2010-11, EDB provided a subvention of about \$12 million to the HKSSF to help cover its administrative costs, staff wages and around 50% of the programme costs for inter-school sports competitions. In the same year, LCSD provided about \$6.6 million under the Sports Subvention Scheme to support the HKSSF's work. The current levels of subvention from EDB and LCSD respectively have increased by 18.6% and 14.5% since 2006-07.

12. Other organisations involved in the promotion of sport for students include the University Sports Federation of Hong Kong, China (USFHK), the Hong Kong Paralympic Committee and the Sports Association for the Physically Disabled (HKPC&SAPD), and the Hong Kong Sport Association for the Mentally Handicapped (HKSAM). In 2011-12, the USFHK will receive a subvention of about \$1.35 million from the Sports Subvention Scheme and HKPC & SAPD and HKSAM will together receive more than \$12 million. We also provide grants from the Arts and Sports Development Fund to help student athletes prepare for and participate in major international competitions.

Expansion of the LCSD School Sports Programme

13. The School Sports Programme (SSP)² began in 2001 as a sports promotion platform in schools. The programme features activities organised by NSAs that are subvented by the LCSD and to primary, secondary and special school students. SSP activities are organised to fit in with the daily schedule of schools so that students can participate in the activities in the school

² The objectives of the SSP are -

- (i) to enrich the lives of students;
- (ii) to provide opportunities for students to participate in sports constantly;
- (iii) to raise the standard of sports among students;
- (iv) to train up more sports volunteers;
- (v) to encourage students to participate in sports and voluntary services related to sports; and
- (vi) to foster a sporting culture.

environment during their leisure time. The SSP also helps to identify students with potential for further training and development.

14. The SSP has expanded over the years to cover seven subsidiary programmes. These programmes, details of which are at **Annex I**, provide activities such as sports demonstrations, tours of sports venues and opportunities to watch high-level international competitions as well as sports training. The SSP also provides training for volunteers to help schools and NSAs organise sports activities. In 2009-10, over 7 700 programmes were organised under the SSP, attracting over 600 000 participants. More than 1 000 primary and secondary schools have joined the SSP, representing a participation rate of more than 90% of all schools in Hong Kong. In 2010-11, LCSD's annual expenditure on the SSP was \$16 million.

Provision of sports facilities and priority booking for schools

15. Since 2005, we have spent about \$4.5 billion on building or upgrading sports facilities. We are currently building 15 new sports facilities with a total investment of more than \$9 billion, and we are upgrading existing facilities such as the Victoria Park Swimming Pool Complex, the Kwun Tong Swimming Pool Complex and the Mong Kok Stadium. New sports projects under planning include sports centres in Area 74, Tseung Kwan O, Area 14B, Sha Tin and Area 14 (Siu Lun), Tuen Mun, as well as an open space project in Area 117, Tin Shui Wai. The completion of these new facilities will provide more easily accessible sports venues for training and competitions for students and members of the general public. In addition, the \$1.8 billion redevelopment of the HKSI will provide state-of-the-art training facilities and comprehensive support services for athletes, including student athletes who have the potential to pursue a career as top-level sportsmen and women.

16. To help provide students with greater access to public sports facilities, LCSD allows schools to reserve facilities one academic year in advance for the period from September to mid-July of the following year. This priority booking arrangement applies during normal schools hours, i.e., from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm on weekdays and 7:00 am to 1:00 pm on Saturday. For swimming pools the arrangement generally applies to the period from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm on weekdays and 8:00 am to 1:00 pm on Saturdays. To encourage schools to organise sports activities, schools are allowed to use specified facilities free of

charge from opening to 5:00 pm on weekdays between 1 September and 30 June of the following year. Students enjoy a half-price concessionary rate for hiring leisure facilities at non-peak hours.

17. Schools are major users of LCSD sports facilities (see **Annex II**). Since 2008-09, the HKSSF has been using LCSD facilities for about 600 hours and over 20 000 hours for training and competitions respectively (see **Annex III**).

18. We will continue to provide new sports facilities. We will also encourage schools to open up their own sports facilities after school hours for Hong Kong student team training or inter-school competitions. The number of schools that open up their facilities has increased from 22 in 2007 to 61 in 2011.

More support for outstanding student athletes

19. Many potential top athletes are students in secondary schools or tertiary institutions. To help maximise their potential and to achieve good results in high-level competitions, students need to dedicate time and energy to training, preparation for and participation in sports events. They therefore need to be able to balance the demands of their studies and their sporting careers.

(A) Support in secondary schools

20. EDB considers it important for students to receive a broad and balanced education and believes that high-level athletes should study in regular schools with tailor-made training programmes. At present, the Hong Kong education system does not obstruct students with sporting potential from being identified, receiving training, and taking part in competitions. Rather, EDB provides policy flexibility that enables students to balance high-level sports participation with study and other needs, e.g., by -

- (a) granting students leave to take part in training and competitions, and providing them with extra assistance in academic studies;
- (b) allowing students representing Hong Kong to request special consideration when public examinations clash with international sports

competitions – in such cases the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority can exempt students from taking the examination and assess their performance using other means; and

- (c) tailor-made training programmes offered by the schools or in collaboration with other institutions for athletes to help them strike a balance between studies and sports career (see examples at **Annex IV**).

(B) Support in tertiary institutions

(i) Admission of athletes

21. Student admission is a matter within the autonomy of tertiary institutions. Institutions adopt merit-based systems that seek to ensure that the students admitted would have the necessary knowledge base, learning skills, language proficiency and aptitude to benefit from tertiary education. When considering admission applications, tertiary institutions make a holistic assessment of an applicant's performance in all relevant aspects. If an applicant has achieved outstanding results in sport, institutions have special admission schemes or may give special consideration to such an applicant.

22. Under the Joint University Programmes Admissions System, there is a Sub-System for School Principal's Nominations and a Self Recommendation Scheme to give due recognition to students who have achieved outstanding results in "non-academic" areas such as sport. The eight UGC-funded tertiary institutions also accept athletes nominated for admission by the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (SF&OC) and the HKSI.

(ii) Special study arrangements for athletes

23. Tertiary institutions are supportive of the need to nurture students' sporting potential and excellence. They provide flexibility to facilitate student athletes to undergo training and participate in competitions taking into account their individual circumstances, given that different academic disciplines may have very different lesson time requirements and modality of studies. For example, institutions may provide special arrangements with regard to class

schedules, coursework submission and examinations for student athletes. Athletes may also apply for leave of absence, suspension, deferral or extension of studies to suit their study pace, in accordance with the regulations of individual institutions.

24. In addition, some institutions have designated programmes or personnel (e.g., team managers, coaches, mentors or academic advisers) to monitor the performance of and offer advice on academic and other matters to student athletes.

25. Many institutions have designated financial aid, scholarships and awards for student athletes. Some institutions also provide special arrangements to cater for the accommodation needs of athletes.

(iii) Support from the HKSI and SF&OC

26. In 2008, the HKSI launched the Enhanced Athletes Educational and Vocational Development Programme to provide educational and career development support to athletes. The programme offers services such as academic guidance, tutorial services and education subsidies. Since the introduction of the programme, some 850 athletes have received training and support, of which 250 athletes have received scholarships for further studies. In 2008, the SF&OC launched the Hong Kong Athletes Career and Education Programme, which provides education and career development support to current and retired athletes (for up to four years after retirement). The programme offers scholarships to athletes to take language courses, as well as certificate, diploma, higher diploma, associate degree and undergraduate courses. So far, more than 130 athletes have benefited from the programme.

Way Forward

27. EDB will continue to support the nurturing of athletes in schools by encouraging schools to adopt a “life-wide” approach to help students broaden their horizon and develop their sporting potential. Specifically, EDB will disseminate the good practices of school-based support for elite athletes through professional development programmes for teachers, encourage schools to liaise with NSAs and the HKSI to devise appropriate training schedules that enable student athletes to balance academic and sports development, and allocate extra

funding for the HKSSF to develop more inter-school events in new sports.

28. LCSD will further strengthen the SSP by –

- (a) encouraging the schools that do not participate in the SSP to identify their needs under the programme;
- (b) inviting more NSAs to participate in the SSP so as to provide a wider range of sports choices and increasing the number of activities under the respective subsidiary programmes;
- (c) providing more information for future teachers undergoing training at the Hong Kong Institute of Education and other tertiary institutions to ensure that they have a good understanding of the SSP and would be in a position to encourage their students to take part in sport; and
- (d) arranging more opportunities for students to watch high-level matches, pre-match training and demonstrations under the guidance of professional coaches from the NSAs, in order to stimulate their interest in taking part in sport.

29. With the proposed establishment of the \$7 billion Elite Athletes Development Fund to finance its future operations, the HKSI will seek to strengthen support for athletes in consultation with EDB and educational institutions. Possible areas for increased support include –

- (a) developing tailor-made in-house education programmes for student athletes that can fit in with their individual training needs;
- (b) exploring with post-secondary institutions the possibility of allowing more flexibility (e.g., through part-time and modular study) for their high-level student athletes to pursue their studies and giving recognition to prior experience and learning gained by athletes during their years of high-level training; and
- (c) collaborating more closely with local tertiary institutions to develop Hong Kong-based accreditation programmes in areas such as relevant sports science and coaching that are relevant to sports development.

30. The Home Affairs Bureau will work with EDB, LCSD, the HKSI and other organisations to formulate and implement measures to increase support for school sports and student athletes. In this context, we are considering a proposal to engage retired athletes directly in promoting sport in schools.

Conclusion

31. Awareness of the importance of promoting of sport and sports education in schools has shown some improvement in recent years. We will continue to implement the current set of programmes and consider how best to introduce new initiatives to improve the environment for sport in schools and encourage students to cultivate an interest in sport. We will also work with the HKSI and NSAs to identify students with the potential to compete at a high level and provide the necessary training, educational and career development support to help them achieve their personal goals.

Advice Sought

32. Members are invited to note the measures currently being undertaken by the Administration and stakeholders to promote sport in schools and support student athletes, and to comment and advise on possible areas for further improvement in these areas.

Education Bureau
Home Affairs Bureau
May 2011

School Sports Programme (SSP)

The SSP consists of the following seven subsidiary programmes –

(A) Sport Education Programme

To provide students with updated information on sports through sport demonstrations, exhibitions and talks, guided visits to major events and sport venues.

(B) Easy Sport Programme

To modify sports training courses through simplified sports rules and equipment so as to arouse the interest of primary students.

(C) Outreach Coaching Programme

Coaches assigned by respective NSAs will conduct training in schools for students and help schools to set up teams.

(D) Badges Award Scheme

Students meeting standards set by NSAs will be awarded badges or certificates to recognise their achievements.

(E) Joint Schools Sports Training Programme

To provide advanced training for students who may be selected for advanced training in squads.

(F) Sport Captain Programme

To train coaches, sports administrators and sports co-ordinators to provide voluntary service in schools and at major sports events.

(G) Sports Award Scheme

To encourage students to participate in sport regularly and to promote the concept of “One Student, One Sport”, under this scheme three subsidiary award schemes have been developed to recognise the efforts of schools and students –

- **sportACT Award Scheme:** This aims to encourage students to participate in sport regularly and establish it as a habit by giving students awards based on their achievement of a pre-determined target number of hours spent participating in sport.
- **sportFIT Award Scheme:** This scheme aims to encourage students to participate in sport to improve their physical fitness by giving awards to students who participate in both the "sportACT" scheme and the School Physical Fitness Award Scheme administered by the Education Bureau. The objective is to arouse students’ interest in participating in sport to improve their health.
- **sportTAG Award Scheme:** This scheme was launched in 2011 and aims to enhance the effectiveness of the sportACT Award Scheme and to encourage students to participate in skill assessments conducted by NSAs to help improve their skills. It gives NSAs an opportunity to identify students with potential for further training and invite them to join representative junior squads. A bonus award called “sportExcel” would be given to students who have achieved all the above three awards of the Scheme.

Schools' use of major sports facilities

Facilities	Total hours of schools use		
	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Indoor Sports Centres - Arena	153 512	134 255	121 270
Sports Grounds	14 555	13 598	13 752
Artificial Turf Pitches	7 800	6 683	6 389
Natural Turf Pitches	3 748	3 293	3 042
Squash Courts	19 450	17 213	16 981
Tennis Courts	18 094	15 806	14 617

**Use of LCSD facilities by HKSSF for training and competitions
under LCSD Sports Subvention Scheme**

Year	Training hours	Competition hours
2008-09	584	22679
2009-10	606	22686
2010-11	697	22245

“Partial integration” of elite athletes in regular schools

(1) The learning group for athletes in Lam Tai Fai College

- Athletes are grouped into one class in each year grade from Secondary 1 to 3, with a class size of 30 to 35 students; and
- The school has around 20 high-level athletes at Hong Kong team or youth squad level. Extra tutorial lessons and after-school learning support are provided to make up for the missing lessons of elite athletes who participate in open competitions.

(2) The Professional Footballer Preparatory Programme in Yan Chai Hospital Tung Chi Ying Memorial Secondary School

- The class sizes of the football classes are 25 to 30 students in Secondary 1 and 20 students in Secondary 2 to 6;
- The football class students receive enhanced in-school training of up to 8 hours per week in Secondary 1 to 2; 6 hours per week in Secondary 3 to 4 and 4 hours per week in Secondary 5 to 6; and
- The school has 5 or 6 high-level athletes at Hong Kong team or youth squad level. Extra tutorial lessons are provided to them.

(3) The Physical Education Stream in Jockey Club Ti-I College

- The school can recruit Secondary 1 students on a territory-wide basis;
- Half of all Secondary 1 to 3 students study in the PE stream and attend 7 periods of PE in each six-day cycle; and
- The school has around 50 high-level athletes at Hong Kong team or youth squad level, they may adopt a study

plan with stronger emphasis on sports training, receive extra tutorial lessons and be taken care by personal tutor.