

16<sup>th</sup> Jun 2013

To: Legco Education Panel (Chair Hon LAM TF, Vice Chair Hon IP KY and All Members)  
ESF Board of Governor  
ESF Chair (Carlson Tong), CEO (Heather Du Quesnay)  
CC: ESF ComPar, All PTA Chairs , All Parents, All Teachers  
Education Bureau (EB)

**PROTECT English Schools Foundation**

I was ESF parent representative at Legco Public Account Committee (PAC) meeting (Jan 2005) and at Education Panel meeting on ESF new Ordinance (Mar 2007).

The EB recently propose to remove/phase out the Government subvention to ESF over 13 yrs starting from 2016. The proposal will be examined in ESF Board meeting on 18 Jun and then tabled to Legco Education panel on Jul13. Parents think this is not reasonable, not justifiable, and is political. This would incur lose to HK society.

(1) In the **Legco Education panel meeting** on new ESF ordinance (Mar 07), members were generally supportive of lifting up subvention on par with local subvented schools. At Education panel meeting on Jul11, members generally support continuation of subvention and called on ESF to improve financial management to **provide affordable English-medium education** to community. When EB expressed the view for ESF to become private school (eventual "self-financing"), NO member was advocate of this.

(2) **Basic Law** article 144 guarantees that policy on education subvention prior to 1997 shall be maintained. The drastic policy change - proposed subvention removal/phasing out, is unprecedented and grossly violates the basic law. In the history of HK education, NO subvented school was forced to become private school. On the contrary, many private schools were transformed to subvented/DSS schools. ESF has been subvented schools for 46 years since establishment in 1967.

(3) The **PAC meeting report** (Feb 2005) stated that any major change in ESF subvention needs to be approved by Legco and ExCo. EB is not entitled to cut the subvention unilaterally.

(4) **"Colonial legacy"** is the EB's reason to remove subvention. With the same principle, all schools established before 1997 are "colonial legacy". Many long established popular subvented schools ("King's college", "Queen Elizabeth school", "Clementi (a former HK Governor) Middle school" – my previous school) are even more "colonial" than ESF. Should these schools' subvention be removed?

(5) **“Teaching non-local curriculum”** is another EB’s reason. Yet increasingly many DSS schools are teaching IB curriculum. Would or should their subvention be removed? The answer is certainly not.

(6) During the HKSAR election campaign last year, all the candidates (CE Mr CY Leung, Mr Ho, Mr Tang, Ms Yip) were unanimous to state that ESF subvention should be continued. This speaks for the value of ESF in HK education.

(7) The **culture, popularity, and accomplishment** of ESF were built up over decades by previous students, teachers, parents and all stakeholders. Primary school students will all go to secondary school without filtering. This is truly “有教無類” – “No children should be left behind”. The academic performances are very good and largest proportion of graduate (1 over 4) entered local universities. Current unit subsidy to ESF students is less than local subvented/DSS schools. The ESF is definitely value for money.

(8) HK **must retain a subvented international school** to provide **affordable** English-medium education for the needy (local and non-Chinese speaking children), much like the subvented and private schools settings in local systems. Otherwise the unique role of ESF would vanish and become the privilege of rich families only.

(9) In the recent **parent’s consultative meeting**, 100% of parents voted for long term continuation of subvention.

In **summary**, the ESF is a 46 years old subverted schools currently serving ~13,000 students (almost 80% HK citizens) with excellent academic performance, and is good value for money. The **“ESF legacy”** should be preserved rather than destroyed. There is absolutely NO sound reason to remove/phase out the subvention. Otherwise this would be tragedy in HK’s history of education.

I plead with the ESF Board members to insist on **long term continuation of subvention** and not to accept the proposal.

I plead with the Lego members to **protect ESF** from being “privatized”, for the benefit of our next generation.

Dr Alex CHIU

Consultant Cardiologist (MBChB, CUHK)

Hospital Authority

Children in Shatin Junior/College

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